

**“United we stand, divided we perish”:  
Negotiating Pan-Tribal Unity in the Union of BC  
Indian Chiefs**

**by**

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M.A., University of Saskatchewan, 2009

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# Approval

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## Abstract

In 1969, First Nations chiefs in British Columbia united to create the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (hereafter the Union), a pan-tribal political organization designed to combat late 1960s Canadian Indian Policy and secure recognition of Indigenous rights and title. The drive for pan-tribal unity began as early as the 1870s, and continued into the twentieth century with an explosion of pan-tribal organizations in the 1950s and 1960s. There was continuity in the political goals of these organizations, as well as in the discourse they espoused and the Union would later draw upon these. The creation of the Union signified the first time the approximately 200 First Nations across the province were represented by one organization, and the Union quickly emerged as a leading voice for Indigenous rights. Despite the organization's dominance and longevity, this dissertation suggests that Indigenous organizations and pan-tribal political unity remain poorly understood. In part, this stems from the tendency to consider Indigenous organizations within a success/failure paradigm that emphasizes success in terms of practical political gains, and failure in terms of factionalism and disagreement. These assumptions fail to capture the nuances of Indigenous political experience whereby cooperation and conflict, as well as complex political ideas are commonplace. Relatedly, Indigenous organizations suffer from non-Indigenous assumptions that Indigenous peoples are not political, but rather, only engage in "activism" or responses to settler-colonial political forms, and further, that the legitimacy and visibility of this "activism" continues to rely on recognition by the settler state. This study seeks to correct these assumptions using a community-engaged approach that privileges Indigenous voices using new ethnohistorical and critical oral history methods.

Examining the history of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs between 1969 and 1981, this study makes four main arguments. First, I argue that pan-tribal unity was a leading and widespread political goal for BC Indigenous peoples, but that various interest groups conceived of unity differently. Union member nations, grassroots members, and Indigenous women pushed to have their political goals achieved, and through competing and conflicting agendas unity remained a central goal. I maintain that the concentrated quest for unity during this period exposes the multiplicity of Indigenous populations, as well as the flexibility and fluidity of Indigenous politics, which were shaped over time according to socio-political contexts and structures of experiences including gender, age, ideology, and position. Second, I insist the flexibility and multiplicity of pan-tribal politics is best understood within concept I have termed "multi-politics." I suggest the term multi-politics encapsulates this range of political dialogue within the Union, the co-existence of multiple political models amongst local and provincial Indigenous communities, and between Indigenous people and the state. Third, I suggest that to maintain unity, the Union and its constituents deployed resistance, recognition, and refusal in highly strategic ways incorporating these frameworks into its flexible multi-political modalities. Examining the ways in which the Union facilitated internal and external discussions about political authority, representation, and political strategies, this study reveals that recognition and refusal were negotiated amongst BC Indigenous peoples and settler state actors under the discourse of unity. Finally, I argue that pan-tribal politics, unity, and the politics of recognition and refusal are deeply gendered. Focusing on a male-dominated political organization, I highlight a core tension within BC Indigenous politics—the privileging of male political ideas and bodies. By centring women's political participation, I demonstrate how Indigenous women also shaped the political movement in significant ways.

**Keywords:** British Columbia; Indigenous politics; pan-tribalism; unity; oral history; gender.

## **Dedication**

To my late grandfather Henry Nickel who patiently waited for me to finish so that he “could call me doctor.”

To my grandmother Anne Doucette who helped inspire this project and supported every aspect of my work: *Kukwstsétsemc*.

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## List of Acronyms

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| AFN    | Assembly of First Nations                          |
| BCTC   | BC Treaty Commission                               |
| BCANSI | British Columbia Association of Non-Status Indians |
| BCIHA  | British Columbia Indian Homemakers' Association    |
| BCNWS  | British Columbia Native Women's Society            |
| DSS    | Department of the Secretary of State               |
| DIA    | Department of Indian Affairs                       |
| FABC   | Fisheries Association of British Columbia          |
| LAC    | Library and Archives Canada                        |
| LIP    | Local Initiatives Program                          |
| NAIB   | North American Indian Brotherhood                  |
| NIB    | National Indian Brotherhood                        |
| NBBC   | Native Brotherhood of British Columbia             |
| NSBC   | Native Sisterhood of British Columbia              |
| SRRMC  | Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre     |
| SVITF  | Southern Vancouver Island Tribal Federation        |
| UBCIC  | Union of BC Indian Chiefs                          |

## Chapter 1.

### Introduction



**Figure 1. Delegates of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, Kamloops, BC, November 18-22, 1969**

Photo Credit: The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs. Used with permission.

The image above was taken at the BC Chiefs' Conference held in Kamloops, BC in November 1969.<sup>1</sup> Pictured here are approximately 150 First Nations chiefs and delegates who travelled to the interior city of Kamloops to discuss the potential formation of a new pan-tribal political organization. In the foreground is a banner designed to commemorate this historic and unprecedented gathering of leaders and the ultimate creation of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (hereafter the Union or UBCIC). The conference's motto, "United we stand, divided we perish," was not only a poetic

<sup>1</sup> This conference has multiple names including, the "All BC Chiefs' Conference," the "Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference," the "First Chiefs' Conference," and the "BC Chiefs' Conference."

statement, but it was also a clear illustration of First Nations' realities in the late 1960s.<sup>2</sup> Attacks on Indigenous social, political, and economic autonomy were staple features in the Canadian settler state, and in the 1960s, they took on intense new forms. In the background of the image is one of the buildings of the Kamloops Indian Residential School, which in 1969, after a long history of state and church-directed education served as residences for students from surrounding reserves attending local schools. The local Kamloops Indian Band also used these buildings for events such as this five-day chiefs' conference.

This picture is meaningful for several reasons. For me, it represents a convergence of my personal and professional interests. Pictured here is a member of my extended family, my great grandfather Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (Kamloops) Chief Clarence Jules.<sup>3</sup> Also in the background, I have been told, are Chief Jules's young children, Clarence Jr. or "Manny" and Jeannette, who were also present at the "First Chiefs' meeting."<sup>4</sup> My interest in my family's involvement in BC Indigenous politics motivated me to study the Union. I wanted to understand how this organization reflected and influenced the modern BC Indigenous political movement, and I was curious to see how my family members fit into this history.

<sup>2</sup> I recognize the multiple terms used to refer to Canada's First peoples, including Indigenous, Aboriginal, and First Nations. This study focuses principally on First Nations populations in British Columbia, and uses the terms First Nations, Indigenous, and Aboriginal interchangeably. I acknowledge that the term "Aboriginal" has legal implications through its incorporation in the 1982 Canadian Constitution, and although many First Nations activists in this study use this term, I have chosen to primarily employ Indigenous and First Nations. Where possible, I name the specific First Nation discussed and typically use current iterations for cultural appropriateness. For clarity, I often place historic names that appear in the records in brackets. I follow this convention for both band names and tribal groupings, and I discuss this decision in more detail later in this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> The lengthy history of the Union and the multiple and fluctuating positions and titles held by individuals in the Union and bands makes it difficult to accurately label people. Chiefs could be elected or hereditary, and therefore could leave office and no longer be an active chief, but maintain the title nonetheless. Hereditary chieftainships are lifelong positions, but some individuals believed that elected chiefs also maintained this title for life regardless of their current position. With this in mind, I make every effort to identify chiefs as such when possible. Other professional designations such as staff or executive positions are also tricky. When the individuals clearly hold a staff position during the time I am discussing, I identify this, as well as any other community designation. For individuals who held a single staff position, but no longer act in that role, I use past designations for clarity.

<sup>4</sup> Jeanette Jules, personal conversation with author, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Band Office, April 24, 2012.

When I look at this picture I think of how Chief Jules, the official host of this conference, addressed delegates by saying how proud he was that the chiefs chose Kamloops for this event. He insisted this important meeting was “the first step in gaining recognition for our wishes, our aims, and our demands.”<sup>5</sup> Kamloops, or Tk’emlúps in Secwepemctsin, means “where the rivers meet” and the people, the Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc, are known as the “people of the confluence.” That this meeting took place in Kamloops, a traditional meeting place and trade route, was highly symbolic, and this meaning was not lost on the delegates.<sup>6</sup> This picture also invokes images about Kamloops itself, and specifically the Kamloops Indian Residential School, which remains a predominant structure clearly visible from the reserve today. When I look at this picture, I think about the transition of this land and these buildings from a place of state-directed residential schooling to a place that hosted hundreds of BC chiefs and delegates in their bid to unite politically, and finally to its current role as a band council office where my grandmother Anne Doucette worked alongside Chief Jules on council. These are powerful images for me and they help situate me in a history that is meaningful to Indigenous peoples across the province.

This picture embodies the strong and lengthy history of Indigenous politics in British Columbia. One can imagine the moments of state oppression and past attempts to achieve political unity that led each of the individuals pictured above to make the trek to Kamloops in 1969. Throughout my research I have heard stories from the coast of how community members and chiefs piled into old cars with brown bag lunches and sleeping bags, unsure of where they might stay or if they would have enough gas money to get to Kamloops.<sup>7</sup> I also heard about one Gitxsan chief from the northern town of Hazelton who was so intent on attending the conference that, with no other option, he hired a cab for the 1000 km journey. The trip left him with a \$700 bill in an era before chiefs could expect their travel costs to be covered.<sup>8</sup> To help offset this burden,

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, November 17-22, 1969, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>6</sup> Clarence Jules, personal conversation with author, Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc, Kamloops, BC, June 12, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Marge Kelly, interview with author, Soowahlie First Nation, Cultus Lake, BC, May 3, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Clarence Jules, interview with author, Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc, Kamloops, BC, June 12, 2012

delegates at the conference passed around the hat for a “little silver collection,” much like they did for others with a financial shortfall.<sup>9</sup>

This image symbolises the narratives community members and activists tell about this picture. In my study of the Union, I have travelled around the province interviewing dozens of current and former members of the organization—some of them pictured here.<sup>10</sup> Almost everyone has talked about this first meeting and about this picture, drawing on their own memories or the stories they have heard. People have told me how cold it was on that November day when the image was captured.<sup>11</sup> They have talked about where they were standing, some shivering in front of the camera, and others, like Nlaka’pamux Lower Nicola Chief Don Moses who helped organize the conference, were standing behind the lens helping to squeeze everyone into the frame.<sup>12</sup> They referenced the buzz of excitement that took over the gathering as delegates came to terms with the importance of widespread political unity.<sup>13</sup> People talked about this meeting and this history because it is important to them and many hoped their children and grandchildren would hear these same stories and get to know this history. This image, then, represents a wide swath of experiences, some that are visible in the image and others that are not, but all are important for capturing the history of the Union. This image, the people in it and around it, and the stories they tell, are the foundation of my study.

<sup>9</sup> Jules, interview; Kelly, interview; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21-25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. This was also common practice in early twentieth century organizing. George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (Don Mills, Ont.: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1974), 85.

<sup>10</sup> The oral history interviews conducted for this research were approved and regulated under the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2). Under this policy, narrators were asked to complete a detailed ethics form through which they could determine the use of their materials. This form included spaces for narrators to remain anonymous, redact portions of their interviews, and withdraw from the project altogether. It also stipulated whether or not their materials could be used for future projects, teaching, and publications.

<sup>11</sup> Kelly, interview.

<sup>12</sup> Don Moses, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 11, 2013

<sup>13</sup> Kelly, interview; Moses.



When these delegates formed the Union in 1969, it was not the first Indigenous organization in BC, and it was not even the first pan-tribal association to emerge. It was, however, the most broadly representative and would become one of the longest lasting organizations in province. Indigenous peoples practiced varying forms of pan-tribal political unity throughout their histories and amid challenges of inter-community divisions, issues with representation, state barriers, and the trying nature of the province's vast and culturally diverse territory. Through their efforts several regional and tribally based organizations operated in the province, though they were unable to mobilize as a strong united front. In 1969, pan-tribalism was given an added incentive when Trudeau's government introduced its *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*, better known as the White Paper. Drawing on past experiences with pan-tribal politics, BC Indigenous peoples united in opposition. Under the banner of equality, the White Paper proposed to transfer the responsibilities of Indigenous peoples from the federal government to the province. To accomplish this it would abolish the Indian Act, which governed the lives of First Nations peoples; end the treaties, which guaranteed resource rights, annuities, and other privileges; and eliminate the special status and recognition of Canada's Indigenous population. In BC, where treaty making had been limited and Indigenous rights went unrecognized, the White Paper meant that the federal government would permanently ignore the historical reality of colonial dispossession.<sup>14</sup> This was unacceptable to First Nations peoples. A quote from Rose Charlie, the president of the British Columbia Indian Homemakers' Association (BCIHA) and one of the founders of the Union, illustrates the role the White Paper played in pan-tribal organizing. She noted, the White Paper "had nice flowery words stating, 'you Indian people will be like any other member of society.' But when I really studied it, what it meant to me is that, if we want to be like any other citizen that would mean we will not

<sup>14</sup> Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians: The Challenge of Self-Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 21; Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1999); J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: a History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989); Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990).

have our reserves and we would have to pay taxes, and everything else. So I thought it was important for all the chiefs to truly understand what it was saying.”<sup>15</sup>

Recognizing this threat as well as their structural limitations and their inability to fully represent the provincial population, leaders from three of the existing BC associations, the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB), the BCIHA, and the Southern Vancouver Island Tribal Federation (SVITF), arranged for a chiefs’ meeting to discuss province-wide unity.<sup>16</sup> The 1969 “Indian Chiefs of BC Conference” drew leadership from at least 140 of the 192 First Nations bands in BC.<sup>17</sup> With eighty-five percent of the status Indian population represented, this meeting signified a level of pan-tribal co-operation Indigenous peoples had long been seeking.<sup>18</sup> Aware of the challenges of uniting such a diverse population, delegates decided that the Union would operate on a broad provincial and pan-tribal platform. They agreed the Union would not interfere with band autonomy. Instead, it would act as a coordinating organization where band

<sup>15</sup> UBCIC AGA 2009 Grand Chief Rose Charlie – The Birth of the UBCIC (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS5LpSedQ1c&feature=relmfu>) <accessed March 21, 2012>.

<sup>16</sup> The key players and organizations involved are a matter of debate for some activists. Some activists insisted the Native Brotherhood of BC and the Nisga’a Tribal Council were also involved in the organization of the chiefs’ meeting, while others note that the leaders of the Native Brotherhood and Nisga’a Tribal Council did not respond to the original call for organization made by Cowichan leader Dennis Alphonse. Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 152; Anonymous, interview with author.

<sup>17</sup> There is some discrepancy over the actual number of bands represented at the first meeting. Paul Tennant suggests that the 1969 meeting represented 140 British Columbia bands, while the minutes of the meeting and a delegate list indicate that 143 delegates were present. The delegate list, however, lists at least three representatives British Columbia Indian Homemakers’ Association (BCIHA), and a representative from the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB). Further complicating the matter, Chief Clarence Jules, who helped organize the first meeting and hosted the five-day affair, insists that only two chiefs were missing, while the March 1971 edition of the Native Brotherhood’s *Native Voice* insisted the Union represented 188 bands. Regardless of the actual number, all can agree that this was a widely attended meeting with almost universal support. I have chosen to use 140 as the official number of representatives because it accounts for the BCIHA attendees but does not leave out the possibility that the NAIB member could have also been a BC chief. Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 53; Jules, interview; Peter McFarlane, *From Brotherhood to Nationhood: George Manuel and the Making of the Modern Indian Movement* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1993); Minutes of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, November 17-22, 1969, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; “BC Chiefs, Ottawa Fail Indian People,” *Native Voice* 1, no. 5 (March 1971): 1.

<sup>18</sup> This percentage of representation corresponds to the population numbers of the 140 bands present at the Union meeting.

chiefs could develop strong opposition to the White Paper, as well as a unified stance on the unresolved BC Indian land question and claims based on Indigenous title. The Union quickly emerged as a leading voice for Indigenous rights and is still in operation today.<sup>19</sup>

Although the Union became a longstanding and dominant Indigenous political organization in BC, this study begins from the premise that Indigenous organizations and pan-tribal political unity remain poorly understood. In part, this stems from the tendency to consider organizations within a success/failure paradigm that emphasizes success in terms of practical political gains or longevity, and failure in terms of factionalism and disagreement.<sup>20</sup> These assumptions fail to capture the strong political genealogies on which organizations such as the Union are built. This model also ignores the gradations of Indigenous political thought and experience whereby cooperation and conflict, as well as complex political ideas, are commonplace. Finally, this model sets Indigenous politics and peoples up for failure by implying that as long as Indigenous peoples continue to seek solutions to the land claim or Indigenous rights, they are failing politically. Relatedly, Indigenous organizations suffer from non-Indigenous assumptions that Indigenous peoples are not political, but rather, only engage in “activism” or responses to settler-colonial political forms, and further, that the legitimacy and visibility of this “activism” continues to rely on recognition by the settler state. The foremost examples of this trend can be seen in discussions of the 1969 White Paper and the 1980 constitution debates, which are falsely credited with commencing the modern Indian political movement and initiating calls for Indigenous sovereignty respectively. According to Indigenous peoples, however, Indigenous sovereignty and politics already existed. These myopic moments collapse Indigenous politics, which has long drawn on pre-

<sup>19</sup> Reuben Ware, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 20, 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*.

contact socio-political bodies as well as generations of post-contact politics, into flashes of awareness and reaction that seem ungrounded and therefore invalid.<sup>21</sup>

This study considers Union politics and pan-tribal unity in conversation with Glen Coulthard's analysis of the "politics of recognition" and Audra Simpson's "politics of refusal" to incorporate Indigenous understandings of Indigenous politics across the nation and to contemplate parallels. The "politics of recognition" was coined by Charles Taylor, who argued that "our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the *mis*recognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being."<sup>22</sup> Coulthard applies the Taylor's theory to Canadian Indigenous political realities and asserts that Indigenous politics has historically operated under an assumption that settler recognition of Indigenous political forms was necessary and even desired, and therefore goals of self-determination and Indigenous rights and title have been "cast in the language of recognition."<sup>23</sup> Coulthard reminds that recognition is premised on political reciprocity and mutual recognition, which he insists are impossible under the rubric of colonialism where power differentials

<sup>21</sup> For select examples of pre- and post-contact socio-political bodies and activities, see: Keith Thor Carlson ed., *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 170-175; Keith Thor Carlson, "Familial Cohesion and Colonial Atomization: Governance and Authority in a Coast Salish Community," *Native Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (2010): 22-23; Peter Carstens, *The Queen's People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation Among the Okanagan of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Joanne Drake-Terry, *The Same as Yesterday: The Lillooet Tribal People Chronicle the Takeover of Their Territory* (Lillooet: Lillooet Tribal Council, 1989); Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002); Manuel and Posluns, *The Fourth World*; McFarlane, *From Brotherhood to Nationhood*; Darcy Anne Mitchell, "The Allied Tribes of British Columbia: A Study in Pressure Group Behaviour" (Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1977); Daniel Raunet, *Without Surrender, Without Consent: A History of the Nishga Land Claims* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984); Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*; Elizabeth Vibert, "The Natives Were Strong to Live': Reinterpreting Early-Nineteenth-Century Prophetic Movements in the Columbia Plateau," *Ethnohistory* 42, no. 2 (April 1, 1995): 197-229.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism, Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Charles Taylor and Amy Gutmann, 25-73 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota), 1.

are uneven.<sup>24</sup> Coulthard has recently called for activists to reject their attempts to reconcile Indigenous political goals with settler sovereignty and instead practice resurgent politics, which privileges Indigenous identity and political action above all else. Simpson's "politics of refusal" operates as a strong counterpoint to cultural and political "recognition" and both supports and refutes Coulthard's principle arguments. Simpson investigates Kahnawà:ke Mohawk understandings and practices of sovereignty and nationhood between two settler-states, Canada and the United States. Explaining the everyday political and cultural "refusals" Mohawk engage in, including refusing to accept state-defined identities and travelling with status cards rather than settler-state issued and recognized passports, Simpson argues that Mohawk sovereignty exists within but separate from a sovereign state.<sup>25</sup> She makes the case, then, for nested sovereignties born of these refusals rather than an Indigenous sovereignty that demands settler recognition. She also demonstrates how the politics of recognition is destabilized through Indigenous political practice. In this sense, Simpson agrees with Coulthard that the politics of recognition is an inappropriate framework for Indigenous politics to operate under, but while Coulthard insists recognition has dominated the Indigenous politics in the past forty years, Simpson suggests otherwise for the Kahnawà:ke Mohawk. With these frameworks in mind I ponder expressions of unity and politics within the pan-tribal Union to consider how the politics of recognition and refusal worked amongst BC Indigenous communities, political organizations, and the settler state.

Examining the history of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs between 1969 and 1981, this study makes four arguments. First, I propose that pan-tribal unity was a longstanding and central political goal for BC Indigenous peoples, but different interest groups, including Indigenous women and grassroots community members conceived of unity differently and used the concept of unity and the Union itself to forward their own political goals. I maintain that the concentrated quest for unity during this period exposes the multiplicity of Indigenous populations, as well as the flexibility and fluidity of Indigenous politics. This allowed community members to shape a chiefs' organization

<sup>24</sup> Glen S. Coulthard, "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada," *Contemporary Political Theory* no. 6 (2007): 438-39.

<sup>25</sup> Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 7-12, 179-190.

according to socio-political contexts and structures of experiences including gender, age, personality, ideology, and position. Second, I insist that Union pan-tribal politics is best understood not in terms of success or failure, but in terms of change and multiplicity, and this is captured within concept I have termed “multi-politics.” Multi-politics recognizes that settlement and tribally-based communities navigated numerous sites of tension and cooperation in order to find acceptable political paradigms that were not static or singular, but fluctuated according to the passage of time, interpersonal dynamics, and historical events. The Union’s operation then further complicated these changing local political systems by demanding a subsequent over-arching political model be negotiated to guide the workings of the pan-tribal organization as well as its relationship with the settler state. I suggest the term multi-politics encapsulates this range of political dialogue within the Union, the co-existence of multiple political models amongst local and provincial Indigenous communities, and interactions between Indigenous peoples and the settler state. Advancing the existing historiography that explains socio-political change and negotiated political spaces within a settler-colonial context using concepts of syncretism, hybridity, or dialogism, multi-politics recognizes that politics manifests in a variety of ways across a myriad of positionalities and lived realities. Other terms privilege interactions between Indigenous peoples and newcomers to focus on cultural and political negotiation and brokerage. Multi-politics, on the other hand, looks at internal negotiations amongst Indigenous peoples that are not necessarily grounded in colonization. It reorients the political actors. This is critical for understanding how pan-tribal politics operates.<sup>26</sup> I argue that multi-politics is appropriate for an organization like

<sup>26</sup> For information on concepts of syncretism, hybridity, and dialogism in Indigenous and subaltern contexts see: Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Dale Turner and Audra Simpson, “Indigenous Leadership in a Flat World,” Research Paper for the National Centre for First Nations Governance, May 2009, Vancouver, 11-12. Many scholars have also emphasized the dialogic nature of colonialism, arguing that colonial processes were negotiated and contested. For select examples see: James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998); John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter From the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Myra Rutherdale and Katie Pickles eds., *Contact Zones: Aboriginal & Settler Women in Canada’s Colonial Past* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005);

the Union that is consciously amalgamating and coordinating multiple political systems and ideologies. Multi-politics allows us to name, locate, and make sense of political phenomena such as shifting strategies, and political conflict and coalition that are not always discussed explicitly. This concept, then, helps us to make room for inconsistencies, contradictions, debates, and change over time without necessarily judging these as inherently beneficial or damaging for the movement.

Third, I suggest that to maintain unity, the Union and its constituents deployed political resistance, recognition, and refusal in highly strategic ways incorporating these frameworks into its flexible multi-political modalities. Examining the ways in which the Union facilitated internal and external discussions about political authority, representation, and political strategies, this study reveals that recognition and refusal were negotiated amongst BC Indigenous peoples and settler state actors within the discourse of unity. These produced simultaneous, competing, partial, and fluctuating political recognitions and refusals according to the conditions at hand. I use the term recognition to denote implicit and explicit acceptance of political authority, ideologies, and agendas within and outside of the Union. I use the concept of refusal to highlight overt political resistance where individuals can register their opposition through political non-compliance, direct action, and other strategies. Finally, I argue that pan-tribal politics, unity, and the politics of recognition and refusal are deeply gendered. Focusing on a male-dominated political organization, I highlight a core tension within BC Indigenous politics—the privileging of male political ideas and bodies. This study acknowledges that Indigenous women were central to the Indigenous political movement, but recognizes that their roles have often been marginalized in the memories and histories of Indigenous politics. By centring women’s political participation and political ideologies, I demonstrate how Indigenous women re-directed the BC Indigenous movement through their disadvantaged positions. To forward these arguments, this study redefines the parameters of established western definitions of “politics” to incorporate Indigenous men’s and women’s understandings, activities, and realities.

Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Before situating this study within the historiography, a quick discussion of the terminology surrounding BC Indigenous politics including “tribalism,” “pan-tribalism,” “band,” and “nation” is useful. Tribalism involves “political thought and action centering upon the historic language or cultural groups.”<sup>27</sup> Expressions of tribalism are visible at an individual or societal level whereby one’s tribal group provides the basis for one’s identity. In this sense, individuals convey their Indigeneity not simply through band membership or residence in a certain place, or through a broad Indigenous ancestry, but through a specific link to tribal group. This study uses Paul Tennant’s definition of “tribal groups” to denote socio-political units, which “each had a unique linguistic and cultural identity, as well as a name for itself and a territory which it made use of.”<sup>28</sup> Unlike the more ambiguous terminology of “tribes,” “people,” and “nation,” Tennant argued in 1990 that “tribal group” has never been applied to local communities in BC and therefore serves as an appropriate descriptor of linguistic and cultural groupings.<sup>29</sup> The terms “tribal” and “tribal group” came into currency in the 1970s to reference linguistic and cultural communities as well as enhanced local political autonomy. Pan-tribalism, then, denotes formal socio-political interactions or relationships between tribal groups. In the case of this study, pan-tribalism specifically refers to concerted efforts to unite politically across tribal designations.

Today, scholars and activists have largely replaced the concept of tribalism with those of “nation” and “nationhood.” In this study I have chosen to use tribalism in order to convey the rich history behind these concepts, as well as historical and political change. I acknowledge that Indigenous peoples have long recognized themselves as independent nations with the inherent right to self-government, and as such, maintained their own terminology to express these realities. In the absence of state-recognition of Indigenous political ideals, however, Indigenous actors worked to make their ideas intelligible to the settler state. In the 1970s, the terms used by Indigenous peoples included tribalism, and this only began to change by the end of the decade and into the early 1980s. I wish to capture this discursive transition, while emphasizing a degree of continuity in Indigenous political thought. This is not possible, however, if I

<sup>27</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 181.

<sup>28</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 4.



anachronistically apply “nationhood” where Indigenous peoples spoke of tribalism. Activists also frequently used the term “band” to refer to their geo-political communities and understood these groupings as akin to nations. The term “community” could be used to refer to bands, tribal groupings, and Indigenous peoples more generally. Typically, the Union records identified individuals by band names and I have maintained this for consistency while recognizing the variety of politico-cultural identifiers individuals ascribed to. I often include tribal identifications alongside band names for clarity.

This study builds on the existing historiography by bridging a gap between two dominant trends in Indigenous political histories: narrow community-based studies on the one hand, and comprehensive analyses of political mobilization on the other. On their own, these trends produce studies that are either too narrow or too broad to fully explain the complexities of BC Indigenous politics, but combining elements of both through a community-based study of a pan-tribal organization, as this study does, provides new insights. In the Canadian literature, the important works of Joanne Drake-Terry, Daniel Raunet, and Peter Carstens focus on the political activity of communities such as the Lillooet, Nisga’a, and Okanagan (Syilx) to illustrate the unique political strategies of specific tribal communities. These studies provide deep historical analyses of longstanding political engagements with neighbouring nations as well as settlers. Written in the context of BC’s distinctive political history in which the province refused to acknowledge and address Indigenous rights and title issues through treaty making, this literature also facilitates the move by Indigenous groups in BC to have their historical claims addressed by the government in the late twentieth century.<sup>30</sup> As such, this scholarship presents an aid to advocacy and detailed analyses of the political processes of select individual Indigenous groups. Yet it is this at the expense of emphasizing links to larger political trends including inter- and intra-tribal coalition and conflict.<sup>31</sup> On the contrary, broad political and pan-tribal surveys explore tribal interaction and the impact of Indigenous politics on Canadian political and economic structures. Yet, these studies

<sup>30</sup> See: Drake-Terry, *The Same as Yesterday*; Raunet, *Without Surrender, Without Consent*.

<sup>31</sup> Drake-Terry, *The Same as Yesterday*; Raunet, *Without Surrender, Without Consent*. See also: D. Duane Thomson, “A History of the Okanagan: Indians and Whites in the Settlement Era, 1860-1920” (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1985); and Carstens, *The Queen’s People*.

lack detailed ties to community dynamics and Indigenous identities.<sup>32</sup> Instead, these works provide wider lenses through which to understand Indigenous activism, highlighting far-reaching and longstanding political roots, and seeking to insert Indigenous politics into the dominant historical narrative.<sup>33</sup> For example, Paul Tennant's seminal work on BC Indigenous politics and Laurie Meijer Drees's study of the Indian Association of Alberta focus on provincial trends rather than individual community contexts or culturally specific political ideas.<sup>34</sup> The BC Indigenous political movement and this study also benefit from extensive scholarly work on the Indian land question and jurisprudence concerning Indigenous rights and title.<sup>35</sup> These studies, which often come from outside the discipline of history, situate relationships between Indigenous peoples

<sup>32</sup> Laurie Meijer Drees, *The Indian Association of Alberta: A History of Political Action* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002); and Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*.

<sup>33</sup> Meijer Drees, *The Indian Association of Alberta*; and Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*.

<sup>34</sup> More focused political studies include: E. Palmer Patterson, "Andrew Paull and the Canadian Indian Resurgence" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1962); Ron Peigan, "Injunctive Relief in Native Claims" (Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1989); Mitchell, "The Allied Tribes of British Columbia"; David Zirnelt, "The Caribou Tribal Council" (Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976). For regional political studies, see: Meijer Drees, *The Indian Association of Alberta*. For further select discussions on Indigenous politics and protest, see also: Nicholas Blomley, "'Shut the Province Down': First Nations Blockades in British Columbia, 1984-1995," *BC Studies* no. 3 (Autumn 1996): 1-35; Tony Hall, "Blockades and Bannock: Aboriginal Protests and Politics in Northern Ontario, 1980-1990," *Wicazo Sa Review* 7, no. 2 (October 1, 1991): 58-77; Bruce W Hodgins, David McNab, and Ute Lischke, eds., *Blockades and Resistance: Studies in Actions of Peace and the Temagami Blockades of 1988-89* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003); Peter Kulchyski, "40 Years in Indian Country," *Canadian Dimension* 37, no. 6 (November/December 2003): 33-36; Sandra Lambertus, *Wartime Images, Peacetime Wounds the Media and the Gustafsen Lake Standoff* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Harry Swain, *Oka: A Political Crisis and Its Legacy* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> For select examples, see: Carole Blackburn, "Differentiating Indigenous Citizenship: Seeking Multiplicity in Rights, Identity, and Sovereignty in Canada," *American Ethnologist* 36 (2009): 66-78; Dara Culhane, *The Pleasure of the Crown: Anthropology Law and First Nations* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1998); Charlotte Coté, "Historical Foundations of Indian Sovereignty in Canada and the United States: A Brief Overview," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2001): 15-23; W.J. Eccles, "Sovereignty-Association, 1500-1783," *Canadian Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (December 1984): 475-510; Hamar Foster, *Let Right Be Done: Aboriginal Title, the Calder Case and the Future of Indigenous Rights* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); Felix Hoehn, *Reconciling Sovereignties: Aboriginal Nations and Canada* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 2012); J. Rick Pointing, ed., *Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1986); Michael W. Posluns, *Speaking with Authority: The Emergence of the Vocabulary of First Nations' Self-Government* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Christopher F. Roth, "Without Treaty, Without Conquest: Indigenous Sovereignty in Post-Delgamuukw British Columbia," *Wicazo Sa Review* 17, no. 2 (Autumn, 2002): 143-165; Neil J. Sterritt, *Tribal Boundaries in the Nass Watershed* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998).

and the settler state in the historic and legal interactions, and provide opportunities for rich historical analysis and engagement.

As a study of a pan-tribal Indigenous political organization, my work interrogates concepts of pan-tribalism, community, and unity. Several scholars examine pan-tribal politics and draw useful conclusions about how tribal groups interact, cooperate, and conflict in a variety of geographical and temporal contexts. This study builds from these works, but does not evaluate pan-tribalism in terms of eventual factionalism and failure as others do.<sup>36</sup> Some scholars view pan-tribalism as a solution to problems of weakening tribal ties, geographic proximity, and the ultimate need to combat settler-colonial structures. For instance, Tennant insisted BC First Nations were tribally fragile and this undermined effective political resistance to settler incursion and ultimately precipitated cross-tribal cooperation.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, Frank Rzeckowski's evaluation of the twentieth century Crow reservation and their interaction with neighbouring Northern Plains communities revealed strategically dynamic pan-tribal identities which allowed communities to maintain degrees of autonomy during settler-colonial incursion.<sup>38</sup> Meijer Drees uncovered similar dynamics in her examination of the pan-tribal Indian Association of Alberta formed in 1939 to seek First Nations rights recognition.<sup>39</sup> In existing historiography pan-tribalism is depicted as unstable and unrepresentative, and an ineffective solution to tribal weaknesses and other political challenges. Tennant and Rzeckowski ultimately framed pan-tribalism terms of decline and failure, and this obscures the dynamic nature of politics, communities, and identity. My examination of the Union, on the other hand, while recognizing the collaboration and disagreement inherent in the pan-tribal organization and the political realities prompting cooperation, focuses on how the Union itself produced new forms of community and identity through its work. These new expressions did not overtake existing tribal or community affiliations, which continued to be important, but offered alternative relationships and strategies that Indigenous peoples could use alongside of existing political arrangements. In fact,

<sup>36</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*; Frank Rzeckowski, *Uniting the Tribes: The Rise and Fall of Pan-Indian Community on the Crow Reservation* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2012).

<sup>37</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*.

<sup>38</sup> Rzeckowski, *Uniting the Tribes*.

<sup>39</sup> Meijer Drees, *The Indian Association of Alberta*.

viewing the Union as a community itself within constellations of overlapping geographic, tribally based, political, and gendered “communities,” provides a more accurate picture of shifting political relationalities.

While my focus will be on the modern Indigenous movement in BC, there is significant evidence that the provincial political landscape during the twentieth century was linked to political and social trends in the United States. This study shows that Indigenous actors in Canada were inspired by the 1960s Puget Sound fish-ins, which saw American Indians enacting their treaty-guaranteed right to fish, the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz by the pan-tribal “Indians of all Nations,” and the American Indian Movement (AIM), that set up Canadian chapters in Penticton and Vancouver.<sup>40</sup> Canadian and American activists from these movements also moved across the border, taking their political ideologies with them. For example, young Canadian Indigenous activists such as Anna Mae Aquash Pictou and Leonard Peltier were frustrated with a lack of political action at home, and travelled south to participate in AIM activities. This included the 1973 Wounded Knee standoff on the Oglala Lakota reservation of Pine Ridge in South Dakota.<sup>41</sup> American activists also came north to lend support in events such as the 1974 Kenora Crisis, which saw Kenora’s Anicinabe Park taken over by the Ojibway Warrior Society, as well as the 1974 Cache Creek blockade and the 1975 occupation of the regional Department of Indian Affairs office, which involved local and international AIM members.<sup>42</sup> These ideological and embodied cross-fertilizations expose important political convergences and trends that help contextualize activities happening in BC during the latter half of the twentieth century.

<sup>40</sup> Adam Eneas, interview with author, Penticton First Nation, Penticton, BC, June 3, 2013; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assemblies, 1969-1983; *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians*, 1972-1977; *Unity*, 1970-1971; Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee*, (New York: The New Press, 1996).

<sup>41</sup> Chaat Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*.

<sup>42</sup> I will discuss this in detail in chapter seven. Mark Anderson and Carmen Robertson, “The ‘Bended Elbow’ News, Kenora 1974: How a Small-Town Newspaper Promoted Colonization,” *American Indian Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 410-440; “Indians continue occupation of downtown gov’t offices,” *Vancouver Sun* May 10, 1975, 1 and 11; David Ticoll and Stan Persky, “Welcome to Ottawa: the Native Peoples’ Caravan,” *Canadian Dimension* 10, no. 6 (January, 1975): 16; Scott Rutherford, “Canada’s Other Red Scare: The Anicinabe Park Occupation and Indigenous Decolonization,” in *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 77-96.

The American historiography has some similarities to Canadian works including a tendency to either highlight isolated political reactions of tribal groups or extensive political movements in the twentieth century. Loretta Fowler and Henry Mihesuah, for instance, discuss the political persistence of specific Native American tribes and communities in the face of government policies and shifting ideologies. They accentuate local conditions over far-reaching political patterns.<sup>43</sup> The more expansive works by those such as James Burke, Daniel Cobb, Donna Hightower-Langston, Paul Chaat Smith, and Robert Allan Warrior focus on political movements such as Red Power and AIM and stress government-imposed divisions amongst tribal groups and communities and the effects of separation on political activity. While Canadian Indigenous peoples were able to mobilize tribally and pan-tribally by uniting across tribal affiliations in organizations such as the Union, United States Indian policies grouped unrelated tribal groups onto shared Indian reservations, separating them from their historic tribal affiliations. This meant they lacked the same cultural basis for political mobilization, but could unite pan-tribally with varying degrees of success. The works of Frederick Hoxie, Peter Mancall, and James Merrell speak specifically to this phenomenon.<sup>44</sup> One notable exception to this trend of narrow and broad studies is Gregory Dowd's exploration of North American Indians' experiences with unity between 1745-1815. Focusing on an Indigenous spiritual movement, Dowd investigated far-reaching tribal affiliations and found that spiritual and military activities united Indigenous groups under a new common

<sup>43</sup> Loretta Fowler, *Arapahoe Politics, 1851-1978: Symbols in Crises of Authority* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982); Henry Mihesuah, *First to Fight*, ed. Devon Mihesuah (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

<sup>44</sup> Frederick Hoxie, Peter Mancall, and James Merrell, *American Nations: Encounters in Indian Country, 1850 to the Present*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2001). For inter-tribal interactions as well as relationships between Indigenous populations and the state, also see: David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Ward Churchill, *Acts of Rebellion: The Ward Churchill Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984); Frederick E. Hoxie, "Retrieving the Red Continent: Settler Colonialism and the History of American Indians in the US," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31, no. 6 (September 2008): 1153-67; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

identity, which produced limited political unification as well.<sup>45</sup> My research builds upon this rich historiography by combining elements of focused communities studies and wide political surveys.

Using a theoretical and methodological approach that differs from previous scholarship on BC Indigenous politics, this community-engaged study of a pan-tribal organization exposes the personal and community contexts informing political engagements, as well as expansive regional, national, and international political trends. I accomplish this by situating my work at the intersection of critical settler-colonial theory, Indigenous theories, and Indigenous feminism, and by utilizing new ethnohistorical and critical oral history methodologies and methods. To effectively pre-position Indigenous understandings and practices of politics, my work recognizes how settler-colonial assumptions about Native-newcomer relationships and political histories remain largely untroubled, and I engage with settler-colonial theory in a specific way to address this. According to settler-colonial theorists, settler colonies such as Canada present unique challenges to understanding Indigenous-settler relationships because unlike post-colonial nations Canada has not decolonized. Lorenzo Veracini has suggested that settler colonies utilized different systems of interaction with Indigenous populations, and thus scholars should examine them in isolation from existing colonial discourses. To establish the differences between colonialism and settler-colonialism, Veracini argues that colonialism involved moving to a new territory, disrupting original inhabitants, and establishing unequal relations.<sup>46</sup> Under this system, sojourning colonizers co-opted Indigenous labour and land for profit, and encouraged Indigenous reproduction to solidify continued gains. Settler-colonialism, on the other hand, relied on the continued dispossession and eventual disappearance of Indigenous peoples—whose very presence challenged settlers’ land acquisition and identity.<sup>47</sup> Patrick Wolfe agrees, suggesting settler-colonialism “destroys to replace” and activates what he calls “the logic

<sup>45</sup> Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*.

<sup>46</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, “Introducing Settler Colonial Studies,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no 1 (2011): 1.

<sup>47</sup> Veracini, “Introducing Settler Colonial Studies,” 1; Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 388. See also, Hoxie, “Retrieving the Red Continent,” 1153-1167.

of elimination” to remove Indigenous peoples as barriers to settler progress.<sup>48</sup> Primarily motivated by desire for territory, settler-colonialists developed ideologies and practices to facilitate the removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands.<sup>49</sup>

As a settler colony, Canada activated this “logic of elimination” in countless ways. Colonial officials worked to deny Indigenous rights and title through the imposition of the Indian Act and the allocation of reserves. It sought to expedite the eradication of Indigenous peoples through assimilationist policies and practices including enfranchisement, residential schools, missionization, limiting traditional economies, and the restructuring of band governance. Both Wolfe and Veracini emphasized that colonizers were temporary interlopers, who, after amassing significant wealth and prestige, eventually retired to their mother country. Settler colonists, on the other hand, remained in their new territories permanently and sought to establish independent nations. Because of this, Wolfe maintains, “invasion is a structure not an event.”<sup>50</sup> Put simply, incursion in the settler-colonial context does not stop, but is consistent and lasting.

Canada’s settler-colonial status did not prevent Indigenous activists from drawing on the experience and expertise of decolonizing peoples to combat settler incursion, however. Movements of global decolonization and ethnic nationalism in the sixties had a significant impact on BC Indigenous politics, influencing Indigenous leaders such as George Manuel (Secwepemc) and Philip Paul (Tsartlip). These men used the ideas of Frantz Fanon, Martin Luther King, and Malcolm X to help them develop and articulate their own political ideologies. Both leaders, however, recognized that the actors and conditions in decolonizing nations differed from Canadian realities. For instance, Manuel visited decolonizing countries in Latin America and Africa, particularly Tanzania to expand his political knowledge, but he remained critical of decolonization processes and sceptical that Third World politics were applicable to Canadian First Nations. Specifically, Manuel disapproved of the manner in which decolonizing Third World nations practiced internal colonization after achieving independence. He suggested that this tendency

<sup>48</sup> Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 388.

<sup>49</sup> Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 388.

<sup>50</sup> Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 388.

came from Third World nations' acceptance that they were underdeveloped and needed to bolster their economic and social capital by exploiting weaker nations.<sup>51</sup> Manuel wholly rejected this principle of underdevelopment, as it subscribed to Social Darwinian ideas of societal evolution. Instead he believed in the ability of Indigenous nations within settler states develop their own social, political, and economic paths and this influenced Manuel's approach to Indigenous politics. Relatedly, Tsartlip Chief and Union member Philip Paul was influenced by the work of Martin Luther King in the United States as well as militant ethnic nationalists groups such as AIM that sought political, economic, and social equality for their people and sometimes employed violence to achieve this.<sup>52</sup>

The global influence of decolonization also extended to many Indigenous activists across Canada, including Métis activist Howard Adams. Adams noted that decolonization largely involved revolutionary violence, and according to individuals such as Fanon, this type of violence was the only way to free subjugated peoples from the shackles of colonialism. Adams was convinced that Canadian Indigenous peoples could overcome colonial oppression using a non-violent strategy of radical nationalism, which involved raising collective consciousness of oppression and directing a cultural revolution to overcome these challenges.<sup>53</sup> Adams's tendency to shy away from the violence perpetuated in other areas of the world can be viewed as simply an ideological split from global Third World leaders, but we also must consider how Canada's status as a settler colonial nation necessitated different strategies for combatting colonialism.<sup>54</sup> Although these men saw the value of drawing strength and awareness from global decolonization movements, they agreed that the ideologies and tactics of these trends did not provide a template for Canadian Indigenous peoples' politics. Post-colonial liberation tactics worked to overthrow minority colonial powers leading colonial forces to vacate those regions. In Canada, colonists are settlers who remain permanently, so overthrowing the Canadian government is both impractical, since Indigenous peoples

<sup>51</sup> Manuel and Posluns, 243-245.

<sup>52</sup> Ware, interview. Ware worked closely with Philip Paul during his time with the Union and attained a good sense of Paul's political influences.

<sup>53</sup> Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada From a Native Point of View*, Rev. ed. (Calgary: Fifth House Publishing, 1989), 166-168.

<sup>54</sup> Adams, *Prison of Grass*, 166-168.



are a minority population, and ineffective, since settlers have no “home” country to return to.

Keeping these ideological influences in mind, I suggest that elements of post-colonial and settler-colonial theory provide strong conceptual underpinnings for understanding Indigenous realities in Canada. Postcolonial theory makes room for the nuances of Indigenous-settler relations, but must be applied carefully remaining attuned to the ways in which colonial realities remain a staple feature for Indigenous peoples. Settler-colonial theory, on the other hand, explains how the colonial encounter is an enduring feature rather than simply an historical phenomenon. It also importantly emphasizes the ongoing power dynamics between settlers and Indigenous peoples.<sup>55</sup> However, like post-colonial theory, settler-colonial theory has its limitations especially in terms of how it envisions Indigenous-settler interactions. Specifically, settler-colonial theory continues to initiate analysis from the position of the settler, leaving problematic ethnocentrism intact. Settler-colonial theory assumes the universal and ultimate dominance of settlers over Indigenous peoples by claiming that settler-colonialism only ends if settlers go home or Indigenous peoples disappear.<sup>56</sup> Both of these emphasize settler agency and fail to account for alternate realities. My work takes up the criticisms of settler colonialism and settler-colonial theory offered by Indigenous academics Scott Lyons (Ojibwe/Dakota), Glen Coulthard (Yellowknives Dene), and Audra Simpson (Kahnawà:ke Mohawk), and non-Indigenous scholars Alissa Macoun, and Elizabeth Strakosch, who question the permanency and inevitability of settler-colonialism.<sup>57</sup> For instance, Macoun and Strakosch insist that because Indigenous peoples and settlers are still here, the settler-colonial project and its ultimate goals remain unfinished.<sup>58</sup> They suggest that Indigenous resistance can account for this incompleteness, but they regret

<sup>55</sup> Veracini, “Introducing Settler Colonial Studies,” 1; Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*.

<sup>56</sup> Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 387-388.

<sup>57</sup> Coulthard, “Subjects of Empire,” 437-460; Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*; Scott Lyons, *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010); Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*; Alissa Macoun and Elizabeth Strakosch, “The Ethical Demands of Settler Colonial Theory,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, nos. 3-4 (2013): 426-443. Non-Indigenous scholar Kevin Bruyneel offers similar assessments in his study of US-Indigenous relationships in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. See: Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

<sup>58</sup> Macoun and Strakosch, “The Ethical Demands of Settler Colonial Theory,” 426-443.

that resistance remains largely unexplored in settler-colonial theory. Coulthard holds that settler-colonialism remains deeply embedded in our social and political relations, and that Indigenous resurgence in the form of direct action, gendered justice and decolonization, and rethinking state political frameworks can undermine these relations.<sup>59</sup> Likewise, Simpson points to the refusal of Indigenous peoples to accept settler sovereignty and political modalities as evidence for the incomplete settler project.<sup>60</sup> My work also destabilizes the assumptions of settler-colonial theories and makes room within settler-colonial analysis for resurgent Indigenous politics and decolonization. It represents a strong historical example of settler-colonial disruption that we need to incorporate into our understandings of the wider settler project. By focusing on a robust history of Indigenous politics and complex practices of resistance, refusal, and recognition, and by centring Indigenous voices and histories, I challenge Canadians to not assume settler dominance or the certainty and legitimacy of the settler state. This allows us to refocus our gaze away from what the settler project is trying to do, to see how it is failing in many respects and can continue to be disrupted.

I also recognize how this settler-colonial thrust to eliminate Indigenous people occurs in the historical record and therefore, I counter this by incorporating Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous theories into my work. Many Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars have reconsidered narratives and reclaimed Indigenous perspectives through similar means. For example, Paulette Regan and Elizabeth Furniss have suggested that decolonizing scholarship requires dismantling settler myths, which ignore or discount Indigenous historical truths.<sup>61</sup> Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith famously called for Indigenous peoples to implement their own systems of knowledge in order to destabilize oppressive western research practices. Indigenous academics such as Simpson, Dian Million, Coulthard, and others have also argued for re-conceptualizing mainstream ideas of what “theory” means, thus integrating community-based theories into our research where they have otherwise been discounted. Rejecting the tendency for Indigenous

<sup>59</sup> Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*.

<sup>60</sup> Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 12.

<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth Furniss, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999); Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).

academics to equate theory with western epistemologies and colonizing scholarship, these scholars demonstrate the centrality and importance of theory for Indigenous peoples. Indigenous theorizing includes acting politically, thinking, writing, singing, and dancing. They suggest this is an effective way to decolonize scholarship and an important way to dismantle the incorrect separation between academic and community-based ideas. This process can also involve co-opting or reshaping theories such as Marxism or feminism in ways that are meaningful for Indigenous peoples.<sup>62</sup> My work activates these calls by relying on the theoretical work of Indigenous scholars as well as community members from the Union movement. For example, Union member nation chiefs and community members placed Indigenous knowledge and political ideologies at the forefront of the Union and Indigenous rights movement. My research not only situates Indigenous actors at the centre of my analysis, allowing them to tell their own histories on their own terms, but it also privileges their theoretical frameworks about Indigenous politics, sovereignty, community, and decolonization. Seeking to address Linda Tuhiwai Smith's call to decolonize research practices, my work redefines parameters of power within the research process and places community members' knowledge within academic literature where it is respected and valued rather than assimilated into existing theories.<sup>63</sup>

This study also acknowledges that much of the existing literature on the BC Indigenous movement obscures women's political activities by depoliticizing women's work, focusing on sensational moments of action, or collapsing women's politics within

<sup>62</sup> Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, "Introduction," in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed., Simpson and Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 1-30; Dian Million, "There Is a River in Me: Theory from Life," in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed., Simpson and Smith, 31-42; Glen Coulthard, "From Wards of the State to Subjects of Recognition? Marx, Indigenous Peoples, and the Politics of Denendeh," in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed., Simpson and Smith, 56-121.

<sup>63</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (New York: Zed Books, 1999); Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "On Tricky Ground: Researching the Native in the Age of Uncertainty," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications), 91.

the broader narrative of male-dominated political organizations such as the Union.<sup>64</sup> This occurs in spite of the robust collection of writing and work produced by Indigenous women in this period and the growth of Indigenous feminist politics and literatures.<sup>65</sup> The result is that early women's organizations such as the Indian Homemakers' clubs and the British Columbia Indian Homemakers' Association (BCIHA), which were heavily involved in community and Union politics, are regularly viewed as non-political "women's groups." Conversely, strong Indigenous feminist political debates in the 1970s about the patriarchal membership provisions of the Indian Act appear politically dominant but also ungrounded. Much like Canadian Indigenous politics, which tends to be narrowly folded

<sup>64</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*; Drake-Terry, *The Same As Yesterday*. Some important exceptions to this include Patricia Barkaskas's excellent thesis on the Homemakers' and their newspaper *Indian Voice*. Through careful analysis of the BCIHA publication, Barkaskas argued that the Homemakers inserted themselves within the male-dominated Indigenous political movement with their discussions on community, identity, and citizenship. Barkaskas underscored the gendered experience of Indigenous women as well as their role in community politics. Patricia Barkaskas, "Indian Voice: Centring Women in the Gendered Politics of Indigenous Nationalism in BC, 1969-1984" (Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 2009). Jo-Anne Fiske also noted the political roles of Carrier women in British Columbia and how their participation in community work and voluntary associations were tied to their roles and responsibilities as mothers. Jo-Anne Fiske, "Carrier Women and the Politics of Mothering," in *British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women*, ed. Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1992), 198-216. See also: Jo-Anne Fiske, "The Womb is to the Nation as the Heart is to the Body: Ethnohistorical Discourses of the Canadian Indigenous Women's Movement," *Studies in Political Economy* 51 (Fall 1996): 65-95. Outside the BC context there are several important works highlighting Indigenous women's political work. These include: Mary Jane Logan McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History, 1940-1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014) and Carol Williams, ed., *Indigenous Women and Work: From Labor to Activism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012). Of particular interest is an article by Aroha Harris and Mary Jane Logan McCallum. Here they explore eastern Canadian Indian Homemakers' Clubs and the Maori Women's Welfare League to challenge assumptions about the conservative nature of early twentieth century Indigenous women's organizations. Harris and McCallum also found that through their clubs, Indigenous women pursued their political and social objectives in ways that were consistent with Indigenous women's lived realities. Aroha Harris and Mary Jane Logan McCallum, "'Assaulting the Ears of Government': The Indian Homemakers' Clubs and the Maori Women's Welfare League in Their Formative Years," in *Indigenous Women and Work: From Labor to Activism* edited by Carol Williams (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 225-239. Grace Ouellette suggested that the Indigenous women's movement has long roots, but largely focuses on the mid-1970s in her work. Grace J. M. W. Ouellette, *The Fourth World: An Indigenous Perspective on Feminism and Aboriginal Women's Activism* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2002), especially 29-31.

<sup>65</sup> Maria Campbell, *Halfbreed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973); Jeanette Armstrong, *Slash* 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1988); Bernice Culleton Mosionier, *In Search of April Raintree* (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1983). Stephanie McKenzie lamented that Indigenous literature from the 1960s and 1970s is often dismissed as "protest literature," which flattens its goals and impact.

into discussions of the White Paper, concentrated discussions of Canadian Indigenous women's politics suffer from an "Indian Act" myopia that obscures the long and complex history of female activism and undercuts deep understandings of the BC Indigenous movement.<sup>66</sup> This is not to suggest that other literatures do not exist, but rather, that the strong focus on the role of the Indian Act in political discussions obscures early activism. This polarization of women's activities contributes to a general failure to understand how BC Indigenous women between the 1950s and 1980s consistently enacted real and important political changes using their unique positions and experiences with colonization and gender discrimination. Without appreciating women's pivotal involvement in the movement and important intersections of gender and politics, we fail to fully grasp the significance of pan-tribal organizations such as the Union, as well as Indigenous politics itself.<sup>67</sup> This study broadens the political scope and lengthens the historical timeline to include Indigenous women's involvement in their own associations such as early Homemakers' clubs and the BCIHA; their participation in organizations such as the Union; as well as their political contributions to informal political channels within their own communities. It also foregrounds Indigenous women's own conceptions of political activities and identities by privileging their writings and voices while also

<sup>66</sup> Scholarship that emphasizes the role of Indian Act activism includes: Joanne Barker, ed., *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestations and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-determination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Joanne Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, Rights: Native Women's Activism against Social Inequality and Violence in Canada," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (June 2008): 259-266; Joanne Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women's Activism," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, and Transnationalism* 7, no. 1 (2006): 127-161; Susan Applegate Krouse and Heather A. Howard, eds. *Keeping the Campfires Going: Native Women's Activism in Urban Communities* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2009); Kathleen Jamieson, "Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act," in *Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization*, ed. J. Rick Pointing (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1986), 112-136; Bonita Lawrence, *"Real" Indians and Others: Mixed Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

<sup>67</sup> Joan Scott, Jo-Anne Fiske, and others have emphasized the gendered nature of politics. Scott acknowledged gender as a central category in the creation of socio-political relationships of power, as well as in power differentials more generally. Others, such as Fiske, have also noted the varying ways in which Indigenous men and women practice and experience politics. Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Fiske, "Carrier Women and the Politics of Mothering." Also see: Andrea Smith, "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change," *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 116-132.

recognizing that actors can sometimes express political ideologies implicitly, and this does not necessarily negate their politics.<sup>68</sup>

Fully integrating Indigenous women's roles demands a strong understanding of how dual, overlapping categories of race and gender prompted distinctive responses from Indigenous women. There is a growing consensus that Indigenous feminism is an appropriate model for this.<sup>69</sup> There are multiple and oppositional iterations of Indigenous feminism and scholars, activists, and community members disagree on the usefulness of the concept.<sup>70</sup> I use Joyce Green's definition of "bring[ing] together the two critiques, feminism and anti-colonialism, to show how Indigenous people, and in particular Indigenous women, are affected by colonialism and by patriarchy."<sup>71</sup> Indigenous

<sup>68</sup> For examples of this phenomenon see: Katherine Borland, "'That's not what I said': Interpretive conflict in oral narrative research," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge), 320-330; Joan Sangster, "Telling our stories: Feminist Debate and the Use of Oral History," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed., Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge), 87-100; and Applegate Krouse and Howard, eds., *Keeping the Campfires Going*, x-xxi.

<sup>69</sup> Andrea Smith, "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change," *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 116-132.

<sup>70</sup> Kim Anderson and Bonita Lawrence eds., *Strong Women Stories: Native Vision and Community Survival* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2006); Applegate Krouse and Howard, eds., *Keeping the Campfires Going*; Lee Maracle, *I am Woman: A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1988); Cheryl Suzack, Shari M. Huhndorf, Jeanne Perreault, and Jean Barman, eds., *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); Carolyn Kenny and Tina Ngaroimata eds., *Living Indigenous Leadership: Native Narratives on Building Strong Communities* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012); Simpson and Smith eds., *Theorizing Native Studies*, 16-17; Joyce Green, ed. *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* and in particular, Joyce Green, "Taking Account of Aboriginal Feminisms," 20-47; Verna St. Denis, "Feminism is for Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism, and Diversity," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, Joyce Green, ed., 33-46; Ouellette, *The Fourth World*; Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, Rights," 259-266; Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women's Activism," 127-161; Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' Up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and Feminism* 1st ed., 2000 (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 2012); Anne Phillips ed., *Feminism and Politics* (New York: Oxford, 1998). Some of these authors assert that sexism exists in Indigenous communities today, but suggest that because it was an imported practice, overthrowing colonialism would eliminate it. On the other hand, others maintain that gender equality and Indigenous sovereignty remained simultaneous goals that were inextricably linked. Some recognize variations between the traditional gender roles of women in Indigenous communities, including the existence of gender inequality before colonization, but they insist that the process of colonization intensified and in some cases codified these inequalities, particularly through colonial policies such as the Indian Act.

<sup>71</sup> Joyce Green, "Taking Account of Aboriginal Feminisms," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, Joyce Green, ed., 23.

feminism, as it is proposed here, also accepts Indigenous principles of life, whereby women's roles as community creators, caretakers, and mothers are central and are empowering rather than oppressive.<sup>72</sup> This perspective does not reject the notion that gender inequality exists in Indigenous communities and does not assume that maternal discourses apply evenly or unproblematically across populations. I recognize the heteronormativity of maternal discourses and how this fails to represent some women's personal and political realities. Yet, I also argue that Indigenous feminism importantly refrains from placing Indigenous motherhood and homemaking in direct opposition to women's political empowerment. Instead, as I demonstrate throughout this study, Indigenous feminism makes room for the politically powerful Indigenous homemaker. This in turn creates a more inclusive definition of politics that is meaningful for some Indigenous women.

At its root, Indigenous feminism takes cultural and gender-specific interpretations seriously and recognizes that existing frameworks of analysis may not be entirely appropriate for Indigenous women. My application of Indigenous feminism embraces these gradations of political identity and activity, and understands the impact these women had on promoting gender equality without strictly labeling them as feminists or activists—labels many, though not all, would reject.<sup>73</sup> In addition, while scholars have argued convincingly for recognition of multiple feminisms, thus sidestepping the problematic association of Indigenous female activists with mainstream feminists, this study takes seriously Indigenous women's past and continued unease with the "F

<sup>72</sup> R. Aida Hernandez Castillo, "The Emergence of Indigenous Feminism in Latin America," *Signs* 35, no. 3 (Spring 2010): 541; Smith, "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change," 116-132. Scholars including Jadwiga Pieper Mooney and Jo-Anne Fiske have explored the politics of motherhood in other contexts, and have suggested that women often activated their gendered roles to secure political power and change. Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women's Rights in Twentieth-Century Chile* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009); Fiske, "Carrier Women and the Politics of Mothering"; Jo-Anne Fiske, "The Womb is to the Nation as the Heart is to the Body: Ethnohistorical Discourses of the Canadian Indigenous Women's Movement," *Studies in Political Economy* 51 (Fall 1996): 65-95.

<sup>73</sup> Hernandez Castillo, "The Emergence of Indigenous Feminism in Latin America," 541.

word.”<sup>74</sup> Many Indigenous women dismiss feminism as white, middle-class phenomenon, as well as a colonial intervention, and seek to distance themselves from the concept altogether.<sup>75</sup> Others, including celebrated author and critic Lee Maracle (Stó:lō) explicitly identifies as a feminist, but constructs her feminism as separate from mainstream feminism and inherently linked to her Indigenous identity. She noted, “I am not interested in gaining entry to the doors of the ‘white women’s movement.’ I would look just a little ridiculous sitting in their living rooms say ‘we this and we that.’”<sup>76</sup> Indigenous feminism applied here recognizes that Indigenous women’s notions of motherhood and women’s roles need to be acknowledged and respected when analyzing female oppression and resistance. It also grants that Indigenous women and men have complex relationships whereby women remain protective of their men against the colonial state, while also recognizing the symbolic and real male-caused violence suffered within their communities. Finally, this study understands that Indigenous feminisms take on different expressions over time, space, and lived experience.<sup>77</sup>

My work draws together these theoretical and historiographical threads using new ethnohistorical and critical oral history methodologies and methods to analyze archival and oral history research. I use ethnohistory to refer to “the combination of the

<sup>74</sup> Luana Ross, “From the ‘F’ Word to Indigenous/Feminisms,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 39-52; Lisa J. Udel, “Revision and Resistance: The Politics of Native Women’s Motherwork,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies* 22, no. 2 (2001): 43; Kate Shanley, “Thoughts on Indian Feminism,” in *A Gathering of Spirit: Writing and Art by North American Indian Women*, ed. Beth Brant (Ithaca, NY: Firebrand, 1984), 213-215; Smith, “Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change,” 116-132; Green, ed. *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*; Ouellette, *The Fourth World*; Hernandez Castillo, “The Emergence of Indigenous Feminism in Latin America,” 539-545. It is important to take women’s accounts of their own politics seriously to avoid mislabelling their work. As Katherine Borland discovered when conducting oral research with her grandmother, feminists are often tempted “to empower the women we work with by revaluing their perspectives, their lives, and their art in a world that has systematically ignored or trivialized women’s culture.” Katherine Borland, “‘That’s not what I said’: Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research,” in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, eds. (London: Routledge, 1998), 321. Joan Sangster made a similar point, noting our narrators may not agree with our interpretations. Joan Sangster, “Telling our stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History,” in *The Oral History Reader*, 93.

<sup>75</sup> Goeman and Denetdale, “Native Feminisms,” 9-13; Udel, “Revision and Resistance”, 43-62.

<sup>76</sup> Maracle, *I am Woman*, 18.

<sup>77</sup> Smith, “Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change,” 116-132; Simpson and Smith, *Theorizing Native Studies*, 16-17.



oral history, cultural focus, and field work of the ethnographer with the archival research and temporal context of the historian.”<sup>78</sup> Initially conceptualized as a practical methodological solution for addressing Indigenous land rights issues in the United States during the late 1940s, ethnohistory used documentary evidence to support Native American tribes’ claims against the government in the Indian Claims Commission.<sup>79</sup> Through its development, ethnohistory has weathered early resistance regarding the validity of oral history sources, which resulted in an overreliance on largely Eurocentric documentary sources, as well as doubts about whether Native American peoples, who had typically been relegated to the cultural sphere, could be studied in an historical manner. In the late 1940s, however, the field began to embrace its hybridity as a historical and anthropological discipline and honed its interdisciplinary toolkit.<sup>80</sup>

According to ethnohistorians Keith Carlson and John Lutz, as well as archaeologist Dave Shaepe, ethnohistory has recently entered a new era focused on Indigenous community-based research. These scholars have suggested that the “new ethnohistory” promotes meaningful and engaged scholarship and is collaborative, mutually beneficial, reflective, and self-aware. Unlike previous incarnations, which focused more on the narrator, the new ethnohistory recognizes the multi-sited role of the researcher in the community, as well as the impact this presence and its accompanying “cultural baggage” has on the narrator and the project itself.<sup>81</sup> The academic process also views narrators as different but equal participants and the discipline refrains from bestowing all the benefits of research onto the interviewer alone. Ethnohistorical practices have employed this dedication to equalizing the research relationship by following research codes and utilizing research questions determined by community members, as well as facilitating collaboration on the analysis and dissemination of the final product. For example, Julie Cruikshank, Leslie Robertson, Paige Raibmon, and Wendy Wickwire worked directly with First Nations individuals, families, kinship

<sup>78</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, John Lutz, and David Schaepe, “Turning the Page: Ethnohistory from a New Generation,” *The University of the Fraser Valley Research Review* 2, no. 2 (2008): 1.

<sup>79</sup> Michael E. Harkin, “Ethnohistory’s Ethnohistory: Creating a Discipline from the Ground Up,” *Social Science History* 34, no. 2 (summer 2010): 113-119. See also: J. Axtell, “Ethnohistory: An Historian’s Viewpoint,” *Ethnohistory* 26, no. 1 (Winter 1979): 1-13.

<sup>80</sup> Harkin, 119-124.

<sup>81</sup> Carlson, Lutz, and Shaepe, 2. See also: Sangster, “Telling our stories,” 94.

networks, and communities to produce collaborative and, at times, even co-authored work deemed appropriate by the participants' communities themselves.<sup>82</sup>

Interpretations of ethnohistory continue to vary, with some ethnohistorians leaning clearly towards community-engaged research<sup>83</sup> to define their practice and others rejecting the term and its controversial history. I grapple with ongoing debates about the continued viability of ethnohistory as a methodology and the applicability of non-Indigenous theories and methodologies to Indigenous histories. For some Indigenous scholars, the worry is that with the availability of strong Indigenous methodologies, which privilege Indigenous ways of knowing, the continued use of ethnohistory is not only unnecessary, but may even be harmful by emphasizing cleavages between "Indigenous" and "mainstream" histories and experiences. For instance, ethnohistory has been described by some as a "marriage of convenience between anthropology and history," and as a method for achieving true cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.<sup>84</sup> Conversely, James Merrell argued ethnohistory further excluded American Indians by separating them from American history broadly writ. It has

<sup>82</sup> For select examples, see: Julie Cruikshank, *Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Elders* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990); Julie Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998); Elsie Paul in collaboration with Paige Raibmon and Harmony Johnson, *Written as I Remember It: Teachings (ʔəms taʔaw) from the life of a Sliammon Elder* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014); Leslie Robertson with the Kwagu'ł Gixsam Clan, *Standing Up with Ga'axsta'las: Jane Constance Cook and the Politics of Memory, Church, and Custom* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012); Wendy Wickwire, *Nature Power: In the Spirit of an Okanagan Storyteller* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 2004); Wendy Wickwire, *Write it on Your Heart: the Epic Works of an Okanagan Storyteller* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1989). See also: Henry Pennier, *Call me Hank: A Stó:lō Man's Reflections on Logging, Living, and Growing Old* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

<sup>83</sup> Community-engaged research refers to community-directed research practices whereby community members, rather than researchers dictate the terms of research. Often this means that community members determine the types of research topics and questions explored, and they play a pivotal role in the research, analysis, and sometimes even the dissemination process. The general goal of community-engaged research is to ensure that research is not only mutually beneficial to all parties involved, but also more importantly, that community members are active participants in the process. Community-based research, on the other hand, typically refers to research with community members, but does not necessarily denote community involvement in the research process and decision-making. Of course, as this dissertation demonstrates, the term "community members" does not fully capture questions of who within the community has the power to determine trajectories of research.

<sup>84</sup> Michael E. Harkin, "Ethnohistory's Ethnohistory: Creating a Discipline from the Ground Up," *Social Science History* 34, no. 2 (summer 2010): 113-119. See also: J. Axtell, "Ethnohistory: An Historian's Viewpoint,"

also been cast as biased, racist, and ultimately irrelevant. The debate around ethnohistory's validity surfaced as early as 1961, when ethnologist Nancy Lurie questioned the use of specific and exclusive methods for studying Indigenous peoples. Lurie was concerned this fostered biased thinking by treating Indigenous subjects as wholly separate from non-Indigenous.<sup>85</sup> Other scholars, including Toby Morantz and Bruce Trigger have suggested it's impossible to create work that is mutually comprehensible and meaningful to Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies.<sup>86</sup> Of course, there is a growing body of ethnohistorical work that seem to prove otherwise. However, how do Indigenous scholars and individuals relate to ethnohistory? Scholars and community members have questioned the value of ethnohistory for Indigenous histories, believing that ethnohistory remains inherently tied to "othering" Indigenous peoples, which perpetuates colonial mentalities and inequalities. As mentioned previously, this separation has contributed to the de-politicization of Indigenous political histories, which are viewed as existing outside of traditional "politics." These perspectives are valid and worth considering as a scholar interested in further democratizing scholarship and history, but my work also demonstrates the importance of recognizing how theories and methodologies can be changed, re-imagined, and even appropriated over time in order to achieve specific aims.

This research reflects a total of seven years of oral history work with individuals and communities around the province, and draws on interviews with dozens of current and former members of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, as well as Union staff, and family

<sup>85</sup> James H. Merrell, "Some Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 46 (1989):

<sup>86</sup> Bruce Trigger, "Brecht and Ethnohistory," *Ethnohistory* 22 (1975): 54; Bruce Trigger, "Ethnohistory: The Unfinished Edifice,"

members of Union activists.<sup>87</sup> I conducted most of the interviews individually, though often narrators were interested in knowing with whom I had already spoken and this sometimes produced a collective sub-dialogue where activists could speak to each other in the interview space.<sup>88</sup> This helped lessen some of the challenges of researching a collective organization through individual interviews. My strategy for seeking interviews was to identify current and former Union members and seek them out through recommendations from others or public contact information. Personal references as well as limitations on my ability to travel widely ensured that the majority of narrators came from central BC and the south coast. As such, just as I recognize the challenges of representation inherent in oral interview work, I also acknowledge that this research is restricted in its ability to speak for activists in communities beyond the southwest coast and interior. Archival materials, however, provided insights into these gaps. Further, although this study focuses on a chiefs' organization in an era where female chiefs were highly underrepresented, I expanded the gender and status representation in this study through interviews and archival materials. This study recognizes the pivotal role of women and the grassroots in Indigenous politics and explores these in great depth.

Just as the new ethnohistory provides important guidelines for conducting meaningful cross-cultural and intercultural research, this study also benefits from the theoretical discussions of oral history practices. Since the 1990s, oral history practitioners have engaged in sustained conversations about power differentials within the interview space, researcher reflection, and achieving genuine collaboration. After

<sup>87</sup> As mentioned earlier, this dissertation seeks to correct the tendency to deemphasize the political nature of Indigenous peoples. I point to several instances where the literature outlines Indigenous resistance and activism as temporary or reactive responses, rather than pointing to established political trends and identities to explain what is happening. In forwarding this argument, I refrain, as much as possible, from using language that perpetuates these myths, and instead work to firmly locate Indigenous peoples as highly political actors. The terminology here is tricky, however. Ideally, I would not use the term "activist" as it denotes reactive politics, yet many Indigenous leaders expressed a dislike for the term "politician" noting that Indigenous peoples view their politics more holistically than this term can explain. The term "leader" is more apt, yet this excludes grassroots individuals who were not formal leaders in their communities. As such, I use the term "leader" or "community member" when discussing formal leaders or politically involved community members, or "political actor" and "activist" when the distinction is not overly clear or the situation warrants a broader term.

<sup>88</sup> Sarah Nickel, "'You'll probably tell me that your grandmother was an Indian princess': Identity, Community, and Politics in the Oral History of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1969-1980," *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* vol. 34 (2014): 1-19

Michael Frisch coined the phrase “shared authority” to capture the dialogic nature of the interview as well as the dualistic authority between narrators and listeners, oral history experts have been increasingly concerned with how narrators and listeners interact.<sup>89</sup> Explaining Frisch’s notion of shared authority, Steven High argued that narrators gained authority within the interview because of their lived experience, while listeners accessed their power through professional training and expertise.<sup>90</sup> As a part of the reflective turn of the 1990s, oral historians such as Frisch sought to locate both the narrator and the researcher within the interview to understand how one’s identity, experience, and socio-political knowledge shaped the oral interview. “This self-reflective approach,” adds Celia Hughes, “is a relational dialogue in which two subjectivities are at play, and in which new subjectivities are created, on the part of both interviewee and interviewer, that result from interactions between them.”<sup>91</sup> Oral history actors viewed this awareness as a crucial factor in creating meaningful dialogue.

The turn towards analyzing the implication of one’s presence in the research experience has also been the subject of criticism, however, particularly by oral historians who believe that such reflection has the potential to be self-indulgent and not analytically rigorous. Joan Sangster cautioned listeners about leaning too far in the spectrum of self-reflection towards a level of narcissistic “soul searching” that might damage oral history relationships by undermining the power of the narrator’s experience to accommodate the subjectivities of the listener.<sup>92</sup> Through her work with female factory workers in Peterborough during the first half of the twentieth century, Sangster noted that endless questioning of how listeners can relate to or interpret the experiences of narrators can “sometimes take on a condescending tone.”<sup>93</sup> Certainly, placing oneself wholly apart from the experiences of narrators so not to appropriate or infringe upon their lived realities has its drawbacks, as does ignoring one’s role in shaping the interview. This

<sup>89</sup> Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

<sup>90</sup> Steven High, “Sharing Authority: An Introduction,” *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d’etudes canadiennes* 43, no 1 (Winter 2009): 12-13.

<sup>91</sup> Celia Hughes, “Negotiating ungovernable spaces between the personal and the political: Oral history and the left in post-war Britain,” *Memory Studies* 6, no 1 (January 2013): 71.

<sup>92</sup> Sangster, 94.

<sup>93</sup> Sangster, 94.

study therefore benefits from combining the new ethnohistory with High's adaptation of Frisch's concept, which stresses "sharing authority" rather than "shared authority."<sup>94</sup> High emphasizes the relational, fluid, and active nature of the oral history relationship. And yet, even within this more democratic approach, High does not expressly address the potentially uneven authority between academics and community members and the inherently political relationship that exists between individuals within the interview space. I take this interpretation farther to not only emphasize the process rather than product-based nature of my oral history interviews, but to also explicitly highlight the politicized nature of these interactions.

I closely align my work with that of the new ethnohistorians and critical oral historians but my research also pushes these fields in new directions. Despite a growing body of literature addressing intersectional identities largely writ, I suggest that many accounts still speak in terms of stable identities in their analyses of narrator/listener relationships. This study troubles issues of identity and challenges insider/outside divisions in important ways. I am particularly concerned with how the narrator and listener's multiple identities and positions interact in a highly politicized environment. Oral interviews with Union leaders demonstrated how perceived and actual identities influenced the interview space and the granting of shared authority. For instance, Penticton Hereditary Chief Adam Eneas, unaware of my First Nations' heritage, used his interview to criticize academics who falsely claimed Indigenous ancestry in order to access community knowledge. Looking at my appearance as we sat down to begin our discussion, Eneas said, with a laugh: "You'll probably tell me that your grandmother was an Indian princess."<sup>95</sup> Even though he used humour and sarcasm to broach the issue, he was expressing serious concerns about colonizing research methods. I was aware of how some non-Native scholars have "played Indian" to access Indigenous knowledge, yet I was also aware of instances where people with genuine ancestral connections like myself uncritically leveraged those relationships, however peripheral, into personal and professional benefits.<sup>96</sup> In this instance, I did not want to be the white researcher mining

<sup>94</sup> High, "Sharing Authority," 12-14.

<sup>95</sup> Adam Eneas, interview with author, Penticton First Nation, Penticton, BC, June 3, 2013.

<sup>96</sup> Several high profile cases include, Ward Churchill, and Andrea Smith, but other lesser known instances occur regularly as well.

Indigenous communities for information, but I also did not want to use my ancestry to defend my presence. Indigenous academics explain how shifting and hybridized Indigenous identities complicate researcher relationships as well as attempts to decolonize research practices.<sup>97</sup> Yet, some Indigenous researchers continue to view their ancestry, as well as community research, as unproblematic solutions to exploitative scholarship. This tends to ignore how non-race-based power deployments exist in ancestral groups as well. Shared ancestry does not eliminate other forms of privilege, and it does not necessarily obscure other identity differences such as age, gender, and education, which are often more pronounced. It also does not produce meaningful relationships out of thin air. These considerations were critical to negotiating the interview space with Union activists, and reveal the importance not only of remaining attuned to one's multi-sited and shifting identities, but also how these identities are viewed by narrators.

The multiple identities and positions of Union activists mattered as well. Narrators not only had shifting motivations for engaging in oral history work, but they were also individuals with numerous positionalities, obligations, and responsibilities, which influenced their memories as well as their motivations. My experience in the field revealed that at times my identity and who I was mattered, while in other moments, my presence merely facilitated the negotiated memories of narrators or their overwhelming political motivations. For instance, activists used their interviews in a variety of ways including creating an internal space for Union members to talk politics to each other and negotiate interpersonal relationships, and to create a history of the Union.<sup>98</sup> Oral histories of the Union often served as sites of internal dialogue for activists as they navigated their memories and their ideologies to determine what to include in their

<sup>97</sup> Robert Innes, "'Wait a Second: Who Are You Anyways?': The Insider/Outsider Debate and American Indian Studies," *American Indian Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2009): 440-461; Kirin Narayan, "How Native is the 'Native' Anthropologist?" *American Anthropologist* 95, no. 3 (1993): 671-686; Smith, "On Tricky Ground".

<sup>98</sup> My interviews with Union members also showed how activists could use Indigenous research to forward their socio-political agendas. Elsewhere I have drawn on oral histories of protest to demonstrate how savvy political actors such as Union delegates could create their own negotiated historical narrative of the Union. In this sense, the oral history interview becomes a political tool itself, and this is an important consideration for work with political actors, as well as others. Nickel, "'You'll probably tell me that your grandmother was an Indian princess.'"

accounts. These individuals and their resulting oral histories proved that narrators are not simply witnesses to historical events; they are often also contemporary activists with a stake in how the narrative of the Union is constructed, as well as individuals dealing with past actions. These considerations were important to integrate into my analysis of the Union and my use of oral history interviews.

My use of oral history interviews also demands a theoretical discussion about memory. Memory presents a challenge in oral history, and according to Ronald Grele, among historians “the dominant tendency has been to be overly enthusiastic in public print, and deeply suspicious in private conversation.”<sup>99</sup> Despite this trend, scholars continue to dispute criticisms about the fallibility of memory and the inaccuracy or problematic nature of oral sources. Alessandro Portelli has suggested that rather than representing a methodological weakness, oral history narratives can provide a more thorough and holistic view of an event than what written material alone can glean. Noting the value of spoken cues such as tone, expression, and volume, Portelli revealed the multi-dimensional nature of oral records.<sup>100</sup> Unfortunately, according to High many scholars continue to struggle with unleashing the potential of these sources. Frequently, scholars translate oral sources into written transcripts that are more easily integrated into traditional written works, and the result is that many of the vocal details of the records are lost.<sup>101</sup> Yet, while the loss of this potential is mourned by High, his concept of sharing authority makes room for the relevance of oral interview to expand beyond its final product. For instance, Splatsin te Secwepemc Kukpi7 (Chief) Wayne Christian argued that the process of creating oral histories is just as important as the final interview product and its application. This is especially true, Christian maintained, for First Nations leaders who exercise traditional skills of orality, often devalued in a settler-colonial

<sup>99</sup> Ronald J. Grele, “Movement without Aim: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History,” in *The Oral History Reader*, Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds. (London: Routledge, 1998): 38.

<sup>100</sup> In Erin Jessee, “The Limits of Oral History: Ethics and Methodology Amid Highly Politicized Research Settings,” *Oral History Review* 38, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2011): 290.

<sup>101</sup> Steven High, “Embodied Ways of Listening: Oral History, Genocide, and the Audio Tour,” *Anthropologica* 55 (2013): 74.



context, in the oral interview.<sup>102</sup> This practice of orality becomes a form of activism and a key process in decolonizing research practices.<sup>103</sup>

Orality can also initiate collaborative remembering, which Neal Norrick and Lorraine Sitzia have noted is an important element of the oral interview process. As listeners take on an active role by posing questions and asking for clarification, the process of remembering develops through dialogue between the interviewer and narrator.<sup>104</sup> Hughes added that the history of radicalism presents a unique challenge to the deployment of memory in that narrators might find themselves discomforted by their past. In response, she argued, many of them use oral histories to compose a version of their activist past with which they can easily coexist.<sup>105</sup> In my research, several narrators were confronted with past events they were uncomfortable with, as well as unclear memories and past relationships, and understanding these varied experiences and their impact on oral interviews required acknowledging the complexities of memory, positionality, and political motivations.

In terms of archival sources, this study draws heavily on the records of the Union itself, namely meeting minutes and conference materials, which exposed the day-to-day operations of the organizations as well as long-term trends. I also used a wide range of Indian newspapers operated by communities and organizations such as the Union, the

<sup>102</sup> Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, interview with author, Splatsin te Secwepemc First Nation, Enderby, BC, June 4, 2013.

<sup>103</sup> See Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*; Turner and Simpson, "Indigenous Leadership in a Flat World," 11-13; Sean Wilson, *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2008).

<sup>104</sup> Lorraine Sitzia, "A Shared Authority: An Impossible Goal?" *The Oral History Review* 30, no. 1 (Winter-Spring 2003): 96; Neal R. Norrick, "Talking about Remembering and forgetfulness in Oral History Interviews," *The Oral History Review* 32, no. 2 (Summer-Autumn 2005): 1-20. Of course dialogue and collective remembering could also work to disempower narrators by allowing the listener to determine the narrative through leading questions or imposing their knowledge on the narrator. This risk is most pronounced when narrators remain marginalized, although new ethnohistorical methodologies serve to lessen this risk. For instance, Stó:lō cultural advisor Naxaxalhts'i, Albert (Sonny) McHalsie counsels new researchers in Stó:lō territory to refrain from interjecting their ideas in the interview space, particularly during awkward moments of silence. Naxaxalhts'i notes the importance of letting narrators control the interview as much as possible, allowing these individuals to dictate the terms and pace of the exchange. Naxaxalhts'i (Albert "Sonny" McHalsie), personal communication, May 13, 2007.

<sup>105</sup> Hughes, 86-87.

BC Indian Homemakers' Association, the Native Brotherhood, and others. I drew on archival sources from the Union's own resource centre, as well as community archives, and provincial and national repositories, including government collections such as the records of the Department of Indian Affairs and the Department of the Secretary of State. These provided a variety of materials exposing the interaction between Indigenous peoples and state officials during this time. The Union specifically, maintained direct and lengthy connections with several government departments, initially in its capacity as a lobbying organization and later in its role providing government services to Indigenous communities.

Ethnohistorical and critical oral history research methods applied to the examination of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs not only open up new avenues of interaction with First Nations communities, but also provide a different understanding of the Union than can be garnered from the archives and existing literature alone. The oral and archival elements of this work contributed to my understanding of the Union, but I do not claim to present a comprehensive history of the Union or a complete history of the individuals involved. In fact, the types of historical narratives produced through fluid positionalities and the roles of both narrators and listeners are decidedly complex and fragmented. As such, they seem to challenge the very possibility of constructing an intelligible and straightforward narrative. The Union operated from 1969 until the present and involved thousands of individuals across the province. Thus, the individual and nation-based membership of the Union shifted and elected chiefs and councillors changed over time, making identifying consistent protagonists difficult. In many ways, this work follows the curvatures of the Union, but it also highlights the work of specific individuals whose involvement in the Union fluctuated. In this sense, my research captures the complex lived experiences of Indigenous political actors in this era by refusing to collapse these nuances into a simple narrative. Despite this, however, I argue that the snapshots this study offers makes Union and Indigenous politics comprehensible. By paying attention to the changing positionalities of the interview and the narrators, oral history practitioners can gain important insight into how narrators direct their participation, memories, and histories in multiple ways. This research uncovers key moments of the Union's operations, as well as that of its member nations,

parallel organizations, and some of the individuals involved. Through this, several themes emerge making it possible to draw out larger conclusions.

These realities have the potential to bring new meanings to practices of community-engaged research and collaboration where historians take direction from the varied positions and motivations of narrators within the oral interview space. Ultimately, oral histories provide an alternative to direct historical narratives by embracing rather than obscuring seemingly problematic divergences and conflicts. This research reveals the strong analytical potential for evaluating the product and process of oral histories simultaneously to discuss how narrators and listeners navigate and negotiate multiple histories. The multifaceted narratives emerging here also provide a good example of Indigenous historical research, because I do not simply incorporate materials from oral sources to produce a single narrative of Union history, instead I illuminate the very process through which actors negotiate their own roles and their histories. This study truly pre-positions Indigenous voices in all their complexities. Ultimately, my approach does not assume that community-engaged research by Indigenous scholars can, on its own, reshape scholarship, but when done carefully, remaining attuned to multiple identities, political voices and interpretations, has significant potential.<sup>106</sup> Further, by embracing this multiplicity as well as donating oral history interviews to the Union Resource Centre and other community archives, my project becomes more than simply an individual body of work. It is a longstanding project that I hope will have multiple expressions as communities re-use and re-articulate the materials created by these activists.

Using the Union as a case study, this study maps out the late twentieth century Indigenous movement in British Columbia, highlighting pivotal moments and ideas to expose the dominance, multiplicity, and negotiation of unity through the activation of multi-politics. Chapter two explores how Indigenous peoples sought unity and situates the creation of the Union and new expressions of pan-tribal politics within the long history of politics in British Columbia. It counters the dominance of the White Paper,

<sup>106</sup> See: Hughes, 86-87; Norrick, "Talking about Remembering"; Sitzia, "A Shared Authority."

prevalent in most accounts of the modern Indian movement, which tend to obscure important and established political networks, and instead places the role of changing Indian policy in conversation with existing Indigenous political patterns. It argues that the formation of the Union reflected longstanding attempts at political unity, most notably concerted attempts to create a pan-tribal organization throughout the 1950s and 1960s and suggests that pan-tribal unity was ultimately conceptualized within a framework of band governance. Chapter three examines how the Union constructed pan-tribal unity between 1969 and 1975 by emphasizing its own political authority. Highlighting how this notion of unity promoted inequalities amongst the Union, grassroots membership, and Indigenous women, I argue that these interest groups enacted internal refusals to reconceptualise the Union's dominant vision of unity. From marginalized political positions, these groups demanded the increased democratization of unity as well as the more gender inclusivity.

Chapter four explores the Union's engagement with the Canadian state, which brought increasing funding to the organization. I argue that the Union adapted its multi-political strategies to incorporate a series of recognitions and refusals in order to propel its political agenda and preserve unity while working within state structures. Chapter five investigates Union leadership six years into the organization's mandate and suggests that maintaining unity required negotiating a shared understanding of what pan-tribal politics would look like and this revealed and facilitated multi-political expressions centering on Indigeneity, cultural practices, and leadership patterns. Chapter six focuses on the Union's decision to reject government funding in 1975, which has long been viewed as a turning point within the Union. I argue that the rejection of funding enacted a significant political refusal against the neoliberal state, but this move also produced competing refusals amongst Union constituents who disagreed with the Union decision and its evolving conception of unity. Indigenous women's organizations were especially vocal against the Union's decision and framed their refusals in terms of gender inequality and the preservation of Indigenous communities. Chapter seven examines the radical manifestations of unity during the summer of direct action in 1975. I argue this increased radicalism, which resulted from the decline of Union and Department of Indian Affairs' bureaucracy, new grassroots political channels, and political influences by global social movements, demonstrated the power and flexibility of pan-tribal unity. Union and

community members adopted new political roles and ideologies and incorporated them within existing multi-political frameworks. Chapter eight places the aftermath of the funding decision and the continuing, albeit changing discourse of unity in the context of sovereignty. Exploring internal axes of recognition and refusal, I argue that using the discourse of unity, the Union defined and pursued its own limited concept of sovereignty that embraced state political structures and excluded Indigenous women.

## Chapter 2.

### “One Voice and One Policy”: Towards Pan-Tribal Unity

Addressing delegates of the BC Chiefs' Conference in Kamloops on November 17, 1969, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Chief and host Clarence Jules began by stating, “I wish to say how proud I am that you have chosen the Kamloops area for this most important occasion.” He continued, “I say ‘most important’ because, as you know, this is the first time in the history of our Province that an All-Chiefs' Conference has been held. May I say that this too, makes me very proud.”<sup>1</sup> Convinced that First Nations peoples needed to unite politically to have their rights and title addressed by the provincial and federal governments, Jules was optimistic that this latest attempt at unity would be successful. Aware of the challenges of pan-tribal co-operation, including a history in British Columbia of inter- and intra-tribal disagreement and government opposition which had undermined early twentieth century organizations, Jules's enthusiasm for a new organization was tempered with caution.<sup>2</sup> Acknowledging the potential for conflict, Jules insisted that disputes could be useful, as “an All-Chiefs' Conference would be of little value unless every Chief expresses his feelings on all subjects to be discussed here.”

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, November 17-22, 1969, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>2</sup> Terminology regarding territory is difficult, particularly where settler-colonial names and ideas of territory clash with those of First Nations. I recognize that the term “British Columbia” is a settler-colonial term imposed on the traditional and unceded lands of First Nations peoples, which extend beyond artificial provincial boundaries. In the period I am examining, however, the political role of the province and its impact on First Nations politics cannot be ignored, specifically in terms of First Nations bands and districts, which were developed by the Department of Indian Affairs to correspond to provincial boundaries. With this in mind, I will use the term “British Columbia” when it is appropriate to describe the broad settler-colonial province and subsequent provincial-First Nations interactions, as well as when First Nations groups use that term themselves. Where references to First Nations' territories are specific, however, I will defer to First Nations' terminology. Regardless of the language activated in any given situation, however, I wish to impress upon the reader that the territory discussed is one of Native-newcomer interaction and dialogue, and the use of “British Columbia” in some contexts should not mistakenly be interpreted as neglecting the presence of First Nations.

He conceded “naturally, there will be many points of view taken. However, this is what we want; this is our democratic right; this is the only way in which we can take a position that reflects the wishes of all Indian people in British Columbia.”<sup>3</sup> Tsartlip leader and president of the Southern Vancouver Island Tribal Federation (SVITF) Philip Paul likewise saw unity as the only hope for the future of Indigenous politics and communities. He gravely suggested to delegates that “the history of disunity in this Province gave birth to this Conference you are now attending and depending on the outcome of this Conference is the future of your children and mine.”<sup>4</sup> Although political unity would be a challenging endeavour, particularly for a diverse provincial First Nations population, it was one worth pursuing to achieve recognition of Indigenous rights.

The drive for pan-tribal unity was not new. In fact, it began as early as the 1870s, and continued into the twentieth century with an explosion of pan-tribal organizations in the 1950s and 1960s. There was continuity in the political goals of these organizations and in the discourse they espoused, and the Union would later draw upon these. This longstanding history of Indigenous politics directly contributed to the Union’s creation in 1969, as did BC’s unique history of Native-newcomer relations and late 1960s Canadian Indian policy. This chapter explains the creation of the Union by taking a long historical view and incorporating Indigenous understandings of twentieth century political trends. Although my focus is on the Union and its achievement of widespread unity, I am not suggesting that the creation of the Union equates pan-tribal or political success. Instead, I expose the political genealogies and negotiation involved in pan-tribal politics to reconsider the success/failure narrative, and these threads remain constant throughout this study. In this chapter I suggest that political unity was achieved in 1969 through a combination of factors. These included longstanding Indigenous political practices, increasingly effective First Nations leadership, support from Indigenous women’s organizations, emerging liberal discourses of multiculturalism, and First Nations’ united

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, November 17-22, 1969, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. The Union would represent the status Indian population through the band councils, but non-status and metis individuals also had some representation through the British Columbia Association of Non-Status Indians (BCANSI), which was present at Union meetings.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, November 17-22, 1969, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

response to the White Paper. These developments allowed space for Indigenous rights discourses and practices to thrive, and this moment facilitated new possibilities for Indigenous politics. While the existing literature suggests the Trudeau government's 1969 White Paper provided the major impetus for this united political front, I argue this direct causality obscures additional political relationships and histories.<sup>5</sup> The assessment of the White Paper's key role in modern Indigenous politicization also privileges beliefs about the inherent eliminatory nature of settler-colonialism at the expense of explanations grounded in Indigenous thought and experience. For instance, Patrick Wolfe's "logic of elimination" suggests that settler-colonial agents designed Indian policy with the express purpose of eradicating Indigenous people through political, spatial, cultural, and economic control.<sup>6</sup> Certainly, the White Paper, with its intent to eliminate the Indian Act, the treaties and the special status of First Nations people, is a prime example of an eliminatory practice, but this emphasis on the White Paper as the root cause of the modern Indian political movement leaves little room for Indigenous understanding of the history of pan-tribal unity, which extended far beyond the policy paper.

The 1969 BC Chiefs' Conference was organized by young Cowichan leader Denis Alphonse, Philip Paul, president of the SVITF, Don Moses, president of the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB), and Rose Charlie, president of the British Columbia Indian Homemakers' Association (BCIHA). The direct result of this meeting was the creation of the pan-tribal Union of BC Indian Chiefs. Premised on the belief that "it is in the best interest of our people if we speak with one voice on the question of Indian status, land claims, and claims based on Aboriginal title, [as well as] the administration of Reserve lands," the first resolution of the inaugural Union conference recommended forming a "united body dealing with problems common to all our peoples in British Columbia."<sup>7</sup> The high attendance at this first meeting suggests widespread

<sup>5</sup> Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians: The Challenge of Self-Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: a History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989); Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387-409.

<sup>7</sup> "Resolutions," in Minutes of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, November 17-22, 1969, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.



support for the idea of unity across a culturally diverse territory (see Figure 2). The reasons for such support varied. Many communities had established traditions of pan-tribal and inter-tribal political cooperation, and chiefs at this first Union meeting wanted to continue and expand these relationships. For example, interior tribes, such as the Syilx (Okanagan), Nlaka'pamux, and Secwepemc had a history of pan-tribal social and economic co-operation, which facilitated political collaboration between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>8</sup> In the eighteenth century, the Fish Creek Accord between the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and the Syilx community now known as the Upper Nicola band, allowed the Upper Nicola to permanently dwell in the Nicola watershed. Because of this agreement, the Upper Nicola remain the only Syilx nation residing in traditional Secwepemc territory. According to Upper Nicola Chief George Saddleman, these agreements made in the "q'əsapi? times" or "long ago times" not only solidified pan-tribal relationships in the past, but also served as a strong socio-political foundation long after, even continuing today.<sup>9</sup> In this context, the Union provided a forum to renew past relationships and continue pre-Union interactions in the provincial organizational setting. Relatedly, other communities, particularly in areas where pan-tribal organization was difficult such as the Williams Lake district, viewed the Union as an opportunity to develop new avenues of political mobilization.<sup>10</sup> Further, those who had highly developed and localized political strategies, such as the Nisga'a, were drawn to the Union because it offered new methods through which their claims could be advanced. Before the Union, the Nisga'a pursued their land claim through local political bodies including the Nisga'a Land Committee, which later became the Nisga'a Tribal Council.<sup>11</sup> Although provincial bands and leaders had different reasons for attending the first All Chiefs' meeting, most could agree on a few factors. Government obstinacy regarding Indigenous rights and title, current Indian policy that politically isolated bands from each other, and new legislation proposing to end First Nations' status, meant Indigenous peoples needed to

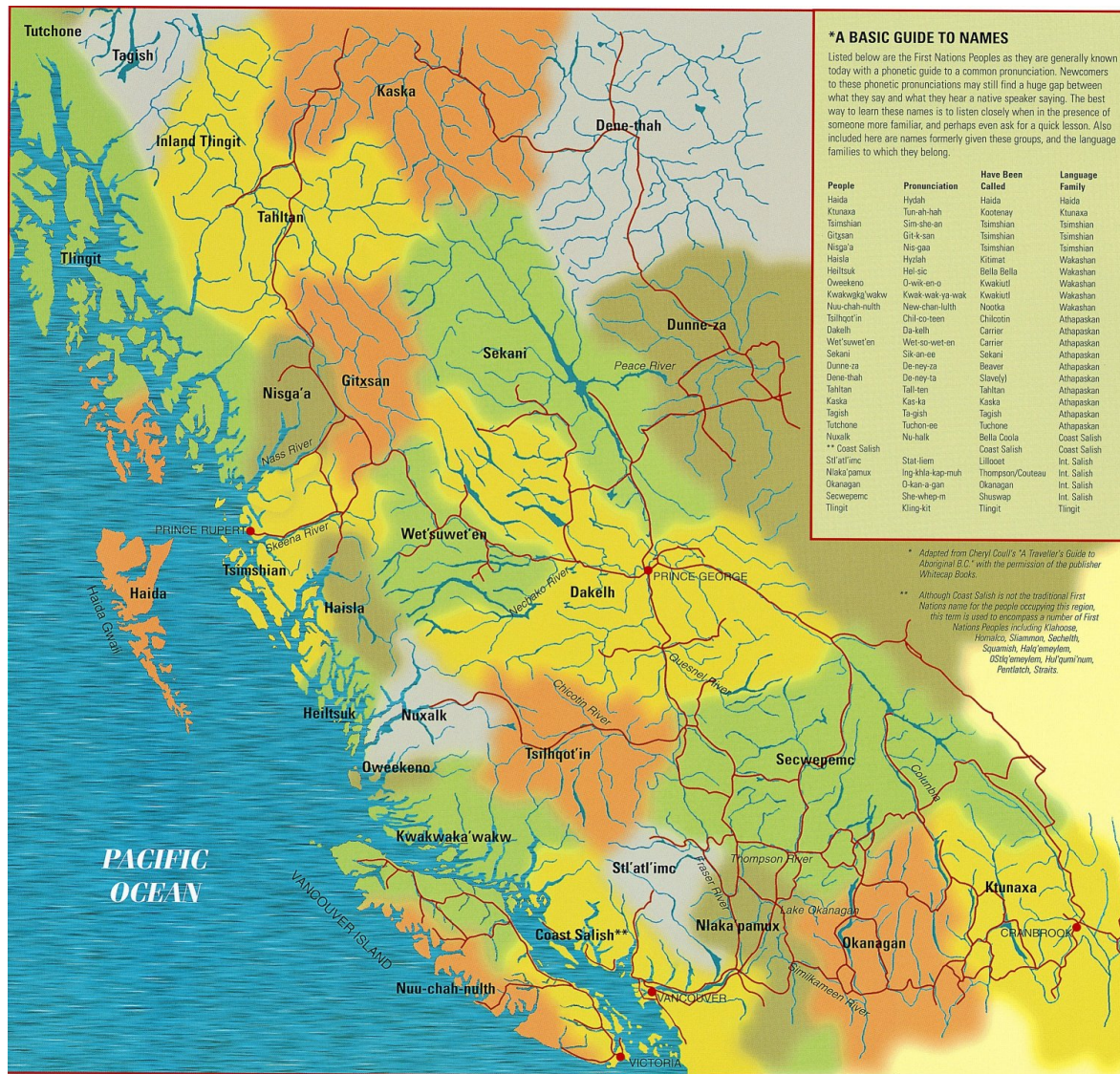
<sup>8</sup> Peter Carstens, *The Queen's People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation Among the Okanagan of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). Neskonalith is also known as Neskainlith in the records.

<sup>9</sup> George Saddleman, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, February 7, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Clarence Pennier, interview with author, Stó:lō Tribal Council office, Agassiz, BC, July 25, 2012; Reuben Ware, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 20, 2012; David Zirnhelt, "The Caribou Tribal Council" (Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976).

<sup>11</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*.

pursue a united political front in order to realize their political goals. The alternative, which consisted of isolated band- or tribally-based organization and limited pan-Indian co-operation, while important and continuing, needed refining.



**Figure 2. First Nations Peoples of British Columbia**

Source: British Columbia Ministry of Education, <https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/map.htm>.

The widespread support for unity also owed much to Indigenous women's roles, specifically in the Homemakers' clubs and the BC Indian Homemakers' Association (BCIHA). Before outlining the strong political interventions made by Indigenous women, however, a brief explanation of the gendered nature of Indigenous politics is useful.

Before contact, Indigenous peoples maintained their own socio-political systems that determined men and women's political roles. The arrival of Europeans altered these roles in multiple and uneven ways that defy easy categorization. For instance, Jo-Anne Fiske argued that amongst the Tsimshian of BC's northwest coast, women held significant political authority until the fur trade unsettled existing Tsimshian gender roles. Fiske maintained that Tsimshian society traditionally viewed women as the economic producers and political leaders, who were able to manage public affairs, control resources and lineages, and maintain autonomy.<sup>12</sup> Fur traders arriving in Tsimshian territory, however, imposed European gender ideals onto Tsimshian communities by immediately and falsely identifying male community members as leaders. Later, colonial government and church authorities promoted male superiority and constructed Tsimshian women as unsuitable managers of public affairs. According to Fiske, because newcomers ignored women's roles in the public sphere and sought out men as commodity producers and decision makers, women were systematically disadvantaged. The result was the increasing separation of male and female labour, decreased opportunities for women's wage work, and the increase of male political and economic status at the expense of the women. Men were now able to accrue wealth through new sources, and through potlatching, gained access to chieftainships that had heretofore been equally accessible to women.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, Carol Cooper claimed this view of the fur trade as wholly disruptive to Tsimshian women's status is inaccurate and fails to capture the expanded roles Tsimshian women played in the Maritime fur trade and other developing resource industries.<sup>14</sup> Cooper conceded, however, that the advent of the land based fur trade solidified trends Fiske noticed in her research and proves the varied impacts of colonization. These differences outline the irregularity of colonial impact, while confirming its influence on women's political authority.

As the settler-state emerged, Nineteenth century Indian policy then worked to solidify and expand these informal changes. Before Confederation, Indigenous men and

<sup>12</sup> Jo-Anne Fiske, "Colonization and the Decline of Women's Status: The Tsimshian Case," *Feminist Studies* 17, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 509-535.

<sup>13</sup> Fiske, "Colonization and the Decline of Women's Status: The Tsimshian Case," 509-535.

<sup>14</sup> Carol Cooper, "Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast: An Historical Perspective, 1830-1900," *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 27, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 44. Cooper's findings also applied to Nisga'a.

women were legislatively equal. However, this changed with the introduction of the 1869 *Gradual Enfranchisement Act*, which stipulated that the state would only consider Indigenous women in relation to their fathers or husbands.<sup>15</sup> The policy solidified Indigenous men as economically self-sufficient leaders and placed women in roles of socio-economic and political dependency.<sup>16</sup> The act also introduced patrilineality as the criterion for allocating Indian status, and section 6 of the act determined that Indigenous women would retain their status of birth until they married. If they chose to marry a non-Indigenous man, the women, and their current and subsequent children would lose their status.<sup>17</sup> The act “provided always that any Indian woman marrying any other than an Indian, shall cease to be an Indian within the meaning of this Act, nor shall the children issue of such marriage be considered as Indians within the meaning of this Act.”<sup>18</sup> Patriarchy therefore became codified and normalized within Indian policy.

Throughout subsequent amendments to Indian policy, section 6 was incorporated in a more oppressive form in the 1951 revisions to the 1876 Indian Act as section 12.1.b.<sup>19</sup> Section 12.1.b retracted some of the remaining allowances offered under the previous act, such as continued access to annuities, band lands, and resources. As a result, Indigenous women who “married out” immediately lost their status as registered Indians, membership in their band, any reserve lands or right to inherit such lands, annuities or percentages of band revenue, educational and housing support, and the right to be buried on reserve land.<sup>20</sup> Section 12.1.b also amounted to an

<sup>15</sup> Kathleen Jamieson, “Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act,” in *Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1986), 117-118. See also, Angela Sterritt, *Racialization of Poverty: Indigenous Women, the Indian Act and Systemic Oppression: Reasons for Resistance* (Vancouver: Vancouver Status of Women, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Jamieson, “Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act,” 117-118; Jo-Anne Fiske, “Native Women in Reserve Politics: Strategies and Struggles,” *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 30-31 (1991): 121-138; Joanne ' , “Gender, Sovereignty, Rights: Native Women’s Activism against Social Inequality and Violence in Canada,” *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (June 2008): 259-266; Joanne Barker, “Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women’s Activism,” *Meridians: Feminism, Race, and Transnationalism* 7, no. 1 (2006): 127-161.

<sup>17</sup> Jamieson, “Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act,” 117-118.

<sup>18</sup> Canada, *An Act for the gradual enfranchisement of Indians, the better management of Indian affairs, and to extend the provisions of the Act*, 31<sup>st</sup> Victoria, Chapter 42, 1869.

<sup>19</sup> Jamieson, “Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act,” 112-136; Barker, “Gender, Sovereignty, Rights: Native Women’s Activism against Social Inequality and Violence in Canada,” 261-263.

<sup>20</sup> Jamieson, “Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act,” 117-125.

attack on Indigenous women's reproductive autonomy, freedom to choose sexual and marriage partners, as well as an assault on Indigenous family units by imposing patriarchy on families. This policy had obvious material effects in terms of access to resources, but also had severe social implications by removing women from their kinship networks and ancestral homes.<sup>21</sup> In many instances, women who lost their status relocated to urban areas where they faced new economic and social pressures. These drove some into intense poverty, homelessness, alcoholism, prostitution and other struggles, while simultaneously promoting the formation of new urban communities and identities.<sup>22</sup>

These changes to the Indian Act also intensified the level of dispossession women were already facing in their communities. Indigenous women were excluded from band government, lacked control of their marital assets, and had their work and roles devalued.<sup>23</sup> The Indian Act also granted greater powers in governance and property rights to Indigenous men.<sup>24</sup> For instance, in the 1869 act only men were given the right to vote in band elections, and until 1951, the act explicitly excluded women from

<sup>21</sup> The records of the BCIIHA reference this dislocation and its effects. LAC, RG10, Box 16, Vol. 1, File E6417-2254, Homemakers' Association of BC, 1983, Notes for a Speech by Hon. John Munro to the Indian Homemakers' Association of BC, April 30, 1981; Charlie, interview; "Native Women's Rights Dominate Homemakers' Annual Conference," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* vol. 2, no 6 (June 1973): 4; Jamieson, "Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act," 125.

<sup>22</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 16, Vol. 1, File E6417-2254, Homemakers' Association of BC, 1983, Notes for a speech by Hon. John Munro to the Indian Homemakers' Association of BC, April 30, 1981. For more information in this phenomenon across Canada and the United States, see: Nancy Janovicek, "Assisting Our Own': Urban Migration, Self-Governance, and Native Women's Organizing in Thunder Bay, Ontario, 1972-1989," in *Keeping the Campfires Going: Native Women's Activism in Urban Communities*, ed. Susan Applegate Krouse and Heather A. Howard (Lincoln: University of Nebraska), 56-75; Dara Culhane, "Their Spirits Live Within Us: Aboriginal Women in Downtown Eastside Vancouver Emerging into Visibility," in *Keeping the Campfires Going*, ed. Applegate Krouse and Howard, 76-92. Both Janovicek and Culhane discuss the various factors pushing and pulling Indigenous women to the cities including membership regulations, family violence, limited resources, and job and education opportunities.

<sup>23</sup> Jamieson, "Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act," 112-136; Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, Rights: Native Women's Activism against Social Inequality and Violence in Canada," 261-263.

<sup>24</sup> Jamieson, "Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act," 117-118.

chief and council positions.<sup>25</sup> Politics became a male domain with women serving as supporters behind the scenes. Illustrating this relationship, Kwagu'ł Gixsam clan member Pearl Alfred insisted that Kwakwaka'wakw women have always been involved in politics, and while “the guys lead the politics...it's the women who push.”<sup>26</sup> Alfred noted that Kwakwaka'wakw women remained in the background largely because there were no political organizations for them to participate in, and this had longstanding repercussions that were visible in the Union era.<sup>27</sup> In fact, by the 1968 formation of the BCIIHA and the 1969 formation of the Union, male chiefs vastly outnumbered female leaders, and male political activity was legitimized and valued by settler agencies while female politics was ignored.<sup>28</sup> According to Union staff member and Stó:lō Chief Clarence Pennier, this underrepresentation of female chiefs within the Union was consistent with the general lack of female leadership in communities across BC.<sup>29</sup> The persistence of these gendered power differentials into the late twentieth century reveals the continued role of government policies and attitudes on Indigenous communities and politics, as well as the difficulties women had overcoming these established systems. Drawing on Hawthorn's notion of Indigenous peoples as “citizens plus,” Canadian legal historian Kathleen Jamieson argued that the Indian Act constructed Indigenous women as “citizens minus”

<sup>25</sup> Canada, *An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Laws Respecting Indians*, S.C., 1876, c. 18, 19-20; Barker, “Gender, Sovereignty, Rights,” 259-266; Cora J. Voyageur, “Out in the Open: Elected Female Leadership in Canada's First Nations Community,” *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie* 48, no. 1 (Feb. 2011): 68.

<sup>26</sup> Leslie A. Robertson with the Kwagu'ł Gixsam Clan, *Standing up with Ga'axsta'las: Jane Constance Cook and the Politics of Memory, Church, and Custom* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 198.

<sup>27</sup> Robertson and the Kwagu'ł Gixsam Clan, 198.

<sup>28</sup> The Department of Citizenship and Immigration's quarterly publication *Indian News* reported in 1955 that since 1951, seventy women had been elected to office. These included two elected chiefs in BC, Jessie Lumm of the Hazelton Band in the Babine Agency, and Grace Vickers of the Kitkatla Band in the Skeena River Agency. The article explained that Vickers was a thirty-six year old non-Indigenous woman who gained status upon marriage, and that Lumm was a fifty-three year old woman born and raised in Hazelton. Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, *Indian News* 1, no. 2 (January 1955): 5. For information on the underrepresentation of female chiefs in Canada, see: Cora Voyageur, “Female First Nations Chiefs and the Colonial Legacy,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35, no. 3 (2011): 59-78.

<sup>29</sup> Clarence Pennier, interview with author, Stó:lō Tribal Council office, Agassiz, BC, July 25, 2012.

by solidifying gender discrimination into a widespread regulatory policy.<sup>30</sup> These challenges are important for understanding how Indigenous women understood and navigated their politics and how they were involved in the drive for unity.

Indigenous women carefully navigated and resisted their political exclusion to support unity and organizations such as the Union.<sup>31</sup> They asserted their political agendas, which centred on community well-being through auxiliary roles in the Union and their own organizations such as the Homemakers' clubs and the BCIHA.<sup>32</sup> The BCIHA was created in 1968 by the amalgamation of local Indian Homemakers' clubs that were developed in BC communities beginning in the early 1940s.<sup>33</sup> The initial Homemakers' clubs were part of a Canada-wide Department of Indian Affairs' initiative introduced, funded, and directed by the federal government as a way to "bring Native women together to do handicrafts, [and] to exchange ideas on childcare and ways in

<sup>30</sup> Kathleen Jamieson, *Indian Women and the Law in Canada: Citizens Minus* (Canada, Advisory Council on the Status of Women: Minister of Supply and Services, 1978).

<sup>31</sup> The Homemakers' clubs and the BCIHA were also not the first or only women's organizations in the province. According to Paul Tennant, the Native Sisterhood of British Columbia developed as ladies auxiliaries to the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia branches. The Union minutes reveal that the Sisterhood operated throughout the twentieth century, but Tennant noted they were not involved in policy making and had no central organization. Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 259. Indigenous women were also involved in Anglican and Catholic organizations across the province. This study focuses on the Homemakers' clubs and BCIHA primarily because of their strong involvement with the Union, including their role in the organization's formation.

<sup>32</sup> This is not to say that women were not involved in an official capacity in the male-dominated political organizations, though examples of this are sparse. For instance, Jane Cook was the only woman on the Allied Tribes executive when the Kwakwaka'wakw bands joined the organization in 1922. Robertson and the Kwagu'ł Gixsam Clan argue that this was because the bands wanted to send representatives who were "skilled in English and had an understanding of law who could communicate the organization's stand to villagers." Robertson and the Kwagu'ł Gixsam Clan, 257-258.

<sup>33</sup> The BCIHA is still in operation today.

which home life can be improved.”<sup>34</sup> By 1951, the growing number of clubs spurred the creation of a standard constitution and set of regulations. The Homemakers’ constitution, which was written by the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and approved by delegates of the annual Homemakers’ club convention in Sarnia, outlined the general objectives of the associations. These included:

Assist[ing] Indian women to acquire sound and approved practices for greater home efficiency; to help the aged and less fortunate, and improve living conditions on the Reserve; to discover, stimulate, and train leadership; to sponsor and actively assist in all worth-while projects for the betterment of the community; to develop better, happier, and more useful citizens.<sup>35</sup>

The role of the federal government in shaping Indigenous communities by directing homemaking practices is evident here. It is curious that the constitution references citizenship considering Indigenous peoples were not allowed to vote and were considered wards of the state until 1960. Indigenous women, in particular, were also dislocated from the politics of their communities through the Indian Act. This reference to citizenship can therefore be understood in terms of the Department’s wider goals, which envisioned the eventual assimilation of Indigenous peoples into Canadian economic, social, and political forms. It also indicates that the Canadian state had a

<sup>34</sup> Bridget Moran, *Stoney Creek Woman, Sai’k’uz Ts’eke: The Story of Mary John*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1999), 134-135. The early Homemakers’ bulletins outlined the types of home improvement style activities practiced by the women. LAC, RG 10, Vol. 11481, Box 1, File 971/24-5, Homemakers’ Clubs, Homemakers’ Club Bulletin, October 1, 1955; LAC, RG 10, Vol. 11481, box 1, file 971/24-5, Homemakers’ Clubs, Homemakers’ Club Bulletin, March 1, 1955. According to Jennifer Milne, Heidi Bohaker, and Franca Iacovetta, the Indian Homemakers’ clubs developed out of similar clubs for newcomer women in the prairie provinces during the early twentieth century, and were part of a larger state goal of assimilation and Canadianization amongst immigrants and Indigenous peoples. Jennifer Milne, “Cultivating Domesticity: The Homemaker’s Clubs of Saskatchewan, 1911 to the Post-War Era” (MA Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2004); Heidi Bohaker and Franca Iacovetta, “Making Aboriginal People ‘Immigrants Too’: A Comparison of Citizenship Programs for Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples in Postwar Canada, 1940s-1960s,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (September 2009): 445. See also: Dorinda Strahl, “Marvelous Times: The Indian Homemaking Program and its Effects on Extension Instructors at the Extension Division, University of Saskatchewan, 1967-1972” (MA Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2002).

<sup>35</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 987/24-5, Homemakers’ Club - Gen., 1973-1981, Constitution and Regulations for Indian Homemakers’ Clubs, Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Ottawa, 1951. Between 1950 and 1966, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration’s Indian Affairs Branch was responsible for Canada’s First Nations population.



specific view of women's "citizenship" that did not necessarily include political autonomy or involvement.

As originally envisioned by the Department, the Homemakers' clubs relied on the federal government's assumptions that Indigenous domesticity and family life needed redirection. Often, these attitudes were grounded in the belief that Indigenous standards of living were too low and that the solutions to these deficiencies lay in better training of community women. Even where this was not the case, such as in many prosperous northwest coast fishing communities, the Department was determined to intervene into the homes and lives of Indigenous families. Through the development of the Homemakers' clubs, the Department blamed any impoverishment or economic underdevelopment on Indigenous mothers.<sup>36</sup> In other words, it was not that some Indigenous communities were poor because of colonial policies that placed Indigenous peoples on small lands with inadequately built houses and little access to sanitary services, education, and health and welfare programs, but rather, Indigenous peoples suffered simply because Indigenous women remained unwilling or unable to be effective homemakers. The settler state viewed Indigenous women as the cause and the solution to these shortcomings, and as a result, the state took on a central role redirecting Indigenous motherhood to achieve settler-colonial standards of domesticity and to entrench patriarchy.

The Homemakers' clubs as well as the Department's publication *Indian News* facilitated these goals. Between 1954 and 1982, *Indian News* was distributed to First Nations communities across Canada, and contained information about the activities and expansion of Homemakers' clubs, as well as government programs and initiatives, community and cultural life, and Indigenous politics. For example, the August 1954 edition praised the activities of Homemakers' clubs noting they "do so much good work to make life on the reserves better and happier . . . ."<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Felicia Sinclair and Mary Jane Logan McCallum argued that the purpose of the publication was to "encourage assimilation through education and economic development and to foster confidence in

<sup>36</sup> Anonymous, interview with author.

<sup>37</sup> Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, *Indian News* 1, no. 1 (August 1954): 3.

the Canadian government by demonstrating its vested interest in First Nations affairs,” and therefore this praise of Indigenous women’s activities needs to be understood within this wider assimilative context.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the obvious colonial, patriarchal, and heteronormative intentions behind the management of Indigenous motherhood, women also believed that they had a distinct responsibility to improve circumstances for their families and reserves. This motivated their participation and agency within clubs across the province where community members increasingly sought the homemakers’ expertise.<sup>39</sup> Chehalis club member Marge Kelly insisted, “a lot of them [were] complaining.... Because here [the women] know what’s needed at home. That was our main project – like health, housing, renovations, all that.” Noting the challenges to providing community services as individuals with limited resources, Kelly concluded, “we sure fought hard to get a lot of things.”<sup>40</sup> The clubs held information sessions on nutrition, disease management and prevention, and maintaining healthy pregnancies. They also provided sewing and handicraft lessons, and arranged for shared childcare.<sup>41</sup> Kelly’s insistence that people came to the homemakers because they knew “what’s needed at home” points to the important roles women played as community mothers, experts, and spokespeople.

<sup>38</sup> Felicia Sinclair and Mary Jane Logan McCallum, “The Complete *Indian News* Collection, 1954-1982,” June 2013 < <http://ecommons.uwinnipeg.ca/handle/10680/451>>. *Indian News* was published between 1954-1982 by the Indian Affairs branch of the Department of Citizenship and distributed to First Nations’ communities throughout Canada.

<sup>39</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, Vol. 11481, File 971/24-5, Homemakers’ Clubs, Homemakers’ Club Bulletin, October 1, 1955.

<sup>40</sup> Marge Kelly, interview with author, Soowahlie First Nation, Cultus Lake, BC, May 3, 2012. The Soowahlie First Nation is a Stó:lō band located at Cultus Lake, British Columbia. It is a member of the Stó:lō Tribal Council.

<sup>41</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 7, File 901/24-2-2254 (part 4), Indian Homemakers Association, 7/1968-2/1979, Indian Homemakers’ Association of BC, Travel Information & Resource Unite Programme - April 1, 1979 - March 31, 1980; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 987/24-5, Homemakers’ Club - Gen., 1973-1981, Constitution and Regulations for Indian Homemakers’ Clubs, Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Ottawa, 1951; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, Vol. 11481, File 971/24-5, Homemakers Clubs. Homemakers’ Club Bulletin, October 1, 1955; LAC, RG 10, Vol. 13462, File 901-24-5-1, Homemakers’ Club – Conventions, 1969/04-1970/09; LAC, RG 10, Vol. 11484, File 976/24-5, part 2, Homemakers’ Clubs, 1967-1969; LAC, RG 10, Box 2, Vol. 2, File 901/24-2-5 (part 2), Indian Homemakers’ Association of BC, 1976-1977; LAC, RG 10, Box 16, Vol. 1, File E6417-2254, Indian Homemakers’ Association of BC, 1980-1981.

As members of a nascent political organization, the homemakers acted like “bridge leaders,” a term coined by civil rights scholar Belinda Robnett. Robnett used the term to describe the important positions of grassroots organizers in the civil rights movement whereby women, though capable and willing to act as formal leaders within the official movement, were often excluded from the major organizations. Instead, they were placed in support roles while also operating within their own informal political channels.<sup>42</sup> According to Robnett, the in-between spaces these women occupied provided powerful support systems for grassroots members, which often translated into strengthening the constituencies of the formal associations.<sup>43</sup> Anne Terry Strauss and Debra Valentino described a similar style of “invisible leadership” whereby Indigenous women, following their traditional roles, worked behind the scenes to help a social or political cause.<sup>44</sup> Unlike Indigenous men who secured positions of considerable power and partnerships, however flawed, with state agents, Indigenous women used their positions on the ground in their communities to pursue strong grassroots agendas. Through their involvement in church activities and childcare, as well as through familial relationships and friendships, community members often viewed the women as more approachable and accessible than formal leadership channels such as chiefs, council, and organizations such as the Union.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long?: African American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 16-24. Also see: Dian Million, *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (University of Arizona Press, Critical Issues in Indigenous Studies Series, 2013); Jacqueline A. Rouse, “‘We Seek to Know... in Order to Speak the Truth’: Nurturing the Seeds of Discontent --Septima P. Clark and Participatory Leadership,” in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*, Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin, eds. (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 95-96.

<sup>43</sup> Rouse, 96-97.

<sup>44</sup> Anne Terry Straus and Debra Valentino, “Gender and Community Organization Leadership in the Chicago Indian Community,” in *Keeping the Campfires Going*, Susan A. Krouse and Heather A. Howard, eds. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 22-33.

<sup>45</sup> Pennier, interview; Kelly, interview; SSRMC, Oral History Collection, Rose Charlie, interview with Koni Benson, Chehalis First Nation, Agassiz, BC, June 3, 1998; Adam Eneas, interview with author, Penticton First Nation, Penticton, BC, June 3, 2013; Delbert Guerin, interview with author, xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) First Nation, Vancouver, BC, May 31, 2013; Janice Antoine, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 5, 2013; Chief Percy Joe, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 5, 2013.

The women used their clubs in highly political ways to generate material, knowledge-based, and personal resource networks on and between reserves. They also provided local outlets for community members to vocalize their needs. Yet, Indigenous women initially did not see themselves or their clubs as political. They believed they were simply doing the work of good wives and mothers, and as such, refused wider definitions of politics that extended beyond male-dominated and state-sanctioned associations. “In those early years, we were not political,” Mary John, explained. “We called ourselves the Busy Beavers and we were just what the name of our club said—we were busy homemakers, looking for ways to make life better for our families and our village. All of us were having babies and raising small children,” she continued, “and we believed that we didn’t have time for politics.”<sup>46</sup> Even Kelly, who insisted the Homemakers “fought hard to get a lot of things,” did not categorize this as political work because she did not view the club as an official political organization.<sup>47</sup> For these women, official politics was limited to band governance and state agencies, whereas community work was tied to home life and motherhood. This general reluctance to label oneself or one’s work as political was visible amongst those who were involved in homemaking clubs as well as women who continued to do work within the community without any formal association.<sup>48</sup>

This political reticence began to change as the women recognized how underlying foundations of poverty and racism continued to thwart their efforts to improve Indigenous lives. They began to co-opt state attempts to manage their motherhood to resist these conditions. For instance, the early Homemakers’ club constitution, bulletins, and *Indian News* implied that the resources women needed to help their communities were available. These materials referenced the accessibility of sewing machines and lessons, and educational movies including “Terrible Twos and Trusting Threes,” and “Frustrating Fours and Fascinating Fives.”<sup>49</sup> Likewise, the Department consistently

<sup>46</sup> Moran, 135.

<sup>47</sup> Marge Kelly, telephone conversation with author, April 12, 2012.

<sup>48</sup> Kelly, interview; SRRMC, Oral History Collection, Maureen Chapman interview with Koni Benson, Stó:lō Nation, June 10, 1998. See also: Applegate Krouse and Howard, eds. *Keeping the Campfires Going*.

<sup>49</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 971/24-5 (part 11481), Homemakers’ Clubs, 1947-1955, Homemakers’ Club Bulletin, March 1955.

praised the expansion of the Homemakers' clubs to include "all the women, and not just a few leaders," as well as their introduction of programs "such as sewing, gardening, 4-H Clubs and other activities for young people, community entertaining and welfare work."<sup>50</sup> But many women began to see how a lack of infrastructure on reserves, including adequate housing, sewer systems, and educational facilities spoke to a much deeper problem that sewing machines and movies could not fix. The women recognized the structural challenges to what Molly Ladd-Taylor termed "mother-work." Ladd-Taylor argued that effective mother-work requires meeting children's basic needs for nurturing and protection. In order to provide these necessities, however, women need access to material security, bodily integrity, moral autonomy, and political efficacy.<sup>51</sup> In other words, women cannot be good mothers and support their children effectually unless they have access to necessary social, political, and economic resources. Patricia Hill Collins also recognized the intersectional nature of motherwork and argued "motherhood occurs in specific historical situations framed by interlocking structures of race, class, and gender, where the sons and daughters of white mothers have 'every opportunity and protection,' and the 'colored' daughters and sons of racial ethnic mothers 'know not their fate.'"<sup>52</sup> Centuries of Indian policy and government attitudes had denied Indigenous women access to the necessary resources for successful motherwork.

The clubs lobbied Canadian government agencies for widespread changes to policy and through this many club members began to recognize their work as political. In response, the Department of Indian Affairs retreated, withdrawing its financial and moral support claiming the women were becoming "too much of a pressure group."<sup>53</sup> The clubs in turn sought their independence by amalgamating into the BC Indian Homemakers'

<sup>50</sup> Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, *Indian News* 2, no. 3 (March 1957): 7.

<sup>51</sup> Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

<sup>52</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood," in *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*, Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Change, and Linda Rennie Forcey, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 45.

<sup>53</sup> Charlie, interview.

Association in 1968.<sup>54</sup> The BCIHA became a reserve-based women's organization representing status and non-status First Nations women.<sup>55</sup> It consisted of ninety-two local Homemakers' clubs with a leadership structure consisting of a president, first vice-president, thirty-two district vice-presidents, and a secretary. The BCIHA had an open membership to Indigenous peoples over sixteen years of age, and worked in the communities to address local concerns.<sup>56</sup> In the transition from local, state-led Homemakers' clubs to an independent province-wide Homemakers' Association, the BCIHA overtook state attempts to direct Indigenous motherhood. While the Department had hoped Indigenous women would use their gendered positions to improve reserve conditions, and praised them for raising "the status of the women themselves on the reserves," it did not anticipate that the women would employ these stations to critique the wider settler socio-political systems in the process.<sup>57</sup>

The Department likewise did not suspect that the BCIHA would play a key role in the creation of the Union. As an active provincial organization with strong community contacts, the BCIHA was well positioned to promote the Union. In the lead-up to the First BC Chiefs' Conference, the BCIHA was not only involved in the initial call for a chiefs' organization, but also helped fundraise to support the costs of the conference.<sup>58</sup> Like the male leadership, the BCIHA saw the value in pan-tribal unity and a chiefs' organization, despite their exclusion from official membership positions. This financial, moral, and political support was central to the Union's formation.

<sup>54</sup> Charlie, interview; "Homemakers' Progress!" *Indian Voice* 1, no. 1 (October 1969): 1 and 6; "Indian Women Call for Prompt Action: Men Don't Understand," *Native Voice* 22, no. 5 (July/August 1968): 1-2; Tennant, *Indigenous Peoples and Politics*, 132.

<sup>55</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 7, File 901/24-2-2254 (part 4), Indian Homemakers' Association, 1968-1979, Travel Information & Resource Unite Programme - April 1, 1979 - March 31, 1980.

<sup>56</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 7, File 901/24-2-2254 (part 4), Indian Homemakers' Association, 1968-1979, Travel Information & Resource Unite Programme - April 1, 1979 - March 31, 1980.

<sup>57</sup> Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, *Indian News* 2, no. 3 (March 1957): 7.

<sup>58</sup> Charlie, interview; UBCIC AGA 2009 Grand Chief Rose Charlie – The Birth of the UBCIC (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS5LpSedQ1c&feature=relmfu>) <accessed March 21, 2012>; "Moccasin Miles," *Indian Voice* 1, no. 2 (December 1969): 8; "Moccasin Miles," *The Indian Voice* 2, no. 4 (January 1970): 11.

Thanks in part to the work done by the BCIHA supporting the conference, on November 20, 1969, ninety percent of the conference's delegates voted in favour of the "United Front" resolution, which created the Union.<sup>59</sup> By November 22, the last day of the conference, a newly appointed committee drafted the structure of the organization to ensure band autonomy and non-interference with other Indigenous organizations.<sup>60</sup> Organizers designed the Union as a coordinating association that would facilitate collective responses to common issues facing Indigenous communities in BC. It would not supersede existing band, tribal, or pan-tribal associations. Representatives also designed the Union's organizational structure to promote unity. Comprised of three levels of membership, band chiefs and band councillors, representatives from other political organizations, and hereditary chiefs, the Union solicited representation from communities across the province. Elected band chiefs and elected councillors, known as full and active members respectively, made up the fifteen-member chiefs' council, which functioned as a board of directors for the Union and was responsible for implementing policies.<sup>61</sup> Each member of the chiefs' council represented one of the fifteen Union districts, which followed Department of Indian Affairs' district boundaries. Some activists were critical of basing political activity on Department-prescribed structures, but it also ensured equal representation from all areas of the province.<sup>62</sup> Outlining the role of the chiefs' council, the Union's official newspaper *Unity* reported, "members of the Council are responsible to report periodically the work of the Union and their participation in this work to the Chiefs of Bands in their respective districts. As individuals they are responsible to promote the work of the Union at Band level and to formulate general policy based upon close contact with the Bands."<sup>63</sup> Although the structure of the organization changed over time, initially the chiefs' council also appointed the Union's

<sup>59</sup> "Summary of Proceedings, Chiefs' Conference, Kamloops, 1969," in Minutes of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, November 17-22, 1969, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>60</sup> "Summary of Proceedings, Chiefs' Conference, Kamloops, 1969," in Minutes of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, November 17-22, 1969, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>61</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, File 978/24-2-12 (part 1), Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1973-1976, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Memorandum, May 6, 1971.

<sup>62</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, File 978/24-2-12 (part 1), Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1973-1976, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Memorandum, May 6, 1971.

<sup>63</sup> *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 2 (Nov-Dec 1970): 4.

three-member executive committee to direct the chiefs' council and oversee general Union operations.<sup>64</sup> The Union considered elected band chiefs full members and these individuals paid a membership fee based on the band's population. They could vote at general assemblies and could hold office in the Union. Elected councillors and representatives from other organizations were called active members. These individuals could also vote at general assemblies and hold office.<sup>65</sup> Representatives from other organizations began as non-voting members, but could attain a voting position through Union approval. For example, the Native Brotherhood received a voting membership position through this process, as did the BCIHA and the interior-based British Columbia Native Women's Society in 1977. Before this, however, women's organizations remained outside the membership despite their heavy involvement in the Union. Finally, the third level of membership included hereditary chiefs who were considered honorary members. They could not vote at general assemblies or hold office, but provided valued insight and direction as community leaders.<sup>66</sup> The arrangement of the Union was mindful of existing political frameworks but it also acknowledged the circumstances of Native-newcomer relations that brought First Nations peoples together in this time and place.

The Union was also heavily influenced by the unique settler-colonial legacy in BC where an absence of treaties and refusal to acknowledge Indigenous rights created the conditions for Indigenous pan-tribal mobilization. This context is essential for understanding how political unity became a desired, albeit difficult to achieve, goal. Unlike other areas of Canada where, following the terms of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the Crown negotiated treaties to secure access to land for settlers and outline social and economic relationships with First Nations, British Columbia refused to follow

<sup>64</sup> *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 2 (Nov-Dec 1970): 4. The biggest change to the Union occurred in 1977 when members elected George Manuel in the capacity of president. The structural change also resulted in the creation of four vice presidencies, one for each major region: South-western, Northern, Central-Interior, and Coast. This channelled significantly more power into the hands of fewer leaders. Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs 9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, Prince George, April 26-28, 1977, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>65</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, File 978/24-2-12 (part 1), Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1973-1976, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Memorandum, May 6, 1971; Lana Lowe, "A Strategic Analysis of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs" (Master's thesis, University of Victoria, 2004), 11.

<sup>66</sup> Lowe, 11.



this law. It preferred to negotiate Native-newcomer relations on its own terms, which blatantly ignored Indigenous autonomy and land rights. This in turn meant that First Nations peoples in British Columbia had to articulate their political goals differently than First Nations populations elsewhere. For instance, whereas western First Nations covered by the Numbered Treaties negotiated between 1871 and 1921 sought political unity to demand the proper implementation of treaty rights, BC First Nations spoke in terms of the unresolved BC land question, Indigenous rights, Indian status, and claims based on Indigenous title.<sup>67</sup> The Union provided the space to do this on a pan-tribal scale.

In addition, increasing state intervention into Indigenous lives through new legislation motivated Indigenous leaders to unite politically. The 1869 *Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, the Better Management of Indian Affairs* (hereafter the Gradual Enfranchisement Act) replaced hereditary governance systems with a government prescribed elective band council system. It initiated a process by which male band members twenty-one years of age and older, elected chiefs to serve three-year terms.<sup>68</sup> Through the act, the governor reserved the right to dismiss any chief who committed “dishonesty, intemperance, or immorality,” while in office, and maintained considerable control over the jurisdiction of band chiefs.<sup>69</sup> In other words, the federal government unilaterally altered Indigenous political frameworks and gave itself the ultimately authority to depose leaders according to its own terms. Despite these disruptions, some bands maintained traditional leadership patterns through the election

<sup>67</sup> For information on the Numbered Treaties and their legacy, see: J.R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Arthur J. Ray, Jim Miller, and Frank Tough, *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000). For prairie political organization, see: Laurie Meijer Drees, *The Indian Association of Alberta: A History of Political Action* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002); Jean Goodwill and Norma Sluman, *John Tootoosis* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1982); F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997); Murray Dobbin, *The One-And-A-Half Men: The Story of Jim Brady & Malcolm Norris, Metis Patriots of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981).

<sup>68</sup> Canada, An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, the Better Management of Indian Affairs, and to Extend the Provisions of the Act, 1869, CAP. VI., 31<sup>st</sup> Victoria, Chapter 42; An Act to amend and consolidate the laws respecting Indians, S.C., 1876, c. 18.

<sup>69</sup> Canada, An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, the Better Management of Indian Affairs, and to Extend the Provisions of the Act, 1869, CAP. VI., 31<sup>st</sup> Victoria, Chapter 42.

of hereditary chiefs, or returned to electing hereditary chiefs after a period Department of Indian Affairs or church-based appointments. However, the impact of colonial Indian policy remains visible nonetheless.<sup>70</sup> The 1876 *Act to Amend and Consolidate the Laws Respecting Indians* (hereafter the Indian Act) amalgamated existing legislation for Indigenous peoples and further disrupted First Nations' systems of governance and society. The Indian Act became a tool for racial definition, as the act defined who Indians were and created a registry for those who met the Department of Indian Affairs' criteria. The act solidified changes to band governance and installed Department Indian Agents to oversee the activities of the reserves. The increasing bureaucratization of the Department over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which led to oversight in Indigenous governance, education, health care, economic development, and land tenure, initiated unprecedented administrative intrusion into Indigenous ways of life. First Nations communities, in turn, sought ways to combat these disturbances.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, BC Indigenous peoples were politically active through tribal and pan-tribal organizations and isolated initiatives. For instance, in the early nineteenth Indigenous opposition to colonialism consisted of tribally based demands for treaty or land that were grounded in strong oral histories and beliefs about Indigenous responsibility to their land.<sup>71</sup> By 1872, tribal groups initiated widespread protest. That year, for example, Coast Salish chiefs<sup>72</sup> and their supporters travelled to New Westminster where they met at the provincial land registry office to demand revisions to land policies.<sup>73</sup> Between 1873 and 1887, Salish, Nisga'a, and Tsimshian leaders initiated pan-tribal political strategies within similar languages groups. In 1874, for instance, fifty-six chiefs from Coast Salish and interior communities gathered

<sup>70</sup> Guerin, interview. This will be discussed in chapter four.

<sup>71</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, ed. *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 170-173.

<sup>72</sup> Coast Salish is not the traditional First Nations name for the people occupying this region. Instead, this term includes a number of First Nations Peoples including Klahoose, Homalco, Sliammon, Sechelt, Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Halq'emeylem, Ostlq'emeylem, Hul'qumi'num, Pentlatch, and Straits.

<sup>73</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 53. Between 1869 and 1873, chiefs from many of the Coast Salish nations came together to write letters and petitions to colonial officials asking for protection from White incursion, rights to land and resources. The impact of these letters was not far reaching, but they do serve to highlight how widespread and consistent Indigenous political goals were.

to draw up a petition demanding an eighty-acre per family federal reserve policy.<sup>74</sup> This petition, presented to Indian Commissioner I.W. Powell, highlighted the shared grievances amongst BC First Nations communities about inadequate reserve allocations, but also demonstrated knowledge of land allocations and reserve policies elsewhere. These detailed requests also confirmed a sophisticated understanding of how colonial land policies were influencing First Nations communities, and how, in lieu of mobility and access to geographically wide-ranging resources, reserve communities needed larger reserves to sustain their populations.<sup>75</sup> These initial expressions of unity were limited in scope, but provided a strong basis for early twentieth-century organizing.

By 1909, evidence of a developing Indigenous rights discourse and an established history of Indigenous political mobilization was apparent when North Coast and Coast Salish communities came together to form the Indian Rights Association. This in turn was followed closely by the unification of interior communities under the Interior Tribes of British Columbia. For many participating communities, these pan-tribal organizations represented the first time they were involved in cross-tribal political cooperation. While these organizations remained heavily reliant on settler allies to help navigate the settler state's political terrain, a new generation of leaders educated in government-sponsored, church-run residential and day schools also proved valuable.<sup>76</sup> In her work on the Allied Tribes organization, Darcy Mitchell explained the largely unintentional impact of these institutions of assimilation on the Indigenous rights issue. "While Catholic missionaries gave more support to the Indians' demands for enlarged reserves than for recognition of native title," Mitchell began, "they, like the Protestant missionaries, indirectly advanced the Indigenous rights campaign through the introduction of western education, new forms of political organization and such Christian ideals as the equality of men."<sup>77</sup> In BC during the twentieth century, the education gained in the residential schools and cross-tribal relationships forged by young First Nations

<sup>74</sup> Carlson, *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, 173; George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (Don Mills, Ont.: Collier-MacMillan Canada, 1974), 81.

<sup>75</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, "Familial Cohesion and Colonial Atomization: Governance and Authority in a Coast Salish Community," *Native Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (2010): 22-23.

<sup>76</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 87.

<sup>77</sup> Darcy Anne Mitchell, "The Allied Tribes of British Columbia: A Study in Pressure Group Behaviour" (Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1977), 20.

students directly accelerated the Indigenous rights movement as students co-opted state training for their own purposes.<sup>78</sup> The political spaces opened through these channels, however, were not yet matched by a willingness on the part of the Canadian government to address Indigenous claims. For instance, when confronted by a delegation of BC chiefs in 1911, Premier Richard McBride flatly rejected the chiefs' pleas to settle the land question. Pressure from the federal government was mounting, however, particularly after Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier toured the province, meeting multiple Indigenous delegations in 1910 and became more sympathetic to their cause.

Over the course of the next few years, continued Indigenous pressure and a shift in federal politics with the election of Robert Borden's Conservatives, led to the creation of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia. Between 1913 and 1916, the McKenna-McBride Commission, as it was commonly known, visited reserves to inspect the land base and hold public hearings on reserve land issues. While a significant step for the federal government, government agents did not design the Commission to address the land question in the manner preferred by First Nations. Instead, it was primarily concerned with the suitability of Indigenous reserve allotments and remained silent on issues of Indigenous rights and title. The Commission worked under the expectation that Indigenous peoples would follow state mandates not vice versa. It placed the onus on Indigenous peoples to conform to settler political modalities. Although Indigenous peoples had demonstrated their ability to adapt, Michael Posluns has since insisted that "the feasibility of social change with a minimum of violence does not depend upon a colonized people learning to express their aspirations in the language of the colonizer as much as it depends on the ability of the colonizers to hear

<sup>78</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*. This was increasingly common in the mid-twentieth century. For example, Penticton hereditary Chief Adam Eneas noted that the residential school system facilitated pan-tribal communication by bringing students from different cultures and language groups together under one roof. Eneas explained that later when activists met to pursue Indigenous rights and title, they were not meeting as strangers and had common experiences, language, and knowledge to draw from. According to Eneas, the strong political relationship between Eneas and Lower Nicola Chief Don Moses directly resulted from shared attendance at residential school. Eneas, interview. For more on the history of the Indian residential school system, see: J.R Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); J.S Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999).

what indigenous people have been saying all along.”<sup>79</sup> This inability or unwillingness to hear Indigenous political demands consistently placed Indigenous people in positions of relative weakness compared to the settler state and is a dominant thread running through the history of Native-newcomer relationships.

Even in this era of limited political organization, BC Indigenous people remained highly political and strategic, engaging in complex political recognitions and refusals with the federal government. Band members simultaneously recognized the political legitimacy of the McKenna-McBride Commission by participating in its hearings, and refused the commission’s underlying goals by ignoring the direction given by the commissioners. The newly appointed deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott believed the McKenna-McBride Commission would provide finality on the land claims issue by delivering the definitive word on reserve allocation. Scott assumed this would satisfy Indigenous demands for land title.<sup>80</sup> This represented a more limited understanding of Indigenous rights and economic needs than BC First Nations held or were prepared to accept. At the hearings, the five appointed commissioners quickly learned the depth and breadth of discontent amongst Indigenous peoples in BC, and often found it difficult to restrict testimony to commentary on reserve apportionments.<sup>81</sup> Indigenous political leaders and community members spoke consistently of Indigenous title and rights, rather than limited reserve lands, insisting that they needed treaties to protect their lands and resources. Elders spoke of hunting and fishing restrictions and the negative impact this was having on their families and communities.<sup>82</sup> Individuals also outlined health problems and difficulties securing access

<sup>79</sup> Michael W. Posluns, *Speaking with Authority: The Emergence of the Vocabulary of First Nations’ Self-Government* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 13.

<sup>80</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 92.

<sup>81</sup> Meetings with the Capilano and x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy<sup>ə</sup>m (Musqueam) bands produced discussions about reserve allocations and reductions from Douglas’s original allotment. Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of BC, “Capilano Indian Reserve, June 21, 1915,” (Victoria: Acme Press Ltd., 1916), British Columbia Archives, NW 970.5 B862 Vol. 1-4, 40-42; Royal Commission, “Musqueam Reserve No. 2, June 24, 1913,” 61-62.

<sup>82</sup> Royal Commission, “Capilano Indian Reserve, June 21, 1915,” 40-42.

to physicians.<sup>83</sup> Indigenous peoples simply refused to follow the prescribed commission mandates, but by concurrently participating in the commission, they leveraged this strategic recognition to speak on issues they found important. In some ways these refusals were community-based, reflecting the local conditions and needs of individual bands. Yet, the common threads throughout the Commission testimony were indicative of another layer of provincial political unity.

Indigenous peoples' actions during the commission both reflected and facilitated political fluency. Like the residential schools, the McKenna-McBride hearings had the unintended consequence of providing Indigenous leadership, as well as community members the opportunity to co-opt and re-shape state structures to express and further develop their political discourse. Structured according to Canadian legal standards, while allowing First Nations peoples to give testimony in their own languages through the aid of interpreters, the hearings introduced a political middle ground. This not only represented continuity with treaty-era engagement with political leadership, by travelling to First Nations communities and accommodating use of Indigenous languages, but also provided Indigenous peoples with practical experience in Canadian political forums. This served to politicize individuals, such as Andrew Paull, a Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) community member who, up until his role as an interpreter for the commission hearings, was not involved in the BC land question debate.<sup>84</sup>

The commission provided a common cause for First Nations communities to unite under, and when the final report recommended modifying existing reserve lands in ways that proved unacceptable to BC First Nations, they stood together in opposition.

<sup>83</sup> Royal Commission, "Meeting with Coquitlam Band, January 8, 1915," 115-116; Royal Commission, "Meeting with Langley Band, January 9, 1915," 131-132; Royal Commission, "Meeting with Matsqui Band, January 11, 1915," 144; Royal Commission, "Meeting with Upper Sumas Band, January 11, 1915," 154, 164-65; Royal Commission, "Meeting with Chilliwack Band, January 13, 1915," 173-178; Royal Commission, "Meeting with Harrison River Band, January 10, 1915," 231-233; Royal Commission, "Meeting with Sliam-mon Band, February 19, 1915," 296; Royal Commission, "Meeting with K̓la-Hoose Band, February 20, 1915," 303-304; Royal Commission, "Meeting with Homalco Band, February 23, 1915," 310; Royal Commission, "Meeting with Cowtain Band, August 17, 1915," 335; Royal Commission, "Meeting with Leeachan Band, August 17, 1915," 347; Royal Commission, "Meeting with Cheakmus Band, August 17, 1915," 352; Royal Commission, "Meeting with Peter Byrne of New Westminster Agency, January 25 - February 4, 1916," 525-526, 534, 541.

<sup>84</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*. 89.

The suggested changes would increase total reserve acreage across BC, but First Nations communities insisted the value of the additional land was much less than what was cut off, and they refused to consent to the changes. Frustrated with the outcome of the commission and with the federal government's unwillingness to take Indigenous concerns seriously, Paull, who by this time was heavily involved in Indigenous politics, and Haida leader Peter Kelly decided to formally organize BC's Indigenous population to pursue a satisfactory solution to the land question. In 1916, Paull and Kelly organized a conference in Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh territory that was attended by approximately sixteen tribal groups. The conference resulted in the formation of the Allied Tribes, which incorporated the Indian Rights Association, Interior Tribes, and the Nisga'a Land Committee and therefore allowed Nisga'a, Interior Salish, and southern bands to pursue the land claim as a cohesive force.<sup>85</sup> Secwepemc political activist and leader George Manuel insisted that Paull and Kelly's leadership was crucial for pan-tribal mobilization as these were "men who had grown up during the years of this struggle, and who had seen the shortcomings and pitfalls of local and divided actions based on piecemeal petitions about individual grievances."<sup>86</sup> Indigenous peoples had long valued widespread political unity as a strategy against settler policies, and were now in a position to achieve it.

The Allied Tribes's principal concern was to negotiate the land claim. Paull and Kelly called for the return of lands cut off from twenty-three bands under the McKenna-McBride recommendations as well as a general land claim to address the lack of treaties in BC.<sup>87</sup> Rather than negotiating with the federal government, however, the Allied Tribes recognized the government's unwillingness to reconsider the McKenna-McBride recommendations and decided to pursue its claim through the courts.<sup>88</sup> The federal government was equally innovative, however. In 1927, when the Allied Tribes attained a hearing with a Special Joint Committee in 1927 to discuss the land question, Canadian officials, building off the criticism of some Interior bands not involved in the Allied Tribes

<sup>85</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 92-95; J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 216.

<sup>86</sup> Manuel and Posluns, *The Fourth World*, 84.

<sup>87</sup> Mitchell, ii.

<sup>88</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 94-95.

insisted the organization's support was too limited.<sup>89</sup> In its decision, the Special Joint Committee identified similar problems about representation and additionally questioned the role of non-Indigenous lawyers in the BC land question debate. Indeed, the Allied Tribes worked closely with lawyer Arthur O'Meara to help build its claim.<sup>90</sup> The federal government, not content to stop there, made a strategic amendment to the Indian Act that same year that prohibited Aboriginal peoples from hiring lawyers to pursue land claims.<sup>91</sup> This amendment was a devastating blow to the Allied Tribes, but the organization had also been struggling to maintain a strong financial base through fundraising efforts and wide representation.<sup>92</sup> In 1927 the organization formally disbanded, but it remained a strong source of inspiration for pan-tribal unity throughout the twentieth century.

The 1927 Indian Act amendment succeeded in limiting the types of political activity to emerge in this era, but the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia (NBBC), founded at Port Simpson in December 1931, proved that Indigenous politics could persevere. In part this was due to the increasingly underground nature of political organizations, and the Native Brotherhood, for its part circumvented Indian Act limitations by emerging "primarily as a response to the economic despair of the depression," rather than as a land claims organization.<sup>93</sup> Shortly after the formation of the NBBC, women's auxiliary chapters emerged under the auspices of the Native Sisterhood of British Columbia (NSBC). The NBBC and the NSBC were heavily influenced by parallel activities amongst relatives and relations in Alaska during the same period, although, as Tennant mentioned, the NSBC was more limited in structure and political goals than their Alaskan counterparts.<sup>94</sup> The NBBC's main focus was to

<sup>89</sup> Mitchell, 76-99.

<sup>90</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 102.

<sup>91</sup> Mitchell, 92-102.

<sup>92</sup> Mitchell, 67-68.

<sup>93</sup> Peter Parker, "We Are Not Beggars': Political Genesis of the Native Brotherhood, 1931-51" (Master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1992), 21; Manuel and Posluns, *The Fourth World*, 95; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 95-116.

<sup>94</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 259.



support Indigenous fishermen throughout the economic crisis.<sup>95</sup> Although the NBBC was not initially concerned with Indigenous rights and title issues, delegates still took measures to hide the political leanings of the organization. To accomplish this, x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) Chief Delbert Guerin explained that the NBBC openly structured itself as a Christian organization in order to fly under the Department of Indian Affairs' radar. Delegates for example, would meet in churches and sing hymns to begin their meetings as a way to further mask their political intentions.<sup>96</sup> Of course, at this time, many leaders were devout Christians and incorporated their spiritual beliefs into their political practices, but this outward emphasis on religion rather than politics is significant in demonstrating well-developed political manoeuvres. Moreover, this type of socio-political strategizing was not new. The federal government's ban on the potlatch and other First Nations' ceremonies and practices in the 1880s had also produced sophisticated tactics to avoid attracting the settler state's attention.<sup>97</sup>

Over time, through their work with fishermen predominately on the northwest coast of BC, the NBBC emerged as a unified, pan-Indian organization emphasizing non-land based Indigenous rights. The political evolution of the NBBC occurred gradually and did not extend beyond the immediate economic concerns of fisherman until well into the 1950s.<sup>98</sup> Unlike the other organizations intent on achieving recognition of Indigenous rights, which, at this time remained vaguely defined but largely centred on Indigenous title and the preservation of rights to hunt, fish, and gather, the NBBC focused on equal access to commercial fishing and fair prices for their goods. The NBBC began with a limited constituency and political mandates, but by the late 1950s, it explicitly incorporated notions of pan-tribal unity into its political lexicon. By this time fishing was not the only issue on the NBBC's agenda, and the organization began seeking

<sup>95</sup> Guerin, interview; George Saddleman, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, February 7, 2015; Saul Terry, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 30, 2012; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 1969 and 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Manuel and Posluns, *The Fourth World*.

<sup>96</sup> Guerin, interview.

<sup>97</sup> For more information on the banning of First Nations' ceremonies, see: Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990); and Leslie Robertson and the Kwagu'ł Gixsam Clan, *Standing up with Ga'axsta'las: Jane Constance Cook and the Politics of Memory, Church, and Custom* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012).

<sup>98</sup> Parker, 22-31.

Indigenous equality by securing the federal vote and eliminating race-based legislation such as the Liquor Act.<sup>99</sup> The NBBC, boasting an expanded membership including the coastal tribes and some interior tribes in the province, publicized its work revising the Indian Act, achieving Old Age Pension for First Nations, improving medical services, education, and housing, acquiring liquor rights, and securing the provincial and federal vote.<sup>100</sup>

Through this work, the NBBC wanted to establish itself as the most prominent, effective, and representative Indigenous political organization in the province, but these new political priorities placed the organization in direct confrontation with Indigenous organizations and community members that disagreed with the NBBC's goals. While the NBBC insisted that Canadian citizenship rights and greater equality would not threaten or undermine Indigenous rights, activists outside the organization remained sceptical. Highlighting the dispute in its report on the extension of the federal vote to First Nations in 1960, the NBBC's newspaper *Native Voice* acknowledged that, "...there are many Indians throughout the country who have raised their voices against the federal vote. They think that the extension of the federal vote would weaken their position in retaining their aboriginal rights and possessions."<sup>101</sup> Some First Nations worried that enfranchisement would send a strong message to the Canadian government that they were satisfied with citizenship and no longer concerned about residual land title and rights issues. In fact, these fears were so widespread that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Ellen Fairclough made an official statement in the *Native Voice* reassuring First Nations peoples that their special status would continue even if they secured the vote.<sup>102</sup> This did little to reassure some activists, however, and many continued to view

<sup>99</sup> Many community women, including members of the NSBC were considerably opposed to other NBBC mandates including revisions to the Liquor Act. Guerin, interview; "Brotherhood Urges Equal Education, Liquor Rights," *Native Voice* (November, 1960): 2.

<sup>100</sup> "Lands Big Issue at Kamloops Meeting," *Native Voice* 8, no. 5 (May 1959): 1; "Native Brotherhood of British Columbia Holds Historic Convention at Kamloops in March," *Native Voice* 14, no. 2 (February 1960): 24; Peter R. Kelly, "Steps to Equality," *Native Voice* 14, no. 2 (February 1960): 3 and 21; Yvonne May Marshall, "A Political history of the Nuu-chah-nulth people: A case study of the Mowachaht and Muchalaht Tribes" (PhD diss., Simon Fraser University, 1993), 325-331.

<sup>101</sup> Peter R. Kelly, "Steps to Equality," *Native Voice* 14, no. 2 (February 1960): 3 and 21.

<sup>102</sup> Hon. Ellen Fairclough, "Native Indians need have no fear of losing status or rights by vote," *Native Voice* 14, no. 2 (February 1960): 4.

the NBBC's mandates as at best, irrelevant to the wider BC land question, and at worst, antithetical and damaging to Indigenous rights. The NBBC's vision for unity, then, did not fully represent the political goals of the province, but it did present a strong base for developing pan-tribal politics.

Both the NBBC and members of the non-Native fishing community remained baffled by the organization's inability to become the representative voice for BC Indigenous peoples. At the 1959 NBBC convention, James Sinclair, president of the Fisheries Association of British Columbia (FABC) praised the NBBC's work not only in the fishing industry, but "in forests, farming, traffic and their rights," and suggested that the Brotherhood was "a unique organization, a single authority for the BC Indian."<sup>103</sup> The FABC was the representative administrative body for the fish processing companies on the west coast, and served to lobby the municipal, provincial, and federal governments on behalf of fishers, cannery workers, and shore workers.<sup>104</sup> The organization also ensured industry compliance with government regulations. Sinclair's involvement with the FABC between 1958 and 1960 was preceded by his role as a Liberal MP for a range of years between 1940 and 1957, as well as his position as Minister of Fisheries between 1952 and 1957. Sinclair thus had a vested interest in the wider fishing industry, and was arguably more concerned with government mandates than the rights of individual workers. In his capacity as president, Sinclair promoted unity within the Indigenous fishing industry to streamline FABC work. He urged the NBBC to act as the official political voice for BC Indigenous peoples, allowing the population to finally "speak with one voice."<sup>105</sup> This was not to be, however. The NBBC's focus on Indigenous rights rather than land claims, its limited constituency within largely northwest coast fishing communities, and its controversial political goals ensured its survival in the draconian era of government Indian policy. But it also guaranteed that the NBBC would never assume the role of a representative pan-Indian provincial organization. As Guerin and

<sup>103</sup> "Brotherhood Urged to be Native Voice," *Native Voice* 8, no. 1 (January 1959): 5.

<sup>104</sup> UBC Special Collections, Beth Pitblado and John Stewart, "The Fisheries Association of British Columbia: An Inventory of Their Records in the Library of the University of British Columbia," Special Collections Division, November, 1990, 2.

<sup>105</sup> "Brotherhood Urged to be Native Voice," *Native Voice* 8, no. 1 (January 1959): 5.

Syilx Upper Nicola Chief George Saddleman noted, too many people saw the NBBC as simply a coastal fishing organization and nothing more.<sup>106</sup>

By the mid-1960s, unity was the dominant political discourse and this facilitated an intensified drive towards establishing a province-wide association. Here we also see activists articulating their politics in ways that the Union would later mirror. For instance, in March 1966, members of the SVITF and the NAIB gathered at x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy<sup>ə</sup>m (Musqueam) to form the Confederation of Native Indians of British Columbia (CNIBC). According to Tennant, “the CNIBC was intended to be a co-ordinating forum which would neither replace nor supplant existing organizations, but would serve their common interests.”<sup>107</sup> This structure, which paralleled the framework adopted by the Union in 1969 appealed to existing Indigenous organizations in BC who were interested in trying new strategies, but did not wish to sacrifice their political autonomy or the gains they had made. By the time the CNIBC held their first meeting in November 1966, representatives from the NBBC, the Nuw’chah’nulth, and the Homemakers’ clubs had decided to join as well.

The CNIBC reacted to the current political climate, which included increasing government intervention into Indigenous political organizations, and thus refashioned unity according around the concept of political refusal. The principal aim of the CNIBC was to convince the federal government to negotiate directly with BC First Nations for Indigenous rights and title rather than through an intermediary such as government agencies or commissions like the US Claims Commission.<sup>108</sup> Indigenous activists were wary of facilitated political discussions, especially after witnessing the lengthy and often futile activities of the US Claims Commission, which involved testimony from non-Indigenous experts and American Indian communities about treaty provisions, reservation lands, and associated rights. The Canadian federal government looked to this model to address Indigenous grievances, but, like their American counterparts, Indigenous peoples in Canada insisted the Commission failed to properly recognize their claims.

<sup>106</sup> Guerin, interview; Saddleman, interview.

<sup>107</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 133.

<sup>108</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 134.

Already frustrated with the Department of Indian Affairs' half-hearted attempts at Indigenous political involvement, the CNIBC was further discouraged when their appeal prompted Indian Affairs Minister Arthur Laing to demand that the CNIBC represent seventy-five per cent of the status Indian population in BC before the Department would begin discussions with them.<sup>109</sup> Reacting to this unrealistic requirement, Benjamin Paul, leader of the CNIBC scoffed, "Could Mr. Laing muster 75 per cent of his constituents [?] I would like to remind him that his own elected party has only 51 per cent of the popular vote."<sup>110</sup> Only a few years prior, the Department sought to keep bands isolated to deter political unity, and now they were insisting that Indigenous peoples designate a representative organization before Laing would even entertain the idea of direct consultation. The federal government proved to be equally flexible in its strategic moves against the Indigenous rights movement. This experience also confirmed the challenges of navigating bureaucracy. Like Indigenous populations, government organizations were not immune to change, but were tied to individuals and government parties whose opinions, priorities, strategies, and policies shift over time. Laing's demand, then, was both an individual response to a growing political threat, as well as strong support for the settler state's longstanding attempts to undermine Indigenous politics as a whole. There was no mention made of these prior demands or the logistical or ideological challenges of province-wide representation, and further, bureaucratic amnesia must have prevented the Department from recalling that First Nations communities in BC were not homogenous or easily united, as the experience of the Allied Tribes demonstrated thirty years prior. This shift was timely, and likely a response to delegitimize the popular and growing CNIBC, yet it followed established trends in settler-state attitudes. Once again, settler state officials demonstrated their unwillingness to listen to or accept Indigenous expressions of their political realities. Instead, Indigenous peoples were pushed to conform to the changing will of the state, and they refused.

Unity remained the primary goal within the CNIBC, and although it struggled to achieve it amid competing Indigenous multi-politics, the organization built upon what came before. The organization had not yet identified a workable framework to overcome

<sup>109</sup> "Big 5' Fail to Carry Indian Vote," *Native Voice*, 22, no. 1 (February 1968): 1 and 8; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 134.

<sup>110</sup> "Big 5' Fail to Carry Indian Vote," *Native Voice*, 22, no. 1 (February 1968): 1 and 8.

challenges of representation, especially in areas such as the northeast where formal organization was less developed. In addition, by 1967 the CNIBC's initial assurances that they could coordinate existing BC political organizations seemed untenable as the association began developing into its own organization complete with an elected executive and a draft constitution. With support from Salish communities and organizations, the CNIBC emulated the limited constituency of the NBBC, and this prompted some to question whether the CNIBC was looking to replace existing organizations, or simply duplicate the associations and services already in place.<sup>111</sup>

In 1967 the *Native Voice* described continued attempts by leaders of the main BC Indigenous organizations to come together. At the February NBBC convention, delegates echoed plans for unity and passed a resolution to create a constitution outlining the terms of such union. The resolution, reprinted in the paper read:

WHEREAS various British Columbia Indian organizations have agreed, in their respective conventions, with the principle of Indian unity;  
WHEREAS British Columbia Indian organizations have agreed with the principle of uniting their respective executive bodies on a common ground for a common purpose;  
WHEREAS one Indian voice is necessary to provide a united front in the consideration of the unsundered Aboriginal title of the Indians of British Columbia;  
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the executive head of each existing British Columbia Indian organization meet forthwith to prepare for signature, a constitutional basis for Indian unity.<sup>112</sup>

The language used in this resolution is strikingly similar, and at times, perfectly matched to that which appeared in James Sinclair's 1959 address at the NBBC convention, as well as what we see two years later, in 1969 in the organizational materials of the Union. The continuity in the discourse and ideology that surrounded BC Indigenous political organization from the late 1950s to 1969 suggests that the Union's achievement of unity largely drew upon the ideologies and goals of previous political activities. This well-established trend towards pan-tribal unity is noteworthy, especially when placed in conversation with the literature that emphasizes 1969 as a watershed moment in pan-

<sup>111</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 135.

<sup>112</sup> "Meet Sets Sights on Full Unity," *Native Voice* 21, no. 1 (January-February 1967): 1.

tribal and modern Indigenous politics. When we consider how Indigenous actors understood these political developments, it is clear that the White Paper played a more marginal role in pan-tribal political unification than the existing literature suggests.

Instead, it is in the context of established attempts at unity and competing organizations that the formation of the Union in November 1969 is best understood. Political unity was highly desired, not only to appease the Department of Indian Affairs, who wanted a single representative organization through which they could achieve certainty on the land claims issue, but because BC Indigenous peoples also believed that unity provided the solution to claims for Indigenous rights and title. Yet, if unity was the agreed-upon aim of Indigenous peoples in 1969, the question remains, what prevented an existing organization from becoming the new representative voice of BC First Nations? Why create yet another organization? It was clear from the inception of the CNIBC that BC First Nations were not interested in supplanting their existing organizations with a provincial institution, and needed an appropriate coordinating organization that would not seek independence as the CNIBC had. Existing tribally-based organizations such as the SVITF and the Nisga'a Tribal Council, and national organizations such as the NAIB were unsuited to becoming provincial bodies, as they maintained ties to specific regions and issues that required separate organizations. The CNIBC and the NBBC while broadly representative by the 1960s were not structured to work as coordinating organizations. They also drew their membership from band members rather than leadership thus delegates struggled to enact political decisions within the communities. Increasingly BC First Nations realized the need for a chiefs' organization that could speak authoritatively and legitimately for the majority of the population, by seeking membership from every band, and enacting political decisions within the communities without weakening local band politics. The Union was the product of an established inclination towards political co-operation that emerged due to specific local circumstances.

The 1969 White Paper brought together these existing forces to motivate the creation of the Union. Just as unity was a longstanding goal for Indigenous peoples, the White Paper reflected established government ideologies and goals. Both were part of larger trends rather than sporadic occurrences. Briefly, the White Paper was a policy document designed to correct the inequality and oppression faced by Indigenous

peoples in Canada. The premise of the White Paper was that Indigenous subjugation resulted from First Nations' special legislative status, and that abolishing the Indian Act and historic treaties, and eliminating the special rights and recognition of Canada's Indigenous population could ameliorate these conditions. Scholars and Indigenous peoples have since debated the intentions and implications of the White Paper. Many viewed the policy, developed by Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chrétien as the culmination of changes in public sentiment and government attitudes towards Indian affairs in the 1960s, which increasingly saw Indian policy as oppressive rather than supportive. For example, in 1968, when Pierre Elliot Trudeau's Liberals came to power, global decolonization movements as well as new social movements, particularly the civil rights, student, and anti-poverty movements in the United States forced many Canadians to shift their critical gaze from the rest of the world to the injustice on their doorstep.<sup>113</sup> Canadians were increasingly conscious of how repressive government policy, which made First Nations people wards of the state and controlled every aspect of their lives from education to mobility, truly affected Indigenous peoples. Peeling away the façade of what many believed was a "humanitarian" and "protectionist" Indian policy, Canadians began to see the poverty, isolation, and dehumanization the Indian Act created and they demanded change. A series of exposés on First Nation reserve conditions throughout this era served to hasten Canadian political awareness. In the summer of 1965, for example, an article in *Weekend Magazine* drew attention to the racism and poor economic conditions faced by First Nations peoples in the Kenora, Ontario area, and Canadians were motivated to protest.<sup>114</sup>

In fact, Canadian citizens adopted and reshaped emerging political ideals from global movements and applied them to local and national issues of Indigenous rights, Quebec nationalism, and poverty.<sup>115</sup> These shifting political beliefs manifested in formal politics as well as in citizen-led movements. Groups such as the Waffle, for instance, a

<sup>113</sup> Sally Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy: The Hidden Agenda, 1968-70* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 13.

<sup>114</sup> Ian Adams, "The Indians: An Abandoned and Dispossessed People," *Weekend Magazine*, July 31, 1965, 2-6.

<sup>115</sup> For discussions on 1960s activism in Quebec see: Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).



militant socialist caucus within the New Democratic party formed in 1969 to support New Left politics and to voice opposition to the Vietnam War, colonialism in Quebec, and support for the labour and women's movement. A youth dominated dissident group with male leadership and a contingent of strong political women, the Waffle maintained much of its strength in Ontario, but had support in the prairies and British Columbia. The gap between the conservatism of many NDP members, who believed in the efficacy of parliamentary democracy, and comparatively radical stance of Waffle members who sought political solutions outside this frame, led to the Waffle's short life. With growing opposition to their politics, Waffle membership either acquiesced and reintegrated into the party, or broke away from the NDP to form the Movement for an Independent Socialist Canada in 1972.<sup>116</sup> Relatedly, the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA), created in Regina in 1964, also provided a framework through which young radicals could "challenge the systematic inequality that was foundational to the nation-state."<sup>117</sup> SUPA members spent time in Métis and First Nations communities to learn firsthand the types of conditions created under settler-colonialism, and to help Indigenous peoples escape this environment through politicization.<sup>118</sup> These programs had uneven success and attracted varying degrees of criticism. For instance, Bryan Palmer noted that despite the often-genuine concern for Indigenous peoples and the desire to help alleviate oppression, SUPA community outreach failed to accomplish anything concrete, and in fact many community members believed the radical students were spies for the Department of Indian Affairs or welfare agencies.<sup>119</sup> This distrust revealed the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous lived realities, and attested to the challenges inherent in relationships between communities with unequal social, political, and economic status. Yet, these programs exposed an important political shift in public consciousness that settler allies would build upon throughout the 1970s. Of course, just as Canadian citizens were becoming more politically aware, Indigenous peoples were simultaneously drawing strength and direction from these developing movements.

<sup>116</sup> Bryan Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Time* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 293-297.

<sup>117</sup> Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 259.

<sup>118</sup> Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 264-265.

<sup>119</sup> Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 264-265.

Sensitive to changing public sentiment and building upon Pearson's mandates, his successor as Liberal leader and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau developed a framework for greater public participation, equality, and more streamlined policymaking. Under his "Just Society" directive, Trudeau rejected the notion that any group could be accorded a separate position from the rest of the population and was convinced that removing the legislated difference between Indigenous and other Canadians could cure Canada's "Indian Problem."<sup>120</sup> Discounting the role of historic injustice in facilitating Indigenous oppression, Trudeau grossly misunderstood Indigenous realities and failed to grasp how liberal concepts of individualism, freedom, and equality ran counter to Indigenous peoples' history, collective rights, and self-identification.<sup>121</sup> In 1969, Nehiyaw (Cree) activist Harold Cardinal highlighted this settler ignorance arguing that Trudeau's Just Society did not apply to First Nations peoples, and that his White Paper represented cultural genocide.<sup>122</sup> Cardinal was not alone in his assessment, and Union staff member Reuben Ware explained, "the White Paper was a direct attack on Indians and most positions their leadership stood for. It was seen as forced termination, non-recognition of Indian status aboriginal rights, and administrative and legal assimilation—all this without ending racism and separation."<sup>123</sup> Similar developments were occurring in the United States at the time with the US government's policy of termination. Through this the

<sup>120</sup> Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, 226. The phrase, the "Indian Problem" has generally been used as a blanket statement capturing the poor socio-economic and political conditions faced by Indigenous peoples, as well as the fraught relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Noel Dyck suggested that this phrase has been problematically ingrained in Native-newcomer lexicon to denote a long-standing tension between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. Dyck lamented the widespread use of this phrase because it suggests that there is a fundamental and concrete "problem" that needs to be remedied. Instead, Dyck argued, "the Indian 'problem' is not an inherent condition or a 'thing,' but the underlying premise of a relationship." According to Dyck, "Euro-Canadian attitudes and actions towards Indians are and always have been an essential part of the 'problem.'" The Indian "problem" serves to deemphasize Euro-Canadian culpability in the challenging aspects of the Native-newcomer relationship, and I have chosen to use this phrase because it best represents Trudeau's attitudes towards Indigenous peoples at the time. While I do not believe that Trudeau denied the state's role in Indigenous injustice, I believe he viewed the issue as a problem to be solved. Noel Dyck, *What is the Indian 'Problem': Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian Administration* (St. John's: The Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1991), 1-3.

<sup>121</sup> Dale Turner, *This is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 13-14.

<sup>122</sup> Cardinal, 1.

<sup>123</sup> Reuben Ware, email communication to author, October 8, 2012.

government terminated the status of American Indians in an attempt to assimilate them, and like the White Paper, this prompted strong protest from American Indian tribes.<sup>124</sup>

The White Paper demonstrated the federal government's misunderstanding of Indigenous issues and presented a strong call to arms. Menno Boldt suggested "although the 1969 White Paper represented an 'enlightened' attempt to shift Canadian Indian policy from the framework of 'guilt management' to the framework of 'justice,' it quickly becomes clear that Trudeau's vision of justice for Indians was referenced into Western liberal ideology."<sup>125</sup> Indeed, the White Paper appeared to be thoughtful and foreword thinking in its conception, allowing Indigenous peoples to participate in Canadian institutions and ideologies as individuals, equals, and of their own volition, rather than regulating Indigenous existence through the Department of Indian Affairs and the Indian Act, but the White Paper was severely flawed. First, it revealed a lack of understanding about Indigenous peoples' complex feelings towards the Indian Act and their commitment to the continued recognition of their collective special status. Certainly, widespread derision of the Indian Act should have produced support for the White Paper, but First Nations peoples understood that while the policy was paternalistic and authoritarian, it also recognized the special status of First Nations and allocated reserve lands. It also protected the crown's fiduciary obligations to provide housing, education, and health and welfare services. In fact, reflecting on her initial reaction to the White Paper at the 2009 Union Annual General Assembly, Rose Charlie, president of the BC Indian Homemakers' Association and member of the Union supported the ideals of equality for Indigenous populations, but remained apprehensive of the retraction of important land, taxation, education, and health care rights, which stemmed from the Indian Act.<sup>126</sup> Moreover, Teme-Augama Anishnabai scholar Dale Turner argued that the White Paper reflected a larger ideology he labelled "White Paper liberalism," which

<sup>124</sup> For information on the United States government's termination policy see: Daniel M. Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2008); Sherry Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>125</sup> Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians: The Challenge of Self-Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 21.

<sup>126</sup> UBCIC AGA 2009 Grand Chief Rose Charlie – The Birth of the UBCIC (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS5LpSedQ1c&feature=relmfu>) <accessed March 21, 2012>.

erroneously saw freedom, equality, and individualism as the de facto remedy for Indigenous difficulties.<sup>127</sup> Such attitudes are clearly visible in the White Paper's interpretation of the treaties as out-dated and politically outlandish arrangements, since according to White Paper liberalism, it was impossible for one part of society to make a treaty with another part.<sup>128</sup> This unilateral rejection of Indigenous nationhood completely misunderstood and dismissed Indigenous understandings of the treaties as nation-to-nation agreements, and ignored Crown promises that were to be "carried out as long as the sun shines above and the water flows in the ocean."<sup>129</sup>

Second, highlighting racial difference, the White Paper also denied the historical reality of colonial dispossession by suggesting a policy could erase Indigenous inequality from Canadian history and memory. Boldt categorized this move as "amnesia" as a cure for injustice.<sup>130</sup> White Paper liberalism remained ignorant of the legacy of colonialism, failed to consider the unique nature of Indigenous rights, assumed the infallible legitimacy of the Canadian state in defining, granting, or retracting Indigenous rights, and did not acknowledge the need for genuine Indigenous consultation and participation in discussions about Indigenous rights.<sup>131</sup> Finally, the White Paper severely overestimated the extent to which Indigenous peoples, even if they desired to do so, could simply shrug off the Indian Act and seamlessly transition into full Canadian citizenship and equality. In other words, the White Paper failed to address the degree to which settler-colonialism continued to influence the lives of Canada's Indigenous peoples. Thus, the White Paper reflected both continuity and change in Canadian Indian policy. On the one hand, the White Paper encompassed the same thinly veiled assimilationist tendencies that had

<sup>127</sup> Turner, *This is not a Peace Pipe*, 15.

<sup>128</sup> Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, 224; McFarlane, 108-121.

<sup>129</sup> This phrase appears in the records of treaty negotiations between the Queen's representatives and Canadian First Nations and symbolizes the perpetual and binding relationship between the treaty parties. Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, Including the Negotiations on Which They Were Based* (1880; reprint, Calgary: Fifth House Publishing, 1991), 96.

<sup>130</sup> Boldt, 22. See also, McFarlane, 108-121; Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, 222-224.

<sup>131</sup> Turner, *This is not a Peace Pipe*, 15.

always dominated Canadian Indian policy.<sup>132</sup> Whether cloaked in the language of morality and good intentions for “uncivilized” Natives, as was evident in many areas of the pre-1951 versions of the Indian Act, or in the more modern context of citizenship and equality reflected in the White Paper, the underlying assumption of Canadian Indian policy remained the same: “the only good Indian is a non-Indian.”<sup>133</sup>

The White Paper did not represent the first eliminatory policy propagated by the settler-colonial state. Colonial officials worked to deny Indigenous rights and title through the imposition of the Indian Act and the allocation of reserves, and sought to expedite the eradication of Indigenous peoples through assimilationist policies and practices including enfranchisement, residential schools, missionization, limiting traditional economies, and the restructuring of band governance. The White Paper was simply an extension or evolution of the attitudes apparent in nineteenth and twentieth century Indian policy in that it sought to be the final solution to address the Indian “problem.” When policies of spatial removal in the form of reserves and institutional assimilation failed to have the desired eliminatory effects, the Canadian government further bureaucratized their attempts through deleterious legislation. On the other hand, it is important to recognize that the White Paper sought to change how Indigenous peoples in Canada were conceived of and treated by abolishing the factors that many believed kept Indigenous peoples marginalized. This policy reflected the first time the Canadian government had attempted to produce a framework for Indigenous justice, and in the months that followed, they provided an opening for Indigenous political discourse. This new space was the result of Indigenous political actions and development as well as changing government response.

<sup>132</sup> Various amendments to the act have been made since its inception in 1876, including: intervention in band governance procedures (1884 and 1920); the prohibition of religious ceremonies (1885); and outlawing hiring of lawyers to pursue land claims (1927-1951).

<sup>133</sup> Cardinal, 1. Using this phrase to describe the ideology of Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chrétien and Deputy Minister John A. Macdonald concerning Indigenous peoples, Cardinal was playing off General Phil Sheridan’s statement on exterminationist American Indian policy: “The only good Indian is a dead Indian.” This phrase is also reproduced in Patrick Wolfe, “Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 397.

BC Indigenous peoples used the White Paper policy to continue their drive towards unity. This began in the national consultation meetings between Indigenous leaders and senior policy officials from June 1968 and May 1969 where participants discussed changes to the Indian Act. During these consultations Indigenous leaders were vocal and united in their opposition to moving away from the Indian Act and the treaties, insisting that they “wanted their special rights honoured and their historical grievances, particularly over lands and treaties, recognized and dealt with in an equitable fashion.”<sup>134</sup> Leaders also voiced a desire for “direct and meaningful participation in the making of policies that affected their future.”<sup>135</sup> Union archival records and oral interviews reveal that BC leaders were frustrated with the consultation process, and began using the meetings to formulate their own political goals. Indeed, many current and former members of the Union suggest that the organization reached its embryonic stage during these failed consultation meetings. They insisted these gatherings provided Indigenous leaders from across the province a rare opportunity to engage in face-to-face political discussions with bands outside of their traditional territories.<sup>136</sup> This strategy built on an existing trend that saw First Nations leaders use government-sponsored meetings in the 1950s to create provincial and national organizations.<sup>137</sup> By the time the consultation meetings were wrapping up in May 1969,

<sup>134</sup> Weaver, 5.

<sup>135</sup> Weaver, 5

<sup>136</sup> Guerin, interview; Saul Terry, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 30, 2012; Clarence Jules, interview with author, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, Kamloops, BC, June 12, 2012; Arthur Manuel, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 14, 2012; Saddleman, interview.

<sup>137</sup> McFarlane argued that the National Indian Council (NIC), founded in 1961, grew out of annual meetings amongst Manitoba First Nations in the late 1950s. McFarlane, 60. Cardinal pointed to a similar experience in Alberta during the 1950s whereby the Department of Indian Affairs organized a series of conferences with Indigenous peoples to determine their needs. These meetings were called agricultural conferences, though Cardinal insisted, “These so-called agricultural conferences covered every conceivable topic, except, possibly, agriculture and thus directly affected the strength of the Indian organizations within the provinces. Gradually the government added to the agenda of these conferences, changing their titles to meet their expanded purposes. They became economic development conferences and community development conferences and, eventually, all-chiefs’ conferences.” Cardinal suggested, however, “each conference hurt the real Indian organization conferences, because most of the key members of a reserve usually chose to attend the one where all expenses were paid.” The difference in Alberta, then, is that these meetings did not lead to the creation of a pan-Indian organization like the Union in BC. Cardinal, 86-87.

BC Indigenous leaders had formulated their response, a pan-Indian political organization.<sup>138</sup>

In the end, the federal government ignored the wishes of Indigenous peoples, which were articulated continuously over the eleven-month consultation process, and the resulting White Paper policy reflected this obvious disregard for Indigenous voices. Instead, the policy championed a settler-oriented framework of justice and equality through the dismantling of the Department of Indian Affairs, the retraction of the Indian Act, and the rejection of special status guaranteed through the Indian Act and the treaties.<sup>139</sup> When Trudeau's government released the White Paper in June 1969, Indigenous peoples were outraged. While most opposed the policy itself, many were also critical of the way in which it was developed without the genuine input of Indigenous peoples. Sally Weaver argued, "for its critics, the policy was, at best, a perversion of 'consultative democracy' and, at worst, a case of duplicity."<sup>140</sup> Established organizations such as the Indian Association of Alberta responded by preparing scathing counter-proposals expressing their outright rejection of the White Paper policy, while other First Nations organized provincial and national associations in order to formulate a response.<sup>141</sup> On the one hand, these actions were clear responses to the White Paper, but I maintain that some of the well-organized political mobilization emerged before the White Paper came out.

This close analysis of the province's political history and the broader context of the White Paper disrupts the linear causality between the White Paper and the creation of the Union. The creation of the Union achieved political unity but this was not the de facto solution to the eliminatory nature of settler-colonial policy and practice. And yet, the context of the White Paper had provided a forum in which unity and settler-colonial ideology could interact and it eventually created the space for a more open discussion

<sup>138</sup> Jules, interview; Sioliya (June Quipp), interview with author, Cheam First Nation, Rosedale, BC, June 25, 2012; Ware, interview; Wahmeesh (Ken Watts) interview with author, Ts'ishaa7ath (Tseshaht) First Nation Band Office, Port Alberni, BC, June 28, 2012..

<sup>139</sup> McFarlane, 108-109.

<sup>140</sup> Weaver, 3.

<sup>141</sup> Weaver, 5; Turner, *This is not a Peace Pipe*, 27; Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, 230-235; Andrew Woolford, *Between Justice and Certainty: The British Columbia Treaty Process* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).

about Indigenous rights and title. The White Paper was therefore an important component in Indigenous politics, but it was by no means the only one. As I have argued here, historically Indigenous peoples have looked to a variety of sources to affirm and develop their politics including community-based knowledge and colonial histories. I have demonstrated how BC's existing Native-newcomer land policies meant that BC First Nations were consistently agitating through petitions, chiefs' delegations, pan-tribal organizations, and local political movements to have their injustices remedied. These developments primed BC First Nations for a successful attempt at provincial unity, but before 1969, they lacked the means to achieve this. In the first half of the twentieth century, isolation, financial issues, state opposition, and limitations of the leadership, particularly in terms of engaging with unfamiliar Canadian legislation, impeded political unity. By the latter half of the century, Indigenous peoples had adjusted and adapted their strategies, leading to an explosion of attempts at political organization and provincial unity, but these remained fraught with regional and personal tensions. By 1969, however, BC Indigenous peoples had developed the skills necessary to develop pan-tribal unity, and when the White Paper threatened to abolish the rights First Nations had been trying to preserve, they were given exactly what they needed to formulate a coherent response: a concrete policy to unite against. These local and national factors, paired with a longstanding desire for unity and a more responsive state meant that in 1969 BC First Nations were finally able to successfully articulate their Indigenous rights in a unified and coherent manner. This is not to suggest that achieving unity ensured the unproblematic or even enactment of Indigenous political authority, however, and the next chapter will examine this.



## **Chapter 3.**

# **“Ordinary Indians” and the “Indian Club”: Political Authority, Democracy, and Pan-tribal Unity**

The creation of the Union facilitated pan-tribal unity but it also followed the vision of the original organizers who wanted to preserve and utilize existing band governance structures and channels of authority. Members designed the Union as a representative democratic association whereby the almost 200 First Nations communities elected their chiefs and then the chiefs selected Union leadership. From the group of 192 provincial chiefs, fifteen were internally selected to represent their districts in the chiefs' council, and from those chiefs, three were chosen by members of the chiefs' council to serve as the executive (see Figure 3 and Table 1).<sup>1</sup> This created a tiered representative democracy whereby the people indirectly elected the Union executive.<sup>2</sup> At the bottom of the Union's structure were band chiefs who were elected by their membership and who took local concerns to their elected Union district representatives at regular meetings. The district representative chiefs then brought their region's issues in the form of individual band or district resolutions to the annual general assembly, where the entire organization could address concerns. At the top of the Union structure was the chiefs' council and executive council that also met throughout the year to debate larger questions of land claims and Indigenous rights.<sup>3</sup> As the organization developed its political legs, first responding to the White Paper policy and then addressing the “Indian land question” largely writ, it became clear that the political authority vested in unity was

<sup>1</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, File 978/24-2-12 (part 1), Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1973-1976, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Memorandum, May 6, 1971; Minutes of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, November 17-22, 1969, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>2</sup> “Union of BC Indian Chiefs Constitution,” in Minutes: Union of BC Indian Chiefs Second Annual Convention, November 16-21, 1970, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>3</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, File 978/24-2-12 (part 1), Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1973-1976, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Memorandum, May 6, 1971.

uneven, and this became a strong point of contention amongst members and within communities who called for changes in Union structure.

The Union's vision for unity was premised on the representative authority of the chiefs, which reinforced status and gender based inequalities amongst Union constituents. The patrilineal Indian Act and masculinist Indigenous political frameworks limited women's political involvement and the Union reproduced this exclusion by relying on the male-dominated chief and council framework.<sup>4</sup> These political modalities confirmed and strengthened men's roles as leaders as well as their political priorities. The Union's organizational structure, which limited community involvement to the band level, was similarly restrictive. Despite these barriers, interest groups outside the Union membership demanded a say in provincial politics and challenged their limited political authority by forwarding their own visions of unity. Band members called for direct rather than representative democracy within the Union, and Indigenous women reminded their leaders and communities that under current systems they were excluded from both. Women called for revisions to the Indian Act to protect against membership loss and in doing this they made a case for women's political recognition and inclusion. I consider these dynamics by bringing together Glen Coulthard's interpretation of the politics of recognition which focuses on the inequalities between state-Indigenous political relationships with Audra Simpson's politics of refusal, which imagines the political power of refusing state attempts to identify, categorize, and subjugate Indigenous peoples. I consider recognition amongst Indigenous peoples to determine whether political reciprocity can exist amid unequal political, gender, and status considerations. I integrate a strong gendered analysis of Indigenous politics to argue that political recognition dually oppressed and politically dispossessed Indigenous women. Demonstrating the extent to which the politics of recognition and refusal occur amongst Indigenous communities, not just between Indigenous peoples and the state, I reveal how community members and sympathetic leaders confirmed, critiqued, recognized, and refused political modalities according to their own priorities and political positions. These individuals sought to

<sup>4</sup> The male-dominated nature of Indigenous politics has been documented elsewhere. See: Jo-Anne Fiske, "The Womb is to the Nation as the Heart is to the Body: Ethnohistorical Discourses of the Canadian Indigenous Women's Movement," *Studies in Political Economy* 51 (Fall 1996): 65-95.

shape the Union and pan-tribal unity to fit their needs and challenged Union leadership with broader and more egalitarian interpretations of unity and democracy.

Communities across the province supported the idea of pan-tribal unity as the most effective way to achieve state recognition of Indigenous rights and title. But immediately after the Union began operating community members and some leaders questioned the organization's framework of representation and democratic decision-making. Initially, the configuration of the Union was meant to ensure that the chiefs remained accountable to their people and that the Union executive was responsible to the other chiefs. Nevertheless, the Union's structure attracted criticism as early as 1970 with at least one Union delegate suggesting changes to the Union constitution. Addressing representatives at the annual assembly, Ted Watts advocated changing the name of the organization to the "Union of BC Indians," eliminating "Chiefs" from the title.<sup>5</sup> Watts and other constituents such as Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Chief Joe Mathias believed that this name change would prompt delegates to match the new name with changes to Union structure and ensure the organization became a voice of the people rather than a sounding board for the chiefs. Watts reasoned that while the organization would still include elected representatives, these actors would not come from a limited pool of elite leadership—the chiefs—but would also come from the communities. The proposal was entertained, but rejected on the basis that another incorporated society had already taken the suggested name.<sup>6</sup> This was a convenient turn of events for those who wanted to preserve the Union as a chiefs' organization.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, Watts and the others were putting forward their specific understanding of Union multi-politics, which recognized and valued the authority of the chiefs while making room for grassroots opinions. In the end, the name and structure of the Union solidified it as a chiefs' organization, but the tension between the grassroots and the leadership continued to build ensuring persistent debate about what kind of organization the Union should be and how it should serve its constituents.

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Second Annual Convention, November 16-21, 1970, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>6</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Second Annual Convention, November 16-21, 1970, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. Anonymous, interview with author.

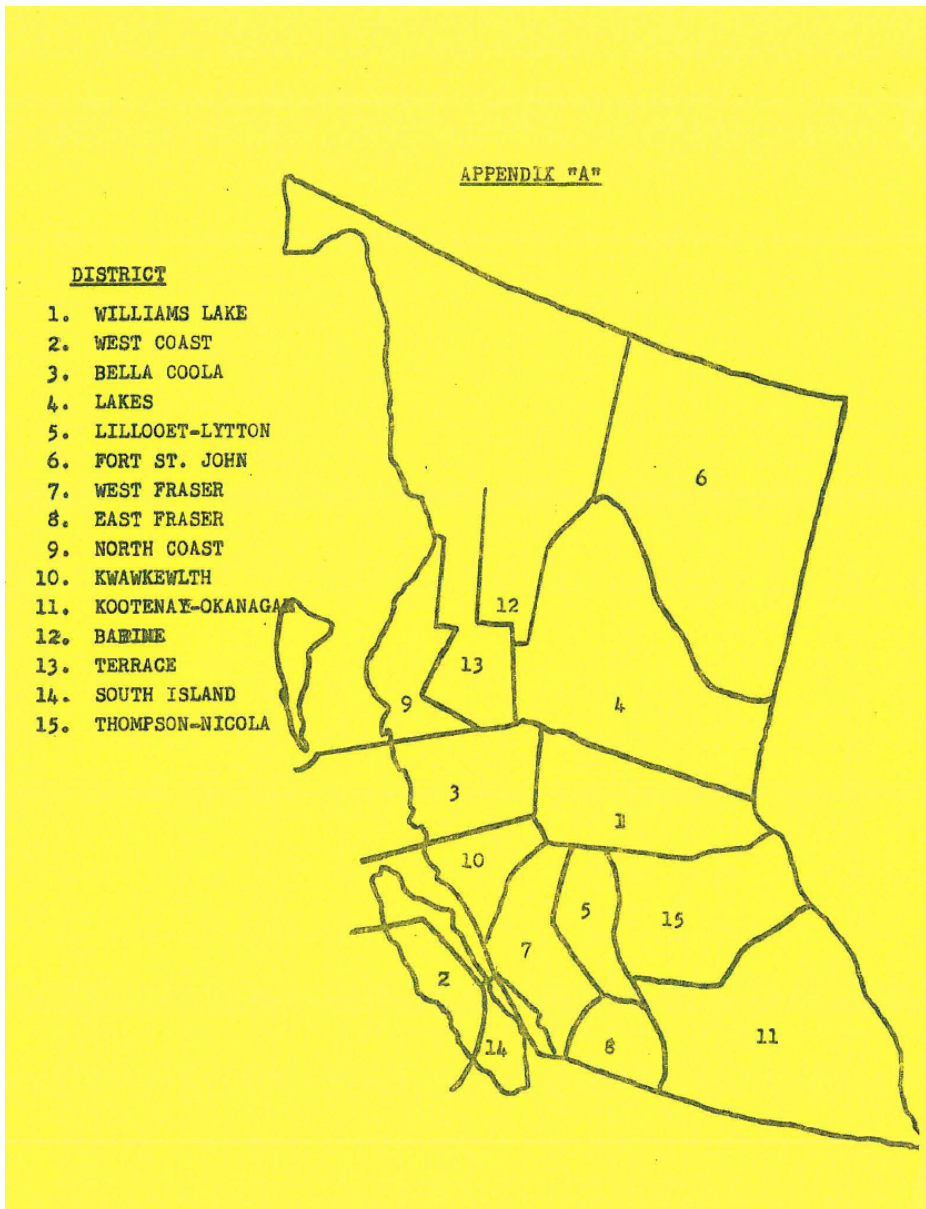
<sup>7</sup> Anonymous, interview.

The negotiation of multi-politics was also evident within the Union general assemblies, as members with varied positions, backgrounds, and political goals got involved. For instance, Bill Wilson (Kwakwaka'wakw) quickly joined the charge against the potential unchecked political authority of the Union and the exclusion of grassroots opinions. Wilson appealed for the Union to embrace participatory or direct democracy rather than representative democracy, which he felt failed to truly capture public opinion. "We are setting up hopefully an organization that you can control from the grassroots level of Indian people . . ." Wilson declared. "It is every Band making decisions, setting priorities so that we can act on them. If you want to turn it into a bureaucracy like the Department of Indian Affairs," Wilson continued, "fine. We have a lot of Indian candidates who are willing to be bureaucrats."<sup>8</sup> Bureaucracy officially refers to a non-elected body of officials most commonly encountered in government agencies. These individuals are in charge of administering ideas, policies, and initiatives. More commonly, the term is used to describe administrative elements of an organization or group. Within the Union, bureaucracy referred to this administration, but also denoted interaction with Canadian government agencies and centralized power structures. In other words, bureaucracy was associated with government departments, particularly the Department of Indian Affairs, and was used to describe this relationship as well as political forms that many activists viewed as antithetical to Indigenous politics. Wilson did not provide a definition of bureaucracy, but his discussion indicates that he viewed it as directly oppositional to grassroots involvement whereby chiefs became faceless representations of power and prestige and remained insulated from the grassroots through policies and administrative structures.<sup>9</sup> Relatedly, I use the term grassroots to denote community members who may or may not be politically aware or involved, but who lack positions in formal band politics or organizations such as the Union. Grassroots individuals attended Union meetings, voted in band elections, and took part in local political initiatives such as committees or demonstrations, but they were not voting members of the Union or chiefs and councillors for their communities. Of course, just as

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Second Annual Convention, November 16-21, 1970, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>9</sup> See also: Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 170. Tennant suggested criticism about the disconnect between leadership and grassroots occurred at every general meeting in the early years of the Union, and by 1973 made its way into the Indian newspapers as well.

leadership positions were fluid, so too did grassroots positions change over time allowing grassroots to become leaders and vice versa. These changes, however, did not alter the parameters of grassroots versus formal or bureaucratic politics. Grassroots initiatives were community-based and largely informal, while bureaucratic and organizational politics were formalized through structures of leadership.



**Figure 3. Union Districts, 1971**

Source: UBCIC 4<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly Kit, 1972, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. Used with Permission.

**Table 1. Union of BC Indian Chiefs Districts, 1971**

| District Name(s)  | Bands <sup>a</sup>   |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Williams Lake District (15 bands)</b>   | Alexandria, Alexis Creek, Alkali Lake, Anaham, Canim Lake, Canoe Creek, Nomaiah Valley, Quesnel, Soda Creek, Stone, Toosey, Williams Lake, Nazko, Kluskus, Ulkatcho.   |
| <b>2. West Coast District (14 bands)</b>  | Ahousaht, Clayquot, Hosquiaht, Nitinaht, Ohaiht, Opotchosaht, Sheshaht, Toquaht, Uchucklesaht, Ucluelet, Nootka, Kyuquot, Ehattesaht, Muchatlaht.  |
| <b>3. Bella Coola District (4 bands)</b>  | Bella Bella, Bella Coola, Kitasoo, Oweekano.   |
| <b>4. Lakes District – after 1979 Prince George District (13 bands)</b>                       | Burns Lake, Omineca, Fort George, Lake Babine, Stellaquo, Necolsie, Finlay River, Cheslatta, Fraser Lake, McLeod Lake, Takla Lake, Stony Creek, Stuart-Trembleur.  |
| <b>5. Lillooet-Lytton District (18 bands)</b>   | Anderson Lake, Mount Currie, Douglas, Skookumchuck, Samahquam, Bridge River, Cayoose Creek, Fountain, Lillooet, Pavilion, Seton Lake, Boothroyd, Kanaka Bar, Siska, Spuzzum, Boston Bar, Lytton, Skuppah.    |
| <b>6. Fort St. John District (4 bands)</b>  | Saulteau, Fort Nelson, Hudson Hope, Fort St. John.   |
| <b>7. West Fraser District – united with East Fraser to become Fraser District (11 bands)</b> | Burrard, Coquitlam, Katzie, Musqueam, Semiahmoo, Sechelt, Sliammon, Homalco, Klahoose, Squamish, Tsawwassen.   |
| <b>8. East Fraser District (24 bands)</b>   | Aitchelitz, Chehalis, Langley, Matsqui, Scowlitz, Skway, Skulkayn, Soowahlie, Skwah, Squila, Tzeachten, Yakweakwioose, Sumas, Lakahahmen, Kwaw-kwaw-A-Pilt, Seabird Island, Skawahlook, Hope, Cheam, Popkum, |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Peters, Ohamil, Union Bar, Yale.   |
| <b>9. North Coast District – after 1979<br/>Campbell River District (7 bands)</b>  | Masset, Skidegate, Kincolith, Kitkatla,<br>Metlakatla, Port Simpson, Hartley Bay.  |
| <b>10. Kwawkewlth District<sup>b</sup> (14 bands)</b>  | Cape Mudge, Comox, Kwicksutaineuk,<br>Tanakteuk, Kwawwawaineuk,<br>Mamalillikulla, Quatsino, Kwiakah,<br>Kwawkewlth, Nuwitti, Tsawataineuk,<br>Turnour Island, Campbell River, Nimpkish.   |
| <b>11. Kootenay-Okanagan District – after<br/>1979 united with Thompson-Nicola to<br/>become Central District (12 bands)</b> | Okanagan, Penticton, Upper Similkameen,<br>Westbank, Tobacco Plains, Shuswap,<br>Osoyoos, Lower Similkameen,<br>Spallumcheen, St. Mary's, Columbia Lake,<br>Lower Kootenay.  |
| <b>12. Babine District – after 1979 Gitksan-<br/>Carrier District (8 bands)</b>  | Hazelton, Kispiox, Kitwanga, Hagwilget,<br>Glen Vowell, Kitsegukla, Kitwancool,<br>Moricetown.   |
| <b>13. Terrace District – after 1979<br/>Northwest District (6 bands)</b>  | Gitlakdamix, Canyon City, Kitselas,<br>Greenville, Kitimaat, Kitsumkalum.  |
| <b>14. South Island District – after 1979<br/>Nanaimo District (19 bands)</b>  | Beecher Bay, Cowichan, Esquimalt,<br>Lyackson, Nanaimo, Penelakut,<br>Pauquachin, Tsawout, Songhees,<br>Pacheenaht, Chemainus, Lake Cowichan,<br>Halalt, Malahat, Nanoose, Qualicum,<br>Tsartlip, Tseycum, Sooke.                        |
| <b>15. Thompson-Nicola District (18 bands)</b>   | Adams Lake, Bonaparte, Kamloops,<br>Neskainlith, Oregon Jack, Cook's Ferry,<br>Nicomen, Shackan, Clinton, Ashcroft,<br>Deadman's Creek, Little Shuswap, North<br>Thompson, Coldwater, Lower Nicola,<br>Upper Nicola, Nooaitch, High Bar. |

Source: Data from Union of BC Indian Chiefs by-laws and organization materials, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>a</sup> Band names appear as in the original document. See appendix for current band names.

<sup>b</sup> Kwawkewlth is also spelled Kwawkwelth in the historical records.

The question of whether government departments and political forms should be incorporated into Union multi-politics was highly debated and incited strong internal political refusals. Rejecting government involvement, Wilson outlined two common fears amongst constituents. The first was that Union leadership would assume control over the political movement and fail to act in the best interests of the communities, and second, that Indigenous political practices would be co-opted by outside ideologies and non-Native institutions such as the Department of Indian Affairs. There was much concern that the latter phenomenon was serving to fuel the former, with the Department working to channel decision-making powers into an organized administrative hierarchy, which, according to Wilson, simply changed the colour of bureaucratic power from white to brown and left oppression intact. This shift was not intentional on the part of the Union, but developed out of the need to engage with government agencies to have its concerns met.<sup>10</sup> In order to position itself as an organization capable of liaising with government agencies and proposing a strong political claim, the Union needed professional leaders and administrative support, and it looked to government agencies for a strong political model. This created practical and ideological barriers between activists with diverging priorities. The Union executive worked to streamline the association so they could mobilize easily to make decisions, and implement policies and programs. Thus, they demanded the space and authority to do so.

Other Union members enacted refusals against the Union executive by positioning themselves as advocates for the grassroots and supporters of direct democracy. In 1973, Haila Chief Rocky Amos echoed Wilson and Watts's concerns and wrote a piece in the Union's newspaper *Nesika* criticizing the other chiefs and councillors for acting without the input of band members. "Too seldom are the opinions and wishes of the communities heard first hand," Amos began. "Too seldom are they made to feel they are actually participating in the destiny being made out for them. Too seldom are they allowed their voice in the plans which govern their daily existence," he declared. Instead, Amos insisted, the leadership was acting like the Department and preserving an

<sup>10</sup> Mark Leier noticed something similar in the BC Labour movement. See: Mark Leier, *Red Flags & Red Tape: The Making of a Labour Bureaucracy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), chapters two and three.



attitude of paternalism towards band members.<sup>11</sup> Even more frustrating for Amos, however, was the “dictatorial” nature of the Union executive and chiefs’ council, who represented the highest level of Union leadership. Referencing an authoritarian statement by one chief who argued Union member nation chiefs “had no right to question the Union council,” Amos wondered where this left band members who did not occupy official roles if non-executive chiefs lacked a political voice.<sup>12</sup> On paper the tiered democracy of the Union promoted grassroots involvement, but in practice it did not necessarily protect the interests of those outside the executive or chiefs’ council. At the 1975 Chilliwack assembly Neskonlith Chief Joe Manuel stressed the need for communities to direct the political movement by directly electing Union executive leadership and having a voice in the organization. “I would like to remind the assembly that I’ve visited the reserves and people ask how the Union is structured,” Joe Manuel began. “To create involvement,” he continued, “we should have the people at the bands voting on who they want. Ever since 1969 I hear people say that they want the grassroots level people to decide, well we should let those grassroots people vote for who they want to make some decisions.”<sup>13</sup> To activate this position, Union records show that the Neskonlith Band passed a band council resolution in March 1975 calling for positions in the Union to be elected at the band level.<sup>14</sup> The continuity of these speeches delivered over the course of six years exposed a growing division between the grassroots and their allies in leadership, and the opposing chiefs. These statements directed criticism at certain chiefs, but also proved that people viewed the Union as an organization they could potentially influence, and as one that could protect their interests.

To initiate this influence, non-Union voices were filtered through sympathetic band and Union leadership and other channels. For instance, as elected leaders or

<sup>11</sup> Rocky Amos, “Community Voices too seldom heard,” *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 2, no. 8 (August 1973): 3.

<sup>12</sup> Rocky Amos, “Community Voices too seldom heard,” *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 2, no. 8 (August 1973): 3.

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>14</sup> Neskonlith Band Council, “Band Council Resolution,” in the Information Kit from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs 7<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly, April 21-25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

politically involved individuals, Watts, Wilson, Amos, and Manuel occupied privileged positions within the movement, allowing them to address Union leaders and membership. This opportunity was not afforded to all First Nations peoples as the Union restricted access to the assembly floor to voting members. Yet, community members could make their opinions heard by using their leaders to speak on their behalf, as proven above, or by using the Union's newspaper, which openly solicited opinion pieces and materials from the grassroots.<sup>15</sup> The Union newspaper also published meeting minutes and Union resolutions, which would keep community members apprised of Union activities and allowed them to craft informed comments.

The effectiveness of competing multi-politics within the Union and internal refusals concerning political authority in the Union was apparent in two proposed changes to the organization at the 1975 assembly. The first proposal would see the configuration of the organization altered so that the assembly rather than the chiefs' council would elect the three-person executive committee. The second would allow band members rather than district chiefs to elect their district representatives. These suggestions were designed to dismantle the "private club" that community members and some chiefs accused the chiefs' council and executive committee of perpetuating.<sup>16</sup> In theory, it would also allow grassroots activism to replace the unimpeded political authority and "brown bureaucracy" Wilson worried was dominating the Union.<sup>17</sup> The first recommendation was widely accepted as a way to facilitate direct democracy within the Union, but this change simply opened voting up to a wider selection of elected leaders and still excluded band members' involvement. This was significant, however, as expanding the elections from fifteen to 192 chiefs ensured more local input and genuine debate as varied political goals and philosophies converged.

<sup>15</sup> Seonghoon Kim noticed a similar phenomenon in American Red Power movement in the 1960s and 1970s whereby Red Power newspapers facilitated and represented pan-Indigenous politics by soliciting and printing activist pieces. Kim also referenced Canadian Indian publications such as *Indian Voice* and *Indian News* as well. Seonghoon Kim, "We Have Always Had These Many Voices': Red Power Newspapers and a Community of Poetic Resistance," *American Indian Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (Summer 2015): 271-301.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

The second motion prompted more debate, as many chiefs were hesitant to relinquish control to the grassroots. Responding to charges that the chiefs' council and Union executive acted like a private club, Chief Forrest Walkem of the Nlaka'pamux Cook's Ferry Band, countered that chiefs were democratically elected leaders who remained accountable to their constituents. As the chiefs contemplated their conflicting leadership ideologies and practices, the assembly floor became increasingly polarized. Multi-political differences contributed to feelings of alienation by individuals such as Walkem, who responded with his own counter-refusals towards the critics. Sarcastically introducing himself as "president" of the Cook's Ferry Band and denouncing the proposal, Walkem declared, "I heard people get up to the mike and say that we do not have elected leaders and I guess this is where I must step down as a Chief; I feel like President Nixon." Pausing to consider the proposal at hand, Walkem continued, "I go along with Fraser East's resolution to let the Chiefs of British Columbia at a general assembly do the voting and electing. If the people at the band level are not satisfied with the person they have elected and they are not satisfied with the decisions that he is making then they should do that at the band level." Concluding, he insisted, "I think they give the Chief a certain responsibility and it doesn't matter which club you belong to they all come to a general assembly like this and carry on their elections."<sup>18</sup> Walkem resisted calls by Joe Manuel, Rocky Amos, and Bill Wilson for direct democracy, and instead advocated representative democracy, which gave band members control over their band leadership but promoted autonomy for Union leadership. Manuel, Amos, and Wilson on the other hand, wanted to ensure genuine and sustained political participation from the ground level, and in their speeches to the Union, proved that this system was possible. Casting the leadership preferences of individual chiefs as potentially compromising community support for the Union, these men contributed to the eventual acceptance of this motion.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. Video recording of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 23, 1975; Video recording of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 21, 1975. <<http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/Digital/7thAGAMIC.htm#axzz2ZLDtxDg4>>. It is interesting to note that Walkem uses the pronoun "he" to refer to chiefs in general terms. Female chiefs were still greatly underrepresented in 1975, but this term also affirms the dominance of male chiefs in Indigenous peoples' political imaginations.

Political tensions amongst leaders and the grassroots could run high, and sarcasm often crept in as a way to alleviate some of the frustration, while simultaneously allowing people to criticize practices they disagreed with. This was particularly evident during the discussion on leadership where individuals addressing the delegation often introduced themselves as members of “the club” or like Kerry Frank, held up fake cards to indicate that they possessed the appropriate credentials to speak.<sup>19</sup> Those without the appropriate qualifications could also use sarcasm as a way to access the Union floor and bring authority to their voices. For example, Raymond Jones identified himself as an “ordinary Indian” of the “Indian club” when addressing the delegation to second a motion on the floor.<sup>20</sup> Using these terms, Jones offered a critique of the unequal political authority accorded to conference attendees, and in doing this created the space for his own political voice. This transgression was significant since conference attendees without leadership credentials could attend meetings, but could not participate in motions, voting, or debate, unless expressly invited through a formal motion. In the context of the discussion, which saw delegates debating the power and accountability of the leadership as well as the disaffecting nature of the Union’s bureaucracy, Jones’s assertion of political will is significant.

Although Union leaders and First Nations chiefs maintained considerable power within their communities and the pan-tribal organization, their positions and visions for unity were consistently questioned by band membership who demanded a role in the political process. And while the clear political hierarchies existed within the Union, it was also the case that divisions between “grassroots” and “leadership” were blurred. As non-voting members, community members occupied liminal spaces within the organization by becoming involved in the assemblies or in the Union itself as staff members.

<sup>19</sup> On April 23, 1975, Ray Harris noted he was not part of any club and not a chief or councillor, but wanted to speak. Likewise, Charles Chapman noted he was not a delegate and did not have voting rights. Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Video recording of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 21, 1975; Video recording of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 23, 1975. <<http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/Digital/7thAGAMIC.htm#axzz2ZLDtxDg4>>.

Likewise, chiefs and councillors could inhabit different spaces within the ranks of leadership. In an organization composed entirely of elected chiefs that became further stratified with the creation of an executive, “leadership” became a complex and shifting category. This meant that non-executive chiefs and councillors could occupy a middle position between the leadership of the Union and the grassroots, allowing these leaders to ally themselves with the communities or the executive at any given time. Indeed, as we saw earlier in the discussions on Union leadership, Chief Joe Manuel aligned himself with the grassroots and used his political power as a chief to censure the actions of the executive committee. Forrest Walkem, on the other hand, used his role to support the executive. The nature of democratic politics further complicated these relationships. If a chief failed to secure re-election, he or she lost their political role in the Union and became a member of the grassroots. Reuben Ware highlighted this reality and insisted, “[the chiefs] had to win an election. I mean they weren’t chief if they didn’t win an election, so, all the politics took place around that.”<sup>21</sup> This could be a powerful bargaining chip for the grassroots who could use their political support to direct their chief’s political agenda. Concern about elections could also have the opposite effect, however, leading chiefs to actively avoid controversial decisions in order to preserve their position. Yet, Delbert Guerin suggested a dominant attitude amongst BC First Nations was that one’s leadership or title as chief did not disappear after an election loss. His wife’s grandfather had insisted, “once you’re a chief, you’re always a chief,” and Guerin adopted this attitude.<sup>22</sup> This was a common view for hereditary chiefs whose position and authority was inborn through their ancestry rather than ascribed through the election process, but amongst elected chiefs, this title often continued beyond their political tenure as a sign of respect. Political authority, then, was exhibited through a complex series of shifting and permanent positions.

Indigenous women also voiced their political goals both from within the Union, where they occupied limited positions on staff or on council, as well as from outside, where they used their own organizations to overcome the dual racial and gender oppression that characterized Indigenous womanhood. The specific history which

<sup>21</sup> Reuben Ware, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 20, 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Delbert Guerin, interview with author, xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam) First Nation, Vancouver, BC, May 31, 2013.

contributed to the decline of women's socio-political status in favour of that of Indigenous men, the destabilization of women's community membership status, and the gendering of political issues is important here. Much of Indigenous women's socio-political oppression stemmed from the Indian Act. The act defined status, band membership, and the franchise along gendered lines and systematically excluded Indigenous women from the developing pan-tribal political community. Because Indigenous women's status could shift quickly according to their marital partners, women's stake in political unity, land claims, and Indigenous rights was unstable. Organizations such as the Union perpetuated political exclusion by using existing band structures as the foundation for voting membership. The organization ignored how this framework removed some Indigenous women from the Union's political objectives, and this in turn influenced how men and women constructed and understood political unity. Indigenous males foresaw pan-tribal unity as a way to achieve Indigenous rights and title along these band membership lines, while Indigenous women increasingly used the discourse of unity to advocate for their inclusion as community members with a stake in the outcomes and a voice in the process. Indigenous women's multi-politics involved challenging their membership status in order to experience the benefits of pan-tribal unity. They used the discourse of unity to demand their inclusion. These women were not just expressing a conflicting opinion, but were fighting against the dominant male political ideologies.

In the early 1970s, women intervened into the BC Indigenous movement through a series of networks including the BCIHA, the British Columbia Native Women's Society (BCNWS), and informal community channels, which affirmed the women's movement's growing strength and multiplicity. The BCNWS emerged shortly after the formation of the BCIHA largely as a response to the coastal dominance of the BCIHA. Since the strongest BCIHA chapters were on the south coast and Vancouver Island, many women in the interior felt isolated from the organization and demanded more local representation.<sup>23</sup> In response, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Band member Mildred

<sup>23</sup> Sioliya (June Quipp), interview with author, Cheam First Nation, Rosedale, BC, June 25, 2012; LAC, RG 10, Vol. 11484, File 976/24-5 (part 2), Homemakers' Clubs, 1967-1968, Letter from Mrs. Mildred (Gus) Gottfriedson to Mr. Duncan Clarke Re: Homemakers' Convention last year at Kamloops, April 27, 1968; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 271.

Gottfriedson formed the BCNWS in the interior.<sup>24</sup> To access political authority within the BC movement, Indigenous women had to circumvent deeply codified masculinist politics, which privileged male actors as well as male opinions about what issues were politically significant. Macro political issues such as sovereignty and the land claim were favoured over micro political concerns such as housing, education, and health, which were cast as women's issues and therefore the domain of organizations like the BCIHA. The BCIHA occupied a liminal space between bureaucratic and grassroots organization, and members acted as bridge leaders between the communities and the Union, while concurrently pursuing their own political objectives. Through this organization, then, BC Indigenous women operated within established gendered expectations, but also used their gender and roles as mothers to pursue strong grassroots political agendas.

As provincial spokeswomen and lobbyists, BCIHA members called for clarity in the policies affecting Indigenous populations. They decried the lack of equality in the services provided to Indigenous populations as compared to other British Columbians. The women made demands in the capacity of mothers concerned for their families and communities, and this both affirmed and challenged the Department's stated expectations of Indigenous women's roles.<sup>25</sup> At its 1969 convention, the BCIHA passed and forwarded thirty-eight resolutions to Department regional director J.V. Boys. The resolutions outlined weaknesses in Indigenous health and welfare, education, adoption policies, housing, Indian arts and crafts programs, and Canadian laws as they pertained to the First Nations population. Among the resolutions were calls for a new school to be built in Sts'ailes to alleviate overcrowding, the completion of Department-contracted housing, and cross-cultural training for non-Native teachers in the public school system.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Sioliya (June Quipp), interview; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 271.

<sup>25</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, Vol. 11481, File 971/24-5, Homemakers' Clubs, 1967-1968, Homemakers' Club Bulletin, October 1, 1955; LAC, RG 10, Vol. 13462, File 901-24-5-1, Homemakers' Club – Conventions, 1969/04-1970/09; LAC, RG 10, Vol. 11484, File 976/24-5 (part 2), Homemakers' Clubs, 1967-1969; LAC, RG 10, Box 2, Vol. 2, File 901/24-2-5 (part 2), Indian Homemakers' Association of BC, 1976-1977; LAC, RG 10, Box 16, Vol. 1, File E6417-2254, Indian Homemakers' Association of BC, 1980-1981; LAC, RG 10, Box 16, Vol. 4, File E6417-2254, Homemakers' Association of BC, 1983.

<sup>26</sup> LAC, RG 10, Vol. 13462, File 901-24-5-1, Homemakers' Club – Conventions, 1969-1970, Rose Charlie to Regional Director J.V. Boys, July 3, 1969.

The BCIHA and BCNWS confronted their own men and Canadian government policies to establish Indigenous women as legitimate political participants and stakeholders in the organization and the wider movement. They targeted national Indian policy to accomplish this. Through a series of challenges mounted against the patriarchal foundations of Indian Act membership qualifications, including two high profile cases concerning women's status under the act, Indigenous women in BC experienced a new level of politicization. For example, between 1972 and 1983 the question of Indigenous women's status occupied a central position in the activities of the BCIHA and the BCNWS. Both organizations held conferences, conducted community surveys, and published materials on Indigenous women's rights in an attempt to secure stable political, social, and economic positions.<sup>27</sup> Grace Ouellette explained the national and international context of the women's movement such as the 1967 Royal Commission on the Status of Women, as well as an international conference of Indigenous women held in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1971 that united the women under a common cause.<sup>28</sup> Also in 1971, inspired by the 1970 Drybones lawsuit, which saw an Indigenous man, Joseph Drybones, overturn a conviction for off-reserve alcohol consumption by appealing to the 1960 Canadian Bill of Rights clause against racial discrimination, Ojibway woman Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, used a similar tactic to challenge the inherent sexism in the Indian Act.<sup>29</sup> Drawing on protections against discrimination based on sex outlined in the Bill of Rights, Lavell argued that the

<sup>27</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 987/24-5, Homemakers' Club – Gen, Indian Homemakers' Association Progress Report, December 31, 1972-November 1, 1973; LAC, RG 10, Box 2, Vol. 2, File 901/24-2-5 (part 2), Indian Homemakers' Association of BC, 1976-1977, Opening Remarks by Rose Charlie, President of the Indian Homemakers' Association at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, Airport Hyatt House, Richmond, BC, September 15, 1976; LAC, RG 10, Box 16, Vol. 1, File E6417-2254, Indian Homemakers' Association of BC, 1980-1981, Indian Homemakers' Association of BC Constitutional Position on Native Indian Children - 1981, May 1, 1981; LAC, RG 10, Box 16, Vol. 4, File E6417-2254, Homemakers' Association of BC, 1983, Indian Homemakers' Association of BC, Resolutions Passed at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, June 20-24, 1983.

<sup>28</sup> Grace J. M. W. Ouellette, *The Fourth World: An Indigenous Perspective on Feminism and Aboriginal Women's Activism* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2002), 30-31.

<sup>29</sup> Kathleen Jamieson, "Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act," in *Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1986), 126; Joanne Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women's Activism," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, and Transnationalism* 7, no. 1 (2006): 136-138; Dian Million, *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013), 59-61.



patrilineal membership provisions within the Indian Act violated her human rights.<sup>30</sup> After Judge Grossberg of the Ontario County Court ruled against Lavell, contending that Indigenous women who “married out” of their communities actually had more rights as Canadian women than they would as status Indigenous women, Lavell took her case to the Federal Court of Appeals. Embedded in Grossberg’s decision was the ethnocentric attitude that the civil rights Indigenous women gained by losing their status outweighed the cultural dislocation and material losses they experienced. Moreover, the decision was imbued with a patriarchal attitude that the court system and Judge Grossberg knew what was best for Indigenous women. The Federal Court of Appeals, on the other hand, recognized the broader issue of sexism and the court ruled in Lavell’s favour finding that the Indian Act granted different rights to men who married non-Native women than women who married non-Native men.<sup>31</sup> The case caused significant political controversy and wound up at the Supreme Court of Canada where Yvonne Bedard joined Lavell. Bedard was a Six Nations woman who lost her status through marriage and was evicted from her reserve despite separating from her husband. The two women faced off against the court as well as several male-dominated Indian organizations that disagreed with their position.<sup>32</sup> These cases and emerging national discussions about women’s status profoundly influenced Indigenous women including members of the BCIHA and the BCNWS, motivating these associations to openly discuss Indigenous women’s rights and the Indian Act.

The BCIHA and BCNWS drew on these cases to combat their political exclusion from community and pan-tribal politics, as well as the deeply ingrained gender biases that promoted these exclusions. As a part of this political awakening, the BCIHA’s 1973 conference addressed the ongoing Lavell case specifically, passing a motion in support of the legal action and calling for the federal government to rewrite the Indian Act.<sup>33</sup> The Union’s newspaper *Nesika* reported the BCIHA’s concern that the sanctioned Indigenous organizations in the province, which they described as “male dominated,” did

<sup>30</sup> Barker, “Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women’s Activism,” 136.

<sup>31</sup> Barker, “Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women’s Activism,” 136.

<sup>32</sup> Jamieson, “Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act,” 126.

<sup>33</sup> “Native Women’s Rights dominate Homemakers’ annual conference,” *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* vol. 2, no 6 (June 1973): 4.

not fully represent the Indian people and ignored women's rights. BCIHA president Rose Charlie explained that no one consulted Indigenous women on political decisions and mandates at the band and provincial levels, but rather community men viewed women as political observers or mere extensions of the men.<sup>34</sup> Charlie directly challenged the tendency for women to act as support systems for the men without questioning the ways in which this subjugated Indigenous women. Charlie highlighted how Indigenous women were not included within Union conceptions of pan-tribal unity, and used the BCIHA convention to promote change. One month after the Union newspaper published Charlie's criticisms, some of the Union membership was beginning to listen. In July 1973, an editorial in the Union's paper warned the leadership of the loss of politically perceptive and important women:

We are standing by watching our strength being drained off by the formation of women's organizations within our ranks. Why are we not ensuring that our associations give women full representation and an unrestricted voice in all of our activities? A change in the by-laws to provide for a male president and a female vice-president, or vice-versa, would ensure that our women would be given a change to hold office. A change in the requirements for appointing delegates to the annual assembly, making it mandatory that each local send an equal number of both sexes as delegates, would give our women equal rights in our organizations. A change in by-laws on the terms of office of a president that would prevent him, or her, from running for a third term, would prevent the formation of a family compact. Such a change would also give the president more incentive to stay home and work for the people, rather than spend his time and taxpayers' money on the campaign trail.<sup>35</sup>

While we do not know the identity of the author, we know that this person was a Union member who not only recognized the lack of female representation in official political channels, but also believed gender inequality was undermining the movement as a whole. This editorial represents a particular perspective within the Union that "unity" included all Indigenous peoples, and therefore is a strong transgressive voice against the status quo of Union politics, which undermined women's voices and ignored their specific gendered concerns.

<sup>34</sup> "Native Women's Rights dominate Homemakers' annual conference," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* vol. 2, no 6 (June 1973): 4.

<sup>35</sup> "Editorial: Major Surgery needed now," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* vol. 2, no. 7 (July 1973): 3 and 12.

This perspective was not limited to this single editorial, but appeared in the archival and oral records as well. For example, archival records show that during Union meetings, some leaders would chastise their male colleagues for speaking when a female activist held the floor.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, Union minutes record members such as Adam Eneas speaking directly to the value of women's participation in the movement by drawing attention to women's contributions in local protest activities and community well-being.<sup>37</sup> Chiefs Clarence Pennier (Stó:lō) and Saul Terry (St'at'imc) also spoke in interviews about the importance of women in the Indigenous movement, although Pennier framed his discussion in terms of a loss of political potential. Pennier noted the adverse impact of Indian Act voting regulations on women's political involvement, insisting that this disconnected women from politics and relegated them to the homemaking sphere when traditionally they would have been more politically prominent.<sup>38</sup> Pennier lamented the state's attempt to depoliticize women and argued that although Stó:lō women were traditionally responsible for important socio-political expressions such as songs and dances, longstanding settler-colonial modalities divided men's and women's politics. Pennier similarly mourned the inherent divisions and latent hostilities between the Union and the BCIHA and suggested these resulted from colonial redefinitions of male and female politics.<sup>39</sup> Terry, on the other hand, pushed back against the perceived tensions between male and female activists and focused on the familial nature of Indigenous politics to emphasize how integral women were to the movement. Speaking to the relationships amongst activists and the centrality of women, Terry exclaimed with a laugh, "They're our mothers!"<sup>40</sup> These diverging opinions underscore the fluid and unstable positions BC Indigenous women faced and demonstrate the varied socio-political experiences of Indigenous women across the province. Ultimately, no matter how individual actors within the Indigenous political movement envisioned

<sup>36</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21-25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>37</sup> Adam Eneas, interview with author, Penticton First Nation, Penticton, BC, June 3, 2013; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 22, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>38</sup> Clarence Pennier, interview with author, Stó:lō Tribal Council office, Agassiz, BC, July 25, 2012.

<sup>39</sup> Pennier, interview.

<sup>40</sup> Saul Terry, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 30, 2012.

Indigenous women's roles, the final decision about women's acceptance within the communities and roles within the Union rested with the male chiefs and their organizations. A case in point is that despite the concerns made within the Union's editorial, on the ground, these transgressive voices remained muted and no changes were made to Union political practice.

One year later, it appeared that the Union would take Indigenous women's concerns and political voices seriously after all. The Union records reveal a push for Indigenous women's involvement in revising the Indian Act. In April 1974, Philip Paul (Tsartlip) put forward a motion to this effect claiming that because women were responsible for raising children, maintaining communities, and preserving Indigenous values, they deserved a role in determining their own legislative futures.<sup>41</sup> The motion was carried, allowing "Indian women in the Province of BC [to] be fully involved in any and all revisions to the Indian Act, now and in the future."<sup>42</sup> Yet, despite this significant move, there is no further evidence to suggest that the women were ever actually involved. They continued to be excluded from official political channels and when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Lavell's case in 1974, their unequal social and political roles remained intact.<sup>43</sup> This was unfortunate not only because Indigenous women constituted a viable political voice, but also because they had long supported men's organizations and politics despite not having the favour returned. For instance, the BCIIHA not only pre-dated the Union, but its members were directly responsible for supporting the call for a chiefs' organization and raising a significant amount of the

<sup>41</sup> Kit Materials from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs 6<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly, April 23-25, 1974, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>42</sup> Kit Materials from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs 6<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly, April 23-25, 1974, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>43</sup> The Supreme Court of Canada argued that the Bill of Rights guaranteed equality in the law, but that no inequality was intrinsic in section 12.1.b. Further, the court decided that the Bill of Rights could not supersede section 91.24 of the British North America Act and influence how Parliament administered lands to Indians. Jamieson, "Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act," 126; Karen Fish, "Native Women fight unique battle," *Indian Voice* 9, no. 8 (August 1977): 17 and 19.

money needed to hold the first chiefs' conference.<sup>44</sup> In return, the chiefs supported the women's work in education, child welfare, and other so-called women's areas, but did not officially address their precarious membership status or their exclusion from debates on Indigenous rights and the land claim. The chiefs defined Indigenous politics narrowly to include male Union activities, but allocated less importance to the work of "women's groups." The main purpose of the Union continued to be securing the land claim, and these masculinist conversations did not account for Indigenous women's opinions about what was important for community well-being and political efficacy.

Not easily deterred, Indigenous women sought alternate avenues to promote their vision of unity and political authority. The loss of the Lavell case and the continued intransigence of the male-dominated organizations led the BCIHA to unite with the BCNWS and the B.C. Association of Non-Status Women in October 1974 at a workshop designed to address the rights of Indigenous women. The workshop gave women the opportunity to liaise with like-minded and politically active women, and after two days, the women formed a committee and drafted a series of resolutions that they forwarded to Department of Indian Affairs Minister Judd Buchanan.<sup>45</sup> The resolutions revealed that Indigenous women continued to be ignored in discussions surrounding the Indian Act, despite the resolution passed by the Union earlier that year guaranteeing them a central role. They cited the "traditional male dominance [that] denies native women equal rights," and called on "the Minister of Indian Affairs and major organizations [to] recognize this Committee to represent the native women of BC."<sup>46</sup> Shifting their strategies to appeal to government officials rather than their community men, Indigenous women were still forced to operate within a highly masculine political arena that relied on men recognizing their political authority. Ultimately, the state and the Union remained

<sup>44</sup> SSRMC, Oral History Collection, Rose Charlie, interview with Koni Benson, Chehalis First Nation, Agassiz, BC, June 3, 1998; Sioliya (June Quipp), interview; "Homemaker President urges union of all Chiefs," *Indian Voice* 9, no. 6 (June 1977): 2-3; "Moccasin Miles," *Indian Voice* 1, no. 2 (December 1969): 8; "Moccasin Miles," *Indian Voice* 2, no. 4 (January 1970): 11; UBCIC AGA 2009 Grand Chief Rose Charlie – The Birth of the UBCIC (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS5LpSedQ1c&feature=relmfu>) <accessed March 21, 2012>.

<sup>45</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, File 901/1-8, Indian Act, Letter from Rose Charlie to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Department of Indian Affairs, October 28, 1974.

<sup>46</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, File 901/1-8, Indian Act, Letter from Rose Charlie to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Department of Indian Affairs, October 28, 1974.

unwilling to address women's legal status, yet Indigenous women had developed a clear political agenda and demonstrated their ability to place their concerns within the Union's purview. The resolutions highlighted male dominance in Indigenous leadership and the negative effects this had on the rights of Indigenous women, and this confirmed women's perception of political unity as both pan-tribal and gender inclusive.

Indigenous women's vision for gender equality was not without its own set of privileges, however, as the organizations, like the Union, were fundamentally premised on normative sexualities and traditional gender roles. The heteronormativity of BC Indigenous politics likewise excluded political actors who did not conform to these ideals. The Union was a highly heterosexual, masculinist space where male chiefs and councillors debated macro political concerns of sovereignty, land claims, and Indigenous rights within a high stakes political environment. Union meetings and post-meeting socialization also consisted of traditionally male activities such as drinking in bars and alcohol consumption was mentioned several times in oral interviews with Union activists. Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Chief Clarence Jules explained that the budget for the first BC Chiefs' Conference in 1969 allocated \$1500.00 "just for drinking" at a "Happy Hour," but that the organizers ultimately spent \$3800.00.<sup>47</sup> Drinking served a variety of purposes including allowing activists to decompress after intense political meetings, continue serious political conversations, and even mend relationships. Penticton Chief Adam Eneas and an anonymous activist also made references to heavy drinking in hotel bars after Union meetings, and noted that in one instance drinking facilitated the unlikely political alliance between Bill Wilson and George Watts, who were intense rivals.<sup>48</sup> In addition, amid these discussions of drinking were vague and direct references to womanizing and infidelity. These socio-political spaces made no room for alternate sexualities or gender identities or even divergent masculinities. Accompanying the political roles of chief and council, and Union politics was a specific expectation of one's social and sexual lifestyle. Likewise, the BCIIHA and women's organizations were also heteronormative. They were premised on the centrality of motherhood, family, and community, and narrowly defined Indigenous women's identities as heterosexual. The

<sup>47</sup> Clarence Jules, interview with author, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, Kamloops, BC, June 12, 2012.

<sup>48</sup> Eneas, interview; Anonymous, interview.

maternal discourses used by the BCIHA and BCNWS privileged motherhood as the basis for political action and development. Although the organizations included young women who were not mothers, the organizations' records, activities, and goals, made no room for women who did not follow these gendered expectations. Over time the associations and specific women in particular developed strong feminist identities and critiques, but these too remained staunchly heteronormative and continued to be deeply tied to motherhood. As mentioned previously, interpreting these activities and attitudes through the lens of Indigenous feminism makes room for the feminist homemaker, while also understanding that the women's organizations were exclusive of non-gender and sexuality conforming individuals. The result is that the BC Indigenous political movement was stratified in multiple ways along the axes of gender and sexuality. This paired with hierarchies of socio-economic and political status means that the organizations, despite being considered representative by government agencies, actually only reflected the goals and identities of specific members of the population.

This chapter contributed to the study's wider goals of establishing the dominance and flexibility of unity, highlighting the importance of Indigenous women's politics in BC, and demonstrating the complex interactions and gradations of political refusal and recognition within Union politics. I proved that while the Union envisioned pan-tribal unity as a foundation for developing strong political demands, not everyone accepted the underlying assumptions framing Union political authority. Community members did not universally approve of the chief and council structure, or some chiefs' interpretations of democracy. Grassroots membership decried inequalities and drawing on their own discourses of unity, demanded direct participation in the political directions of the organization. Indigenous women also condemned the dual political oppression they faced by the Indian Act and the Union's use of Indian Act structures to administer political authority. Instead the women's organizations used their burgeoning political roles to demand more inclusive definitions of unity and politics that incorporated Indigenous women and their priorities. Ultimately, however, men's and women's political organizations envisioned unity as heteronormative and these reproduced structures of inequity. Nevertheless, these groups worked tirelessly to influence the development and mandates of the Union and slowly reshaped Indigenous politics, though these changes were often subtle and non-linear.

## **Chapter 4.**

# **Union Mandates and Government Funding: Multi-Political Recognitions and Refusals**

The Union's conceptions of pan-tribal unity evolved as they rejected the White Paper policy and began pursuing the land claim. This was challenging considering the complex political and economic circumstances the Union was operating within. Throughout the early 1970s the Canadian government channelled unprecedented amounts of funding into Union coffers to outwardly promote Indigenous politics, while maintaining an assimilationist agenda. These events produced a series of internal and external recognitions and refusals from the Union and its constituents. For example, between 1969 and 1971, the Union produced one of the strongest political refusals in its history with its response to the White Paper. Along with achieving one of the organization's founding mandates, the Union, along with Indigenous organizations across the country, succeeded in forcing the federal government to retract its policy paper. The advent of government funding, however, was controversial. On the one hand, it aided in the professionalization of Union politics and Indigenous actors, but it also caused friction between the leadership and grassroots over the perceived and actual inequalities brought by funding. Just as grassroots membership and Indigenous women demanded broader interpretations of democracy within Union politics, these interest groups also envisioned unity as economically equal and used strategic internal refusals to achieve this.

In the early years of organizing the Union focused on forcing the federal government to shelve their White Paper policy. The White Paper tested the Union's ability to speak for and protect the interests of BC First Nations communities and in 1969 it researched and prepared an official response. Although the Union represented a unique Indigenous population without treaties, the organization was part of a national trend towards pan-tribalism and mobilization against the policy paper. For instance, the Indian Association of Alberta under Cree leader Harold Cardinal famously authored a



document entitled “Citizens Plus,” which argued that rather than eliminating the special status of Indigenous peoples and abrogating the treaties, federal and provincial governments should enact recommendations made in 1966 by Harry B. Hawthorn that “Indians should be regarded as ‘Citizens Plus.’” Hawthorn’s report, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies*, argued that “in addition to the rights and duties of citizenship, Indians possess certain additional rights as charter members of the Canadian community.”<sup>1</sup> For Cardinal and the Indian Association of Alberta, these “additional rights” centred principally on the treaties signed between Prairie First Nations and the Crown in the 1870s, and the Association’s report, known colloquially as the *Red Paper* insisted that treaty and other rights needed to be protected in perpetuity.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, the Union’s 1970 position paper, *A Declaration of Indian Rights: The BC Indian Position Paper*, later known as the “Brown Paper,” focused on non-treaty rights, addressing First Nations rights and identity, legal status, legislation affecting First Nations, reserve lands, and government relations.<sup>3</sup> The Brown Paper, which was drafted by Union lawyer, E. Davie Fulton, a non-Indigenous man and former minister in Diefenbaker’s Conservative government, and Union member and law student Bill Wilson (Kwakwāḱ’wakw) represented the Union’s dedication to pan-tribal unity and reflected multi-politics in action. This was the organization’s first attempt at forwarding a political position on behalf of its constituents and they relied on Wilson and Fulton’s legal expertise to advance the organization’s position.

Fulton was representing the Union, but his presence as a non-Indigenous professional integrated Indigenous and non-Indigenous political forms together. The Brown Paper brought together a distinct form of multi-politics that amalgamated the priorities and political understandings of Wilson, Fulton, and the Union executive. For instance, although a clear supporter of the Union’s political mandates, Fulton was unwilling to speak in definite terms of Indigenous land title. Instead, the Brown Paper proposed protecting reserve land bases and the authority of First Nations band

<sup>1</sup> Harry Bertram Hawthorn, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: A Report on Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies* (Ottawa: Indian Affairs Branch, 1966).

<sup>2</sup> Indian Association of Alberta, *Citizens Plus* (Edmonton, 1970), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Second Annual Convention, November 16-21, 1970, Vancouver BC, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

governments, seeking recognition of Indigenous rights through treaties, and compensation for land and resource expropriation.<sup>4</sup> It made no mention of Indigenous title based on Indigenous sovereignty. Explaining Fulton's work on the Brown Paper, Union staff member Reuben Ware insisted, "he wasn't going to put anything down there about 'this is our land,' that's for damn sure."<sup>5</sup> Fulton's reticence to accept the Union's position stemmed from his belief in the legal history, which awarded sovereignty over the land to the Canadian state, as well as his experience in government. This departed from the tactics other organizations such as the Nisga'a Tribal Council were using, where they relied on traditional occupation to demand for rights and title recognition.

The multi-vocal Brown Paper also revealed the flexibility of Union multi-politics, but left room for other activists to criticize or reinterpret the position put forward. For example, Skwxwú7mesh Chief Joe Mathias later argued that the Brown Paper was an ambitious attempt to state the legal, political, social, and economic position of BC Indians, but that it needed expansion and clarification in key areas to avoid misconceptions. He insisted the document was vague and therefore a "cumbersome and dangerous document from a negotiating point of view."<sup>6</sup> Specifically, the Brown Paper failed to define Indigenous rights and title, and self-determination. There were several references to Indian bands and reserves, but some like Mathias disagreed with these limited interpretations insisting that self-determination encompassed traditional tribal groups and territories, not state-defined categories.<sup>7</sup> It was also unclear what would happen to Indigenous rights and title to lands beyond reserves or future treaty areas. Mathias quickly noted that the document needed refinement to clearly outline the ideals and political intentions of Indigenous peoples. Mathias's fears proved justified when, in 1974, Department of Indian Affairs minister Jean Chrétien insisted that through their Brown Paper the Union had essentially agreed to extinguish rights and title to their land

<sup>4</sup> Union of BC Indian Chiefs, *A Declaration of Indian Rights: The BC Indian Position Paper*, November 17, 1970.

<[http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ubcic/legacy\\_url/535/1970\\_11\\_17\\_DeclarationOfIndianRightsTheBCIndianPositionPaper\\_web\\_sm.pdf?1426350398](http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ubcic/legacy_url/535/1970_11_17_DeclarationOfIndianRightsTheBCIndianPositionPaper_web_sm.pdf?1426350398)>.

<sup>5</sup> Reuben Ware, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 20, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Joe Mathias, "Response to Brown Paper," in Conference Information Kit: Union of BC Indians 4th Annual General Assembly, November 7-9, 1972, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>7</sup> Joe Mathias, "Response to Brown Paper," in Conference Information Kit: Union of BC Indians 4th Annual General Assembly, November 7-9, 1972, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

in exchange for a negotiated settlement.<sup>8</sup> This interpretation went against most Union members' political goals and more closely aligned with Fulton's interpretations of Indigenous rights and the desire for political certainty for both Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state. The potential liabilities of multi-political frameworks were clear here.

Despite its controversial elements, the Brown Paper did play a role in the retraction of the White Paper. Although the Prime Minister declined to comment on the paper itself, Union leadership soon learned that the federal government had already begun to re-evaluate the White Paper. On March 17, 1971, Trudeau's government formally retracted the White Paper but the Union continued to vocalize their concerns about the federal government's attitudes towards liberal multiculturalism and Indigenous rights and title. Furthermore, the general mood amongst BC First Nations and the Union was that the federal government was still embracing White Paper mentalities and that the Union had a continuing obligation to counter this.<sup>9</sup> This is evident in the continued discussion of the Brown Paper until 1974, as well as in the oral history narrative of Ware who insisted that when the Union hired him in January 1973, the White Paper was still the main topic of conversation and concern.<sup>10</sup>

To facilitate this political work, the Union moved quickly to develop a strong position on Indigenous rights and title and expanded its staff in the early 1970s. Bill Wilson, George Saddleman, Clarence Pennier, Saul Terry, and others were completing or had finished post-secondary education in law, accounting, and fine arts during the early 1970s when Union leaders such as Philip Paul, Don Moses, Gordie Antoine, Bill Mussell, asked them to come and work for the Union. Pennier explains that he and Don Moses were completing an accounting program at Camosun collage when Moses, who was already connected to the Union executive, asked Pennier to join them as their finance person.<sup>11</sup> Saddleman had a similar experience whereby Gordie Antoine approached him to do bookkeeping, payroll, and accounts for the Union since he had

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the Sixth Annual General Meeting, Williams Lake, BC, April 24, 1974, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>9</sup> Reuben Ware, email correspondence with author, October 8, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Ware, interview.

<sup>11</sup> Clarence Pennier, interview with author, Stó:lō Tribal Council Office, Agassiz, BC, July 25, 2012.

completed a bookkeeping program at Cariboo College.<sup>12</sup> Saddleman quickly joined Pennier, who was already working in the newly established office at xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), and the duo soon accompanied the Union executive as they began their consultation rounds across the province.<sup>13</sup> The Union executive wanted to establish a strong communication base to keep community members apprised of Union activities and travelled around the province holding consultation meetings with BC chiefs and band members to get a sense of their socio-political needs and the direction the Union should pursue. Saddleman and Pennier made all the travel and meeting arrangements for these consultations, and provided honorariums and travel reimbursements for the chiefs.<sup>14</sup> Both men spoke at length about the value of travelling around the province in terms of getting to know Indigenous peoples outside their own communities, and the politicizing effect these trips had on them. Pennier noted that before his work with the Union he really was not aware of the political situation for Indigenous peoples in BC, and this experience was a moment of political awakening for him.<sup>15</sup> The strong mentorship from older or more involved activists also had a profound effect on these individuals joining the organization.<sup>16</sup> Through its expansion, the Union facilitated the professionalization of Indigenous political actors.

This, in turn, promoted a stronger community buy-in for pan-tribal unity. The Union also used radio spots and its newspapers *Unity* and later *Nesika* to publicize reports on Union meetings as well as the activities of the chiefs' council and specific committees. The papers were widely circulated around the province and were free to First Nations individuals. The papers also encouraged community members to write in

<sup>12</sup> Saddleman, interview.

<sup>13</sup> The Union office moved quite frequently and activists' accounts reveal that the offices were first established on the Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh (Squamish) reserve in North Vancouver, then moved to west 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Arbutus in Vancouver, and then onto the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) reserve. The office also resided on the Coqualeetza grounds in Stó:lō territory, on West 4<sup>th</sup> in Vancouver, and today are located on Water Street in Gastown. George Saddleman, interview with author; Pennier, interview.

<sup>14</sup> Pennier, interview; Saddleman, interview.

<sup>15</sup> Pennier, interview.

<sup>16</sup> Janice Antoine, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 5, 2013; Delbert Guerin, interview with author, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nation, Vancouver, BC, May 31, 2013; Pennier, interview; Saddleman, interview.

and express their opinions, and as such incorporated expansive multi-political frameworks into the Union's agenda.<sup>17</sup>

As the Union grew, it needed a well-developed multi-political agenda that could unite the political needs of the almost 200 bands and integrate these within well-articulated and designed programs. To accomplish this the Union developed a series of "streams" or areas of interest including community development, band administration, and land claims. Bill Mussell (Stó:lō) led the community development and band administration stream, and worked to educate band members on a host of administrative concerns, which included introducing accounting programs so they could run their own finances.<sup>18</sup> This stream also coordinated appeals to government agencies to address policy inconsistencies, access to resources, poor education, health and welfare conditions, and other concerns.<sup>19</sup> In the summer of 1970, for instance, Cowichan Chief and South Island Union representative Dennis Alphonse, and Union administrator Bill Wilson wrote to Chrétien to protest the Department of Indian Affairs' Education Assistance policy. Both letters outlined Union and community outrage at the Department's decision to only offer assistance to on-reserve First Nations peoples arguing that this policy discouraged individuals from seeking opportunities off reserve and punished those who already lived outside their communities.<sup>20</sup> In a similar vein, the Union often took a public and unified stance against other government agencies like the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, when agents attempted to constrain First Nations'

<sup>17</sup> Donna Tyndall, "Radio and the Union," *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 6 (September 1971): 3; Bill Mussell, "Chief's Council Meeting: August 13/14, 1971," *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 6 (September 1971): 5; Ware, interview.

<sup>18</sup> Ware, interview.

<sup>19</sup> "First Citizens' Fund," *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 1 (Sept-Oct 1970): 13-14; Bill Wilson, "Letter," *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 1 (Sept-Oct 1970): 14; Bill Mussell, "Chief's Council Meeting: August 13/14, 1971," *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 6 (September 1971): 5.

<sup>20</sup> Chief Dennis Alphonse, "Letter to Minister of DIAND (Chrétien)," *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 1 (Sept-Oct 1970): 9; Bill Wilson, "Letter to Minister of DIAND (Chrétien)," *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 1 (Sept-Oct 1970): 9.

access to resources.<sup>21</sup> In this way, the Union offered provincial solidarity to communities who would otherwise face government departments on their own. The organization would “go where they were needed,”<sup>22</sup> and at times this included taking on local concerns with non-government agencies. In 1970, for example, the Union tackled Marshall-Wells, a local Fraser Valley hardware store that had a policy of automatically rejecting credit applications made by First Nations from a reserve. The Union used its newspaper *Unity* to publically chastise this business and call for change, demonstrating the extent to which the Union pursued local mandates as well as big picture political concerns.<sup>23</sup>

Community outreach and engagement was a cornerstone of Union multi-politics, and necessary for the Union to pursue the land claim. The two streams worked together to fulfill the Union’s major mandate, but personalities and loyalties amongst areas of interest created complications. In 1973, Philip Paul, who was heading the land claims stream, founded the Land Claims Research Centre in Victoria to centralize the work being done.<sup>24</sup> Paul sought the talent of community development workers including Reuben Ware and Janice Antoine and asked them to come work for him. Ware was surprised and uncomfortable when Paul approached him to work at the Land Claims centre, noting that he had worked closely with Bill Mussell in community development and felt a sense of loyalty to Mussell. These individual allegiances within the wider Union indicated the extent to which the organization was developing its own internal structures. Union staff were not part of a unified category, but developed their own friendships, professional partnerships, political goals, and multi-politics. This could take individual activists and Union streams in different directions accordingly. In Ware’s case, he had to remind himself that despite these differences, they were all working in the same organization and towards the same general political goals and that he should not align himself solely with one individual or stream. In the fall of 1973, Paul convinced Ware to join the new project, and soon he was touring the province conducting community

<sup>21</sup> “Moricetown Canyon Fishing Ban,” *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 1 (Sept-Oct 1970): 10.

<sup>22</sup> Louise Mandell, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, March 12, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> “Reservations on Credit,” *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 1 (Sept-Oct 1970): 8.

<sup>24</sup> Ware, interview.

surveys. It was here that Ware quickly learned that communities were uninterested in surveys and were concerned with the land claim and the White Paper. Through their work in First Nations' communities as fieldworkers, in the case of Ware and Antoine, or bookkeepers, in the case of Saddleman and Pennier, Union staff members facilitated a direct connection between grassroots membership and the Union executive.

The Union was able to hire the staff to pursue the land claim because of government funding. The federal government provided funding as part its widespread support of Indigenous and non-Indigenous social movements and rights-based organizations.<sup>25</sup> The Department of the Secretary of State, for instance, funded Indigenous organizations (discussed below) and also housed other non-Indigenous citizen participation programs including the Local Initiatives Program (LIP), the Company of Young Canadians (CYC), and others. In addition, Dominique Clément explained that in the same era, the BC Civil Liberties Association was completely reliant on state funding and that the Secretary of State regularly provided \$5,000 grants for operational funding.<sup>26</sup> He added that in 1973 the organization also received a \$35,000 Local Initiatives Program grant to expand operations, and that by the mid 1980s, the Secretary of State was funding over 3,500 organizations across Canada.<sup>27</sup> In the aftermath of the White Paper, the federal government was keen to convince Indigenous peoples that it encouraged Indigenous self-determination. Yet, like the White Paper, federal funding followed the same devolution and assimilationist agenda that sought to discharge the federal government from its financial and moral obligations to First Nations. Indian Affairs wanted a strong national organization and fully representative provincial organizations such as the Union to become a highly functional association with effective administration.<sup>28</sup> Convinced that transferring government administered programs and

<sup>25</sup> Howard Ramos, "Aboriginal Protest," in *Social Movements*, ed. Suzanne Staggenborg, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2012), 76-77.

<sup>26</sup> Dominique Clément, *Canada's Rights Revolution: Social Movements and Social Change, 1937-82* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 33, 85-86.

<sup>27</sup> Clément, *Canada's Rights Revolution*, 33, 85-86.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990); Laurie Meijer Drees, *The Indian Association of Alberta: A History of Political Action* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002); Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

services to First Nations communities would promote productivity, the federal and provincial governments began funding organizations like the Union.

The level of government funding the Union received in the 1970s departed from early iterations of Indigenous politics. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, money for political action came from activists and community fundraisers. For instance, during the heyday of the Allied Tribes, Andy Paull relied on “Indian money,” raised by passing the hat, to travel around the province and organize the people.<sup>29</sup> Relying on fundraising was precarious but effective enough until a timely amendment to the Indian Act in 1927 banned these activities in an attempt to undermine the land claims movement that was gaining momentum. By the 1950s, after political repression eased with the retraction of the Indian Act clause, actors such as George Manuel, Paull, and others continued their work, relying on their own wages and the generosity of others. Politics was incorporated into existing lifestyles, which for Indigenous men often included wage labour. This limited the types of political organizing individuals could take part in and also required a high level of personal dedication and sacrifice. Reflecting on the difficulty and thanklessness of this early political activity, Nlaka’pamux activist Janice Antoine insisted, “there was nothing glamorous about it. The chiefs here all worked full time and worked at very physically taxing positions.” She continued, “and then they would meet in the evening, and if they didn’t get their business done they would meet almost until it was time to go to work, and then work all day, and the next meeting was similar. They put in a lot of hours with no pay and probably no recognition.”<sup>30</sup> Speaking from experience with a politically active family, Antoine recalled the work of her grandfather and her uncles, who all served on band council and participated in provincial politics while concurrently working in agriculture.

In contrast, when the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) was created in 1968, Indigenous politics was moving away from local fundraising and volunteerism towards

<sup>29</sup> George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (Don Mills, Ont.: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1974), 85.

<sup>30</sup> Antoine, interview.



the professionalization of activism.<sup>31</sup> The NIB and the British Columbia Association of Non-Status Indians (BCANSI) received core funding grants, and agencies such as the Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC) and Local Initiative Program (LIP) also provided funds for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations.<sup>32</sup> When the Union was created, it gradually took advantage of these available funds. For instance, in the first years of operation, the Union relied on isolated government grants and membership dues to finance their operations. Financial records reveal that the Union maintained consistent membership across the province with the majority of First Nations bands paying dues to secure membership in the Union.<sup>33</sup> During these early days, chiefs and councillors received small honorariums and sometimes had their travel expenses covered, depending on the level of fundraising or government support secured for a given conference. At the first Union convention, for instance, organizers were able to obtain a grant of \$50,000, and this paired with the fundraising efforts of the British Columbia Indian Homemakers' Association (BCIHA) provided enough money to support limited travel and accommodations for chiefs and councillors.<sup>34</sup> X<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy'em (Musqueam) delegate Delbert Guerin accompanied Chief Edward Sparrow to the meeting and received travel funding from the Union and an honorarium of thirty-five dollars per day from his band.<sup>35</sup> Similar support was not extended to community members, however, and those who decided to travel to Kamloops in 1969 did so on their own dime. For instance, Stó:lō Soowahlie band member Marge Kelly carpooled to

<sup>31</sup> Ramos, "Aboriginal Protest," 76-77. Most sources place the NIB's formation in 1968, but an edition of the Department of Indian Affairs' publication *Indian News* insists the NIB was created in early 1969 when the National Indian Council disbanded in favour of the NIB and the British Columbia Association of Non-Status Indians. *Indian News* 11, no. 6 (February 1969): 1.

<sup>32</sup> Ware, interview; Guerin, interview; Saul Terry, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 30, 2012; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Annual Meetings, 1970-1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 168; Ramos, "Aboriginal Protest," 76-77.

<sup>33</sup> Union of BC Indian Chiefs 5th Annual General Assembly Information Kit, 1973, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Minutes: Union of BC Indian Chiefs Second Annual Convention, November 16-21, 1970, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>34</sup> Clarence Jules, interview with author, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, Kamloops, BC, June 12, 2012; Minutes of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, November 17-22, 1969, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; "Moccasin Miles," *Indian Voice* 1, no. 2 (December 1969): 8.

<sup>35</sup> Guerin, interview.

Kamloops with a group of locals and packed brown bag lunches for the road.<sup>36</sup> This was a marked difference, however, from early organizing where everyone was expected to pay his or her own way.

Between 1971 and 1972, the Union received steady financial support from various government departments, allowing the organization to stabilize and expand. Drawing on the recommendations of the federal “Interdepartmental Committee on Indian and Eskimo Policy” of 1971, the Department of the Secretary of State (DSS) developed a core funding program for a restricted number of national and provincial Indigenous organizations across Canada.<sup>37</sup> DSS would fund one status and one non-status organization within the province and stipulated that these associations must represent the entire provincial status or non-status Indian population in order to qualify for funding.<sup>38</sup> In 1971 the Union easily positioned itself as the representative status organization in BC with almost universal membership and DSS transferred unprecedented amounts of money into the association. DSS provided yearly grants, generally in excess of \$500,000 for five-year terms, under its “core and communications” funding program. This program, according to Tennant, was designed,

for ethnic minorities and classified both status and non-status Indian organizations as eligible recipients. Core funds were intended to cover the basic, or core, aspects of operation an organization, including the payment of full-time salaries to executive officers; communications funds were intended to provide for publication of the newspapers, purchase of audio-visual equipment, and salaries of field workers engaged in community development.<sup>39</sup>

The Department of Indian Affairs also provided capital, operations and maintenance funds, and “‘core funds’ to reinforce and support the leadership and representation roles

<sup>36</sup> A few years later when Marge Kelly became a councillor, she began receiving thirty-five dollars per day as an honorarium from the Union as well as subsidies for accommodations. Kelly mentioned that these honorariums increased in the mid-1970s and this corresponded with the Union’s financial stability. Interestingly, Guerin recalled receiving money from his band, while Kelly explained that her band did not provide any funds. Marge Kelly, interview with author, Soowahlie First Nation, Cultus Lake, BC, May 3, 2012.

<sup>37</sup> Ware, interview; Guerin, interview; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 168.

<sup>38</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly, 1973-1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Ramos, “Aboriginal Protest,” 77.

<sup>39</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 168.

of Band Councils.”<sup>40</sup> These funds financed the operation of band offices including salaries and travel costs for chiefs and councillors.<sup>41</sup> The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and LIP also provided support for the Union by the mid-1970s, and the resulting financial security allowed the organization to generate paid executive and staff positions, provide chiefs’ honorariums and travel expenses, and operate the Union offices, Land Claims Research Centre, Resource Centre, and newspaper *Nesika*.<sup>42</sup> Over the course of two years, the Union developed a complex organizational structure and sizable staff.

Funding produced competing opinions within the Union about the wisdom of accepting government money at all. Chiefs Adam Eneas, Delbert Guerin, George Saddleman, and Saul Terry interpreted government funding as a ploy to distract the Union from their larger political goals by transferring housing, social services, and education portfolios to the bands.<sup>43</sup> Guerin, who served on multiple committees for these new services, noted that the fiscal and organizational challenges of administering services at the band level meant that bands had little time to discuss land claims strategies at the local or provincial level.<sup>44</sup> Likewise, the Union’s 1974 Annual Report written by administrator Lou Demerais, questioned whether the Union, bands, and districts were “embarked on the right course in handling government-funded programs.” Labelling the piecemeal nature of funds as a “‘carrot-on-a-stick’ designed to lead us

<sup>40</sup> Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report Fiscal Year 1974-1975, issues under the authority of the Hon. Judd Buchanan, PC, MP, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1975), 33.

<sup>41</sup> Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report Fiscal Year 1974-1975, issues under the authority of the Hon. Judd Buchanan, PC, MP, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1975), 35.

<sup>42</sup> Pennier, interview; Adam Eneas, interview with author, Penticton First Nation, Penticton, BC, June 3, 2012; Ware, interview; Antoine, interview. Pennier noted that one challenge to providing travel funding was that chiefs had to submit receipts for reimbursement. He explained that this was a foreign concept to many of them and caused some difficulties.

<sup>43</sup> Adam Eneas, interview with author, Penticton First Nation, Penticton, BC, June 3, 2012; Guerin, interview; Saddleman, interview; Saul Terry, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 30, 2012; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Sixth General Assembly, Williams Lake, BC, April 23, 1974, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. Andie Diane Palmer also discusses this general trend in the late 1960s towards transferring services from Indian Affairs to bands. Andie Diane Palmer, *Maps of Experience: The Anchoring of Land to Story in Secwepemc Discourse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 51.

<sup>44</sup> Guerin, interview.

away from the ultimate goal: settlement of our claim claims question,” Demerais chastised the Union for allowing themselves “to be led astray.”<sup>45</sup> Figures such as Philip Paul and Clarence Pennier outlined the flawed nature of accepting money from an agency in order to oppose it, or “biting the master’s hand,” as Pennier put it, and were wary of the government’s devolution agenda.<sup>46</sup> And yet, financial security also promoted an administrative configuration that prepared communities for self-government. In this sense, funding could be used strategically, as part of the Union’s multi-political agenda, to realize Indigenous political goals. Funding also facilitated the professionalization of activism. As activists took on full time jobs within the Union they were able to focus on attaining the skills and knowledge they needed to succeed. Other obligations no longer distracted them, and ideally, the more time they spent in this professional capacity, the more adept they became as leaders.<sup>47</sup> Union lawyer Louise Mandell best captured the complexities of government support categorizing it as “a blessing and a golden noose.”<sup>48</sup> Despite these differences in opinions, BC Indigenous peoples did not interpret government funding as a “hand up” or even a reflection of changing government attitudes surrounding disadvantaged peoples. Rather, funding was viewed as compensation for expropriated land and resources, and longstanding policies of political, cultural, and economic dispossession. Everyone agreed that this money was owed.

Under government funding, the transition from volunteer to professional politics was slow, uneven, and influenced by the availability of government funding, as well as one’s relationship to the Union, economic position, and gender. For instance, at the first Union meeting Guerin, a longshoreman, recognized the cost of political participation. He realized just how limited delegate support was when considered alongside lost wages. “The band would give us \$35 a day,” Guerin recalled. “We had to pay our hotel bills out of that and meals and everything. [But] I was [also] losing work from the waterfront,” he

<sup>45</sup> Lou Demerais, “1974 Annual Report as presented to the Seventh Annual General Assembly, Chilliwack, April 21-25, 1975,” in the Annual General Assembly Information Kit, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>46</sup> Pennier, interview.

<sup>47</sup> Guerin, interview.

<sup>48</sup> Mandell, interview.

said.<sup>49</sup> Guerin noted that the honorarium covered all of the costs of attending the meetings, but remained a financial sacrifice. For Guerin, as for other activists who worked full time alongside their political involvement, political participation directly undermined one's economic stability. These sacrifices were significant and widespread, but also demonstrate the multiplicity in working men's experiences in politics. For instance, Guerin had more workplace freedom than some xʷməθkʷəyəm members and despite lost work, Guerin ultimately had the financial ability needed to participate in provincial politics. Maintaining balance between paid labour and unpaid or underpaid political work proved challenging for many activists. For instance, after Guerin secured a spot on council, other leaders often asked him to attend political meetings when they were unable to leave work. This prompted Guerin to joke that he was the president of the "you-go club."<sup>50</sup> Even as government funding was forthcoming, it was not enough to create full time paid work.

By 1974, which Union delegates largely view as the peak of government funding, the gap between Union and band finances was substantial leading Larry Seymour of the South Island district to insist that chief and council needed full time pay for full time political work. "I'm wasting my time working for MacMillan-Bloedel," Seymour argued. "I'm wasting my time in working with some company for my wages so that I can live. It is a waste of time for Chiefs and Council to be working outside of the community when we've got so much work [to do]," he continued. "We've got to stabilize ourselves. Stabilize our reserves, bring about stability in our community and this," Seymour insisted, "is a full time job: it's a full time job for Council, it's a full time job for Chiefs."<sup>51</sup> The previous year the delegation argued over honorariums paid to members of the executive council, which stood at \$600 per month, plus travel expenses. The honorariums available to chiefs and councillors were not outlined, but likely were

<sup>49</sup> Guerin, interview. For more information on Indigenous longshoremen in BC see: Andrew Parnaby, "The best men that ever worked the lumber': Aboriginal Longshoremen on Burrard Inlet, BC, 1863-1939," *Canadian Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (2006): 53-78; Andrew Parnaby, *Citizen Docker: Making a New Deal on the Vancouver Waterfront, 1919-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

<sup>50</sup> Guerin, interview.

<sup>51</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Sixth Annual Meeting, Williams Lake, BC, April 23, 1974, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

significantly less.<sup>52</sup> Seymour resenting having to balance wage work and Indigenous politics, and hinted that the absence of full time wages for political work diminished the roles of chief and council. Others agreed with Seymour that Indigenous politics was suffering because activists had their focus diverted by other things, yet Department raises were not matched by the increases in Union funding, and both were inadequate for professional leaders.

The paid work of Indigenous leadership must also be understood in contrast to women's disadvantaged socio-political and economic roles. Indigenous women faced significant barriers in terms of political participation, which undermined women's political professionalization. For instance, Indigenous women were largely excluded from Union politics simply because they could not access leadership roles in the band governance system. After 1951 the Indian Act no longer barred women from band leadership positions, but few secured these positions. In fact, female chiefs and councillors were rare enough that they warranted special attention in the Department of Indian Affairs' publication *Indian News*.<sup>53</sup> When women did participate in the Union, they did so as support workers and members of auxiliary organizations such as the BCIHA. For example, in the Union women typically provided the behind-the-scenes administrative support. Examples of this unpaid gendered labour included taking meeting minutes, receiving and organizing receipts from chiefs and councillors, and making coffee and refreshments at meetings.<sup>54</sup> Women's work in the BCIHA, on the other hand, while self-directed, was not "professional" in the sense that BCIHA executives received lower wages than their Union counterparts. In fact, the BCIHA, which DSS did not identify as a representative organization for BC did not receive the same levels of funding as the Union. BCIHA operating budgets typically constituted one third of the money received by the Union, while executive salaries ranged between \$300.00 and \$1200.00 per month

<sup>52</sup> Summary of Day One: Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs - 5th Annual Conference, West Coast District Council, Port Alberni, BC. November 20, 1973, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>53</sup> Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, *Indian News*, 1954-1969.

<sup>54</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Annual General Assemblies, 1969-1976; Kelly, interview.

depending on the budget year versus the Union's salary range between \$600.00 and \$1500.00 per month.<sup>55</sup>

Despite these obstacles to women's political power outside of these auxiliary roles, settler-colonial economic and political systems could compete with each other to produce political opportunities for women. For instance, among the Nuu-chah-nulth of Gold River, men's involvement in wage labour in the 1960s and 1970s opened up political avenues for women that had long been unavailable. As community men went to work in logging camps away from Gold River, they found themselves with little time for band politics. The result was that women stepped in to fill these local political roles through temporary local arrangements.<sup>56</sup> Soowahlie band member Marge Kelly had a similar experience in Fraser Valley when her brother-in-law Thomas Kelly, a chief and dairy farmer asked her to attend band and Union meetings as his proxy.<sup>57</sup> Notwithstanding these changes in local powers, however, it was clear that women were viewed, and often viewed themselves as simply "standing in" for men who were too busy to conduct all their duties. Community members regarded the female leaders in Gold River as temporary replacements, leaving women's traditional roles as supporters intact. Kelly similarly occupied a provisional and gender specific role as her chief's proxy that ensured she did not have access to any real political power, but rather that she simply acted as an intermediary between the legitimate power of the chief and that of the Union. She insisted that she was "just helping out" when the political men in her family asked her, and that she did not have any political experience or knowledge. Even when the Union gave her a proxy vote, Kelly deferred her judgement to the male chiefs and would simply vote the way they were voting because, as she argued, "they were experienced and I wasn't."<sup>58</sup> This outlook extended into Kelly's assessment of women's politics as well revealing the dominance of masculinist politics. While Kelly conceded that the early

<sup>55</sup> Compiled from data in LAC, RG 10, Box 2 Indian Homemakers' Association of British Columbia, File 901/24-2-5, Part 2, Basic Minimum Budget. 1976; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/24-24-1-12, Part 2, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, Union of BC Indian Chiefs Budget Proposal, 1976. The differences in funding levels between the Union and the BCIIHA will be explored in more detail in chapter six.

<sup>56</sup> G. McKeivitt, "Women leaders emerge among Nootkas," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, vol. 3 (March 1974): 7.

<sup>57</sup> Kelly, interview; Marge Kelly, telephone conversation, April 30, 2012.

<sup>58</sup> Kelly, interview.

Homemakers' club members played important roles as community experts, she was reluctant to frame women's work as politics, even once the BCIIHA was formed.<sup>59</sup>

Additionally, work, marriage, motherhood, and gender expectations served as barriers to women's political involvement. While some male workers from resource industries had flexibility for political involvement due to shift work and seasonal work fluctuations, women, who were already excluded from state-sanctioned governance patterns on account of their gender and often had families to care for, found it more challenging to participate in meetings. For example, Ts'ishaa7ath (Tsashaht) activist Ken Watts recalled that his mother did not get involved in politics until after his father, Chief George Watts, died. Explaining that this partially stemmed from "an old school mentality" dictating that men worked and women cared for the home and children, Ken Watts suggested that men's activities sometimes compromised women's political potential.<sup>60</sup> At the same time, however, Watts provided evidence of the flexibility of women's politics emphasizing the important role Nuuchahnulth women played in supporting their husband's political pursuits. In Nuuchahnulth culture, Watts explained, "you don't say 'behind every great man there's a great woman,' it's actually beside." He continued, "especially in Nuuchahnulth culture, if you ever have the opportunity to see, at a feast or something there's a leader...and his wife stands right beside and a bit behind him and they'll talk back and forth as he's speaking as a leader, and I think that's what my mom was like; she was such a support for my dad."<sup>61</sup> According to Watts, supporting their men could be difficult at times, as he remembers his mom having to run the household alone while his father was away at political meetings. Women carefully incorporated political work into their existing paid and unpaid labour patterns. For example, examining a picture of a meeting of the East Fraser District Chiefs and the Indian Homemakers' Association in Chilliwack in 1969, Stó:lō Cheam Chief Sioliya (June Quipp) pointed out the strong family connections between the two organizations, including many husband

<sup>59</sup> Kelly, interview. Kelly continues to hold this opinion even though she has been involved in community initiatives and organizations regarding Indigenous health, access to services, etc.

<sup>60</sup> Wahmeesh (Ken Watts), interview with author, Ts'ishaa7ath (Tsashaht) First Nation Band Office, Port Alberni, BC, June 28, 2012.

<sup>61</sup> Watts, interview.



and wife teams.<sup>62</sup> Pointing out her father, the late Chief Albert Douglas, Quipp revealed that her mother, Edna Douglas was also prominent within the Homemakers' Association. Noting her mother's absence in the image, Quipp mused, after some quick mental calculations that "she was off having a baby."<sup>63</sup> For Edna Douglas, her political involvement was shaped by her role as a mother, and this meant she had less flexibility than her husband did. Motherhood and family duties came first, and this helps to explain how some Indigenous women struggled to politicize while others merged motherhood and politicization together. Ultimately, Indigenous women lacked the same political opportunities as men.

Relatedly, political and economic inequalities existed between the communities and Union leadership as well and this became a source of political refusals against the Union. Communities envisioned political unity and Union goals as promoting economic equality. As a result they were critical of leadership and the Union more broadly when they perceived disparities. The economic context in which the Union was operating fuelled these divisions, as government created paid leadership and staff positions within an organization where previously none existed. In the mid-1970s these paid positions included the three-member Union executive, who received \$1500.00 per month, as well as administrators and researchers who received between \$900.00 and \$1000.00 per month.<sup>64</sup> Before 1976, members of the chiefs' council also received \$250.00 per month in addition to \$50.00 per day honorariums.<sup>65</sup> The Union budget also included targeted travel funding for the executive at \$200.00 each per year, \$500.00 per month honorariums, as well as separate funding for conferences, meetings, and workshops, which included honorariums and travel funding for participants.<sup>66</sup> The operating budget

<sup>62</sup> Sioliya (June Quipp), interview with author, Cheam First Nation, Rosedale, BC, June 25, 2012.

<sup>63</sup> Sioliya, interview.

<sup>64</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/242-12, Part 2, UBCIC Budget Proposal to the Department of the Secretary of State, 1976-1977.

<sup>65</sup> Eneas, interview; Guerin, interview; Minutes of the Union of BC Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 1972-1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; "Interview with Bill Wilson," *Indian Voice*, 7, no. 1 (January 1975).

<sup>66</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/242-12, Part 2, UBCIC Budget Proposal to the Department of the Secretary of State, 1976-1977. The \$500.00 per month honorariums for the executive council were introduced in 1974 and lasted only until funding was rejected in April 1975. Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

for the Union varied year to year according to levels of government funding. In 1971 the organization proposed a budget of \$3.6 million, while in 1976 a mere \$275,000.00.<sup>67</sup> This gap resulted from the Union's decision in April 1975 to reject government funding as a political strategy to achieve political and economic independence.

The primary concern in the mid-1970s was funding. For the communities, Union budgets appeared to be substantial rather than inadequate, and this prompted some community members to believe their leaders were living large off government money rather than filtering funds down into the communities. In some instances this was true. Some oral interviews exposed the levels of privilege accorded to Union chiefs that were denied to community members. For instance, Chiefs Adam Eneas and Delbert Guerin shared stories of how some chiefs refused to attend Union events or meetings unless they were happy with the amount of money offered for their attendance including travel grants and honorariums. In addition, Union materials and interviews show that throughout the 1970s, delegates increasingly held meetings at hotels and restaurants.<sup>68</sup> The Marble Arch hotel near the Union on West Hastings Street was a favourite spot for Union leadership and activists recalled meeting there often.<sup>69</sup> Reflecting back on these days with a mixture of humour and revulsion, Adam Eneas noted that leaders often joked that they were getting "sick of steak and lobster."<sup>70</sup> According to Eneas, "steak and lobster" became a common catch phrase for activists attending Union conferences, and reflected the expectation that Indigenous leaders would be treated according to their elite political stature. Determining the extent to which this was widespread practice or the

<sup>67</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/242-12, Part 2, UBCIC Budget Proposal to the Department of the Secretary of State, 1976-1977; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 1972-1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 158.

<sup>68</sup> Antoine, interview; Eneas, interview; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 1973-1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>69</sup> Eneas, interview; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 185.

<sup>70</sup> Eneas, interview.

perception of a few leaders is difficult, but noteworthy that well-known Union leaders remember economically benefitting in significant ways that communities did not.<sup>71</sup>

While perhaps not to the extent that some leaders recall, grassroots members occupied politically and economically disadvantaged positions as compared to their chiefs and councillors. And they publicized this at Union gatherings. Union staff member Janice Antoine suggested that the influx of government money created some distance and distrust between the chiefs and their constituents. “Whether there was or not,” she said, “there was a belief that the top was skimmed of the money coming into the British Columbia region for the organizations and then it was distributed. So a smaller pot was distributed [to the communities].”<sup>72</sup> Although Antoine admitted that there never was enough money available to the communities and that leadership did many good things for their people, she cautiously questioned some of the privileges available to the chiefs and council and denied to community members. The most visible of these benefits were honorariums and travel funding for leaders to attend political meetings. Antoine insisted, “I mean, how many people during that period had actually stayed in hotel rooms or even got per diems?” she wondered. “Most people could barely put gas in their car to go to a meeting, and so to know that a bureaucracy was getting it or a few people had access to that,” Antoine said, trailing off. “It’s not that they weren’t doing good work with it,” she insisted, “it’s just that it seemed like a real luxury when there was such a contrast between what was happening in our communities.”<sup>73</sup> This contrast was visible in the Union records when Neskonlith Chief Joe Manuel thanked Stó:lō Skwah Chief Bill

<sup>71</sup> This phenomenon was not limited to Indigenous politics. Similar transitions occurred in non-Indigenous political arenas, such as the late nineteenth century BC labour movement, which saw the creation of paid union positions, and within Canadian politics with Members of Parliament receiving salaries by the early twentieth century. In Indigenous communities, the challenges followed similar developments to what labour historian Mark Leier noticed within the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council (VTLC) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Here rank and file membership resented the bureaucratization and growing economic and political stratification within the VTLC as the leadership sought to promote their cause. Mark Leier, *Red Flags & Red Tape: The Making of a Labour Bureaucracy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 71-72, and chapters two and three. The United Kingdom introduced paid positions in Parliament in 1911, and Canada followed shortly after. Richard Kelly, *Members’ Pay and Allowances – A Brief History*. United Kingdom, Parliament, House of Commons Library, May 21, 2009. <http://www.parliament.uk/about/faqs/house-of-commons-faqs/members-faq-page2/>.

<sup>72</sup> Antoine, interview.

<sup>73</sup> Antoine, interview; Guerin, interview.

Mussell for giving band members a place to stay during the Union assembly. Manuel explained, “on Sunday, some of our band members came down [to Chilliwack]. We all chipped in for gas and paid our own way down. About 30 in all came...[and] we don’t have enough money to buy motels. Bill Mussell has given us a little area in his park across from his house so we could set up camp. We feel great about this.”<sup>74</sup> This contrast was also visible at this and other meetings where band members worked together to make sandwiches or stews to feed themselves, while their leaders were eating in restaurants.<sup>75</sup>

Community members and sympathetic leaders like Manuel consistently raised these experiences at Union gatherings often as evidence of the heightened political dedication and sacrifice practiced by community members and criticism of Indigenous leaders. At times, this seemed strategic, as a way to motivate Union leaders to act in the best interests of the grassroots who relied on them. For example, in April 1975, Chief George Watts introduced members of his West Coast district to the Union assembly drawing attention to the fact that they “[had] taken five days off work [and] have taken money out of their bank accounts to get here.”<sup>76</sup> These experiences and criticisms constitute political refusals whereby community members were vocalizing their disapproval of Union financial decisions, while simultaneously enacting political alternatives. Manuel, Watts, and their communities demonstrated that Union multi-politics could utilize community cooperation and shared resources to promote involvement and political progress. They demonstrated that even those lacking political and economic capital could make important contributions to the political movement. These accounts also expose an awareness by leaders and grassroots that they were experiencing politics and pan-tribal unity differently.

Even in their critiques of leadership, however, grassroots members did not believe that elected leaders should work without compensation as they did previously.

<sup>74</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>75</sup> Antoine, interview; Eneas, interview; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 1973-1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 22, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

Antoine noted that many leaders came from poor backgrounds and the idea of a disposable income was new to them. She maintained that it was unfair to expect Indigenous peoples to continue to live in poverty or make continued personal sacrifices for political progress, simply because that was what they were used to.<sup>77</sup> Likewise, Guerin reasoned that Indigenous leaders frequently liaised with senior government officials and expecting First Nations chiefs to bring sleeping bags and brown bag lunches to these important meetings would send a message that Indigenous leaders were not legitimate or serious political actors.<sup>78</sup> This is an important point. Indigenous leaders were already at a disadvantage in a state that enacted heavily paternalistic attitudes and policies towards Indigenous populations, and many leaders worked hard to combat these realities. Demonstrating that their own leaders could work on the same level as government officials was imperative. Ultimately, the assumption that Indigenous leaders must operate outside of the capitalist system preserved longstanding biases about Indigenous peoples and politics and this worked to undermine leadership.

This increased wealth and the resulting evaluations of the chiefs' economic privilege is best considered alongside ethnohistorian Alexandra Harmon's work on Indian affluence. Countering the narratives of economic exploitation and resulting Indigenous poverty, Harmon explored instances of wealth amongst American Indians over the past four hundred years, and exposed underlying racial biases that lead non-Natives to question the morality and deservedness of wealthy Indians.<sup>79</sup> Arguing that affluent American Indians were judged according to the manner in which their wealth was accrued as well as the extent to which that wealth was equally distributed across their communities, Harmon revealed the hypocritical and racialized attitudes of non-Indian Americans who held American Indians to higher economic standards than they practiced themselves. According to Harmon, this allowed racist assumptions of the inherent poverty of Indigenous peoples to colour their views about Indians' economic potential.<sup>80</sup> Within the Union, similar attitudes prevailed, but they were further

<sup>77</sup> Antoine, interview; Percy Joe, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 5, 2013.

<sup>78</sup> Guerin, interview.

<sup>79</sup> Alexandra Harmon, *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

<sup>80</sup> Harmon, 2-15.

complicated by internal community dynamics. For instance, Chiefs Adam Eneas (Syilx) and Wayne Christian (Secwepemc) explained that Indigenous leadership positions were holistic in that they demanded leaders see themselves first and foremost as members of their communities.<sup>81</sup> Communities also maintained specific ideals about their leadership, and while they did not expect leaders to remain impoverished and underprivileged, they believed chiefs, as political representatives and members of shared cultures, historical experiences, and communities, had a duty to remain connected to experiences of poverty in their bands and ensure extra wealth was spread around. Gender and kinship obligations added another layer to this, as male leaders were expected to ensure necessary resources were available for their families. For example, Ware and Union staff member Rosalee Tizya spoke highly of leaders such as Philip Paul and George Manuel who lived according to the standards of their communities, refusing to spend money on frivolous expenses such as fancy clothes and accommodations, preferring to use any extra money to progress the movement. In contrast, as Antoine mentioned, the disparity between the hotel rooms and per diems of leadership and the sleeping bags and brown bag lunches of community members promoted resentment and underscored the unequal benefits of the Union's vision of pan-tribal unity.

By the mid-1970s, the federal government's emergent neoliberal agenda meant that the federal government used funding to force Indigenous communities to provide their own services. Explaining this transition from the welfare state to neoliberalism, Dian Million reminds us of the biopolitical nature of neoliberalism and its goal to "bring all life and social life into the sphere of capital."<sup>82</sup> In Indigenous communities specifically, the extension of neoliberalism involved "devolving, or returning responsibility for, First Nations and Indigenous peoples' economic grievances (endemic poverty, poor housing, and joblessness) to Indigenous communities to solve, as a matter left eventually to their own self-governing economic development initiatives."<sup>83</sup> In other words, this agenda, while seemingly supportive of Indigenous sovereignty and independence, transferred

<sup>81</sup> Eneas, interview; Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, interview with author, Splotsin te Secwepemc First Nation, Enderby, BC, June 4, 2013.

<sup>82</sup> Dian Million, *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013), 18.

<sup>83</sup> Million, 19.

services to communities ill-prepared to administer them, and failed to fund these enterprises properly to ensure success. The Union and its member nations resisted these changes and worked to reshape the goals of the Department by calling for adequate funding and genuine independence.

Even as the Union accepted government dollars and tacitly recognized the authority of DIA and other government agencies, it consistently employed its own vision for political autonomy. The Union liaised with government departments to facilitate the delivery of health, education, and housing programs, and developed associated committees tasked with understanding the programs and the needs of Indigenous communities, and ensuring those needs were met. But Union records also reveal that many leaders and communities saw these service provisions as part of broader self-determination rather than following government devolution agendas.<sup>84</sup> For example, the Brown Paper explicitly called for “improved services and programs” that are “managed and operated by us,” and framed this in terms of escaping government oversight.<sup>85</sup> Thus, the Union was willing to cooperate with the Department’s aims to decentralize operations and devolve responsibility for government programs to Indigenous communities, but ultimately wanted to shape its activities according to its own agendas. The Union minutes revealed a strong connection between Indigenous control over services and Indigenous rights and political autonomy. In 1974, for example, Delbert Guerin challenged DIA Minister Jean Chrétien on his department’s practice of transferring programs to bands without subsequent reductions in DIA staff. Guerin reasoned that if bands were administering services independently, there would no longer be a need for as many Department officials.<sup>86</sup> For Guerin, the reduction of DIA bureaucracy was just one component of recognizing Indigenous rights and independence. For DIA, however, the ultimately goal was never Indigenous sovereignty, it was Indigenous self-sufficiency and provincial rather than federal responsibility.

<sup>84</sup> Million, 19; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Annual Meetings, 1971-1974, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>85</sup> Union of BC Indian Chiefs, *A Declaration of Indian Rights: The BC Indian Position Paper*, November 17, 1970, 8.

<sup>86</sup> Minutes of the Sixth Annual General Meeting, 1974, Williams Lake, BC, April 24, 1974, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

Other Union member bands explicitly rejected government intervention into band services, and strategically used the Department's goal of devolution to seek more political autonomy than the Department intended. For instance, a 1974 band council resolution from Williams Lake seeking to fire the Department of Indian Affairs financial advisor in favour of an advisor from the Williams Lake district used the Department's goal to justify their request. The resolution explained, "it is common knowledge that Indian Affairs would like the Indian Bands to take control over more of their own affairs," and therefore the band wanted to hire their own advisor who would be accountable to the Williams Lake district and paid by the Department.<sup>87</sup> Similar letters and resolutions also came from the Babine district.<sup>88</sup>

The Canadian government's political agenda reshaped Indigenous politics in British Columbia in the 1970s. Plans to decentralize program and service administration away from government agencies into First Nations communities satisfied the federal government's wider aims of divesting themselves of economic and moral responsibility for Indigenous peoples. Funding for these programs was a necessary step to reallocating responsibility and as the representative status Indian organization in the province, the Union received the bulk of the funds. Between 1971 and 1974 the Union practiced shifting strategies of political recognition and refusal and reframed its multi-political agenda to accommodate these changes. The rejection of the White Paper elicited widespread support amongst Union member nations, while the turn to government funding brought political conflict as Union constituents disagreed about the role of government in the Union as well as the unequal distribution of funds. The benefits of Union funding had obvious status and gender based differentials. Band chiefs and councillors received compensation for their political work, while grassroots members did not. Furthermore, Indigenous women who were largely excluded from formal political channels and government funds, continued to push for greater political and economic equality through their vision for pan-tribal unity. Ultimately, by the mid-1970s, the Union

<sup>87</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, Vol. 3, File 901-1-10, Indian Affairs Branch – Band Council Resolution, March 3, 1974, Liaison – Financial Advisory Services for Indian Bands, 1/1975-10/1976.

<sup>88</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, Vol. 3, File 901-1-10, Liaison – Financial Advisory Services for Indian Bands, 1-1975-10-1976, Letter from Chief Dan Michell to Larry Wight, Regional Director, June 12, 1975.



was faced with unrealistic expectations for government funding, and they would refuse these in a dramatic manner in 1975.

## Chapter 5.

### “We want to live as Indians”: Defining Indigenous Politics and Leadership

On the morning of April 21, 1975 Stó:lō Yakweakwioose Chief Richard Malloway found himself at a crossroads.<sup>1</sup> Speaking to the delegates of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs' seventh annual general assembly, Malloway revealed his conflicted feelings about the BC Indigenous political movement, setting the tone for what would become the most controversial meeting in the Union's history. As a respected leader of the wider Stó:lō host community, and a direct descendant of the four original ancestors of the Ts'elxéyeqw (Chilliwacks),<sup>2</sup> Malloway, who was the current carrier of the tribal hereditary name, Th'eláchiyatel, was well-positioned to reflect on the current and future state of Indigenous political organization.<sup>3</sup> As representatives arriving at the Evergreen Hall in Chilliwack settled in to begin the five-day convention, Malloway spoke poignantly about his forty-year involvement with the Indian land question. Speaking with a mixture of exhaustion and optimism Malloway noted, “I've been in this work for over forty years and . . . nothing has happened in the land question. We've gone to Ottawa and Victoria and

<sup>1</sup> Yakweakwioose is one of the six bands of the Ts'elxéyeqw (Chilliwack) Tribe. The others include, Skowkale, Skway, Soowahlie, Squiala, and Tzeachten. Keith Thor Carlson, “Indian Reservations,” in *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, ed. Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 94-95; Ts'elxéyeqw Tribe website < <http://tselxweyeqw.ca/index.php>>, accessed August 14, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> The four ancestors include, Th'eláchiyatel, Yexwéylem, Síyémches, and Wílí:léq,

<sup>3</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, *You are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lō in Canada's Pacific Coast History* (Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 1997), 15.

we haven't got any answer . . . ."<sup>4</sup> Malloway was not alone in his frustration, and his speech captured a disillusioned movement looking for change. Six years after BC Indigenous peoples formed the Union, constituents were growing impatient with halting attempts to have Indigenous rights and title formally recognized by provincial and federal governments. As he spoke, Malloway legitimized and vocalized this dissatisfaction and provided fuel for subsequent discussions about the type of political vision and leadership needed to realize the Union's land claims agenda.

Upholding unity required constant negotiation amongst Union member nations, and as the previous chapters proved, various interest groups held unique understandings about what unity would entail. Focusing on the Union's 1975 meeting, I examine Union delegates' debates concerning how Indigenous politics should be understood and practiced. Drawing on political knowledges and systems from their own nations and experiences within the pan-tribal forum, Union delegates worked to redefine Union politics and pan-tribal unity to achieve meaningful change. Indigenous communities had lengthy histories of balancing competing customary political practices with encroaching state systems through alternating practices of recognition and refusal. These engagements ultimately produced unique multi-political expressions that communities then drew on to help shape the Union and ideals of pan-tribal unity. To remind, the concept of multi-politics allows for multi-directional and multi-level political considerations capturing local political expressions, Union pan-tribalism, and colonial and pre-colonial interactions. Encompassing concurrent internal and external political exchanges, Union multi-politics was negotiated on multiple and shifting planes. In 1975, these resulted in what Kwakwaka'wakw Chief Bill Wilson has since termed "a philosophical revolution."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. Similar themes emerged in my interviews with Indigenous leaders and activists who felt as though no progress had been made on the question of Indigenous rights despite the concerted time and effort spent on the cause. Many were resigned to the fact that they would not see a solution to the issues in their lifetimes, yet there were mixed responses regarding the potential for the next generation to mobilize and see results. Lower Nicola Band Chief Don Moses spoke specifically on this political trend and mentioned that he too had dedicated over fifty years to Indigenous politics with little to show for it. Don Moses, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 11, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Bill Wilson, personal communication with author, July 2, 2013.

By the early 1970s, the Union was heavily involved in land claims research, service distribution, and the push for Indigenous rights recognition. Between 1969 and 1975, the Union established a series of committees and branches tasked with researching and pursuing key mandates. Although these shifted over time according to the fluctuating needs of the communities and the administrative capacity of the Union, they revolved around key areas of land claims, resource rights, health, education, housing, and economic development (see Table 2). The Union had established itself as a central body through which individual bands could seek support on local issues in the above categories, and the Union could pursue improvements to government policy and programs to secure better social, economic, and political conditions for communities. For example, in 1974 the Union's social services branch developed a pilot project in the Thompson River district in 1974 where Indigenous foster children were intentionally placed in Indigenous homes. Addressing the pervasive problem of child apprehension in BC Indigenous communities that often took children out of their communities and placed them in non-Indigenous homes, the program sought local solutions that could be later applied provincially.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the Union coordinated land claims through the Land Claims Research Centre, which used fieldworkers, researchers, and claims experts such as anthropologist Barbara Lane, to advance a province wide claim for the Union to put forward to the federal and provincial governments. The Union also developed more concentrated land claims committees including the Action Committee on McKenna-McBride Cut-Off Lands that researched the historic cut-offs stemming from the 1916 commission. Once researched, the committee made recommendations to seek monetary and land-based compensation.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Lou Demerais, "Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 1974 Annual Report, presented at the Seventh Annual General Assembly, Chilliwack, BC, April 21-25, 1975," Union of BC Indian Chiefs 7<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly Information Kit, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>7</sup> "Report of the Action Committee on McKenna-McBride Cut-Off Lands," in the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Special General Assembly Information Kit, April 2-4, 1975.

**Table 2. Union Committees, 1975**

| <b>Committee</b>   | <b>Area of Interest</b>   |
|--|---|
| <b>Communications</b>                                    | Press Committee, <i>Nesika</i> , general communication.   |
| <b>Community Development</b>                             | Social and economic development on reserve.   |
| <b>Housing</b>   | Construction and maintenance of reserve housing. Included lobbying for new houses.  |
| <b>Education</b>   | Lobbying for Indigenous control of Indigenous education, funding, promoting Indigenous content. Concerned with residential schools, day schools, universities, and Indigenous students in provincial schools. |
| <b>Agriculture</b>                                       | Management of land and water rights for agricultural land.  |
| <b>Food Fish Committee</b>                               | Fishing rights and regulations, working with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.  |
| <b>Action Committee on McKenna-McBride Cut-Off Lands</b> | Working with the 23 bands with cut-off lands, the Union, and the provincial and federal governments to form a plan of action to address these losses.   |

Sources: Lou Demerais, "Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 1974 Annual Report, presented at the Seventh Annual General Assembly, Chilliwack, BC, April 21-25, 1975," Union of BC Indian Chiefs 7<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly Information Kit, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21-25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

Between 1969 and 1975, the Union positioned itself as a pan-tribal Indigenous political organization and this necessitated defining what members meant when they referenced "Indigenous" politics. In a pan-tribal setting where Indigenous nations held divergent views about their Indigeneity, tradition, and the roles these should play in their communities and the Union, agreeing on political ideology proved challenging. Defining the terms Indigeneity and tradition is crucial to understanding how debates within the Union unfolded. In this chapter, Indigeneity is understood broadly to encompass the distinctive and varied identities, cultures, epistemologies, and worldviews of Indigenous peoples. It includes the dual experiences of racialized, government defined Indigeneity employed by the Indian Act, as well as historical and community-based Indigeneity recognized by communities. It also recognizes the tension between the two and the multiplicity of Indigeneity amongst Indigenous peoples. Indigeneity is used here to

understand how Union member nations framed their identities, political knowledge and agendas as distinctly Indigenous and explicitly separate from non-Indigenous forms. Tradition is used broadly to refer to established customary practices and ideologies that Indigenous peoples understand as integral to their ways of life. Like Indigeneity, the term tradition is tricky, and it becomes even more so when used as a barometer for authenticity and Indigeneity. Each of these categories has multiple manifestations, which have been subject of much debate in academia, the legal system, state policy, and amongst Indigenous communities themselves.<sup>8</sup> State officials and the courts have used Indigeneity and authenticity to grant or deny legal status as well as treaty and resource rights, and to facilitate cultural assimilation. Many have also criticized these concepts as limiting and inaccurate cultural indicators for Indigenous peoples, while others concurrently use these concepts for cultural empowerment. For my purpose, it is essential to historicize and spatially locate the concepts of Indigeneity and tradition to properly analyze them.

To this end, I examine what it meant to practice “Indigenous” politics in BC in the 1960s and 1970s, keeping in mind the cultural variations amongst BC First Nations, what Indigeneity and tradition meant in the context of the Union, and how constituents negotiated these. For example, during the late 1960s to mid-1970s, Indigenous communities were increasingly free to conceptualize Indigenous politics in ways that made sense for them. The Union was operating within a unique set of circumstances whereby state-led policies of political and cultural suppression were lessening and activists with varying levels of education, interaction with non-Indigenous society, and influence from contemporary social movements were active on the political scene. This meant, for instance, that while the federal government in the nineteenth century designed national Indian policies such as the band council system to create consistent

<sup>8</sup> See: Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); Dara Culhane, *The Pleasure of the Crown: Anthropology, Law, and First Nations* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1998); Heather Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660-1900* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004); Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter From the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

and externally determined forms of band governance across the country, the reality was much more varied. In the mid-twentieth century, as in earlier periods, Indigenous political schemes took on local expressions according to unique colonial relationships, socio-political dynamics within the communities, and the personalities, education, status, and political ideologies of individual leaders.<sup>9</sup> Certainly communities had to contend with continued settler-colonial impositions and as well as the legacies of colonialism, but conditions were increasingly favourable for communities and political organizations to revive political practices that had been driven underground or into collective memory through colonization. In 1957, for example, *Indian News* reported on variations to Indian Act models of band governance and noted that 232 bands in the western provinces “select their chiefs and councils under tribal custom and such persons hold office according to the custom of the band.”<sup>10</sup> The article explains that within these customary practices, however, “a number of bands . . . have, nevertheless been holding band meetings to fill vacancies on the councils in conformity with the provisions of Section 73(2) of the Act with respect to the composition of a council . . . .”<sup>11</sup> The use of mixed political models were common according to xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) Chief Delbert Guerin, who noted similar practices within his own band during the 1950s and 1960s, and these expressions of multi-politics fuelled debate and negotiation within the Union in 1975.

Translating mixed political frameworks to the pan-tribal level proved frustrating, especially as Union member nations grappled with the intense bureaucratic discussions that accompanied pan-tribal coordination. Before the delegation could begin discussing Indigeneity, they spent considerable time deliberating the current structure of the Union, the type of land claims strategies to prioritize, the election of leadership, and the processes for debating and activating proposed changes to the organization. Although the main purpose of the organization was to maintain political unity, increasingly the Union alienated people. For instance, convinced that these metapolitical considerations

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed discussion of how Indian Act procedures influenced leadership patterns of the Okanagan, see: Peter Carstens, *The Queen’s People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation Among the Okanagan of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), chapters seven, twelve, and thirteen.

<sup>10</sup> *Indian News* 2, no. 3 (March 1957): 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Indian News* 2, no. 3 (March 1957): 6.

merely served to distract from the main purpose of the organization and hamper progress towards developing concrete political claims, Howard Wale, George Watts, and Simon Lucas censured the Union executive, other chiefs, and even the community delegates for wasting time without solidifying plans for action on the land claim. Thundering into the microphone, Watts exclaimed, “We have heard a lot of *empty words* over the last five years as far as Land Claims is concerned. We have heard a lot of *empty promises*. We have heard a lot of *empty resolutions* that mean nothing. We wonder when we are really going to get down to the business of committing ourselves to this thing?”<sup>12</sup> Watts was taking aim at the delegation itself. In his mind, the lack of progress on the land claim resulted from an absence of real dedication from the communities and the Union chiefs and a tendency to talk about politics and process rather than act to create political change. Simon Lucas echoed these sentiments, highlighting the need for action and results as opposed to lengthy theoretical discussions, when he announced “I really want to come out of this meeting today feeling uplifted, but now my shoulders are drooping, my heart is almost busted, [and] my ass is an inch wider.”<sup>13</sup> The physical and psychological toll of these meetings was real and the delegation had reached a breaking point. Watts and Lucas recognized the logistical challenges of negotiating pan-tribal politics, especially within a new organization coordinating the demands of almost 200 bands. Yet through their interventions, these men sought to integrate their own multi-political agendas and visions for unity, which would prioritize meaningful discussion over metapolitical debate. Reflecting back on assemblies such as this, Penticton hereditary Chief Adam Eneas and Lower Nicola Chief Don Moses agreed that more time was dedicated to political process rather than action, particularly as the Union secured the funds to support large conferences. Highlighting the extent to which this remains common practice in Indigenous politics today, Eneas

<sup>12</sup> Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. Emphasis added.

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 22, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.



half-jokingly suggested an amendment to the Union's current motto, changing it from "Our Land is Our Future" to "Our Meetings are Our Future."<sup>14</sup>

Though lengthy, frustrating, and seemingly futile, these discussions were necessary to coordinate the political priorities and multi-political agendas of the provincial bands. The history of Indian land policies was varied and each band had different concerns. For the twenty-three bands with large land cut-offs stemming from recommendations of the McKenna-McBride Commission, for example, the principal goal was recovering lost lands or receiving compensation. While not the only focus of these bands, the cut-offs provided a good starting point for negotiation. Those without cut-offs, on the other hand, were more concerned with developing a general land claim proposal for the federal government. This required synthesizing information from provincial bands and articulating this into a specific demand for increased reserve sizes, compensation, or other forms of reparation. For instance, Səlílwəta? (Tseil-Waututh/Burrard) Chief John L. George insisted that focusing explicitly on the cut-off lands actually worked to legitimize the province's claim to the land. George argued, "going by the ruling of the white man and saying, 'yes, these little Indian reservations are mine, and what you have cut off, I want back,' [is in] contradiction [to] what we are trying to do in claiming all of the band in BC . . . . *I believe that BC is all cut-off lands.*"<sup>15</sup> George argued that negotiating parcels of land went against the general principle of Indigenous rights and title, and obscured the wider historical reality of Indigenous ownership over all the entire province. Labelling all of BC as "cut-off lands," reminded delegates that the land question was not limited to the results of the McKenna-McBride Commission. George and others understood the potential for internal friction in this debate about land, and the cut-off question was still further complicated by bands that were heavily reliant upon resources for their livelihoods wanted to see gathering, hunting, fishing, and trapping rights guaranteed above all else. Each band constituted their priorities according to local multi-

<sup>14</sup> Adam Eneas, interview by author, Penticton, BC, June 3, 2013; Moses, interview. Clarence Pennier also expressed frustration with these types of meetings. Clarence Pennier, interview with author, Stó:lō Tribal Council Offices, Agassiz, BC, July 25, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. Emphasis added.

politics developed through customary socio-economic practices and unique historical realities.

These varying opinions produced a political deadlock about how to approach the land claim, and drawing strength from the delegation's frustration, Lucas moved to negotiate a \$10 billion settlement with the federal government for the exploitation of First Nations' natural resources. Lucas designed this motion to circumvent some of the sticky questions about cut-offs and resource rights by focusing explicitly on compensation for past wrongs. In other words, the \$10 billion settlement had nothing to do with the land claim settlement or future land use, but was a payment for past land and resource expropriation. Delegates quickly seconded the motion with the assertion that it would finally give the executive committee something to work with.<sup>16</sup> While it did shift the conversation away from political process, the proposal also prompted debates about the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ideologies. Central to this were theoretical considerations about money, which built on earlier discussions about government funding. Deliberations began with James (Jamie) Sterritt's concern about monetary compensation, which he argued privileged white man's concepts of "money" above Indian concepts of "life."<sup>17</sup> Penticton representative Jacob Kruger reiterated these attitudes exclaiming, "let's get on with Indian business. Money is white business. Are we going to have a united front or are we just trying to scratch out dollars and cents and live in the laws of the foreign society?"<sup>18</sup> Kruger pointed out that accepting government money came hand-in-hand with accepting government laws, and he believed the Union had the potential to secure alternate forms compensation while concurrently reshaping Indigenous peoples' relationships with the state. A cash settlement would indicate that Indigenous grievances had been resolved and allow the provincial and federal governments to continue with the status quo because they had paid First Nations for their losses. This would cut off any future discussions about securing land claims,

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>17</sup> Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975. < <http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/Digital/7thAGA.htm#axzz2j2M40SqJ>>.

<sup>18</sup> Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975.

Indigenous rights recognition, and sovereignty. Money would equal acceptance of past injustices and present settler-colonial hegemony.

Many were also apprehensive of formulating their political demands in terms of monetary compensation, as they believed it would, in effect, privilege and legitimize non-Indigenous economic systems. The concern was that First Nations communities would abandon traditional practices for more capitalistic ones and that this would create or intensify class divisions in their communities. Envisioning the impact of a \$10 billion cash infusion for First Nations peoples, Watts quipped, “we’ll probably become good capitalists and be able to rip off our people more. In 10 years from now 75% of those people will have nothing and 25% will have everything, because that’s the way the system works.”<sup>19</sup> Watts was not simply equating accepting government money with capitalism, but he is making a clear distinction between capitalist principles centred on capital accumulation, and traditional Indigenous economies. Watts, Sterritt, and Kruger’s comments also must be understood in the broader framework of attempts to reconcile Indigeneity and tradition on the one hand, and capitalism and modernity on the other. The context of controversial government funding also played a role here and fuelled the uncertainties of these leaders. As noted in the previous chapter, within the historical literature as well as within Indigenous communities, a prevailing belief was that being Indigenous was somehow at odds with desires for capital accumulation.<sup>20</sup> Despite his discomfort with the implications of the settlement, Watts also acknowledged that compensation was necessary to communicate recognition of wrongdoing, and emphasized that reparation could not result in the extinguishment of title or rights. Instead, Watts insisted the motion for compensation was akin to a rental agreement that would allow Indigenous communities to seek financial redress for lost resources, while keeping negotiations open for the governments to recognize continued Indigenous rights to land and resources. Watts insisted, “I think what the motion says is that ‘you’ve been

<sup>19</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>20</sup> Harmon, *Rich Indians*; Lutz, *Makúk*; Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*. Contact narratives about the fur trade and emerging colonial state worked to place Indigenous peoples first as victims of European capitalism, and later as strategic participants, while concurrently maintaining that Indigenous cultures, economies, and communities declined as a result of these interactions. Mary Jane Logan McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History, 1940-1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014), 4-9.

in our house for a couple hundred years now and you owe us some rent for that. If you want to stay in your house, then we've got to sit down and negotiate the rent that you're going to pay to stay in our house. But we still own the house, and that isn't for sale."<sup>21</sup> By envisioning the settlement as a moral victory and a tangible reflection of what has been lost, Watts could make sense of this proposal. Monetary compensation would also represent a significant loss to the settler state, for even if Indigenous peoples did not value the cash settlement as much as their moral victory, the Canadian state would surely see the significance of a \$10 billion loss.

Amid these discussions, delegates also had diverging opinions about the how to define and enact Indigenous politics within the Union. Larger question of state recognition versus Indigeneity underlay these considerations revealing how multi-political interpretations and activations of unity operated amid complex Indigenous-state political paradigms. Indeed, the structure of the Union was premised on attaining government recognition of Indigenous rights and title and organizers designed it to promote mutual comprehension between the Union and government agencies. It therefore followed Department of Indian Affairs' districts, had elected leadership positions, designated committees, and followed the format similar to non-Indigenous Unions and organizations. Union members understood these practices as bureaucratic. To remind, non-elected officials in charge of decision-making and administering policies typically constitute bureaucracy. In the BC Indigenous movement, delegates viewed their elected officials, who were weighed down with administrative considerations and had close ties to federal government departments like the Department of Indian Affairs, as part of a bureaucracy as well. Activists used the term bureaucracy to refer to wide variety of practices including political organization and procedures and decision-making

<sup>21</sup> Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975. This language mimics demands made by AIM leader Clyde Bellecourt in the late 1960s. Bellecourt exclaimed, "We're the landlords of this country, the rent is due, and we're here to collect!" In Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 136. The overlap here suggests that the ideologies of Red Power had become more entrenched within the Union and BC Indigenous communities by 1975 (explored in chapter seven).

processes, and many identified bureaucracy as antithetical to Indigenous political methods.<sup>22</sup>

Within the Union these practices are visible. For example, though the Union general assemblies began with a customary prayer from the host First Nation, they were also strictly routinized with a chair designated to run the proceedings, numbered microphones to organize delegate participation, and rigid conference procedures dictated by Robert's Rules of Order and the Union constitution.<sup>23</sup> This structure represented a specific vision of multi-politics envisioned by the original organizers as the most effective, but others disagreed. For instance, Kwakwaka'wakw Chief Bill Wilson rejected the Union's over-reliance on outside political conventions and tendency to act like a "white man's organization."<sup>24</sup> The Union was designed to promote political efficiency relying on strict rules to authorize and direct political participation and majority voting rules to address differences in opinion. This differed from the customary political frameworks of many communities. For instance, Nuuchahnulth Chief Richard Atleo insisted that community meetings often took a long time because tribal leadership ensured everyone present understood the issues at hand. The decision-making process guaranteed that everyone was able to contribute their opinions and the cornerstones of patience, respect, tolerance, and trust facilitated this.<sup>25</sup> Other nations practiced consensus politics, which also demanded patience. These practices had deep historical roots and each reflected the values of the community. Developing a strong pan-tribal organization required compromise, however. The first Union leaders designed the Union to enable the informed involvement of attendees, but they struggled to incorporate customary political practices that many communities highly valued.

<sup>22</sup> Janice Antoine, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 5, 2013; Saul Terry, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 30, 2012; Anonymous, interview with author; Pennier, interview.

<sup>23</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Annual General Assemblies, 1969-1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>24</sup> Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>25</sup> Richard E. Atleo, *Tsawalk: A Nuuchahnulth Worldview* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 67. Tsartlip Chief Philip Paul would later reiterate this mindset when he called on the delegation to tear down the institutionalized ways of the white man in order to move forward. Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975.

The result was that a number of delegates argued they could not understand or follow what was happening in Union politics. Other delegates joined Wilson to insist that the Union's structure severed Indigeneity from Indigenous politics and placed Indigenous socio-political ideologies outside of Union practice. Representatives such as Hazelton Chief Howard Wale and Penticton Chief Jacob Kruger complained that the multiple motions and discussions emerging from the assembly floor alienated many attendees who were unfamiliar with those types of political processes.<sup>26</sup> Stó:lō Aitchelitz Chief John George admitted that he could not understand the discussions or resolutions of the "educated ones" because his "heart is with the Indian ways of hunting and fishing."<sup>27</sup> Union lawyer Doug Sanders responded by attempting to untangle the web of official procedures in order to bring clarity to the issues, but often found he needed clarification himself.<sup>28</sup> In response, Wilson suggested that the Union was actively privileging non-Indigenous political modalities and "white man's lawyer talk," and he advocated rejecting these in order to move forward.<sup>29</sup> In the minds of these men, "white man's politics" involved talking about process in grandiose but empty ways, while "Aboriginal politics" ensured accessible discussions that resulted in meaningful action.

The Union unintentionally intensified rather than bridged the gap between individuals well versed in customary ways of life and those familiar with settler-oriented politics, and this effectively silenced and alienated segments of the population. Participants increasingly began to question how the Union could claim to represent them if they could not even understand the workings of the organization. This type of alienation was neither new nor limited to Indigenous politics, and was a staple feature in bureaucratic and hierarchical organizations, as well as in organizations that

<sup>26</sup> Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>27</sup> Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975. Aitchelitz First Nation is a Stó:lō band located in Chilliwack.

<sup>28</sup> Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>29</sup> Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21, 1975.

unintentionally became so.<sup>30</sup> In fact, in the early twentieth century, similar issues arose in the Allied Tribes. Darcy Mitchell explained that Kwakiutl communities had initially selected ranking chiefs to act as delegates for the Allied Tribes, but quickly found that these older leaders could not understand English or the types of white law and culture the Allied Tribes embraced. The result was that younger, more educated individuals replaced older customary leaders in the organization.<sup>31</sup> This phenomenon continued to a varying extent during the Union's operation, and was a significant factor in the increasing involvement of new political leaders.

Throughout the 1975 meeting, delegates frequently returned to questions about Indigenous politics and protecting Indigenous interests, and many continued to equate a lack of political progress with the Union's multi-political agenda, which they implied was too broad. Because the Union was working in a variety of areas, its progress was equally spread out and therefore not as substantial. For example, although committees such as the Food Fish Committee and the Action Committee on McKenna-McBride Cut-Off Lands were well organized with a clear mandate and dedicated individuals, work progressed slowly.<sup>32</sup> At each Union assembly, committees on education, social welfare, band and core funding presented reports on their activities and made suggestions for future actions. The result was that delegates were inundated with information that prevented Union members and nations from acting on any one thing. For many, the solution to this political paralysis lay in refusing bureaucratic reporting and actions plans and returning to customary practices. The West Coast district attendees pursued this

<sup>30</sup> For example, John-Henry Harter argued that the original founders of Greenpeace designed the group to be "non-hierarchical, decentralized, and democratic," which ultimately meant that organizers did not design any frameworks to facilitate decision-making beyond an informal basis. This worked well when the group was small, but as it grew "it created the basis for a fundamentally undemocratic organization in which decisions were made by a small group of people." John-Henry Harter, "Environmental Justice for Whom? Class, New Social Movements, and the Environment: A Case Study of Greenpeace Canada, 1971-2000," *Labour/Le Travail* 54 (Fall 2004): 90. Similar developments can be seen in the feminist movement where attempts to avoid hierarchy and structure does not prevent the creation of power dynamics, but simply rendered them invisible. Jo Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 17 (1972-72): 151-164.

<sup>31</sup> Darcy Anne Mitchell, "The Allied Tribes of British Columbia: A Study in Pressure Group Behaviour" (Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1977), 67.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Sixth General Assembly, Williams Lake, BC, April 23, 1974, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

agenda specifically. On the second day of the conference, for instance, George Watts described how his district had reintegrated traditional political elements such as the talking stick, a tool of Indigenous democracy, and hereditary chieftainships into their community multi-politics as a way to reinvigorate their political power and concurrently resist settler interventions into Indigenous politics.<sup>33</sup> “We feel that it is hypocrisy,” began Watts, “to talk about land claims and Indian survival unless you start to practice some of the things which were essential to Indianness and to Indian survival before the white man came here.” He continued, “Our people are planning on things that are going to do away with the things that have been introduced by the white people which have been destructive to our communities and to the tribal-ness within our group.”<sup>34</sup> Following their traditional cosmologies, the West Coast district, which included the Nuuchahnulth, proposed incorporating Indigenous politics within the Union. Recognizing the vast differences between the customary protocols of individual nations, Watts was making a bigger point about valuing uniquely Indigenous political systems over settler-oriented modalities, but this idea of returning to “tradition” demanded serious and sustained conversations by Union constituents.

Some Union delegates were keen to embrace multi-political expressions that contained traditional components. Watts’s appeals prompted representatives from outside the West Coast district to request the use of the talking stick when addressing delegates on the floor. Noting how the talking stick had given the west coast peoples great community and political strength, Stó:lō Skowkale Chief Steven Point asked if he

<sup>33</sup> Jo-ann Archibald outlined the significance of the talking stick amongst the coastal tribes. She insisted, “at Stó:lō cultural gatherings we give the ‘floor’ to respected speakers whom we ask to speak. A carved talking stick, held by the designated speaker, is an example of a cultural protocol reinforcing that this speaker has been given the time to share her or his knowledge through the oral tradition—whether as story, speech, or song. Once the speaker is finished, the talking stick may be given to the next speaker.” Jo-ann Archibald (Q’um Q’um Xiiem), *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 16.

<sup>34</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 22, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.



could benefit from that strength by using the talking stick to address the assembly.<sup>35</sup> This cross-cultural interaction between Nuuchahnulth and Stó:lō representatives demonstrated a level of respect for culturally specific practices, as well as the ability for a pan-tribal organization to seamlessly incorporate these multi-political expressions. The flexibility of both unity and multi-politics is evident here where Watts created space for Nuuchahnulth political expressions and where Point consciously engaged in cultural borrowing in ways that enhanced his political fluency. Over the next few days, individuals approached the microphones to support this move to embrace First Nations' traditions within the Union.

Syilx (Okanagan) Penticton hereditary Chief Adam Eneas called on the delegation to utilize their communities and their traditions to move forward. "My friends, this is unity and this is the way we should be doing it," Eneas said, addressing the Chilliwack assembly. "Our old people are here with us. Let's not talk anymore about the constitution and the white man's laws and how we can fit into them. Let's talk about what we are going to do now." He continued, "let's get away from the flowery speeches. I do not like applause because that is the white man's way to a large extent. You've been taught that in school and it's what the priests, the nuns, and the brothers and sisters have taught you." Calling on delegates to remember traditional protocols, Eneas insisted, "when you applauded after someone's speech or delivery, you drive away the spirit. There's a good spirit at this meeting and we should continue on like a recent meeting I attended where people would bring their drums and sing, and then make their point. They never heard of Robert's Rules of Order and that was one of the best meetings I have ever been to."<sup>36</sup> Like Watts, Eneas made a case for politics as a holistic, community-driven experience that relied on established local frameworks and histories. According to Eneas, the way that leadership enacted politics was just as important as what was said, and he believed that Union leadership should work to incorporate

<sup>35</sup> Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975. Similarly, the following day, Chief Eddy John of the Lakes District asked to borrow the talking stick, so he could draw on its strength. Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>36</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975.

elements that celebrated, empowered, and activated First Nations' cultures rather than relying on empty political bravado.

Just as there was cross-cultural cooperation and shared respect for tribal expressions, there was also confrontation and internal refusals. Conflicting cultural practices exposed another layer of Union multi-politics that undermined unity. At times, differences in political opinions followed tribal divisions, which could hamper decision-making. Upper Nicola Chief George Saddleman explained how in moments of tense political debate, activists would sometimes create derogatory names based on tribal affiliation and cultural practices. Saddleman remembered meetings where diplomacy between the coastal and interior First Nations was faltering and delegates resorted to calling each other “whale chasers” and “coyote chasers” to express their frustration.<sup>37</sup> Penticton Chief Adam Eneas recalled similar tribal divisions based on centuries-old rivalries when he travelled around the province promoting unity after the Union was first established. At a meeting in Cranbrook with the local tribal council, an Elder hereditary chief told Eneas the idea for unity was a good one, but he wondered why the Union sent “two Okanagans,” traditional Ktunaxa (Kootenay) enemies, to promote the idea of unity to them.<sup>38</sup> At times, this name-calling and tribal divisiveness could be humorous and served to highlight differences of interpretation or opinion based on cultural divergences, yet other times it reflected a wider critique of pan-tribal politics and the potential for difference to disrupt political unity.

Likewise, disagreements about the role of customary expressions within a pan-tribal political organization also placed leaders with different interpretations of appropriate multi-political systems and expressions of Indigeneity in direct opposition with each other. For instance, at the Chilliwack meeting the day after several groups took to the floor to sing and dance during the conference proceedings, enacting the “good spirit” of politics that Eneas promoted, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Chief Delbert Guerin called for an end to such disruptions. Viewing these cultural performances as a distraction from the political goals of the conference, Guerin suggested that individuals

<sup>37</sup> George Saddleman, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, February 7, 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Adam Eneas, interview with author, Penticton First Nation, Penticton, BC, June 3, 2013.

wishing to sing relocate to the Tzeachten hall down the street so that the assembly could continue unabated.<sup>39</sup> Guerin reinforced his request with the argument that the Union assembly was a place of business not a forum for cultural expression. His suggestion was part of a wider dialogue about cultural practices that had been developing throughout the conference. In fact, the previous day, songs and dances were increasingly incorporated into the Union's multi-political framework. For instance, Eneas had turned to song after delivering a speech on the internal racism on his reserve. Eneas and his community were responding to discussions in the Chilliwack meeting about eligibility in land claims settlement. Union members were trying to determine who would be entitled to receive the benefits of a potential future settlement, and many insisted on some kind of blood quantum and residency requirement. These individuals were concerned about non-BC Indigenous peoples or non-Status, Métis, or non-Indigenous spouses benefitting from a settlement. These concerns produced lengthy discussions about Indian Act definitions of status, which Eneas vociferously opposed. Eneas criticized communities for turning against their family members because of Indian Act definitions of identity. Regretting his own role in this Indian Act racism and proclaiming reserves to be akin to a Ku Klux Klan meeting, Eneas lamented: "it tears my heart apart sometimes since I've become Chief to see [non-status people] come back and I have to sit there and look at them and refer to a section under the Indian Act and tell them, 'sorry brother, but you can't live here.'"<sup>40</sup> At that point, Eneas introduced a song from his people, which I interpret as an expression of anguish concerning the restrictive and oppressive nature of Indian Act policies, as well as a critique of community multi-political frameworks that incorporated government policies.<sup>41</sup> Eneas resented the way in which Canadian Indian policy had imposed artificial legal and

<sup>39</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975.

<sup>40</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>41</sup> The UBCIC Resource Centre has edited all culturally sensitive performances from their video recordings in order to preserve the cultural integrity of the performances. It is difficult to assess the significance of this song in the absence of footage or a direct explanation of the song's meaning in the minutes, but it can be broadly interpreted as political based on Eneas's introduction. Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

physical barriers between First Nations individuals through status/non-status designations and band lists, which determined eligibility to live on reserve. The subsequent song provided an alternate political forum for Eneas and his community to voice their opposition to state policies and to the individuals who embraced them.

Building on these political presentations, singers and dancers flooded the Union floor.<sup>42</sup> Simon Baker's Xwemelch'stn (Capilano) Band performed a song that drew on historical political practices of his people.<sup>43</sup> Introducing the presentation, Baker noted that the group would perform the same song his grandfather Chief Joe Capilano sang during the 1906 chiefs' delegation to England. The 1906 delegation saw Chief Joe Capilano, Secwepemc Chief Basil David of St'uxwtews (Bonaparte), Syilx (Okanagan) Chief Chillihitza (Tselaxi'tsa), Simon Pierre of Katzie, and Chief Charlie Isipaymilt of Cowichan travel to London to present their grievances to King Edward VI.<sup>44</sup> This delegation not only represented an important moment in the fight for Indigenous rights, but also reflected the growing currency of pan-tribal political achievements as this was the first time a delegation claimed to represent the entire British Columbia Indigenous population.<sup>45</sup> Referencing this example of pan-tribal unity and the political figures involved served as a poignant reminder of the historic weight of the BC land claim.<sup>46</sup> This song also activated common practices of drawing strength from ones who have passed

<sup>42</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly, Williams Lake, April 23, 1974, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>43</sup> The Xwemelch'stn band is part of the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) Nation. The Xwemelch'stn are often known as the Capilano Band after Chief Joe Capilano. Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 85; Carlson, *The Power of Place*, 269.

<sup>45</sup> Carlson, *The Power of Place*, 269. See also, Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 85.

<sup>46</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

on.<sup>47</sup> As delegates embraced these activities, they created new energies and political directions, offered additional multi-political elements to include in Union practice, and facilitated the participation of non-voting delegates in Union activities.<sup>48</sup>

These activities and the response they drew from Guerin revealed how multi-political expressions could be both competing and fragmented. Unlike Eneas, Baker, and others, Guerin's multi-political vision for the Union did not include cultural expressions. The next day, when Guerin suggested performers vacate the conference hall, the assembly responded with loud jeers from those delegates who supported the infusion of songs and dances into Union proceedings. Undeterred, with the support of his district Guerin promoted his vision of Union politics that disagreed with interruptions a serious meeting.<sup>49</sup> Early Union records reveal that songs were an integral part of early Union meetings, and were once again firmly entrenched by the 1990s. In the 1993 records of the annual general assembly, for instance, the agenda revealed allotted time for honour songs and dream songs. This debate in 1975 was part of a larger process whereby Union leaders were negotiating how the Union would operate, and it was increasingly clear that leaders maintained different understandings of how Indigenous politics should be envisioned in BC. Those who disagreed with Guerin, including West Coast district representatives Simon Lucas and George Watts were quick to formulate a response, outlining the purpose and benefit of singing. Lucas suggested, "if we are going to mobilize people we have to use every source of weapon, and so far constitutions

<sup>47</sup> Early Union meetings frequently began with a recitation of chiefs who had passed on. A moment of silence followed the list, and this served to initiate contemporary political proceedings with strong references to the past. Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Annual General Assembly, 1969 – 1973, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. A warrior song performed by Frank Rivers of Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) immediately followed the Xwemelch'stn (Capilano) song. This would have had great currency in the context of discussions on land claims and escalating calls for delegates to act rather than debate. Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>48</sup> Periodically, the Union allowed unofficial and non-voting to speak at the general assemblies. This was the case on April 23, 1975 and prompted wider participation. Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>49</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975.

haven't been able to move our people."<sup>50</sup> For Lucas, it was time to redefine the style of Indigenous politics practiced by the Union to officially include customary activities, particularly those that Canadian Indian policy had once outlawed. In other words, Union multi-politics was not powerful enough on its own. The organization needed to incorporate Nuu-chah-nulth and other customary political paradigms as well. Lucas believed this would politically motivate the people in ways that bureaucracy failed to achieve. Watts agreed maintaining that people were singing and dancing because they were frustrated and wanted to "lift themselves up."<sup>51</sup>

Every First Nation maintained songs and dances that community members recognized as politically significant. Amongst the Coast Salish, for instance, "the s̓xwó:y̓xwey mask, dance, regalia, and songs are integral aspects of traditional culture . . . and serve primarily as a 'cleansing instrument' at significant events such as naming, puberty, wedding and funeral ceremonies."<sup>52</sup> According to West Coast manifestations of multi-politics, outlined by Watts, songs and dances had an important role in mobilizing the communities by allowing performers to express their emotions and meditate on tough political questions.<sup>53</sup> Songs were a way of life for the Nuu-chah-nulth and as such, highlighted the multiple modalities of Indigenous political expression. Richard Atleo has outlined the importance of song and dance in Nuu-chah-nulth culture, insisting, "it is a custom that precedes every undertaking, even today." Sketching how songs were ingrained in everyday life, Atleo continued, "men sang to themselves as they worked on carving out a fishing canoe or, later, as they worked on their modern, commercial fishing boats. Women sang to themselves as they worked around the house, mended clothes, or dried and smoked fish, and at night they sang lullabies to the children."<sup>54</sup> Songs and dances also had a gendered political component to them, especially for coastal and

<sup>50</sup> Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975.

<sup>51</sup> Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975.

<sup>52</sup> Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, "S̓xwó:y̓xwey Origins and Movements," in *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, ed. Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 10.

<sup>53</sup> For more on the politics of performance, see: Susan Roy, *These Mysterious People: Shaping History and Archaeology in a Northwest Coast Community* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010); Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*.

<sup>54</sup> Atleo, 107-108.

interior Salish nations whose women looked after the songs and dances and could use them to activate their political powers in a male-dominated setting.<sup>55</sup>

Indeed, these activities cannot simply be understood as cultural performances, but were grounded in centuries of traditional socio-political practice. They also expressed and facilitated political discourse. Following this ideology, Watts was quick to draw comparisons between the styles of politics on the west coast and those at the Union assembly, and turned the criticism of the singers back towards the rest of the delegation. Noting that the west coast Elders were especially exasperated with the bureaucratic proceedings from the previous day, Watts declared “it wasn’t them that debated election processes for four hours. It wasn’t them that tossed politics across the floor.”<sup>56</sup> The idea of “tossing politics” around became a common phrase at the assembly and individuals used this to criticize vacuous statements or practices, or political posturing. Watts used this moment and this phrasing to argue that these Elders rejected empty debates about politics that privileged talk over action, to wanted to seek real solutions grounded in traditional ideologies. For the Nuu-chah-nulth, this means enacting the principle of *heshook-ish tsawalk* or the interconnectivity of all things.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the West Coast Elders viewed singing and dancing as an integral to and inseparable from their multi-politics. While Watts, Lucas, and others insisted Union multi-politics needed a strong customary component, Guerin argued the organization was stronger without the distraction of cultural practice.

Multi-political debates can be framed in a variety of ways. In this case it was centred on Indigeneity and authenticity. In his response to Guerin, Watts framed his disapproval of Guerin’s politics in terms of authentic Indigeneity. Taking direct aim at Guerin, Watts concluded that those who opposed this practice of singing and dancing were “only denying their Indian heritage.”<sup>58</sup> Watts constructed political expression in

<sup>55</sup> Pennier, interview.

<sup>56</sup> Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975.

<sup>57</sup> Atleo, 117.

<sup>58</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975.

terms of binary identities, with “authentic Indians” exercising their cultural practices through the politics of performance and “inauthentic Indians” rejecting their heritage in favour of the “white man’s” organization. For Watts, Indians who embraced their Indigeneity were those who practiced their culture at home as well as in multi-political settings such as the Union. All others fell outside the definition of Indigenous politics and Indigenous identity. While Watts did not subscribe to Indian Act definitions of Indigeneity that used blood quantum and genealogy to determine Indigenous categorization he emphasized that Indigeneity and authenticity were derived from ideology and action.<sup>59</sup> Declaring the activities on the floor to be an intrusion into the proper Indian ways, Watts insisted, “no Robert’s Rules of Order and no constitution that has been written by white people is going to overrule what the people from the West Coast feel like doing.” Contemplating these disjointed practices, Watts mused, “maybe we have two types of Indians living in this province: those people who want to live as white people, and those people who want to live as Indians.” He concluded sharply, “we want to live as Indians.”<sup>60</sup> The hall erupted in cheers as Watts finished his speech and delegates jumped to their feet to give him a standing ovation. Clearly, Watts had struck chord had with Union delegates.

Yet, it was not simply the case that Guerin and the *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* people did not value cultural expression and its political currency. Indeed, *Sxwó:yx̣wey* dances and regalia were also important in *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* culture, and Guerin was not denying this. Instead, Guerin believed in the adaptability of pan-tribal politics and did not interpret this as an affront to Indigeneity or tradition as Watts did.<sup>61</sup> In this moment Guerin simultaneously enacted different multi-political frameworks for the Union and for his community. Guerin’s vision of Union multi-politics was decidedly more bureaucratic and this was necessary to promote mutual political intelligibility across nations. Guerin’s *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* multi-politics, on the other hand, embraced customary protocols and

<sup>59</sup> Wahmeesh (Ken Watts), interview with author, Ts’ishaa7ath (Tseshahat) First Nation, Port Alberni, BC, June 28, 2012

<sup>60</sup> Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Watts, interview.

<sup>61</sup> McHalsie, “*Sxwó:yx̣wey* Origins and Movements,” 10.



cultural expressions as well as integrating Department of Indian Affairs' band council structures. Watts and Lucas believed cultural practices of singing and dancing were essential to Union multi-politics, while Guerin was convinced that Union politics could fit easily within the confines of the Canadian system. Guerin separated these two political forums, whereas Watts and Lucas saw the boundaries between Union and Nuuchahnulth multi-politics as more porous. Ultimately, Guerin, Watts, and Lucas found space within the Union assembly to express their politics and ideals about Indigeneity, but also saw those ideas challenged by others. In this moment, Guerin and Watts's individual expressions and interpretations of *xw̓məθk'wəy̓əm* and Nuuchahnulth politics collided, and this highlighted the complexities of multi-politics, undermined notions of Indigenous political uniformity, and emphasized how the different histories and cultures of each nation influenced the negotiation of politics.

Categories of Indigeneity also plagued individuals, communities, and the Union. The tension between racialized identities defined by the state versus community recognition of membership was ever-present within the Union. Organizers mobilized Indian Act categories by conceptualizing the Union as a status Indian organization for on-reserve Indigenous peoples. This meant that only status Indians could run for executive positions and that policies and decision-making would focus on reserve communities. This designation did not sit well with some members who called on the Union to reject Indian Act membership definitions and broaden the representative scope of the organization. Defining who counted as an Indian had political, material, and affective implications. Those considered status Indians would benefit from political authority within the Union and, according to Union minutes, were beneficiaries of any potential land claims settlement.<sup>62</sup> They were also accepted as members of cultural, political, and historical communities. Those cast outside of status designations were excluded from these benefits through a government-defined category. These high stakes prompted some, such as Neil Sterritt (Gitksan) to politically refuse the Indian Act and remove it from his understanding of unity and multi-politics. At the Chilliwack conference Sterritt outlined the negative impact of Indian Act categories where non-status individuals were treated "like we were lepers" at Union general assemblies and within

<sup>62</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Sixth General Assembly, Williams Lake, BC, April 23, 1974, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

families in their communities. “I don’t feel that the Babine district fully accepts me,” Sterritt began. “I came to the mike because I don’t feel as though you’ve all accepted me and when I hear someone like Willis Morgan,” he continued, “who is my cousin, and who doesn’t accept me just because we left the reserve, I wonder why my own cousin can reject me from the reserve.”<sup>63</sup> The politics of residence was frequently a factor in discussions of indigeneity, politics, and power. For instance, in January 1973, Indian Affairs declared the Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc (Kamloops) band elections void after twenty-seven members protested the election of Norman La Rue as chief. Arguing that La Rue, as well as many of his supporters, were not residents on the reserve and therefore not eligible to hold office or vote, band members used Indian Act governance regulations to have the incumbent Chief Gus Gottfriedson reinstated. Not satisfied with these externally defined guidelines, La Rue countered that while he did not reside on reserve, he was a blood member of the band and his father had served as the last hereditary chief for twenty-four years. Residency for La Rue, then, was less significant for determining leadership eligibility than ancestry and connections to traditional leadership. La Rue rejected settler-colonial Indian policy as a determinant for his authority and embraced traditional political practices, which privileged the authority of hereditary leaders. Protestors, on the other hand, chose to uphold Indian Act definitions in order to have their desired leader elected: a surprising turn of events considering the degree to which First Nations peoples have resented Indian Act regulations on leadership, band membership, and reserve resource allocation. In this case, however, and others, band members selectively and strategically enacted and refused elements of settler systems to protect their own political interests, affirming the political fluency of Indigenous peoples in multiple and competing political systems and the flexibility of Indigenous multi-politics. The political efficacy of the communities and the Union depended on state recognition of Union leaders, who then also must be recognized and legitimized by their communities and Union colleagues.<sup>64</sup> Like La Rue, Sterritt revealed ways in which the politics of the personal also manifested in the Union. As an individual of Gitxsan ancestry, whose family left the reserve perhaps out of choice or, more likely,

<sup>63</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>64</sup> “Kamloops Indian band elections: DIA voids results, ‘sit-ins’ continue,” *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 1 no. 5 (January 1973): 1 and 10.

because of a loss of status through the Indian Act, Sterritt resented how some communities and individuals bought into government definitions of identity. Sterritt believed ancestry rather than “status” or residency was the only legitimate indicator of Indigeneity, and as he referenced the personal anguish he experienced by his exclusion, Sterritt concluded sharply, “the bloody Indian Act has divided us.”<sup>65</sup> Until this point the Union strategically recognized Indian Act definitions of membership when it channelled political authority into the hands of a select group and limited the number of beneficiaries to a potential land claims settlement. But as individuals like Sterritt spoke out, the Union began reconsidering its stance.

In response to these debates, the Union proposed two motions that explicitly rejected Indian Act definitions. The first, proposed by Sterritt, eliminated Indian Act definitions of status when considering eligibility for Union executive positions. This opened up Union leadership positions to all Indigenous peoples regardless of legal status. The second rejected Indian Act status definitions as criteria for eligibility in the land claims settlement. Instead, the Union created its own definition, which included “current band members, former band members disenfranchised through marriage or enfranchisement, and persons who are at least ¼ “British Columbia Indian by descent.”<sup>66</sup> These classifications reflected the specific political goals of the Union and were shaped to express its multi-politics. The Union could not implement changes to the Indian Act in the communities or across Canada more broadly, but it could determine how the Indian Act operated within this political forum.

The second motion constituted an important step towards recognizing and correcting the gender inequality within Indigenous communities, but because it only referred to a theoretical future settlement, it had little practical impact on the lives of disenfranchised Indigenous women. Until a settlement was reached, Indigenous women who “married out” of their communities remained ineligible for any cultural, community, and material benefits of membership. The delegation approved the second motion, but

<sup>65</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>66</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

they ultimately decided not to act on it without input from the band members. This is significant as individuals who were already included and had Indian status would be the ones determining the fate of those whose status was in question. The potential for status members to preserve the exclusion of non-status was already proven in the cases of La Rue and Sterritt. The Union also ignored the question of band autonomy, a central component of the Union's original mandate as a coordinating organization, which left unclear the practical application of this membership decision. Since band membership was determined at the band level, the Union's claim to reject Indian Act membership definitions meant very little unless individual bands agreed to follow this resolution and this remained unclear in the Union assembly. Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and Gitksan communities confirmed that they were already operating according to their own ideals of membership with varying results, and therefore, agreement at the Union level was inconsequential for bands that disagreed with wider inclusion. And yet, symbolically, if not practically, this motion was an important move. Although the delegation disagreed on definitions of Indigeneity, they agreed that it was something that needed to be internally defined. This was something Stó:lō Chief Clarence Pennier characterized in his simple directive: "Act Indian, don't Indian Act."<sup>67</sup>

Throughout the 1975 meeting Union delegates spent a significant amount of time discussing how pan-tribal unity and Indigenous politics would be activated within the organization. The "philosophical revolution" that materialized at the Chilliwack convention not only revealed competing political visions in terms of Indigeneity and tradition, and relationships with the state, but also demonstrated the sophisticated ways in which activists re-crafted and re-negotiated their political identities, ideologies, and positions to maintain unity. This was both facilitated by and reflected important multi-political expressions that were the cornerstone of pan-tribal politics. No political formula ensured unity, but the very nature of the debate indicated a healthy political atmosphere and evidence that Union member nations continued to believe in the efficacy of unity. Four days earlier Richard Malloway lamented the slow pace of Indigenous politics and prompted intense discussions about unity that would ultimately send the organization in new directions.

<sup>67</sup> Pennier, interview.

## **Chapter 6. Gendered Refusals in the Move Towards Grassroots Politics**

The 1975 Union assembly and the summer of 1975 were pivotal moments of political refusal for the Union and its constituents. By the time the assembly ended in April 1975, the organization had undergone a massive transformation with several leaders stepping forward to re-envision the Union as financially and politically independent from the Canadian state. Central to this independence was the Union's decision to reject federal and provincial government funding and programs. This included operational funding for the bands, and organizations like the Union, as well as education, housing, and social welfare funds normally transferred to the bands to administer. The decision emerged out of the chiefs' philosophical dilemma about government funding, which they argued compromised their political authority, and concerns about inadequate government funding that was increasingly clawed back as neoliberalism took hold across Canada. By refusing funds and the federal government's neoliberal agenda, the Union argued it and First Nations bands could operate independently from the Canadian state to pursue the land claim. Through this decision, the new executive, Tsartlip Chief Phillip Paul, Ts'ishaa7ath (Tsashaht) Chief George Watts, and Kwakwaka'wakw Chief Bill Wilson would also prematurely declare the end of Union bureaucracy modelled on state forms and recast the post-1975 Union as a grassroots organization within a people's movement. At the first publicized demonstration after the meeting, the executive emphasized how this break with government expanded the focus and influence of the Union beyond the administrative walls of the organization into the communities where the Union would hear the voices of the people. "We're no longer the executive of an organization," declared Phillip Paul to a gathering of land claims demonstrators preparing for a protest at the Victoria legislature. Instead, he insisted, "We're the executive of an Indian movement. [And] this movement

would shake the very bones of this country.”<sup>1</sup> Although a true people’s movement would never develop, the Union executive envisioned a new style of pan-tribal unity no longer dependent on government recognition that would incite real change on the ground.

This chapter explores the period between April and July 1975 when the Union sought transition from a state-recognized Indigenous bureaucracy to an independent people’s movement by rejecting government funding and programs. The Union’s decision to reject government funding in 1975 is a central event in the history of the organization and I will discuss it several times throughout this study in different contexts. Here, I outline the Union’s decision and subsequent responses from the grassroots and Indigenous women’s organizations. In chapter seven I also briefly trace the role of the decision in the prompting community-based direct action. In this chapter I argue that the rejection of funding was a strong, albeit misguided, expression of political refusal against the Canadian government’s neoliberal interventions and that this refusal resulted from the changing multi-politics of Union delegates as well as evolving conceptions of unity. The Union’s rejection of government funding and politics, however, also failed to account for the lived realities and political agendas of the organization’s constituents and thus initiated counter-refusals amongst those who disagreed with Union strategies and directives. Specifically, members of the Indigenous women’s movement criticized the Union’s decision insisting it did little to advance the movement and ultimately harmed and silenced community women and children. Advancing Audra Simpson’s concept of political refusal, I demonstrate how refusals within the Indigenous movement, across band, status, and gender considerations, deepens our understanding of pan-tribal unity and the BC Indigenous movement. For example, through their distinctly gendered refusals, use of politicized motherhood, and strategic alliances with government departments and likeminded bands, the women demonstrated alternate multi-political strategies and continued to advocate for a more inclusive vision of pan-tribal unity than the Union was practicing.

The Union’s decision to reject funding developed out of criticisms of bureaucracy, elitism, and government dependence that had been building within the organization

<sup>1</sup> Photo caption, *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 13 (May 1975): 1.

since 1969. These peaked at the 1975 meeting where delegates were primed for change. The principal catalyst came with the arrival of a telex from National Indian Brotherhood leader George Manuel. The telex called for the Union to reject unfair Indian Affairs programs, particularly the controversial Grants to Bands program. This was a federal initiative operated by Indian Affairs that allocated funding to bands based on federally determined per capita grant formulas.<sup>2</sup> In 1974, when the program introduced a new formula that effectively cut band funding in half, communities denounced this decline in resources, as well as the unpredictable nature of the program. Chiefs and councillors reasoned that it was impossible to provide funds and services to their membership when their budgets could fluctuate so drastically with little warning.<sup>3</sup> This and other program decisions were made unilaterally by the Department of Indian Affairs, and Manuel, a well-respected leader and longstanding member of the modern Indian movement, argued Indigenous peoples needed to reject this level of outside control. As the telex was read out to Union delegates, they interpreted this to mean that they should reject all funding for bands and organizations. Manuel's son Arthur has recently argued that George Manuel never intended to imply total financial independence, but wanted Indigenous peoples to reject specific programs such as the Grants to Bands in order to register their discontent.<sup>4</sup> George Manuel's message, however, perfectly captured the Union assembly's frustration with the federal government, and articulated a practical solution to their challenges. With an organization poised for change and an assembly

<sup>2</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC. April 24, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Arthur Manuel, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 14, 2012; Reuben Ware, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 20, 2012; Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: the Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 179. The Grants to Bands program was also known as Band Core funding. Lou Demerais, "1974 Annual Report as presented to the Seventh Annual General Assembly, Chilliwack, April 21-25, 1975," in the Annual General Assembly Information Kit, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Sixth General Assembly, Williams Lake, BC, April 23, 1974, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Eneas, interview with author, Penticton First Nation, Penticton, BC, June 3, 2013; George Saddleman, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, February 7, 2015; Arthur Manuel, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 14, 2012; Reuben Ware, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 20, 2012; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC. April 24, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Lou Demerais, "1974 Annual Report as presented to the Seventh Annual General Assembly, Chilliwack, April 21-25, 1975," in the Annual General Assembly Information Kit, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>4</sup> Manuel, interview.

that activists described as having “taken on a life of its own,” delegates read Manuel’s telex according to their own political desires, and proposed a motion to refuse government funding.<sup>5</sup>

The decision to reject government funding was a strong political statement grounded in a sophisticated understanding of how neoliberalism was compromising the land claim and Indigenous rights. It was also a spontaneous and emotionally charged response that was ultimately ill conceived and premature. Indeed, the Union delegates in charge of making the decision did so from positions of relative economic and political privilege and this blinded many of them to the hardship they were imposing on Indigenous families. The original motion, introduced by Tl’azt’en (Stuart-Trembleur) Chief Eddy John of the Lakes district, specifically criticized the Department’s programs for band administration, health, education, and housing. John argued these programs provided inadequate per capita based funds and expected bands and organizations such as the Union to administer these services using insufficient resources. In his motion to the Union, John called for delegates to reject their dependency on the Department by refusing government money (see Table 3).<sup>6</sup> John reasoned that without government money, the Union could pursue its own mandates and pressure the Department to “negotiate on [an] equal basis with respect to our provincial and national leaders.”<sup>7</sup> The extent of Union frustration was confirmed by the lack of debate preceding the carrying of this motion, despite the massive implications of this proposal, which would undermine the sources of Union financial stability. As mentioned in chapter three, the turn to neoliberalism prompted government agencies to transfer responsibility for socio-

<sup>5</sup> Marge Kelly, interview with author, Soowahlie First Nation, Cultus Lake, BC, May 3, 2012; Saddleman, interview; Clarence Pennier, interview with author, Stó:lō Tribal Council Offices, Agassiz, BC, July 25, 2012; Saul Terry, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 30, 2012; Delbert Guerin, interview with author, xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) First Nation, Vancouver, BC, May 31, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> LAC, RG 10, V1994-95/412, Box 1, File 987/24-2-12, Release: Bulletin # 3, May 5, 1975. Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1972-1981; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. Tl’azt’en Nation was formerly known as the Stuart-Trembleur Band. The band is a member of the Dakelh (Carrier) tribal group and is located on the north shore of Stuart Lake near Tache River. < <http://www.tlc.baremetal.com/About%20Us.htm> > Accessed June 10, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.



economic programs to Indigenous communities under the guise of self-government. The primacy neoliberalism placed on the market economy, individualism, and productivity fuelled decisions to transfer responsibility for service provision to the Union. The Union strategically embraced state recognition when it progressed their political aims, and accepted funding and service responsibility to accomplish this. This allowed the Union to develop their organization and politicize their populations. In April 1975, however, discomfort about the political motivations of the neoliberal government inspired the Union to refuse neoliberalism and state-facilitated Indigenous politics by rejecting funding.

The complexities of political refusals are clearly shown in the introduction of the funding decision and the subsequent amendment, debate, and acceptance at the Union level. As I have previously shown, refusals are not simply all or nothing. They can exist on a spectrum, and can overlap and compete. For some, the original motion did not go far enough in registering Union refusal of government policies. In fact, upon approval Diitiid7aa7tx (Ditidaht) Chief Charlie Thompson further radicalized the proposition by recommending an amendment that would reject all forms of provincial and federal government funding and programs, not simply Union funding and limited band money.<sup>8</sup> This revision would mean that First Nations communities would not only decline funding for band administration, housing, education, health and welfare, and cultural development, as well as the Department of the Secretary of State's core and communications funding, but would reject funding and services from federal and provincial sources (see Table 4).<sup>9</sup> This proposal, if accepted, would serve to financially cripple the Union and First Nations communities almost instantaneously by defunding their political organizations, band governments, housing, education, health, economic development, and other programs and services. Yet, for its supporters, it would also send a strong message to government about the resiliency, pride, and political

<sup>8</sup> Diitiid7aa7tx (Ditidaht) First Nation is also known as Nitinat is a member of the Nuu-chah-nulth tribal group and is located on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

<sup>9</sup> LAC, RG 10, V1994-95/412, Box 1, File 987/24-2-12, Release: Bulletin # 3, May 5, 1975. Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1972-1981; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 168.

independence of First Nations peoples.<sup>10</sup> This was clearly an important moment for BC Indigenous politics. It represented a robust political ideal and was well intended, but also short-sighted in terms of anticipating the economic challenges communities would face in surviving without government money. It also did not represent many grassroots members' vision for the movement.

**Table 3. Proposed Funding Refused (original motion)**

| Funding Agency                      | Type of Funds   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Department of Indian Affairs</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• band administration and core funds</li> <li>• district administration and core funds</li> <li>• band and district housing projects funds</li> <li>• band and district education projects funds</li> <li>• band and district social assistance</li> <li>• cultural project funds</li> <li>• economic development funds</li> </ul> |
| <b>Secretary of State</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organization core funding</li> <li>• organization communication funding (specifically the Union core and communications resources).</li> </ul>   |

Source: Data adapted from LAC, RG 10, V1994-95/412, Box 1, File 987/24-2-12, Release: Bulletin # 3, May 5, 1975; Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1972-1981 and Minutes of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>10</sup> Pennier, interview.

**Table 4. Proposed Funding Refused (amended motion)**

| Funding Agency                                  | Type of Funds  |
|---|--|
| <b>Department of Indian Affairs</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• band administration and core funding</li> <li>• district administration and core funding</li> <li>• band and district housing projects funds</li> <li>• band and district education projects funds</li> <li>• band and district social assistance</li> <li>• cultural project funds</li> <li>• economic development funds (e.g. Indian Fisherman’s Assistance Program)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Secretary of State</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organization core funding</li> <li>• organization communication funding (specifically the Union core and communications resources).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>National Health and Welfare</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Province of British Columbia</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Citizens Fund<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Department of Agriculture</li> <li>• Department of Education</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mortgage insurance subsidies</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Canada Manpower</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job placement programs</li> </ul>   |

Source: Data adapted from LAC, RG 10, V1994-95/412, Box 1, File 987/24-2-12, Release: Bulletin # 3, May 5, 1975; Minutes of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Annual General Assemblies, 1972-1981, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>1</sup> The First Citizens Fund was created by the BC government in 1969 to support the cultural, educational, and economic development of Indigenous peoples. Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation <gov.bc.ca>; “First Citizens Fund,” *Unity: Bulletin of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs* 1, no. 1 (Sept-Oct 1970): 13-14.

Chiefs Eddy John and Charlie Thompson developed specific forms of multi-politics that enacted unity through refusing government frameworks, but these varied levels of refusal also demanded negotiation within the Union. As delegates broke into their districts to discuss the amendment to the motion, competing multi-politics and refusals emerged. Oral history interviews and the Union minutes highlight the careful balancing of district opinions and Union mandates and the intersection of local and provincial politics. They also reveal the gradations of political authority along gender and status lines that delegates had to navigate. For example, in the Fraser West district interactions between the District Chief Earl Commodore (Soowahlie), x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>ə'yəm (Musqueam) Chief Delbert Guerin, and Stó:lō Soowahlie Councillor Marge Kelly underline marked differences in political knowledge and authority. Commenting on the debate surrounding Thompson's funding amendment, Both Guerin and Kelly have since suggested that many delegates did not quite understand the full implications of the funding decision.<sup>11</sup> Kelly recalled the confusion surrounding the motion both at the meeting and afterwards in the communities. "That was a hectic meeting," Kelly began. "Everybody panicked when they were talking about funding. They were going to take it away. We couldn't understand, eh?" Turning to their band Chief Commodore for clarification, Kelly argued "he couldn't understand because he was never involved in too much of the meetings." She concluded, "our Chief was trying to [say] they'll take our money out of our bank. But I don't know – I told him, 'you can't take it out now, we can't do that,'" Kelly concluded.<sup>12</sup> In this exchange, Kelly struggled between deferring to her chief as the main political authority and questioning his expertise according to her own political experience. As mentioned in chapter four, Kelly was a reluctant political actor who tended to deemphasize her involvement and expertise, but here she confronted her chief's understanding of the funding decision and legitimized this by highlighting his lack of political involvement.

Guerin also challenged Commodore's interpretation of the funding decision, but took on a more confrontational tone. At the district meeting, Guerin noted that Commodore singled him out to explain why he opposed the motion. Surprised that so many delegates were willing to support a proposal with such grave consequences,

<sup>11</sup> Kelly, interview; Guerin, interview.

<sup>12</sup> Kelly, interview.

Guerin disputed Commodore's understanding of the proposition hoping to change his mind. Guerin narrated the resulting interchange. "Earl," Guerin said, "let me ask you this question. You've got quite a few sisters, right? Your mom and dad are still alive, right?' He said, 'yeah.' I said, 'well do you want your mom and dad to reject their pension cheques? And your sisters and brothers and your families to reject their family allowance for their children?' 'Oh,'" Commodore said, realizing the extent of the motion.<sup>13</sup> According to Guerin, Commodore focused on the strong message the motion would send to government, but failed to grasp the magnitude of the proposal. Guerin, on the other hand, focused on the practical impact this motion would have on families. Guerin, however, also misunderstood the proposal and falsely believed community members would lose access to old age pensions, family allowances, veterans and disability pensions, and unemployment insurance, which were payments not included in the funding packages the Union was proposing to reject.<sup>14</sup> Although the proposal was controversial and prompted much debate, the motion passed. With government funding rejected, the Union chose to activate a vision of multi-politics premised on state refusals, and financial and political independence.

These varying levels of political fluency created debate and frustration amongst these three individuals, but allowed Union member chiefs and councillors a degree of input denied to grassroots membership. The Union chiefs did not provide a mechanism for grassroots delegates to vote on the funding motion. Many community members were not present at the Union meeting to witness this controversial discussion, and even those in attendance did not have the right to vote for an issue that would directly influence their lives. The decision resulted from the leadership's, rather than the communities', democratic decision-making. This meant that although community members consistently expressed a desire to be heard, they were not, which intensified pre-existing criticisms about the inadequacy of representative democracy and band and Union structure. Several leaders demonstrated an awareness and concern about the opinions of their people, and mediated these voices onto the assembly floor. This added

<sup>13</sup> Guerin, interview; Eneas, interview; Percy Joe, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 5, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 987/24-2-12, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Release: Bulletin # 3, May 5, 1975; Minutes of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Annual General Assemblies, 1972-1981, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

another layer to complex gradations of political authority and position, and exposed how the silences of community members were lessened. For instance, American Indian Movement member and former St'uxwtews (Bonaparte) Chief Ken Basil spoke up for community members by loudly and directly denouncing the funding decision as further separating politics from lived realities on reserve.<sup>15</sup> Basil argued that the funding decision not only privileged grand political gestures at the expense of community well-being, prompting Chief Dennis Alphonse to suggest the chiefs were “playing politics with peoples’ lives,” but it also failed to take community concerns and lived realities seriously.<sup>16</sup> For the newly elected executive of the Union, Philip Paul, Bill Wilson, and George Watts, this exclusion of the grassroots was unacceptable and they pushed for change.

By the end of the Chilliwack meeting, the new leadership suggested grassroots mobilization and the rejection of funding provided a two-fold solution to the dominant political authority of the chiefs and unwanted government intervention into Union politics. This strategy used the politics of refusal to identify funding and government-directed bureaucracy as damaging to unity. Yet, amid this declared change in multi-politics little actually changed. The structure of the Union remained the same with a three-person executive and voting membership limited to band chiefs and councillors, thus the bulk of political authority remained in the hands of band and Union leadership. The funding decision itself was also short lived, with most communities returning to funding by the fall of 1975 and the Union doing the same by spring of 1976. Aside from increased community involvement in politics through direct action in late 1975, the people’s movement envisioned by the executive never fully materialized. Yet the organization’s drastic push against bureaucracy, government involvement, and unequal political authority is significant in outlining changing ideals of unity as well as the practical challenges to achieving these ideals. Further, short-term changes to the Union as a result of the funding decision were significant.

<sup>15</sup> Video recording of Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC. April 25, 197, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. St'uxwtews (Bonaparte) First Nation is a Secwepemc First Nation located by Chase, BC.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

The post-Chilliwack Union most closely resembled the 1969 incarnation of itself, before government funding produced a staff of approximately 100 people working out of several offices. In the aftermath of Chilliwack, these administrative positions disappeared almost instantaneously with the Vancouver Union office and Victoria Land Claims Research Centre closing shortly after the conference. At the Union offices, a skeletal staff remained after what *Vancouver Sun* reporter Ron Rose described as “the happiest mass layoff in BC Indian history.”<sup>17</sup> Emphasizing the political capital behind the decision to end government funding, Rose and some members of the Union viewed the layoffs as evidence of Indigenous political independence, and therefore cause for celebration. The Union fired approximately eighty staff members as it packed up its offices and relocated to a smaller, more cost-effective location, but volunteers, including many fired employees joined the few remaining paid staff to continue operations. Focus shifted immediately away from administrative arrangements for service provision, which required liaisons with the Departments of Health and Welfare and Indian Affairs in order to develop and execute programming, towards community-based organization focused on solely land claims. This was a pragmatic response in the absence of funding, since the Union was not longer accepting government money for these basic services, but more significantly, it reflected an ideological desire to embrace a different form of political organization.

Responses to the funding decision varied revealing a myriad of internal recognitions and refusals from bands and individuals. Bands that fully supported the Union mandate recognized Union authority and viewed their own politics in relation to this. They implemented local strategies to adapt the funding rejection to their lived realities. Bands including the Upper Nicola, Scw’emx (Shackan), and Neskonlith incorporated their traditional economic practices into their response to the funding rejection. For instance, Upper Nicola leader George Saddleman explained that because the decision happened during the spring, communities were better placed to care for their members by hunting, gathering, and growing much of their food during the summer months. Those who were able to engage in these activities shared the benefits with Elders and families who needed extra help. Implementing the relationships and practices

<sup>17</sup> Ron Rose, “180 Indians lose jobs in happy mass layoff,” *Vancouver Sun* April 30, 1975, 25.

of the “q’əsapí? times” or “long ago times” also extended into contemporary wage labour with seasonal industry workers donating part of their wages to needy community members.<sup>18</sup> Scw’exmx Chief Percy Joe’s community enacted similar strategies and he recalled the preparations his community took to survive five months without funding in 1975. He explained that families on social assistance turned to hunting and fishing to make up some of the shortfall. Acknowledging the hardship his membership experienced, he insisted, “we were quite proud that we were independent and people were able to survive those times when there was no money.”<sup>19</sup> The Neskonalith likewise intensified their reliance on traditional economies, but adapted their multi-politics to include direct action in the form of the Harper Lake Road blockade to support the rejection of funding and community survival.<sup>20</sup> On May 29, 1975, Neskonalith band members, wanting to protect important fish stocks from non-Indigenous fishers, blocked non-Indigenous access to Harper Lake, located on the Trans-Canada highway just south of Chase, BC. Noting the loss of much-needed provincial welfare payments, a Neskonalith band spokesman defended their blockade “as a matter of survival.”<sup>21</sup> In a written statement to the Union, the spokesman insisted, “as the Indian people in BC have elected to reject all welfare programs, we must depend upon our own resources, as well as the resources of the land. We must hunt and we must fish; we must build our homes out of these resources.” The statement concluded, “We therefore feel it mandatory to protect our traditional fishing and hunting grounds. Harper Lake is one of our traditional grounds.”<sup>22</sup> This blockade was both an expression of unity and support for land claims and Indigenous economic independence, as well as a practical method of safeguarding community well-being. It was also situated within the broader move

<sup>18</sup> Saddleman, interview.

<sup>19</sup> Joe, interview. Grand Chief Percy Joe has been Chief of the Scw’exmx since 1971 when he was 30 years old. The Scw’exmx are one of the five Nicola First Nations of the Nlaka’pamux people. The other four include the Coldwater, Lower Nicola, Upper Nicola, and Nooaitch Indian Bands.

<sup>20</sup> “Phillip Paul: You Can’t Undue Life Time of Paternalism in Short Time,” *Indian Voice* (June 1975): 10-11; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 987/24-2-12, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 1972-1981, News Release: Bulletin # 3, May 5, 1975.

<sup>21</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, Vol. 2, File 901/24-2-12 (file part 2), Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1975-1977, News Release: Bulletin # 6, June 11, 1975.

<sup>22</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, Vol. 2, File 901/24-2-12 (file part 2), Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 1975-77, News Release: Bulletin # 6, June 11, 1975.



towards grassroots radicalism occurring across the province, particularly during the month of May.<sup>23</sup>

Other communities only adopted elements of the Union mandate that worked for them. For instance, the Owikeno Council of Chiefs sent a telex to Minister of Indian Affairs Judd Buchanan on May 26, 1975 outlining their support for the Union decision.<sup>24</sup> Implementing their own brand of multi-politics, which included a community vote and rejecting elements of the Union's proposal that did not suit their communities, the Owikeno people tailored Union politics to support local and pan-tribal unity. The telex read, "We the Owikeno people have voted 98 percent in favour of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs in rejecting the program and funds of the DIA, *except in the area of health, welfare, education, and public services.*"<sup>25</sup> Not fully embracing the Union's decision, the Owikeno adopted a unique hybrid of political refusals and recognition. On the one hand, they called for the transfer of band funds held in Ottawa to the Council of Chiefs for independent administration, and on the other, they demanded negotiations and liaisons with government departments to improve continued services in health, welfare, education, and public services. The Caribou Tribal Council in the Williams Lake district also requested to have some of their member bands' capital and revenue funds transferred for band administration and implemented its own interpretation of the Union's

<sup>23</sup> This will be explored in detail in the following chapter.

<sup>24</sup> Owikeno is also spelled Oweekeno. The Oweekeno are from River's Inlet in the Bella Coola District and today are known as the Wuikinuxv Nation.

<sup>25</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Telex from Owikeno Council of Chiefs to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, May 16, 1975. Emphasis added.

mandate in its communities.<sup>26</sup> The council's insistence on the need to "remove ourselves from the heavy hand of the Great White Father syndrome," and follow the "principle of Indian helping Indian, Band helping Band," spoke to its continued dedication to pan-tribal unity as well as its own tribal sovereignty.<sup>27</sup> Highlighting the council's position to allow each band to opt into this decision via Band Council Resolution (BCR), the council forwarded resolutions from half of its bands.<sup>28</sup>

Ironically, although the funding decision rejected government intervention, it also facilitated it. In May 1975, Buchanan, citing concern over individual hardship on reserve and a lack of democratic decision-making called on his regional director Larry Wight to ensure that band membership voted on whether or not to reject government funding.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Caribou Tribal Council member bands include Alexandria, Alexis Creek, Alkali Lake, Anaham, Canim Lake, Canoe Creek, Kluskus, Nazko, Nemaiah Valley, Quesnel, Soda Creek, Stone, Toosey, Ulkatcho, Williams Lake. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Letter from Dave Somerville, Caribou Tribal Council Administrator to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, June 22, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Kluskus Band, May 21, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Nazko Band, May 21, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Toosey Band, June 6, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Stone Band, May 22, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Alexis Creek Band, May 27, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Quesnel Band, June 18, 1975.

<sup>27</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Letter from Dave Somerville, Caribou Tribal Council Administrator to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, June 22, 1975.

<sup>28</sup> The bands that forwarded band council resolutions demanding Indian Affairs to transfer control of capital and revenue funds included: Nazko, Kluskus, Stone, Toosey, Alexis Creek, Quesnel, and Alkali Lake. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Kluskus Band, May 21, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Nazko Band, May 21, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Toosey Band, June 6, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Stone Band, May 22, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Alexis Creek Band, May 27, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Quesnel Band, June 18, 1975.

<sup>29</sup> This letter outlines the May 1975 decision. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Judd Buchanan to Mrs. Mary Stump, Alexandria Band Councillor, July 17, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Letter from Dave Somerville, Caribou Tribal Council Administrator to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, June 22, 1975.

Buchanan had received multiple letters from band members concerned about the direction their communities were going, and asking Buchanan to help, so Buchanan stepped in.<sup>30</sup> The result was that band councils and tribal councils began forwarding BCR's outlining the results of their referendums. Buchanan's request, though seemingly grounded in a desire to understand the intentions of each community so he could adapt DIA accordingly, as well as protect the wishes of grassroots individuals, perpetuated the level of intervention and paternalism the Union and its allies were trying to reject.

Amongst the remaining Caribou Tribal Council bands, competing refusals emerged as one band in particular not only rejected the Union decision and the Caribou Tribal Council's support of it, but also strategically appealed to the Department of Indian Affairs to continue services and protect their community from these organizations. In a letter to Buchanan, Alexandria Band Councillor Mary Stamp explained the internal band and tribal council politics that were dividing the people on the question of funding rejection and the devolution of DIA services to the bands.<sup>31</sup> Stamp noted that the council was not fully representing the wishes of the member communities and explained that the Caribou Tribal Council remained unsupportive of her band's decision to continue accepting government funding.<sup>32</sup> In her appeal to Buchanan, Stamp was deliberately integrating government involvement into the multi-political practices of her community, and as such, directly challenged the politics of her tribal council and the Union. The Alexandria Band explicitly refused the Union's funding decision choosing instead to use district and community-based unity and a degree of government recognition to propel

<sup>30</sup> These documents refer to past correspondence. LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Rose Charlie, Indian Homemakers' Association to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, June 27, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Rose Charlie, Indian Homemakers' Association to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, June 30, 1975, Telex from Louise Louis, Okanagan Indian Reserve to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, June 29, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Rose Charlie, Indian Homemakers' Association to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, June 30, 1975, LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Rose Charlie, Indian Homemakers' Association to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, June 30, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Judd Buchanan to Rose Charlie, July 28, 1975.

<sup>31</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Mrs. Mary Stamp to Judd Buchanan, June 24, 1975.

<sup>32</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Mrs. Mary Stamp to Judd Buchanan, June 24, 1975.

pan-tribalism according to their own agendas. Within this correspondence, then, is evidence of several forms of multi-politics and articulations of unity. At the tribal council level, the bands supported the general decision of the Union to reject government programs, but continued to accept band funding in order to take control of their own programming. At band level, communities decided for themselves whether they should accept band funding or not.

These band level refusals were not limited to the Caribou Tribal Council. Archival materials and oral history interviews prove that most districts including the West Coast, Lakes, and Kootenay-Okanagan upheld the principle of band autonomy, and therefore several communities throughout the spring and summer of 1975 returned to government funding.<sup>33</sup> For instance, in June and July the Clayquot, Ucluelet, Hesquiat, and Uchucklesaht bands sent telexes to DIA insisting they were “not in agreement on the rejection of government funds by UBCIC,” and “that they will be accepting all government funding and continuity of programmes.”<sup>34</sup> In the case of the Hesquiat band, the telex came from the band council who insisted their chief did not consult his people before voting “on such an important decision,” and therefore they were challenging their leader’s choice.<sup>35</sup> In addition, less than one month after the Ucluelet returned to government funding, they passed a BCR withdrawing from the West Coast District Council. The band rejected district level tribal unity as well as Union pan-tribal unity, but united with other likeminded communities engaged in similar refusals. In contrast, in Osoyoos, the band specifically used the Union’s own mandate of non-community intervention to urge DIA to investigate the true level of support for the rejection of funding

<sup>33</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief Samson Robinson Uchucklesaht Band to Judd Buchanan, July 3, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Press Release, Lakes District Council of Chiefs, July 5, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Jim Stelkia, Osoyoos Band to Judd Buchanan, June 18, 1975.

<sup>34</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief J. Lawrence, Ucluelet Band to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975; Telex from Chief Samson Robinson Uchucklesaht Band to Judd Buchanan, July 3, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Hesquiat Band Council to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief Joe Frank and Howard Tom, Clayquot Band Council to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975.

<sup>35</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Hesquiat Band Council to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975.

and the organization itself.<sup>36</sup> Chief Stelkia argued that the Union was not only ignoring its own directive of non-intervention in community affairs, but that the organization did not have community support to legitimize its actions. Take together these varied responses illustrate how community refusals varied according band multi-politics.

Refusals were also gendered and women's organizations such as the British Columbia Homemakers' Association (BCIHA) were especially vocal in their opposition to the Union's funding decision. Occupying informal political channels in auxiliary organizations, the BCIHA used their multi-politics, which included politicized motherhood, community caretaking, and concern with the political outcomes regarding land claims and Indigenous rights, to demand more inclusive interpretations of unity than the Union proposed. As a reserve-based women's organization representing status and non-status First Nations women, the BCIHA had been lobbying for improved housing, education, health, and child welfare since the organization's inception in 1968.<sup>37</sup> The organization also worked in conjunction with the Union to pressure government for changes to policy, but the funding decision caused a critical break between the Union and the BCIHA. The BCIHA disagreed with both the practical implications of funding refusal as well as its theoretical underpinnings, which it argued, privileged grand political gestures over preserving community well-being. The BCIHA publically chastised Union leaders for this decision and used the discourse of motherhood to frame its political opposition. Characterizing the Union's decision as a political ploy, the BCIHA insisted that it was "weary mothers, little children and the disabled [who were] being caught in the cross fire between the politics of the department of Indian Affairs, the provincial government, and their own insensitive leaders."<sup>38</sup> Ts'ishaa7ath (Tseshaht) member, foster mother, and BCIHA district vice president Agnes Dick likewise accused leaders of "putting the children on the front lines of battle to force a settlement," by rejecting funds that were necessary for the thirty eight foster children on the reserve including seven in

<sup>36</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Jim Stelkia, Osoyoos Band to Judd Buchanan, June 18, 1975.

<sup>37</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 7, File 901/24-2-2254, Part 4, Indian Homemakers' Association, 1968-1979, Travel Information & Resource Unite Programme – April 1, 1979 – March 31, 1980.

<sup>38</sup> "Innocent Caught in Cross Fire," *Indian Voice* 7, no. 6 (June 1975): 13.

her own home.<sup>39</sup> Dick personally supported the land claim issue but lamented the Union's lack of consultation with community members. Similar attitudes were evident in a meeting of Homemaker Foster Parents at Ts'ishaa7ath where attendees took aim at their West Coast District Council, local leadership, and the Union for not exempting funding for foster children from their political mandate.<sup>40</sup> Through the Union's actions, women and children remained politically invisible and seemingly inconsequential.

The BCIHA held conferences, published newspaper articles, and petitioned to the Department of Indian Affairs and Secretary of State to voice its concerns and appeal to have funding reinstated. Through this the organization continued to pursue the same political agenda centered on social welfare it always had and continued to draw political legitimacy from women's accepted roles as community mothers. In this sense, the activated unity according to ideals of greater gender equality and family protection. In April 1975, the BCIHA also overtly linked community hardship to shortcomings in male leadership and inserted its membership as strong leaders, willing and able to redirect the Indigenous movement. One of its primary goals during the funding debacle was to secure necessary resources for families. Because bands administered welfare and other payments, those communities that had refused funding in solidarity with the Union eliminated the sole access point of state support for community members. While the Williams Lake, Lakes, and West Coast district examples proved that multi-politics and competing refusals allowed districts and bands to implement their own interpretations of the funding decision, this did not mean that every community member agreed with band decisions. This could pit individuals against each other and this often had a gender component to it. In the South Island district, for example, Margaret Point, a young mother of two confronted members of her Nanaimo band and their acceptance of the Union funding mandate when she attempted to access welfare payments at the Nanaimo DIA district office. Her band had rejected government funds along with the Union and was currently occupying the district office in hopes of shutting it down. When the demonstrators refused to allow Point into the building, she turned in vain to the

<sup>39</sup> Ron Rose, "Leader of Indian conference asks protection for delegates," *Vancouver Sun* June 19, 1975, 1-2.

<sup>40</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Minutes of the Meeting of Homemaker Foster Parents, July 21, 1975.

province and then to the city for aid, hoping they would bypass her band and administer funds to her directly.<sup>41</sup> As a grassroots woman with little political capital, Point's attempt to reject her band's position and circumvent these imposed economic barriers was unsuccessful. Yet, the BCIHA maintained that Point was not alone in her struggle and that the funding decision placed many mothers and families in the same desperate position. These individuals turned to the BCIHA for help and the BCIHA in turn became a strong voice of refusal against the Union.

The BCIHA did not simply complain about the Union and protest its decision, but rather it identified key implications of the decision and offered solutions. It demonstrated Indigenous women's willingness and ability to be bridge leaders, acting between the communities and male dominated organizations. Implementing the same strategy as dissenting bands, the BCIHA incorporated an alliance with DIA into their multi-political practices. BCIHA members wrote a series of telexes, letters, and reports to DIA officials Judd Buchanan and Larry Wight, as well as to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau between May and July 1975. Labelling the Union's decision to reject funding "irresponsible," the BCIHA insisted the burden fell to the federal and provincial governments to ensure the communities received necessary funds and services. In June 1975, Agnes Dick appealed to Buchanan "urgently request[ing] funding for the less fortunate foster children on our reservation who have been denied proper diets as a result of the recent land claim issue." Dick's Ts'ishaa7ath community was following the Union's mandate and therefore Chief Adam Sewish and band manager George Watts did not intervene on the children's behalf by signing food vouchers.<sup>42</sup> Soon after, Charlie reported to Wight "we are receiving calls from concerned families, where children are hungry and are stealing food in order to feed themselves."<sup>43</sup> Charlie demanded an immediate investigation by DIA. Charlie also appealed to Buchanan to continue federal and provincial funding for Indian education and to transfer the financial responsibility for Indigenous foster children to the department of human resources rather than DIA. And she called for government

<sup>41</sup> "Mother Given Run Around," *Indian Voice* 7, no. 6 (June 1975): 13.

<sup>42</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Agnes Dick, District Vice President, BCIHA to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975.

<sup>43</sup> Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Rose Charlie to Larry Wight, July 31, 1975.

departments such as Health and Welfare, Housing, Education, Fisheries, Water, Environment, and Community Development to negotiate directly with the BCIHA to ensure services remained in place for Indigenous communities.<sup>44</sup>

The BCIHA's political demands caught the attention of DIA. In late June 1975, Charlie sent a concise and strongly worded telex to Buchanan demanding immediate financial assistance for needy families on Vancouver Island. The telex stipulated that government representatives would be on hand later that same day to allocate resources and Charlie's language left little room for negotiation.<sup>45</sup> Buchanan responded immediately by calling on Regional Director Larry Wight "to do everything possible to see that individuals in need are given assistance." Buchanan also replied to the BCIHA's suggestions regarding foster care, education, and assistance, and not only agreed with the women's assessment of the socio-political barriers for Indigenous families, but called on the BCIHA to pressure the chiefs and councillors to put BCIHA objectives into place.<sup>46</sup> Ironically, after generations of politically dislocating and dispossession Indigenous women in favour of Indigenous men, the Department of Indian Affairs expected women to redirect the Union. The BCIHA was up to the task because it had ignored and circumvented DIA opposition to women's politicization, but the women continued to face structural challenges to political autonomy in spite of the Department's request. For example, women's membership status continued to ensure their precarious political position, as did patriarchal attitudes about women's limited political capabilities. Yet, through its interactions with government and the Union the BCIHA insisted on expanding conceptions of Indigenous politics to include its activities and concerns and the women used strategic political refusals and alliances to accomplish this.

This strategy of attempting to align with the Department was also noteworthy, as Union members often envisioned the BCIHA as a direct extension of their organization.

<sup>44</sup> RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Rose Charlie president of Indian Homemakers' Association to Judd Buchanan minister of Indian Affairs, June 27, 1975.

<sup>45</sup> RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Rose Charlie president of Indian Homemakers' Association to Judd Buchanan minister of Indian Affairs, June 30, 1975.

<sup>46</sup> RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Judd Buchanan to Rose Charlie, July 28, 1975.



In the Union records and oral interviews, Union members frequently referred to the Homemakers as “our women.”<sup>47</sup> Though many chiefs viewed this relationship in a positive light whereby men and women united together, the experiences of the BCIHA reminds us that the Union could also take on a domineering tone, and the phrase “our women” was just as easily grounded in patriarchy and unequal power dynamics as in familial affection and connectivity. For the most part, Union activists were reluctant to speak about tensions between male and female activists, but the historical record clearly highlights some challenges. Indeed, BCIHA activities, which included explicitly criticizing and undermining the Union confirmed underlying dissonance between the organizations while exposing the BCIHA’s belief that strong political statements must continue to protect community welfare. Furthermore, as BCIHA members spoke out against the Union and male leadership in women’s communities and within the BCIHA general assemblies, they faced criticism and even threats of violence.<sup>48</sup> For instance, Dick reported being bullied by younger political men in her community who accused her of compromising the entire Indigenous political movement.<sup>49</sup> Her critics did not believe that the concerns of a few community mothers warranted a drastic change in the Union’s political stance. In response, the West Coast District Homemaker Foster Parents group encouraged Dick and the other women to “speak out their feelings.”<sup>50</sup> Noting the generational dynamic between the women speaking out and those opposing them as well as the need to use traditional teachings in the political efforts, the group insisted older women like Dick should “not [let] the young bully them, but demand the respect due to an elder.”<sup>51</sup> The group did not mention the gender dynamic apparent in the exchanges, but the underlying assumption was that women should stay out of Union political matters. Likewise, Irene Harris of Chemainus was threatened with violence by

<sup>47</sup> Pennier, interview; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Annual General Assemblies, 1969-1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>48</sup> “Rose Charlie against UBCIC decision,” *Indian Voice* 7, no. 6 (June 1975): 1-2; “Homemaker President urges union of all Chiefs,” *Indian Voice* 9, no. 6 (June 1977): 2-3.

<sup>49</sup> Ron Rose, “Leader of Indian conference asks protection for delegates,” *Vancouver Sun*, June 19, 1975, 1-2; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Minutes of the Homemakers’ Foster Parents Meeting, West Coast District, July 21, 1975.

<sup>50</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Minutes of the Homemakers’ Foster Parents Meeting, West Coast District, July 21, 1975.

<sup>51</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Minutes of the Homemakers’ Foster Parents Meeting, West Coast District, July 21, 1975.

community members who accused her of using disallowed band funds to attend the BCIHA conference. It is not clear if Harris did use band funds, but it is obvious that this would be interpreted as defiance against her band's position on government funding. These threats were so widespread that Rose Charlie requested police protection for the women at the BCIHA's annual conference in June 1975.<sup>52</sup> Here the women spoke of being afraid to return home to their communities over concerns that critics would target them for their opinions.<sup>53</sup> Such intimidations were noteworthy in that they overtly challenged women's politics and their perceived political transgression away from accepted roles as community caretakers to become internal pressure group willing to criticize both Indigenous men and the settler state. Although BC Indigenous men approved of women's activities when they were defying the Department to improve reserve conditions, they were less supportive when the women criticized male leadership.

These pressures also underscored the different ways in which male and female activists experienced high-stakes politics. While it is true that male leadership were also criticized for their political decisions, these oppositions were not rooted in a deep history of gendered violence or the repression of political identities. Indigenous women, on the other hand, remained disproportionately vulnerable to both violence and unforgiving judgement about their political roles within their own communities as well as outside.<sup>54</sup> These intimidation tactics, therefore, served as very real threats to women's politics and the well-being of female activists and continued long past the Chilliwack decision and the

<sup>52</sup> Ron Rose, "Leader of Indian conference asks protection for delegates," *Vancouver Sun*, June 19, 1975, 1-2; "From the Editor's chair," *Indian Voice* 7, no.6 (June 1975): 4.

<sup>53</sup> Ron Rose, "Leader of Indian conference asks protection for delegates," *Vancouver Sun*, June 19, 1975, 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> See: Nancy Janovicek, "'Assisting Our Own': Urban Migration, Self-Governance, and Native Women's Organizing in Thunder Bay, Ontario, 1972-1989," in *Keeping the Campfires Going: Native Women's Activism in Urban Communities*, ed. Susan Applegate Krouse and Heather A. Howard (Lincoln: University of Nebraska), 63-70. For additional information on Indigenous women and violence see, Dara Culhane, "Their Spirits Live Within Us: Aboriginal Women in Downtown Eastside Vancouver Emerging into Visibility," in *Keeping the Campfires Going*, ed. Applegate Krouse and Howard, 76-92. Stó:lō activist Lee Maracle also has spoken about the prevalence of lateral violence within Indigenous communities as a result of colonization. Explaining her own feminist awakening in the early 1980s, Maracle spoke of finally recognizing the internal colonization of Indigenous women by their men who saw them as "vessels for male gratification" and stoic targets for male violence. Lee Maracle, *I am Woman: A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1988).

1975 BCIHA conference.<sup>55</sup> Fears surrounding gendered violence also add another layer to our understanding of women's reticence to identify as political actors, and explains the tendency to frame Indigenous women's political work in the context of motherhood and community protection.

The BCIHA also framed its criticism of the Union in terms of democratic rights, emphasizing how the funding decision did not account for community opinions. At the first Union meeting in 1969 Chief Clarence Jules viewed disagreement and debate as a positive thing and reflection of one's democratic rights. Charlie likewise embraced this ideal, but women's exclusion from band membership and their relegation to auxiliary political roles concerned only with "women's" issues exposed an alternate reality. BCIHA multi-politics included a broader interpretation of democracy than the Union practiced. Through its criticisms and refusing to recognize the rejection of funding, the BCIHA inserted itself within the democratic processes it had been excluded from. Addressing delegates at the 1975 BCIHA conference, Charlie maintained, "we firmly believe that this ultimatum [sic] issued by these irresponsible leaders is an encroachment of those in power on the grassroots level of native people to be at liberty to choose whether or not they wish to refuse government funding. We firmly believe their actions to be an abridgement of the freedom of the individual to have a voice in the decisions that directly affect their children's lives."<sup>56</sup> Unlike Union leaders who believed that effective politics required risk taking, sacrifice, and strong political gestures that they alone were capable of making, the BCIHA insisted activists needed to consider community opinions and conditions above all else.<sup>57</sup> Charlie argued, "We feel that these women were only speaking out for something they feel is right," Charlie began. "Their deep concern [sic] as mothers and women was very evident at [the BCIHA] conference. Every person in this country has a right to speak their mind," Charlie continued, "and there is no reason in the world that they should be pushed into a corner, verbal or otherwise."<sup>58</sup> Charlie's recognition of the gendered nature of politics and democracy within the Union and the resulting social and political oppression of women is significant and highlights her

<sup>55</sup> "Homemaker President urges union of all Chiefs," *Indian Voice* 9, no. 6 (June 1977): 2-3.

<sup>56</sup> "Rose Charlie against UBCIC decision," *Indian Voice* 7, no.6 (June 1975): 1-2.

<sup>57</sup> "Rose Charlie against UBCIC decision," *Indian Voice* 7, no.6 (June 1975): 1-2.

<sup>58</sup> "From the Editor's chair," *Indian Voice* 7, no.6 (June 1975): 4.

agenda against patriarchy. Through the BCIHA's discussions of community welfare and violence and its strategic interactions with government agencies many members began to incorporate feminist resistance into their political agenda of social welfare and family cohesion. This widened the BCIHA's vision of community well-being.

The BCIHA also aligned with likeminded bands and Union chiefs that similarly incorporated women's equality and community health into their multi-political practices and understandings of pan-tribal unity. Several bands agreed with the BCIHA's political position and in offering their support, further affirmed the organization's growing political authority while accumulating additional elements to its pan-tribal multi-politics. These communities also refused the Union's current mandate, but in addition to speaking out against the Union through telexes and BCR's, officially aligned themselves with the BCIHA. For instance, the West Coast district communities mentioned above attended the BCIHA's annual conference in June 1975 where the organization discussed the Union's funding decision and "support[ed] [the] Indian Homemakers Association of BC on their stand in not rejecting government funds."<sup>59</sup> Sympathetic organizations such as the Westcoast Fishermen also demonstrated its support of the BCIHA and its decisions regarding funding by sending correspondence to DIA outlining its position.<sup>60</sup>

Though operating from disadvantaged political positions, the BCIHA gained political capital through new alliances and its changing multi-political platform, which no longer identified the Union as allies in community service but instead relied on women's own confidence and capabilities. In this sense, the BCIHA not only refused the Union decision and its multi-political forms, but also expressed an interest in replacing the Union's former role as a service provider. While a strong political act of resistance and vote of non-confidence for the Union, the BCIHA concurrently preserved existing

<sup>59</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief J. Lawrence Jack, Ucluelet Band to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975; Telex from Chief Samson Robinson Uchucklesaht Band to Judd Buchanan, July 3, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Hesquiat Band Council to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief Joe Frank and Howard Tom, Clayquot Band Council to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975.

<sup>60</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Ernest David, Westcoast Fishermen to Judy Sesullion, Secretary of the Minister of Indian Affairs, June 27, 1975.

gendered divisions within BC Indigenous politics, where macro political concerns such as sovereignty and land claims were men's political domains, and community health issues including education and social services were women's concerns. For instance, the BCIHA did not criticize the Union's capabilities concerning their original mandate to address the land claim or Indigenous rights, but focused on the Union's inadequacies in the arena of protecting communities. In fact, speaking to the "separate problem of [the] land claim," the BCIHA resolution insisted, "the UBCIC executive can only reject funds in their realm," and had "no right to require the Indian families in poverty to forego welfare."<sup>61</sup> BCIHA delegates therefore positioned themselves as community caretakers who would do a better job in providing these services than the Union. Significantly, this tells us that women are both accepting and transgressing their established roles by maintaining their gendered political mandates while demanding more political authority to do so.

The BCIHA remained the most organized and consistent voice of opposition against the funding decision, and successfully encouraged dozens of bands to ignore the Union directive and have funding reestablished in their communities. To maintain their work, the BCIHA continued to accept government funding and publically noted the political significance in this move.<sup>62</sup> The BCIHA argued that by rejecting funds and asking bands and other organizations to do the same, the Union was ignoring its mandate to preserve the political autonomy of existing bodies. The BCIHA further exposed the hypocrisy of the Union asking for support for its actions while refusing similar support to the women's organizations including allowing them access to much needed grants for programming.<sup>63</sup> More than simply disagreeing with the political strategy of refusing funds and suggesting it was counterproductive, the BCIHA took a stand against the Union by continuing its operations as before. Moreover, at least one local BCIHA chapter, Stoney Creek, declared its support of land claims issues while

<sup>61</sup> RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Rose Charlie president of Indian Homemakers' Association to Judd Buchanan Minister of Indian Affairs, June 27, 1975.

<sup>62</sup> "Rose Charlie against UBCIC decision," *Indian Voice* 7, no.6 (June 1975): 1-2.

<sup>63</sup> "Rose Charlie against UBCIC decision," *Indian Voice* 7, no.6 (June 1975): 1-2.

concurrently accepting government funding.<sup>64</sup> Stoney Creek president Sophie Thomas was clear that the BCIHA's lack of support for the Union decision did not mean the women disagreed with the wider aims of the political movement. In fact, the women also still believed in the value of pan-tribal unity to achieve land claims and Indigenous rights, but they were not willing to pursue these at all costs, like the Union. The BCIHA displayed its lack of solidarity with the Union and its allies, and registered firm counter-refusals to the Union mandate.

The BCIHA's move was part of a trend whereby communities returned to government funding to provide services the Union could not.<sup>65</sup> This was challenging considering the BCIHA was working with a level of funding far below what the Union had received. In part, this was because the Union had a broader representative base, but it also spoke to the masculinist nature of politics, which saw women's organizations as politically unimportant. Despite the BCIHA's continued involvement lobbying for community rights, government agencies continued to view the organization as tied wholly to women's issues.<sup>66</sup> Combatting this view in a letter introducing the BCIHA's 1976-1977 budget, Charlie insisted, "our work is not confined to domestic problems." She argued that in addition to "striving to solve the critical and urgent problems of Native Indian women, families, and communities in the areas of health, education, welfare, child care, nutrition, housing, and also employment and training," the BCIHA did advocacy work for Indigenous inmates, helped community members seek legal aid, and advised people on their rights of citizenship.<sup>67</sup> Charlie maintained that Indian Affairs should provide adequate resources for this work, but that the BCIHA "have had very little financial assistance from Indian Affairs."<sup>68</sup> The enclosed BCIHA budget reflected its

<sup>64</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Sophie Thomas, Stoney Creek Homemakers' Club to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975.

<sup>65</sup> "Rose Charlie against UBCIC decision," *Indian Voice* 7, no.6 (June 1975): 1-2; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Rose Charlie president of Indian Homemakers' Association to Judd Buchanan Minister of Indian Affairs, June 30, 1975.

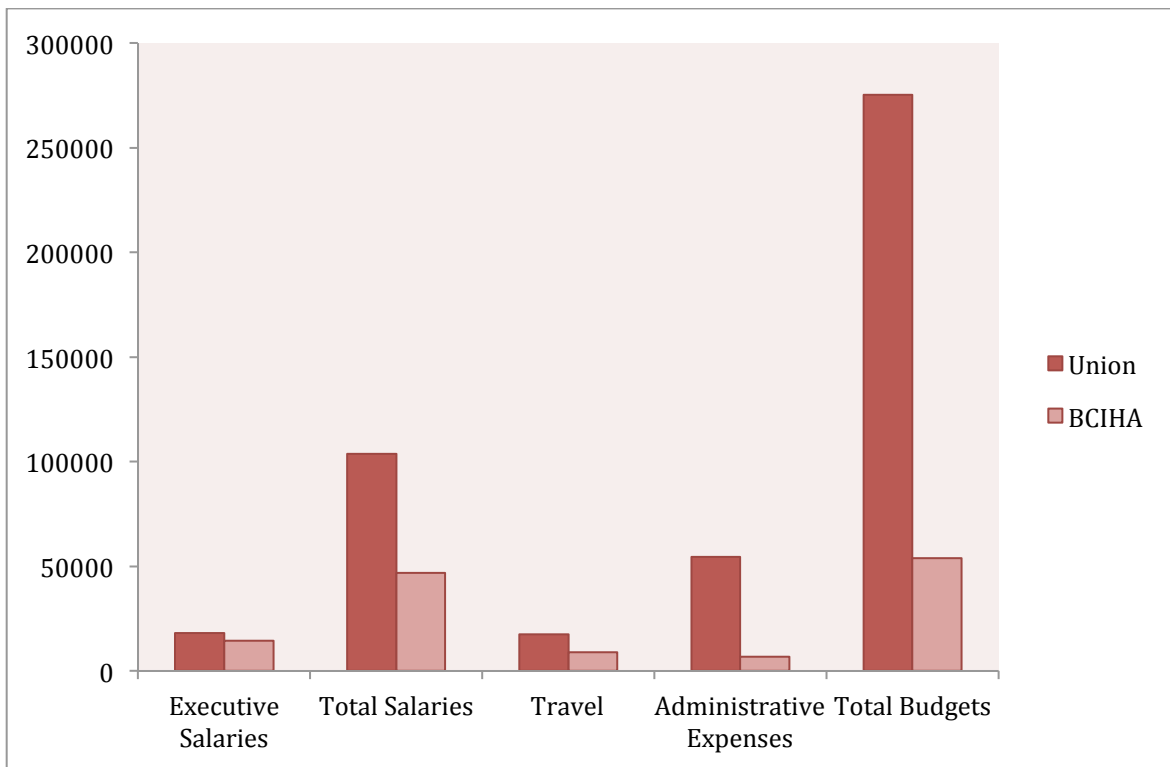
<sup>66</sup> LAC, RG 10, Indian Homemakers' of British Columbia, Box 2, File 901/24-2-5, Part 2, Letter from Rose Charlie to F.J. Walchli, Director General of Indian Affairs, November 10, 1976.

<sup>67</sup> LAC, RG 10, Indian Homemakers' of British Columbia, Box 2, File 901/24-2-5, Part 2, Letter from Rose Charlie to F.J. Walchli, Director General of Indian Affairs, November 10, 1976.

<sup>68</sup> LAC, RG 10, Indian Homemakers' of British Columbia, Box 2, File 901/24-2-5, Part 2, Letter from Rose Charlie to F.J. Walchli, Director General of Indian Affairs, November 10, 1976.

unequal political positioning when compared to the Union, and subsequent margin notes, which reduced the original proposal from \$53,760 to \$35,160, further intensified these differences (see Figures 3 and 4). Before the revisions, the BCIHA president's monthly salary of \$1200.00 per month was comparable to those of the Union executives at \$1500.00 per month, but was amended on the document to a stipend of \$4000.00 per year. A DIA official likely made these revisions as the budget document was in DIA records, and the handwriting on the document matched handwriting on other DIA documents in the file. The amendments appeared to have an impact, as a similar budget sent to the same office one month later proposed a \$1000.00 per month salary for the BCIHA president along with \$500.00 per month salaries for the first and second vice presidents.<sup>69</sup> That these proposed salaries were significantly lower than the original budget indicated both the low levels of financial and moral support the BCIHA received from DIA, as well as the women's adaptability to such realities. The BCIHA's interactions with the Department starkly contrasted what the Union received in both financial and moral support. And yet, while the Union had access to political tools and benefits denied to the BCIHA, the women continued to use any available resources to aid their communities.

<sup>69</sup> LAC, RG 10, Indian Homemakers' of British Columbia, Box 2, File 901/24-2-5, Part 2, Letter from Rose Charlie to F.J. Walchli, Director General of Indian Affairs, December 28, 1976. The handwriting on the document also matches handwriting on other DIA documents in the file.

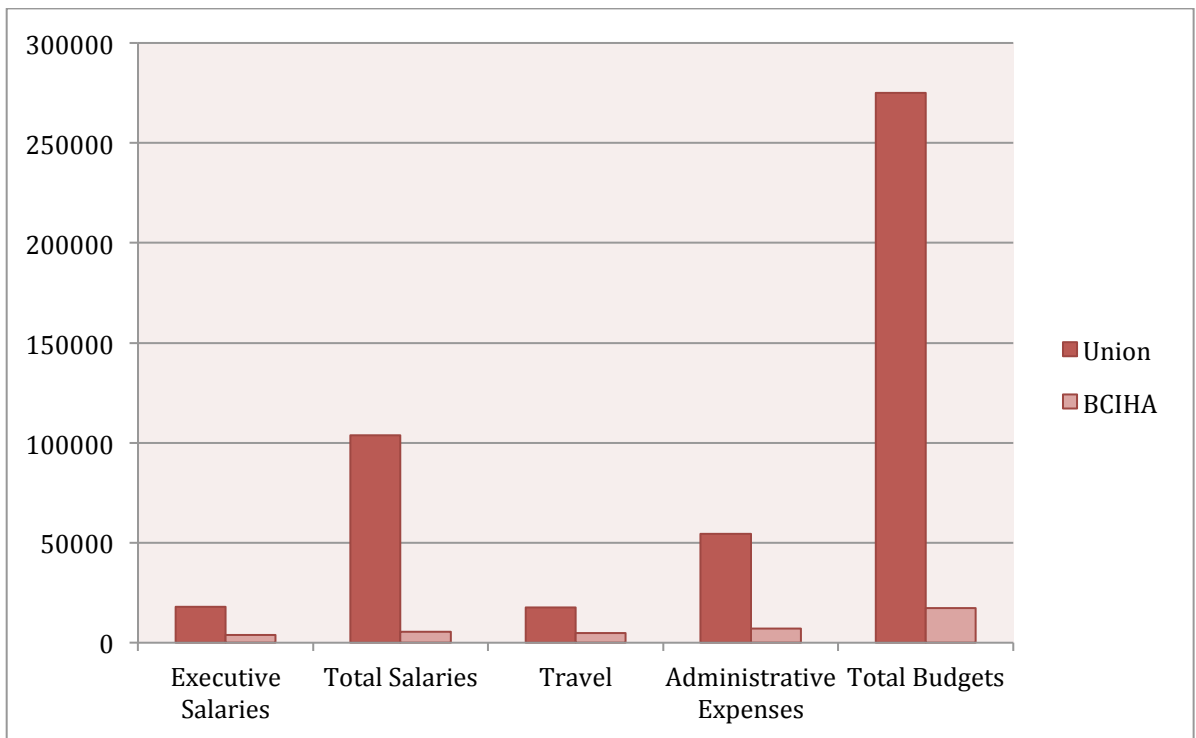


**Figure 4. Union and BCIHA Budget Proposals, 1976-1977**

Source: Compiled from data in LAC, RG 10, Box 2 Indian Homemakers' Association of British Columbia, File 901/24-2-5, Part 2, Basic Minimum Budget, 1976; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/24-24-1-12, Part 2, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, Union of BC Indian Chief Budget Proposal, 1976.

Note: The total budget for the Union also includes funding for professional services including legal representation, audit services, and consultant services, as well as money for conferences, meetings, and workshops. The BCIHA budget does not contain similar requests.





**Figure 5. Union and BCIHA Budget Proposals Revised, 1976-1977**

Source: Compiled from data in LAC, RG 10, Box 2 Indian Homemakers' Association of British Columbia, File 901/24-2-5, Part 2, Basic Minimum Budget, 1976; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/24-24-1-12, Part 2, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, Union of BC Indian Chief Budget Proposal, 1976.

Of course, the BCIHA was not a universally representative female political voice. Like the wider BC Indigenous movement, women's politics also experienced degrees of multiplicity across organizations, communities, and position. As mentioned earlier, within the BCIHA's locals, differences in political opinion and strategy emerged with the Stoney Homemakers' club accepting government funding in line with the BCIHA collective, but "also supporting the Chiefs' land claim issues."<sup>70</sup> Thus, funding for community welfare was acceptable, but capital funding for the band and the Union was not. As we have seen, this segmentation of funding according to local needs and politics was common,

<sup>70</sup> RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Sophie Thomas, president of Stoney Creek Homemakers' Club to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975.

and women participated in these strategies as well.<sup>71</sup> Some women acted from outside the main women's organizations like the BCIHA and British Columbia Native Women's Society (BCNWS) to oppose the Union, while others spoke in favour. Interestingly, just as the BCIHA activated the discourse of motherhood to protest the rejection of funding, other women also used motherhood and its associated strength and centrality to support their political opinions and multi-political forms. For example, a group of "interested mothers and grandmothers" from the Okanagan reserve appealed to Indian Affairs to alleviate the hardship wrought by the Union funding decision. Explaining, "there are a lot of women on this reserve and grandmothers that are looking after their grandchildren," the women framed their political refusal in terms of motherhood and familial protection.<sup>72</sup> Unlike the BCIHA, these women were not seeking a position in the political arena, but registered similar complaints in a related manner. This exposed strong continuities in women's socio-political roles and priorities and also demonstrated how everyday concerns were intensely political. A similar letter came from Secwepemc women from a series of interior communities. These individual women used their political awareness and authority as mothers, as well as strategic alliances with DIA to circumvent the authority of their chiefs and council and the Union, and appeal for help.<sup>73</sup>

The discourse of motherhood was also used to support the Union funding decision. For example, one unidentified woman at the 1975 Union meeting insisted, "as mothers we are closest to those children and we are the ones that are going to have to be the backbone for this movement." Placing mothers at the forefront of this undertaking, she continued, "we are going to have to be the ones that are going to provide if someone else can't provide for us . . . ." Acknowledging the added strain this decision placed on mothers, she continued, "don't let the fear of what this motion that was passed is going

<sup>71</sup> RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Press Release, Lakes District Council of Chiefs, July 5, 1975; RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief J. Lawrence, Ucluelet Band to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975; Telex from Chief Samson Robinson Uchucklesaht Band to Judd Buchanan, July 3, 1975; RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Hesquiat Band Council to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975; RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief Joe Frank and Howard Tom, Clayquot Band Council to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975.

<sup>72</sup> RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Interested Mothers and Grandmothers, c/o Louise Louis to the Minister of Indian Affairs, June 26, 1975.

<sup>73</sup> RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Jenny Marchand *et al.* to Judd Buchanan, June 28, 1975.

to mean to you mothers, because if we break down, everybody else will break down.”<sup>74</sup> Ultimately, while the men made the grand political decisions and gestures, the women ensured their success. Through her explanation of the power of Indigenous women, this woman was careful to frame her gendered discussion as supportive rather than critical of Indigenous men. Recognizing the potential for delegates to interpret her comments as part of a wider feminist dialogue, she insisted, “I am not a women’s libber although sometimes I sound like one.”<sup>75</sup> Vocalizing her refusal to identify as a feminist, this woman acknowledged Indigenous resistance to liberal individualist feminism, which many understood as antithetical to the collective Indigenous rights movement. Attuned to how Indigenous women’s goals differed from the “women’s libbers” because they were inherently tied to Indigenous ways of life and linked to the wider political goals of Indigenous peoples including sovereignty and land claims, this woman’s political identity was consciously Indigenous.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, although this woman and the BCIIHA agreed on the value and role of motherhood in women’s politics and daily life, this woman maintained strong gendered alliances with male leadership, while the BCIIHA willingly transgressed accepted boundaries of gendered politics.

The Union’s decision to alter their multi-political agenda by rejecting government funds and related bureaucracy created space for women to articulate their own multi-politics. Indigenous women’s responses to the Union funding decision are evidence of strong attempts to reshape Union politics, and demonstrate the flexibility of women’s political strategies. Though they lacked the same political powers as community men, the BCIIHA served as spokeswomen of vulnerable band members and gained their political authority from the communities. However, the women were not looking to replace male leadership. Instead, they saw themselves as mothers or caretakers of the movement, seeking to strengthen Indigenous politics through more visible and

<sup>74</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>75</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

authoritative roles.<sup>77</sup> Most women agreed with the ultimate aims of the Union, but disagreed with the style and methods of Union politics and refused these accordingly.

In 1975, pan-tribal politics seemed incorruptible as delegates voted to take control of their organizations and communities at Chilliwack. The rejection of funding surfaced as a solid act of political refusal for the Union, and Union leadership believed this would facilitate strong grassroots involvement. Once again, however, it was clear that the Union leadership maintained different multi-political forms and a different view of unity than other community members, notably women. Rather than support the Union's decision, Indigenous women's organizations and their allies used their specific brands of multi-politics to push back against the Union to offer their own views of unity. Through women's gendered refusals, the robust and flexible nature of women's politics and pan-tribal unity is apparent. Even as women's organizations and opposing bands criticized Union activities, activists continued to believe in and contribute to the wider pan-tribal project.

<sup>77</sup> Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, personal conversation with author, Vancouver, BC, September 10, 2014.

## Chapter 7. Direct Action and Engendering Radicalism

When the organization detached itself from government funding and programming, Union delegates also made a conscious decision to engage in direct action to express First Nations' autonomy and disdain for settler-colonial political and economic intrusions. Diverging from historical iterations of direct action in labour, direct action within the BC Indigenous movement encompassed a wide range of activities, but most activists understood it as protest activities against the Canadian state, business, or Canadian citizens that did not include negotiation, diplomacy, or democratic political forms. Direct action could be violent or non-violent, legal or illegal, but it differed from negotiated political discussions the Union usually had with Canadian government agencies. The summer of 1975 witnessed unprecedented direct action across the province in what *Vancouver Sun* reporter Ron Rose termed, "militant May."<sup>1</sup> Throughout the summer, First Nations peoples blocked transportation corridors, including rail lines, highways, and logging roads, occupied offices of the Department of Indian Affairs, and protected their territories and resources from outside incursion by non-Indigenous individuals and resource industries. This coordinated burst of activity was part of a Union-derived strategy to protest the political and economic status quo and was influenced by local multi-politics and global social movements. Although little militancy in the form of violent confrontation would take place, BC First Nations did threaten violence and aggressive actions earning this label "militant May." Rose's report came after the intense 1975 Union meeting where BC First Nations peoples rejected federal and provincial funding and agreed to adopt "a month of action" to protest stalled land claims negotiations. This represented a complete re-evaluation of the Union's political goals. Where it once sought state recognized political authority, it now demanded political independence. This increasing radicalism encompassed the Union and its executive leadership, but it manifested most intensely in the communities.

<sup>1</sup> Ron Rose, "Indian chiefs warn of 'militant May'," *Vancouver Sun*, April 23, 1975, 44.

Militant May represented another layer of political refusal whereby the Union was not just refusing government money but also settler politics, governance, and presence in BC. Adding further nuance to Audra Simpson's notion of everyday political refusals, I expose how through the multi-political expressions practiced by Union member nations we can understand political refusals as flexible pan-tribal phenomena. Nations incorporated direct action protest against Canadian governments as a pan-tribal strategy to maintain unity and express independence. I suggest that the decision to pursue militant May was imbued with complex political encounters between the grassroots and leadership, Indigenous organizations and government agencies, moderate and militant activists, the young and the aged, and men and women. Each situated their own goals within the larger dialogue of pan-tribal unity, land claims, and Indigenous rights, resulting in coordinating and, at times, competing political activities.

Militant May emerged out of a specific set of circumstances where the multi-politics of the global social movements, youth, the Union, and its member nations converged. In British Columbia, social movements like Red Power developed in unique locally inspired ways. Red Power is broadly understood as a "decade-long Indian activist movement," which began with the occupation of Alcatraz Island by the pan-Indian group the Indians of All Tribes in 1969, and ended with the Longest Walk in July 1978.<sup>2</sup> Sherry Smith, on the other hand, described Red Power in more nebulous terms, suggesting it was a "pan-Indian movement that demanded recognition of treaty rights, tribal sovereignty, and self-determination for native people."<sup>3</sup> Smith avoided the strict periodization adopted by others, but generally seemed to agree that Red Power coincided with the rise of social movements and global decolonization movements, and

<sup>2</sup> Alvin M. Josephy Jr., Joanne Nagel, and Troy Johnson, eds., *Red Power: The American Indians' Fight for Freedom* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 1-2. For these scholars, Red Power is a strictly 1970s phenomenon with a limited geospatial focus. Relatedly, Daniel Cobb and Loretta Fowler acknowledged this periodization and agree that Alcatraz, the Trail of Broken Treaties march, Wounded Knee, and the Longest March traced the evolution of Red Power. While approving of the general definition of Red Power, however, Cobb and Fowler lamented the overall dominance of Red Power, suggesting that this era has come to symbolize and therefore overpower Indigenous political activism. Daniel Cobb and Loretta Fowler, eds. *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism Since 1900* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007), x-xii.

<sup>3</sup> Sherry Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4-6.

occurred in the United States. In Canada, Bryan Palmer suggested that Red Power was a militant movement developing in the late 1960s with connections to wider New Left and new social movements. Unlike the others, who firmly situate Red Power in the United States, Palmer reveals how this ideology moved across the border.<sup>4</sup> For instance, in BC the influence of Red Power was visible in urban youth movements, such as the American Indian Movement (AIM), which had chapters throughout the province, and the Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP), a Vancouver-based youth organization established in 1968.<sup>5</sup> This community-based and often militant influence was limited to small organizations such as NARP, and particular First Nations bands such as the Syilx (Okanagan) Penticton Band, where an AIM chapter was located, and the Stó:lō Cheam Band, who were actively involved in militant direct action.

The Union itself did not identify as a militant organization or as a part of the wider Red Power movement. In part this was because many delegates identified Red Power and AIM as militant direct action movements, which contradicted the Union's more bureaucratic focus. Yet discussions about the potential role of Red Power in the Union emerged as early as 1969. At the inaugural Union meeting, student delegate Henry Jack cautiously engaged with the concept of Red Power. In his address to the delegates, Jack suggested the negative definition of Red Power as a militant ideology had overshadowed its true purpose. Jack rejected this mischaracterization and proposed instead that Red Power could be expressed through the gathering of the chiefs and the people. Taking a multi-political understanding of the Union and Red Power, Jack insisted

<sup>4</sup> Bryan Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 402.

<sup>5</sup> Indigenous authors Lee Maracle and Jeanette Armstrong wrote fictional accounts of political activities in British Columbia, and Maracle spoke specifically about the emergence and activities of NARP in Vancouver. Lee Maracle, *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1990); Jeanette Armstrong, *Slash* (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1996). See also: Donald L. Fixico, "Witness to Change: Fifty Years of Indian Activism and Tribal Politics," in *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism Since 1900*, ed. Daniel Cobb and Loretta Fowler, (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007), 5. For more on Red Power in Canada see: Palmer, "'Indians of All Tribes': The Birth of Red Power," in *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties*, ed. Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément, and Gregory S. Kealey, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 193. Rutherford suggests the Red Power arrived in Canada by the 1970s. Scott Rutherford, "Canada's Other Red Scare: The Anicinabe Park Occupation and Indigenous Decolonization," in *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 79.

the two could co-exist because like the Union, Red Power was about unity.<sup>6</sup> Even though Jack proposed a less radical understanding of Red Power, revealing the ways in which local conditions had shaped this ideology to suit the political mood of BC First Nations, Union delegates including George Watts expressed disbelief that Red Power had anything to do with Indigenous politics in BC. Yet, throughout the 1970s, this was changing as AIM members including St'uxwtews (Bonaparte) Chief Ken Basil took part in the Union, and AIM chapters frequently had a presence at Union meetings. Increasingly, the lines between the organizations were blurred with individuals incorporating both into their multi-political practices. In 1975, the influence of AIM on the Union was difficult to ignore as approximately thirty members actively took part in the conference.<sup>7</sup> These members, who came from west coast and interior communities, as well as from other provinces such as Ontario, focused on dispelling myths about the militancy of AIM and insisted that they supported the land claim and stood ready to help.<sup>8</sup>

By 1975, reflecting on AIM's presence at the Union assembly Ts'ishaa7ath (Tseshah) Chief George Watts noted that while the Union did not identify with or fully accept AIM, unity should overshadow those incongruences. He noted that "a couple of years ago, if the American Indian Movement came to our conference they would have been thrown out." Explaining how these attitudes as shifted somewhat, especially as the Union embraced more radical political strategies in 1975, Watts continued, "We don't have to stand up and say we belong to the American Indian Movement[.] [W]e have to take the position that we've got to align all the Indian people that have the ultimate goal in mind[.] [W]e've got to take all our forces together and put them into some kind of workable situation that's going to bring about a solution to the land claims issue."<sup>9</sup> The idea that political unity should take precedence despite ideological differences reveals a

<sup>6</sup> "First Meeting of BC Chiefs Conference Planning Committee," October 18 and 19, 1969, Kamloops, BC in Minutes of the Indian Chiefs of British Columbia Conference, November 17-22, 1969, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly at Evergreen Hall in Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly at Evergreen Hall in Chilliwack, BC, April 24, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.



willingness by some Union members to widen their multi-political agendas to make room for AIM. This was part of a larger trend of increasing radicalism within the BC Indigenous movement by the mid-1970s. Drawing guidance and strength from the Puget Sound fish-ins and the Wounded Knee standoff in the United States, as well as blockades and sit-ins across Canada, the Union and BC Indigenous activists expanded their own political activities.

The political genealogies of BC communities also contributed to the incorporation of direct action into Union multi-politics. Throughout the 1970s, Osoyoos, Penticton, and St'uxwtews First Nations reminded the Union that bureaucracy was not the only way. The leaders of these communities, who were heavily involved in the Union brought their community practices into the Union and pushed the organization to seek change beyond the Union offices. Radicalism had been developing in these communities throughout the early 1970s with fishing protests and the Cache Creek blockade in the summer of 1974, the Union remained on the periphery supporting but not openly engaging with these actions. For example, in 1970, the Union supported peaceful local protests and illegal action with the Deep Creek fish-in, which attracted over 150 participants from First Nations bands around the province. The fish-in took place on October 4 to dispute the federal ban on taking spawning Kokanee salmon. Osoyoos and Penticton band members claimed they had been fishing for Kokanee in Deep Creek for over 1,000 years and they opposed the insinuation made in the press that the Indigenous fishery was responsible for destroying spawning fish. Instead, they argued sport fishing and recreational swimming in the creek had led to declining numbers. Osoyoos Chief James Stelkia, outlining the intention by Indigenous peoples to rebuff government restrictions and exercise their resource rights, argued, "the fish and game people say we have not got the right to go fishing. We say we do. We are doing what God gave us to do – and not the God of the government. I don't believe in him."<sup>10</sup> Illegal fishing had long been a primary means to protest and circumvent fishery regulations, and these tactics

<sup>10</sup> "High court test case sought after 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian fish-in," *Indian Voice* 2, no. 8 (October, 1970): 1-2.

intensified in the 1970s.<sup>11</sup> Placing Syilx (Okanagan) cosmologies in opposition to settler political frameworks, Stelkia activated the politics of refusal to explain his actions without indicating that he was seeking settler permission or legitimation of Syilx ideals. In fact, in refusing to “believe in” the “God of the government,” Stelkia co-opted a time honoured settler tactic of delegitimizing Indigenous ideologies and cultural beliefs, turning the tables on the settler state to prove that recognition worked both ways. Indigenous people needed to recognize settler political modalities for them to have any effect. By refusing to recognize the settler state’s authority in Indigenous economies, Stelkia made a strong case for Indigenous sovereignty. Moreover, Stelkia’s enactment of the term “God” to reference both Syilx cosmologies and government legislation activated a common practice of referring to the Creator as God, but further, in equating the God of settlers to their government, provided insight into how Stelkia viewed the political priorities of Canadians. In other words, Stelkia implied that settlers regarded their government and laws, which they created, as akin to a god, whereas the Syilx followed the demands of the Creator and this was more powerful than the authority of the state.

<sup>11</sup> In 1973, Cowichan members also staged a week long “Salmon for Survival” demonstration on the Quamichan reserve to agitate for their resource rights. The event was peaceful, but included building illegal traditional weirs to catch salmon. The Cowichan maintained as they had throughout the nineteenth century that the state should allow them to fish without permits using traditional salmon weirs. This stance had frequently placed the Cowichan in direct confrontation with settler state departments, and the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife records reveal consistent efforts by the Cowichan to thwart state control. The Department argued that the weirs were destroying salmon stocks by trapping large numbers of fish at one time, but scholars have convincingly revoked this logic insisting that government agencies increased regulations on Indigenous fishing to accommodate the rise of industrial and commercial fishing practices. Regulations, then, had more to do with a desire to control and subjugate Indigenous economies in order to promote industry, than they did with protecting salmon stocks. The Cowichan Band Council initially supported the “Salmon for Survival” protest, but when the action lasted longer than the pre-approved three days, the band officially withdrew their authorization. Correspondence within the Department of Fisheries records between 1893 and 1908 discuss regulations against Indian weir fishing, particularly amongst the Cowichan. Also included in the records are references to complaints by the Cowichan regarding their unrecognized fishing rights, including the right to fish using traditional weirs. These records also reveal instances where the officials from the Department of Indian Affairs defended Cowichan fishermen against regulations by the Fisheries Department and declared that Fisheries were encroaching on Indian rights. LAC, RG 23, Department of Fisheries, Vol. 583, part 1, Fishing Regulations, Barricades; LAC, RG 23, Department of Fisheries, Vol. 678, part 1; LAC, RG 23, Department of Fisheries, Vol. 1467, part 1, Sturgeon Fishing – Complaints by Indians, 1894-1895; LAC, RG 23, Department of Fisheries, Vol. 1467, part 1, Fishery Regulations – Judgment re: trespass on federal property.

Stelkia employed Indigenous rights defined by Indigenous peoples, and motivated other nations to join the Osoyoos. Protestors arrived not only to support the Osoyoos and Pentiction bands and their cause, but also to oppose widespread patterns of state intervention into Indigenous economies.<sup>12</sup> State restrictions had deepened as the province began to embrace aggressive resource development under W.A.C. Bennett's Social Credit (Socred) government, and this alarmed First Nations peoples. Socred initiatives including the expansion of railways, highways, and bridges, as well as the creation of Crown corporations throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, and state enterprises complemented similar advances in private resource industries.<sup>13</sup> This forceful expansion and development disregarded Indigenous resources rights and the economic downturn of the 1970s created challenging economic conditions for First Nations peoples who struggled to engage in wage labour while maintaining traditional hunting and fishing pursuits.<sup>14</sup> Protests such as the one at Deep Creek then, offered commentary on Indigenous rights issues including the inherent right to resources as determined by the Creator, as well as on the current economic conditions on reserves

<sup>12</sup> The Deep Creek fish-in ended with seven chiefs facing charges. Among these included Chief Noll Derrickson of Westbank First Nation, Chief Murray Alexis of the Vernon Band, and Chief James Stelkia of Osoyoos. Many of these leaders would continue to play key roles in direct action across the province.

<sup>13</sup> Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 9-10.

<sup>14</sup> Dominique Clément, *Canada's Rights Revolution: Social Movements and Social Change, 1937-82* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008). For more on First Nations people and wage work see: Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1848-1930*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996); John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter From the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Andrew Parnaby, "The Best Men That Ever Worked the Lumber": Aboriginal Longshoremen on Burrard Inlet, BC, 1863-1939," *Canadian Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (2006): 53-78.

and the settler state's role in perpetuating these.<sup>15</sup> The protests also operated as a strong expression of political refusal and were increasingly incorporated into community and Union multi-politics throughout the mid-1970s.

By February 1974, the Union was taking steps to not just support community direct action, but to actively engage in it as well. That month the Osoyoos band blockaded Highway 97 at Okanagan Falls to protest the cut-off land claim, and by April 1974 Stelkia made a motion at the Union general assembly to call for province-wide demonstrations. Other leaders who lamented the lack of action on Indigenous issues supported Stelkia's motion leading George Watts to declare that the Union had "agreed to become radical."<sup>16</sup> Individuals convinced of the efficacy of protest triggered this impulse towards direct action, and moderate activists who typically valued bureaucratic and diplomatic channels but were frustrated by the provincial government's apathy toward the land claim also supported this move. The extent of this radical stance varied according to individual and community political ideas and often followed historical and geographical trends. Certain communities including Osoyoos, Penticton, and Cheam were known for more radical activities.<sup>17</sup> For instance, amongst the Stó:lō Cheam Band members could be counted on to participate in blockades and illegal activities to support their political goals. This was both a source of concord and tension amongst the Stó:lō

<sup>15</sup> Douglas Harris has argued that the reserve geography in British Columbia was premised on direct access to Indigenous fisheries. Initially the state defined where Indigenous people could settle with the reserve system, and then protected their access to food by establishing a food fishery. The development of commercial fisheries motivated increasing state intervention but the province insisted it would exempt Indigenous access to food from growing state resource regulation. Despite the initial protectionist claims by the province, the legal creation of the food fishery, a system allowing government control of Indigenous access to fish, ultimately worked to dispossess Indigenous peoples in British Columbia. Adding further insult to injury, many of the reserves in British Columbia were intentionally reduced from standard allocations because the tribes in question relied on water-based economies rather than land-based ones. See Douglas Harris, *Landing Native Fisheries: Indian Reserves and Fishing Rights in British Columbia, 1849-1925* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008). See also: Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002); Dianne Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> Summarized Minutes: 1974 Sixth General Assembly of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Elks Hall, Williams Lake BC, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: the Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 174.

<sup>17</sup> Sioliya (June Quipp), interview with author, Cheam First Nation, Rosedale, BC, June 25, 2012; Eneas, interview.

communities with some appreciating Cheam Band members' willingness to support their own band's actions, and others believing Cheam was too radical and not helpful.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the armed Cache Creek blockade in the summer of 1974 produced similar disagreements and would soon test the limits of the Union's decision to "become radical."<sup>19</sup>

The Cache Creek blockade began in August 1974 when Chief Ken Basil of the St'uxwtews (Bonaparte) Band led an armed obstruction of the local highway in order to protest the substandard housing conditions on reserve. After calls to build twenty new houses went unanswered by the Department of Indian Affairs, band members escalated their tactics. From their protest base camp at Two Springs on the Bonaparte reserve, demonstrators handed out information pamphlets and charged a \$5.00 toll for cars to raise awareness for their housing crisis. Shortly after, protestors engaged in an armed blockade. Explaining the turn towards arming the protestors, Basil noted, "we have tried many ways of communicating our problems to both provincial and federal governments, . . . but the only thing that gets any attention is the use of force."<sup>20</sup> The Cache Creek Native Movement (CCNM), a group of local members including many young radicals who were beginning to align with the American Indian Movement, organized the blockade, but the three-week event also attracted supporters from Vancouver, as well as American and Canadian activists who had been involved in protests at Alcatraz and Wounded Knee.<sup>21</sup> While this protest was local and based on concerns of an individual band, it was also highly representative of the conditions Indigenous peoples in Canada experienced. The involvement of non-band members and international activists in the conflict spoke to this shared experience and illuminated the level of communication and cross-fertilization between local, national, and transnational movements. Ideas and

<sup>18</sup> See Sarah Nickel, "The Politics of Activism: A Discussion of the Understanding and Implementation of Stó:lō Political Activism," Unpublished Paper. Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre, Sardis, BC.

<sup>19</sup> Summarized Minutes: 1974 Sixth General Assembly of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Elks Hall, Williams Lake BC, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>20</sup> "Real issues veiled says Bonaparte leader," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 8 (August 1974): 5.

<sup>21</sup> David Ticoll and Stan Persky, "Welcome to Ottawa: the Native Peoples' Caravan," *Canadian Dimension* 10, no. 6 (January, 1975): 16; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC. April 21-25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

individuals from other movements such as Black Power and the American Indian Movement converged at Cache Creek to propel this local cause as well as the global social justice movement forward. In fact, near the end of the conflict Ed Burnstick, national coordinator for the Canadian chapter of the American Indian Movement, insisted that 3,000 AIM members were poised to join the blockade if needed.<sup>22</sup> This blockade solidified AIM's involvement in Canada.

The existence of AIM members and guns at Cache Creek attracted criticism from the mainstream press, and this prompted the Union to respond. Focusing on the potential for violence at Cache Creek, the press blamed CCNM members for compromising the "integrity of the Indian reform movement."<sup>23</sup> This implied that every individual First Nations person was responsible for upholding the legitimacy of Indigenous demands and underscored racist assumptions of the homogeneity of Indigenous peoples and a misunderstanding of Indigenous politics. Variances in political strategy, according to the mainstream press, were not acceptable. In this instance, the media also had a tendency to blame Indigenous peoples for their struggles. According to the *Province*, Indigenous militancy rather than continued government neglect and inaction caused the Cache Creek protest. This inferred that had the St'uxwtews band followed the proper political channels, state departments would have met their demands.<sup>24</sup> Of course, this was not true. The St'uxwtews had been trying to achieve exactly this, and it had not worked. Although the Union did not actively participate in the Cache Creek blockade it offered moral support, taking a defensive position in the media to justify the activities of the protestors. Balancing its mandate to respect band autonomy while distancing itself from violent multi-political expressions the Union did not embrace was challenging. The Union supported Cache Creek blockade despite the presence of weapons because the band had gone through the proper administrative and diplomatic channels before resorting to direct action. Asked to comment on the situation at Cache Creek, Forrest Walkem, Nlaka'pamux Cook's Ferry Chief and chairman of the Union's

<sup>22</sup> "BC Indians Resume Highway Road Block," *Kainai News* 7, no. 10 (September 6, 1974): 1.

<sup>23</sup> The Union's media reported this criticism and the CCNM's reaction. "Real issues veiled says Bonaparte leader," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 8 (August 1974): 5.

<sup>24</sup> Cited in "Real issues veiled says Bonaparte leader," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 8 (August 1974): 5.

executive committee, expressed regret or perhaps disapproval of the band's use of militancy, but he ultimately conceded that armed insurrection was unavoidable. "As far as the Union and the Kamloops district council are concerned," Walkem began, "we did everything we could to try and avoid this situation." He insisted, "We've gone to Ottawa to put our housing proposals together and they've been falling on deaf ears."<sup>25</sup> According to Walkem and the Union, militant direct action was not an ideal political device, but a last resort when state departments refused to hear valid concerns. Walkem's use of the term "we" in his statement to the Indigenous media activated the discourse of unity to defend the action at Cache Creek and demonstrated that the protestors were widely supported by their district, neighbouring communities, the Union, and Indigenous peoples across the province. This suggests that even if activists did not always agree on political tactics or ideologies, the Union supported its members.

This was a strong expression of unity, but it also highlighted the Union's position as official spokesman for the movement. It was not enough to hear the statements from Basil or St'uxwtews members. The blockade demanded outside commentary as well in order to demonstrate a united front to the Canadian state and resist the state's dismissal of the CCNM as isolated radicals. This represented a good example of the shifting multi-political strategies. Shortly after Walkem made his statement, however, the Union officially retracted its moral and media support when seventeen-year-old David James Robert, who was visiting from Ontario, was accidentally shot at the Two Springs camp.<sup>26</sup> In this moment, the danger of armed protest became real and therefore more difficult to support. Before this, weapons were present but not being used, allowing the Union to assuage some of its apprehensions about militancy. The Union was content to let St'uxwtews members exercise band autonomy and choose their political strategies, but they would have to continue without Union support, which had leant a degree of credibility in the eyes of the provincial and federal governments. The increasing pressure from the press and the lack of support from the Union took a toll at Cache Creek and Basil ended the blockade September 2, 1974 after securing a promise from the RCMP

<sup>25</sup> "Real issues veiled says Bonaparte leader," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 8 (August 1974): 5.

<sup>26</sup> G. McKeivitt, "Caravan wants gov. action," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 9 (September 1974): 5.

that they would not charge any participants for their involvement.<sup>27</sup> It was an anti-climactic end to the event, and while the St'uxwtews were unable to achieve their political goals by the end of the blockade many Union member nations found themselves increasingly willing to pursue direct action strategies. For the Union, the Cache Creek blockade tested its radical limits and revealed that the Union remained quite moderate in comparison to the St'uxwtews. Ultimately, the Union's decision "to become radical" would not come to fruition until the following summer.

In spring 1975 the report of the Action Committee on the McKenna-McBride Cut-Off Lands provided a specific framework for direct action tactics and this represented a specific vision of radicalism within the Union. The Cut-Off Lands Committee had been tasked with researching the lands cut off from reserves during the McKenna-McBride Commission in 1916.<sup>28</sup> Once the issue was researched and communities consulted, the committee was to develop a strategy for redress. In the face of refusal by the provincial government to compensate bands for lands divested in the 1916 commission, the Action Committee recommended taking direct action. They advocated "a multi-phased coordinated plan that combines a number of tactics. . . depending on the willingness of any one Band to be involved." The Action Committee emphasized using "different levels of militancy," and insisted on solidarity amongst bands and the Union. It argued, "this means supporting any Band that takes action, however militant, on the cut-off lands. SOLIDARITY means support, even if this is only verbal support. SOLIDARITY means

<sup>27</sup> The subsequent arrest of CCNM member Clarence Dennis, however, led Basil to collaborate with the Kenora occupation leader Louis Cameron to arrange for a Native Peoples' Caravan to Ottawa. The Caravan also importantly illustrated the deep connections forged across communities throughout the 1970s, as organizers designed the action to publicize the issues Indigenous peoples faced in Canada in terms of securing adequate housing, education, and economic development, and arrange for the settlement of land claims and the enforcement of treaties. Ticoll and Persky, "Welcome to Ottawa: the Native Peoples' Caravan," 16. The September 6, 1974 report from *Kainai News* revealed that Basil's decision to end the blockade was only temporary and that it was resumed a few days later. "BC Indians Resume Highway Road Block," *Kainai News* 7, no. 10 (September 6, 1974): 1. See also: Peter Kulchyski, "40 Years in Indian Country," *Canadian Dimension* 37, no. 6 (November/December 2003): 33-36.

<sup>28</sup> Member of the Action Committee included, Chief Adam Eneas (Penticton), Chief Victor Adrian (Seton Lake), George Harris (Chemainus), Chief Philip Joe (Squamish), Chief Jim Stelkia (Osoyoos), Jacob Kruger (Penticton), Chief Joe Mathias (Squamish), Howard Wale (Hazelton), George Watts (Ts'ishaa7ath). "Report of the Action Committee on McKenna-McBride Cut-Off Lands," in Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Special General Assembly Information Kit, April 2-4, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.



support, even if your Band does not feel it can take similar action. SOLIDARITY means not criticizing any Band's actions in public. SOLIDARITY means not playing the white man's game of 'divide and rule.'<sup>29</sup> The Action Committee then made suggestions for the types of activities bands could use including using the cut-off lands, and engaging in demonstrations, sit-ins, and blockades. The group even outlined suggested locations for such activities including specific places on major highways such as "Highway 16 where it goes through Seton Lake," and government buildings.<sup>30</sup> As militant May took hold, many First Nations took up the specific suggestions made in the report.

At the 1975 Union assembly in Chilliwack and in the Indigenous and mainstream media, delegates debated the proposed use of direct action. Originally the discussion coalesced around protecting fishing rights, with Bill Lightbown proposing a motion for the Food Fish Committee to coordinate a fish-in. The motion called for "every Indian that is able to engage in their aboriginal rights to fish even if it contravenes with the white man's law."<sup>31</sup> Penticton Chief Adam Eneas quickly supported the motion insisting, "we are the only ones who can protect that right and if that means going to jail then we'll go to jail."<sup>32</sup> Others were more cautious in their response to the motion, however. Disagreement about civil disobedience and direct action followed clear regional economic patterns, which determined multi-political strategies undertaken. For instance, the west coast nations that depended on commercial fishing for their livelihoods were wary of flouting Fisheries laws and risking having their boats and commercial licenses confiscated. Kerry Frank of the Kwawkwalth district explained "all our fishing is done with a seine boat. We don't fish the rivers. It's fine to put sticks and spears on the line, but if we get busted we [lose] a \$300,000 boat and it's a little hard to put that up."<sup>33</sup> Recognizing the economic

<sup>29</sup> Report of the Action Committee on McKenna-McBride Cut-Off Lands, Union of BC Indian Chiefs Special General Assembly Information Kit, April 2-4, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>30</sup> Report of the Action Committee on McKenna-McBride Cut-Off Lands, Union of BC Indian Chiefs Special General Assembly Information Kit, April 2-4, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>31</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly at the Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly at the Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975; Eneas, interview.

<sup>33</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly at the Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975.

diversity of First Nations beyond fishing, George Saddleman asked to hear from the people of the Williams Lake District and “the north people who live on moose” to address civil disobedience in terms of hunting rights. These delegates spoke in favour of practicing their Indigenous rights regardless of state regulations, and as a result, the original fishing rights motion was approved and later expanded to call for a month of direct action beyond fishing.<sup>34</sup> The varied responses towards direct action demanded the Union’s consideration and led Eneas to declare that the Union would approve of direct action and law breaking but not demand it.<sup>35</sup> Although some communities would later suggest the Union did not adhere to its policy of non-intervention, officially, communities were encouraged through Union authorization and support, to use direct action if they desired, and delegates promised not to condemn political activities regardless of their level of militancy. Until April 1975, direct action was a community-based strategy that the Union could choose to support or reject according to its political ideologies. This changed at the Chilliwack assembly where the Union, through careful negotiation with its member nations, explicitly added direct action to its multi-political expressions of unity.

Militant May employed pan-tribal unity and political refusal against settler-state agencies, authority, and presence in BC. True to the Union’s promise that seizures and demonstrations would “explode all over B.C. on May 1,” the first day of the month saw community members, band leaders, and Union members participate in the simultaneous occupations of three Department of Indian Affairs district offices in Kamloops, Williams Lake, and Vernon.<sup>36</sup> Organized locally, but supported and advertised by the Union, activists planned for the occupations to continue until the federal government agreed to negotiate the land claim, and until the Department of Indian Affairs permanently closed its offices and ceased to exist. The call for the elimination of DIA appeared to be reminiscent of the White Paper policy and neoliberal devolution schemes, which the Union vociferously rejected. There was certainly overlap in that both the White Paper and devolution advocated for the end of DIA. But political motivations behind the

<sup>34</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly at the Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Saddleman, interview.

<sup>35</sup> Ron Rose, “Indian chiefs warn of ‘militant May’,” *Vancouver Sun* April 23, 1975, 44; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC. April 21-25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>36</sup> Ron Rose, “Indians begin to beat their war drums,” *Vancouver Sun*, April 24, 1975, 39.

occupations espoused several key differences. First, the White Paper advocated the elimination of the Indian Act, the Department of Indian Affairs, and the rights and relationships outlined in historic treaties. It did this without the input of Indigenous communities. The occupations, on the other hand, promoted the abolition of DIA only, but left the Indian Act, the treaties, and the status of Indigenous peoples intact. This move was also direct by Indigenous peoples rather than the settler state. Second, activists did not envision the closure of DIA or the reduction of DIA bureaucracy in the same manner as the federal government did in its devolution schemes. BC Indigenous peoples wanted to take over DIA services and programming as an act of sovereignty. The federal government's plan, on the other hand, involved shifting federal programs and responsibilities to the provinces to deliver and as such undermined the political autonomy of First Nations communities. The occupation of the DIA offices in conjunction with the Union's rejection of provincial and federal dollars allowed Union member nations to function without the funding and services provided by DIA and prompted Indigenous peoples to make the case that the Department was redundant. DIA records also reveal that several bands demanded greater funding for services, changes to staff, band involvement in policy making, and consistent policy making.<sup>37</sup> For instance, bands in the South Island district that received services through the Nanaimo DIA office wanted band control of policies and services that affected them. The district occupations helped communicate these goals.

The Union supported these activities through press releases and member participation in the events, but they were not explicitly constructed as Union events and this exposed the complex interplay between the Union and bands during militant May. *Nesika* reported on all the district DIA office occupations, as well as on road and railroad blockades by the Westbank, Gwawaenuk (Port McNeill), and Tl'azt'en (Stewart-

<sup>37</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from L.E. Wight, Regional Director British Columbia Region, to Chiefs and Councilors of the South Island District, July 17, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Judd Buchanan to Chief Patrick Charleyboy, Caribou Tribal Council, July 17, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Chief Patrick Charleyboy to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, May 13, 1975.

Trembleur) bands.<sup>38</sup> Special bulletins also encouraged communities to report on their activities, and at times even called out directly to specific communities: “Hey! You Bella Coolas! Are you still occupying D.I.A.? We haven’t heard from you! Where are you?????”<sup>39</sup> These and other reports outlined support for direct action, as well as the importance of disseminating information about these actions across the province. These occupations also drew strength from similar Bureau of Indian Affairs’ occupations in the United States as well as solidarity with the labour movement in BC.<sup>40</sup> It is significant that BC Indigenous peoples did not rely on the Union as the sole political framework for direct action, and this adaptability and independence sent a strong message to government about the power of Indigenous communities and politics.<sup>41</sup> It also reveals the multiplicity of Indigenous politics and pan-tribal organizing that utilized both Union and band frameworks to develop and enact direct action. As the BC occupations began, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that hundreds of people entered the offices when they opened on May 1 and stayed in an attempt to pressure movement on land claims. The widespread participation in the occupations revealed strong opinions about Department’s role in the communities. The Kamloops demonstration, led by Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc Chief Mary Leonard, attracted one hundred supporters from approximately twenty-five bands in the Thompson-Nicola region, while the Williams Lake

<sup>38</sup> Gerard Peters, “From 1969 to 1975: The Movement is born,” *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 13 (May 1975): 2; “Province wide militancy continues,” *Nesika* (July 1975): 7; “You’ve backed us up as far as we’re going to go, we’re not going to go back any further,” *Nesika* (July 1975): 4; “RCMP storm blockade at Gold River: ‘We saw real unity amongst our people’,” *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* (July 1975): 2. The Westbank First Nation is a Syilx (Okanagan) nation situated in West Kelowna, BC. The Gwawaenuk First Nation is a Kwakwaka’wakw nation situated around Port McNeill). The Tl’azt’en Nation is a Dakelh (Carrier) nation situated in north-central BC.

<sup>39</sup> LAC, RG 10, vol. 2, box 1, file 901/24-2-12 (file part 2), accession V1990-91/045, Union of BC Indian Chiefs News Release: Bulletin # 6.

<sup>40</sup> Ron Rose, “Alliance will honor Indian picket lines,” *Vancouver Sun*, May 26, 1975, 1-2; Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like A Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 149-168.

<sup>41</sup> Janice Antoine, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 5, 2013; Eneas, interview; Percy Joe, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 5, 2013; Don Moses, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 11, 2012; Clarence Pennier, interview with author, Stó:lō Tribal Council Offices, Agassiz, BC. July 25, 2012.

office occupation drew one hundred and sixty activists from the fifteen bands in that area.<sup>42</sup>

The occupations were community events that, while similar, each took on distinct local expressions. The Kamloops occupation, for example, deviated from the other occupations by employing a class-based strategy to shut down the office. As with the other districts, Thompson-Nicola band members initially occupied the Department office, but after two days, they decided to move outside the building and set up a picket instead.<sup>43</sup> The other occupations did not close down the offices or place limitations on the movement and activities of Indian Affairs employees, and therefore the offices continued to operate as usual, though band members were discouraged from conducting regular business there.<sup>44</sup> Conversely, in Kamloops, the picket prevented DIA employees from entering the office altogether. This was because the employees were members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada Union and as such refused to cross the picket line.<sup>45</sup> Through the picket, the Kamloops protesters quickly achieved their goal of closing down the district office forcing DIA officials to consider alternatives. As early as June 23, 1975 DIA regional director Larry Wight was arranging for district staff to be retrained and placed elsewhere in other government agencies. Wight did not express any hope that the situation would be resolved.<sup>46</sup> The success of the picket relied on DIA employees

<sup>42</sup> "Indians start sit-in at Interior offices," *Vancouver Sun*, May 1, 1975, 1-2; Gerard Peters, "From 1969 to 1975: The Movement is born," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 13 (May 1975): 2.

<sup>43</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from L.E. Wight to P.B. Lesaux, Assistant Deputy Minister, June 5, 1975.

<sup>44</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Judd Buchanan to Rose Charlie, July 10, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Judd Buchanan to Rose Charlie, July 10, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Norm Levi to Judd Buchanan, July 8, 1975; "Indians start sit-in at Interior offices," *Vancouver Sun*, May 1, 1975, 1-2.

<sup>45</sup> "Indians maintain blockade," *Vancouver Sun*, May 5, 1975, 34; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, Vol. 2, File 901/24-2-12 (file part 2), Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1975-1977, Union of BC Indian Chiefs News Release: Bulletin # 5, May 20, 1975; Eneas, interview. The Union records also revealed that band members were sometimes employed at the district offices. Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>46</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Larry Wight, Regional Director, British Columbia region to P.B. Lesaux, Assistant Deputy Minister, Indian and Eskimo Affairs, June 23, 1975.

recognizing the picket as legitimate and thus this gesture of solidarity was significant. Solidary between Indigenous peoples and labour was also not limited to Kamloops. In fact, later that same month the labour movement in north western BC including the Terrace, Kitimat, and Prince Rupert Labour Councils had officially given support to Nisga'a blockades against logging companies in the Nass Valley. The labour movement, which previously had supported First Nations actions in case-by-case capacities, emphasized the need for "unity across the races" to fight against multi-national corporations bent on exploiting First Nations' natural resources and working-class labour.<sup>47</sup> Drawing on another political movement for support, the Kamloops protestors incorporated political cross-fertilization into their multi-politics. The protestors used the picket to reject the welfare-style funding programs administered to First Nations peoples by officials in the Department, and called on Department staff members to support them. The Kamloops protestors capitalized on a growing alliance between labour and First Nations groups.

For the most part, the occupations were well received by district employees and the Minister of Indian Affairs Judd Buchanan, but officials struggled to paternalistic responses to Indigenous mandates. In fact, a report by Williams Lake District supervisor Eric Underwood, stressed the well-organized and peaceful nature of the sit-in in his district. The broad participation of band members in the demonstration also brought sympathy and acceptance for the occupation. Correspondence from bands in the Williams Lake District to Judd Buchanan showed high levels of support for the action. On June 19, 1975, for instance, six weeks into the initial occupation, Chiefs Tony Meyers and Frank Boucher from the Stone and Quesnel Bands respectively, added their names to the Caribou Tribal Council's call for "the immediate closure of the Williams Lake District Office."<sup>48</sup> The Tribal Council's telex from two days earlier insisted on the immediate and permanent closure of the office and insisted that the current occupation

<sup>47</sup> Ron Rose, "Alliance will honor Indian picket lines," *Vancouver Sun*, May 26, 1975, 1-2.

<sup>48</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief Tony Meyers, Stone Band and Chief Frank Boucher, Quesnel Band to Judd Buchanan, June 19, 1975.

would continue until DIA met these demands.<sup>49</sup> These communications provided an additional strategy of political refusal towards DIA intervention by providing written demands alongside of direct action. This was effective. Asked to comment on the sit-ins, another Department spokesperson insisted, “these people do represent a good cross-section of the bands in their areas and the department attitude is that if there is a good representation and they want to stop Indian Affairs from working, they have a mandate to do that.”<sup>50</sup> Buchanan agreed, and in his correspondence to bands, Regional Director Larry Wight, and officials from other agencies including Human Resources, Buchanan emphasized his dedication to follow through with band wishes. For instance, Buchanan wrote to the West Coast District chiefs asking if the current closure of the Nanaimo district office reflected their wishes, or if they preferred to have services restored.<sup>51</sup> And yet, Buchanan and other DIA officials also remained paternalistic in their handling of the occupations and demands to eliminate DIA, exposing the extent to which the Department continued to misunderstand or fail to hear the political demands of Indigenous peoples in BC.<sup>52</sup> DIA Regional Planner A.M. Cunningham wrote to Wight about ensuring that band members and leadership “have full knowledge of the consequences” of closing the district offices and that the decisions “rest on a majority decision from the constituent Bands within a DIA district.”<sup>53</sup> Although DIA had good reason to second guess the actions of the bands considering opposition from the British Columbia Homemakers’ Association and from other bands like the Cowichan Band, mentioned previously, it was also intervening into bands that were protesting government intervention and oversight.

<sup>49</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief Andy Chelsea, Alkali Lake Band, Chief Cathy Patrick, Nazko Band, and Chief Stanley Boyd, Kluskus Indian Band to Judd Buchanan, June 16, 1975.

<sup>50</sup> “Indians start sit-in at Interior offices,” *Vancouver Sun* May 1, 1975, 1-2; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, Vol. 2, File 901/24-2-12 (file part 2), Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1975-1977, News Release: Bulletin # 5, May 20, 1975.

<sup>51</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Judd Buchanan to West Coast District chiefs, June 16, 1975.

<sup>52</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Judd Buchanan to Rose Charlie, July 10, 1975. See also: LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Judd Buchanan to Councillor Francis Amos, Hesquiat Band, July 22, 1975.

<sup>53</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from A.M. Cunningham, Regional Planner, to L.E. Wight, Regional Director, June 26, 1975.

Like responses to the rejection of funding, First Nations community approval of the occupations was not universal and DIA records reveal a series of strong counter-refusals to the aims and practices of the occupiers. Typically opposing bands rejected the funding decision because they could not afford to go without provincial and federal government funding and services or they resented the Union's perceived intrusion on band autonomy. The Osoyoos Band, for example, exercised their independence from the Union by returning to government funding and publicly stating their lack of support for Union directives.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, in South Island district, several bands such as the Cowichan and Qualicum were unhappy with the closure of the DIA office and the resulting reduction of services. To protest the actions of their district, the Cowichan Band passed a band council resolution requesting that the Department move all relevant Cowichan files from the Nanaimo office to Duncan, and further that it "provide...services from a location on our reserve." Interestingly, the Cowichan Band did not criticize the occupiers or the Union for denying the band access to funds and services, but instead targeted the Department. The resolution blamed the Department for "abandon[ing] its obligations and responsibilities by its delivery of the office to those in occupation."<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the Qualicum Band, which made similar demands, insisted if the Department could not meet these requests, the South Island District staff should resign.<sup>56</sup> Unlike the Osoyoos Band, the Cowichan and the Qualicum seemed to accept the divergent multi-political agendas of other bands in their districts, and followed the Union directive of not speaking out against the activities of individual bands. The Cowichan and Qualicum Bands therefore continued to preserve and enact pan-tribal unity even through their refusal of South Island and Union directives, while the Osoyoos Band revealed how Union authority was threatening unity.

While not universally accepted or practiced, the DIA district office occupations reflected pan-tribal unity in that they were widespread and lengthy political actions. Most of the occupied offices, including Vernon, Kamloops, Bella Coola, and Williams Lake

<sup>54</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Jim Stelkia, Osoyoos Band to Judd Buchanan, June 18, 1975.

<sup>55</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Band Council Resolution, Cowichan Band Council, July 8, 1975.

<sup>56</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief A. Recalma, Qualicum Band to Judd Buchanan, June 4, 1975.



remained closed long into the summer months. The occupiers at Kamloops and Vernon offices succeeded in permanently closing the offices by September 1975 and DIA transferred services to the thirty respective band councils throughout the Thompson River and Kootenay-Okanagan Districts.<sup>57</sup> The occupations and resulting disruptions to DIA programming allowed many BC First Nations bands to envision their politics unfettered by Department considerations and this was a powerful boon for sovereignty.

The occupations also extended to the regional DIA office in downtown Vancouver where First Nations activists, including Union executive Bill Wilson, members of the cut-off lands committee, and one hundred AIM members came together to shut the office down.<sup>58</sup> *Vancouver Sun* reporter Ron Rose described the Vancouver or “Black Tower” occupation as noisy but peaceful, and outlined how an AIM security force maintained order by allowing Department staff to move freely, banning drugs and alcohol from the premises, and restricting the occupation to DIA offices only.<sup>59</sup> Like the district occupations, the Black Tower action had a strong and well-articulated political goal. Occupiers designed the action to last until the June 25 land claims meeting between the

<sup>57</sup> Joe, interview; Eneas, interview; Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, interview with author, Splitsin te Secwepemc First Nation, Enderby, BC, June 4, 2013; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from W.E. Millin to All Band Councils in the Thomson River and Kootenay-Okanagan Districts, September 29, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from R.C. Pankhurst, Regional Superintendent of Finance and Administration to District Supervisor, Kootenay-Okanagan District, August 21, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from L.E. Wight to John G. McGilp, August 20, 1975.

<sup>58</sup> Ron Rose, “Indians end sit-in at office, start information picketing,” *Vancouver Sun* May 12, 1975, 1 and 2; Gerard Peters, “From 1969 to 1975: The Movement is born,” *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 13 (May 1975): 2. This was not the first occupation of the Vancouver office. Protestors occupied this space in 1973 as well. Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 174.

<sup>59</sup> “Indians continue occupation of downtown gov’t offices,” *Vancouver Sun*, May 10, 1975, 1 and 11. The “Black Tower” was the colloquial name for the Regional Headquarters of the Department of Indian Affairs. Louise Mandell, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, March 12, 2012. In his article, *Sun* Reporter Ron Rose also used the racialized term “whooping” to describe the protestors’ entrance into the building. This term evoked stereotypical and polarized images of buckskin-clad warriors running through the ultra-modern glass office tower, and somewhat overpowered the notion of orderly and valid protest. This and other racially-charged terminology coming from Rose, the first full time correspondent on the “Indian beat,” who was and continues to be well-respected amongst First Nations peoples, demonstrated the stranglehold stereotypes about Indigenous peoples and politics had on British Columbians at this time. These descriptions that concurrently emphasized images of savagery, orderliness, war, and peace focused on the protestors and method of protest while ignoring the underlying political issues. This placed Indigenous peoples outside the realm of respectable politics.

province and First Nations. They argued the occupation would function to pressure a suitable agreement and would encourage the Department to turn over its budget to the bands. The occupiers also drew on well-established political methods and strong cross-fertilizations with AIM members to achieve their directive.

Unlike the district occupations where some Department officials took activists' goals seriously, however, the Vancouver occupiers faced intense opposition by DIA Regional Director Larry Wight. Wight, who was in charge of the Vancouver office, dismissed the action as the work of foreign radicals who had co-opted the BC Indian movement and did not fully represent it. This was a common accusation in the BC Indigenous political movement and others such as the labour movement. For example, in 1973 when Cowichan members on the Quamchian reserve participated in a fish-in to protest Department of Fisheries' attempts to ban their traditional fishing weirs, members of the mainstream press tried to undermine the validity of the protest by making links between the protestors and Indigenous radicalism happening in the United States. Reporters asked demonstrators if they were militants inspired by the 1973 standoff at Wounded Knee between the Oglala Lakota, their allies in the American Indian Movement, and agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, many demonstrators at Quamchian had connections to their American counterparts through family ties, mobility, or shared ideologies. Many knew of or even participated in the sixties fish-ins, which saw confrontations between the Washington State government and the treaty tribes of Puget Sound, the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz, which saw the Indians of All Tribes inhabit the island to demand its return to the Sioux, and the 1973

<sup>60</sup> G. McKeivitt, "Band wants to operate fishing co-op," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 2, no. 9 (September 1973): 2.

Wounded Knee incident.<sup>61</sup> These actions prompted BC bands to place similar pressure on the Canadian state to remove restrictions on First Nations hunting and fishing practices. Though no treaties existed in British Columbia to recognize such rights, First Nations peoples argued that they had never given up their hunting, fishing, and gathering privileges and should be allowed to continue unabated. Yet, the connections made by media between American and Canadian protestors served to undercut band members' right to fish for food by highlighting the supposed indoctrination of band members by outside militant ideologies.<sup>62</sup> In Vancouver, where participants orchestrated and publicized the Black Tower sit-in as an AIM event rather than a protest by surrounding local band members, Department officials began to question whose goals the occupiers were pursuing.<sup>63</sup> This evaluation is fair in some respects, as many BC First Nations opposed radical action whereas AIM mandated it, yet Wight disregarded the ways in which activists transposed AIM into local conditions and developed their own unique political expressions.

<sup>61</sup> The 1960s witnessed fish-ins and confrontations between the state government and the treaty tribes of Puget Sound over rights to fish and hunt outside their reservations. The tribes argued Governor Isaac Stevens guaranteed this right in nineteenth century treaties. Many bands in British Columbia have ancestral ties to Puget Sound tribes and had long maintained these relationships through cultural and economic travel and exchange continuing into the twentieth century. By 1974, the decade long confrontation between the tribes, government, and fish and game officials culminated in a United States District Court case, which found in favour of Indian treaty fishing rights. Judge George Boldt in *United States v. Washington* demanded the co-management of fish stocks by the tribes and state, and allocated half the fish in Washington to the treaty tribes. Daniel Cobb and Loretta Fowler, eds. *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism Since 1900* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007), xvii; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 174; Sherry Smith, "Indians, the Counterculture, and the New Left," in *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism Since 1900*, ed. Daniel Cobb and Loretta Fowler, (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007), 142. For more on cross-border pan-tribal relationships in the Pacific Northwest see: Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

<sup>62</sup> G. McKeivitt, "Band wants to operate fishing co-op," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 2, no. 9 (September 1973): 2. One article from *Nesika* also intimated that the Canadian government was drawing connections between Indigenous protest in BC and the FLQ crisis in 1970. The paper reported, "the RCMP used to consider French Separatists and the FLQ as the main threat to national stability, but recent actions by native people, particularly in B.C. have changed that ranking. Although their report stated that native militants are not out to overthrow the government, they are certainly fearful of another kidnapping similar to the Pierre LaPorte kidnapping in 1970, this time by Indian militants." "We're Number 1!" *Nesika: The Voice of B.C. Indians* (August 1975): 3.

<sup>63</sup> Ron Rose, "Indians end sit-in at office, start information picketing," *Vancouver Sun*, May 12, 1975, 1 and 2; Gerard Peters, "From 1969 to 1975: The Movement is born," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 13 (May 1972): 2.

There were AIM chapters in Vancouver and Penticton by the mid-1970s and Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior have argued that chapters across the United States and Canada often had little interaction with headquarters and could pursue their political aims autonomously.<sup>64</sup> Union executive member Philip Paul also highlighted this in his conversations with the media in May 1975 where he insisted that Canadian AIM members were inherently different from their American counterparts. Noting that AIM members active in British Columbia were genuinely concerned with helping the bands, Paul emphasized the organization's dedication to unity, support, community, and spirituality rather than militancy.<sup>65</sup> In part, this support was fuelled by pointed discussions between Union and AIM members at the 1975 Union assembly. Responding to criticism that AIM did not share the same political vision or strategies as the Union and therefore might compromise the movement, Basil called on members of the Vancouver and Penticton AIM chapters to introduce themselves and outline their political ideologies. The Union minutes record the speeches of six AIM members who expressed their support for the land claims and the cut-offs.<sup>66</sup> After outlining the shared political goals of Union and AIM, Basil attempted to set critics' minds at ease. "I'd like to explain the policy of AIM," Basil began, addressing the Union assembly. "We don't go into areas until we are invited," he noted cautiously. "If you want us to act on our own, then we will. But," he continued, "we look for total participation. And that [is in] regards [to] demonstrations, sit-ins, or fishing and hunting rights." Basil insisted, "we don't claim to represent the people but we speak out on issues that confront us, issues that have to be dealt with."<sup>67</sup> Through his address, Basil carefully and intentionally stressed that AIM promoted community and support rather than militancy and violence, which was often associated with AIM. Basil, like Henry Jack in 1969, constituted AIM and Red Power as an integral part of Union multi-politics and pan-tribal unity. Furthermore, because Indigenous resistance movements were transnationally connected but not identical, AIM chapters in British Columbia drew influences from elsewhere while reacting to local issues and

<sup>64</sup> Chaat Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, 138.

<sup>65</sup> Ron Rose, "Alliance will honor Indian picket lines," *Vancouver Sun*, May 26, 1975, 1-2; Eneas, interview.

<sup>66</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>67</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

concerns. For example, national AIM coordinator Ed Burnstick offered AIM support at Cache Creek in 1974.<sup>68</sup> Political movements and organizations also promoted cross-pollination and individuals such as Ken Basil and Adam Eneas were involved in both the Union and AIM concurrently. This meant that Wight's support of the Union and condemnation of AIM ignored activists' multi-sited political positions and isolated Indian rights organizations from each other in Wight's mind.

The result was that Wight incorrectly dismissed the Black Tower occupation as unrelated to BC concerns, when it was anything but. The Black Tower protest was local. It was motivated by distinctly British Columbian political goals whereby First Nations bands wanted independence from DIA and the elimination of the Department altogether. It was also directly tied to Union politics, and in fact, the Union continued to play a pivotal role in the coordination and ratification of community-driven direct action strategies. For instance, Union executive member Bill Wilson was a pivotal actor within the occupation, and the Union used its newspaper and special bulletins to disseminate information about the occupation and lend its support.<sup>69</sup> Although the Union described the event as an AIM event, it insisted the Union and other organizations were supporting the effort.<sup>70</sup>

The continued importance of the Union was obvious to AIM regional director and Union member Ken Basil when he drew on Union approval to legitimize the occupation in the eyes of DIA.<sup>71</sup> Basil named the Union as a contact in AIM's occupancy regulations. The Union therefore maintained its status as a centralized political authority that

<sup>68</sup> The porous nature of organizational and geopolitical borders was also visible in Ontario during the Anicinabe Park occupation. In 1974, at Kenora, Ontario the Ojibway Warrior Society (OWS) used a forty-day armed standoff to unite North American Indigenous peoples in opposition to colonialism. Answering calls for unity, Dennis Banks, one of the founding members of AIM, arrived with other AIM members at a conference organized by the OWS. Banks and the other AIM members were there to lend support to the occupation and the OWS. Scott Rutherford, "Canada's Other Red Scare: The Anicinabe Park Occupation and Indigenous Decolonization," in *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 77-96.

<sup>69</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, Vol. 2, File 901/24-2-12, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1975-77, News Release: Bulletin # 5, May 20, 1975.

<sup>70</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, Vol. 2, File 901/24-2-12, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1975-77, News Release: Bulletin # 5, May 20, 1975.

<sup>71</sup> "Indians continue occupation of downtown gov't offices," *Vancouver Sun*, May 10, 1975, 1 and 11; Ron Rose, "Indians end sit-in at office, start information picketing," *Vancouver Sun*, May 12, 1975, 1 and 2.

facilitated and supported local initiatives.<sup>72</sup> This supports the Union's insistence that it was "no longer the executive of an Indian organization" but "an executive of an Indian movement," as AIM and other communities continued to use the Union's strong reputation with government to push their agendas.<sup>73</sup> For example, Scw'exmx Chief Percy Joe explained that while many of the actions taken by communities during the summer of 1975 were locally organized and executed, the communities knew the Union supported them. He suggested that sometimes this support took the form of a physical presence at protests or occupations, and at other times it was a moral presence that was communicated through *Nesika* and the Union bulletins or through phone calls and word of mouth.<sup>74</sup> The certainty with which Joe explained his community's knowledge of Union support is significant and highlighted the stability of Union backing. This was noticeable at the Black Tower occupation as well. When the Department confronted AIM and the Union about their relationship in the occupation both agreed that they mutually supported each other. Although the relationship between the Union and AIM was uneasy, the organizations were united in their opposition to DIA and this, along with the participation by key Union members in the occupation further facilitated unity and promoted local aims. Just as First Nations had agreed to put aside their differences in 1969 to form the Union, the Union consciously placed unity and Indigenous solidarity above all other considerations during the summer of action and in this moment, incorporated AIM into their political agenda as best they could.

Wight vociferously opposed this unity and he also framed his opposition to the Black Tower occupation in terms of threatening radical masculinity. For instance, soon after the action began, Wight called on the police to move in and clear the offices citing concern for the safety of young female secretaries working in the Department.<sup>75</sup> This preoccupation with the threat posed by Indigenous men not only erased the presence of

<sup>72</sup> Ron Rose, "Alliance will honor Indian picket lines," *Vancouver Sun*, May 26, 1975, 1-2.

<sup>73</sup> Photo caption, *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 3, no. 13 (May 1975): 1; Antoine, interview; Eneas, interview; Joe, interview; Sioliya (June Quipp), interview; George Saddleman, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, February 7, 2015.

<sup>74</sup> Joe, interview; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, Vol. 2, File 901/24-2-12, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1975-77, News Release: Bulletin # 5, May 20, 1975; "We're Number 1!" *Nesika: The Voice of B.C. Indians* (August 1975): 3.

<sup>75</sup> Ron Rose, "Indians end sit-in at office, start information picketing," *Vancouver Sun*, May 12, 1975, 1 and 2.

female occupiers, but equated direct action with masculine violence. This is not to say that such violence was not possible, as we have seen Indigenous women threatened with violence in their own communities, but there was no evidence to support Wight's concerns at the Vancouver office specifically. AIM members such as Derek Wilson as well as Union officials who had offered their support insisted that no violence or threatening behaviour occurred during the sit-in, by any parties, let alone men.<sup>76</sup> As police arrived, the occupiers left the offices quietly in what Bill Wilson insisted was a "gesture of responsibility" and began an information picket outside the building instead.<sup>77</sup> The occupiers did not use violence or force to escalate their tactics, but rather, continued to employ the same types of direct action activated in the districts. The presence of AIM, then, made little difference in terms of the occupation's goals and tactics, but made a significant difference in terms of how the Department evaluated it.

The media also played a role in emphasizing radical masculinity. Mainstream papers transmitted these highly gendered understandings of militant politics by using photos of stern-looking young men with long hair and dark sunglasses that emphasized militant threat and undercut public sympathies. This was not limited to the Black Tower occupation. Indeed, during the 1974 Cache Creek blockade images surfaced portraying young men with guns aimed into the camera lens.<sup>78</sup> Likewise at the fishing protest on the Quamchian reserve in 1973, G. McKevitt of *Nesika* noted, "stories in the dailies talked about unsmiling Indians insolently cleaning their fingernails with machetes."<sup>79</sup> These intimidating portrayals rarely included women or children, who were ever-present at

<sup>76</sup> Ron Rose, "Indians end sit-in at office, start information picketing," *Vancouver Sun*, May 12, 1975, 1 and 2.

<sup>77</sup> Ron Rose, "Indians end sit-in at office, start information picketing," *Vancouver Sun*, May 12, 1975, 1 and 2.

<sup>78</sup> According to the caption, the image captured "a Native militant at the Bonaparte Reserve new Cache Creek [taking] aim at Vancouver Sun photographer Glenn Baglo, warning him to put down his camera." *Vancouver Sun*, August 14, 1974.

<sup>79</sup> G. McKevitt, "Band wants to operate fishing co-op," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 2, no. 9 (September 1973): 2.

demonstrations and occupations, and involved in AIM.<sup>80</sup> Like Wight's criticisms, this served to undermine the legitimacy of Indigenous concerns.

Some Indigenous men also actively embraced images and practices of radical masculinity and incorporated these into their multi-political agendas. Often these not only excluded female participation and expression of politics, but also were distinctly heteronormative. For example, clothing played a central role in the construction and dissemination of AIM's image. Participants wore "uniforms" of jackets emblazoned with the AIM crest, sunglasses, bandanas, and long hair. As the reputation of AIM grew, members were easily identifiable by their appearance, and the AIM uniform became synonymous with radical Indian politics. These clothing choices were also similar to other male-dominated radical movements including the Black Panthers and the Brown Berets. Yet, the unitary images of AIM jackets and bandanas, and a CCNM warrior with his gun fixed at the camera did not adequately capture the multiple expressions of Indigenous masculinities. Activists acted according to current circumstances. For instance, at the Cache Creek occupation AIM and CCNM members constructed themselves as masculine warriors who were not averse to armed struggle if necessary. At the Black Tower occupation, on the other hand, Basil and the other AIM members were rational risk takers who enacted masculine authority through cautious and calculated political movements.<sup>81</sup> Demanding order, sobriety, and professionalism, as well as the ability to quickly reconsider political strategies according to local conditions,

<sup>80</sup> Union records include specific references to four female members of AIM and video recordings of the meeting indicate that there were more. Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 23, 1975. UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>81</sup> Christopher Dummitt, Tina Loo, and Mary-Ellen Kelm likewise explored this notion of rational risk-taking as a significant component of modern masculinities. Dummitt argued that mountaineering and driving provided modern men with opportunities to engage in leisure activities that required specific knowledge and control to manage risk. Kelm demonstrated that Indigenous rodeo cowboys similarly engaged in these negotiations of risk and expertise when participating in the rugged and dangerous life on the rodeo circuit. Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); Mary-Ellen Kelm, *A Wilder West: Rodeo in Western Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011); Tina Loo, "Of Moose and Men: Hunting for Masculinities in British Columbia, 1880-1939," *Western Historical Quarterly* 32, 3 (2001): 296-319.



AIM members hoped their protest was difficult to critique.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, at Union meetings, some AIM members emphasized spirituality and political legitimacy by appealing to rationality, moderation, and community well-being.<sup>83</sup> These spiritual and welfare-oriented articulations were apparent in AIM's work at the Nasaika Lodge in Vancouver, which provided accommodations and support for urban Indigenous peoples and at the "spiritual and survival" camp near Penticton where members provided cultural and spiritual revival practices as well as accommodation and guidance to urban and rural Indigenous peoples struggling with poverty and addictions.<sup>84</sup> These men managed their image and their actions according to their relationship with other organizations such as the Union, their interaction with government agencies, and their own shifting ideas of what political strategies would be most effective in any given circumstance. In other words, multiple images were maintained according to shifting multi-politics. AIM members were not unitary or static. They occupied multiple political, community-based, and gendered positions but the most visible images of AIM, constructed internally and externally, obscured these gradations and oversimplified Indigenous politics.

The broader historical context framing Indigenous masculinities is important. For instance, direct political protest of the Red Power movement provided a way for young Indigenous men to reclaim masculinities that colonial encounters had altered.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, historic expressions of Indigenous masculinities in leadership, economic production, and cultural exchange were implicated in relationships with colonial actors and the emerging state, particularly with the advent of surveillance and control by Indian Agents on

<sup>82</sup> These elite masculinities were used to grant authority and direction to the grassroots political movement, while concurrently compromising it by alienating community members.

<sup>83</sup> The Canadian Broadcast Corporation, *Our Native Land: American Indian Movement shakes up Canada*. <<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/discover/programs/o/our-native-land-1/american-indian-movement-shakes-up-canada.html>>; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC April 23, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>84</sup> "Indian group quits occupied hostel," *Vancouver Sun*, April 29, 1975, 10; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>85</sup> Rutherford, 84.

reserve.<sup>86</sup> Mary-Ellen Kelm has argued that the transition to reserves, limitations placed on mobility and traditional resource economies, the supremacy of the Indian Agent, and residential schooling, disrupted traditional expressions of Indigenous manhood.<sup>87</sup> The collision of Indigenous and Euro-Canadian cosmologies was transformative, and led to the creation of alternate forms of Indigenous masculinities.<sup>88</sup> Other scholars add that in nineteenth century British Columbia, Indigenous men deployed multiple strategies to preserve their socio-economic and political status, including strategic uses of modern and traditional economic activities and pluralistic expressions of cultural exchange.<sup>89</sup> By the 1970s, many of these approaches continued and weighed heavily on Indigenous men. Thus, political activism, particularly high-risk forms of direct action, provided a channel through which men could reaffirm and reshape their masculinities.

Male Union members also managed their masculinities in similar ways. Unlike AIM masculinities, which were often premised on risk-taking and militancy, Union masculinities were related to status, privilege, and political authority due to their roles as organizational and community leaders. These masculinities converged and deviated according to racial and status-based hierarchies as Union leaders interacted with grassroots membership as well as government officials. Executive Union members expressed their Indigenous masculinities through administrative interactions with government before the 1975 funding decision, whereby leaders sought equal footing as those with whom they were liaising. Many leaders reasoned that in order for government officials to take them seriously as Indigenous leaders, they must speak the same political

<sup>86</sup> Kelm, *A Wilder West*, 66-75. Also see: Keith Smith, *Liberalism, Surveillance and Resistance: Indigenous Communities in Western Canada 1877-1927* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2009).

<sup>87</sup> Kelm, *A Wilder West*, 66-75.

<sup>88</sup> Kelm's work demonstrates how in the nineteenth century, Indigenous men were no longer able to express their masculinity through hunting and horse raiding on the prairies, and so men engaged in alternate expressions such as participating in rodeos. According to Kelm, men such as Tom Three Persons used hybridized articulations of masculinity by engaging in the physical toughness and risk-taking of rodeo, while also maintaining economic self-sufficiency according to both Euro-Canadian standards and Kainai traditions of privilege and resource sharing. In other words, Three Persons and others created new Indigenous masculinities in response to the changing world. Kelm, *A Wilder West*, 75-80.

<sup>89</sup> John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 9, 23-24, and 46-47. See also: Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, especially chapter three.

language as state representatives and maintain the same stature.<sup>90</sup> As mentioned in chapter three, wealth played a significant role in this identity construction. Moreover, like AIM, clothing was pivotal to Union masculinities. Activists such as Adam Eneas recalled how under the suggestion of Bill Wilson, the executive began wearing matching navy blazers with the Union crest. Wilson reasoned that the executive should be both recognizable and dressed respectably, and this would solidify their authority.<sup>91</sup> Oral interviews, however, revealed that the blazers could actually alienate Union leadership from their constituents by advertising wealth and political privilege many community members lacked.<sup>92</sup> Like AIM, Union masculinities were largely heteronormative.

Some individuals explicitly resisted these categorizations including the tendency for the media and some men to obscure the strong intergenerational, community, and female presence during occupations and other strategies of direct action. For instance, Adam Eneas took to the floor during the Chilliwack conference to discuss the recent occupation of the Vernon DIA office and offered an alternate vision of the action. The occupation, which began a few weeks before the advent of militant May, activated Eneas's recommendations in the Action Committee on McKenna-McBride Cut-Off Lands, which he would later promote to the Union assembly. Commenting on the media's labelling of the occupiers as "young hotheads," a phrase that both essentialized and dismissed activists as young men incapable of meaningful political action, Eneas called on those involved in the occupation to come forward. As five female Elders gingerly made their way to the front of the assembly, the imagery of young male Indian radicals dissipated. The women, Helen Alec, Mary Paul, Angeline Eneas, Susan Kruger, and Louise Gabriel, took turns addressing the delegates, often in their traditional

<sup>90</sup> Loo also explored Indigenous and non-Indigenous masculinities in her discussion of big game hunting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Loo argued that the masculine ideologies of non-Indigenous, urban, bourgeois hunters, such as self-control and self-reliance were not sustainable in the context of hunting where they had little expertise. This forced them to rely on male Indigenous guides who had the required expertise and skill for a successful hunt. The result was a series of competing masculinities that were shaped and enacted between the hunters and the guides. Indigenous politics demanded similar negotiations between Union and government leadership. Loo, "Of Moose and Men".

<sup>91</sup> Eneas, interview.

<sup>92</sup> Eneas, interview.

language, to explain their support of the occupation and the need for rights recognition.<sup>93</sup> Drawing on oral histories of traditional use and occupation of the land and their determination to protect what the Creator gave to them, these women grounded contemporary radicalism in longstanding political and cultural practice, and as such, disrupted mainstream ideals about what Indigenous politics, particularly direct action, looked like.<sup>94</sup> These women were not unique in their participation in political action, but they were highly underrepresented in both the media, and perhaps even in the minds of Indigenous community members themselves. In fact, though Eneas was clearly taking aim at the mainstream media, who were present at the Chilliwack assembly, the extra flourish Eneas gave to the presentation of these women suggested that he also expected Union delegates to be surprised by the women's appearance. Working to define their own political images, the women resisted the erasure of their radicalism and involvement in direct action strategies. Subverting stereotypes of radical masculinity, the women attempted to disrupt entrenched masculinist and youth-oriented conceptions of political activism and demonstrate the intergenerational and gendered cooperation on the ground.

Relatedly, although young people played a central role in the Union, especially by 1975 when the Union had an influx of politicized youth under the age of thirty, they did not dominate Union delegations or direct action activities. According to Janice Antoine, the political mobilization of marginalized populations around the world influenced university students like her, and pushed them into Union politics. "The Red Power movement, Black Power, [and] the women's movement were all a part of, or starting to be a part of my consciousness," Antoine explained. "And the situation of our people and our communities," she continued, "you know, probably like many of our generation, we just found it really unacceptable."<sup>95</sup> For Antoine, her then husband Chief Joe Mathias, and their friends, the Union provided an opportunity for change, and by the mid-1970s more young people were turning to the Union as well as other political

<sup>93</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 22, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>94</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 22, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Eneas, interview.

<sup>95</sup> Antoine, interview.

movements like AIM to activate and further develop their turn towards politics. They became involved as paid staff members, as conference attendees, and in many cases, their politicization got them involved in band governance, which granted them membership in the Union.<sup>96</sup> Yet, the activities occurring in and around the Union during this era disrupt a dominant youth trope in the mainstream 1970s media and in the literature of the long sixties, which includes activities between the late 1950s and 1970s.<sup>97</sup> Many of these individuals involved in global social movements were young people, leading scholars such as Sherry Smith to classify these trends as youth-dominated. “Challenging bourgeois culture’s values and believes in progress, order, achievement, and established authority,” Smith explained, “the youthful counterculture advocated freedom from discipline and convention.”<sup>98</sup> The more political Leftists, who Smith asserted, “may, or may not, have also defined themselves as counterculture,” were part of a generational trend in search of politico-cultural authenticity.<sup>99</sup> Outlining the transformative effect of the 1960s on Canada’s “rebellious youth,” Palmer likewise cast young people in central roles in the counterculture, as well as in New Left movements such as the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA) and the Front de Liberation du Quebec (FLQ).<sup>100</sup> The attention allocated to youth in sixties literature is warranted in

<sup>96</sup> Antoine, interview; Joe, interview; Saul Terry, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 30, 2012; Eneas, interview; Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, interview with author, Splantsin te Secwepemc First Nation, Enderby, BC, June 4, 2013; Pennier, interview.

<sup>97</sup> The concept of the long sixties captures the wider ideological trends including New Left ideals, prosperity and youth, and the politics of race and culture normally associated with the decade between 1960 and 1969. It expands the temporal timeline of the 1960s to include activities in the late 1950s and 1970s as part of the wider sixties mentalities. It recognizes connections between concepts and movements across space and time, and allows us to make sense of the influences on Union politics in the 1970s. For more information on debates surrounding sixties periodization, see: See Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément, and Gregory S. Kealey, eds., *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Dan Berger, ed. *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010); Karen Dubinsky, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford, eds., *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009); Alice Echols, *Shaky Ground: The Sixties and its Aftershocks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Bryan Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); M.J. Heale, “The Sixties as History: A Review of the Political Historiography,” *Reviews in American History* 33, issue 1 (2005): 135-139.

<sup>98</sup> Sherry L. Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7.

<sup>99</sup> Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power*, 7-8.

<sup>100</sup> Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, especially chapters six, eight, and nine.

some ways. Youth did participate in new political, cultural, and economic dialogues, and this involvement captured the imagination of mainstream society in unprecedented ways. Youth similarly occupied the minds of Canadian government officials and the mainstream press, who agreed young radicals had spearheaded much of the direct action overtaking the province.<sup>101</sup> But for the purposes of the Union, the sixties trope of youth obscured important intergenerational connections within movements stressing generational and ideological divergence and discord over convergence and cooperation.<sup>102</sup>

Within the Union, young activists worked closely with older leaders, and as we have seen, the young and the aged came together for demonstrations and political gatherings, with many developing strong relationships. Intergenerational connections were apparent through affective connections of family, community, or friendship. For example, older activists greatly influenced the political developments and interests of Janice Antoine, Guerin, and Don Moses. Antoine explained that her grandfather, father, and uncles served on the band council of her community and that her aunties, including Evelyn Paul were involved in the Homemakers' associations.<sup>103</sup> Antoine therefore grew up with a strong awareness of Indigenous political issues that were then intensified by global social movements in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>104</sup> Delbert Guerin credited Andrew Paull with getting him involved in politics when he was a young boy. Guerin explained that he used to deliver newspapers to Paull's house and when Guerin arrived, Paull would invite him in and tell him stories about Indigenous politics. When he got older, Paull's daughter explained that Paull wanted Guerin to get involved in politics and tried to groom him.<sup>105</sup> Antoine, Guerin, and Moses also spoke of established leaders such as Andrew Paull, James Gosnell, and James Sewid meeting with their families and

<sup>101</sup> Ron Rose, "Indians end sit-in at office, start information picketing," *Vancouver Sun*, May 12, 1975, 1 and 2; Pennier, interview.

<sup>102</sup> Heale, 135-139.

<sup>103</sup> Antoine, interview.

<sup>104</sup> Antoine, interview.

<sup>105</sup> Guerin, interview.

communities around kitchen tables and in community halls to discuss political issues.<sup>106</sup> These interactions produced a level of political interest and awareness for these individuals from a young age and these relationships expanded as these individuals joined the political arena. Antoine and other actors whose family members were involved in the Union mentioned similar intergenerational interactions and mentorships.<sup>107</sup> The variety of experiences within the Indigenous movement disrupts the view of the sixties as a moment of intense transformation and rupture from the politics and culture of previous eras. Union politics suggest that the long sixties did not simply replace older political trends and actors with a giant influx of youth, but rather youth entered the fray and shaped the movement through a variety of relationships and ideals. The politics of youth, in other words, did not develop in isolation.

Union meetings fostered intergenerational relationships, which at times facilitated political alliances, new multi-political expressions, and could also reinforce stereotypes. This was evident at the Chilliwack meeting where Stó:lō community member Matilda “Tillie” Gutierrez activated discourses of motherhood and kinship or broadly defined family bonds to support the activities of AIM members. Emphasizing the vulnerability of youth, specifically of these young men, Gutierrez appealed to Union members for help. “There is something here I would like to say . . . speaking as a mother to our children out

<sup>106</sup> Skwxwú7mesh leader Andrew Paull was instrumental in the Allied Tribes in the early twentieth century along with Nimpkish leader James Sewid. Sewid continued to be involved in politics, including the Union and was present at the Chilliwack meeting. In fact, at this meeting, Sewid, then an Elder, spoke out in favour of the decision to reject funding, noting how the funding issue had negatively influenced the Allied Tribes contributing to its downfall. Sewid also lamented how funding had turned his community into a welfare village because people could not escape government bureaucracy. Antoine, interview; Guerin, interview; Moses, interview. See also: Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC. April 25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Ron Rose, “BC Indian chiefs vote to reject government aid,” *Vancouver Sun*, April 25, 1975, 33. Nisga’a leader James Gosnell was similarly involved in provincial politics and was especially active in the Nisga’a Tribal Council.

<sup>107</sup> Arthur Manuel is the son of George Manuel, noted Secwepemc leader. Sioliya’s (June Quipp) father Albert Douglas was involved in the Fraser East meetings in the lead-up to the creation of the Union before he died tragically in 1969. Sioliya’s mother Edna Douglas was involved in the Homemakers’ clubs and local politics. Wahmeesh (Ken Watts) is the son of Ts’ishaa7ath (Tseshaht) leader and former Union executive member George Watts and George Saddleman is Victor Adolph’s nephew. Arthur Manuel, interview with author, UBCIC Office, Vancouver, BC, August 14, 2012; Sioliya (June Quipp), interview with author, Cheam First Nation, Rosedale, BC, June 25, 2012; Wahmeesh (Ken Watts), interview with author, Ts’ishaa7ath (Tseshaht) First Nation Band Office, Port Alberni, BC, June 28, 2013.

here,” Gutierrez began. “For five days I have been here, and there are about thirty young men that belong to the AIM. I know they are hungry, and none of us are doing anything about it.” She continued, “These are the kids that wake up the white man, and they wake up the Indians because they do something about it. They wake us up: both sides of the fence are awakened when they make a move.” She pleaded with the assembly, “Now, let’s help these kids. We are going to pass a hat around for a little silver collection. This is what I want to do for these children because they are our children.”<sup>108</sup> Gutierrez emphasized intergenerational connections, connected politics to kinship, and concurrently supported radical politics and reinforced gendered stereotypes. She spoke only of “young men” despite the presence of young AIM women, and she identified these men as pivotal political actors that need support to reach their full political potential. Gutierrez did not mention the specific activities of AIM, but focused on the effect they had on the political community as well as their vulnerable positions as young men away from their home communities. Implicit in Gutierrez’s speech was that delegates should not pass judgment on these men and their beliefs and actions, but rather, should financially and emotionally support them because, as she noted, “they are our children.” Appealing to widely accepted notions of youth, family, unity, and community, Gutierrez cautioned against allowing differences in opinion to fracture the movement. Instead, she focused on the positive impact AIM was having; on the concept of familial support; and on vision of pan-tribal unity that bridged ideological gaps. Through her speech, Gutierrez simultaneously diluted the radical images of the men while confirming the legitimacy of their actions. These young militant men carried the image of independence, implying that they did not need to be cared for, yet calling them “children” and more specifically “our children” denotes a sense of community responsibility and protectiveness towards dependents. Through her speech, Gutierrez also placed herself in a supportive and maternal role stereotypical of women’s politics, and allocated the most politically active roles to the men.

Militant May demonstrated the power of pan-tribal refusals as BC First Nations communities shifted their multi-political strategies to incorporate direct action tactics. The

<sup>108</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly Held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC. April 22, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.



summer of action also reflected the continued importance of unity as First Nations groups protested resource extraction, government inaction on the land claims, and unresolved Indigenous rights. It brought Union politics into the communities where individual bands could direct their political goals accordingly, but members struggled against media and government images of youth and radical masculinity that undercut the legitimacy of protest and erased women's political contributions. The new multi-political strategies adopted by the Union and the communities, however, would prove useful as the Indigenous political movement prepared to tackle its next major challenge, the patriation of the Canadian constitution.

## Chapter 8.

### **“If you really believe that you have the right, take it!”: Negotiating Sovereignty**

On February 18, 1980, Secwepemc leader and Union president George Manuel attended an Indigenous sovereignty workshop at Canim Lake. While there, he declared to participants, “sovereignty is the supreme right to govern yourselves, to rule yourselves. Indians used to be able to control and exercise that right, now we have to work to get that right back.”<sup>1</sup> In contrast to settler-colonial legal understandings of Indigenous rights and title as existing within the Canadian state, this statement signified a philosophical notion of Indigenous rights as stemming from the inherent, pre-colonial sovereignty and nationhood of First Nations peoples.<sup>2</sup> Indigenous peoples were invested in questions of sovereignty, rights, and title long before these issues emerged as part of the constitutional debates. These concepts run throughout the history of Indigenous experience and throughout the contours of Union operation, but Manuel’s announcement, coming at the height of debates surrounding the patriation of the Canadian constitution, reflected both continuity and change in the Union’s multi-political discourses and practices. Yet between 1975 and 1981, BC Indigenous peoples shifted their multi-political strategies for negotiating politics with the state, while maintaining an emphasis on Indigenous oral traditions, histories of sovereignty, and pan-tribal unity. I

<sup>1</sup> “Canim Lake elders talk,” *Indian World* 2 no. 9 (February 1980): 18.

<sup>2</sup> This chapter will address multiple definitions and applications of terms such as Indigenous rights, self-government, Indian government, self-determination, sovereignty, and nationhood. Recognizing the multiple understandings of these terms as well as the tendency, at times for such terms to be used interchangeably, I will clarify meanings when possible but will generally use the terms individuals chose for themselves. When it is not possible to be specific, or when I am speaking of the general movement towards sovereignty and nationhood, I will speak in terms of the “sovereignty discourse” or “sovereignty movement” for consistency and clarity. It is important to note, however, that I am not attempting to essentialize Indigenous political experience through this use of language, though I am trying to demonstrate moments of continuity within political change.

argue that the Union and its member nations pursued sovereignty according to tribally specific understandings, local conditions, provincial and national relationships, gender dynamics, and shifting political epistemologies and legal possibilities. Contributing to Glen Coulthard and Audra Simpson's arguments on recognition and refusal by continuing to reconfigure recognition and refusal along Indigenous axes of power, I argue that the Union positioned itself as a political authority through which tribal councils, Union member nations, and Indigenous women were forced to gain political recognition from. This was not a new development for the Union, but it reached new levels of intensity in this era. Using the discourse of unity, I argue that the Union acted as a gatekeeper to determine acceptable forms of sovereignty. These often ignored local tribally based expressions and excluded women by rejecting their citizenship. I explore the Union's oscillating deployment of recognition and refusal with the Canadian state where, at times, it constructed sovereignty within the framework of the settler state, and in other moments refused to engage with it. These interactions contribute to this study's overall argument that multi-politics fuelled internal and external recognitions and refusals that followed political, status-based, and gendered lines. Ultimately, all of this was done to preserve unity and promote sovereignty.

These arguments also contribute to analyses of sovereignty as both theory and historical phenomenon. Indigenous sovereignty, which I define as the processes by which First Nations people outline and execute their own political strategies, institutions, and customs according to local and historically specific circumstances, has a long history entrenched in pre-contact socio-political bodies as well as adaptations made throughout the contact periods.<sup>3</sup> Other disciplines consider Indigenous sovereignty in a multitude of studies, but historical analyses of Indigenous sovereignty are uncommon. Few studies seriously consider Indigenous sovereignty from an historical or an Indigenous perspective in ways that make room for narratives of adaptation,

<sup>3</sup> See Gerald R. Alfred, *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1995); Yvonne May Marshall, "A Political History of the Nuuchahnulth People: A Case Study of the Mowachaht and Muchalaht Tribes" (PhD diss., Simon Fraser University, 1993); Philip Drucker, *Indians of the Northwest Coast* (New York: The Natural History Press, 1963); James A. Teit, *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, ed. Franz Boas (New York: G.E. Stechert Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, 1900).

empowerment, and plurality in terms of “sovereignty” itself.<sup>4</sup> The contentious nature of the historiography on Indigenous sovereignty often leaves the settler-colonial narrative of Indigenous politics intact, and continues to place the power and agency of settlers and the state at the forefront of the discussion. The tendency is to ignore Indigenous conceptions and uses of sovereignty beyond the narrative of colonized Indigenous politics.<sup>5</sup> I recognize that the state’s increasing socio-political control of Indigenous peoples through what Michael Posluns has categorized as “civil disabilities,” effectively undermined First Nations’ expressions of sovereignty in many cases, as well as the language used to articulate it.<sup>6</sup> Yet, I argue that Indigenous peoples continued to view themselves as sovereign nations, even as they came up against an intransigent state unwilling to recognize them. The result of this is that while the history of sovereignty is

<sup>4</sup> The journal *BC Studies* published a special issue on the Nisga’a treaty in winter 1998/1999, which included articles from preeminent legal scholars Hamar Foster and John Borrows, as well as the historical legal perspectives of Neil Sterritt. In this issue, Joseph Gosnell (Nisga’a), Borrows (Anishinabe), and Sterritt (Gitksan-Carrier), provide Indigenous voices to interpretations of the Nisga’a treaty, but the issue of Indigenous sovereignty was not discussed in either a sustained or an historical manner. For examples of similar trends see: Carole Blackburn, “Differentiating Indigenous Citizenship: Seeking Multiplicity in Rights, Identity, and Sovereignty in Canada,” *American Ethnologist* 36 (2009): 66–78; Ward Churchill, “The Tragedy and the Travesty: The Subversion of Indigenous Sovereignty in North America,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 22, no. 2 (1998): 1–69; Charlotte Coté, “Historical Foundations of Indian Sovereignty in Canada and the United States: A Brief Overview,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2001): 15–23; W.J. Eccles, “Sovereignty-Association, 1500-1783,” *Canadian Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (December 1984): 475–510; Felix Hoehn, *Reconciling Sovereignties: Aboriginal Nations and Canada* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 2012); J. Rick Pointing, ed., *Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1986); Michael W. Posluns, *Speaking with Authority: The Emergence of the Vocabulary of First Nations’ Self-Government* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Christopher F. Roth, “Without Treaty, without Conquest: Indigenous Sovereignty in Post-Delgamuukw British Columbia,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 17, no. 2 (Autumn, 2002): 143–165.

<sup>5</sup> Taiaiake Alfred, “Sovereignty,” in *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestations and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-determination*, ed. Joanne Barker (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2005), 33–55; Michael W. Posluns, *Speaking with Authority: The Emergence of the Vocabulary of First Nations’ Self-Government* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 1–3.

<sup>6</sup> The most notorious of these civil disabilities were the 1927 Indian Act amendment, which banned land claims activity and remained in place until 1951, the residential schools, which sought to eradicate Indigenous culture from the Canadian landscape, and enfranchisement and Indian Act legal definitions, which sought to legally eliminate the “Indian problem.” Equally devastating to Indigenous life ways were widespread practices of delineating Indigenous and non-Indigenous space through reserve creation, the colonization of Indigenous space through place naming, as well as the implementation of wage labour and welfare-oriented economies. Posluns, *Speaking with Authority*, 1–3.

long, it only emerged in settler public discourse during the 1970s when Indigenous politics was re-emerging after the dark era of state repression. In this period, terms such as Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal self-government, Aboriginal sovereignty, Aboriginal self-determination, and Indian government were prolific and activists often used these concurrently and interchangeably. This reflects political continuity from earlier generations of activism, as well as evolving political strategies. At their foundation, each of these terms represented resistance to the imposition of foreign concepts by non-Indigenous actors on Indigenous peoples, but to fully comprehend these concepts and their roles in the political movement, we must analyze them in their historically specific circumstances. This chapter will accomplish this.

Drawing on the theoretical considerations of Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood by Kahnawà:ke Mohawk scholars Taiaiake Alfred and Audra Simpson, Lenape scholar Joanne Barker and Yellowknives Dene academic Glen Coulthard, and examining Indigenous political practice in tribal and pan-tribal contexts, I highlight how Indigenous actors negotiated and enacted multiple discourses of sovereignty according to shifting contexts and demands.<sup>7</sup> Doing this uncovers alternate understandings of sovereignty that go beyond criticisms of the inappropriateness of sovereignty as a European concept for First Nations peoples, or the vague understanding of sovereignty as simply a catch all concept for any form of First Nations resistance or lived experience, which are commonly seen in this historiography.<sup>8</sup> I use the concept of sovereignty not as a barometer for authentic Indigenous politics or political progress but recognizing its historical contingency and how different Indigenous people have rearticulated sovereignty to mean different things, I use it as an historical roadmap to Indigenous understandings of socio-political realities during this particular era in British Columbia.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1999); Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Audra Simpson, "To the Reserve and Back again: Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Narratives of Self, Home and Nation" (PhD diss., McGill University, 2003); Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Joanne Barker, *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestations and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-determination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Alfred, "Sovereignty," in Barker, *Sovereignty Matters*, 39; Barker, *Sovereignty Matters*, 19-20.

<sup>9</sup> Barker, *Sovereignty Matters*, 19-20.

This chapter also contributes to an overarching goal of this project, to redefine “political history” to include Indigenous peoples, and to redefine “politics” to reflect Indigenous realities. Building on this study’s dedication to privileging Indigenous voices and firmly locating Indigenous peoples within the realm of “politics,” I confirm Indigenous peoples as central players in discussions of sovereignty and the Canadian constitution and this serves as a strong example of settler-colonial disruption. It demonstrates, as previous chapter did, that the settler-colonial project has always been contested and remains incomplete. In this context I suggest multi-politics can be used to explain colonially-driven political discussions about sovereignty that required the concurrent navigation of Indigenous peoples’ multiple oral histories, which explained their historic relationship to the land, and state systems, which assumed Canadian sovereignty over Indigenous lands.

Every First Nation has oral histories explaining their relationship to and responsibility over the land. For instance, the Secwepemc, whose traditional territories extend into the interior of British Columbia, maintain oral traditions of Sk’elép’s (Coyote) laws, which explain that each nation holds exclusive rights to their homelands and resources. Oral histories similarly note how Secwepemc and Syilx (Okanagan) interacted in their bordering territories according to their tribal laws.<sup>10</sup> Ethnologist James Teit discussed the longstanding rivalry between the northern Syilx and Secwepemc over territory between their respective lands, and noted that after years of war the two groups reached an agreement to end the conflict.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, the Stó:lō of the Fraser Valley look to oral traditions of Xexá:ls’ transformations of people, animals, and the environment as

<sup>10</sup> George Saddleman, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, February 7, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> James A. Teit, *The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus*, ed. Franz Boas (Washington, D.C: US Government Printing Office, 1930), 266. Quoted in Peter Carstens, *The Queen’s People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation Among the Okanagan of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 19-20. Coyote also plays a pivotal role amongst Indigenous groups across the Plateau, Great Basin, and the Plains. Harry Robinson, *Write it on your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller*, ed. Wendy Wickwire (Vancouver: Theytus Books, 1989), 21.

proof of their rights and responsibilities to their territory.<sup>12</sup> I argue that while Indigenous expressions and understandings of sovereignty changed over time, they remained rooted in Indigenous knowledge of the past.

Indigenous peoples also maintained their own political structures after contact and sought to affirm their sovereignty by directly resisting colonization.<sup>13</sup> Oral traditions reveal that Sk'elép continued to protect Secwepemc sovereignty rights after contact in multiple ways, including meeting with the Queen of England to assert Secwepemc sovereignty over their lands.<sup>14</sup> Oral traditions ground contemporary politics as well. As the first ancestor of the Syilx, Coyote is a central trickster figure in Okanagan oral history, and though these oral histories are located in the myth age or early contact times, political actors such as Upper Nicola Chief George Saddleman look to these stories to make sense of their current political world.<sup>15</sup> For example, the traditional oral history of Coyote and Fox explains how the Big Chief (or God in some stories) gave Fox the ability to heal Coyote if he was injured or killed during his antics. Fox merely had to jump over Coyote four times, and even in the direst situation where only a hair or bone fragment remained, Coyote would come back to life.<sup>16</sup> These stories remain deeply ingrained in First Nations' lives and can be adapted according to the political needs of any given time. For example, Saddleman uses this story today to illustrate the continued

<sup>12</sup> Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, David M. Schaepe, and Keith Thor Carlson, "Making the World Right Through Transformations," in Keith Thor Carlson, ed., *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 3, 6-7; Naxaxalhts'i (Albert "Sonny" McHalsie), "We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us," in Bruce Granville Miller, ed., *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 82-130.

<sup>13</sup> Carlson, *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, 170-175; Keith Thor Carlson, "Familial Cohesion and Colonial Atomization: Governance and Authority in a Coast Salish Community," *Native Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (2010): 22-23; Joanne Drake-Terry, *The Same as Yesterday: The Lillooet Tribal People Chronicle the Takeover of Their Territory* (Lillooet: Lillooet Tribal Council, 1989); Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002); George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (Don Mills: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1974); Peter McFarlane, *From Brotherhood to Nationhood: George Manuel and the Making of the Modern Indian Movement* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1993); Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990).

<sup>14</sup> Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, personal communication with author, Vancouver, BC, September 10, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Saddleman, interview.

<sup>16</sup> Saddleman, interview.

need for strong inter and pan-tribal relationships, explaining that when some leaders are struggling, others can lift them up and save them like Fox did for Coyote.<sup>17</sup>

The settler state often refused to recognize the existence and continued importance of traditional political models and ideologies. Splatsin te Secwepemc Kukpi7 (Chief) Wayne Christian argued interactions with the state prompted Indigenous communities to modify existing vocabularies of sovereignty to present their political practices in terms the state would understand. Through this, Indigenous peoples were not adopting settler concepts of sovereignty, but rather they were simply trying to explain notions of sovereignty that they already knew and practiced.<sup>18</sup> As mentioned in chapter two, Indigenous peoples engaged with the settler state through petitions and delegations on a number of occasions. For instance, Secwepemc, Nlaka'pamux, and Syilx chiefs asserted their unequivocal sovereignty over the lands and resources of their territories in the 1910 Laurier Memorial, a letter they presented to the prime minister as he made his way through their territories during his campaign.<sup>19</sup> Indigenous peoples also used this strategy in response to both the 1912-1916 McKenna-McBride Commission and the 1969 White Paper. Considering these centuries of Indigenous traditions of sovereignty and histories of challenging settler-colonialism, I suggest that Indigenous peoples' efforts to gain state recognition for their sovereignty were informed by their knowledge of their communities' inherent sovereignties, generations of historically entrenched Indigenous resistance, and a strong dedication to evolving discourses of pan-tribal unity.

The rejection of funding and the summer of action in 1975 precipitated a rise of tribal politics resulted in the re-emergence of tribally rooted discourses of sovereignty.<sup>20</sup> Several tribal councils including the Nisga'a, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Caribou Tribal Councils either pre-existed the Union or emerged shortly after, yet the Union further

<sup>17</sup> Saddleman, interview.

<sup>18</sup> Christian, personal communication.

<sup>19</sup> Christian, personal communication.

<sup>20</sup> David Zirnhelt, "The Caribou Tribal Council," (Master's Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976), 19.



politicized communities.<sup>21</sup> For instance, the Caribou Tribal Council formed in 1969 as the Williams Lake District Council of Chiefs and united fifteen Secwepemc, Tsilhqot'in, and Dakelh tribes.<sup>22</sup> Following the Union district boundaries, the Williams Lake District Council worked closely with the Union to pursue the land claim and sovereignty. The Union provided local support by funding and organizing district-level meetings and sending community development workers such as Brendan Kennedy, Reuben Ware, and Janice Antoine to provide land claims research and front line support for Indigenous rights and title struggles all over the province.<sup>23</sup> Explaining the activities of fieldworkers across BC, Antoine noted, "we were doing a lot of community organizing and roadblocks, and just wanting to bring attention to the issues that were happening during that period. It was a very exciting time."<sup>24</sup> By May 1975, the desire for political and economic independence reached its pinnacle in BC First Nations communities, and many drew on the Union's funding decision to pursue sovereignty. In the Williams Lake District, this took the form of a more robust local body—renamed the Caribou Tribal Council to emphasize tribal rather than colonial identities.<sup>25</sup> The Caribou Tribal Council

<sup>21</sup> Paul Tennant, "Native Indian Political Activity in British Columbia, 1969-1983," *BC Studies* 57 (Spring 1983): 121. Most of the existing and emerging tribal councils maintained close relationships with the Union, but the Nisga'a Tribal Council is an exception. The Nisga'a Tribal Council, formed in 1955 under the leadership of Frank Calder, sought legal recognition of their land title and political autonomy in their traditional territories through litigation. In the early 1970s, the Union and the Nisga'a parted ways when certain Union leaders including George Watts expressed unease about the Nisga'a's strategy of pursuing land claims through the courts. These Union members, who preferred negotiation rather than litigation, worried that if the Nisga'a, as a member of the Union, failed in their claim, that this might compromise the entire provincial land claim. As George Manuel noted, "there was no denying that the court's decision would influence any political negotiations that might occur." George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (Don Mills, Ont.: Collier-MacMillan Canada, 1974), 222-223. For the Nisga'a, their tribal council provided the most effective way forward. The Nisga'a ultimately found some success in the legal system and these provided a strong example of local tribal sovereignty. The Nisga'a claim culminated in a split Supreme Court decision on the existence of Indigenous title. The 1973 Calder decision acknowledged that Indigenous title to the land existed before colonization, but the judges disagreed on whether or not Euro-Canadian settlement had extinguished this title. While not a definitive win, the recognition of existing and inherent Indigenous title provided an excellent legal basis on which to develop further claims of tribal sovereignty and self-determination. Dara Culhane, *The Pleasure of the Crown: Anthropology, Law, and First Nations* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> Zirnheld, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Reuben Ware, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 20, 2012; Janice Antoine, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 5, 2013; Zirnheld, 36.

<sup>24</sup> Antoine, interview.

<sup>25</sup> Zirnheld, 27-28.

members no longer wanted to associate themselves with Williams Lake, as this was where the DIA district office was located, and this served as a centre point for DIA policy making and a symbol of colonialism.<sup>26</sup> Through the tribal councils, the Union and Indigenous communities were practicing new forms of multi-political expressions that specifically and concurrently incorporated tribal and pan-tribal identities. We see Indigenous communities articulating and enacting sovereignty through the reorganization of local political schemes, which added another element to the multi-political toolkit. The move towards tribal councils generated new articulations of Indigenous politics and unity with a renewed emphasis on local sovereignty and governance as a principal goal of tribal communities.

This came at a significant political cost to the Union by May 1976 and highlighted one of the key tensions in the history of the Union, the conflict between local autonomy and provincial politics. The 1976 annual general assembly had the lowest attendance rates of any conference in the Union's history. This occurred even though the Union organized and advertised it as a people's conference to attract large numbers of delegates. The Union executive wanted to use the assembly to highlight important structural changes to the Union, most notably, the inclusion of all delegates in the election processes. After months of solid direct action and political involvement at the community level, conference organizers held high hopes for assembly attendance, projecting about 1500 attendees.<sup>27</sup> Many were shocked when only 110 of the 192 voting delegates and approximately 200 observers arrived in Courtenay, BC, and were further devastated to realize that these numbers fell short of the quorum of 128 chiefs needed to conduct official business.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Zirnhelt, 27-28.

<sup>27</sup> "UBCIC Courtenay 1976: 'A bold experiment has ended'," *Nesika: A Journal Devoted to the Land Claims Movement* (May 1976): 6; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly, 1976, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Anonymous, interview with author.

<sup>28</sup> *Nesika* reported that 118 voting delegates were present at the meeting, but the attendance list in the minutes only lists 110. "UBCIC Courtenay 1976: 'A bold experiment has ended'," *Nesika: A Journal Devoted to the Land Claims Movement* (May 1976): 6; Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly, 1976, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Union of BC Indian Chiefs Constitution, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

Certainly, as communities turned towards local politics, fewer leaders and delegates attended Union meetings. This was not solely indicative of a loss of confidence in the Union, as others have argued, or due to the immediate success of tribal politics, though these were factors.<sup>29</sup> Instead, the primary causes were geographic, economic, and historical. Attendance followed clear patterns. Of the fifteen districts, eight sent representatives from less than half its bands (see Table 5).<sup>30</sup> These included districts that were the farthest away from the meeting location of Courtenay, BC, which is located on the eastern side of Vancouver Island. Travel distances were always a factor for Union meetings, and generally, meetings saw higher attendance rates from districts in close proximity to the meeting place. Exact numbers are difficult to ascertain as delegate lists were not published in the minutes each year, but general levels of representation are gleaned from specific references to representation in the minutes as well as records of individual leaders speaking. For instance, the East Fraser district hosted the 1975 Chilliwack assembly, and the minutes identify leaders from most of the area's twenty-four bands throughout the conference.<sup>31</sup> In 1976, the uneven attendance numbers between districts is directly proportionate to distance in all but one case. Every district with higher than fifty per cent representation except for the Lillooet-Lytton district came from the southern half of the province (see Figure 6).

**Table 5. District Representation at 1976 Union Assembly**

| District                 | Bands Present/Total District Bands |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Williams Lake            | 8/15                               |
| West Coast District      | 10/14                              |
| Bella Coola District     | 1/4                                |
| Lakes District           | 5/13                               |
| Lillooet-Lytton District | 6/18                               |
| Fort St. John District   | 0/4                                |
| West Fraser District     | 9/11                               |
| East Fraser District     | 14/24                              |

<sup>29</sup> Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*.

<sup>30</sup> Evidence of the low attendance rate can also be gleaned through the very existence of an attendance list. Other meetings, with the exception of the 1969 meeting, did not include attendance lists in the minutes.

<sup>31</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs held at Evergreen Hall in Chilliwack, BC, April 21-25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

|                                  |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| North Coast District             | 2/7   |
| Kwawkewlth District <sup>a</sup> | 11/14 |
| Kootenay-Okanagan District       | 7/12  |
| Babine District                  | 3/8   |
| Terrace District                 | 2/6   |
| South Island District            | 18/19 |
| Thompson-Nicola District         | 16/18 |

Source: Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Annual General Meeting, Courtenay, BC, May 15-18, 1976, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>a</sup> Kwawkewlth is also spelled Kwawkwelth in the historical records.

Union funding was often needed to facilitate long distance participation. Before May 1975, Union chiefs and councillors could expect honorariums, travel funding, and per diems to offset the cost of attending Union meetings. Non-voting delegates typically were not entitled to conference subsidies, but at times individual bands subsidized attendance. This was the case for Neskonlith Band members in 1975 for example.<sup>32</sup> In 1976, however, in the absence of funding, many leaders and delegates simply could not afford to attend the Union meeting. In many cases, the districts with the lowest attendance levels had consistently advertised their economic challenges, particularly during the rejection of funding. Bands from the Williams Lake District were noticeably underrepresented the Union assembly. Among these were the Nazko, Kluskus, Toosey, Alexis Creek, and Quesnel Bands, which had passed band council resolutions throughout the summer of 1975 returning to government funds.<sup>33</sup> That the bands constructed this return to funding in terms of economic need rather than political

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly held at Evergreen Hall, Chilliwack, BC, April 21-25, 1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>33</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Letter from Dave Somerville, Caribou Tribal Council Administrator to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, June 22, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Kluskus Band, May 21, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Nazko Band, May 21, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Toosey Band, June 6, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Stone Band, May 22, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Alexis Creek Band, May 27, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Band Council Resolution, Quesnel Band, June 18, 1975.

disagreement with the Union is significant and points to the financial challenges of attending Union meetings. The Caribou Tribal Council as whole continued to politically support the Union with eight of its fifteen bands present at the meeting, though, as mentioned in chapter four, it only enacted Union mandates that fit the Council's wider multi-political practice.<sup>34</sup>

Bill Wilson adopted a more political interpretation of this economic reasoning insisting that many attendees were motivated to attend meetings solely by financial compensation rather than political interest or duty.<sup>35</sup> This was certainly true in some cases where delegates had grown accustomed to receiving compensation for their political work, though most chiefs and councillors were simply being reimbursed for the costs they had already incurred. For bands that had rejected federal and provincial funding for even a few months in 1975, finding the money to subsidize travel and accommodations for the Union meeting was challenging. That only 200 observers attended the conference also indicated that few people were in a position to fund their own involvement.

The final factor explaining the limited and uneven attendance was the historic patterns of political participation across BC. Throughout the Union's operation, the West Coast, West Fraser, East Fraser, Kwawkwalth, South Island, Kootenay-Okanagan, and Thompson-Nicola districts were well represented. In part, this stemmed from the history of pan-tribal organizing in BC, which was more concentrated in the southern half of the province. These districts had also always been heavily involved in Union politics with

<sup>34</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly, 1976, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Letter from Dave Somerville, Caribou Tribal Council Administrator to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, June 22, 1975.

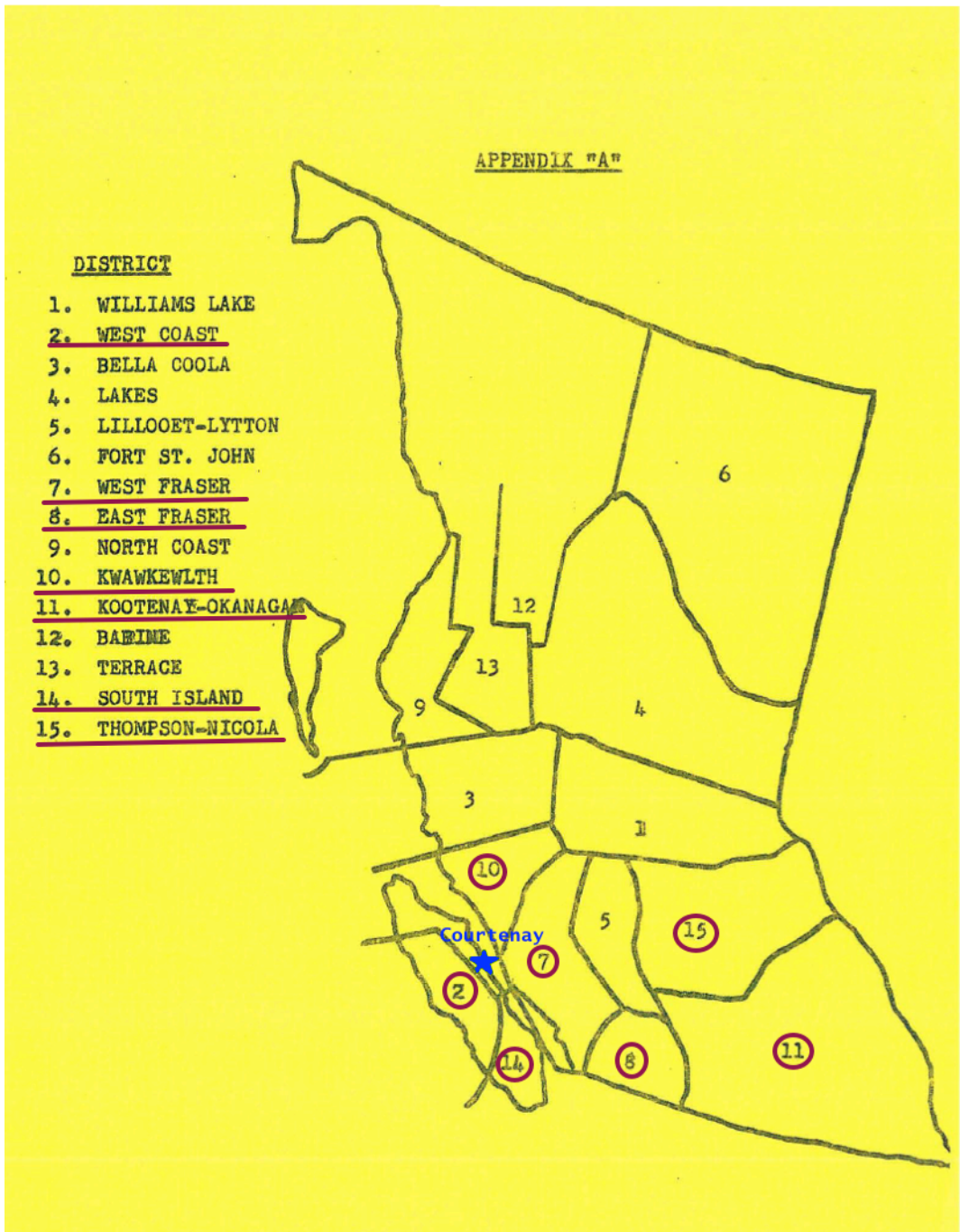
<sup>35</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assembly, Courtenay, BC, May 15-18, 1976, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

chiefs from each of the districts serving on the executive council at any given time.<sup>36</sup> By 1976 this was changing.

Many tribal councils also began to turn back to local initiatives because they realized that while there was strength in pan-tribal unity, negotiating a single political strategy was challenging. From the outset of the Union communities clashed over decisions to negotiate a single land claim covering all of BC with individual claims tailored to each band, or begin with the clearly defined, yet geographically limited cut-off claims cases for the twenty-three bands who lost land during the 1916 McKenna-McBride Commission.<sup>37</sup> Leaders similarly struggled to determine if they should seek compensation for lands taken and resources lost before embarking on negotiations for land claims and Indigenous rights. With a multitude of historical experiences and divergent opinions, it is not surprising that activists made little progress in formulating a concrete plan. Tribal politics offered a solution to these challenges by providing communities with smaller tribal councils that were more attuned to local problems and less weighed down by bureaucratic considerations. This is an important shift as tribal politics was not just about the result of rights recognition and the land claim, but also about the process of achieving strong governance and expressions of tribal sovereignty.

<sup>36</sup> For example, Philip Paul, George Watts, and Simon Lucas, were from the South Island and West Coast districts. Bill Wilson was from the Kwawkewlth. Don Moses and Clarence Jules were from the Thompson-Nicola district. Delbert Guerin and Joe Mathias represented the West Fraser district, while Bill Mussell hailed from the East Fraser. Adam Eneas was from the Kootenay-Okanagan district.

<sup>37</sup> Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs General Assemblies, 1973-1975, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; "UBCIC leaders not prepared to lead," *Indian Voice* 7, no. 6 (June 1975): 5; Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 174.



**Figure 6. District Representation at the 1976 Union Assembly in Courtenay, BC – Bands with Higher than Fifty Percent Attendance Rates**

Source: Adapted from the UBCIC 4<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly Kit, 1972. UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. Used with Permission. Data from the Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Annual General Meeting, Courtenay, BC, May 15-18, 1976, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

Growing tribalism also did not mean that the neoliberal state's devolution agenda disappeared. When the Union rejected its role as a bureaucracy responsible for taking on DIA services in 1975, the federal government looked to the district and tribal councils to become new bureaucracies for devolution. This is apparent in DIA Minister Judd Buchanan's correspondence to band chiefs offering continued services and funding.<sup>38</sup> Buchanan insisted that his job was to provide services for First Nations communities and he called on chiefs to accept government funds to prevent the suffering of their people.<sup>39</sup> Buchanan's attempt to compromise the entire Indigenous political movement by undermining the Union backfired. Many bands throughout the summer did return to government funding out of economic need or in opposition to the Union. However, bands and councils that demanded government funds did so on their own terms and this facilitated Indigenous sovereignty. The Caribou Tribal Council and South Island district council demanded the immediate closure of DIA district offices and the transfer of funds and records over to them.<sup>40</sup> The councils were not content to return to Department oversight or underfunding of programs and services, but instead incorporated strong critiques of DIA in their calls to manage their own affairs. For example, the Caribou Tribal Council wrote a letter to Trudeau declaring its independence on May 13, 1975, and on May 21, Caribou Tribal Council administrator David Somerville insisted the

<sup>38</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Judd Buchanan to All Chiefs, West Coast District, June 16, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Judd Buchanan to Chief James Stelkia, Osoyoos Band, June 20, 1975.

<sup>39</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Judd Buchanan to All Chiefs, West Coast District, June 16, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from Judd Buchanan to Chief James Stelkia, Osoyoos Band, June 20, 1975.

<sup>40</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief Tony Meyers, Stone Band and Chief Frank Boucher, Quesnel Band to Judd Buchanan, June 19, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief Andy Chelsea, Alkali Lake Band, Chief Cathy Patrick, Nazko Band, and Chief Stanley Boyd, Kluskus Indian Band to Judd Buchanan, June 16, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief J. Lawrence, Ucluelet Band to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975; Telex from Chief Samson Robinson Uchucklesaht Band to Judd Buchanan, July 3, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Hesquiat Band Council to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975; LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Part 1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Telex from Chief Joe Frank and Howard Tom, Clayquot Band Council to Judd Buchanan, June 27, 1975.



council would use government funding to pursue political independence.<sup>41</sup> The council also wrote to Buchanan to demand the return of capital and revenue funds to bands. The council phrased this demand as supporting their “move to self determination.”<sup>42</sup> The councils adapted the Union mandate to suit their own political goals and socio-economic realities, and through this refused the Department’s attempt to carry on its devolution agenda on a district and tribal level.

By 1978, however, DIA had a new tool to facilitate decentralization while undermining band political autonomy. The Local Services Agreement (LSA) emerged out of the March 1978 Auditor General’s Report which accused DIA of inadequate accounting. DIA then passed the responsibility onto the bands to balance the accounts according to DIA regulations and oversight.<sup>43</sup> The bands and councils were justifiably upset at being blamed for DIA’s shortcomings and to have the Department step in to demand specific changes. To secure band compliance DIA threatened to withdraw federal funding if communities did not use DIA’s accounting system.<sup>44</sup> Through this, the Department sent a strong message reminding bands that the DIA agenda remained alive and well.

Indigenous politics had always incorporated multiple expressions and concurrent political organization, but in the late 1970s and early 1980s, these streams of pan-tribal and tribal organizations converged to debate sovereignty. Indigenous peoples in British Columbia shared basic understandings about Indigenous rights and title and Indigenous sovereignty, and between 1977 and 1980, the Union worked to define these terms. For the most part, the Union and tribes used the same language and embraced the notion of inherent Indigenous rights, but they disagreed on the structures through which to

<sup>41</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, 5/1975-9/1975, Letter from the Longhouse at Williams Lake of Chiefs, Councillors, and Interested Indian people to Prime Minister P.E. Trudeau, May 13, 1975; *Coyoti Prints: Caribou Tribal Council Newsletter 2*, no. 3 (May 21, 1975): 1-2; David Somerville, *Coyoti Prints: Caribou Tribal Council Newsletter 2*, no. 3 (May 21, 1975): 2.

<sup>42</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 901/1-1-1-1, Office Phaseouts, May 1975-September 1975, Letter from Dave Somerville, Caribou Tribal Council Administrator to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs, June 22, 1975.

<sup>43</sup> “Local Services Agreement Supplement,” *Indian World 2*, no. 9 (February 1980): 21.

<sup>44</sup> “The Politics of Control: Negotiating the LSA,” *Indian World 2*, no. 9 (February 1980): 22-23; “Knowing How is the Key,” *Indian World 2*, no. 9 (February 1980): 24-25.

express these rights. In 1977, the Union, now under the leadership of George Manuel believed Indigenous peoples could achieve sovereignty through existing Canadian government structures including First Nations bands and the British North America Act. In 1978, the Union introduced its vision of sovereignty, labelled “Indian government,” in its Indigenous Rights Position Paper. The paper attracted much debate, particularly in terms of its tendency to equate Indian government to band rather than tribal councils.<sup>45</sup> Many of the tribal councils, and new pan-tribal organizations argued that linking Indigenous governance to state political schemes was an egregious violation of their right to self-government. These critics envisioned Indian government or sovereignty as an inherent right granted by the Creator and unencumbered by the Canadian state.<sup>46</sup> In other words, the federal government did not have to authorize or oversee Indian government, it simply existed and always had. Manuel agreed with this principle, and even suggested that the right to Indian Government was inborn and not granted from an outside force. Addressing Union delegates, he insisted, “if you really believe that you have the right, take it! Indians need to get away from the belief that big things only happen in Ottawa under the authority of White people.”<sup>47</sup> Yet Manuel continued to believe the existing band councils were the best way to convince the federal government to accept the Union’s political goals. This placed the Union and the tribal councils in political opposition and as the proposed patriation of the Canadian constitution drew close, BC Indigenous peoples were under pressure to develop a strong position on sovereignty.

<sup>45</sup> The records simply note that the issue was debated at length, but the debate itself was not recorded.

<sup>46</sup> Summarized Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs 11th Annual General Assembly, October 15-18, 1979, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>47</sup> Summarized Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs 11th Annual General Assembly, October 15-18, 1979, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

When Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau reignited the long-standing topic of Canadian constitutional patriation in 1978, Indigenous peoples were critical of the plan.<sup>48</sup> The principle concern among Indigenous communities and political leaders was that the “special status” historically guaranteed by the British Crown would no longer be upheld when Canada created its own constitution.<sup>49</sup> The Royal Proclamation had codified these ties in 1763, outlining the Crown’s process for negotiating control over Indigenous lands through treaties, which had been signed since contact and were meant to continue in perpetuity.<sup>50</sup> The 1867 *British North America Act* had also explicitly affirmed the federal government’s legislative responsibility for Indigenous peoples and their lands in section 91.24. Thus Indigenous interests were at stake in constitutional revisions.<sup>51</sup> Addressing Minister of Indian Affairs John Munro at the 1980 Union assembly, George Manuel insisted, “we have no objection to the decolonization of Canada. What we are objecting to is during the course of decolonization, the obligations by the Royal Proclamation of 1763, and many other treaties will automatically be repealed or deleted.”<sup>52</sup> This concern escalated as Trudeau’s Liberals revealed their intent to forestall Indigenous involvement in the constitutional debates and to minimize the protections the new constitution would provide to Indigenous peoples and their rights.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Of course, Indigenous peoples were among many other groups who challenged the constitutional patriation. The proposal generated much debate and conflict particularly from provincial leaders concerned about appropriate divisions of power between the provinces and the federal government. Quebec’s Francophone population, as well as women’s rights groups also watched the constitutional developments with interest, as decisions made in the creation of the new constitution would affect the future of English-French relations and women’s equality in Canada.

<sup>49</sup> Summarized Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly, October 14-18, 1980, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Section 91 (24) of the act confers “special status,” as referenced in Michael Woodward and Bruce George, “The Canadian Indian Lobby of Westminster, 1979-1982,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 18, no. 3 (Fall 1983): 121.

<sup>50</sup> J.R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); J.R. Miller, *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000).

<sup>51</sup> Woodward and George, 121.

<sup>52</sup> Summarized Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly, October 14-18, 1980, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>53</sup> Sanders’s article “The Indian Lobby” offers the most comprehensive narrative of these events. Douglas Sanders, “The Indian Lobby,” in *And No One Cheered: Federalism, Democracy, and the Constitution Act*, ed. Keith Banting and Richard Simeon (Toronto: Methuen, 1983), 301-332.

The Union also had to frame sovereignty to fit within the broader context of unstable French-English relations in Canada. This included the 1980 referendum, which saw the province of Quebec vote whether to pursue sovereignty association. The Union was well aware of Trudeau's fears regarding Canadian unity and special group rights, and strategically constructed sovereignty as preserving rather than threatening Canada. The Union insisted, "in our quest for self-determination, we should not be called separatists. The tensions between the English and the French have led governments to refuse to even listen to our position. We are committed to a strengthening of Canada for we have more at stake in this county than anyone else."<sup>54</sup> Rather than interpreting this shift as acquiescence to the state, I maintain that the Union drew on settler politics to strengthen its demands.

Indigenous peoples were concerned that the Canadian government would unilaterally abrogate their rights through the new constitution and they had every right to be apprehensive. If the new constitution did not contain a provision recognizing Indigenous treaty rights and the continued relationship between the federal government and Indigenous peoples, it would serve the same purpose as the failed White Paper policy.<sup>55</sup> It would erase the special status and recognition of Indigenous peoples. This led George Manuel to declare a "state of emergency" at the 1980 Union assembly, where he emphasized the need for swift response to have Indigenous rights entrenched in the constitution.<sup>56</sup> The impending patriation placed Indigenous politics in a pressure cooker and prompted the Union to construct a vision of sovereignty that strategically draw on state recognition and placed Indigenous rights in direct conversation with current Canadian political goals. At the same time, the Union left little room for alternate interpretations of sovereignty that tribal councils refusing band structures would accept. The 1980 Aboriginal Rights Position Paper proposed,

Aboriginal rights means that we as Indian people have the right within the framework of the Canadian Constitution to govern through our own unique forms

<sup>54</sup> UBCIC, *Aboriginal Rights Position Paper*, 1980, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>55</sup> Manuel outlined this parallel specifically. Summarized Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly, October 14-18, 1980, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>56</sup> Summarized Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly, October 14-18, 1980, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

of Indian Governments (Band Councils)[,] an expanded version of our Indian reserve lands that has an adequate amount of associated resources and is large enough to provide for all the essential needs of all our people who have been defined as our citizens or members of our Indian government.<sup>57</sup>

The rights paper acknowledged the role of state-determined band councils and the legitimacy of the Canadian state, but also referenced the importance of Indigenous peoples' "own unique forms of Indian Governments," including Indigenized forms within the band council system.<sup>58</sup> As such, this definition continued to tether Indigenous rights and self-government to settler-colonial political paradigms, while concurrently emphasizing Indigenous autonomy, a phenomenon Audra Simpson described in her politics of refusal as "embedded sovereignties." Simpson noted that the Kahnawà:ke Mohawk community possess "a consciousness of itself as a nation within the place, space, and present time of Canada—as a sovereignty within multiple sovereignties."<sup>59</sup> In the case of Indian government, the Canadian state dictated the overarching political structure of the Indian Act, the Union offered interpretations of Indigenized band councils, and the communities were forced to work within these frameworks. In other words, the Union accorded itself a degree of authority in defining Indigenous sovereignty.

In addition to offering a solid definition of Indigenous rights, the Union's position paper outlined a concrete formula for Indigenous self-government. The Union rejected Trudeau's proposal of transferring the federal government's current responsibility for Indians to the provinces, and suggested creating a third level of government, equal to the federal and provincial governments, but run by and for Indigenous peoples. The Union argued this trilateral federalism would ensure that Indigenous rights would be "recognized, expanded, and entrenched within the British North America Act."<sup>60</sup> The

<sup>57</sup> UBCIC, *Aboriginal Rights Position Paper*, 1980, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. The 1980 position paper was revised from a 1978 report and attempts were made throughout 1978 and 1979 to clearly define "Indian Government."

<sup>58</sup> Chapter five outlined a variety of these forms. Guerin, interview.

<sup>59</sup> Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 187.

<sup>60</sup> UBCIC, *Aboriginal Rights Position Paper*, 1980, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC. For

paper sketched twenty-four jurisdictions that Indian governments under this third, distinct order of government, would be responsible for, including citizenship regulations, management of reserve lands, waterways, resources, education, and health and welfare. It proposed that a type of Confederacy would then unite these local Indian governments under this platform.<sup>61</sup> In proposing this framework, the Union sought to entrench the types of multi-political actions certain bands were already practicing in formal law by creating a separate level of Indian government within the Canadian political structure. The Union was not locating the validity or genesis of Indigenous sovereignty in the Canadian state, however. Indigenous peoples had long viewed themselves as sovereign nations and the Union argued this deserved formal recognition by the Canadian state. The Union pointed to the S'latsin te Secwepemc's Indian Child Caravan of 1980, which protested the high rates of child apprehension from their community and resulted in a by-law guaranteeing their exclusive jurisdiction over Indigenous children in their band, as an example of Indian government and expression of Indigenous rights. Likewise, the organization outlined the decision by the Mowachaht band Gold River and members of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council to pass a by-law restricting pollution created by a pulp and paper mill in their territory, as enacting strong Indian government. These actions, according to the Union, codified tribal law into Canadian law, and validated Indian government.<sup>62</sup>

This formula did not enact the flexibility the Union proclaimed in its definition of Indian governments, however, but rather stood as the final word on Indigenous sovereignty. It not only identified the Union's political vision as the most authoritative one, but it effectively excluded definitions of Indian government or sovereignty that existed outside government structures. Because the Union defined Indian governments as akin to current Indian Act bands and placed those bands in a structure alongside

more information on tri-lateral federalism see: Frances Abele and Michael J. Prince, "Four Pathways to Aboriginal Self-Government in Canada," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 36, no. 4 (December 2006): 568-595.

<sup>61</sup> UBCIC, *Aboriginal Rights Position Paper*, 1980, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

<sup>62</sup> George Manuel, "President's Report," Union of BC Indian Chiefs 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly, Information Kit, October 14-18, 1980, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC; Summarized Minutes of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly, October 14-18, 1980, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

federal and provincial governments, there was no room for alternate expressions. Although the Union engaged sophisticated political strategies to navigate the current political realities in Canada while protecting and propelling Indigenous rights, it also promoted its vision for sovereignty at the expense of others. For many tribal councils premising their authority on tribal organization, the Union's definition of Indian government was unacceptable. Tribal councils such as the Nuu-chah-nulth and other communities believed that every Indigenous nation had a natural right to sovereignty, and they simply needed to exercise it.<sup>63</sup> On the one hand, by proposing a specific vision of sovereignty that others went on to dispute, the position paper underscored the multi-vocal nature of sovereignty. It illustrated the competing, overlapping, and complex understandings of Indigenous political realities. On the other hand, the Union reproduced the unequal power dynamics of political recognition that Coulthard argued plagued Indigenous-state relationships within the Indigenous political movement as a whole.<sup>64</sup> This introduced gradations of recognition that BC Indigenous peoples had to navigate.

BC Indigenous women also challenged the Union's hegemonic political ideals, though they did this from positions of considerable weakness. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the patriation debates, sovereignty question, and Indian Act membership issues converged and Indigenous women in BC and Canada explicitly noted their connectivity. Indigenous women also supported sovereignty, but their gendered political dispossession meant that they constituted sovereignty on different terms than Indigenous men. As Jo-Anne Fiske reminds, "in the course of their struggle for 'Indian Rights,' that is, rights perceived to be inherent Aboriginal entitlements as well as rights of statute and treaty, Aboriginal women have had to respond to two antagonistic discourses: that of the state and that of their own male leadership."<sup>65</sup> For instance, Indigenous women were concerned with the ways in which narrow and state-defined concepts of Indian status excluded them from citizenship. Therefore, they sought gender equality and family inclusivity as a cornerstone of sovereignty and pressured the Union

<sup>63</sup> "Haida/Nuu-chah-nulth Land and Sea Claim," *Indian World* 3, no. 9 (January 1981): 12.

<sup>64</sup> Glen S. Coulthard, "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada," *Contemporary Political Theory* no. 6 (2007): 438-39.

<sup>65</sup> Jo-Anne Fiske, "The Womb is to the Nation as the Heart is to the Body: Ethnopolitical Discourses of the Canadian Indigenous Women's Movement," *Studies in Political Economy* 51 (1996): 65-95.

to do the same. This required revisiting the question of women's status in the Indian Act, and the Union was uninterested in doing this.

The Indian Act membership debate had continued in spite of the unfavourable Supreme Court decision against Jeannette Corbiere Lavell in 1974, and soon expanded beyond the confines of the nation after Sandra Lovelace took her claim to the United Nations.<sup>66</sup> To remind, Lavell, an Ojibway woman who lost her status after marrying a non-Indigenous man, argued that the gender inequality in the Indian Act violated the Bill of Rights. The presiding judge disagreed and exposing his ignorance about the value of Indigenous culture and community, explained that Indigenous women had more rights without Indian status.<sup>67</sup> Relatedly, Lovelace was a Maliseet woman who married and then divorced a non-Indigenous man. When she attempted to return to her reserve at Tobique, New Brunswick she found that she no longer had Indian status or membership in her band. In 1979, Lovelace petitioned the United Nations to address Canada's sexist treatment of Indigenous women, placing the oppression of Indigenous women on the international stage. The renewed membership debate prompted Indigenous women, including the British Columbia Indian Homemakers' Association (BCIHA) and the British Columbia Native Women's Society (BCNWS), to craft their call for Indian Act revisions in terms of community, family, and sovereignty, which they argued were inherently linked to Indigenous women's citizenship.

The Indian Act removed women's status and right to live and participate in their communities, and this desire for community coherence drove BCIHA and BCNWS activism. In June 1978, the BCNWS wanted to get a clear sense of how many Indigenous women in BC communities were influenced by section 12.1.b and what they thought should be done about it. The organization conducted a questionnaire for Indigenous women on and off reserve in Hazelton, the Okanagan Valley, and Vancouver

<sup>66</sup> Kitty Sparrow, "Discrimination of Indian women taken to UN," *Indian Voice* 12, no. 6 (June 1980): 1; Joanne Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women's Activism," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, and Transnationalism* 7, no. 1 (2006): 137-142.

<sup>67</sup> Kathleen Jamieson, "Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act," in *Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1986), 126; Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women's Activism," 136-138; Dian Million, *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013), 59-61.



to get a good cross section of the population. The questionnaire gauged women's awareness of the Indian Act, and asked their opinions about the land claim, how status should be determined, and whether or not they had lost their status.<sup>68</sup> As the results came in, BCNWS president Mildred Gottfriedson realized the widespread community destruction caused by the Indian Act, and also noted how women supported the land claim and gender equality.<sup>69</sup> Women viewed their gender and racial discrimination as intertwined, and the solution to both as similarly connected. Thus, they envisioned gender and racial equality as protecting their ability to live within their sovereign communities and remain connected to their culture. As women promoted their political causes, they were both part of and remained separate from growing minority feminist movements.<sup>70</sup>

The BCIHA specifically took part in non-Indigenous feminist discussions by attending conferences of groups such as the Status of Women Council of BC in 1973.<sup>71</sup> The BCIHA reported that the council provided the BCIHA with financial assistance to continue its work advocating for Indigenous women's rights. The council also organized a national day of mourning for October 22, 1973 where women could mourn the Bill of Rights after the loss of the Lavell case.<sup>72</sup> The BCIHA envisioned a strong alliance with the council, as well as with other women's organizations like the BC Native Women, the British Columbia Association of Non-Status Indians, the New Democratic Party Women's

<sup>68</sup> Advertisement, *Indian Voice* 10, no. 6 (June 1978): 19.

<sup>69</sup> "An Interview with Mildred Gottfriedson," *Lex'yem* (Summer 1979) <<http://tkemlups.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/1979-Lexeyem-Summer.pdf>>.

<sup>70</sup> For more information on the relationship between Indigenous and mainstream feminist movements see: Joyce Green, ed. *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Winnipeg: Fernwood Press, 2007); Dian Million, "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 53-76; Lee Maracle, *I am Woman: A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1988); Cheryl Suzack, Shari M. Huhndorf, Jeanne Perreault, and Jean Barman, eds. *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); Luana Ross, "From the 'F' Word to Indigenous/Feminisms," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 39-52; Grace J. M. W. Ouellette, *The Fourth World: An Indigenous Perspective on Feminism and Aboriginal Women's Activism* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2002); Andrea Smith and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "Native Feminisms Engage American Studies," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (June 2008): 241-249.

<sup>71</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 987/24-5, Homemakers' Club – Gen, 1973-1981, Indian Homemakers' Association Progress Report, November 1, 1973.

<sup>72</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 987/24-5, Homemakers' Club – Gen, 1973-1981, Indian Homemakers' Association Progress Report, November 1, 1973.

Association, and the Pacific Indian Friendship Centre.<sup>73</sup> The BCIHA also disseminated information from mainstream women's organizations to their constituents, especially when organizations spoke on Indigenous women's issues. For instance, the BCIHA newspaper *Indian Voice* printed a lengthy article on Kathleen Jamieson's report on Women and the Law in Canada, which was part of the larger report from the Council on the Status of Women. In this report, Jamieson surveyed Indian policy and noted the "double-edged irony" of the Indian Act, under which Indigenous women became "citizens minus." The article explained, "on the one hand [the Indian Act] authorizes discrimination against Indian women and on the other, it is seen as necessary by male Indian leaders . . . to ensure legal rights for Indian people and to confirm their 'citizen plus' status."<sup>74</sup> This provided further support for the BCIHA and BCNWS to demand changes to their status. A group of female parliamentarians and Senators also supported the BCIHA and BCNWS by lobbying on behalf of Indigenous women.<sup>75</sup> In 1980, a coalition of twenty-three female politicians from three political groups expressed their concern about Indigenous women's status in their report entitled, "Declaration of Solidarity of Canadian Women Parliamentarians to Recognize Equal Rights for Indian Women."<sup>76</sup> The report highlighted the methodical deprivation of Indigenous women through the Indian Act, as well as their general oppression. Though not solicited by Indigenous women or BCIHA and BCNWS, this report and alliance with mainstream feminists promoted the women's cause and the Indigenous women's organizations were grateful.<sup>77</sup>

These gendered partnerships were structured with a keen awareness of the unique racial and gendered biases Indigenous women faced, and while Indigenous women made general references to the larger women's movement, they remained focused on the ways in which race and gender as well as poverty converged to create multiple and overlapping oppressions for Indigenous women. For example, despite

<sup>73</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 987/24-5, Homemakers' Club – Gen, 1973-1981, Indian Homemakers' Association Progress Report, November 1, 1973.

<sup>74</sup> "Indian Women are 'Citizens Minus'," *Indian Voice* 10, no. 4 (April 1978): 18.

<sup>75</sup> Kathleen Bell-Younger, "Moratorium on Section 12 (1) (b) Declared by Munro," *Indian Voice* 12, no. 8 (August 1980): 2.

<sup>76</sup> Kathleen Bell-Younger, "Moratorium on Section 12 (1) (b) Declared by Munro," *Indian Voice* 12, no. 8 (August 1980): 2.

<sup>77</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 987/24-5, Homemakers' Club – Gen, 1973-1981, Indian Homemakers' Association Progress Report, November 1, 1973.

accepting the help of female parliamentarians, BCIHA member Karen Fish outlined the division that remained between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women's movements. "Indian women face obstacles in their struggles for change that the white middle class women's movement has never had to deal with," Fish began. "Indian women are discriminated against because they are Indian, because they are women, and more than either of these," Fish explained, "they are discriminated against because they are Indian women."<sup>78</sup> Indigenous women recognized how other frames of experience and structural inequalities fragmented their womanhood in ways that non-Indigenous women could not experience.<sup>79</sup> Through these partnerships, the BCIHA incorporated a wide number of political influences into its multi-politics to promote gender equality as well as Indigenous rights. In this sense, the Indigenous women's organizations were participating in Indigenous feminist debates about the multiplicity and historicity of women's experiences, but they continued to maintain a firm connection to their roles as Indigenous mothers and the accompanying political responsibilities.

The BCIHA was especially dedicated to child welfare issues and constituted these as integral to Indigenous sovereignty. For instance, the BCIHA combatted the particularly high levels of child apprehension and the placement of Indigenous children into non-Indigenous homes as a part of their multi-political agenda. This phenomenon, now widely understood as the "Sixties Scoop," saw a dramatic increase in the number of Indigenous children removed from their homes from the 1960s onwards. The BCIHA's consistently appealed to the federal government to investigate these apprehensions and developed programs to facilitate bringing children back to their home communities, and provide alternatives to non-Indigenous adoptions. For example, in 1973, the BCIHA was in the process of developing a series of receiving homes across the province that would house Indigenous children as well as group homes for single mothers and their children.

<sup>78</sup> Karen Fish, "Native Women fight unique battle," *Indian Voice* 9, no. 8 (August 1977): 17 and 19; "Native women suffer triple discrimination," *Indian Voice* 9, no. 8 (August 1977): 8. Mary Jane Logan McCallum's examination of Indigenous women and work in the twentieth century also addressed the uneasy relationship between Indigenous women's politics and mainstream second-wave feminism specifically within the Registered Nurses of Canadian Indian Ancestry (RNCIA), a professional organization for Indigenous nurses. Mary Jane Logan McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History, 1940-1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014), 167-224.

<sup>79</sup> "Native women suffer triple discrimination," *Indian Voice* 9, no. 8 (August 1977): 8.

The same report explained that the BCIHA recently met with Norman Levi, head of rehabilitation and social improvement, to express their “dissatisfaction at the legislation that was passed in regards to Indian children being adopted by non-Indian families.”<sup>80</sup> With few resources to develop a strong defence against child apprehensions, the BCIHA used the Union newspaper and its meetings to match potential adoptees with Indigenous families in the children’s communities. For example, in 1973 two adoption requests appeared for three children. The advertisements include pictures, names, and ages of the children, as well as their current home life circumstances.<sup>81</sup> The BCIHA also worked unofficially on cases in Indigenous communities. Sharing his personal interaction with the BCIHA, Albert “Sonny” McHalsie (Stó:lō) explained that the organization was directly responsible for ensuring he and his siblings did not go into care after his mother was killed and father badly injured in a car accident. McHalsie noted that child welfare services came into his community to split the children up for adoption into non-Indigenous homes when the BCIHA stepped in and convinced the province to let McHalsie’s eighteen-year-old sister care for the children.<sup>82</sup> Recognizing the vulnerability of children without families, the BCIHA even went as far as to oppose the closure of residential schools in the late 1970s arguing that these schools played a significant role in child welfare by providing accommodations for orphaned or at risk children who had no where else to go. The BCIHA implored the federal government to refrain from closing schools unless discussed with the BCIHA.<sup>83</sup> The BCIHA demanded to be involved in child welfare issues and have a final say over policy and implementation.

In 1981, the BCIHA took a distinctly legalistic approach in their criticism of child welfare policies by flatly rejecting the notion that the province had any jurisdiction over Indigenous children. In a report that Minister of Indian Affairs John Munro would call the “most comprehensive statement on the whole issue of the responsibility for Indian child care from any Indian organization,” BCIHA member John Sparrow insisted, “the BNA Act

<sup>80</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 1, File 987/24-5, Homemakers’ Club – Gen, 1973-1981, Indian Homemakers’ Association Progress Report, November 1, 1973.

<sup>81</sup> “Adoption requests,” *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 2, no. 11-12 (November 1973): 14.

<sup>82</sup> Naxaxalhts’i (Albert “Sonny” McHalsie), interview with author, Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre, Sardis, BC, April 20, 2012.

<sup>83</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, Vol. 2, File 901/24-4-5 (part 2), Resolutions – Indian Homemakers’ Association Convention, 1976-1977, Resolutions, September 1976 and May 6, 1977.

specifically states that the welfare of the ‘Indians’ shall be the responsibility of the Federal Government.” He continued, “Nowhere in the Act does it exclude Indian children from the category of ‘Indians.’ Yet countless number of our children have been stolen from us by provincial legislation, which, according to the BNA Act, has no jurisdiction over us.”<sup>84</sup> The BCIIHA were committed to ensuring that the legal standing of Indigenous children was clear and consistent both in terms of their status and band membership in relation to the section 12.1.b debates, as well as ensuring they were included under the definition of “Indian” within the Indian Act.<sup>85</sup> The BCIIHA argued these apprehensions were in represented a jurisdictional conflict between the federal and provincial governments, and thus the BCIIHA constituted the legal position of children, their well-being, home life and continued connection to community as integral components of Indigenous sovereignty.<sup>86</sup>

To forward these agendas and concurrently protect Indigenous women’s rights, the BCIIHA increasingly aligned itself with an unlikely ally, the Department of Indian Affairs. As Canadian women turned to the UN for support in their bid to eliminate gender inequality, international pressure on the Canadian government was mounting. In 1979, upon signing the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the federal government was forced to address the heteropatriarchal nature of the Indian Act. Section 12.1.b violated CEDAW and the Lovelace case provided the opportunity to push for amendments. This was a significant step towards recognizing Indigenous women’s rights to membership. However, the government was reluctant to make sweeping changes. In part, this stemmed from deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes within the government overall and the Department of Indian Affairs specifically. Historically, this resulted in policy-level gender discrimination,

<sup>84</sup> Kitty Sparrow, “IHA challenge provincial jurisdiction to apprehend native children,” *Indian Voice* 13, no. 5 (May 1981): 1-2; Kitty Sparrow; Kitty Sparrow, “Minister disputes IHA stand on BNA Act,” *Indian Voice* 13, no. 5 (May 1981): n.p. Wayne Christian explained that the Splotsin te Secwepemc took a similar approach in their challenge against provincial child welfare policies. Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, personal communication with author, Vancouver, BC, September 10, 2014.

<sup>85</sup> “Provincial jurisdiction of Native children overrides BNA Act,” *Indian Voice* 13, no. 5 (May 1981): 2.

<sup>86</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 16, Vol. 1, File E6417-2254, Indian Homemakers’ Association of BC, 1980-1981, Position on Native Indian Children – written by Rose Charlie, May 1, 1981.

but it was also responsible for the Department's lacklustre attitude towards Indigenous women's political organizations. Further complicating matters was that government officials also had to balance potential changes to the Indian Act with their proclaimed dedication to band political authority. This concern was a foremost consideration for Justice Minister Ronald Basford in 1977 when, after a series of debates during the Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, he discussed the violation of Indigenous women's human rights through the Indian Act. The standing committee focused on Bill C-25, the Canadian Human Rights Act.<sup>87</sup> Other parliamentarians shared Basford's anxieties, and some including Conservative Member of Parliament Gordon Fairweather suggested eliminating section 12 altogether. Basford insisted, however, that any changes must come from band governments and not the Department of Indian Affairs. This dismantling of colonial mentalities was important to the Department as it attempted to re-craft its image and promote limited Indigenous self-government. Outlining the precarious relationship between the government and Indigenous leaders, Basford noted, "the Government has made a commitment to Indian leaders not to change the Indian Act until consultations were completed and Mr. Fairweather's amendment would jeopardize the 'good-faith working relationship' the Government has with Indian representatives."<sup>88</sup> Government officials had good reason to be reticent about making unilateral changes to the Indian Act under the guise of "protection." Indigenous peoples across Canada were attuned to continued White Paper policy attitudes and opposed any attempts by government to intervene without direct consultation. Unfortunately, preserving the political authority of Indigenous bands came at the expense of Indigenous women's rights and political inclusion.

The membership question was deeply troubling to male-dominated band councils and organizations.<sup>89</sup> Some leaders argued that Indian Act revisions in favour of women's

<sup>87</sup> "Indian leaders warned to halt discrimination against women," *Indian Voice* 2, no. 7 (July 1977): 9. Reprinted from *Globe & Mail*, Toronto, May 26, 1977.

<sup>88</sup> "Indian leaders warned to halt discrimination against women," *Indian Voice* 2, no. 7 (July 1977): 9. Reprinted from *Globe & Mail*, Toronto, May 26, 1977.

<sup>89</sup> "Membership is a band affair," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 1 no. 5 (January 1973): 2. This was part of a wider trend. See Nancy Janovicek, "'Assisting Our Own': Urban Migration, Self-Governance, and Native Women's Organizing in Thunder Bay, Ontario, 1972-1989," in *Keeping the Campfires Going: Native Women's Activism in Urban Communities*, ed. Susan Applegate Krouse and Heather A. Howard (Lincoln: University of Nebraska), 59.

equality had the potential to strain limited reserve resources, undermine male political dominance, and serve as a distraction to the push for Indigenous sovereignty. The Union had quietly stated its disapproval of the Lavell case emphasizing that bands should be able to determine their own membership and as such, used its authority to sanction women's exclusion. It resented attempts to impose changes to the act through litigation, as in the Lavell case, or through the Department of Indian Affairs. "While the Union is concerned with the possibility of reserve lands being over-run by reinstated women members and their non-Indian spouses, not to mention countless children of mixed blood," a Union spokesperson began, "people within bands are the ones to be inevitably affected so it stands to reason they should decide who will live among them."<sup>90</sup> This person activated racialized discourses to "other" and exclude women and their "countless children of mixed blood." The gender bias of this individual is also clear. They made no mention of reserves being "over-run" by Indigenous men's non-Indian wives and their mixed blood children. This was only problematic for Indigenous women and their families. The representative continued, "any other method of determining membership and status can only be looked upon as yet another attempt to make Indian people feel that they are incapable of running their own lives."<sup>91</sup> Although many leaders disagreed with the intrusion of the Indian Act in their communities, in this case they were content to use the act to maintain the status quo, as they did not want to have civil servants determine membership or see further amendments that might place intense pressure on limited band resources.<sup>92</sup>

The Union was making a clear argument for Indigenous sovereignty in terms of a band's right to determine membership, though they ignored the reality that the "band" often excluded women. The Union also framed women's rights, membership, and access to politics and sovereignty as needing male recognition. It failed to acknowledge how male band members benefited from the membership section of the Indian Act because they were never at risk of being legally dispossessed, and would therefore always be considered "band members" capable of deciding membership. Furthermore, the Union did not address how dominant male leadership might continue to decide

<sup>90</sup> "Membership is a band affair," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 1 no. 5 (January 1973): 2.

<sup>91</sup> "Membership is a band affair," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 1 no. 5 (January 1973): 2.

<sup>92</sup> "Membership is a band affair," *Nesika: The Voice of BC Indians* 1 no. 5 (January 1973): 2.

against Indigenous women's status if the bands had control over membership. This vision of sovereignty continued to silence women's opinions and denigrate their status.

Notwithstanding opposition from male leadership, on July 17, 1980, Indian Affairs Minister John Munro declared a moratorium on discrimination against Indigenous women who married white men.<sup>93</sup> In this noteworthy moment, the Department turned against their policy of gendered assimilation, while simultaneously embracing band council authority more thoroughly, a move rife with contradictions. In his announcement of the Department's position on membership provisions, Munro stated that each of the 500 bands across the nation would have to ask Munro to introduce the moratorium in order for it to come into effect.<sup>94</sup> The idea here was to avoid unilateral Department decision-making and provide for band control over membership. This move was highly welcomed by bands that rejected Department intervention as well as those who feared the financial and political ramifications of altered membership. Thus, in the end most refused to implement the moratorium. In fact, according to Bill Wilson, by 1980 only eleven of the 500 bands had followed the moratorium.<sup>95</sup> Wilson launched an appeal to BC bands at a regional forum earlier that year to take action against Indian Act discrimination, but bands remained disinterested. Although the Union general assembly took place a mere three months after Munro introduced the moratorium, the minutes are completely silent on it so it is difficult to assess why bands ignored the Department mandate. Most likely, bands were exercising their political authority and their disinterest in opening up membership.

Interestingly, although the moratorium appeared to preserve band autonomy, the undercurrent of state authority remained with the Department's strong declaration of their position against gender discrimination. While Munro acknowledged the

<sup>93</sup> This moratorium applied to future marriages only, and did not include reinstating membership that had already been lost. "Indian leaders warned to halt discrimination against women," *Indian Voice* 2, no. 7 (July 1977): 9. Reprinted from *Globe & Mail*, Toronto, May 26, 1977; Kathleen Bell-Younger, "Moratorium on Section 12 (1) (b) declared by Munro," *Indian Voice* 12, no. 8 (August 1980): 2.

<sup>94</sup> Kathleen Bell-Younger, "Moratorium on Section 12 (1) (b) declared by Munro," *Indian Voice* 12, no. 8 (August 1980): 2.

<sup>95</sup> Kathleen Bell-Younger, "Section 12(1) B in effective because of lack of band action," *Indian Voice* 12, no. 10 (October 1980): 2.



“paternalistic attitude of various state departments,” there was no overt recognition that the state had unilaterally codified this bias in its policies in the first place.<sup>96</sup> Instead, government statements chastised male Indigenous leaders for allowing such inequality to persist in their communities.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, along with being sanctioned by the Department, which in itself placed undue pressure on bands to fall in line with officials who controlled their funding and services, the process for eliminating section 12.1.b was administered through the Department rather than the bands. The bands could decide whether to follow Department wishes, but the existing settler-colonial frameworks still forced them to liaise with Munro in order for any changes to take place. Munro insisted that the bands had to ask him to make the changes, placing the ultimate authority for change in his hands rather than the band’s. This process preserved longstanding colonial political hierarchies, and as always, positioned the state as the “protector” of Indigenous women.

Indigenous women continued to promote gender equality as the membership and sovereignty debates converged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Although male and female activists maintained different notions of politics and membership, they both constructed their political goals in relation to unity and Indigenous sovereignty. Like the Union, the BCIHA and BCNWS believed that Indigenous communities, not the Canadian government, should determine their own membership, but the women insisted that gender equality needed to provide the basis for such considerations. The Indigenous political movement must include men and women and this was only possible if women’s status as community members was protected. Women viewed their political causes for equal membership, health and welfare, education, housing, and female representation in politics as inextricably linked to Indigenous sovereignty and pan-tribal unity.<sup>98</sup> For

<sup>96</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 16, Vol. 1, File E6417-2254, Indian Homemakers’ Association of BC, Notes for a speech by Hon. John Munro to the Indian Homemakers’ Association of BC, April 30, 1981.

<sup>97</sup> “Indian leaders warned to halt discrimination against women,” *Indian Voice* 2, no. 7 (July 1977): 9. Reprinted from *Globe & Mail*, Toronto, May 26, 1977; Kathleen Bell-Younger, “Moratorium on Section 12 (1) (b) declared by Munro,” *Indian Voice* 12, no. 8 (August 1980): 2.

<sup>98</sup> This was part of a wider political trend amongst Indigenous women. See: Allyson Stevenson, “Vibrations across a Continent: The 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act and the Politicization of First Nations Leaders in Saskatchewan,” *The American Indian Quarterly* 37, nos. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 2013): 218-236; Andrea Smith, “Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change,” *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 122-123.

instance, Rose Charlie insisted at 1976 BCIHA annual conference that “the Indian Homemakers’ Association of British Columbia, have not only the responsibilities of representing and expressing the needs, wants, and deprivations of the Indian women and families, but for all the Indian people of this province.” She continued, “We have been working for many years to correct the deficiencies and to propose plans of action and to represent our Indian people to governments and organizations.”<sup>99</sup> Charlie lamented women’s exclusion from work on the cut-off claims, in housing development, employment, education, and consultations concerning revisions to the Indian Act. Constructing these and other areas as directly related to Indigenous rights, the BCIHA situated itself and Indigenous women as important political players with a strong record of lobbying for women’s and community rights.<sup>100</sup> Later that same year, Charlie used the BCIHA’s demonstrated political record in both domestic and political affairs for women and entire communities to appeal to DIA for better funding.<sup>101</sup>

The Indigenous women’s organizations and their allies noted the problems with serving as caretakers of the nation when they were often not included as citizens, and many women resented the ways in which status was pitted against sovereignty. These women refused to accept gendered political oppression and many used feminist critiques even as they continued to construct their politics as inherently maternal. BCIHA members Charlie and Karen Fish, for instance openly discussed sexism and patriarchy in interviews, articles, and exchanges with other women and activists.<sup>102</sup> Charlie insisted the BCIHA and Indigenous women “are making Native males leaders realize their power lies in the strength of their women and the women are the backbone of the family and

<sup>99</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, File 901/24-2-5, Part 2, Indian Homemakers’ Association of British Columbia, 1976-1977, Opening remarks by Rose Charlie, President of the Indian Homemakers’ Association at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, September 15, 1976.

<sup>100</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, File 901/24-2-5, Part 2, Indian Homemakers’ Association of British Columbia, 1976-1977, Opening remarks by Rose Charlie, President of the Indian Homemakers’ Association at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, September 15, 1976.

<sup>101</sup> LAC, RG 10, Box 2, File 901/24-2-5, Indian Homemakers’ Association of British Columbia, 1976-1977, Letter from Rose Charlie to F.J. Walchli, November 10, 1976.

<sup>102</sup> “Innocent Caught in Cross Fire,” *Indian Voice* 7, no.6 (June 1975): 1-2; “Rose Charlie against UBCIC decision,” *Indian Voice* 7, no.6 (June 1975): 1-2; “Homemaker President urges union of all Chiefs,” *Indian Voice* 9, no. 6 (June 1977): 2-3; Karen Fish, “Native Women fight unique battle,” *Indian Voice* 9, no. 8 (August 1977): 17 and 19.

the community.”<sup>103</sup> Likewise, Tsimshian community activist Val Dudoward directly challenged the dominance of male leaders in the Union. She noted that the men continually undermined women’s politics by placing activist women in subservient roles. She noted that although Indigenous peoples often emphasized the political power of the women, at Union and other political meetings women were relegated to making coffee, meals, and doing administrative work. “Our political leaders are usually men; women play the support roles,” Dudoward insisted.<sup>104</sup> Part of this male dominance stemmed from the underrepresentation of female chiefs, which remained well into the 1980s and even today, yet even when the Union opened the proceedings to community members for debate, female delegate’s voices remained muted. Dudoward noted that when women’s opinions emerged they were often speaking on “women’s issues” such as childcare and education, but ultimately the final decisions about these matters rested with the men. The reality of women’s experiences in politics, according to Dudoward, did not fit the respectful and women-centred attitudes many leaders claimed to have. Dudoward argued that male leaders often used non-tribally specific references to “tradition” to legitimize their political and cultural authority and drew on hereditary chieftainships and customary relationships and positions to undermine women’s positions.<sup>105</sup> Typically, these references pointed to men’s longstanding roles as leaders and community representatives, and revealed the extent to which pan-tribal organization could, at times, conveniently obscure tribal specificity. This, paired with state-sanctioned leadership positions meant that sovereignty took on a “hyper-masculinist” character where men constructed themselves as the ultimate authorities in Indigenous politics.<sup>106</sup> This masculine authority was easily translatable into the Canadian state’s understandings of sovereignty, and therefore allowed male chiefs and state officials to speak the same political language.

For Dudoward, the general devaluing of women permeated Indigenous communities and politics, and she believed Indigenous peoples needed to alleviate this if

<sup>103</sup> “Native women suffer triple discrimination,” *Indian Voice* 9, no. 8 (August 1977): 8.

<sup>104</sup> Val Dudoward, “Editorial,” *Indian World* 3, no. 5 (August 1980): 2.

<sup>105</sup> Val Dudoward, “Editorial,” *Indian World* 3, no. 5 (August 1980): 2.

<sup>106</sup> Joanne Barker, “Gender, Sovereignty, Rights: Native Women’s Activism against Social Inequality and Violence in Canada,” *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (June 2008): 127-161.

there was to be any real progress within the Indigenous political movement. Communities and Indigenous organizations could not ignore women's concerns about the Indian Act and women's voices needed to be heard as active participants in the movement. To do this, Dudoward argued, male leaders must move past the belief that women's concerns threatened the larger movement, which was pronounced as the constitutional debates intensified. She wrote, "The defense of non-action taken by political leaders, phrases like 'we can't separate our struggle by recognizing only the struggles on women' or 'we have to stick together' or 'we have to make sure of what we're doing before we change the Indian act' have become jaded code-words of procrastination."<sup>107</sup> Dudoward called on Indian leaders to take seriously the concerns of fifty per cent of their community members or risk losing their movement altogether, and this call was reminiscent of the 1973 *Nesika* editorial warning the Union about losing women to other political organizations discussed in chapter three. Dudoward's arguments, framed in an editorial within *Nesika* were noteworthy in that they publically highlighted the sexist attitudes, practices, and policies Indigenous women faced and made a direct connection between these practices and the overall lack of progress in the Indian movement. In other words, by politically subduing and dispossessing Indigenous women through passive support roles rather than active political roles and continuing to allow the Indian Act to remove their status, Indigenous men failed to capitalize on the potential political power of women, and were, in fact, undermining the overall movement themselves.<sup>108</sup> Thus, women invested in the Indigenous movement, sovereignty, and unity, but by using specifically gendered critique women constructed gender equality as pivotal to BC Indigenous peoples' political success. In its unenthusiastic response to women's rights, however, the Union continued to position itself as the gatekeeper to sovereignty.

<sup>107</sup> Val Dudoward, "Editorial," *Indian World* 3, no. 5 (August 1980): 2.

<sup>108</sup> Val Dudoward, "Editorial," *Indian World* 3, no. 5 (August 1980): 2; "Native women suffer triple discrimination," *Indian Voice* 9, no. 8 (August 1977): 8. This resistance against male-centric definitions of sovereignty was increasingly common in women's Indigenous movements outside of Canada as well. Outlining Indigenous women's understandings of the interconnectedness of tribalism, race, gender, and nationalism, Renya Ramirez noted, "sovereignty can no longer mean that Native men have the right to control Indian women's lives. It can no longer simply mean separation and independence. It must also involve respect, interdependence, responsibility, dialogue, and engagement with indigenous women's rights and claims." Renya K. Ramirez, "Race, Tribal Nation, and Gender: A Native Feminist Approach to Belonging," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 7, no. 2 (2007): 31.

The Union also continued to pursue its own agenda for membership and sovereignty. In 1980, the Union pushed to have Indigenous sovereignty entrenched in the Canadian constitution, and turned to community-based action to accomplish this. The Union was not alone in pursuing this tactic. By the fall of 1980, Indigenous political organizations across the country were poised to respond to government practices, as they perceived the federal government's constitutional patriation plans were, as George Manuel told reporters, "designed to make Indian rights illegal."<sup>109</sup> Convinced that confronting the prime minister about Indigenous rights was the most effective way to have their voices heard, and cognizant of Trudeau's plan to seek patriation by July 1, 1981, the Union proposed immediate political action. In November 1980, the Union hired two passenger trains to bring people from across Canada to Ottawa to protest patriation under the auspices of a Constitution Express. In the lead-up to the Express the Union published a series of bulletins on the constitutional issues to raise awareness and support from the grassroots. The bulletins explained how the proposed amendments and patriation threatened historical Indigenous rights. Despite recognizing "Native rights as freedoms as they presently exist" under section 24 of the proposed constitution, the Union argued Trudeau was acting without the consent of First Nations to erase their historic treaty ties with the British Crown.<sup>110</sup> The Union carefully planned the entire event. The bulletins detailed the cost of participation, which included \$200 train fare for all status Indians—a discount given by Canadian Pacific Railway for hiring two trains. The Union also organized billets to house the participants along the way and in Ottawa, and asked participants to bring drums and traditional dress to participate in songs and ceremonies. The Express welcomed participants of all ages, especially elders and children.<sup>111</sup>

The Union's planning was successful. The Express gained considerable momentum and drew pan-tribal support along the 5,000-kilometre trek to Ottawa. The Express left Vancouver on November 24 with each train taking a different route to cover

<sup>109</sup> Sanders, "The Indian Lobby," 311.

<sup>110</sup> *UBCIC Bulletins: Constitution Bulletin*, 29 October 1980.

<sup>111</sup> *UBCIC Bulletins: Constitution Express* (November 1980): 1; UBCIC, "Constitution Express: Newsclippings, Trip to Ottawa November 1980," in Summarized Minutes of 6th Special General Assembly, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs held May 14th and 15th, 1981, UBCIC Resource Centre, Vancouver, BC.

both the north and the south. The trains attracted approximately 1,000 people from British Columbia, including numerous Indigenous peoples from outside the province. Organizers designed the Express to demonstrate pan-tribal unity, as well as cultural and political strength. On board, participants took part in Indigenous rights workshops, discussion groups, and cultural ceremonies. Acutely aware of keeping public opinion on their side, the Union banned drugs and alcohol on the Express and maintained strict rules for behaviour. Despite this concerted attempt to manage the Express's image, the federal government worried that violent protest would ensue when the Express arrived in Ottawa. To help quell this fear, RCMP officers stopped and searched the trains in northern Ontario. The RCMP claimed that they were responding to a bomb threat, but Robert (Bobby) Manuel, who was leading the delegation in his father's absence was suspicious.<sup>112</sup> As the trains were evacuated and bags were searched, Bobby Manuel was convinced the RCMP was looking for weapons not bombs.<sup>113</sup> With no evidence of a bomb (or weapons), the RCMP allowed the Express to continue.

The Constitution Express embodied well articulated, albeit multivocal ideas of Indigenous sovereignty and allowed activists to enact and ultimately re-shape their political agenda. The Union believed the rejection of Indigenous socio-political rights was an attempt to erase longstanding relationships and realities, and they demanded a say in how Canadian independence unfolded. Once again, Manuel's opinions demonstrated a willingness to accommodate the Canadian political agenda and adapt concepts of Indigenous sovereignty to these. By the time the Constitution Express arrived in Ottawa on December 5, 1980, activists and the Union declared it a great victory. Art Manuel, who was at the Ottawa train station to meet the participants including his brother Bobby, wife Beverly, and children, described the atmosphere as "electric," with the "station throbb[ing] with Indian music and with the excitement of the arriving protestors."<sup>114</sup> The

<sup>112</sup> George Manuel arrived in Ottawa before the Constitution Express, but fell ill and ended up in an Ottawa hospital where he watched the event unfold. Manuel's son Robert (Bobby) took charge of the delegation. Art Manuel, telephone conversation with author, July 24, 2012; Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald M. Derrickson, *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2015), 67-68.

<sup>113</sup> Arthur Manuel, interview with author, Union of BC Indian Chiefs Offices, Vancouver, BC, August 14, 2012; Manuel and Derrickson, *Unsettling Canada*, 67-68.

<sup>114</sup> Manuel and Derrickson, 69.

Express allowed Indigenous peoples to voice their concerns with both the constitution and the patriation process, and to enact expressions of sovereignty they had been honing through debates and policy papers. The Constitution Express and the related international lobbying efforts it spurred directly resulted in the Canadian government prolonging the constitutional debates. This was a significant accomplishment that paved the road for section 35.1, which “recognized” and “affirmed” the “existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada.”<sup>115</sup>

Yet, the Express also unexpectedly facilitated a re-articulation of Indigenous sovereignty within the Union whereby leaders increasingly rejected state recognition and limited definitions of Indian government, and instead embraced concepts of nationhood.<sup>116</sup> This change was not simply one of terminology whereby activists retained the same goals of Indian government and Indigenous rights within the constitution, but reflected new attitudes and suspicions towards constitutional processes. After returning from Ottawa, where he had watched the Express, Manuel shocked Union supporters with a change in strategy. He announced that while in the nation’s capital, conversations between Union leaders, other activists, and federal government representatives unveiled significant political divisions. Manuel explained that the federal government had not consulted Indigenous peoples about their definitions of Indigenous rights, and thus entrenching state definitions in the would not only fail to guarantee these important rights, but would actually compromise them.<sup>117</sup> This was a devastating continuation of the same colonial mentalities that maintained Indigenous dependencies and undermined ideals of sovereignty many worked so hard to maintain. The federal government’s engagement with Indigenous peoples reflected an unwillingness to accept Indigenous definitions of government, sovereignty, and rights, forcing Indigenous peoples to work within the framework of state recognition. Unfortunately, this framework had a poor track

<sup>115</sup> *Constitution Act, 1982*, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act 1982 (UK)*, 1982, s. 35.

<sup>116</sup> “Journey to Nationhood,” *Indian World*, November 1980.

<sup>117</sup> *UBCIC Bulletins: Constitution Bulletin*, 17 December 1980. The Union’s position against entrenchment was not fully supported by all Indigenous organizations across Canada, however. The Assembly of First Nations, formerly known as the National Indian Brotherhood, the Inuit Tapirsat, and the Native Council of Canada accepted the government’s demands for entrenching Indigenous rights, while the Indian Association of Alberta, the Four Nations Confederacy, and others opposed this stance. Archie Pootlass, “Dilemma at NIB,” *Indian World* 3, no. 10 (February 1981): 8.

record of ensuring equal rights and recognition. As Coulthard reminds, as long as recognition is defined by the state, it will preserve longstanding colonial frameworks.<sup>118</sup>

In response, BC First Nations unequivocally and explicitly refused this inherently unequal form of recognition and loudly denounced the vague constitutional clause. One activist in the Union's publication *Indian World* insisted that the government's legitimization of Indian government and recognition of Indigenous rights in the constitution failed to truly capture Indigenous understandings of these structures and rights. According to this activist, the Canadian government simply co-opted Indigenous terminology and activated settler understandings of political epistemologies, but ultimately failed to understand the tribal and historical specificities of Indigenous sovereignty. Outlining how far apart Indigenous- and state-defined conceptions of Indian government were, and how Indigenous rights granted and defined by government fundamentally contradicted Indigenous sovereignty, the activist concluded sharply, "Indian Government defined by the Federal government can never be Indian Government."<sup>119</sup> This represented a turning point in the level of compromise or recognition the Union would offer concerning the constitution, and activists took on an increasingly confrontational position.

Despite heavy criticism from Indigenous communities and pan-tribal leadership, the federal government refused to alter its position on Section 35. In response, the Union immediately opposed the patriation of the constitution and instead embraced nationhood, or non-state-recognized politics, as the means to achieve Indigenous political goals.<sup>120</sup> This shift was mirrored across the nation as Indigenous leadership met to discuss the challenge posed by the constitutional developments and organized a conference for January 1981 to plan their next moves.<sup>121</sup> At this Vancouver meeting, the newly formed national council of chiefs developed a National Provisional Indian

<sup>118</sup> Glen S. Coulthard, "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada," *Contemporary Political Theory* 6 (2007): 438-439.

<sup>119</sup> "Another termination attack: Indian Government bill," *Indian World* 3, no. 10 (February 1981): 22. See also: "Prime Minister offers no more than Observer Status at Constitutional Talks," *Indian World* 3, no. 1 (April 1980): 6.

<sup>120</sup> Wilfred Pelletier, "Thoughts on Nationhood," *Indian World* 3, no. 9 (January 1981): 32.

<sup>121</sup> *UBCIC Bulletins: Constitution Bulletin*, 17 December 1980; "Council of Chiefs of Indigenous Nations," *Indian World* 3, no. 8 (November 1980): 10.



Government in which leaders sought a unified position. To begin, leaders solidified definitions of important terminology such as Aboriginality, sovereignty, self-governance, self-determination, and nationhood.<sup>122</sup> Discussions refrained from referencing the settler state in ideologies of sovereignty and instead focused solely on the inherent rights of Indigenous people conferred on them by the Creator:

We the original peoples of this land know the Creator put us here. The Creator gave us laws that govern all our relationships to live in harmony with nature and mankind. The laws of the Creator defined our rights and responsibilities. The Creator gave us our spiritual beliefs, our languages, our culture, and a place on Mother Earth which provided us with all our needs. We have maintained our freedom, our languages, and our traditions from time immemorial. We continue to exercise the rights and fulfill the responsibilities and obligations given to us by the Creator for the lands upon which we were placed. The Creator has given us the right to govern ourselves and the right to self-determination. The rights and responsibilities given to us by the Creator cannot be altered or taken away by any other nation.<sup>123</sup>

This statement aligned more closely with the type of sovereignty individual communities and tribal councils had been promoting through spiritual and relational connection to their territories.<sup>124</sup> Leaders emphasized that the Creator conferred sovereignty on them, and this was an inalienable right, immune to revision by “any other nation.”

Robert Manuel argued simply that “if we’re a nation, we need to start acting like one,” stressing that an important aspect of achieving recognition of their sovereignty and nationhood came from enacting these rights regardless of the responses from the settler state. Community members were on board with this idea and many publically expressed their nationhood at Union meetings and in Union publications. Some even went as far as to deny their Canadian citizenship. Sharon Venne exclaimed, “At this point in time, we are not Canadian citizens. We are citizens of our own Indian nations. We are Carrier. We are Shuswap. We are Kwakiutl. We are Kutenai. We are Cree. We are definitely not

<sup>122</sup> “Council of Chiefs Deliberate,” *Indian World* 3, no. 9 (January 1981): 12; “If we’re a nation we have to act like one,” *Indian World* 3, no. 9 (January 1981): 30.

<sup>123</sup> UBCIC Bulletins: Constitution Bulletin, 17 December 1980.

<sup>124</sup> Two strong examples of tribally-based territory and rights declarations include the Stó:lō and x̣ẉməθḳẉəỵəm (Musqueam) Declarations in 1975 and 1976 respectively. These are reproduced in full here: “1975 Stó:lō Declaration,” and “1976 (June) Musqueam Declaration,” in *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, Keith Thor Carlson, ed., (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 191.

Canadian.”<sup>125</sup> This claim is symbolically and politically important, particularly in this critical historical moment where Trudeau’s government hoped to contain Indigenous rights in a state-approved format. Though the Express certainly had gotten the federal government to take Indigenous concerns about patriation seriously, it did not mean that they would deal with those concerns fairly. The result was that constitutionally enshrined “Aboriginal rights” would remain undefined and a serious point of contention.

The discourses and constructions of sovereignty visible in and around the Union between 1975 and 1981 developed in local, provincial, and national contexts, producing multiple expressions of sovereignty that changed according to local tribal goals, Union ideologies, gender dynamics, national political contexts, and internal debate. Observing the definition and deployment of various forms of sovereignty provides new understandings of the concept as not simply inappropriate for Indigenous peoples or an all encompassing and therefore useless notion, but as a broadly defined, yet historically and culturally specific phenomenon that is negotiated, contested, and highly adaptable. By examining Indigenous politics through the lens of sovereignty we gain a better understanding of sovereignty and how it operates as well as how sovereignty related to pan-tribal unity in this era. This chapter revealed numerous expressions of sovereignty that expose the complex political realities of the time, while simultaneously exposing layers of political recognitions and refusals within the BC Indigenous movement. Tribal and district councils and Indigenous women’s groups pushed back against the Union’s definitions of sovereignty and unity as well as its self-appointed role as the sole political authority required to bestow political recognition on others. Through this, these interest groups made a strong case for multiple sovereignties.

<sup>125</sup> Sharon Venne, “Indian nations seek world support,” *Indian World* 3, no. 9 (January 1981): 10-11

## **Chapter 9.**

### **Conclusion**

The creation of the Union resulted from a natural progression towards pan-tribal political organization and a direct response to the federal government's 1969 White Paper, but also represented a widespread belief in unity as a tool to achieve Indigenous rights recognition. "United we stand, divided we perish," was the rallying cry in 1969. This statement was grounded in longstanding experiences with the Canadian state's eliminatory tendencies and the desire to have the settler state recognize Indigenous rights and title, as well as a "politics of refusal" or the belief that Indigenous rights were inherent and not dependent on state recognition. These two forces, recognition and refusal, and their interaction would shape the Indigenous political movement in BC and its drive for unity, particularly when one strategy would overpower the other in key historical moments. Multi-politics provides a way to better understand political articulations in this era, capturing the nuances of Union politics as well as change over time. It helps us understand Union politics and the development of the BC Indigenous political movement outside the paradigm of success and failure. As a conceptual tool, multi-politics embraces the fluidity, complexity, and inconsistency of Union politics.

This study set out to decolonize the history of Indigenous politics by privileging Indigenous knowledge, voices, and interpretations. It has re-defined the boundaries and expectations of what constitutes politics, including a strong rematriation of Indigenous politics by firmly locating Indigenous women into the BC political movement. This close examination of the Union proves that Indigenous peoples continually assess their socio-political needs and activate multiple and at times, overlapping, competing, and contradictory strategies consisting of tribal and pan-tribal political expressions. The central thesis of this study holds that pan-tribal unity in British Columbia between 1969

and 1981 was not only experienced unevenly across the population, but it was conceptualized and activated differently according to the lived realities, political goals, and shifting historical circumstances of various interest groups. Yet, despite this, the discourse of unity remained dominant throughout the Indigenous political movement, proving that amongst political, geographical, ideological, and interpersonal challenges, BC Indigenous peoples ultimately believed that unity, in some shape or form, was the most effective political strategy. This study confirmed the complex multi-political nature of BC Indigenous peoples, whereby multiple personal, local, tribal, provincial, national, gender, and class-based political modalities are negotiated at any given moment explains the flexibility of pan-tribal unity and the persistence of Indigenous politics. By introducing the concept of multi-politics, this study also proved that Indigenous populations did more than simply refuse or accept state recognition as a condition for their politicization. The history of the Union demonstrates that at times internal political dynamics overwhelmed any considerations of the state, and further, that Indigenous leadership could use calls for state recognition as a political strategy to pursue alternate ends. This was evident in George Manuel's negotiation with the federal government concerning Indian Government, which appeared to privilege state sovereignty over Indigenous, but ultimately served to facilitate Indigenous political autonomy.

This study also acknowledges that Indigenous political issues and the Union itself are not simply in the past. They have continued currency today, especially as the Union continues to pursue the yet unresolved Indian land question. Between 1981, when this study ends and 2015, the Union and the BC Indigenous movement have undergone much change. A quick survey of this period is a useful way to cap off a study that has continually emphasized the long history of Indigenous politics. Just as I have extended the historical roots of the Union beyond the nineteenth century, I must also consider the Union beyond the scope of this study. Taking an uncompromising stance on Indigenous title and rights, insisting that any agreement with the settler state cannot result in the explicit or implicit extinguishment of Indigenous rights, the Union has come up against the BC government's current strategy: the BC Treaty Process (BCTC). Created in 1992 under the auspices of an independent facilitating body, the BC Treaty Commission, the treaty process helps negotiate land treaties between the provincial government and First

Nations groups to achieve solutions to land ownership and Indigenous self-government.<sup>1</sup> The Treaty Commission evolved out of recommendations from the 1991 British Columbia Claims Task Force, which brought together representatives from First Nations and the provincial and federal governments, including representatives from the emerging First Nations Summit, an organization of First Nations and Tribal Councils interested in developing a provincial treaty process.

The Treaty Commission also has roots in the broader context of Indigenous-settler relations in the 1990s, specifically the renewed period of direct action by Indigenous communities. Although direct action was a well-established political strategy used extensively across the province, especially in the summer of 1975, according to Nicholas Blomley, “the summer of 1990 saw the most extensive rounds of blockades ever.”<sup>2</sup> The BC blockades were certainly influenced by the standoff between the Kahnawà:ke Mohawk and the city of Oka, Quebec, as First Nations groups across the nation expressed their solidarity with the Mohawk. Yet BC activism was also intensely local.<sup>3</sup> BC First Nations had negotiated for their rights to be recognized in the Canadian constitution, and had submitted formal land claims statements to the federal government throughout the early 1980s, but the federal government continued to drag their feet, and the provincial government maintained its longstanding stance of not recognizing Indigenous rights. By 1990, tensions were high and First Nations demanded action on Indigenous title and rights issues.

When the BC Treaty process began, it attracted much interest from First Nations who had spent twenty years with the Union, tribal councils, and other organizations trying to resolve the land question. As a result, the Union saw much of its support siphoned off to organizations like the First Nations Summit, which supported treaty.<sup>4</sup> The treaty process, however, has proven difficult, and many nations have become

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Woolford, *Between Justice and Certainty: The British Columbia Treaty Process* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Blomley, “‘Shut the Province Down’: First Nations Blockades in British Columbia, 1984-1995,” *BC Studies* no. 3 (Autumn 1996): 1-35.

<sup>3</sup> Blomley, 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> Don Bain, personal communication with author, Union of BC Indian Chiefs Offices, Vancouver, BC, April 5, 2012.

disillusioned with the lengthy and costly process, as well as the political costs associated with gaining self-government on treated land and the ultimate discomfort of relinquishing their stake in the wider traditional territories. Some Indigenous peoples also reject the BC Treaty Commission's basic assumption that the British Crown owns the lands in BC and that First Nations are expected to "regain" their title to it.<sup>5</sup> Today, the Union has recovered some of its member nations who have abandoned the treaty process and believe that the Union's ideology of non-extinguishment of title is the only path to take. Although technically the BC Treaty process no longer demands Indigenous peoples "cede, release, and surrender" their Indigenous title to the land not included in treaty, other wise known as "certainty," an undercurrent of this remains.<sup>6</sup> Today certainty is cloaked in more acceptable terminology. The result is that many First Nations view the Treaty process as promoting real-estate agreements rather than nation-to-nation relationships, and for many including the Union this is unacceptable.<sup>7</sup> In her study on alternatives to the BC Treaty Process, Nahumpchin (Jennie Blankinship) captured the sentiments of nations opposed to treaty when she wrote, "the BCTC process, emphasized by many Indigenous leaders, is a façade, a cynical manipulation that perpetuates the problems that negotiations are supposed to resolve; it is veiled as another form of domestication, an advanced form of co-optation, control, manipulation, denial and assimilation."<sup>8</sup>

In spite of growing hostility to the treaty process, the Union has never regained the dominance it held between 1969 and 1975. Yet it remains an important organization both in the history of BC Indigenous politics and in terms of current conditions. When asked to gauge the contributions or legacy of the Union, activists had mixed opinions. Some pointed to the supposed "hey day" of Union organizing in the early 1970s as

<sup>5</sup> Jennie L. Blankinship (Nahumpchin), "Alternatives to the British Columbia Treaty Process: Community Perspectives on Aboriginal Title and Rights" (Master's thesis, University of Victoria, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> The "cede, release, and surrender" clause is present in most of the treaties negotiated between the Crown and First Nations peoples, and stipulates that in exchange for the treaty, First Nations will give up interest in the lands not covered in the treaty. Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories*, Prospero Canadian Collection, 1880 (Calgary: Fifth House Publishers, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Percy Joe, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 5, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Blankinship (Nahumpchin), "Alternatives to the British Columbia Treaty Process."

evidence of a successful organization with much potential that ultimately let greed, power, and government intervention undermine its potential to enact real change. Others rejected this “lost opportunity” interpretation and reasoned that overall the Union has been a stable political organization through which advances in politics, education, health and welfare, economic development, have been achieved. Yet, just as Chief Richard Malloway lamented the haltingly slow progress of Indigenous rights issues in 1969, in 2013 Lower Nicola Chief Don Moses insisted activists today are still fighting the same battles he entered the movement fifty years ago to address.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, over the past three years many of the activists I interviewed expressed their disappointment that over the years the faces around the table changed, the reports got longer, but the issues remained the same, and the solutions seemed out of reach.<sup>10</sup> This problem is not unique to the Union, and other Indigenous organizations, including the national Assembly of First Nations, face criticism from grassroots and resurgent activists about the purpose, direction, and accomplishments of Indigenous politics. For example, recently the Assembly of First Nations has been cast as a settler state-dominated body that simply reproduces colonial oppression, and is currently facing questions about its validity and ability to speak for the nation’s First Nations populations.

Amid this slow progress, however, is a glimmer of hope. As I have argued here, the settler-colonial project remains incomplete, largely due to acts of resistance by Indigenous peoples, and as a result, the dialogue between Indigenous and state actors is still ongoing. Today, the Union has moved past the lexicon of treaties to pursue litigation and direct action, while many other nations continue to take incremental steps towards rights negotiations, “negotiating for small pieces of the puzzle,” as current Union executive director Don Bain noted.<sup>11</sup> Unlike organizations such as the First Nations Summit that believe in beginning with Indigenous rights and title recognition from the

<sup>9</sup> Don Moses, interview with author, Merritt, BC, June 11, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Clarence Pennier, interview with author, Stó:lō Tribal Council office, Agassiz, BC, July 25, 2012; Sioliya (June Quipp), interview with author, Cheam First Nation, Rosedale, BC, June 25, 2012; Saul Terry, interview with author, Vancouver, BC, August 30, 2012; Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, interview with author, Splotsin te Secwepemc First Nation, Enderby, BC, June 4, 2013; Delbert Guerin, interview with author, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nation, Vancouver, BC, May 31, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Bain, personal communication.

reserve base first and then moving outwards, the Union demands holistic recognition from entire tribal territories. Believing in the power of Indigenous sovereignty, the Union, and a growing number of First Nations peoples, are increasingly unconcerned with state interpretations, acceptance, or recognition of Indigenous rights, and continue to enact longstanding interpretations of sovereignty and strong traditions of activism in their daily lives. Bain noted that the Union's original vision of the strength of unity remains today, and he argued, "It's not about collapsing goals in together, but standing together."<sup>12</sup> Pan-tribal unity, in other words, continues to be a dominant theme. The recent Idle No More movement demonstrates the strength of unity and how the Union continues to place Indigenous activists on the frontlines of resistance. Many are entering a stage of politics Glen Coulthard has termed, "resurgent politics of recognition," which is "premised on self-actualization, direct action, and the resurgence of cultural practices that are attentive to the subjective and structural composition of settler-colonial power."<sup>13</sup> Reflecting on the Union's activities, including a willingness to become involved in direct action strategies and their stance on non-extinguishment, Clarence Pennier suggested the Union embraces many of the same attributes as resurgent politics, and that this has the potential for transformative politics.<sup>14</sup>

The Union remains on the front lines of the Indigenous sovereignty movement through engagements with government, anti-pipeline demonstrations, protests over Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and a myriad of other political issues. Therefore, understanding this history takes on new importance. Many activists that were involved in the Union during the timeline of this study are still politically active today and others continue to have a stake in the political outcomes of Indigenous rights. Many also spoke of their hope that the younger generations would learn this history and become motivated, as they did, to continue the fight. Xwisten Chief Saul Terry believes, "a lot of youth don't really know the real history of what has come to be now. And so they are quite oblivious of what their struggles were or continue to be."<sup>15</sup> In other words, current

<sup>12</sup> Bain, personal communication.

<sup>13</sup> Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota), 24.

<sup>14</sup> Pennier, interview.

<sup>15</sup> Terry, interview.



and future generations need to understand the political histories of their ancestors, and this study provides this knowledge. With this in mind, this study is inherently and unapologetically an activist piece, which holds that Indigenous-centered narratives and Indigenous knowledge are critical to promoting meaningful and effective political engagement; to re-shaping the historical record and providing accessible and recognizable knowledge for the younger generations; to achieving justice for past and continued political wrongs; and most importantly, to ensuring the strength of our Indigenous communities.

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## Appendix

### Former and Current Band Names

| Former Name                      | Current Name                             | Former Name                   | Current Name   |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>1. Williams Lake District</b> |  | <b>2. West Coast District</b> |  |
| <b>Alexandria</b>                | ?Esdilagh First Nation                   | <b>Ahousaht,</b>              | Ahousaht First Nation                                |
| <b>Alexis Creek</b>              | Tsi Del Del                              | <b>Clayquot</b>               | Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation                           |
| <b>Alkali Lake</b>               | Esk'etemc                                | <b>Hesquiaht</b>              | Hesquiaht First Nation                               |
| <b>Anaham</b>                    | Tl'etingox-t'in                          | <b>Nitinaht</b>               | Ditidaht First Nation                                |
| <b>Canim Lake</b>                | Government Office                        | <b>Ohaiht</b>                 | Huu-ay-aht First Nation                              |
| <b>Canoe Creek</b>               | Tsq'escen'                               | <b>Opetchesaht</b>            | Hupacasath First Nation                              |
| <b>Nemaiah Valley</b>            | Stswecem'c/Xgat'tem                      | <b>Sheshaht</b>               | Tseshaht First Nation                                |
| <b>Quesnel</b>                   | First Nation (Canoe and Dog Creek)       | <b>Toquaht</b>                | Toquaht First Nation                                 |
| <b>Soda Creek</b>                | Xeni Gwet'in                             | <b>Uchucklesaht</b>           | Uchucklesaht First Nation                            |
| <b>Stone</b>                     | Lhtako Dene Nation                       | <b>Ucluelet</b>               | Ucluelet First Nation                                |
| <b>Toosey</b>                    | Xat'sull                                 | <b>Nootka</b>                 | Mowachaht First Nations                              |
| <b>Williams Lake</b>             | Yunesit'in                               | <b>Kyuquot</b>                | Kyuquot First Nation                                 |
| <b>Nazko</b>                     | Tl'esqox                                 | <b>Ehattesaht</b>             | Ehattesaht   |
| <b>Kluskus</b>                   | T'exelc                                  | <b>Muchalaht</b>              | Muchalaht First Nation                               |
| <b>Ulkatcho</b>                  | Nazko First Nation                       |                               |  |
|                                  | Lhoosk'uz Dene Government Administration |                               |  |
|                                  | Ulkatcho First Nation                    |                               |  |
| <b>3. Bella Coola District</b>   |  | <b>4. Lakes District</b>      |  |
| <b>Bella Bella</b>               | Heiltsuk Nation                          | <b>Burns Lake</b>             | Ts'il Kaz Koh  |
| <b>Bella Coola</b>               | Nuxalk Nation                            | <b>Omineca</b>                | Wet'suwet'en First Nation/Nee-Tahi-Buhn <sup>a</sup> |
| <b>Kitasoo</b>                   | Xai'xais Band Council (Klemtu)           | <b>Fort George</b>            | Lheidli T'tenneh First Nation                        |
| <b>Oweekeno</b>                  | Wuikinuxv Nation                         | <b>Lake Babine</b>            | Lake Babine Nation                                   |
|                                  |  | <b>Stellaquo</b>              | Stellat'en First Nation                              |
|                                  |  | <b>Necolsie</b>               | Nak'azdli  |
|                                  |  | <b>Finlay River</b>           | Tsay Keh Dene First                                  |

|                                    |  |   |   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
|                                    |  | <b>Cheslatta</b><br><b>Fraser Lake</b><br><b>McLeod Lake</b>        | Nation<br>Cheslatta Carrier Nation<br>Nadleh Whut'en Band<br>McLeod Lake Indian<br>Band |
|                                    |  | <b>Takla Lake</b><br><b>Stoney Creek</b><br><b>Stuart-Trembleur</b> | Takla Lake First Nation<br>Saik'uz First Nation<br>Tl'azt'en Nation                     |
| <b>5. Lillooet-Lytton District</b> |  | <b>6. Fort St. John District</b>                                    |   |
| <b>Anderson Lake</b>               | Anderson Lake First Nation                         | <b>Saulteau</b>   | Saulteau First Nation   |
| <b>Mount Currie</b>                | Lil'wat  | <b>Fort Nelson</b>  | Fort Nelson First Nation  |
| <b>Douglas</b>                     | Xa'xtsa  | <b>Hudson Hope</b>  | Halfway River First Nation  |
| <b>Skookumchuck</b>                | Skatin Nations                                     | <b>Fort St. John.</b>   | Blueberry River First Nation  |
| <b>Samahquam</b>                   | Samahquam First Nation                             |   |   |
| <b>Bridge River</b>                | Xwisten  |   |   |
| <b>Cayoose Creek</b>               | Sekw'el'was  |   |   |
| <b>Fountain</b>                    | Xaxli'p  |   |   |
| <b>Lillooet</b>                    | T'it'q'et  |   |   |
| <b>Pavilion</b>                    | Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nation                          |   |   |
| <b>Seton Lake</b>                  | Seton Lake Band                                    |   |   |
| <b>Boothroyd</b>                   | Boothroyd Indian Band                              |   |   |
| <b>Kanaka Bar</b>                  | Kanaka Bar Indian Band                             |   |   |
| <b>Siska</b>                       | Siska Indian Band                                  |   |   |
| <b>Spuzzum</b>                     | Spuzzum First Nation                               |   |   |
| <b>Boston Bar</b>                  | Boston Bar First Nation                            |   |   |
| <b>Lytton</b>                      | Lytton First Nation                                |   |   |
| <b>Skuppah</b>                     | Skuppah Indian Band                                |   |   |
| <b>7. West Fraser District</b>     |  | <b>8. East Fraser District</b>                                      |   |
| <b>Burrard</b>                     | Səl'ílwəta? (Tsleil-Waututh/Burrard) First Nation  | <b>Aitchelitz</b>   | Aitchelitz First Nation   |
| <b>Coquitlam</b>                   | Kwikwetlem First Nation                            | <b>Chehalis</b>   | Sts'ailes First Nation  |
| <b>Katzie</b>                      | Katzie First Nation                                | <b>Langley</b>  | Kwantlen First Nation   |
| <b>Musqueam</b>                    | x <sup>w</sup> məθk <sup>w</sup> əy <sup>ə</sup> m | <b>Matsqui</b>  | Matsqui First Nation  |
| <b>Semiahmoo</b>                   | Semiahmoo  | <b>Scowlitz</b>   | Scowlitz First Nation   |
| <b>Sechelt</b>                     | Sechelt Indian Band                                | <b>Skway</b>  | Shxwhà:y Village  |
|                                    |  | <b>Skulkayn</b>   | Skowkale First Nation   |
|                                    |  | <b>Soowahlie</b>  | Soowahlie   |
|                                    |  | <b>Skwah</b>  | Skwah First Nation  |

|                                       |                                      |                                |   |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Sliammon</b>                       | Tla'amin First Nation                | <b>Squiala</b>                 | Squiala First Nation  |
| <b>Homalco</b>                        | Xwémalhkwu                           | <b>Tzeachten</b>               | Tzeachten First Nation  |
| <b>Klahoose</b>                       | Klahoose First Nation                | <b>Yakweawkwoose</b>           | Yakweawkwoose First Nation  |
| <b>Squamish</b>                       | Skwxwú7mesh                          |                                |   |
| <b>Tsawwassen</b>                     | Úxwumixw<br>Tsawwassen First Nations | <b>Sumas</b>                   | Sumas First Nation  |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Lakahahmen</b>              | Leq'á:mel First Nation  |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Kwaw-kwaw-Apilt</b>         | Kwaw-kwaw-Apilt First Nation  |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Seabird Island</b>          | Seabird Island Band   |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Skawahlook</b>              | Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation   |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Hope</b>                    | Chawathil First Nation  |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Cheam</b>                   | Cheam First Nation  |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Popkum</b>                  | Popkum First Nation   |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Peters</b>                  | Peters Band   |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Ohamil</b>                  | Shxw'ow'hamel First Nation  |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Union Bar</b>               | Union Bar Indian Band   |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Yale</b>                    | Yale First Nation   |
| <b>9. North Coast District</b>        |                                      | <b>10. Kwawkwalth District</b> |   |
| <b>Masset</b>                         | Old Masset Village Council           | <b>Cape Mudge</b>              | We Wai Kai Nation   |
| <b>Skidegate</b>                      | Skidegate Band Council               | <b>Comox</b>                   | K'ómoks First Nation  |
| <b>Kincolith</b>                      | Gingolx                              | <b>Kwicksutaineuk</b>          | Kwikwasut'inuxw<br>Haxwa'mis First Nation/<br>Kwicksutaineuk/Ah-Kwa-Mish Tribes |
| <b>Kitkatla</b>                       | Gitxaala First Nation                | <b>Tanakteuk</b>               | Da'naxda'xw Aweatlata Nation  |
| <b>Metlakatla</b>                     | Metlakatla First Nation              | <b>Kwawwawaineuk</b>           | Kwawwawaineuk   |
| <b>Port Simpson</b>                   | Lax Kw'alaams Band                   | <b>Mamalilikulla</b>           | Mamalilikulla-<br>Qwe'Qwa'Sot'EmFirst Nations                                   |
| <b>Hartley Bay</b>                    | Gitga'at First Nation                | <b>Quatsino</b>                | Quatsino First Nation   |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Kwiakah</b>                 | Kwiakah First Nation  |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Kwawkwelth</b>              | Kwagu'ł   |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Nuwitti</b>                 | Tlatlasikwala First Nation  |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Tsawataineuk</b>            | Dzawada'enuxw   |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Turnour Island</b>          | Tlowitsis   |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Campbell River</b>          | We Wai Kum First Nation   |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Nimpkish</b>                | 'Namgis First Nation  |
| <b>11. Kootenay-Okanagan District</b> |                                      | <b>12. Babine District</b>     |   |
|                                       |                                      | <b>Hazelton</b>                | Kispiox Band Council  |

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Okanagan</b>  | Okanagan Indian Band   | <b>Kispiox<br/>Kitwanga<br/>Hagwilget</b>   | Anspayaxw<br>Gitwangak<br>Hagwilget Village<br>Council   |
| <b>Penticton<br/>Upper<br/>Similkameen<br/>Westbank<br/>Tobacco Plains</b> | Penticton Indian Band<br>Upper Smelqmix<br>Westbank First Nation<br>Tobacco Plains Indian Band | <b>Glen Vowell<br/>Kitsegukla<br/>Kitwancool<br/>Moricetown</b>   | Sik-e-Dakh<br>Gitsegukla Band<br>Council<br>Gitanyow<br>Moricetown Band<br>Administration  |
| <b>Shuswap<br/>Osoyoos<br/>Lower<br/>Similkameen<br/>Spallumcheen</b>      | Shuswap Band<br>Osoyoos Indian Band<br>Lower Smelqmix<br>Splatsin te<br>Secwepemc              |   |  |
| <b>St. Mary's<br/>Columbia Lake</b>  | ?Aq'am<br>?Akisq'nuk First<br>Nation   |   |  |
| <b>Lower<br/>Kootenay</b>  | Yaqan nu?kiy   |   |  |
| <b>13. Terrace<br/>District</b>  |  | <b>14. South Island<br/>District</b>  |  |
| <b>Gitlaxdamix</b>   | Gitlaxt'aamix Village<br>Government  | <b>Beecher Bay</b>  | Beecher Bay First<br>Nation  |
| <b>Canyon City</b>   | Canyon City Indian<br>Band   | <b>Cowichan<br/>Esquimalt<br/>Lyackson<br/>Nanaimo</b>  | Cowichan<br>Esquimalt Nation<br>Lyackson First Nations<br>Snuneymuxw First<br>Nation   |
| <b>Kitselas<br/>Greenville</b>   | Kitselas Nation<br>Laxgalts'ap Village<br>Government   | <b>Penelakut<br/>Pauquachin<br/>Tsawout<br/>Songhees<br/>Pacheedaht<br/>Chemainus<br/>Lake Cowichan</b> | Penelakut First Nation<br>Pauquachin First Nation<br>Tsawout First Nation<br>Songhees First Nation<br>Pacheedaht First Nation<br>Stz'uminus<br>Lake Cowichan First<br>Nation |
| <b>Kitimaat<br/>Kitsumkalum</b>  | Haisla First Nation<br>Kitsumkalum First<br>Nation   | <b>Halalt<br/>Malahat<br/>Nanoose<br/>Qualicum<br/>Tsartlip<br/>Tseycum<br/>Sooke</b>                   | Halalt First Nation<br>Malahat Indian Band<br>Snaw-naw-as<br>Qualicum First Nation<br>Tsartlip First Nation<br>Tseycum First Nation<br>T'Sou-ke Nation                       |
| <b>15. Thompson-<br/>Nicola District</b>                                   |  |   |  |

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Adams Lake</b>          | Cstelen/Adam's Lake<br>Indian Band         |
| <b>Bonaparte</b>           | St'uxwtews/Bonaparte<br>Indian Band        |
| <b>Kamloops</b>            | Tk'emlúps te<br>Secwépemc                  |
| <b>Neskainlith</b>         | Sk'etsin/Neskonlith<br>Indian Band         |
| <b>Oregon Jack</b>         | Oregon Jack Creek<br>Band                  |
| <b>Cook's Ferry</b>        | Cook's Ferry Indian<br>Band                |
| <b>Nicomen</b>             | Nicomen Indian Band                        |
| <b>Shackan</b>             | Scw'exmx                                   |
| <b>Clinton</b>             | Whispering<br>Pines/Clinton Indian<br>Band |
| <b>Ashcroft</b>            | Ashcroft Indian Band                       |
| <b>Deadman's<br/>Creek</b> | Skeetchestn Indian<br>Band                 |
| <b>Little Shuswap</b>      | Quaaout/Little<br>Shuswap Indian Band      |
| <b>North<br/>Thompson</b>  | Simpcw First Nation                        |
| <b>Coldwater</b>           | Coldwater Indian<br>Band                   |
| <b>Lower Nicola</b>        | Lower Nicola Indian<br>Band                |
| <b>Upper Nicola</b>        | Upper Nicola Indian<br>Band                |
| <b>Nooaitch</b>            | Nooaitch Indian Band                       |
| <b>High Bar</b>            | Llenileney'ten/High<br>Bar First Nation    |

<sup>a</sup> The Omineca Band split into the Broman Lake and Nee-Tahi-Buhn Bands in 1984. Broman Lake is now referred to as Wet'suwet'en First Nation.