RELIGION, POPULISM, AND SOCIAL CREDIT IN ALBERTA

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN A

CANADIAN POPULIST MOVEMENT: THE EMERGENCE AND

DOMINANCE OF THE SOCIAL CREDIT PARTY IN ALBERTA

By

HARRY H. HILLER, B.A., B.D., Th.M.

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AUTHOR:　　　　Harry Herbert Hiller, B.A.　(University of Alberta)

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　B.D.　(North American Baptist
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Seminary)

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Th.M.　(Princeton Theological
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Seminary)

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS:

　　　　Common knowledge regarding the rise of the Social Credit movement

in Alberta and the nature of its leadership in the ensuing years has led

to the frequent identification of Alberta Social Credit with fundamenta-

list Protestantism.　It was then supposed that there must have been an

intricate relation between religion and politics in Alberta during the

Social Credit administration.　The veracity of this assumption was tested

by the construction of hypotheses that would test the conservative and

radical contributions of religion to socio-political change, determine

why the movement with its religious overtones failed to spread to other

provinces, and explain the new role of religion with the advent of in-

creasing secularization in the movement's later existence.　Attention was

also devoted to a descriptive analysis of Social Credit in England, the

land of its origin, to determine whether this perceived relationship in

Alberta was indigenous to the province or an integral part of the British

movement.　In spite of some religious interests within English Social

Credit, it was concluded that Aberhart's adaptation was his own and the movement he moulded assumed its own characteristics as a result of Alberta's own needs. It was determined that religion was an important variable within the early movement because it helped solve the multi-dimensional crises that the largely unorganized residents were facing. Aberhart's emphasis on the Bible particularly provided not only a source of legitimation but became a rallying point and a source of cohesion for a recently-migrated population by transcending traditional institutions and customs. The Social Credit movement fused social, political, economic, and religious goals into a special social phenomenon -- a crusade, whose compelling demands made life-long converts. The fact that the crusade failed to take root elsewhere in Canada was explained as a result of the movement being a specific and unique response to Alberta's own efforts to create meaning and order out of her environmental problems. Furthermore, as the pressures towards secularization increased, religion per se was compartmentalized from the political sphere but was indirectly linked through moral commitments. It was concluded that in Alberta Social Credit, religion functioned as an anchor amidst change, served as a vehicle for change, provided a framework of meaning to interpret change, and finally, furnished a basis for morality to ensure orderly change.

PREFACE

A few explanatory notations regarding form and style may be of assistance to the reader at the start.

As much of the data was collected through field interviews, the attempt was made wherever possible to preserve significant statements in the words of the respondents. Many of these statements are set off in the form of quotations, but their source has not been footnoted in an attempt to preserve anonymity and privacy. Numerous other factual details were obtained in the interviews and, after checking these facts with other respondents, they were incorporated into the manuscript as unfootnoted data. As a general rule, footnote references regarding source were restricted to data that has been published already.

No publishing data (publisher, date, and place of publication) has been included in the footnotes except for author, title, and page location. Publishing details are contained in the Bibliography.

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INTRODUCTION

I. Theoretical Background

The Enlightenment and its aftermath, positivism and historical materialism, had passed stern judgment on traditional ideas and institutions.[1] Man was exposed as both the "manipulator" and the "manipulated" by which old ideas and beliefs prevented the development of the best society possible. New social constructions could be achieved only if the ideological supports that barely veiled the vested interests of the traditional society were uncovered. When tacked to the scaffold of this type of analysis, it was not surprising that religious ideas and religious institutions were neatly dissected as defenses for an outmoded or unjust social order. Religion was not an independent variable. It was dependent on the dominant social and economic forces and thus could be explained by reducing religious phenomena to sociological or economic terms.

Into such an intellectual climate Max Weber dared to sketch a bold thesis that attempted to avoid any reductionism.[2] Religion was not

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[1] Irving Zeitlin, Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory, identifies three historical phases of social analysis and critique around which debate centered: the Enlightenment, positivism, and Marx.

[2] Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

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merely moulded by the socio-economic goals. In noting the differing

propensities to develop economic rationalism among Protestants and

Catholics, Weber argued that the principal explanation for this dif-

ference must be centered in "the permanent intrinsic character of their

religious beliefs" as well as the historical situation.[3] He perceived

a direct link between a set of theological ideas, i.e., Calvinism, and

the emergence of the spirit of capitalism.[4] Two doctrines were of

particular significance: the doctrine of predestination and the con-

cept of a "calling". Because one's election has been foreordained by

an absolute and transcendent God, the recipients of salvation were

unknown to man. According to Weber, it was the necessity to obtain

absolute certainty and the pressures to manifest one's election exter-

nally that produced a "reversion" to salvation by works.[5] The sphere

of this demonstration of election became this world, and the means be-

came rational, disciplined, and systematic conduct that repudiated

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[3] Ibid., p. 40.

[4] Weber made two important qualifications to his argument that
are often forgotten. He was not advocating that capitalism was something
new to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for it had been in exis-
tence for a long time. What was new, however, was the "spirit" of
capitalism in which profit was sought rationally and systematically as
an end in itself. Ibid., pp. 64-68. Secondly, in speaking of Calvinism,
Weber was less interested in the official teachings of Calvin and those
who promulgated similar doctrines than in the effects of those doctrines,
i.e., the "psychological sanctions which originating in religious belief
and the practice of religion, gave a direction to practical conduct and
held the individual to it". Ibid., p. 97.

[5] The religious basis for the development of worldly asceticism
is discussed in ibid., Chapter 4. Weber specifically points out that it
was not Calvin who taught the importance of works but the demands of
practical pastoral work which had to deal with the suffering and anxiety
caused by the doctrine of predestination. Ibid., p. 111.

pleasure in order to "add to the glory of God on earth". Calvinism, Weber argued, removed monastic discipline from the cloister so that the "rationalization of conduct within this world, but for the sake of the world beyond, was the consequence of the concept of calling of ascetic Protestantism".[6] The restrictions that Protestant asceticism placed on consumption rather than on the accumulation of wealth, inevitably led to the accumulation of capital and the sanctioning of profit-making in any labour conceived as God's calling.

Few volumes have created such controversy and yet stimulated such continued interest as The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. It has been pointed out that this work is often considered to be Weber's poorest, despite its renown.[7] Some have criticized his theory and have left it in ruins.[8] Others have acknowledged errors and inadequacies but have rebuilt Weber to make his theory plausible.[9] Recently, there has been a shift to re-explore the historical detail and thus even reconfirm much that was formerly in contention.[10] The lengthy

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[6] Ibid., p. 154.

[7] N. J. Demerath and Phillip E. Hammond, Religion in Social Context: Tradition and Transition, p. 44.

[8] For example, Kurt Samuelsson, Religion and Economic Action: A Critique of Max Weber.

[9] For example, J. Milton Yinger, The Scientific Study of Religion, pp. 380-395. See also, Demerath and Hammond, op. cit., p. 105, who reformulate Weber's argument to show that it was not the change in religion that was significant, but the eclipse of religious influence altogether that makes Protestantism amenable to capitalism. They take their cue from Parsons' argument regarding increasing religious differentiation.

[10] For example, David Little, Religion, Order and Law: A Study in Pre-Revolutionary England. Little poses the question Weber's critics have

and cumbersome footnotes packed with supportive arguments in The Protestant
Ethic are evidence of Weber's awareness of his critics and his desire to
respond to them. Unfortunately, much of the controversy has evolved from
misunderstandings of Weber's intentions as well as the type of correla-
tion between religion and capitalism that he is suggesting.[11]

The Role of Ideas in Social Action

Weber is clearly engaging in debate with Marx. Ideas are not
merely the expression or reflection of class interests; they are deriva-
tive forces in propelling human conduct. "To speak here of a reflection
of material conditions in the ideal superstructure would be patent
nonsense", Weber declares. Instead, the question is "What was the back-
ground of ideas which could account for the sort of activity apparently
directed toward profit alone as a calling toward which the individual
feels himself to have an ethical obligation?"[12] Marx had pointed out
the impossibility of ideas having an independent effect on historical
developments since they merely reflect the social position of their

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asked as to whether Weber ignored the gap in time and the social changes
between Calvin and English Puritanism. He reaffirms the striking consis-
tency between Calvin and early English Puritanism and notes that similar
tensions and tendencies were present (p. 26).

[11]Weber's lack of attention to the background, development, and
transmutations of Calvinism in the historical settings presents a very
unsatisfactory argument. A far more comprehensive socio-historical
treatment, though not with the same end in mind, is found in Troeltsch,
The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, acknowledged by Weber to
have filled this void (p. 284). Footnote 119.

[12]Weber, op. cit., p. 75. Compare Marx, The German Ideology, p.
28, where the material production of life is the "starting point to ex-
plain the whole mass of different theoretical products and forms of
consciousness, religion, philosophy, ethics...".

proponents.[13] But did Weber conceive ideas to be independent of interests?
Yinger feels that this is exactly the mistake Weber makes in assuming that
Calvinism developed by its own inner dialectic rather than as a part of
a larger socio-economic system.[14] However, Weber was not proposing an
idealistic theory of causation; ideas and interests were linked, but
primarily in the later routinization process of a movement through what
Weber called elective affinity. Gerth and Mills state: "For Weber,
there is hardly ever a close connection between the interests or the
social origin of the speaker or of his following with the content of the
idea during its inception....Only during the process of routinization
do the followers 'elect' those features of the idea with which they have
an 'affinity', a 'point of coincidence' or 'convergence'".[15] Since Weber
notes that religions succeed because they propose salvation from the
theodicy problem,[16] it was his conclusion that religious ideas held by
individuals might produce unanticipated consequences for the society as
a whole.[17] It was this wider concern which justified Weber's isolation
of one variable (religion) in order to trace its effects on the total

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[13]For an excellent discussion of the similarities and differences
between Marx and Weber, see Norman Birnbaum, "Conflicting Interpretations
of the Rise of Capitalism: Marx and Weber", British Journal of Sociology
4 (June, 1953), 125-141.

[14]J. Milton Yinger, Religion in the Struggle for Power, p. 123.

[15]H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, From Max Weber: Essays in
Sociology, pp. 62-63.

[16]Weber, The Sociology of Religion, Chapter 9.

[17]Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, p. 90.

social system. Parsons sums up this point by claiming that, "Weber's

interest is by no means confined to the logical consequences of the

initial system of religious ideas, or to the directly expressed wishes

of religious leaders for practical conduct based on them. He is, rather,

concerned with the total consequences of the religious system".[18] Ideas

are therefore significant because they act back on the society through

the individuals who maintain them.

In debating with Marx, Weber was not repudiating him. "Every

such attempt at explanation", declares Weber, "must, recognizing the

fundamental importance of the economic factor, above all take account

of the economic conditions. But at the same time the opposite correla-

tion must not be left out of consideration. For though the development

of economic rationalism is partly dependent on rational technique and

law, it is at the same time determined by the ability and disposition of

men to adopt certain types of practical rational conduct".[19] It is thus

clear that Weber had accepted Marx's initial presupposition of the im-

portance of materialist conditions.[20] Gerth and Mills sum up Weber's

intellectual indebtedness by noting that, "With Marx, he shares the

sociological approach to ideas: they are powerless in history unless

they are fused with material interests. And with Nietzsche, he is deeply

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[18]Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, vol. II, p. 521.

[19]Weber, op. cit., p. 26.

[20]Near the conclusion of The Protestant Ethic, Weber argues that it is the next task to sketch precisely "how Protestant asceticism was in turn influenced in its development and its character by the totality of social conditions, especially economic" (p. 183).

concerned with the importance of ideas for psychic reactions".[21] Ideas

do not exist in a vacuum but interact with economic forces to form dy-

namic social systems. It is through comparison of divergent religious

beliefs and their effects on a style of economic life that one can see

their stark interrelationships as evident in Weber's other studies on

India, China, and Judaism. Perhaps Weber's most significant statement

of intention, often overlooked in the controversy, is found at the con-

clusion of The Protestant Ethic. "But it is, of course, not my aim to

substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided

spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and history. Each is

equally possible, but each, if it does not serve as the preparation, but

as the conclusion of an investigation, accomplishes equally little in

the interest of historical truth".[22] If sociology is to be a science of

"interpretive understanding of social action", no simple and final

theory can be constructed of multi-variant human behavior. Therefore,

the selection of any particular variable of social explanation is

legitimate and necessary as the preliminary means to a fuller understand-

ing of human activity.

The Question of Causation

Sociology is interested in ideas not for their own sake but as

they influence human action. Weber sought to find the link between

ideological commitments and particular styles of economic behavior.

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[21]Gerth and Mills, op. cit., p. 62.

[22]Weber, op. cit., p. 183.

The question then is not one of the source of ultimate causation but of interrelationship. Perhaps Weber's interpreters have carefully made more explicit what was previously left implicit in Weber's writing. Birnbaum perceives that in Weber's system ideology is not an automatic derivative of social position but rather evolves as "a means of interpreting that position".[23] Parsons makes a similar interpretation of Weber. Religious ideas merely "define the situation" and are not the primary driving forces. It is man's religious interests, i.e., salvation,[24] that provide the motivation. The content or type of action that follows, says Parsons, will depend on the specifications of the religious ideas adopted. Bendix emphasizes that Weber conceives of man as having the possibility of rational choices in the adoption of particular ideas but that these ideas must be limited to those congenial with the individual's life experience.[25] As Parsons comments in his major discussion on Weber, there is no attempt to show how religion changes interests in The Protestant Ethic but how religious ideas canalize interests in pursuit of a goal.[26] The "chicken-egg controversy" regarding ideas and interests is perhaps totally misleading because its quest for a final and ultimate cause is circular and therefore unending. Raymond Aron makes an excellent point that ultimately the direction of a man's interests is related

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[23]Birnbaum, op. cit., p. 141.

[24]Talcott Parsons, "The Role of Ideas in Social Action", in Essays in Sociological Theory, rev. ed., pp. 28-29.

[25]Reinhard Bendix, Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait, p. 96.

[26]Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, vol. II, p. 520.

to his vision of the world.[27] Economics is merely one aspect of human existence that governs the nature of one's vision of the world. Weber, according to Aron, is attempting to make explicit the affinity that existed between a particular vision of the world and a certain style of economic activity.

These statements stand at considerable distance from those who would search for ultimate causation in Weber. Many have misunderstood Weber to say that ascetic Protestantism caused capitalism.[28] Yet Weber states explicitly in The Protestant Ethic that Calvinism was not the originator of capitalist development, but "a powerful ally along the way".[29] He argues that while it would be a grave error to conclude that the Reformation was an historically necessary result of economic change, it would be equally erroneous to maintain that capitalism was "the creation of the Reformation". Weber asserts, "We only wish to ascertain whether and to what extent religious forces have taken part in the qualitative formation and the quantitative expansion of that spirit over the world".[30] The "chicken-egg" controversy over what caused what appears

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[27]Raymond Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought II, pp. 261-264.

[28]It is not our intention to discuss the controversy or to re-construct the historical argument. We are only interested in Weber's treatment of religion within the social system and his selection of re-ligion as an independent variable for analysis. For a history of the controversy and the treatment of Weber by his critics, cf. Ephraim Fischoff, "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: The History of a Controversy", Social Research 11 (1944), 54-77; and Robert W. Green, ed., Protestantism and Capitalism: The Weber Thesis and Its Critics.

[29]Weber, op. cit., p. 62.

[30]Ibid., pp. 90-91.

to be not only futile in Weber's estimation but also definitely mis-

leading. To speak of cause at all, of necessity, requires a multiple

theory of causation. Therefore, Weber acknowledges that he is treating

only one side of the causal chain[31] and thus he cautiously can elucidate

in what sense religion was not cause but "a powerful ally along the

way".

The emphasis in Weber then is on the role Calvinism played in

shaping and propelling capitalist development. Calvinism and capitalism

found their affinity not in confrontation as systems but through

individuals who linked the demands of both world-views in social action.

It is this concern for motivation in social behavior that led Weber to

talk about the "Protestant Ethic" rather than Calvinism as associated

with the spirit of capitalism. Without going into great detail, let us

state baldly what occurred. Calvinism reorganized the individual per-

sonality by making this-worldly asceticism a sanctioned religious goal.

Calvinism reorganized personal social ethics by legitimating the pursuit

of gain not for personal glorification but as one's Christian duty.

Weber argues, "The religious valuation of restless, continuous, systema-

tic work in a worldly calling, as the highest means to asceticism, and

at the same time the surest and most evident proof of rebirth and genuine

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[31]Ibid., p. 27. Yinger is relatively pessimistic about this re-
lationship and speaks of it as the crossing of independent systems due
to "historical accident". Religion in the Struggle for Power, p. 122.
Demerath and Hammond perceive a significant shift in Weber's
later works to give more weight to socio-economic factors. While this
may be true in terms of more developed statements regarding this side
of the causal chain in his later works, it is obvious from the above
discussion that what was undeveloped in The Protestant Ethic was not due
to a shortened perspective on Weber's part at that time. Op. cit., p. 54.

faith, must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the ex-
pansion of that attitude toward life which we have here called the spirit
of capitalism".[32] This transformation in individual world-views had
implications for the social system. It provided the dynamic for a
break from traditionalism. It sanctioned the unequal distribution of
wealth and provided sober and conscientious employees and employers
"who clung to their work as to a life purpose willed by God".[33] In
this sense, Weber can talk about religion influencing "the ability and
disposition of men to adopt certain types of practical rational conduct",[34]
as forming a basis for "ethical obligations",[35] as providing "psycho-
logical sanctions",[36] as negating the "inhibitions of traditionalist
ethics",[37] and as "the most powerful conceivable lever for the expan-
sion"[38] of the spirit of capitalism. In specifying the nature of this
correlation, Weber has shown how religion and an economic system were
allies along the way, and he has made this affinity credible.[39]

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[32]Weber, ibid., p. 172.

[33]Weber, ibid., p. 177. Weber was realistic enough to see that
once firmly established, capitalism became emancipated from its old sup-
ports. Religious asceticism escaped from the iron cage of materialism
that now imprisons man (pp. 181-182).

[34]Ibid., p. 26. Emphasis is mine.

[35]Ibid., p. 75.

[36]Ibid., p. 97.

[37]Ibid., p. 170.

[38]Ibid., p. 172.

[39]Raymond Aron declares that, "Setting aside any questions of
causality, Weber has at least made the affinity between a religious attitude
and an economic commandment credible". Main Currents in Sociological
Thought II, p. 263.

The Weberian Heritage in Further Research

Weber's macro-analyses of religion and society ploughed so much new ground and raised so many questions that his work has served as a reference point for a continual flow of research. Four strands of such research may be identified: critiques and reappraisals of Weber's historical interpretation regarding the emergence of modernity; contemporary studies on the relationship between religion and general ethical conduct; research that traces the role of religion as one explanatory variable in an historical event; and studies on the role of religion in the modernization of under-developed countries.

Reference has already been made in the footnotes to contributions to the historical debate regarding the validity of the affinity Weber portrays between Calvinism and capitalism. Arguments at this level had reached a stalemate by the fifth decade of this century because of a lack of new evidence and creative insights. However, new interest has recently been kindled in the Protestant Ethic debate by additional research on its original setting. Two works have been primarily responsible for this shift. In 1968, Michael Walzer published The Revolution of the Saints, in which he traced the role of English Puritanism as a revolutionary ideology (which we will discuss later). Walzer pushes Weber's argument a step further back by not only stating that Calvinism was an "anxiety-inducing ideology" but asking why men should have adopted such an ideology in the first place.[40] The second work was published in 1970

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[40]Michael Walzer, The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origin of Radical Politics, pp. 307 ff.

by David Little entitled <u>Religion, Order, and Law.</u>[41] Little explores the

tensions in pre-revolutionary England between traditionalism and legal-

rationality as a basis for social order. Taking this distinction from

Weber, Little argues that the Calvinist-Puritan pattern of order utilized

the church, a new institution not dominated by the established authorities,

to devalue social and political traditions, and to establish a new model

and basis of stability to legitimate the new rational-capitalist social

order. Both of these studies have broken new ground in the continuing

debate.

The second strand of research has focused on measuring the in-

fluence of religion in contemporary life. Such studies usually single

out one of Weber's hypotheses for further testing. For example, a number

of studies focused on Weber's supposition of an inherent difference in

worldly orientation between Protestants and Catholics and have used

statistical measurements to determine its contemporary validity. Andrew

Greeley has surveyed this research and called for a moratorium on the

debate, concluding that perceived Protestant-Catholic differences of

this nature are inapplicable in America.[42] More well-known is the type

of large-scale quantitative analysis done by Gerhard Lenski in Detroit.[43]

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[41]David Little, <u>Religion, Order, and Law:</u> <u>A Study in Pre-</u>
<u>Revolutionary England.</u>

[42]Greeley reacts to the statement that American Catholics are other-
worldly. He claims that intervening variables such as Catholic ethnic groups
need to be considered. When these variables are considered, he concludes
there is little difference in the economic rationality of Protestants and
Catholics. "The Protestant Ethic: Time for a Moratorium", <u>Sociological</u>
<u>Analysis</u> 25 (Spring, 1964), 20-33. This issue of <u>Sociological Analysis</u>
contains a series of articles criticizing and revising the Protestant Ethic
theme.

[43]Gerhard Lenski, <u>The Religious Factor</u>, rev. ed.

Lenski asks how religious commitment affects daily life (economic be-
havior, political behavior, family life) and answers the question, not
in terms of ideological commitments, but in terms of organizational
commitments to a socio-religious group. Members of these groups become
"carriers" of complex religiously based subcultures which influence their
social action. Lenski asks his initial question within the Weberian
framework but shifts ground from ideology to group identity as the
source of religious influence. A similar approach was used by Lawrence
K. Kersten in a recent study which attempted to assess the influence
of religion on members of a specific denomination -- Lutheranism.[44]

Weber's methodology has also become a pattern in understanding
other historical events. The selection of religion as a significant
variable in the birth or decay of political regimes or political move-
ments, social movements in general, nationalism, or immigrant assimila-
tion, for example, have helped to clarify the functions and consequences
of religion in a society. It is not assumed in these studies that
religion is the explanatory principle but that it sheds specific light
on one aspect of social action. We conceive our study to be constructed
within this framework and further comments will follow.

The fourth strand of research attempts to explain the role of
religion in the modernization of under-developed countries. The Weberian
hypothesis is tested as a significant factor in the breakdown of tradi-
tional institutions and the advent of industrialization. Changes in

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[44]Lawrence K. Kersten, The Lutheran Ethic: The Impact of Religion
on Laymen and Clergy.

religious systems or resistance to change, and the birth of new religions

provide rich data in the search for an understanding of the social strains

in modernization and the role of religion in the transition. An excel-

lent sourcebook for further study is S. N. Eisenstadt's The Protestant

Ethic and Modernization: A Comparative View.[45]

The Context of Our Case Study

It has often been assumed that religion had some relationship to

the rise and dominance of the Social Credit political party in Alberta.

Yet the nature of that relationship has been obscured by its treatment

as an interesting sidelight of the depression and by lack of a coherent

systematization of facts.

Taking the Weberian empirical and theoretical heritage as our

reference point, our goal will be to seek to determine the role of re-

ligion in the anticipated relationship with the success of a political

movement.

From the perspective of social change and social movement theory,

the landslide victory of 56 seats in a legislature of 63 seats in 1935

by a political party that had been in existence for only a short time

previously was a unique phenomenon that deserves explanation. With an

untried monetary theory, leaders inexperienced in legislative activity,

and an electorate already torn from the two-party system and committed

to a farmers' government, the rapid accumulation of support to another

political party was somewhat surprising. The shock waves Social Credit

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[45]S. N. Eisenstadt, The Protestant Ethic and Modernization: A Comparative View.

produced throughout Canada evoked such widespread interest in the movement that a series of ten studies on the background and development to the rise of this phenomenon in Alberta was commissioned.[46] Most of these studies dealt with background material such as the problems and social expressions unique to Western Canada, or attempted to describe some aspect of the Alberta environment. Only two of the studies dealt with the Social Credit movement itself, i.e., the works of Irving and Macpherson.

John A. Irving's The Social Credit Movement in Alberta[47] is a most comprehensive sourcebook on the early stages of the movement from Aberhart's migration to Calgary to the attainment of power in the election of 1935. Because he limits his investigation to the formative years of Social Credit in Alberta, Irving proposes an analysis of the movement as a phenomenon of mass psychology. While rejecting "highly simplified and schematic models" of social causation and stating a preference for a "pluralistic interpretation", Irving ultimately explains the appeal of the movement in psychological terms, i.e., suggestibility, desire for meaning, need satisfaction, ego involvement, and preferred group tendencies.[48] To achieve this end, he constructs a conceptual framework of the phases of the social movement interpreted via the philosophy,

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[46]This series of studies was multi-disciplinary, was edited and directed by S. D. Clark in the period 1950-59, and was sponsored by the Social Science Research Council of Canada.

[47]John A. Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta. Cf. also, "Psychological Aspects of the Social Credit Movement in Alberta", Canadian Journal of Psychology, 1 (March, 1947), 17-27; (June, 1947), 75-86; (September, 1947), 127-140.

[48]See Preface and Chapter 11 in Irving, op. cit.

leadership, strategy, and tactics. Irving acknowledges his indebtedness to Hadley Cantril for this "psychology of social movements" perspective.[49] The book is full of first-hand phenomenological accounts of attitudes and responses by the participants themselves, and is laden with detailed facts, much of which would now be difficult to obtain. Irving is particularly adept in objectively analyzing and correcting variant interpretations of events produced by the heat of political battle.[50] But Irving's limited time perspective needs to be expanded. The passing of the years has given an historical perspective on the Sitz im Leben of this period of Alberta's heritage that permits additional insights. The tensions of continuity and change in Alberta Social Credit over the period of power also provides interesting data on the relationship between a socio-economic environment and ideological adaptation. Certainly, it could be argued that a theory of mass psychology has little validity after the movement has been in office for twenty years. Further, Irving makes no attempt to relate his findings to literature already available in this sub-discipline or to trace the sociological implications of his findings. Perhaps the time has come to extract theoretically significant points from Irving's study and to relate them to other studies that have appeared even since Irving's publication.

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[49] Hadley Cantril, The Psychology of Social Movements.

[50] For example, Social Crediters, including Aberhart, claimed from the beginning that they were an educational pressure group with no political designs. Opponents of Social Credit, on the other hand, perceived the movement to be political from the start and maintained by Aberhart's lust for power. Irving attempts to settle this controversy by careful analysis of the facts.

C. B. Macpherson's work, Democracy in Alberta: Social Credit
and the Party System,[51] does expand the time limitations of Irving to
the later governing year of 1949. He presents a rigorous analysis of
the theory and practice of the UFA government as a prelude to the Social
Credit success in exploiting Alberta's subordination as a quasi-colonial
economy to a "mature capitalist economy" in the east. The class struggle
of independent producers, property holders, and committed small-scale
capitalists of the prairies is the key explanatory variable in under-
standing the Socred rise to power, according to Macpherson. Social
Credit moderated these class tensions by a process of delusion in which
"delegate democracy" became "inspirational plebiscitarian democracy" --
at best "an illusory democracy".[52] Macpherson's economic determinism
minimized the multiplicity of factors that contributed to the rise of
such populism, and his negative judgment of Social Credit's contribution
to class warfare prevented him from perceiving its genuine expressions
of participant democracy. Without passing further judgment on his
brilliantly original theory of the quasi-party system, it is readily
conceded that Macpherson did make an excellent case for the economic
tensions produced in a quasi-colonial economy that lead to explosive
political action. Nevertheless, Macpherson cannot hide his disappoint-

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[51]C. B. Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta: Social Credit and
the Party System, second ed.

[52]Ibid., pp. 246-247. For an interesting debate on Macpherson's
thesis, cf. S. M. Lipset, "Democracy in Alberta", The Canadian Forum 34
(November, 1954), 175-177, and (December, 1954), 196-198; Macpherson's
response (January, 1955), 223-225; and a further comment by Dennis H.
Wrong, "Parties and Voting in Canada", Political Science Quarterly 73
(September, 1958), 397-412.

ment in Social Credit as marking the "deterioration"[53] of class conscious-
ness in the search for a new basis of socio-economic organization.

In spite of dominant economic factors such as the depression and
oil revenues, it appears that no discussion of Alberta Social Credit is
complete without some reference to religion. Perhaps because of the
persistent personal identification of Aberhart and Manning with religious
endeavor, this aura has been transferred to the political movement.
Their activity in religious broadcasting and religious education is often
perceived as pre-political aspects of the movement merely continued as a
convenient means to maintain political power. Engelmann and Schwartz
state that Aberhart and Manning utilized "their religious authority to
political advantage".[54] Lipset assessed Aberhart's success as "a com-
bination of religious fervor and economic radicalism".[55] Macpherson
observed the affinity of the "magical promise" of Social Credit with
Aberhart's fundamentalist religious gospel.[56] Nearly all accounts of
Alberta Social Credit contain at least a passing reference to some re-
ligious influence but little development or explanation of that theme.

There is nothing unusual about the linking of religion with

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[53]Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, p. 236.

[54]F. C. Englemann and M. A. Schwartz, Political Parties and the
Canadian Social Structure, p. 59.

[55]S. M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism, p. 154.

[56]Macpherson, op. cit., p. 145.

politics in Canada. Studies of the role of religion as a variable in federal voting patterns in Canada have demonstrated a general correlation between Catholicism and the Liberal vote, and Protestant affiliation and a vote for the Conservative party.[57] This general correlation, however, is too vague and fails to account for marked exceptions, particularly in the presence of other party alternatives. For instance, the large number of Catholics voting for Social Credit in Quebec and the absence of Quebec Protestants voting Social Credit, in contrast to both Protestant and Catholic support (although predominantly Protestant support) for Social Credit in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia demonstrates that regional variables must be more important than the general Protestant-Conservative, Catholic-Liberal correlation.[58] Furthermore, in a secular age when society is compartmentalized through institutional specialization, religion and politics increasingly become independent rationally autonomous entities, and it becomes increasingly

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[57]Most of these studies have been done in central Canada. Lynn McDonald, for example, points out the greater importance of religion over social class in explaining and predicting voting behavior. "Religion and Voting: A Study of the 1968 Canadian Federal Election in Ontario", Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 6, #3 (1969). Cf. also, Grace M. Anderson, "Voting Behavior and the Ethnic-Religious Variable: A Study of the Federal Election in Hamilton, Ontario", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science 32 (February, 1966), 27-37; and John Meisel, "Religious Affiliation and Electoral Behavior: A Case Study", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science 22 (November, 1956).

[58]Robert R. Alford, "The Social Basis of Political Cleavage in 1962", in John Meisel, ed., Papers on the 1962 Election, pp. 203-234. Provincial variations in Social Credit support with reference to occupation, social status, and education again demonstrate the importance of regional factors.

difficult to determine where and how religion and politics converge, if at all beyond a superficial level. In Alberta, one hardly speaks about Aberhart or Manning without thinking about the overt espousal of deep religious convictions. It is then assumed that religion and politics have become entwined in both the Social Credit party and its premiers without adequately tracing the nature of this relationship.

For Macpherson, religion is of minimal importance because it belongs to the superstructure. He acknowledges its presence in Alberta but the class struggle and the ownership of the means of production represent the real issues in his analysis. Irving rightly places religion as one of a conglomerate of factors that gave impetus to the rise of Social Credit. He emphasizes the continuity of the political movement with the previously existing religious movement, but does not specify why this continuity could take place. The absence of a theory pertaining to Aberhart's rise to religious popularity prevents the construction of a solid sociological explanation for why and how this continuity existed. In his attempt to be comprehensive, Irving hesitates to detail the force of any particular factor in moulding or propelling Social Credit to power. While giving full documentary evidence of historical facts that prove a relationship between religion and politics in Alberta, Irving is largely suggestive in this matter in barely sketching an analysis of the nature and significance of this relation.

Another book that deserves mention at this point is W. E. Mann's Sect, Church, and Cult in Alberta.[59] As part of the commissioned series

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[59] W. E. Mann, Sect, Church, and Cult in Alberta.

on the background and development of Social Credit, Mann proposed a
theory whereby Alberta's religious diversity and fundamentalism were
perceived as the result of a socially marginal and non-conformist popu-
lation. We will have a better opportunity to assess his analysis of the
socio-religious milieu into which Social Credit took root in a later
chapter. What is important here is that Mann fails to explicitly tie
Aberhart's movement to this milieu, and one is left wondering amidst
Mann's plurality of religious non-conformity how Aberhart ever succeeded
in uniting such a diverse population. Without commenting further at
this point on the accuracy and method of Mann's analysis of this socio-
religious environment, his study gives only subtle hints as to how this
climate accounted for the success of the Social Credit movement. We
might also argue that it would be beneficial to re-examine Mann's frame-
work of interpretation in the light of more recent theoretical contri-
butions for this type of analysis made by the sociology of religion in
the interval.

The question of whether religion had any significance for the
Social Credit movement has thus been a matter of great debate. It has
generally been answered affirmatively regardless of whether the inter-
pretation emphasized economic determinism, or such stereotype interpre-
tations as "religious fanaticism" or "political illiteracy".[60] Unfor-
tunately, such discussions have degenerated into mere argument because

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[60]Irving, op. cit., p. 225, argues that these interpretations
are often carelessly propounded without a systematic investigation of
the data, and particularly of the attitudes of the people.

th~y have not asked <u>how</u> religion related to Social Credit and <u>why</u> it did
so. It is ~·1y after we have traced the nature of this relationship
that we can draw concl~~ions about the functions and consequences of
religion in the rise to power and continued dominance of Social Credit
in Alberta.

We are therefore proposing to isolate religion as an explana-
tory variable to account for the rise and dominance of Social Credit.
Historically this is necessary as a corrective to accusatory and mis-
aligned statements regarding this relationship. Sociologically this is
necessary to bring into sharper focus the role of religious ideology,
organization, and commitment in the formulation, legitimation, propulsion,
consolidation, and institutionalization of a socio-political movement.
With Weber, we do not suggest this isolation of one variable to be a
final explanation; we merely perceive our study of the religious factor
to be one side of the causal chain. In sum, the frequent identification
of Social Credit with fundamentalist Protestantism leads us to hypo-
thesize that there must be an intricate relation between them. What is
that relation, how does it manifest itself, and what are its functions
and consequences for Alberta society? These are the central questions
with which we will be concerned.

II. Theoretical Specifications and Method

Durkheim was intrigued by the contribution religion made to
social order and social stability. Weber, in contrast, demonstrated
how religion could be a significant factor in social change. On one
occasion religion might be a conservative ingredient to the social cement

of a culture, and on another occasion religion might be an agent of re-
vo¹⁻∶∶∶₋ₐₙ and social upheaval. The strains and stresses of marked social
change often produce contortions and distortions of particular components
.ᶜ a society that foster a clearer perception of the intricately woven
relationships otherwise hidden in the conditions of social equilibrium.
In the social disruptions produced by an emerging capitalist society,
Weber noted the predominance of a new-born religious system that demon-
strated remarkable affinity to the expanding capitalist economic order.
The changes in emphasis within the religious order contributed to the
successful adoption of the changes demanded by the economic order.
Weber attempted to specify the role of religion as an independent vari-
able in this type of social change. He observed that breaks from tra-
dition were usually precipitated by a charismatic figure who, in his
religious character, was called a prophet. But social change was more
than mere changes in overt behavior; it was the relationship and changes
in the complexes of meaning maintained by individuals and their resul-
tant social action.

Weber removed Calvinism and capitalism from the general level of
historical coincidence, or even determinism, to the specific level of
interrelationship. Parsons conceives Weber's contribution to be at this
level of specificity in that he "helped to shift the basic problem from
the question of whether and how much religious and cultural values in-
fluence behavior and society, to that of how they influence them and in
turn are influenced by the other variables in the situation".[61] Weber

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[61]Talcott Parsons in the Preface to The Protestant Ethic, p. xvii.

specified the role of Calvinism in the break from tradition and the
social changes that capitalism demanded. We would like to ask what role
funadmentalist Protestantism played in the break from tradition and the
social changes that Social Credit demanded. In one sense, it is probably
inaccurate to talk of Alberta as even encumbered by tradition. Yet the
unorthodox financial proposals of Social Credit required a complete dis-
regard for established structures and procedures. Further, Alberta by
1935 was struggling under the impact of a relatively recent large-scale
migration and settlement of an ethnically diverse population. Waves of
immigration coupled with alternating periods of prosperity and depres-
sion made social change the order of the day for Albertans. We would
expect then to be able to trace a period of religious change, religious
reaction, and maybe even the emergence of a new form of religious ex-
pression as demanded by the needs of the situation. Perhaps by sur-
veying particular studies of the role of religion in social change, we
will be able to extract significant theoretical strands to weave some
hypotheses regarding the nature and function of the interrelationships
we have perceived.

A Survey of Significant Case Studies

Robert Bellah's Tokugawa Religion[62] represents an exploration in-
to the political and economic rationalization of Japan during the
Tokugawa Period (1600-1868). The freedom from traditionalism that such
rationalization required produced social strains which, according to

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Robert N. Bellah, Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-
Industrial Japan.

Bellah, led to the strengthening of the existing religious system rather than the development of a new religious orientation. He argues that movements originating in religious interests made important unintended contributions to the process of rationalization by intensifying tendencies inherent in the central value system. The religious teaching of an ethic of filial piety, loyalty, obedience, diligence, economy, and righteousness produced a population "ethically activist" and "inner-worldly ascetic" which had functional analogues to the Protestant ethic.[63] Labor became a "sacred obligation" for all the classes in the society and took its roots in religious, political, and familistic ideas. Of particular importance was the Shingaku movement in removing the stigma from economic activity and legitimating the activities of the merchant class by making the pursuit of trade and industry a manifestation of loyalty and selfless devotion. Bellah cautions against presenting only the ethical teachings of the movement which at bottom are only a series of exhortations and do not represent its compelling force.[64] The dynamic which provides the motivation for the fulfillment of these ethical imperatives is the religious appeal for salvation related to deep inner needs. It is this religious motivation which transforms the ethic from mere exhortation to dynamic response. While it was the strong polity and dominant political values in Japan that favored the emerging industrial society, Bellah argues that it was the religious motivation and legitimation of an inner-worldly ethic that intensified commitment to the central

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[63] Ibid., p. 98.

[64] Ibid., p. 165.

value system. The social changes required by the restoration of the emperor were facilitated by the religious commitments that expressed this development in familiar fundamentalist terms.[65]

In sum, Bellah has demonstrated that social change does not necessarily result in the emergence of a new religious system, but that it can revert to the basic, fundamental, and common elements of the existing system, and reinforce these elements, in order to legitimate other changes in social action. Secondly, it is often man's religious interests that provide the motivational dynamic in the active adoption of and commitment to new patterns of behavior.

Michael Walzer's creative study on Puritanism, The Revolution of the Saints,[66] argues that Calvinist organization and ideology was primarily an agent of social change and reconstruction. He envisions the disciplined, enthusiastic, and purposive activity of the Puritans as "a kind of military and political work-ethic", similar to Weber's worldly asceticism but not oriented "toward acquisition so much as toward contention, struggle, destruction, and rebuilding".[67] It is not surprising that intellectuals such as clergy and educated laymen should have been the first radicals, sensitive to the strains of social change, and most readily convertible to new experiments in ideology. Puritan congregational life was training for democracy and participatory govern-

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[65]Bellah notes that, "Just as the Protestant Reformation proclaimed, 'Back to the Bible' and Reform Islam 'Back to the Koran', so the Shinto Revival movement proclaimed 'Back to the Kojiki'". Ibid., p. 195.

[66]Walzer, op. cit.

[67]Ibid., p. 13.

ment, and sanctioned political participation as part of the endless struggle with the forces of evil. But the question then is why men should have found the disciplined religious controls of Puritanism so congenial when they wished to seek freedom from the well-entrenched traditional social controls. Using an interpretive theory from Erich Fromm,[68] Walzer suggests that Calvinism explained in theological terms the anxiety feelings men already felt regarding the dangers of the world and then through the role of sainthood offered a way out of the anxiety. Puritanism was not merely a result of social change, social disorder, or personal anxiety but a creative response to and meaningful interpretation of the difficulties before these men. It is not that all seventeenth century men sought to escape from their cherished freedom; rather it was "one possible way of perceiving and responding to a set of experiences that other men than the saints might have viewed in other terms".[69] In this sense, the Puritans were the product of disorder and not the product of a new order. They were "masterless men" who sought to discover new purposes and a new world at the breakdown of traditional controls by reorganizing their lives in rigid self-control. Thus, Puritanism was "an ideology of transition" because it met human needs in the period of uncertainty from the old to the new and unknown order.

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[68]Erich Fromm, _Escape from Freedom_. Fromm brilliantly describes the psychological period of the lag between "freedom from" and "freedom to" in which the individual feels alone and isolated. Increasing aloneness and powerlessness creates the desire for submission again to a new authority or pattern. Fromm applies this interpretive framework to the Reformation. Anxiety and insecurity are the central factors for him in ideological commitments.

[69]Walzer, _op. cit._, p. 309.

Walzer concludes by explaining the disappearance of the saints from British politics as the result of men no longer being afraid or in a time of rapid change and therefore finding Puritanism irrelevant.

In short, Walzer is arguing that the transitional period from the onset of the crumbling of an old order to the relative stability of a new society requires a strong integrative force to give direction and purpose to men who suffer most from anomie. Through disciplined activity, thinking men who are most articulate unite to completely destroy the decaying structures and hold forth ideals for the new world. When relative stability is achieved, radical action and radical ideology need no longer be dominant. Therefore, men do not merely passively reflect on their plight but actively cope with their real problems, and attempt to restructure society in ways consistent with their ideological commitments. Puritanism was not the ideology of a rising class but a personal and collective response to social change.

Koppel Pinson has made an interesting attempt to relate the fervor of Pietism to the rise of German nationalism.[70] In noting the psychological and emotional similarities between nationalism and religion, Pinson seeks to explain the forces that united a divided Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century. He is not suggesting a theory of religious causation for this widespread collective movement,[71] but

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[70] Koppel S. Pinson, Pietism as a Factor in the Rise of German Nationalism. While some questions may be raised about the extent or total impact of Pietism on German society, we are more interested in the nature of the relationship that Pinson is suggesting.

[71] "It is not the purpose of this study to identify Pietism and nationalism. Nor is it our purpose to ascribe the rise of German nationalism solely to the influence of Pietism and Pietist enthusiasm. Nationalism

argues that the enthusiasm and communality engendered by Pietism was

secularized rather than obfuscated by the rationalism of the Enlighten-

ment and thereby was deflected from the religious to secular ends.

Pinson perceives the early German nationalist to be the "enlightened

Pietist".[72] Pietism arose as a reaction to formal dogma and creedal

scholastic argumentation, and sought "a more heartfelt form of religion",

a practical expression of Christianity in purity of life and behavior

rather than learning, and aimed to remove the gulf between clergy and

laity with the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Pietism

gave the lower classes their self-respect, insisted on the importance

of education, and united them with those of other classes who had common

religious goals. The Pietist centrality of "Wiedergeburt" (regenera-

tion) as a religious idea helped loosen the bonds to traditional pat-

terns and was a "preparation" for the social changes later required by

the idea of national regeneration. Reason or tradition were rejected

as the guiding principles of worship in favor of feeling or intuition

which united people for a higher purpose. It was the linking of this

inward bond of unity with the outward display of enthusiasm that pro-

vided fertile soil for the rise of nationalism. Nationalism could then

be made either co-extensive with religion or be entirely secularized as

the new religion.

Stated succinctly, Pietism originated or popularized a world-

view and particular social patterns that lent themselves to the rise of

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is too great and all-embracing a movement to have been the product of any
single current or historical factory". Ibid., p. 180.

[72]Ibid., p. 26.

nationalism. The religious goals and ideology of Pietism legitimated
the break from ecclesiastical traditionalism, which made possible the
later transference of emotions to its secularized expression in nationa-
lism. The predominant Pietist religious themes of regeneration, feeling,
enthusiasm, priesthood of all believers, and spiritual unity in outward
diversity easily lent themselves to a secular interpretation by the
apparent continuity of purpose. What was at first primarily a religious
endeavor united people of divergent social classes and made them sus-
ceptible to a patriotic endeavor. While nationalism may have found
Pietism as a "preparation" and supportive at first, patriotism and
religion soon went their separate ways.

J. J. Mol attempts to examine religion and social change not in
the economic order or in the development of the patriotic fire of
nationalism, but in the assimilation of immigrants into the United
States.[73] Mol hypothesizes that the adjustments required to be made by
immigrants in forsaking old social patterns for the demands of the social
milieu of the new country would be most easily facilitated when their
religious ideology emphasized an emotional detachment from the world.
Taking his cue from Weber and Parsons, Mol perceives the transcendental
God of Puritanism as providing an inviolate Archimedean point, thus per-
mitting reconstruction of other parts of the world.[74] To test the
hypothesis, Puritan-pietistic-evangelical clergymen with their stress on
personal fervency and faith in a transcendental God are compared with

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[73] J. J. Mol, The Breaking of Traditions: Theological Convictions in Colonial America.

[74] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

orthodox-conservative clergymen who are institutionally oriented to traditional doctrines and rituals. After examining such factors as recency of arrival, age at arrival, cultural distance, geographical dispersion, and anticipatory socialization, and finding nothing significant, Mol argues that change came easier to the pietists because their theology sanctified change for an ultimately higher purpose than for the orthodox who were fixated on the maintenance of traditions. The evangelicals were more likely to be more tolerant and socialize with other denominational and ethnic groups, and to favor independence from the mother church of the country of origin. Fervency of commitment to the transcendental God was the key variable in sanctioning change. The widespread influence of evangelicalism in America can thus be explained as the "need for religion which combined both the ancient symbols of the heritage of the immigrants with the fervency which dissolved this heritage from its old-world cultural setting. New forms and traditions could crystallize around this transcultural Archimedean point".[75]

Puritan theology was not the product of the new environment but found in the new environment conditions which furthered its spread. The prior fervent commitment of Puritan evangelicals to a transcendent God rather than earthly institutions provided the necessary emotional detachment from traditional patterns at the same time that it provided an inviolate reference point to assist in the adjustment to the social changes faced in the new world.

The dean of the sociologists of Canadian religion is S. D. Clark.

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[75]_Ibid._, p. 71.

Clark's basic premise in analyzing Canadian development is that the church-type of religious organization is characteristic of a "mature", socially stable society, and that the sect-type of religious expression is a product of social instability and frontier conditions.[76] Clark perceived sectarianism as a means of adjustment amidst social disorder and therefore to be discarded when social integration developed. "It [the religious sect] served to maintain the religious interest as an effective basis of social organization in areas of change where traditional systems of social control, including that of the church, were breaking down".[77] In the absence of institutional controls, sects became the primary agent of social cohesion. Sectarianism, then, was the expression of social disorganization and succeeded because it was a means to reorganization and social unification. The New Light movement in Nova Scotia, for example, "canalized in a religious direction" the

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[76]S. D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada, p. xii. The pejorative elements of Clark's analysis come to the fore with his use of such words as "marginal" and "mature". Maturity, it could be argued, is a relative matter and Clark's use of it indicates a derogation of frontier life as inferior to his implied standard. His basic assumption also fails to allow for the possibility of sects existing within "mature" societies, which indeed is the case. It could also be argued that churches often become more sect-like in adaptation to a particular environment so that, for example, the Presbyterian church in Nova Scotia or Alberta would exhibit different characteristics than the Presybterian church in southern Ontario. Furthermore, the church does not grow out of a mature society. As an institutional component of an ongoing society, it changes and adapts as the society at large changes and adapts itself. The same bias protrudes in his article on "The Religious Sect in Canadian Economic Development", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science 12 (November, 1946), 443, where sectarianism is equated with "fanaticism" and "social and economic misfits". W. E. Mann's analyses contain the same biases in our opinion, and we will comment on this further in a later chapter.

[77]Clark, Church and Sect in Canada, p. 433.

strains of social, political, and economic tensions of a segmented

society on the brink of internal revolution and yet in reaction to the

American Revolution.[78] In this situation, sectarianism became identified

with the quest for local autonomy, the overcoming of individual isola-

tion and status relationships, and traditional barriers to promote

social solidarity, and the means to integrate the restless, the inse-

cure, and those devoid of social status which the unadaptable and ex-

ternally rooted Church of England could not provide.

In sum, Clark describes sectarianism as a product of the strains

caused by social disorder and instability. Sects become a means whereby

men attempt to cope with social disorganization and can seek a new

basis for social unity. They provide the social controls to attempt a

reorganization of society and reinforce the repudiation of traditional

ties. In a period of rapid social change, sects are the transitional

supports for those who need them along the road to a new level of social

equilibrium.

Each of these studies has pointed out how religion was a signifi-

cant variable in some aspect of social change. Usually the relationship

was not one of a direct effect of religion on economics or politics but

an indirect or unintended contribution to the restructuring of society.

The reorganizational potential of religion rather than merely its con-

servative quality has prompted Eisenstadt to talk about the "transforma-

tive capacity" of Protestantism. He proposes that Weber was primarily

concerned about this dynamic factor instead of causation, and defines it

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[78]Ibid., p. 39.

as "the capacity to legitimize, in religious or ideological terms, the
development of new motivations, activities, and institutions which were
not encompassed by their original impulses and views".[79] We would add
that religion not only has the capacity to legitimize the change but
also to select and delimit the most appropriate motivations, activities,
and institutions that would be consistent with the religious ideology
under the given structural conditions.

These case studies provide intriguing theoretical possibilities
for our understanding of Social Credit in Alberta. We have identified
the period under analysis as a time of marked social change, and desire
to isolate religion as an integral variable in the shaping and coloring
of the political landscape. The following chapters will attempt to
describe the nature of the religious and political milieu and the inter-
relationship of these two spheres, and then we will be in a position to
explain the consequences of religion as a significant factor.

The Construction of Hypotheses

Within the context of social change, the Aberhartian movement
provides a significant example of what Wallace terms a "revitalization
movement".[80] A high rate of individual stress and "disillusionment
with a distorted cultural Gestalt" presents the conditions under which
a revitalization movement becomes "a deliberate, organized, conscious

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[79] S. N. Eisenstadt, op. cit., p. 10.

[80] Anthony Wallace, "Revitalization Movements", American Anthro-
pologist 63 (April, 1956), 264-281. Note that we have used the term
"Aberhartian movement" to indicate the inclusion of the early religious
aspect, the economic aspect, and the later political emphasis as one
movement.

effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture".[81]

Whereas the processes of cultural evolution, drift, and acculturation are usually unintended and long-term, a revitalization movement is usually a deliberate organization for change and occurs within one generation. Wallace perceives religious movements to be one of the most vital forms of revitalization because of their inherent latent functions.[82] In our study, the total saturation and impact on a given geographical area (Alberta), and the unique combination of religio-politico-economic elements allows us to perceive the Aberhart movement as a conscious effort to construct a more satisfying society. It was not that a dying age-old culture needed to be revitalized as much as a despondent and culturally diverse population sought to construct a more equitable way of living. In this interpretation, the Manning years represented a routinization of the efforts and results of revitalization.

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[81] Ibid., p. 265.

[82] The question could be raised whether all religious movements can be legitimately perceived as revitalization movements. Further, many religious movements attract only a minority of the population and therefore could hardly be considered as having a revitalizing effect on the total society, though it may do so on the personal level. However, in our study, Aberhart's effective penetration of all Alberta with three appeals — religious, economic, and political — and during the time of hardship and depression, meant a larger impact was possible than if it had been solely a religious movement under stable conditions. While we also question Wallace's conception of society as an organism, such a discussion is irrelevant to our adoption of his basic concept of revitalization. Bryan Wilson has argued in personal conversation, that religion is a particularly viable agent in revitalization because its legitimations are so powerful and provide other benefits of latent functions.

The success of any movement in a period of social change is dependent on the construction of bridges that relate the traditional behavior patterns and world-view to the new patterns and world-view emerging in the society. Our case studies have demonstrated the importance of the consolidation of support around particular commonly accepted symbols culled from the old society which can facilitate the restructuring of a new society. We would hypothesize that Aberhart's cross-denominational and non-institutional reaffirmation of traditional Christian themes provided a basis for social support by people of a diversity of background; and that the utilization of appropriate symbols as the inviolate Bible served as a transcultural Archimedean point to assist in the displacement of emotional commitments to old social patterns (Hypothesis #1).

New values, a new ideology, or a new plan for action is much more easily adopted despite its innovative character if it is shown to be continuous with an acceptable element of the old society. Given Aberhart's primary interest in religion and the ideological character of Social Credit, we would hypothesize that the Social Credit themes were legitimized by their presentation as secularized religious themes, and that the same emotions, hopes, enthusiasm, and commitment that centered on the religious symbols were transferred to the crusade that knew no political boundaries (Hypothesis #2).

Our first two hypotheses have produced a curious paradox: Religion can provide a non-changing reference point or stability amidst change at the same time that it legitimates and fosters change. Thus, religion can be both an anchor and a vehicle for change.

People are united in a social movement because of shared experiences, similar goals, and a common socio-economic milieu. Perhaps more than other factors, it is shared experiences that provide the real social glue to solidify people in a common cause. Those who cannot share in the hopes and frustrations of mutual experiences will have difficulty relating to a revitalization movement in spite of relatively similar socio-economic conditions. We would hypothesize that the failure of persistent efforts to expand the movement throughout Canada, and the hostility to the continued use of the same religio-political techniques of propagation was due to the imposition of a movement forged in experiences shared by Albertans but unshared by others even in similar economic environments (Hypothesis #3).

The removal of the conditions which prompted the rise of the revitalization movement required a structural shift in the movement's orientation if it was to survive. The change from economic depression to increasing prosperity, from protest to unexpected power, and from promoting ideals to facing reality meant that goals must be institutionalized and the emotional elements of the movement must be routinized to effectively function in the new conditions. The successes and enthusiasm of the revitalization movement must be codified and memorialized to serve as reference points in the re-orientation of the movement. The transference of power from Aberhart to Manning in Alberta occurred at the advent of these new conditions in which a crusade was no longer viable as a political vehicle. We would hypothesize that Manning compartmentalized religion and politics under these pressures of secularization but linked them again through moral commitments (e.g., honesty,

industry, sobriety) as demanded by the rising middle class in a province
bent on rapid economic expansion (Hypothesis #4).

These hypotheses will be tested and utilized as explanatory
variables throughout the study, but we will defer an evaluation of the
hypotheses to the final chapter.

Our analysis will proceed more or less chronologically. Chapters
II and III are primarily concerned with suggesting the reasons why
Aberhart attracted such a large religious following. Chapters IV to
VI will attempt to determine the context within which Social Credit
arose in England and what affinity it could have had with the Aberhart
movement and the Alberta milieu. The relative scarcity of published
research on this aspect of Social Credit has prompted a more lengthy
description than otherwise would be necessary. Chapter VII aims to ex-
plain how religion became fused with politics. Chapters VIII and IX
attempt to describe the changing role of religion in a movement-turned-
government facing changing environmental conditions.

Methodology

While the significance of this study lies in the sociological
observations it contains, this is not the level with which we begin in
data collection. Before we can ascribe particular functions to religion
in a political situation, it is important first to discover the religio-
political world constructed in the Weltanschauung of the actors. In
other words, the observer cannot interpret the significance of events
in question until he first can reconstruct the meaning the events had
to the observed actor within his social world, and what he meant by

acting within it.[83] Observable behavior does not necessarily reveal anything significant about motives, intentional refraining from action, convictions, or beliefs -- all of which escape sensory observation, but nevertheless are real and inevitably influence action. In addition, the well-defined religious world-view tends to integrate all human activity within its meaning structure so that, for example, becoming engaged in politics is not merely for personal interests but because of the conviction that God has given one this mission for the sake of mankind. We make these observations not for the sake of discussing the truth or falsity of a particular religious world-view as a genuine motivation, but to point out that their perceived existence influences human conduct. Our methodology has aimed to understand as much as pos-- sible the self-interpretations given to Social Credit by Albertans themselves, and particularly by the political elite. Since religion is such a "touchy" and personal matter, it was thought that the first-order construct ought to be our starting point. However, it is our hope that we will have advanced past this level in our analysis to make significant interpretative comments. If for no other reason, this phenomenological foundation has been laid to inform the reader of our caution and awareness of the difficulties in handling the subjective aspects of the data.

Eight months were spent in Alberta gathering data at two intervals, the summer of 1969 and the summer of 1971. Structured and

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[82]We are indebted to Alfred Schutz for this perspective. He warns against perceiving human beings as objects for observation while neglecting the fact that they construct their own pre-interpreted world by doing their

systematic interviews were considered but the diversity of data, the lack of research assistance, and the failure of a trial run in categorizing responses proved its inadequacies for our purposes. The bulk of the open-ended field interviews were obtained in the summer of 1971. All areas of Alberta were visited and the calling of a provincial election for August made it relatively easy to randomly interview supporters and non-supporters in and around local campaign headquarters and on the streets. An attempt was made to speak to merchants and people in civic offices, as well as visiting people in their homes (even nursing homes) who were recommended for their active political interests in Social Credit or otherwise. A deliberate effort was made to interview as many of the MLA's, past and present, and cabinet ministers as possible. Former Premier Manning, cabinet ministers, and party officials were particularly cooperative and helpful. Interviews were also held with executives of all the major religious bodies in Alberta.

Historical data was gleaned from interviews and from newspapers of both towns and cities of relevant periods. All archives in the province were visited for significant materials, including numerous church archives. Sermons and speeches were submitted to content analysis. Demographic data was furnished by the Alberta Bureau of Statistics.

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own observing. This is clearly in line with Weber's concept of _verstehen_ and the thesis of other sociologists such as W. I. Thomas and C. H. Cooley. Alfred Schutz, _Collected Papers_, 2 vols.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF ABERHART'S SECTARIANISM

W. E. Mann discusses Aberhart's religious group as one of many
sects to arise in Alberta as a direct consequence of social disorganiza-
tion. The Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute organization is listed as
one of the fundamentalist sects that co-existed alongside the
Christadelphians, the Seventh Day Adventists, and the Church of the
Nazarene, among others. But is the term "sect" an adequate description
of Aberhart's movement? To assume that Aberhart's religious "sect" was
merely one of a host of minor religious quirks of Alberta's depression
years has obfuscated its relationship to his political endeavor. It is
important, therefore, to precisely describe the essential nature and
uniqueness of his religious efforts in order to properly determine what
significance, if any, they had for the political ventures of Social
Credit.

Sociology utilizes the concept of sect as a neutral term to
describe any social group that finds its raison d'etre in religious
protest. Following Wilson, we prefer the broader use of the term sect
to indicate any small voluntary religious group with membership con-
ditional on a test of merit.[1] This usage makes the concept of "cult"

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[1]Bryan R. Wilson (ed.), Sects and Society, p. 3. In the plethora
of literature on the church-sect typology, we have chosen to follow
Wilson in much of our discussion in this chapter because he has written
extensively on the concept of sect in both an empirical and theoretical
framework. His latest work, Religious Sects: A Sociological Study, re-
presents the most up-to-date theoretical statement on religious sects. In

expendable and does not necessarily delimit the emergence of sects to economic deprivation or in opposition to the social order. Without stating that sects are class phenomena, it is possible to assert that sects represent a quest for a more adequate interpretation of social position and/or social dislocation. While sects might be identifiable by their unique doctrinal elements, "the sect is not only an ideological unit, it is, to a greater or lesser degree, a social unit, seeking to enforce behavior on those who accept belief, and seeking every occasion to draw the faithful apart from the rest of society and into the company of each other".[2] Sects are then sociologically identifiable because their ideology unites people into an organization which becomes a community in demanding conformity to group norms, mores, and roles.

Wilson notes that a sect is "pre-sectarian"[3] until social boundaries are drawn around the sect as a means to withstand hostility and to circumscribe those considered reliable associates. The protest against the established religious bodies eventually leads to withdrawal from them and the development of a strong group-concept. "As hostility is met and as followers need to know who are reliable associates, who are Christians to be accepted at worship or for social intercourse —

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other words, we conceive this effort of Wilson's to have incorporated the most fruitful discussions of the earlier studies on sects and therefore to have superceded them to a more adequate level of sect analysis. For other important works by Wilson on this topic, cf. "An Analysis of Sect Development", American Sociological Review 24 (February, 1959), and Patterns of Sectarianism.

[2]Wilson, Sects and Society, p. 1.

[3]Ibid., p. 29.

so boundaries come to be drawn and the sect acquires real shape".[4]

This is to say that, sociologically, a sect remains pre-sectarian until it differentiates the in-group from the out-group. Through tests of merit as a requirement for membership, and the specificity of ideological differences, the sect sets itself off from unacceptable associates, becomes self-aware, and insulates itself from foreign encroachments and threats to its existence. The maintenance of the organizational group becomes a sanctioned activity and a never-dying allegiance to the group a primary aim. Religious protest, then, is not the essential sociological characteristic of a sect; it is organizational differentiation based on religious protest that creates the sect.

There is a tendency among some groups who engage in religious protest to reject sectarian organization initially and to launch their appeal as an effort to unite all Christians to the common cause, regardless of denominational boundaries. This is particularly the case if no new revelation is claimed and the aim is to renew or reform a decaying element in the orthodox tradition. Mormonism, for instance, claimed a new revelation from the start and therefore was forced into a sectarian position to protect that revelation. On the other hand, the Holiness movement, for example, represented an attempt to re-institute the neglected role of the Holy Spirit as an energizing element in Christian experience, and thus sought to renew the "old bones". T. Rennie Warburton has made the only other reference to this pre-sectarian phase in the literature, and he calls it the "pre-separatist phase" or

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[4]*Ibid.*, p. 29.

the "anti-sectarian" phase.[5] He notes that initially in the British

Holiness movement the goal was quite interdenominational in emphasizing

common basic Christian teachings accepted by other fundamentalists and

to unite all of similar perspective in the deepening of their Christian

experience and the conversion of unbelievers. Warburton asserts:

"...there was an initial conception of a wide, free and unifying move-

ment in Christendom, which only gradually faded as organizational im-

peratives, the need for definition, identification, regulation and

continuity in a specific mission, differing from that of others, imposed

a more typical, more sectarian structure".[6] In order to prevent the

fading of the original group goals and to conserve gains made, the

group must organize and legitimate its organization by specifying its

uniqueness. Specifying pronounced differences brings the group under

attack for which it requires insulation. The establishment of a sect

becomes the primary means to prevent group dissolution and to further

organizational and ideological goals in the face of external threats.

We are arguing that not all movements of religious protest be-

come sects. For one reason or another, they may be fixated at the pre-

sectarian stage for a lengthy period and then become a sect or completely

disintegrate. To the extent that they remain pre-sectarian, their

purpose and function is uniquely different than in being a sect.

If Aberhart's religious group was a sect which, according to

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[5]T. Rennie Warburton, "Organization and Change in a British
Holiness Movement", in Bryan R. Wilson, ed., Sects and Society, pp. 120-
121.

[6]Ibid., p. 120.

definition, had organized itself in differentiation from competing

groups and had insulated itself to prevent dissolution, it would be ex-

tremely difficult to posit any type of relationship to political

activity in the alien society. Insulation and differentiation are not

conducive to worldly involvement. So while Aberhart's religious group

may have exhibited sectarian characteristics, it was not a sect but

the spearhead of a religious movement. It is very difficult even to

find a name to describe this movement. The official names, the Calgary

Prophetic Bible Conference or the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute,

or the Bible Institute Baptist Church represent only one aspect of the

movement individually, and together do not even represent the total

thrust of the movement. The fact that it was a movement is demonstrated

in that it was always identified by its leader,[7] "Aberhart's school",

"Aberhart's broadcast", "Aberhart's church". Many a loyal supporter

had neither attended the school nor the church, but experienced their

personal identification with the cause over the airwaves. Thus the

religious swell which Aberhart evoked was not a sect but a movement of

religious protest and affirmation in which he was the charismatic

leader. It is the burden of this chapter to substantiate this basic

premise. Wilson's eight characteristics of the ideal-typical sect will

be utilized as a theoretical model by which to adjudicate the nature of

Aberhart's religious movement.[8]

[7] J. M. Yinger (The Scientific Study of Religion, pp. 273-274)
suggests that a charismatic sect is an earlier structuring of what will
later become a sect movement. This distinction is not too helpful for
it utilizes the term sect in two different senses and implies that charisma
is only an essential element in the early stages of sect development.

[8] Wilson, Religious Sects, pp. 28-34.

The second major concern of this chapter is to outline the development of these religious efforts as a social movement. It is often suggested that economic or social deprivation is a significant determinant in the origination of religious groups.[9] While deprivation may be significantly related to the congeniality individuals may feel in adapting an ideology when it becomes a widespread movement in the later phases,[10] it may be totally inappropriate to use deprivation as the key variable in explaining the coagulation of a religious group in its initial formulation. Something more than social and economic conditions often directs people to select new social bonds and primary group relationships at the inception of a movement. We would like to posit "prophecy" and "dispensationalism" as the primary ideological interests that were responsible for the formation of the new religious group, and that as the movement gained momentum, new supporters selected those elements of Aberhart's religious core with which they had an elective affinity.

The Rise of the Prophet

Aberhart left Ontario in 1910 at the age of thirty-one as a school principal in Brantford. He had earned a diploma from Chatham Business College, a teaching certificate from Hamilton Normal School, and an extramural Bachelor of Arts degree from Queens University, which,

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[9]C. Y. Glock, "The Role of Deprivation in the Origin and Evolution of Religious Groups", in Robert Lee and Martin Marty, ed., Religion and Social Conflict, pp. 24-36.

[10]We follow Weber at this point in his specification of the concept of elective affinity which we have explained in Chapter I.

combined with his experience and dynamic personality, qualified him for

supervisory responsibilities in education. His departure for Calgary

appears to have been prompted by a promise for similar employment and

the attraction of friends already resident there.[11] On arrival in

Calgary with his wife and two daughters, he became principal of the

Alexandra School (now Mount Royal), followed by King Edward School, and

then was promoted to the newly established Crescent Heights High School

which he developed into a prestigous center of education. Aberhart re-

mained principal of Crescent Heights until he became Premier in 1935.

Participation in church activities was encouraged by his parents

who were not considered to be particularly devout. Aberhart had been

reared in the Presbyterian Church and for a long time had considered

entering the Presbyterian ministry. Lack of finances for full-time

theological study and emerging theological differences appear to be

the only known reasons why this goal was not achieved. Aberhart had

had a liberal exposure to the mass religious gatherings of revival

meetings as a boy and cultivated an early admiration for the American

Evangelist Dwight L. Moody. The Bible Class which he attended at Zion

Presbyterian Church in Brantford was initially taught by a medical

doctor, William Nichol. Nichol introduced Aberhart to the Biblical

interpretation of C. I. Scofield with its emphasis on prophecy, pre-

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[11]Irving discusses the rumour that Aberhart was forced to leave
Brantford because of his use of harsh disciplinary methods with students
and cites evidence which largely discounts the idea. Op. cit., p. 13.
Our account of much of this early period is dependent on Irving, The
Social Credit Movement in Alberta; Harold J. Schultz, William Aberhart
and the Social Credit Party: A Political Biography, Ph.D. Thesis, Duke
University, 1959; and L. P. V. Johnson and Ola MacNutt, Aberhart of Alberta,
as well as Aberhart's personal documents at the Glenbow Alberta Institute
and the Provincial Archives.

millenialism, and dispensationalism. He enrolled in the "Busy People's

Bible Course"[12] which Scofield made publicly available through corres-

pondence, and rechanneled his energies to mastering its 52 lessons in

lieu of official theological training. His new-found enthusiasm for

Bible study and his budding desire to use his didactic skills in sharing

his Bible knowledge soon found expression in the creation of a new

Bible class at the Presbyterian Church and a Bible class for teachers

at Central Public School. By 1907, Aberhart had even begun serving as

a lay preacher in Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist

churches. Nineteen sermons with titles such as "Second Coming of the

Lord", "Not under Law", and "Almost Persuaded" were in his repertoire,

which, according to his own record, he preached 114 times. Carrying

full responsibility as Principal, teaching two Bible classes, studying

for his extramural B.A., and engaging in lay-preaching, all at the same

time, is sufficient evidence of the boundless energies Aberhart pos-

sessed and the discipline of a work-load which set a pattern for the

future.

Settlement in Calgary did not mean the reorganization of his

life-style but an immediate continuance of the same pattern of activities.

Aberhart immediately secured the transference of his membership to Grace

Presbyterian Church in Calgary, where he soon became an elder. He

organized a Young Men's Bible Class which met on Thursday evenings

rather than Sunday mornings and attendance soon climbed over the one

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[12]The Busy People's Bible Course was written by Rev. Charles H.
Morgan, Ph.D., and was based on the Scofield Reference Bible. Aberhart's
personal copy with appropriate notations is on file at the Glenbow Alberta
Institute.

hundred mark. Friction developed with the church leadership, including

the minister, over Aberhart's scriptural interpretations and insistence

on the separation of the finances of the Bible class from church con-

trol.[13] Circumstances soon became unbearable and Aberhart sought to

find a new role at Wesley Methodist Church. Controversy arose again

and he moved on to Trinity Methodist Church where, for the third time

in two and one-half years, Aberhart soon found it impossible to continue

to work within the institutional church. He took his religious work so

seriously that he went to great extremes to ensure its success. Schultz

describes the thoroughness and authority by which Aberhart turned a

dull Bible class into an extraordinary event at Trinity Methodist.

> Here he prepared a series of Euodia Bible Courses
> for the class that he had published in an attrac-
> tive volume and presented to each member with his
> name embossed in gold on the maroon cover. One
> series was on 'The Story of the Heavens' complete
> with graphic illustrations of the Zodiac and
> mythological figures. He prepared the course as
> he would a high school textbook. Each paragraph
> was outlined numerically and each lesson had a
> distinct introduction, body, conclusion and review
> questions. With quotations and translations from
> the Hebrew and Arabic his writings provided an air
> of finality and his learned references seemed con-
> vincing.[14]

Aberhart had a partial outlet for his zeal in continuing to serve as

pulpit supply as a lay preacher for mostly Methodist and Presbyterian

churches in the area. He also found a man with similar interests in

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[13]Irving, op. cit., p. 25. The necessity for securing their own curriculum which was not likely to receive church approval prompted the desire to keep finances separate.

[14]Schultz, op. cit., p. 20.

prophecy, W. T. Broad, and jointly they carried on a series of Sunday lectures at the Eagle Hall until 1915. Shortly thereafter he came upon a small group of Baptists who had organized in the east end as the Westbourne Baptist Church and who were without a pastor. His first sermon was preached at Westbourne, December 5th, 1915, on the eschatological themes of II. Timothy 3 and II. Peter 3:9. The dwindling congregation accepted his offer to conduct the preaching services and thus after five years of transiency and controversy, Aberhart found a church home in which he was accepted and needed. By this time, ninety sermons were in his repertoire. He took on all the public speaking duties of a regular minister, teaching a Sunday School class, preaching morning and evening, and giving the meditation at the Wednesday night prayer meetings.

What has happened here? It is entirely inconsistent with the facts to perceive the theological perspective as a mask for social or economic protest. Rather, it was simply that a man with a domineering personality and an unorthodox Biblical theory could not be accommodated within the institutional church. Each time he took over a Bible Class, his dynamic presentations led to such startling growth that his organizational efforts were overdone. His dogged perseverance aroused jealousies, suspicions, and friction so that he posed as a threat to the leadership; and his innovative emphasis on prophecy and dispensationalism undermined the entire organization. While Aberhart had no desire to overthrow or supersede the institutional church, he was forced to work outside it because he was a threat to the power structure and doctrinally disturbing. It was not so much that his leadership

was unwanted but the terms on which he imposed his leadership that were

rejected. When his talents were not accommodated by one organization,

he probed and withdrew until he found an organization that could accom-

modate him and his innovations. A restless spirit could not rest until

it found overt expression.

Great debate has centered around Aberhart's personality and

disposition.[15] His opponents have labelled him as authoritarian and

closed-minded while his supporters looked upon him as a compassionate

father and "a real leader". No doubt each assessment of Aberhart was

as much related to the psychological needs of the assessor as to the

psychological components of Aberhart's personality itself. He had been

schooled in strict discipline and preferred that others be similarly

schooled. He took his leadership positions seriously and expected

others to follow. To the extent that he could not follow others, he

was authoritarian. He could accept the advice of others but always on

his own terms. On the other hand, the thoroughness with which he or-

ganized his own life and the acute sense of goal orientation that he

possessed attracted many admirers. Aberhart was the perfect embodiment

of one committed to the Protestant ethic. Disciplined activity, this-

worldly asceticism, and a strong God-consciousness coupled with unre-

lenting diligence inevitably produced the success of most of his ambi-

tions. Generally, Aberhart was more an organizer than a thinker. A

statement was either a fact or an error; there were no shades of grey

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[15]For interesting perspectives on Aberhart's personality, see
Mabel Giles, A Tribute to William Aberhart, n.d.; Johnson and MacNutt,
op. cit., pp. 37-48; Harold J. Schultz, "Portrait of a Premier: William
Aberhart", Canadian Historical Review XLV (1964), 185-211; and Irving,
op. cit., pp. 14-24.

in this type of black-and-white thinking. Once something had been assessed as good or evil, true or false, moral or immoral, Aberhart excelled in educating his audience of his conclusion. The most agreement regarding Aberhart's abilities was on the fact that he was a creative organizer. Once the goal was determined, there was no technique or organizational method left unturned in mobilizing either his students or his audience to attain the desired end.

Baptist polity was most congenial to Aberhart's interests. The negation of centralized hierarchical control meant the autonomy of the local church in all decision-making. Ritual and tradition were rejected in favor of the sole authority of the Bible. As long as Aberhart could maintain the support of the congregation, no one could remove him from his place of authority. He was baptized by immersion and elected a deacon, a lay position with particular responsibility for the spiritual growth of the church. That Aberhart went beyond the call of duty of a deacon and yet with the sanction of his status as a deacon meant that the congregation was revitalized by all his activity. Those who objected to Aberhart's ideas were free to attend another church.

The Rise of the Movement

Not everyone in the congregation was interested in Biblical prophecy. Aberhart felt the need for a special time and place to gather together those who were deeply interested in the study of the prophetic books of the Old Testament, such as the Book of Daniel, and the Book of Revelation of the New Testament. Furthermore, there were individuals who were affiliated with other churches and denominations who also had

similar interests and preferred a time when they could attend. Thursday
evening was selected at first and the meetings were held on neutral
ground at the Public Library. In 1918, this inter-denominational group
formed the Calgary Prophetic Bible Conference with the stated aim to
sponsor stimulating lectures and study material on prophecy and the
fundamentals of Christian belief that most churches were neglecting.
Aberhart was beginning to develop a following of those whom he had im-
pressed in the eight years of teaching and preaching prior to the
formation of the CPBC. The meetings were changed to the more convenient
time of 3:30 on Sunday afternoons and the attendance grew as a result
of the dynamic presentations of Mr. Aberhart. From the Public Library,
the CPBC moved to the Westbourne Church; the following year to the Paget
Hall, and by 1920 the Grand Theatre became the center of operation.
The demand continued to grow so that in 1923, the 2,200 seat Palace
Theatre was the only building capable of holding the enthusiastic
crowds. Lectures were given and meetings were held from October to May,
more or less under the sponsorship of the Westbourne Church while yet
reaching far beyond the confines of the church.

By the early twenties, Aberhart had evolved to a position of
undefined yet full authority in the church. What had begun as puplit
supply was later supported by his election as one of several lay
deacons, only later to lead to an unordained position short of acting
as full minister. These were the roots of Aberhart's promulgation of
the unique doctrine of "apostle" which would later be specified to
legitimate his precarious authority. Westbourne Church had been con-
sidered a mission work of the First Baptist Church which had held the

deed to Westbourne's property. Aberhart led the negotiations to attain full title to the property and a short time later withdrew the church from affiliation with the Baptist Union of Western Canada on the charge of liberalism within the convention and heresy at Brandon College. Westbourne had thus been made completely autonomous and no restrictions could be placed on her activities or procedures. It soon became apparent that the growing congregation needed more adequate pastoral care, which Aberhart could not give due to time limitations. Aberhart needed someone who would be supportive of his own work, someone to do the visitation of the sick and shut-in and be responsible for carrying out the details of organizational work, but in no way to detract from his pulpit oratory or his position of leadership. The story of the success and failure of each man who came to serve in the position of minister was built on this tension. Any time there was dissension or difference of opinion within the ranks, support crystallized around either Aberhart or the minister, and since Aberhart held the balance of power in the devotion of his followers, the minister was found to be expendable and his supporters either acquiesced or withdrew. Rev. Ernest Hansell was the first pastor to serve under this arrangement. After graduating from the Bible Institute of Los Angeles with a Bachelor of Divinity degree and serving as pastor for several years in the United States, Hansell had carried on a ministry in British Columbia where as artist and cartoonist he ably served as children's evangelist. With this background, he came to Westbourne where friction developed in due time and Hansell departed for Camrose.

Not only did Aberhart's nature and abilities demand a leadership

role, but Aberhart knew how to cultivate his leadership by consolidating a loyal band of supporters. By and large he was not seeking to convert people to Christianity, he was attempting to school those already committed to the faith. Aberhart's preaching was as much educational as it was inspirational. The impartation of Bible knowledge as a means to interpret history became the focal point of his zeal. For this venture in education, the Bible was the textbook and his audience were the pupils. He perceived his task as instructor to stimulate his pupils to study the materials he published, to assist them in understanding the full significance of the Bible's teachings, not only about the past, but also regarding the present and future. In addition to several small pamphlets, Aberhart published an early series of fourteen lectures known as God's Great Prophecies, which received wide circulation even in later years. Each lecture contained adequate illustrations and proof texts from the Bible to substantiate his argument, followed by review questions by which a person would measure his comprehension of the facts and the fundamentalist position. The reader was then invited to mail the answers to the questions to Aberhart's home where they would be corrected. Additional questions could be asked for the fee of one dollar to cover expenses. There was no compulsion to pursue this venture. All who earnestly studied the material and responded did so completely voluntarily. But once someone showed an interest, Aberhart was adept at challenging them to dig deeper. He organized Bible Study groups which completed the socialization into prophecy and the Aberhart movement. Satisfying primary group relationships centered around doctrinal interests solidified a central core of those committed to the movement

and its leader. The socialization was not to the Westbourne Church but to the doctrine and world-view which the movement espoused. As most established religious groups had developed a hostility to this new emphasis, the successful socialization of individuals into this world-view had been so cultivated that the teacher-pupil relationship easily became a leader-follower relationship. To respond to the questions and diligently study God's Great Prophecies, and to attend the study classes begun in 1924 on Tuesday and Thursday nights at Westbourne, meant the acknowledgement of Aberhart as an authority to whom loyalty was due.

In 1924-25, Aberhart began to structure his religious teaching methods by forming a Bible Institute to be held in Westbourne Church. He recruited some of his abler disciples to assist in instruction and a series of night courses were given in Bible interpretation and theology. Again, these were not just adult interest classes but study that was to be taken seriously. Aberhart mimeographed notes and charts, gave examinations which were graded carefully, and made the successful completion of the course a laudatory achievement. The increasing interest shown by the students was sufficient to permit Aberhart to dream bigger dreams for the future. To maintain prophecy as the focus of interest, he began a library in Westbourne Church which would serve as a communications center for literature on current events which would include writings on prophecy. However, it was the commencement of the publication of a bi-monthy magazine, The Prophetic Voice, in 1924 which began to expand the movement outside of Calgary. Aberhart's numerous speaking engagements in surrounding churches, as well as word of mouth, had developed an invisible following which The Prophetic Voice could at least partially

tie together. At this phase, it was still commitment to an idea and the
man who articulated those ideas that united people in this venture of
Bible education.

The Nature of Prophecy

Prophecy meant taking the Bible seriously. In fact, prophecy
was a way of reaffirming the Bible. Furthermore, prophecy was a way of
perceiving history and current events as the arena of God's activity.

Aberhart listed four important facts that he required students
to memorize that demonstrate the nature of this perspective.[16] First,
"God Knows the End from the Beginning (Acts 15:8). From this statement
Aberhart defined prophecy as "history foretold" and history as "prophecy
fulfilled". The Bible then became a record of God moving through man in
history more than the record of man responding to God in history.
History was goal-directed in its future elements to the return of
Christ to earth as the climax of history, and all present events could
be interpreted in relation to this expected fulfillment. Because the
Bible tells of how God moves in history, it was not limited to past
occurrences but states, although sketchily, and symbolically, of what
would occur in the transition for the final triumph of the Second Coming.
In this sense, the Bible is an historical roadmap that not only tells
of the embarkation point but also of the destination of history.
Secondly, it was imperative that the "Word of God" be perceived as
"absolutely reliable". Selecting internal testimony such as Numbers 23:19,

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[16]William Aberhart, God's Great Prophecies, Lecture No. 1, "The
Earmarks of the True Religion", p. 23.

Aberhart repudiated those who would detract from the unity and authority

of the Bible. There was no doubt about the accuracy of the message,

the inspiration of its writers, or the transmission of the text itself.

New translations of the Bible must be scrutinized for deletions and

alterations that violate the complete message of the text as best re-

presented in the King James Version.

Thirdly, "Christ Declared that All Must be Fulfilled". Quoting

from Matthew 5:18, Aberhart was emphasizing that the promises of the

Bible regarding the Second Coming and the final events of history were

expected realities and not fantasy. A Christian was one who could not

only look back in history but who could also look forward to more

significant future events. It was this latter aspect in which Aberhart

took such great interest. The fourth tenet followed from the above

three statements, "Man has Been Warned not to Tamper with nor Change

the Plain Statements of the Bible". With Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revela-

tions 22:18-19 as a basis, Aberhart was reacting to two types of

heresies. Some were adding to the Bible additional beliefs and sacred

texts while others were substracting from the literal Bible by demytho-

logizing and other "modernist" ideas. In either case, Aberhart was

affirming the Bible as the literal and only authority. He argued:

> The Bible is the best interpreter of the Bible.
> If then we come to a passage that we cannot
> understand -- a word or an expression that we
> are not sure about -- our best plan is to turn
> up another passage where the same expression
> is used and we shall invariably find it ex-
> plained or used in a connection that we may
> grasp.[17]

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[17]God's Great Prophecies, Three Introductory Lectures, p. 20.

What was needed was not a fancy education or a brilliant mind but a general willingness to be a student of the Bible. The Bible then became the keystone around which support was gathering.

The unique reference point, though, was prophecy. Aberhart observed that many peopled denied prophecy, relegated it to the past, or spiritualized it, whereas he was advocating prophecy as both historically continuous and futurist.[18] It was not that Aberhart was making prophecies of his own but that he was searching the Bible for both explicit and implicit statements which could be related to present world events as evidence of the movement of history to its fulfillment. "Again Books of Prophecy are not easy reading even though they are intensely interesting. They demand a careful knowledge of Past History, especially of the Nations that came in contact with God's chosen people, Israel, as well as a wise discernment of movements now in operation".[19] The Bible was the basis for prophecy and just as the Bible dealt with historical events, so also prophecy was concerned with history. Prophecy therefore was not fantasy or day dreaming;[20] rather, Aberhart defined it as merely "the revelation of God's plan or

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[18]Ibid., Lecture No. 2, "God's Great Divisions of the World's History", p. 2.

[19]Ibid., Preface, p. 1.

[20]The text of Aberhart's sermon "Is Christ's Coming Again a Reality or a Mere Fancy?" is reprinted in Johnson and MacNutt, op. cit., pp. 217-230. Preached in 1924, this sermon begins with Old Testament prophecies of Christ's coming, and then moves to New Testament prophecies of his return to earth. Aberhart makes individual pleas to Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists to show them that these beliefs have been part of their historical faith.

purpose for the world"[21] Anyone who is seriously interested in God's

purpose for the world must look into prophecy as a means to understand

the meaning of world events in relation to God's larger plan. Whether

the interest is in understanding the rise and fall of great nations,

wars, or the regathering of Israel, the prophetic elements of the Bible

provide the clues to their significance as indicative of the Second

Coming of Christ. The Bible text proves that we are moving to this

point of the culmination of history and it is impossible to understand

the meaning of a book such as Daniel or Revelation without interpreting

its symbolic language in terms of present world events. Lecture No. 11

of God's Great Prophecies is a lengthy discussion of the modern names

of the nations mentioned in Scriptures as evidence that the Bible was

foretelling present events. In fact, most of these lectures concen-

trated on the explication of what would happen when history reached its

climax. Book Two dealt with the Second Coming of Christ, the Zionist

Movement, and Daniel's Seventieth Week (a statement of expected events

in the final seven years preceding the millenium). Book Three centered

around the Anti-Christ as a terrible creature who would be destroyed in

the Battle of Armageddon. Aberhart identified the Anti-Christ as a

Turkish Jew who would become King of Russia and bring all nations of the

world into the Battle. But Christ will appear before this disaster and

Christians will be rescued to "ever be with the Lord" (I. Thess. 4:17).

This doctrinal point was known as "pre-millenialism" and its promulgation

encouraged extensive pre-occupation with the detailed events that would

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[21]God's Great Prophecies, Lecture No. 16, Three Introductory
Lectures to the Study of Revelation, Section I, p. 4.

be indicative of the time of the return of Christ. However, Aberhart
expressly repudiated the fixing of dates for the occurrence of the
Second Coming. "As far as I am concerned, I am willing to take the
words of Christ as authoritative when He said, 'But of that day and
hour knoweth no men, no not the angels of heaven, but my father only'".[22]
The alarming events of world war, famines, and doctrinal heresies appeared
to be ample evidence that the expected return was at least somewhat
imminent.

Aberhart grounded his understanding of prophecy in the Bible.
But the Bible covered great periods of time which often taught con-
flicting prescriptions. For instance, Aberhart noted the confusion of
teachings regarding meat-eating and vegetarianism in both the Old and
New Testaments. He observed that Roman Catholics followed the practice
in Leviticus of burning incense, and that Seventh Day Adventists were
keeping the Sabbath Day as the Jews were told in Exodus. Aberhart
perceived that such a "pick and choose" policy in interpreting the
Scriptures led to utmost confusion. "Making no divisions in the Bible
whatever, but accepting it holus bolus from cover to cover, I began to
read, and ere long came face to face with difficulties that bewildered
me and seemed clear contradictions".[23] The key to the resolution of
this problem was found in II. Timothy 2:15: "study to show thyself
approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly
dividing the word of truth". The significant phrase in this verse was

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[22] Ibid., p. 20.

[23] Ibid., Lecture No. 2, p. 8.

"rightly dividing the word of truth", and provided the justification

for seeking divisions in the Bible. These divisions were termed "dis-

pensations" by Aberhart and defined as "a period of time during which

God dispenses, or deals with mankind, in a particular way in respect

to sin, and to man's responsibility. Each of the dispensations show

some change in God's methods in dealing with mankind".[24] In each dis-

pensation God makes a covenant with man that contains specific exhor-

tations which man fails to keep.

Aberhart outlined four such divisions which he painted on a

canvas 6 feet high and 21 feet long known as the "Big Chart". The

first was the beginning of things or the peopling of the earth. This

time-period included the time from creation to the scattering of man-

kind at the Tower of Babel, and consisted of three dispensations:

innocence, conscience, human government. The second great time-period

extended from the call of Abraham to the time of Nebuchadnezzar when

the Hebrews were carried into captivity and is known as the time of

the Hebrews. It has also three dispensations: promise, law and king-

dom. The third division of history is known as the time of the Gentiles.

It consists of five world empires, four of which are already history

(Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome). The fifth empire has been de-

layed by the coming of Christ which introduced the fourth division, the

age of grace or church age, in which we presently live. This age of

grace continues until the return of Christ and the rapture of the church.

The fifth empire is still to come, however, and will be led by the

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[24]Aberhart, Systematic Theology, Book 3, Course "A", p. 3.

Anti-Christ. Therefore, the rising of a dominant and ruthless world

power easily lead to speculation that its leader was the Anti-Christ

and the return of Christ was imminent.

It is therefore quite obvious that prophecy provided a total

world-view and was not primarily an other-worldly or world-denying

projection to the Second Coming of Christ or the pursuit of the millenium.

There was no attempt at withdrawal from the rest of society, no re-

pudiation of government, and little concentration on warning the rest

of the world or the active seeking of new converts. Prophecy was a

way of interpreting the world. It was a means to understand present

history as well as past and future history.

> Living in such a day as we live, when great and
> stupendous events are happening on all sides, I
> should judge that all of us would be most de-
> sirous to know and understand something of God's
> Prophecy. When events so rapid in their succes-
> sion as they are startling in their magnitude,
> terribleness and far-reaching consequences,
> chase each others as waves of the sea, or come
> upon us like falling stars on a dark winter's
> evening, I think we should be looking to the God
> of Heaven to make known to us what it all means.[25]

Prophecy provided a framework of meaning by which to organize a person's

life. History was not a record of one human disaster after another

but God's covenant, man's failure, and then God's judgment upon the af-

fairs of the world. History was not merely alternative periods of order

and chaos but was the movement of humanity to a foreordained goal which

was part of God's plan. Prophecy made today significant in the course

of history and rooted it in the Bible.

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[25]_God's Great Prophecies_, Lecture No. 2, pp. 5-6.

Interestingly, Aberhart's explanation on the dispensational chart stated that its purpose was "to show that the Bible is one Harmonious Whole. Every Passage of Scripture from the First Verse of the First Chapter of Genesis to the last verse of the last chapter of Revelation accurately and exactly fits into its place without being trimmed or altered or mutilated in any way".[26] Prophecy made sense out of the difficult and symbolic passages of the Bible and reaffirmed its contents as an integral foundation for living. In short, prophecy placed the Bible in the center as the illuminating instrument for the understanding of present events as part of God's plan.

The Origination of Religious Groups

At this point, it is appropriate for us to digress a bit and construct a framework by which to interpret Aberhart's movement. While the seeds of protest had been sown, the primary theme of Aberhart's message at this phase of the movement was not protest but affirmation and the explication of a new set of ideas, i.e., prophecy and dispensationalism. And while most of the support was obtained from Anglo-Saxon persons with middle class ideals, it was not a class movement. A survey of the names of those who took his courses as found in his personal notebook reveals that most of Aberhart's followers were people of British origin. No social class background was predominant as the movement included struggling young merchants, laborers, and some professional people. At this phase, it is more appropriate to talk of an

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[26]Aberhart, Chart of the Dispensations.

interest group rather than a social movement or organization. Education
to a set of Biblical ideas for the hard-core supporters was more impor-
tant than expanding the social group. Aberhart's prophetic teachings
attracted people regardless of social class because he provided a frame-
work of meaning to those who found its Biblical basis congenial. He
united those who had a predisposition to religious ideas, were already
religious active, and yet whose religious interests were flagging. He
revitalized the lives of those who sought a Biblical framework of meaning
and thoroughly socialized them to its perspective with his demanding
education programme. People who attended the Sunday afternoon meetings
were attracted by the new emphasis on prophecy and the total world-view
that it presented. Aberhart was not demanding social conformity to a
particular life-style or behavior pattern. Instead, he provided a con-
ception of history and a system of meaning by which persons who desired
it could understand or reorganize their own lives.

Niebuhr hypothesized that theological dissent was a substitute
for social and economic protest.[27] New religious movements were under-
stood to arise as a result of the rechanneling of secular frustrations
into socially harmless religious compensations. Glock attempts to
broaden the economic base of Niebuhr's thesis and states that it is the
attempt to overcome varying types of deprivation that shapes a new
religious group and serves as a necessary condition for its rise.[28] In

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[27]H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism.

[28]C. Y. Glock, op. cit., differentiates between economic, social,
organismic, ethical, and psychic deprivation.

this theory, deprivation in the sense of being "disadvantaged" in comparison to others or to an internalized standard is still considered to be the key factor.

It is totally inappropriate to speak of Aberhart's support, at least at this point, as a response to deprivation. His early supporters represented a cross-section of socio-economic status and were simply united by mutual interest in a Biblical theory. Calgary had not yet formulated a well-developed class structure. There was a small economic elite but the rest of the population could best be described as struggling to attain financial security and adjustment to a new environment. Aberhart's followers came from this larger section of the population. They included school teachers, white collar workers, a dentist, tradesmen, laborers, and merchants. While some aspects of deprivation were no doubt present, this does not explain why some persons would seek a religious epxression in the first place or why this particular religious expression was selected.[29] Aberhart himself was not suffering from social or economic deprivation as a school principal with prestige and a relatively good income. His long-standing interest in prophecy had been nurtured in Ontario while still a young man. Prophecy was an interest that became a passion for him for which his personality demanded an outlet. It was a life-orientation for him, and Aberhart's following grew as they found this life-orientation congenial. Other than his own congregation, he attracted those who were already connected with a church

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[29]This is essentially Wilson's point regarding the correlation between the disinherited and religious sects. He cautions against the explanation of a socio-economic determinism as "insufficiently subtle" to explain religious phenomena. Sects and Society, op. cit., p. 5.

and who found that the framework of meaning that that particular church provided was inadequate for their own integration.

Prophecy gathered together those who were uncertain and who were seeking a more specific and satisfying life-orientation, gave them a definitive view of the world that circumscribed its beginning and end, and therefore located the significance of their own life in the course of history. In short, Aberhart's effort succeeded not because it was primarily an incipient socio-economic protest or because it was an attempt to overcome deprivation, but because it provided a more comprehensive framework of meaning to those who desired it. That this framework was entirely rooted in the Bible and emphasized classic Christian doctrines ensured this success.

The point to which we are leading is that a diversity of persons can be initially joined together because of common interests that are not necessarily directly related to socio-economic variables. In the first chapter, it was pointed out that Weber perceived no direct correlation between the content of an idea and the social origin or interests of a leader and his following in the early stages of the coagulation of a group.[30] We would refine the assumption to state that there is no significant correlation for the uniqueness of individuality is such that there are those who think independently and maintain convictions quite apart from the ideological mainstream. We would expect, however, that as a movement grows, some sociological explanation must be given for the "elective affinity" the followers exhibit for an ideology.

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[30]Gerth and Mills, From Max Weber, pp. 62-63.

It is not to be inferred that our argument is contrary to the assumptions of the sociology of knowledge. Thoughts and ideas do have a specific relation to the historico-social process. But at this point we are not asking how people construct ideologies but how ideologies unite people into social groups. In his study of social movements, Heberle speaks of the "constitutive ideas"[31] which form the foundation of group cohesion and solidarity. The attitudes men have regarding these ideas under differing historico-social conditions produce varying social configurations which might be identified as phases in a social movement. Therefore, we would like to identify three phases or moments in the development of a social movement in which the differentiation is based on the social manifestations of its ideological themes. The three stages are interest group, protest group, and perspective group.[32]

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[31]Rudolph Heberle, Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology, p. 13.

[32]The classic model of the stages of a social movement was presented by C. A. Dawson and W. E. Gettys, An Introduction to Sociology. These were: 1) preliminary stage of social unrest; 2) popular stage of collective excitement; 3) stage of formal organization; 4) institutionalization. Neil Smelser describes three stages in The Theory of Collective Behavior, p. 298: 1) incipient; 2) enthusiastic mobilization; 3) institutionalization and organization. C. Wendell King (Social Movements in the United States, pp. 40-48) describes three stages in the internal development of a social movement as 1) the incipient phase; 2) organizational phase; 3) stable phase. In many ways, we have incorporated these distinctions into our typology. Yet we find their nomenclature imprecise and too general. To say a movement is in the incipient phase does not tell us anything about what has brought people together or how they are brought together. All it tells us is that the movement is just coming into being. King acknowledges that the incipient phase can only be apprehended in retrospect. In contrast, our distinction allows us to identify the existence of a type of group which may or may not be the beginning of a social movement that crystallizes itself. Further, all of these typologies imply a movement from little organization to more organization to greater organization, and from instability to stability. However,

These three stages are not explicitly demarcated. Elements of one are

undoubtedly found in the other, and certainly both interest and protest

are found in the last stage. As the ideological themes change, the

base of support changes and evidences itself in different social

patterns.[33] In the first, it is a doctrinal interpretation that evokes

a particular social pattern, in the second it is a rejection of liberal

theology; and in the third it is the crystallization of representative

principles and the clear articulation of a world-view.

The Interest Group

The term interest group is not utilized in a Marxian sense, al-

though it may include that framework. It goes beyond the socio-economic

milieu to propose that people come together because of interests in

ideas held in common. Any socializing that is done is for the express

purpose of the study of these ideas. Adherents to these ideas may be

geographically scattered but occasional primary group contacts reinforce

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many movements never become stable or well-organized and still continue
to exist. They may face alternating periods of growth and decay and even
demonstrate a complete change through time. It is for these reasons we
have started with the ideology for its adaptations are a far better in-
dicator of the stresses and strains within a movement and of the responses
and reactions to the environment.

[33]One might easily reverse this statement and say that as the
base of support changes, the ideological themes change. We agree.
However, it is our contention that changes in ideology coincide with
changes in social support, and varying ideological formations are in-
dicators of organizational changes, external and internal stresses,
and changes in group strength. It is not a matter of determinism but
of changes of ideological emphases reflecting and producing changes in
the character of the movement.

their mutual feelings. The ideas are what unite, and an organization, if it exists at all, is wholly informal. Seldom do interested people register their involvement through established groups or organizations; they usually act independently of existing groups and do not sever old relationships. There is no concept of membership or a membership list. Interest in the theory rather than commitment is integral. There is only minimal self-awareness as a group and thus the group makes few demands on the interested person. Adherents to the theory come and go for there is nothing to solidify support. Even if adherence to the movement is crystallized in an individual, no alteration of life-style is demanded. The movement is maintained either through face-to-face associations or through a study of common literature.

Aberhart's religious following is best described as an interest group in the time period already discussed. The Westbourne Church was an organization, but it provided only a beachhead for Aberhart's efforts which reached beyond the confines of the church. His intention was not to make converts to the Baptist faith or to utilize his energies in enlarging the membership of the church. The Sunday afternoon broadcast in the Palace Theatre was evidence of the non-institutional nature of his efforts. He drew his interested friends from a variety of churches with only the promise that he could make the Bible more meaningful by demonstrating its prophecies about the future of mankind. Any group meetings held were primarily for a thorough education of the prophetic interpretation of Scriptures and thus were for didactic rather than mobilizing purposes. Individuals rather than families periodically would step outside their own denominations (Methodists, Baptists,

Presbyterians and a few Anglicans) to reinforce mutual feelings regarding these ideas. The Calgary Prophetic Bible Conference existed only to coordinate loosely the activities of the interest group and did not provide any group controls or prescribe any internal differentiation of followers.[34] Social pressures were weak and little group awareness or solidarity existed. What unity prevailed was the result of the study of common literature on the doctrinal perspective rather than primary group relationships. Interest in prophecy was not so much a function of social class as it was a derivative of the quest for meaning that this particular world-view supplied and founded on an ultimate authority — the Bible.

The Emergence of the Protest Group

The next phase of Aberhart's movement began with two highly significant events: the decision to broadcast the Sunday afternoon services and the construction of the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute building. The result of the broadcast was that it enlarged the following far beyond the immediate Calgary area and made Aberhart a well-known figure in the whole Pacific Northwest. The erection of a permanent building to house the Bible Institute was significant in providing an identifiable base of operations and forcing a clear articulation of the group's reason for existence as opposed to existing religious bodies.

Somewhat reluctantly, Aberhart experimented with a live broadcast of the Sunday afternoon lectures from the Palace Theatre on

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[34]The annual report for 1923-24 in the first issue of The Prophetic Voice reported an average attendance of 600 per meeting and total receipts of $1,962.03 (all but $70.00 of which was disbursed for hall rental and advertising).

Calgary radio station CFCN. Aberhart had feared that people would no longer attend in person and thus there would be no money in the offerings to meet the expenses and even pay the theatre rent.[35] The first broadcast in November of 1925 was greeted with unexpected response by people far and wide in both contributions and encouraging letters. Radio was just becoming a popular form of entertainment and provided an essential link with the world to prairie farmers. Aberhart was pioneering in the new era of broadcasting which utilized the air waves for the first time for religious purposes. A Radio Club was organized which listeners were encouraged to join by agreeing to make a financial contribution to the broadcast periodically to keep it on the air. Over 500 registered their support in this way in a short period. CFCN had a powerful transmitter that earned it the nickname "The Voice of the Prairies" and reached an audience in the neighboring provinces of British Columbia and Saskatchewan as well as reaching the border states of Montana, Idaho, and Washington. Aberhart's early radio audience was estimated at around 50,000 people every Sunday.[36] His commanding voice, educational presentations, and the authority conveyed in being important enough to be on radio at all contributed to his success.

However, a radio broadcast alone was not sufficient to create a loyal following. All who wrote to Aberhart or contributed to financing the broadcast were put on the mailing list to receive the monthly publication The Prophetic Voice. The series of lectures, God's Great Prophecies, was made available to listeners who were encouraged to

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[35] Irving, op. cit., p. 31.

[36] Harold J. Schultz, "Portrait of a Premier: William Aberhart", op. cit., p. 189.

answer the questions at the end of the lesson and submit them to

Aberhart for correction. Thus both the spoken word and the written word

were effectively schooling people to the world-view represented by

Aberhart and were tying them to him personally as a religious leader.

The measure of Aberhart's effectiveness in being the "pastor of the

pastorless" and in reaching families untouched by the institutional

churches is evidenced by the demand of the people and his own educa-

tional mind-set to establish a Radio Sunday School for children shortly

after the inauguration of his regular broadcast. Children from the

ages of 5 to 16 could enroll in a correspondence course consisting of

52 lessons. Temporarily, Aberhart used American Baptist materials

until he could write his own curriculum which had 96 lessons. Parents

were encouraged to enroll their children as they listened to the broad-

cast and in 1926, 475 children had responded. Each lesson had a

questionnaire which was to be completed and returned for correction

before a new lesson was sent out. The papers were graded by volunteers

who attended the Wednesday evening prayer meetings, examinations were

given and prizes were awarded for achievement and completion of the

course. Aberhart appointed Charles Pearce, a devoted disciple and

layman, as superintendent of the Radio Sunday School, a position which

he held until 1970. This Sunday School united parents and children and

cemented their personal loyalties to the Aberhart cause.

The widespread response to the radio broadcast had several

effects on the movement as a whole. It further subordinated the role

of Westbourne Church and elevated the position of the charismatic

leader. Aberhart had developed an invisible following of radio listeners

who knew nothing of Westbourne, which contributed to Aberhart's sense

of independence. Radio produced a leader-follower relation and further

developed an inner core of those already committed to Aberhart as

supportive disciples. The radio efforts emphasized the need for those

devoted to the leader to make significant secondary contributions to

the work without detracting from the role of the leader. Lastly, the

broadcast created a great desire to see and hear Aberhart in person.

Many from out of town made it a special point to be in Calgary for

Aberhart's meeting on Sundays at least once or twice a year.

> Sunday after Sunday the Grand Theatre was packed
> to the doors. People throughout the surrounding
> district often motored as far as 50 miles to at-
> tend and a feature of the program in those days,
> as it is now, to mention receipt of communications
> from all parts of the province over the radio,
> was to have these visitors from distant points
> stand in the body of the theatre. One Sunday
> afternoon more than 20 persons had come distances
> of more than 50 miles to hear Mr. Aberhart.[37]

It was these factors produced by a growing following that evoked the

need for a permanent headquarters to coordinate activities and to pro-

vide an identity for the movement.

The practical needs for a new structure were a combination of

the growing demand for more adequate facilities for the Bible School

and the small sanctuary at Westbourne, and the high rental costs of the

Palace Theatre. If the movement was to expand as Aberhart was dreaming,

something more permanent, functional, and distinctly identified with

the cause must be constructed. In March-April, 1926, it was suggested

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[37]Calgary Albertan, March 23rd, 1935.

that a building be erected at a convenient downtown location to house

the Westbourne Church, the Bible Institute, and to provide limited

accommodations for students. The cost of the structure was estimated

at $50,000, and was to seat approximately 1,200 people. Financing

the construction of such an edifice at the selected Eighth Avenue West

location would be a monumental task. But Aberhart had an untapped and

unlimited source of revenue in his radio audience and to these people

he made his financial appeal. He first asked people to buy sods at

$100.00 per sod, and 132 complete sods were donated. This would pay

for the land and enable construction of the foundation. The large

number of people who found $100.00 too steep and contributed smaller

amounts taught Aberhart a lesson. While larger contributions were more

desirable, they tended to discourage the bulk of the population from

responding. Being short of the necessary finances, Aberhart then urged

people to buy bricks at $5.00 per brick. Anyone who contributed 25

bricks or more would be mentioned by name over the air. When one small

village bonded together to make a contribution of 25 bricks in order to

receive the publicity over the air, a precedent was established. To

hear the name of their town or just their remote postal station became

a great incentive to Albertans of all walks of life. Sometimes Bible

study groups which utilized the prophetic interpretation would contri-

bute and their group would be mentioned. Throughout the construction

period, Aberhart kept people informed of the progress on the building,

so that by the time of completion, his listening audience felt they

had had a real part in bringing it to be. The building of the Institute

in a very real sense was a community project for many Albertans, and

its progress towards completion was a paramount topic of conversation in many rural areas. The prime time of the Sunday afternoon radio broadcast, a leisure time period for all people, especially farmers, forced Aberhart into full view of even those not particularly interested in his religious doctrine. The dynamics of these gathering responses to Aberhart's appeal for the collective endeavor of building the Institute were all precursors of almost identical responses to the later political appeal. Unknowingly, Aberhart was laying solid foundations of community interest and involvement in the achievement of goals by collective action which could be transferred to political ends.

The construction of the Institute had been undertaken by the Westbourne Prophetic Bible Institute Church Association. As the title indicates, this was a fusion of the Westbourne Church and the Calgary Prophetic Bible Conference for cooperative endeavor. The net effect of this maneuver was to create a new enterprise that was completely independent of the church organizational structure and completely dependent on Aberhart's leadership. The new buildings were definitely the results of Aberhart's leadership and the Westbourne congregation could not lay claim to them as they would to their old structure. Furthermore, the Westbourne congregation still existed as a unit, but its organization was subordinate to the Aberhart enterprise. Any vitality it possessed was due to Aberhart's vigorous activity, and to reject his leadership would be to separate themselves from the possibilities of a flowering movement. Not all Westbourne members were happy with Aberhart's dominance and authoritarianism, but it was hard to reject a successful movement. Schultz observed that

> His supporters accepted his word and, right or
> wrong, they were convinced. But Aberhart's
> authority also proved a source of weakness.
> This very trait made relationships with his
> colleagues exceedingly difficult. Over the
> years at the Institute 'a whole regiment'
> joined Aberhart, differed with him, and left.
> He would not brook insubordination. You worked
> with him or he worked without you.[38]

Obviously, Westbourne was behind Aberhart at this point but differences

in procedures and personalities had already caused some to leave the

ranks. Their places, however, were readily filled by others.

Aberhart had educated a host of loyal disciples both in the

church and through the CPBC to the merits of his efforts. They were

among the first, many of them not being impoverished, to buy bonds

which Aberhart had secured to finish the building. $30,000 worth of

bonds were sold and in subsequent years many of these supporters later

refused to accept the interest coupons or even gave up their bonds

completely as a donation. Aberhart encouraged such devotion and re-

warded his most trustworthy supporters with positions on the executive

Construction proceeded rapidly so that by October, 1927, the dedication

of the $65,000 structure was held with Dr. W. B. Riley, founder of the

Northwestern Bible Institute of Minneapolis as guest speaker.

The writing of God's Great Prophesies in the earlier phase re-

presented a definitive statement of the prophetic position. It was an

affirmative elaboration and consolidation of the prophetic world-view

to be diligently studied by interested persons. The inadequacies of

Biblical criticism and the failures of modernism were pointed out as

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[38]Schultz, William Aberhart and the Social Credit Party, p. 37.

a means to bolster the significance of prophetic study. But when the emphasis turned from mere study to action, from the gathering of interested persons to the dissemination of potent ideas, and from private discussion to public promulgation, a rationale for this activity had to be specified. The group became aware of itself as distinct from other religious groups and had to justify its independent efforts for engaging in some particular activity that others had neglected. It legitimated its public activity by protesting and identifying its opposition in more specific terms. By going on the air, Aberhart would naturally influence people considered to be members of other religious bodies and this would raise conflict. He would be opposed by those jealous of his success as well as those in disagreement with his doctrinal viewpoint. Furthermore, in order to secure the financial support of his listeners for the broadcast, in order to persuade parents to enroll their youngsters in the Radio Sunday School, and in order to justify the construction of an expensive building for which public funds were to be solicited, Aberhart increasingly articulated a distinctive stand of religious protest. In this second phase, Aberhart increased his following not primarily because of mutual interest in prophecy but because of mutual convictions of protest.

Whereas in the earlier phase Aberhart's Biblical viewpoint had been the means to bring the social group together, Aberhart's stand regarding the Bible had now become the basis of differentiation from other groups. The Bible was still the pivotal point; in the one stage it differentiated the in-group and in the following stage it differentiated the out-group. Nowhere was this protest more potently affirmed

than in the literature pertaining to the Bible Institute. In Aberhart's

argument to his supporters to persuade them of the need for the building

of the Institute, he asserted:

> For some time now, it has been felt by many lovers
> of the TRUTH ONCE DELIVERED, that there is a great
> need, in this Western Country of ours, of an Up-
> to-Date Bible Institute or School of Learning where
> our young people, especially, and any others who
> wish it, can secure a good training in Bible know-
> ledge without having their faith undermined by
> atheistic, skeptic, and modernistic teaching, too
> often found in many of our present day theological
> colleges and universities. The cry of young people,
> who have had their faith shipwrecked, is to be heard
> on every side. Has it reached you where you live
> yet?

In the first Bulletin of the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, one of

the primary aims and purposes of the school was "to use every legitimate,

Christian means of combatting and resisting Modernism, Higher Criticism,

Skepticism and Sectarianism in all its forms", and "to teach and instruct

people regarding the great fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion

so that they will not be led astray by any of the numerous sects or re-

ligious beliefs not in strict accordance with God's Holy Word". Moder-

nists, evolutionists and skeptics were continually identified as those

who were responsible for the destruction of the "Infallible Word" and

therefore the decaying moral and social life of particularly the younger

generation. The tragedy was that theological seminaries and colleges

were teaching such "Modernism and Infidelity" and thus the leadership

for the correction of this personal and social deterioration could not

be expected from these sources. The Institute was to be "The Great

Prairie Monument to the Faith" and to defend and proclaim "the truth

according to the exact, literal interpretation of the verbally inspired Word of God". Not only would the Institute train Biblically knowledgeable laymen but it would also aim to prepare "fundamental Bible preachers who will be able to teach them [residents of the West] the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever". The Institute was therefore constructed as a means of protest against the existing religious thinking and education institutions judged to be inadequate. On this basis, it could justify a general appeal to the public and the increased effort demanded by the expanding activities of the movement.

The Structure and Organization of the Movement

Aberhart was now operating a rather complex enterprise. The ownership of property and buildings, the large sums of money involved in receipts of donations through the mail and collections, and the disbursements in operating costs and bond payments had become quite involved. It was deemed advisable as a safeguard that papers of incorporation be taken out to protect the operation and establish boundaries of control. The Calgary Prophetic Bible Conference which had been organized in 1918 appears to have been a body of trusted laymen appointed by Aberhart of which he was President. Some of these same men were members of the board of the Westbourne Baptist Church as elected officers. Aberhart's position in the church was somewhat unclear. It appears that he was first elected one of several deacons with spiritual responsibilities for the church. Somehow he evolved to a higher position of authority known as apostle. Such a position appeared to be a creation of Aberhart's, for it has no roots in Baptist churches or other

denominations. An apostle was conceived as a lay person who had ulti-

mate responsibility and control over the church, much as a bishop. As

chief elder, the apostle holds the highest church office.[39] Most

important, an apostle can have greater authority than the minister.

Apostleship was an elected position and thus vulnerable to the demo-

cratic process. But it appears that once the position was attained,

it became permanent. In contrast, the CPBC was an independent body

under Aberhart's leadership and appointment. To prevent any foresee-

able erosion of his control by those dissatisfied or at the slightest

provocation of disagreement, Aberhart incorporated the enterprise in

1927 under the provincial Religious Societies Act. The CPBC executive

became the members of the incorporated body known as the Calgary

Prophetic Bible Institute Church -- the word Church being inserted to

make it eligible for incorporation under the Religious Societies Act,

with tax exemption status, and to indicate Aberhart's expectation of

the continuance of the Westbourne Church to operate under the Aberhart

flag.

The result of this incorporation was that all receipts and

property were now directly under Aberhart's control. An examination

of the by-laws of the articles of incorporation fully demonstrates this

to be the case.[40] Article I(a) points out that membership in the con-

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[39]Cf. Church Organization and Government, published by Berean
Bible College, Calgary, and written by Arthur Cornell, for a statement
of explanation of the role of apostle.

[40]Calgary Herald, Fred Kennedy Papers, File No. 12, Glenbow
Alberta Institute.

gregation consisted of all active office-holders and honorary officers appointed by two-thirds of the active officers. Note that according to this clause the congregation is defined as the executive body rather than the rank-and-file of the people. Each one of these officers must annually "avow his whole-hearted belief in and allegiance to every article of the creed and constitution and shall sign his name thereto and signify such allegiance" (Article I(c)). The crunch came in the next sentence, however, when it was stated that any conduct or utterance inconsistent with this allegiance would lead to suspension from the church. Obviously, the definition of what would be inconsistent would be subject to diverse interpretation but served as an effective weapon of discipline. The rank-and-file were to hold the position of associate members and would have no voting power in the business affairs of the church, except in an advisory capacity (Article I(b)).

The permanent officers were to be the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Teller. The following officers held voting power until their positions were revoked by two-thirds of the congregation: Librarian, Literary Steward, Testament Steward, Chairman of Ushers, Equipment Manager, Tract Man, Radio Sunday School Superintendent, Filing Clerk, Copying and Stencil Man, Radio Service Manager, Radio Lookout Man, Building Superintendent, Musical Director, and any other offices considered necessary temporarily. Article III(a) made it the duty of the Vice-President and President to report any member (officer) "who is persistently and continually neglecting the duties of his office, or who is taking a half-hearted interest in the work of the church. The congregation on receiving such a report may require the resignation of

the officer". Furthermore, according to Article III(c), all officers were to report regularly to the President to keep the work centralized and all correspondence must pass through his hands. A general assembly of members and associate members would be held yearly "for the purpose of hearing reports, showing the character and extent of the work accomplished by the church and outlining plans for the future (Article VI (cA)).

The real power lay in the hands of the five permanent officers who could appoint or revoke the positions of secondary officers at their discretion. But even within the permanent officers, the President controlled the discipline and censored all correspondence. What is obviously missing is that there are no checks on the officers by the congregation-at-large. There is no way to become an officer except to be elected by the executive and there is no limitation on the length of time a person could hold one office. There is no provision for annual elections and only officers had a vote in the church affairs. Aberhart built in all these safeguards to prevent the enterprise from falling into alien hands and to protect his leadership role from serious opposition.

The Westbourne congregation accepted the invitation of the incorporated body to make the newly constructed Institute their church home and offered to pay the Institute $600.00 per month to help meet expenses. Westbourne Church by this time had another pastor, W. W. Silverthorne, who obviously had to take second place to Aberhart. Aberhart appointed Silverthorne Vice-President of the Institute, Vice-President of the educational staff, and one of the instructors. In order

to maintain the monthly payments, the trick was to solidify a united congregation that conceived itself as independent of the Institute work, otherwise funds would be directed to the Institute rather than to the church treasury. Silverthorne was able to cultivate this identity once again in the church through pastoral care and visitation, and the agreed payments could be made. The difficulty was that Aberhart required supportive organizations and feared too much independence. Silverthorne soon preferred a safer base of operation and left Calgary. With his departure, the Westbourne congregation began to resent the Aberhart domination and the $600.00 payments were not being met. Many of the Westbourne members were tiring of such excessively high payments and it was hinted that the more loyal Aberhart disciples were funnelling their contributions to the Institute rather than to the church. In addition to the financial disagreement, some of the more "orthodox" Baptists in the Westbourne group objected to the practice of baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus rather than in the name of the Trinity, a distinctive practice which Aberhart had begun. After some attempts at negotiation, slightly over one hundred members of the church voted to return to the old Westbourne Church in the early spring of 1929. With the majority of the Westbourne Church gone, the Bible Institute Baptist Church was founded on April 18th, 1929. This church was distinct from the incorporated Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute Church and was directed by a Board of four deacons elected annually for a period of two years, and included leaders of all church organizations. The new church had the same status of the Westbourne Church as a tenant organization paying the corporation for use of the building. It was agreed that the offerings

of the Church from two Sundays per month were to be turned over to the
Institute Church. Much to the chagrin of some of the loyal Aberhartians,
no comprehensive financial report was ever given by the incorporated
Institute Church.

Thus, three organizations were operating under one roof and
Aberhart was in a position of leadership and power in each organization:
he was President of the incorporated Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute
Church, Dean of the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, and Apostle of
the Bible Institute Baptist Church. He had filled the vacancies on
the executive with those who had demonstrated unquestioned loyalty (e.g.,
Manning) and created a smaller inner group of permanent officers with
legal control over the property.

We have argued that it was the inauguration of radio broadcasting
that broadened Aberhart's base of support. By denouncing the modernism
and emptiness of the conventional churches, Aberhart became the spokes-
man for all those protesting against the conditions of their local
churches. He preached a message of protest by pointing out the failures
of conventional churches and by affirming the authority of a Bible which
was being diluted. He perceived his task as that of combatting and des-
troying the allegorists and "modern German-bred higher critics" who
negated verbal inspiration, substituted the thought for the actual words,
and who made "the concrete, the literal, and the real disappear from
God's Word and replaces them by something volatile, fanciful and airy".[41]
The primary instrument to solidify the protest and to promulgate its

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[41]God's Great Prophecies, Lecture No. 2, p. 1.

world-view was through the education of concerned persons in the Bible Institute. The construction of the Institute building merely added permanence to the protest and provided the facilities for out-of-town residents to be more thoroughly educated and socialized as emissaries for the protest than correspondence courses would allow.

Aberhart delineated six classes of people who were supporting his religious protest movement.[42] The largest group was the "Radio Enthusiasts" -- persons in the western provinces or northern states who "feel the need of a regular broadcast of the Word of Truth". In other words, this was an all-encompassing group of people of varying backgrounds who enjoyed hearing a religious broadcast and made it a point to listen to Aberhart. However, within this group there will be those "who are seeking the fellowship of Fundamentalists, who stand firmly on the verbally inspired Word of God and who will have no fellowship with those who deny it, or with those who compromise its teachings". These he defines as "Fellowship Members", although what they are members of or the mechanism of joining is not stated. Others are known as "Fundamentalist Associates" because they are "Earnest men and women of any faith whatsoever who desire to have a strong testimony to the true Gospel and to the Infallible Word, given in this city and over the air, and who realize the harm that is being done to the rising generation and others by the Modernists, Evolutionists, and skeptics of every kind". The fourth group are those who desire a better acquaintance of the Bible which Aberhart called the "Laymen Forces". It mattered little

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[42] Bulletin of the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, p. 9.

from what denomination a person came as long as they were desirous of

pursuing the goal of greater Bible knowledge and Christian skills. A

variant to the fourth group was the fifth category of Sunday School

teachers who desired better training to be known as the "Lord's Vine-

yard Workers". Lastly, the Institute programme could be of definite

assistance in preparing people to be "Personal Workers; Colporteurs;

Home Missionaries; Foreign Missionaries; Evangelists; Evangelist

singers; Pastor's Assistants; Pastors". Nowhere in this classification

was Aberhart asking people to join anything. It might be expected that

some joined the Bible Institute Baptist Church, but this was never

stressed. The only sense in which people could register their commit-

ment to the work was through making a financial contribution to the work

of the Institute.[43] He was not asking people to become Baptists or to

be baptized, but was seeking support from those, regardless of denomina-

tion, who wanted to make a stand against modernism, and for the Bible.

He was not asking people to sever their old denominational ties, but

was only asking that they be faithful radio listeners and financially

support the work if they thought it was important. His school was non-

denominational and specialized in teaching only what the Bible said.

Therefore it appealed to students from a diversity of backgrounds who

agreed with the protest and wanted to be armed for the conflict.

The Bible study group Aberhart had organized among interested

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[43]Aberhart differentiated six types of membership according to
the amount of money that was contributed: Radio Sunday School Membership
($1.00-$2.00); Radio Broadcast Membership ($2.00-$5.00); Student Member-
ship ($5.00-$10.00); Sustaining Membership ($10.00-$25.00); Aggressive
Membership ($25.00-$100.00); Super-Institute Membership (over $100.00).
Bulletin, ibid., pp. 12-13.

teachers at Crescent Heights High School several years earlier and the
evening school at the Westbourne Church prior to the construction of the
Institute provided a host of qualified instructors who had diligently
learned what Aberhart had taught them. A full schedule of courses was
maintained at the Institute and included Personal Evangelism, Apologetics
and Bible Introduction, Biblical and Sacred History, Systematic Theology
and Bible Doctrine, and General English.[44] In addition to these "com-
pulsory credits", which were taken at various levels in all three years
of schooling, a host of "practical credits" were also offered: Bible
Geography and Oriental Customs, Bible Exegesis, Bible Teaching and Sunday
School Organization, Homiletics and Effective Expression, Song-Leading
and Hymnology, Missionary Nature Craft, Youth Work, Pastoral Theology,
Missions and Missionaries. The Bible was the center of the curriculum
and practical courses were designed to be complementary and supportive
of the primary aim of Bible knowledge. The Institute gave no diploma
until around 1943, so merely provided a letter certifying the success-
ful completion of one of six types of courses ranging from a Junior Pass
Course to a Graduate Specialist Course. The special attraction of the
Institute was that it provided optional courses of employment value
which could be incorporated into the Bible School programme. These in-
cluded Shorthand and Spelling, Office Practice, Mechanical and Auto
Engineering, Sewing, Music, Typing, Penmanship, Domestic Science and
Millinery. The development of these skills combined with Bible training
had special appeal to the poorly educated rural and immigrant urban

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[44]Copies of the notes of all the courses Aberhart taught can be
found in his own handwriting at the Provincial Archives.

population. They and their sons and daughters found the Institute to be an effective agent for educational and social mobility. For instance, for anyone whose English grammar was poor, the course on Biblical Exegesis offered a careful study of the Biblical text in terms of sentence construction and literary forms. Despite the impressive list of courses enumerated in the Bulletin, the actual curriculum that was taught was much smaller and centered around the compulsory courses.[45]

The Institute was open to any person over sixteen years of age with a common school education, although no one was to be excluded simply on educational grounds. Therefore, a compulsory course was included in English to cover any deficiencies the poorly educated or foreign-educated might possess. None of the Bible courses had a tuition fee but the optional courses required a stipulated payment. The school year ran from the end of October to the end of April to coordinate with the farming cycle. Dormitory facilities were next to non-existent and most students found board and room in approved private homes. There were usually many more part-time students than full-time students and many students attended for only one year. As one teacher put it, "Probably the majority were country kids who, with limited education, had a thirst for knowledge, as for instance, being curious about where negroes came from". Aberhart had a Bible answer for these historical questions and this was an approach that most ministers did not have.

Aberhart not only taught facts to his pupils but he also taught

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[45]For example, Aberhart would list a number of Bible verses and then ask students to pick out the different types of sentences used. Another exercise would be to select all the verbs in Psalm 15.

discipline and morality. Therefore, his loyal teachers eagerly spent long hours in preparation and teaching without any remuneration. Students were discouraged from idling their time at picture shows and dance halls. "The moral atmosphere of the Institute", the Bulletin pointed out, "will be maintained at such a standard as to aid the students in doing their very best in their work and in their lives". A rigorous time schedule was advocated with appropriate moments for meditation, prayer, and group activities until 9:45 p.m. Once per week Mrs. Aberhart would serve a roast beef supper at the Institute for all the students and a time of Bible Study would be held around the table. Attendance at the Institute's Sunday activities was required and students were "frowned upon" for going to other churches. The Institute, therefore, was a primary agent in inculcating and furthering a Protestant ethic of discipline, hard work, achievement, and all for "the glory of God".

However, the multi-faceted work of the Institute was not to imprison the ambitious and expansive spirit of Aberhart. The articulation of the protest against modernistic, cold, formalistic religion of denominational churches aroused interest in the establishment of Bible Study groups at various points in the broadcasting area. Even in more remote areas, small groups were coming together to follow Aberhart's study helps, study the Bible, and enjoy comraderie. Aberhart himself began to accept more speaking engagements in the rural community surrounding Calgary, particularly in the summer when roads were good and Institute activities slackened. Institute students

were often sent to speak to these groups[46] and occasionally the rela-
tionship developed so that the study group became a church and called
an Institute student to serve as the pastor. The churches that were
actually organized in this way were referred to as "branch churches"
to indicate their primary tie to the Institute Church in Calgary. Most
study groups did not reach this stage of organization and continued to
exist in a rather private manner to satisfy the needs of people for a
more comprehensive and reliable world-view.

We have argued that the shift from the rather private gathering
of an interest group to a public open appeal to the population-at-large
as evidenced by the radio broadcast meant the specification of a ration-
ale to justify its claim on the public. In other words, in order to
gather a following, Aberhart had to specify what his movement was doing
that others had neglected. The protest was primarily against a watered-
down theology and a low view of the Bible. Aberhart countered that by
affirming the verbal inspiration, unity, and complete accuracy of the
Scriptural text. He condemned boring preaching, denominational bureau-
cracies, formalism, ineffective churches, cold intellectualism of
seminaries and colleges, and traditions that minimized the Bible. In
its place, he offered dynamic preaching, an enthusiastic broadcast and
congregation, and a warm love for the Bible that could identify the ways
in which its prophecies were being fulfilled in the events of the day.

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[46]Ernest Manning, the first graduate of the Bible Institute, was
one of the first students to be so engaged. Aberhart and Manning collab-
orated in the writing of a play, "The Branding Irons of the Anti-Christ",
which was taken to some of these communities. The central message of the
play was to show what would happen to those taken in by modernism and did
not believe the warnings and promises of the Bible. Johnson and MacNutt,
op. cit., pp. 231-239 contains the text of the play.

A Theory of Protest

Theoretically, then, we can assert that the emergence of a pro-
test group (the second phase) requires the setting off of the group
from the wider society and establishing a rationale for this differen-
tiation. Because it is the movement from an interested study of ideas
to a planned pattern of action, a protest group requires the develop-
ment of some type of organization to be presented to the wider society
around which allegiance can be coagulated. Regardless of whether other
group allegiances are severed or not, the group becomes acutely aware
of itself and must justify its existence to the society. There is no
room for mere interest; instead, commitment is actively sought. In
affirming itself in commitment to a goal, it protests against particu-
lar goals accepted in the society, and the existing means to their
achievement. The protest must be crystallized in a well-articulated
raison d-etre and clearly formulated objectives. If membership is not
actively sought, it will at least become important to demonstrate
one's conformity and loyalty to the group's goals through the perfor-
mance of group-sponsored roles and tasks. Allegiance to the group, the
leader, and the goals requires an emotional commitment which at times
displaces rationality. By setting itself off in protest from other
groups, the movement solidifies its own support and provides a basis
for recruitment.

The seeds of protest had been present in the ideological world-
view of prophecy even when it was merely an object of interest and
study. However, it was the public proclamation of prophetic principles
for general adherence that required Aberhart and his following to develop

an acute awareness of what they stood against as well as what they stood

for. Protest then was the mechanism for defense of the theory in the

face of external attacks and the legitimator of increased efforts to

promulgate the theory in a hostile world. The broadcast presented

prophecy for public consumption and commitment, and since it was thrust

into lives already moulded by an attitude to Christianity, Aberhart saw

the tactical advantage of differentiating his work from others as a

means to consolidate support. While his followers were not spatially

set apart from the wider society, the group was at least ideologically

differentiated by the protest, if not somewhat sociologically differen-

tiated by the gathering into small groups. The differentiation, how-

ever, was based on the religious protest which was specified and

promulgated by the organizational elite. The central organization de-

fined what was considered to be loyalty to group goals. Membership

was not so much measured by joining a social group but by faithfully

listening to the broadcast, diligently studying the educational materials,

and above all by making a financial contribution as indicative of a

commitment to the group goals. The construction of the Institute as

an independent center for religious education was symbolic of the pro-

test and was the primary agent for its transmission. Since Aberhart

himself most clearly articulated the protest and thus embodied the

force of its antagonism, loyalty to the leader and the primacy of his

demands subordinated individual independence. Protest did not isolate

the following from the world; it was the means whereby the charismatic

leader invaded the world. In the first phase, prophecy was a means to

affirm the Bible in spite of the world. In the second phase, prophecy

was a means to mount an offensive and attack those who destroyed the
Bible within the world.

The momentum of this protest increased and spread rapidly until
it reached a saturation point. The isolated, the disaffected, and the
rootless might have been the first and most loyal respondents to
Aberhart's message but they did not constitute his sole support. The
radio broadcast with its excellent music and provoking preaching was a
religious novelty to Albertans, and since radio was a prime source of
entertainment in those days, few people were not reached by Aberhart's
programme at one point or another. As an indicator of the response,
the Radio Sunday School had an enrollment of 2,398 by May of 1930. To
the bulk of these people, Aberhart was not the father of a new religious
idea or a new religious organization, but the supplement to existing
religious involvements. Because his programme was on Sunday afternoons,
after the noon meal, people could become regular listeners without
breaking or affecting their ties with the United, Lutheran, or Anglican
Church of which they were a member. In addition, Aberhart claimed to be
non-denominational and therefore his listeners did not feel they were
being traitorous to their own heritage. The broadcast reached into
homes whether formal religious ties existed or not and many a home was
divided in its approval of Aberhart's viewpoint. His crusade struck a
responsive chord even among those whose churches had not "sold out" to
modernism. German and Swedish Lutherans, for instance, had no propen-
sity to discuss prophecy but understood the evils of the modern day and
appreciated Aberhart's stand for the authority of the Bible. To be a
regular listener, it was not necessary to agree with everything Aberhart

said. However, where agreement existed, no doubt Aberhart said it

better than anyone else. Where others ignored or accommodated the

challenges to Biblical orthodoxy, Aberhart took a stand and courageously

responded to the attack. The interviews indicate that an admiration

for this type of courage which Aberhart exhibited endeared him to many

as "a giant among men".

The Articulation of a Wide-Ranging Perspective

In this third phase of the movement, Aberhart became the champion

of a cause. He united those interested in prophecy with those protes-

ting the decay of Christianity and Christian churches, and attracted

those who enjoyed dynamic Bible-based preaching and good gospel music.

Aberhart gathered a multitude of different followers all responding for

a host of different reasons because he articulated a particular per-

spective. That perspective, or that cause which he championed, was the

reaffirmation of the Biblical tradition.[47] He not only had the personal

abilities to lead such a movement but also the organizational mechanisms

to do it. He was well in control of an incorporated organization, a

church, a broadcast of which he was the dominant figure, and of a Bible

Institute that trained young and old alike for the encounter with

modernism.

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[47]Another interesting means by which Aberhart attempted to ac-
complish this task was to give out membership cards for the Pocket
Testament League signed by him and under the auspices of the Institute.
The theme song on the back of the card underlined the importance of the
Bible:
> "Carry your Bible with you
> Let all its blessings outflow
> It will supply you each moment
> Take it wherever you go".

Theoretically, the perspective group is the third phase of a
movement because it consolidates those of divergent approaches to a
common overarching goal. People with other organizational allegiances
may give it partial support because they share a similar perspective.
The emphasis is on minimizing conflict and differences in deference to
commitment to the primary objective. The group succeeds because it
places basic principles before action and champions a cause which
touches segments of the population at sensitive points. Whereas in
the protest group a central organization exists to specify the basis
of social differentiation, in this phase the organization becomes more
elaborate merely to maintain the activities of the group. Socialization
and education to the ideology of the group are hindered by the increase
in adherents. Therefore, differing levels of commitment develop.[48] An
active and committed nuclear group exists within the movement with
varying levels of commitment proceeding outwards. Solid hard-core sup-
port is evident at the center, but a much larger following exists at
the periphery with loose commitments. Adherents on the periphery are
more interested in the principles or ideas while the hard-core supporters
are committed to the organization as well. The perspective group has
usually secured a larger following than the immediate geographical area
of origination. A vivid self-awareness as a perspective is usually
developed since the wider society has been made aware of the movement
in some way.

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[48]Cf. Gurvitch's discussion of the "onion layers" of social
organization.

Aberhart's success in representing this perspective is reflected in his ability to attract students from various denominations to the Institute. In fact, Aberhart's influence was so widely felt that most of the denominational bodies took steps to combat the interdenominational spirit that was prevalent in Alberta. These reactions will be sketched in the next chapter. However, what was clear was that Aberhart was the only native Albertan to have such a widespread and regular audience of listeners. These listeners appreciated his overarching goal of re-affirming the Biblical tradition. It was only those whose schooling had made them aware of the dangers of this form of affirmation who firmly opposed it. Even ministers of established churches found it hard to roundly condemn Aberhart because they failed to fully agree with his theology. Therefore their attack had to be on a different level, i.e., Aberhart's authoritarianism or his financial dealings. The vast majority of the people had neither the desire nor the ability to submit Aberhart's Biblical interpretation to a careful criticism. They picked and chose those elements of his teaching and preaching that their sociological and psychological conditions would allow. In this way, Aberhart appealed to the rootless, the lonely, the isolated, the poor, and the disaffected, as well as those closely tied to a socio-religious community. He was the champion of a cause that was free of institutional encumbrances and vested interests. Regardless of ethnic or denominational background, the Bible was a common symbol of authority that spanned other barriers. Aberhart uniquely demonstrated that the Bible was not merely a record of past events but also of the events of the present and future. God rather than man made history and if things

were decaying, it was only man's responsibility to understand how this
chaos and unbelief were contributing to the climax of history. To a
recently arrived population, Aberhart's message was one of strength
amidst adversity, and guidance amidst the bewilderment of world events.
He placed the inner reorganization of the lives of Albertans within the
context of God's history and united a heterogeneous population around
common symbols. The perspective he represented appealed to a diversity
of people because it was a conscious effort to revitalize flagging
spirits and an unorganized social order.[49]

Social Class Appeal

In the initial phase of the movement, dentists, school teachers,
small merchants and laborers were attracted by the total world-view
which the prophetic interpretation of the Bible provided. The relative
absence of an educated middle class in Alberta society in the 1920's
makes it difficult to speak of this recruitment in class terms. Despite
the prominence of some well-educated persons in the early group, there
is no doubt that upper class support was noticeably absent. However,
there was a mixture of small entrepreneurs, white collar workers, and
skilled laborers, many of whom would be potentially middle class in a

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[49]Note the difference by which a similar end was achieved in the
early development of the Maritimes. S. D. Clark points out the role of
revivalism in social reorganization and social reunification. Church and
Sect in Canada, pp. 88-89. While Aberhart did not ignore the need for
revival, his approach was not primarily a call for conversion. Few
people claimed to be converted under Aberhart and his services were not
traditional revival meetings. His task was much more rational and
middle class: to locate man's life in the course of history and to re-
affirm traditional beliefs in the absence of a traditional culture.

more advanced stage of capitalist development. We might cautiously

suggest that Aberhart's early supporters were those who were primarily

potentially of middle class status.[50] Nevertheless, this does not ex-

plain why some persons selected the prophetic group as the focus of

their allegiance. Prophecy was not Aberhart's creation. The influence

of the Scofield Reference Bible with its prophetic and dispensational

markings had been felt all over North America. Aberhart merely

gathered those who had prior interests in the theory and aroused

sufficient interest among others who were impressed by the total world-

view which prophecy presented. We have rejected deprivation as a use-

ful model to explain the origin of the movement because there was no

consistent form of deprivation to make a significant observation. Our

thesis is that common interests in a set of ideas by persons previously

engaged in religious activity is what drew the group together. However,

once the transition to protest was made, Aberhart appealed to the dis-

illusioned and struggling poor, the religiously and socially powerless,

and the poorly educated rural people who were disaffected in the new

society and in their churches, lacked the presence of traditions and

financial security, and who were suspicious of the aims of higher edu-

cation. While no single factor explains this affinity for prophecy

and protest, a multivariant focus on deprivation explains why the pro-

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[50]The significant point here is that the apathetic and dispos-
sessed are not usually the early recruits to a movement. It is among
those already engaged in religious activity and who possess definite
ideas and ideals regarding the nature of this activity who feel the most
secure and confident about a personal realignment if it is felt to be
necessary. Compare this similar tendency in political movements. Maurice
Pinard, The Rise of a Third Party, pp. 31-34. S. M. Lipset, Agrarian
Socialism, pp. 238-242.

test received a large-scale response. We would argue that by the mid-thirties Aberhart had coordinated the majority of the population into a perspective that represented a movement of the people of Alberta. Aberhart helped reorganize the lives of a frontier population and fostered the social solidarity of the people around sacred symbols and values. That the upper class and the established leaders of Alberta should have found this unity reprehensible and a threat to their power (religious, political, or otherwise) is easily understood.

Assessing Aberhart's Sectarianism

At the outset of this chapter it was tentatively suggested that Aberhart's religious following manifested characteristics of considerable divergence from the usual sociological description of a sect. It is now appropriate to reflect on this problem again utilizing Wilson's eight general attributes of a sect (voluntariness, exclusivity, merit, self-identification, elite status, repulsion, conscience, and legitimation).[51] We have identified a pre-sectarian stage in the development of a sect as the absence of social boundaries to insulate and differentiate the social group from the hostile world. The Calgary Prophetic Bible Conference was exactly what its name implied: a regular gathering of interested persons for a conference or discussion of items of mutual concern. This concept of groupness was furthered by the large radio

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[51]Wilson describes these characteristics as ideal typical and therefore not reality itself. They do serve, however, as a convenient means to handle and compare large bodies of data. The fact that sects change through time and respond to varying changes in the environment need not hinder a general formulation of characteristic attributes. Religious Sects, pp. 28 and 35.

audience who were also encouraged to support the movement with contributions rather than with membership. Since Aberhart controlled the decision-making process in a small group, there was no need for democratic participation. As there was no attempt to consolidate the following into an organizational unit, we would argue that the movement remained pre-sectarian in character. The scope of the movement was non-denominational or cross-denominational and never demanded exclusive allegiance of its followers to a well-defined social organization. Adherence was entirely voluntary, often with individuals rather than families demonstrating support. If the decision had not been made to broadcast, thus enlarging the geographical distribution of the following, it might have been necessary to erect social boundaries to ensure self-maintenance as a unit.

In the early stage, study of the literature was an important test of merit for the would-be recruit. Yet there was no formal organization to join so the later followers were not pressed to declare their specific eligibility or merit as a basis for participation in the movement. But part of the reason that the movement grew so rapidly was that it claimed no exclusive access to supernatural truth. Since it did not conceive itself as in any way an elite, it was free to draw support from those of various religious affiliations without requiring that they sever their denominational allegiances. The selection of Sunday afternoon as the time for the weekly instruction rather than a time in direct competition with established services was a deliberate attempt not to force a choice of allegiance. This had the effect of widening the support. The only hostility that was expressed was to

modernism, and this attack, rather than delimiting support to an insignificant few, found a rather large and favorable response. The only expulsion that took place was a "falling out" with the leader. Loyalty to Aberhart rather than loyalty to group goals was the primary technique used to maintain the unity of the leader-dominated movement. Aberhart was most successful in appealing to the consciences of Albertans. He did not impose vigorous and peculiar standards of behavior as a symbol of commitment to distinguish his supporters. He appealed only to the Bible to legitimate his cause as a valid personal challenge to decaying religious convictions and cool spiritual feelings. It was because he felt that people knew better than to allow this deterioration to take place that he stirred their consciences and demanded their attention.

This evidence indicates the difficulty of analyzing Aberhart's religious movement as a sect. It did not claim exclusivity, or elite status, nor did it aim at institutionalization. Because the movement was always in this phase of incipient crystallization as a social group, there was a consistent lack of group controls whereby tests of merit for membership, expulsion, or self-identification could take effect. However, its requirement for financial and listening support (if not attendance), and its doctrinal emphasis caused numerous strains with the churches which resented this encroachment on their members. The popularity of radio meant that Aberhart had a diverse and ecumenical audience and few congregations escaped his influence at least in some way. This always produced a bit of a "rub" with the mainline churches and thereby gave his movement a sectarian quality as an "unapproved" and to some extent competing religious endeavor.

How then can Aberhart's religious following and purpose be described? It was a norm-oriented,[52] non-insititutional movement of reform that called for a return to the Bible and basic theology. It was an attempt to revitalize personal religious life by returning to the fundamentals, which would then have the effect of revitalizing social life. It was a search for common symbols to express in ideological terms the quest of Albertans for solidarity and unity in the face of diversity. Aberhart's maverick and domineering personality and his concept of organization had discouraged the institutionalization of the movement and were highly significant factors in allowing the movement to gain such momentum and to penetrate Alberta society so deeply. Thus, although it was not a sect, the movement was sectarian only in the sense that it was non-traditional and non-conformist and as a divergent faction challenged the existing religious structures and patterns.

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[52]Smelser, op. cit., pp. 109-120, differentiates between a norm-oriented movement and a value-oriented movement. A norm-oriented movement attempts to restore, protect, modify, or create norms in the name of a generalized belief. It does not necessarily advocate a change in the normative order and may exist to protect existing norms from threatened change. In contrast, a value-oriented movement is more revolutionary in reconstituting values, redefining norms, reorganizing individual motivations, and redefining situational facilities. The aim is not merely an improvement of individuals or a reform of institutions but "a basic reconstitution of self and society".

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT OF ALBERTA

It has been argued that because Aberhart did not demand exclusive allegiance of his religious supporters organizationally, they were free to maintain existing socio-religious ties in their own communities. The absence of social boundaries, tests of merit, separateness from the world, and lack of a tight in-group structure is usually not conducive to sustaining growth. Yet the movement enlarged its base of support because it evoked common religious sentiments throughout the province. The Calgary Prophetic Bible Conference was not a religious organization attempting to recruit members. It was, properly speaking, a religious movement that recruited a following by voicing basic religious sentiments and drawing those who entertained such sentiments into a body with some unity and coherence through Aberhart's teaching and preaching. If this is our theory, the nature of Aberhart's support must be described and we must prove why indeed he was gaining this type of support.

The Settlement Process

The settlement of the Canadian west was a relatively late phenomenon by North American standards. In the United States, the large migration to the fertile farming areas of the midwestern states had closed the gap between the population centers of the Atlantic coastal states and the Pacific seaboard by the end of the nineteenth century. In Canada, a wide expanse of territory still separated the Loyalists

and the French in central Canada from the active trading and shipping center of coastal British Columbia. A small settlement in the Red River Valley of southern Manitoba sat posed as a beachhead to conquer the vast prairie lands secured from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1870. As land became more expensive and more heavily populated to the south and in the east, the open territory of "the last best west" beckoned the settler to make a new start.

Trappers, traders, and missionaries had been among the first white men to enter this territory. But they were too transient and seldom settled down to work the land. Something more permanent and large-scale was required. To achieve the goal of populating this vast expanse, two prerequisites were required: a vigorous immigration policy to encourage settlement in western Canada, and the provision of an efficient transportation facility to link the settler with the market.[1] The federal government commissioned the Canadian Pacific Railway to form the transcontinental link by which this colonization could occur and compensated the company with large blocks of land which could be sold to settlers. This union of the east with the west was completed by 1885. Particularly under the policy of Clifford Sifton, appointed minister of the Interior under Laurier in 1896, the doors were thrown wide open to immigrants from the British Isles and from Europe and assistance was provided through offices located in their mother countries.

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[1]The development of the west as a deliberate policy of the federal government for market and expansionist goals is the theme of Veron C. Fowke, The National Policy and the Wheat Economy. Cf. also, A. S. Morton and Chester Martin, History of Prairie Settlement and "Dominion Lands" Policy.

The distinctive characteristic of the CPR policy was that they were not merely preoccupied with selling the land they owned for the potential profit of the sale, but went to extraordinary lengths to ensure that the land would be actually occupied and successfully cultivated.[2] It was only if a permanent population could be gathered on the plains that a railroad business would be ultimately profitable. Enticed by the homesteading possibilities and the offer of cheap land, thousands of persons migrated to the Canadian west in search of a brighter future.

The rapid influx of settlers into Alberta really began in the last decade of the nineteenth century and continued unabated until 1926.[3] Table I shows the high rate of population increase at five year intervals which can only be due to extraordinary rates of immigration. The percentage of population increase during any five year period is particularly high at the turn of the century but is obscured in later years by a larger total population. Therefore, the total increase rather than the percentage increase in each five year period gives a more adequate picture of the phases of growth, as shown in Table II. The arresting of population expansion was closely correlated with economic conditions. By the early twenties there had been several years of

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[2]J. B. Hedges, Building the Canadian West: The Land and Colonization Policies of the Canadian Pacific Railway, p. 402. Cf. Chapter 8 for a description of the assistance given to settlers by the CPR in breaking the land, preparing the first crop, and even in providing ready-made farms.

[3]Cf. A. Whiteley, "The Peopling of the Prairie Provinces", American Journal of Sociology 38, #2 (September, 1932), 240-252. Also, W. A. Mackintosh, Prairie Settlement: The Geographical Settlement.

TABLE I

Population Increase in Alberta at Specified Intervals

Year	Total Population	Number Increase	% Increase
1881	18,076		
1891	25,277	7,201	39.84
1901	73,022	47,745	188.86
1906	185,195	112,173	153.62
1911	374,295	189,100	102.11
1916	496,525	122,230	32.66
1921	588,454	91,929	18.51
1926	607,599	19,145	3.25
1931	731,605	124,006	20.41
1936	772,782	41,177	5.63
1941	796,169	23,387	3.03
1946	803,330	7,161	.90

Source: Adapted from Alberta: Facts and Figures, Bureau of Statistics, Government of Alberta, 1950, p. 19.

TABLE II

Population Growth of Alberta. Total Increase at Specified

Periods
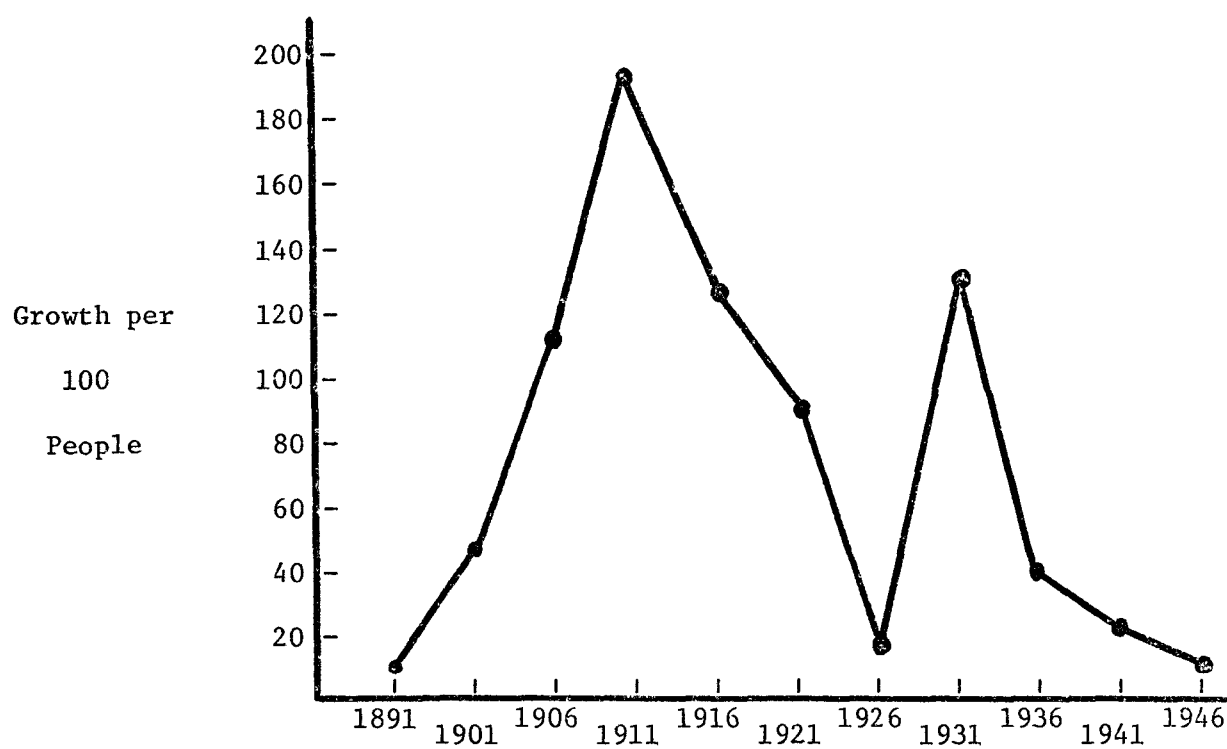
poor crops or bad prices. The manpower demands of the war tended to close national boundaries and immigration was sharply reduced. The markets produced by the war led farmers to take greater financial risks, even though halted railroad construction had isolated some farmers from projected shipping points.[4] Salvation from financial ruin could only be ensured by another period of rapid growth. Several good years did follow and another peak was reached in the five year period 1926/31. Immigration dropped sharply after that with the onset of the depression and population increase remained low until after World War II. What is clear from the data is that, except for a brief period of decline in the early twenties, the forty year time span from 1891-1931 was a period of rapid population growth and expansion in Alberta's history.

Population Analysis

The stresses and strains produced by a population of mixed backgrounds suddenly forming a new society where they must live together is easily conceived in analyzing Table III. The percentage of the population born in Alberta was initially very low but showed a steady increase. The percentage of the population born in other provinces began somewhat higher than those Alberta-born but slowly decreased. The percentage of the population born elsewhere was usually approximately double those born in other parts of Canada. While the number of those born elsewhere steadily decreased, it was not until 1941 that native Albertans formed the majority of Alberta's population. This means adjustment, assimilation,

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[4] I. G. Thomas, The Liberal Party in Alberta, p. 154.

TABLE III

Percentage of Alberta Population by Place of Birth

Year	% Born in Alberta	% Born in Other Provinces	% Born Elsewhere
1906	20.76	20.06	53.18
1911	19.62	23.62	56.76
1916	25.30	23.31	51.39
1921	33.06	20.48	46.46
1926	39.35	18.18	42.47
1931	41.03	17.18	41.79
1936	47.36	16.23	36.41
1941	52.05	15.50	32.45
1946	55.76	16.18	28.06

Source: Adapted from Alberta: Facts and Figures, Government of Alberta, Bureau of Statistics, 1950, p. 26.

and integration was a major problem for Alberta society as a whole until

at least 1941. Intensifying the problem was the fact that many who were

born in Alberta in this period were largely socialized into the old

world customs and world-views of their parents.

Table IV reveals that the majority of Alberta's population was

always born in English-speaking countries. Those born in Canada were

a significant majority and when those born in the British Isles were

added, the dominance of British subjects increased. Those born in

Europe were a slowly decreasing but significant portion of the popula-

lation. Interestingly, those persons born in the United States con-

sisted of one-fifth to one-sixth of the Alberta population until 1926

with the high of 23.33% in 1906. What the table does not show was the

fact that between 1905-1948, 61.23% of all those entering Alberta came

from the United States.[5] And of all those who entered Alberta prior to

1920, 71.21% came from the United States. Many of these persons were

born in Europe, Great Britain, or Canada, but a portion of their life

had been spent in the United States. Most of these persons had been

farming in the midwest but found additional land too scarce or expen-

sive and therefore were attracted by the cheaper and more abundant land

in Alberta. Their land could be sold in the U.S. at a profit and a

larger piece of land could be purchased in Alberta with the same money.

Furthermore, the map indicates that by 1911, Alberta had not only the

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[5]Alberta: Facts and Figures, Bureau of Statistics, Government
of Alberta, p. 49. This figure unfortunately does not differentiate
those who were merely passing through the United States from those who
had settled there.

TABLE IV

Population of Alberta by Birthplace as a Percentage of Total

Population

Year	% Born in Canada	% Born in Brit. Isles	% Born in U.S.	% Born in Europe
1901	51.05	10.52	15.23	16.49
1906	46.82	12.84	23.33	15.58
1911	43.24	18.23	21.74	15.70
1916	48.61	17.46	18.46	14.42
1921	53.54	16.57	16.97	11.86
1926	57.53	16.05	12.86	12.68
1931	58.21	14.60	10.79	15.53
1936	63.59	12.40	9.42	13.92
1941	67.55	10.66	8.25	12.90
1946	71.94	9.29	7.10	11.02

Source: Alberta: Facts and Figures, p. 41.

FIGURE A

UNITED STATES BORN IN THE PRAIRIE

PROVINCES, 1911

%

2 - 3

3 - 5

5 -10

10 -15

15 -25

25 -35
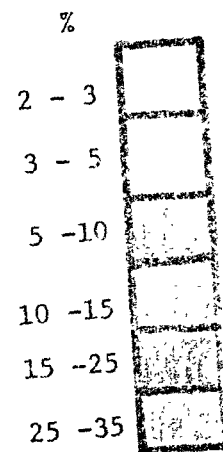
Source: Marcus Lee Hansen, The Mingling of the Canadian and
American Peoples, p. 234.

The size of discs indicates the number of United States born.   ● =527 persons.
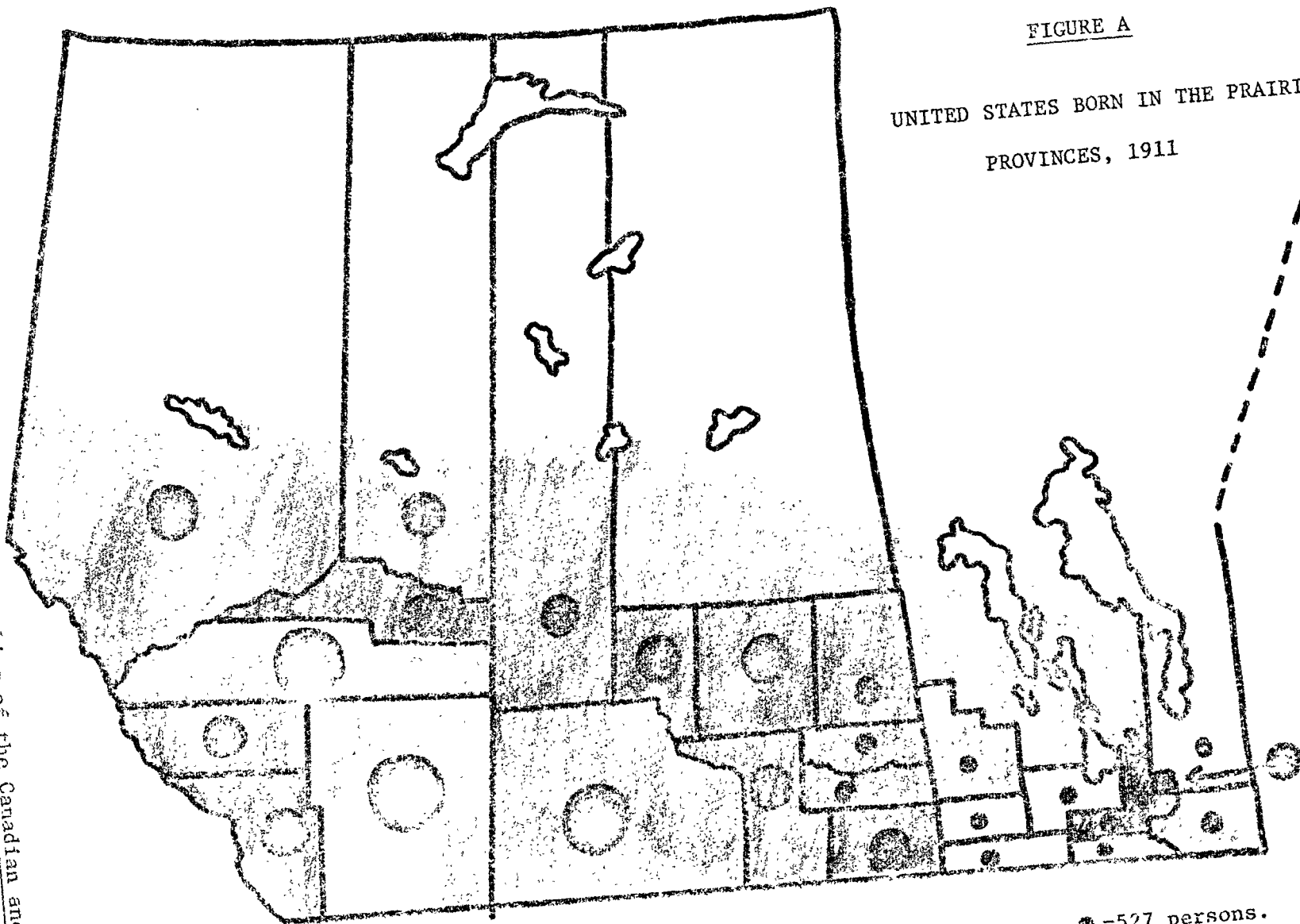
greatest number of United States born of all the prairie provinces but
also the highest percentage of Americans in relation to the total popu-
lation of the province. As might be expected, the heaviest concentra-
tion was in the southern part of the province which had also coincidently
been the spawning ground for Aberhart's religious movement. These data
are significant because they suggest that most persons entering Alberta
were probably influenced in some way by American ideas, movements,
practices, and farming methods which no doubt facilitated their adjust-
ment to Alberta but inevitably colored the nature of their adjustment
as well.[6] Dawson and Yonge speak of this adaptation of American
techniques and organizations in Canada as the "cultural diffusion north-
ward".[7] It would thus not be surprising to find a greater affinity
among early Albertans with their brothers in the American midwest than
to distant central Canada. Since only a portion of those entering
Alberta from the United States were American born, it was obvious that
a large share of Albertans were a migrant population at least twice re-
moved from their place of birth with intermediate residences in the
United States.

Ontario initially made a large contribution to the Alberta

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[6]Cf. Marcus Lee Hansen, The Mingling of the Canadian and American
Peoples. Chapter 10 particularly deals with the movement from the United
States to the prairie provinces from 1896-1914. Wilfrid Eggleston argues
that Alberta is the most American of all the provinces and that in the
1921 census, the proportion of Americans was four times that of Canada as
a whole. Alberta was also more British than Saskatchewan. "The People
of Alberta", Canadian Geographical Journal 15, #4 (October, 1937), 213-215.

[7]C. A. Dawson and E. R. Yonge, Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces:
The Social Side of the Settlement Process, p. 12.

population. In 1906, 16.44% of the population in Alberta was born in Ontario, according to Table V. Ontario was therefore an early source of Alberta's immigration. But this contribution gradually decreased in significance as the Alberta-born increased. It is important to note that the percentage of Alberta-born increased only through the birth of children. The large percentage, then, must not be overrated for a good share of them were children, who would not participate in the decision-making processes for some years. Another interesting fact that emerges is that as time passed, Quebec and Ontario-born diminished in number in Alberta, whereas the neighboring provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia made an increasingly greater contribution to the population of Alberta. The movement of Saskatchewan-born to Alberta is particularly marked. However, Alberta did not maintain all its immigrants either. From 1931-1941 alone, 95,775 migrants (approximately one-tenth of the total population) left the province.[8]

Aberhart's religious movement thus arose in a period of rapid population expansion which only declined with the advent of economic adversity.[9] Large population increases correlated closely with economic prosperity and small increases with economic hardship. The result was that there was no period of equilibrium in which social stability and consolidation could take place. It was not surprising that Alberta

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[8]Alberta: Facts and Figures, op. cit.

[9]For an interesting view of the role of religion in retarding economic growth, cf. S. D. Clark, "The Religious Factor in Canadian Economic Development", The Journal of Economic History, Supplement (1947), 89-103.

TABLE V

Percentage of Alberta Population Born in Each

Province

Year	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia
1906	2.54	16.44	1.80	.36	20.76	.41
1911	2.70	15.37	1.48	.47	19.62	.38
1916	2.56	13.24	1.50	.73	25.30	.57
1921	2.54	11.71	1.58	1.19	33.06	.83
1926	2.13	9.84	1.66	1.54	39.35	.81
1931	1.95	8.09	1.97	2.32	41.03	.93
1936	1.66	7.10	1.95	2.93	47.36	.88
1941	1.48	6.15	2.00	3.50	52.05	.93
1946	1.33	5.46	2.12	4.49	55.76	1.42

Source: Alberta: Facts and Figures, p. 42.

should become a fertile breeding ground for numerous experiments in social unity as a means to assimilate a diverse population. In Aberhart's day, the number of those born outside of Alberta was always the dominant share of participants involved in adult activities. English was definitely the dominant language, and ties with the United States were immeasurably significant to the disposition of Albertans.

The Society of the Frontier

The period under consideration is then a period in which Alberta was attempting to find some basis for consensus and consolidation while still a frontier. F. J. Turner's well-known frontier thesis as applied to the American frontier maintained that the process of pioneering on the frontier was responsible for the development of the individualism and democracy which Americans have cherished. This same conception of the frontier as the cradle and the crucible of a new man has been applied to the Canadian west, though not without some modifications.[10] Having been much shorter in duration and having profited from the early experiences of the American frontier as well as the more recent advancement in technology, western Canadian society did not face the disorganization that was so characteristic of the American west. The settlers

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[10] For an excellent presentation of the frontier thesis and its Canadian modifications, see Michael S. Cross (ed.), The Frontier Thesis and the Canadas: The Debate on the Impact of the Canadian Environment. The frontier thesis stresses the role of the frontier as the most important influence on the history of a nation for on it the indigenous social patterns and social institutions that become peculiar to a nation develop. A popular modification of the thesis is to stress the role of urban or metropolitan centers as most significant in determining the development of the rest of the nation.

were largely preceded by business and government interests in that the

CPR replaced the old covered wagon with its efficient and organized

transportation system and the North West Mounted Police provided law

and order.[11] Immigration aid societies were organized not only to

attract settlers but to assist them to establish a farming operation

through a system of mutual help. Therefore we prefer to describe early

twentieth century Alberta as socially unorganized rather than socially

disorganized. Lawlessness and the absence of traditional institutions

so characteristic of life south of the border were largely avoided on

the Canadian plains as government, business, and religious leaders all

had their representatives in the west prior the mass invasion of

settlers.

John Porter has defined the first ethnic group to enter a

previously unpopulated territory as a charter group.[12] Canada's two

charter groups, the British and the French, have had conflicting ideas

about the development of the nation. In contrast, the settlement of

western Canada depended on recruiting a population from a diversity of

nations and experiencing their arrival all at approximately the same

time.[13] So it is impossible to talk of a charter group in the west with

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[11]The best essay on the frontier thesis as it applies to the
Canadian west was written by George F. G. Stanley, "Western Canada and the
Frontier Thesis", Canadian Historical Society Report of the Annual Meeting,
(1940), 105-118.

[12]John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic, p. 60.

[13]The idea of the absence of a charter group in the west is also
shared by Marlene Stefanow, "Changing Bi- and Multi-Culturalism in the
Canadian Prairie Provinces", in C. C. Zimmerman and S. Russell (eds.),
Symposium on the Great Plains of North America.

any real significance outside of such generalizations that the majority were of British origin or were Anglo-Saxon Protestants. While British law and customs provided the framework in which the west was settled, the heterogeneity of the people who settled the land prohibits any meaningful discussion of a charter group in the same sense that Ontario can speak of it. Although Alberta gave distant loyalty and lip service to British traditions, it was her struggle to formulate her own identity, independent of ethnic background and distant federal policy that provides much of the colorful history of the province and the story of a people establishing its own social patterns and destiny.

The Ethnic Variable

By 1931, the second surge of immigration had reached its peak and Alberta had accepted most of the population with which Aberhart would work. Keeping in mind that Alberta settlers were usually at least twice removed from their country of origin (with the exception of some European peasant groups), the total percentage of those coming from the countries of the British Isles was slightly larger than the total percentage of those originating in the European countries. The diversity of European origins which consisted of slightly less than half the Alberta population is evidence of the multi-cultural mosaic from which Alberta would be compelled to seek some type of integration. In an attempt to determine to what extent Alberta's ethnic mosaic was abnormal in comparison to the rest of the nation, a formula was constructed to determine to what degree Alberta (or any designated region) has more or less than its share of a particular phenomenon. This index

was called the location quotient because it measured the degree of a particular group that was over or under-represented in Alberta as compared to the rest of the nation. A numerical value of more than 1.00 indicates that the region has more than its share of a group, and a number less than 1.00 indicates that the province has less than its share of members of that group.[14] Table VI points out that the French population was under-represented and that those of British background have a normal representation. All European ethnic groups other than the Italians are over-represented with the east Europeans showing the largest representations in relation to their comparative distribution in the rest of Canada. It can be concluded then that immigrants from Europe played a larger role in Alberta (and probably in the prairie provinces) in proportion to the total population than was the case in other parts of Canada. We can infer from this that ethnic diversity must have characterized Aberhart's Alberta and that integration was one of the major problems to be faced by the new society.

The large amount of vacant land meant that settlement could take place almost at random. The tendency was for ethnic groups to settle together in order to transplant their culture and mother tongue, to provide mutual assistance in settlement, and to generally facilitate

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[14]The formula used was $LQ = \dfrac{D_1}{P_1} \times 100 \div \dfrac{D_2}{P_2} \times 100$,

(D_1= group total in Alberta, D_2= group total in Canada, P_1= total population of Alberta, P_2= total population of Canada), and was adapted from G. A. Lester, The Distribution of Religious Groups in Alberta, 1961, M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1966, p. 25. A similar formula was constructed by John W. Alexander, Economic Geography, pp. 406-407, 594-595.

TABLE VI

Population of Alberta by Ethnic Groups,

1931

	Total in Alberta	% of Alberta Population	Location Quotient	Index of Areal Segregation
British Isles	389,238	53.20	1.03	.22
French	38,377	5.25	.19	.92
Austria	6,737	.92	1.95	.48
Slovak	6,404	.88	3.03	.58
Dutch	13,665	1.86	1.29	.40
German	74,450	10.18	2.23	.38
Hungarian	5,502	.75	1.92	.67
Italian	4,766	.65	.68	1.23
Polish	21,157	2.89	2.06	.76
Russian	16,381	2.24	2.64	.55
Ukrainian	55,872	7.64	3.52	1.10
Scandinavian	61,909	8.46	3.48	.43
Indian & Eskimo	15,252	2.08	1.68	2.47

Source: Census data obtained from 1931 Census of Canada (DBS), Table

32.

adjustment to a new land. The presupposition has been that the British tended to disperse rather evenly throughout the province but that other groups tended to form bloc settlements in which their nationality would predominate in a given area. To check this hypothesis we adopted a formula to measure the tendency of various ethnic groups to cluster in a given geographic location and labelled it the index of areal segregation.[15] The higher the numerical value of the index, the greater the tendency of a specific group to cluster. Table VI reveals, as expected, that the British have the least tendency to cluster and that the east European ethnic groups have a great tendency to cluster. Most of the east Europeans settled in blocs because they came direct from the mother country without any intermediate residences and often visibly transplanted their whole culture in Alberta.[16] The French clusters were the

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[15]The formula used was Ind. A.S.$= \dfrac{\displaystyle\sum_{i=1}^{K} \left| \dfrac{x_i}{D_i} - 1 \right|}{K}$

(K= number of census divisions, x_i= population of a specific group in a census division (i) as a percent of the total population of that group in the province. D_i= total population in a census division as a percentage of the total population of the province.) The basic unit area chosen was the census division as data was most readily available for this unit. However, there are problems with the selection of this unit as it might be argued that it is too large and was not constructed with ethnic clusters in mind. One cluster may border on two census divisions and thus weaken the numerical strength of the group in the index even though it is well-segregated. In spite of these weaknesses, the index can be a useful tool to demonstrate tendencies. Adapted from H. L. P. Stibbe, The Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Alberta, according to the 1961 Census, M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1966, p. 28.

[16]Cf. Robert England, The Central European Immigrant in Western Canada, and The Colonization of Western Canada. Dawson and Yonge, op. cit., pp. 115 ff., using different methods, came to the same conclusion regarding ethnic concentrations and also observed the role of religion in sustaining them.

result of church-directed settlements from Quebec. The Germans and Scandinavians had a slight tendency to cluster around linguistic and religious interests but less so than the east Europeans because most of them had intermediate residences in the United States, and were already skilled in frontier agriculture and thus were far more independent. Aberhart's Alberta was socially differentiated by ethnic clusters and therefore assimilation was also one of the major social problems the province was to face.

Ethnicity was not only tied to racial orgin as an index of nationality but to cultural elements which gave flesh to ethnic communities. The stronger the ethnic community the more vital became the mother tongue, religion, traditional customs, and social patterns. The transition to a new country required considerable adaptation to the demands of the new environment, even if an ethnic group concentrated in one area. The primary adaptation was to the new economic patterns required to earn a living and this is where the most rapid change occurred.[17] Secondary mores such as traditional religion, customs, and social institutions not only exhibited the least immediate change, but became the bulwark which the ethnic defended as a focus of his own personal identity and to cushion the shock of adjustment. Herberg has pointed out that in the melting pot theory as applied to the United States, the perpetuation of ethnic differences is frowned upon as not befitting the needs for integration in the new environment.[18] But one thing the ethnic was

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[17] George F. G. Stanley, op. cit., p. 107.

[18] Will Herberg, Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology, p. 23.

UK	Ukrainian
R	Russian
P	Polish
MOR	Mormon
HUT	Hutterite
G	German
MEN	Mennonite
R-G	Russian-German
SC	Scandinavian

FIGURE B

ETHNIC CLUSTERS IN

ALBERTA 1929

125

Source: C. A. Dawson and E. R. Yonge, Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces: The Social Side of the Settlement Process, adapted from p. 37.

not expected to change was his religion. Religious differentiation or
denominationalism, even if it was based on ethnic difference, was a
socially acceptable form of distinction in assimilation. Historically,
the melting pot theory has been considered inappropriate as a valid
explanation of the assimilation process in western Canadian society;
but Herberg does have an important point. Ethnic idiosyncracies in
the prairie provinces were more easily tolerated if they were centered
in the ethnic church. Therefore, religion was closely tied with ethnicity
as a visible and acceptable social activity and the ethnic church be-
came the social location for participation in the ethnic tradition.
One German Lutheran analyzed the religio-ethnic situation this way:
"Many of our people identified language with religion. If you were
German you were Lutheran, and if you were Lutheran you were German.
So to keep the German was an important part of being Lutheran and an
important part of being Lutheran was being German". While religion was
not the only legitimate activity in which ethnicity could be expressed,
it became the focus for immigrant unity. At the ethnic church, socia-
lization and reinforcement of traditions could take place. National
and religious festivals could be celebrated with age-old customs and
ethnics found the church a convenient meeting place. Most of all, re-
ligion provided an important continuity with the past and the resultant
psychological security stabilized persons inwardly with a familiar
framework of meaning in spite of the external hardships and changes in
their environment.[19]

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[19]J. J. Mol distinguishes between two functions of the immigrant
church -- social and personal integration. While the immigrant church
facilitates personal integration, it usually hinders rather than helps

The Religious Variable

The role of communality in Alberta along religious as well as
ethnic lines is demonstrated by Table VII. Using the same methodology
for determining the Location Quotient and the Index of Areal Segregation,
similar data was obtained for the religious groups in the province.
Alberta had a fairly normal representation of the major denominational
groups with slightly less than its share of Anglicans and Baptists but
slightly more than its share of Presbyterians and United Church members.
All other groups with a high proportionate share of their affiliates in
Alberta can be tied to a religio-ethnic community (except possibly the
Pentecostals). The Adventists, Christians, and Mormons were predominantly
Anglo-Saxons who had migrated together solidified by religious beliefs
from the United States. The Lutherans, Catholics, Mennonites, and
Greek Orthodox were solidified by both religious and ethnic unity and
migrated from either the United States or usually Europe. We would ex-
pect then that Anglicans, Baptists, Presbyterians, and United Church
members would rank lowest on the Index of Areal Segregation, and this
is indeed the case. We would expect the tendency to cluster to be
highest among those with the least Protestant or least Anglo-Saxon
heritage. Thus, the Mormons and Greek Orthodox show the highest ten-
dency to cluster followed by the Mennonites and Jews. More Anglo-Saxon
bodies, such as the Salvation Army, Catholics, and Adventists, show
only a moderate tendency to cluster.

The statistical data enables us to conclude that religio-ethnic

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social integration. "Churches and Immigrants", R.E.M.P. Bulletin (Research
Group for European Migration Problems), May, 1961, p. 30.

TABLE VII

Population of Alberta by Religious Groups,

1931

	Total in Alberta	% of Alberta Population	Location Quotient	Index of Areal Segregation
Adventists	4,213	.58	3.87	.44
Anglicans	112,979	15.44	.98	.23
Baptists	30,496	4.17	.98	.37
Christians	2,315	.32	2.91	.61
Greek Orthodox	26,427	3.61	3.65	1.06
Lutherans	82,411	11.26	2.96	.36
Mennonites	8,289	1.13	1.31	.92
Mormons	13,185	1.80	8.57	1.26
Pentecostal	3,655	.50	2.00	.54
Presbyterians	72,069	9.85	1.17	.30
Catholics (including Greek Orthodox)	168,408	23.02	.56	.55
Salvation Army	20,024	2.74	9.13	.46
United	176,816	24.17	1.24	.27
Jews	3,663	.50	.33	.74

Source: Data compiled for all religious groups listing 2,000 members or over in the 1931 Census of Canada, Table 41, vol. II

communality[20] was an important aspect of early Alberta settlement.

Contrary to those who would stress the disorganization and anomie of

the frontier,[21] there is evidence of the establishment of unitive social

patterns based on religion and ethnicity as differentiating factors for

socialization. The effectiveness of both of these factors in assisting

in the assimilation process, of course, is another matter. However,

the inadequacy of stressing only the social unity of these communal

settlements can be observed in that the religious groups with the

largest percentage of the total population have the lowest tendency to

cluster. The four lowest bodies on the segregation index make up

53.63% of the total population (and when the fifth lowest -- the

Lutherans -- are added, the total is 64.89%). So while religio-ethnic

communality is an important variable in understanding pre-Social Credit

Alberta, the socio-religious characteristics of the fairly evenly dis-

persed Anglicans, Baptists, Presbyterians, and United Church members

must also be considered.

The Religious Ethnic Community

Before attempting to describe the general socio-religious climate

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[20]Communality is not being used here to describe a socially
tight-knit community in which the common good has preference and the
social unity is reified. We are using communality in the sense of indi-
viduals who are united by social bonds, traditions, experiences, and
languages, and see the world in essentially the same way. This common
perspective becomes the basis for frequent socialization.

[21]This is essentially the perspective of S. D. Clark's studies
on frontier society.

of Alberta, a further appeal can be made beyond statistics to understand the nature of these religio-ethnic communities and the characteristics they possessed which made them susceptible to Aberhart's appeal. While the majority of Albertans claimed affiliation with either the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, or United Churches, it was this group that also tended to be most politically active since they were less tied to a foreign language, foreign customs, or ethnic social groups. What needs to be understood was what factors fostered the active interest of European ethnics in the Aberhart movement.

We would like to support a theory that religion was the most important social activity for the early European migrant to Alberta and that because of the centrality of faith and respect for religious leadership in their tradition, they were predisposed and aroused to support Aberhart and the Social Credit cause. The personal religiosity of these immigrants became an oft-observed phenomenon.

> In every community visited the factor of out-
> standing importance was their interest in re-
> ligion; usually this religion had a national
> character. Even where personal piety was
> emphasized the community relations of these
> devout persons was impressive. Religion is a
> great stablilizing factor in the life of these
> communities. In some communities there were
> divisions and intense strife over religion;
> the controlling elements of much of their
> life were religious.[22]

To participate in religion was to participate in the national tradition. To participate in religion was to signal one's commitment to the ethnic

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[22] Walter Murray, "Continental Europeans in Western Canada", Queens Quarterly 38 (1931), 74.

group. Therefore, the construction of a church was an important symbol

of that unity in spirit as well as tradition. When in a position of

uprootedness, personal faith and social solidarity were the most im-

portant bulwarks against anomie. Reflecting on the German population,

Gerwin noted the importances of the physical church building as symbolic

of that solidarity.

> The greater number of German-speaking people of
> Alberta have brought a religious background with
> them in the form of firm personal convictions,
> religious consciousness and affiliations with
> church bodies which are or were actively interested
> in settlement of immigrants. In many districts
> the people in showing a visitor around would
> point out the church as the building of first
> importance, and it is true of many community
> churches that they were the first buildings in
> the countryside to be constructed of actual
> lumber and according to a plan.[23]

Skwarok made a similar observation of the importance of the church

building among Ukrainians. Noting that the village church was the

community center in the old country, he argues that it was not sur-

prising that Ukrainians built churches in Alberta while they themselves

were still living in holes in the ground.[24] Makowski's description of

a Polish settlement in Alberta contained a similar evaluation:

> The construction and development of these churches
> was an example of both the devotion of these people
> to their religion, and their need for a spiritual

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[23]E. B. Gerwin, A Survey of the German Speaking Population of
Alberta, M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1938, p. 91.

[24]J. Skwarok, The Ukranian Settlers in Canada and Their Schools,
pp. 16-17.

> guidepost to their survival. Before the echo of
> their axes was stilled from the construction of
> their homes, they began work on the churches. The
> work was neither co-ordinated nor directed;
> rather, it was the spontaneous cooperation of all
> settlers for the benefit of all.[25]

Thus religion was an important matter both externally and internally
for these agricultural immigrants. It gave them a sense of self and
group identity since it was tied to ethnic tradition, personal belief
and visible symbols of unity in a strange environment.

The major problem encountered by these ethnic enclaves was the
lack of religious leadership. For the Ukrainians, this was an unfore-
seen problem as this matter was in the hands of the state in the Ukraine.[26]
Some of the upheavals of the early Ukrainian church in Canada centered
around this lack of leadership, for other churches often made it their
missionary concern to bring other influences into Ukrainian religious
practice. The priest was a person with high social status and his role
was only slowly filled by acceptable native leaders.[27] The Slovaks
also experienced difficulties in obtaining clergymen,[28] and this lack
of leadership had consequences for the role of the church in community
life. The Missouri Synod Lutherans found that their ministers were

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[25]W. B. Makowski, History and Integration of Poles in Canada, p. 159.

[26]Paul Yuzyk, The Ukranians in Manitoba: A Social History, pp. 70 ff. Cf. also, M. H. Marunchak, The Ukranian Canadians — A History, p. 99.

[27]O. Woycenko, The Ukranians in Canada, points out that in the rural Ukraine there were only two classes, the peasants and the rural intelligentsia — the priests (pp. 10-11).

[28]Joseph M. Kirschbaum, Slovaks in Canada, p. 223.

always in short supply to meet the demands of a growing Lutheran popu-
lation funnelled into Alberta from the central United States. In 1905,
six pastors supplied 27 stations and by 1913, 22 pastors were serving
125 stations.[29] Less liturgical groups such as the German Baptists which
were not as dependent on clergy with formalized training seldom seemed
to have been short of ministers as eloquent individuals arose in their
own groups. The lack of adequate religious leadership had a varying
effect on ethnic groups. In some instances it strengthened the group
by forcing them to stand together; but in other instances, ethnics
became involved in the local community church. The United Church and
Baptist church were particularly interested in absorbing or reaching
ethnic groups.[30] However, the greater the cultural distance and the
greater the concentration of an area by an ethnic group, the more im-
portant the transplanted church became and the greater likelihood that
it would survive.[31]

Much of the settlement of Alberta by ethnic groups was done
through religious units. If the religious leaders were the community
leaders, it was natural that they should be entrusted with the plans
for resettlement. Zimmerman and Moneo point out that:

[29] J. E. Herzer, Homesteading for God, pp. 29-31.

[30] For instance, Jean Burnet points out that the United Church in
Hanna consists mostly of those who formerly belonged to the Lutheran
Church. Next-Year Country, p. 37.

[31] The designation of the ethnic church in the New World as a
"transplanted church" is used by Mol, op. cit. He also deals with the
dual factors of cultural distance and ethnic concentration as signifi-
cant to the establishment of this kind of church (pp. 66 ff.).

The religious officials could go ahead and pre-
pare the way by negotiating for lands and privi-
leges and ascertaining what was needed for
settling in the new land. Hence, the settlement
of most prairie communities tended to be of a
group nature, so that small areas -- at least
the size of church parishes -- became dominated
mainly by people of the same ethnic, language
and religious backgrounds. Thus in the open
country of Canada many small areas tended to be
settled by culturally-homogenous people.[32]

Therefore, it was not surprising that each immigrant group brought their

own religious consciousness with them. Gerwin points out that there

were eleven principal denominations supported by German speaking people

in Alberta.[33] In his study of the Ukrainians, Young found that in

Canada religious differentiation became the nucleus for other alignments

within the ethnic group.[34] Religious diversity was associated with

dialect, language, customs, old-world protest, as well as nationality.

There was also little unity among the Lutherans in Alberta. Ten dif-

ferent Lutheran bodies were represented in the province[35] and caused

one official to remark, "...our constituency is more richly blessed with

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[32]C. C. Zimmerman and G. W. Moneo, The Prairie Community System,
p. 18. It is important to note that bloc or group settlement did not
mean the exclusion of other persons. In fact, in most areas where ethnic
settlement was heavy, other settlers had already located on some of the
choicest land.

[33]Gerwin, op. cit., p. 92.

[34]Charles H. Young, The Ukranian Canadians: A Study in
Assimilation.

[35]These included the United Lutheran Church, the American Lutheran
Church, Augustana Synod, Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, Lutheran
Free Church, United Danish Church, Danish Lutheran Church, Finnish
National Church, Missouri Synod, Slovak Synod. Mergers did occur later.
Valdimer Eylands, Lutherans in Canada, p. 327.

a national consciousness than Lutheran consciousness..."[36] Religious

pluralism was more directly related to migration than to differentiating

factors within the Alberta environment.

Language or dialect was an important aspect of ethnic loyalty,

and, whereas English would have to be adopted for participation in the

business world and in education, the church was the only legitimate

institution in which the mother tongue could be maintained and perpe-

tuated. With the maintenance of the foreign language, it was easier

to perpetuate the old world traditions and world-view, and the diminishing

role of the foreign language became a significant index of assimilation.

At the 1937 convention of one Lutheran body in Alberta, it was esti-

mated that the Missouri Synod and Manitoba Synod were still 75-80%

German, the United Danish Lutheran Church and the American Lutheran

Church 85% Danish and German respectively, the Lutheran Free Church

50% Norwegian, the Norwegian Lutheran Church 41% Norwegian, and the

Augustana Lutheran Church 35-40% Swedish.[37] Even the Catholic Church

faced difficulties because of the linguistic diversity. In their

study done in 1930 in the Peace River district, Dawson and Murchie made

this comment about ethnic and linguistic pluralism and its effect on

the church:

> Apart from economic drawbacks, and difficulties
> imposed by the physical environment, there are

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[36]President's Message, Minutes of the 22nd Annual Convention of the Canada Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod, 1935, p. 9.

[37]Report, The Canada Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod, 24th Annual Convention, 1937, p. 11.

> the problems of assimilating diverse cultural
> elements. This difficulty faces the Catholic
> churches, especially in Berwyn and Battle River.
> Their congregations include English, Irish,
> German, Polish, Ukrainian and Russian people,
> some of whom were born in Canada, while others
> are recent immigrants. The services are at
> present conducted in three languages, but the
> priests hope that English may in time become
> the common tongue.[38]

The degree of importance given to the continued use of the foreign

language in religious activity points out two facts: assimilation to

the new environment had not been sufficient as yet to discard the mother

tongue and secondly, the church played an important role in the life of

the European ethnic because, among other reasons, it sustained this

integral element of the Old World.

With the advent of the depression, most of the ethnic groups

had attained a certain degree of adjustment and assimilation to the

new environment. Whatever was done in the other activities of their

lives, religion was still important to them and religious leaders were

respected because they were primarily responsible for the maintenance

of the tradition. Their churches were very sect-like in character be-

cause they were exclusive, intimate and withdrawn, and often consisted

of persons in dire poverty.[39]

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[38]C. A. Dawson and R. W. Murchie, The Settlement of the Peace
River Country, p. 189.

[39]David Millett sees three stages in the development of ethnic
religions in Canada: a sect-like group, a minority church, and an in-
digenous church. While the sociological description of this development
requires more specificity, and the nomenclature, particularly of "minority
church" raises innumerable questions, this distinction of stages in the
adaptation process appears to have good explanatory usefulness. "The
Orthodox Church: Ukranian, Greek, Syrian", in J. L. Elliott, ed.,
Minority Canadians 2: Immigrant Groups, pp. 58-60.

They were little interested in provincial affairs except as it affected their own potential prosperity. However, the depression marked the beginning of a transition in which their ethnics began to turn out toward the world. It was partly the economic disaster and partly the pressures of assimilation and the rise of a new generation that opened the ethnic mind. While still deeply rooted in his tradition, some of the most alert ethnics began to interpret the activities of the New World to the rest of the ethnic settlement. Thus, as Woycenko observed, the pressures of life, self-interest, and self-protection forced them out of isolation and made the bloc vote possible.[40] Their predispositions to religious concerns and religious leadership might then make them more susceptible to an appeal by a religious leader in politico-economic life who couched his efforts in religious phraseology.

The Settlement of the Nuclear Family

These ethnic pockets of immigrant farmers who settled together in particular areas and who brought with them their culture were one dominant population type in pre-depression Alberta. The other population type were innumerable individuals and nuclear family units who left kinfolk behind and migrated to Alberta to make a new start. Emigrating mostly from eastern Canada, the United States, or the British Isles, these families were primarily Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. In urban areas, these individuals sought to establish associations based on occupation, religion, or intellectual interests. People of

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[40] Woycenko, op. cit., p. 113.

English descent, for example, knew they would always find compatriots at the local Anglican Church. But on the whole, the diversity of backgrounds in the population forced individual families in both rural and urban areas to form new bases of association. Schools, shops, and churches became the centers of these interactions and of necessity cut across ethnic and denominational affiliations to give a sense of social cohesiveness.

If the European ethnics brought their religious institutions with them, the Anglo-Saxon migrants could be expected to do the same. The fact that these immigrants did not settle in enclaves and attempt to transplant an entire culture did not mean that there had been no conscious efforts made to reconstruct familiar institutions and social patterns. However, because many of these individuals had established intermediate residences in either the United States or eastern Canada before coming west, their social traditions had often been diluted and infiltrated by indigenous adaptations at the immediately previous residence. This was most apparent in the transplanting of farmers' organizations and of peculiarly American religious denominations.

The mixture of population was not only one of different and diverse traditions but also a diversity of attitudes and world views.[41] Those who came to Alberta from the United States naturally were predisposed to the Americans and were accustomed to their tendency of excessive individualism. Those who came more or less directly from the

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41
S. D. Clark argues that the absence of older age groups in frontier areas removes the steadying influence of tradition. The Social Development of Canada, p. 8.

British Isles had their own ideas about the limitations of individualism and usually had been schooled in the virtues of the British labor movement. Persons coming from Ontario had developed a feeling for the development of the Canadian nation and sought to cull the best from both the United States and Great Britain. With this mixture of backgrounds and the absence of any single tradition from which to draw, the transplanting of established institutions and social patterns would be successful only if they were adaptable in the new society or if they would serve temporarily, awaiting the rise and coagulation of indigenous patterns.

The General Socio-Religious Environment

It was the two charter groups who first sought to extend their religious influence over the sparsely populated west.[42] While the French were concerned about spreading the Catholic faith to the French-Canadians, Indians and Metis, the Anglicans sent their missionaries along with the British traders and explorers. Dawson and Yonge argue that especially to the Church of England, winning the frontier had an imperial connotation.[43] The Anglican Church established new churches

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[42]
For an excellent summary statement on three major perspectives on the role of religion in Canadian society (Oliver, Clark, Lower), cf. N. K. Clifford, "Religion and the Development of Canadian Society: An Historiographical Analysis", Church History 38 (December, 1969), 506-523. Details on Catholic activity in the early west may be obtained from A. G. Morice, History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada, and G. T. Daly, Catholic Problems in Western Canada.

[43]
Dawson and Yonge, op. cit., p. 209.

in Calgary and Fort Edmonton in their earliest days and hoped to grow

along with the population. But the Presbyterians and particularly the

Methodists were not to be outdone. With characteristic evangelistic

zeal, Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist ministers followed the popu-

lation movement into the province. The movement of religious leader-

ship into the prairie provinces had one particularly important conse-

quence for the future of religion. In many instances, clergy had been

imported from Great Britain. James Woodsworth reported that around

1900, 280 Methodist ministers were recruited to the prairies from
England.[44] Anglicans had also engaged in heavy recruitment in England.[45]

Thus much of the leadership of the two largest denominations had ex-

perienced the possibilities of the British labor movement and the

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[44]
James Woodsworth, Thirty Years in the Canadian Northwest.

[45]
Not all this recruitment was successful, however. In the Bishop's
address to the Synod, it was stated, "We have for years been very seriously
suffering from a dearth of clergy thoroughly suitable for our work. We
cannot get the men we need in sufficient numbers. The supply, whether we
think of eastern Canada or of England, is ridiculously below the demand.
In 1909 I went over to England to try to get thirty energetic, capable
young unmarried clergymen; and after doing all I could for a few months,
I came back with one! Then, of those whom with considerable difficulty
the Bishop secures for work, only a percentage prove suitable; and of the
rest some never can adapt themselves in such a way as to win the complete
respect, confidence and support of the people they minister to. Does not
all this show that we unduly handicap our work when we depend entirely upon
clergymen obtained from abroad". Synod of Edmonton Reports, Edmonton:
Diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada, p. 17.
     W. E. Mann makes an excellent case for the fact that the clergy
of most denominations were unsuited for leadership roles in rural com-
munities because they were not native westerners, attempted to foist their
own world-view on agrarians, and had little intentions of remaining in
rural areas so that a rural charge was viewed merely as a prelude for
better things to come. Sect, Church and Cult in Alberta, pp. 92 ff.
Compare Brunner and Lorge, Rural Trends in the Depression Years, Chapter
21 for an outline of similar problems of rural religion in the same time
period in the United States.

Methodists especially had shown great willingness to establish the
Kingdom in a social gospel sense.[46]   On the other hand, most of their

parishioners, particularly in rural areas, had come immediately from

the United States and Ontario where acute reactions had set in about the

validity of the social gospel and the viability of collective social

action that bordered on socialism. In contrast to Winnipeg where the

Labor Strike in 1919 was led by clergymen with British background, and

which was settled by persons with urban British experience, Alberta was

largely rural and settled by persons with rural American experience as

small entrepreneurs. The fact that this British socialist-oriented

clergy had a different world-view from the perspective of Alberta's

agrarians reduced the leadership role that they would ever have in

rural prairie areas.

The random and widespread settlement of Alberta made it diffi-

cult for settlers to establish visible religious organizations of the

denomination with which they were most familiar unless they settled

near persons of a similar persuasion. Often the first church to or-

ganize or establish a congregation achieved community support. If

interest in another denomination led to the establishment of another

church, the first congregation was often severely weakened as former

affiliations were again expressed.[47]   Between 1910 and 1915, the

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[46]
Cf. Stewart Crysdale, The Industrial Struggle and Protestant
Ethics in Canada. Implicit in Crysdale's evidence is the idea that the
rejection of the Protestant ethic and the reconstruction of the social
order was the intense passion of the church leaders and clergy more than
a conviction of the rank-and-file.

[47]
Dawson and Yonge, op. cit., pp. 215-216.

Presbyterians and Methodists got together in an effort to end competition. Several plans were tried. One of these plans was to federate certain churches in small towns with two churches.[48] Another plan was to be dually affiliated or to be completely independent. The most effective plan was that of comity or the non-intrusion policy whereby alternating towns along the railroad line (at least six miles separating them) were reserved for one of the two bodies so there would be no direct interference. While Morrow has argued that most of the citizens on the prairie were not strong denominationally, there was a certain nostalgia about keeping some ties with their own denomination. It would be permissable to assume that in the long run, the creation of a viable and efficient local church would be preferred to a weak church regardless of denomination; but this is not to indicate that denominational backgrounds meant nothing. Social ties and loyalties were often disturbed as, "These arrangements were made as a result of conferences between home mission boards and superintendents of missions. Local people were not consulted and they were not always in favor of the arbitrary plans by which their religious needs were being met".[49] Other

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[48] E. Lloyd Morrow, Church Union in Canada: Its History, Motives, Doctrine and Government, pp. 101-102. For instance, the Presbyterian Church absorbed the Methodist Church in Leduc. Morrow claims this happened more often in Alberta than in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

[49] Dawson and Yonge, op. cit., p. 327. Denominational policy was usually made by members of the Home Mission Board whose members were largely from urban centers among Baptists. I. H. Wenham found that the Home Mission Board had only two representatives from the prairie churches and they were ex-officio. Furthermore, only six percent of the membership of convention boards came from rural churches. The Baptist Home Mission Problem in Western Canada, pp. 53-54. Also, E. H. Oliver, Winning the Frontier, p. 248.

federations and unions appeared to occur spontaneously and without

bureaucratic directive. Whatever can be said of the methods by which

new socio-religious patterns were being formed, it is important to note

that a new religious institution was being called into being and the

new social bonds that would have to form would not be cemented without

painful social adjustments. The fact that some persons would never be

able to make the adjustment or shift denominational allegiances con-

tributed to a restlessness into which void Aberhart preached his dynamic

gospel.

It has become a commonplace to explain the union of the

Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists in 1925 as at least

partly due to the push from the west.[50] There is no doubt that the

more sparsely populated west was forced by economic considerations and

by sheer numbers to seek some sort of union.[51] While it is doubtful

that the "national spirit" idea was a major factor at the grass-roots

in the west, economic considerations, the shortage of ministers, and a

shortage of people to keep more than one congregation operant, were

powerful factors in making union a necessity. What must not be forgotten

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[50]C. E. Silcox, Church Union in Canada: Its Causes and Conse-
quences, p. 224. Silcox argues that the fear of the rise of an indepen-
dent western church prompted easterners to take union more seriously.
E. H. Oliver, op. cit., Chapter 12. Also, George Morrison, The United
Church of Canada: Ecumenical or Economical Necessity?, argues that it
was the mission motivated expansionist desires of the church that made
union an economic necessity. Cf. John M. Buck, The "Community Church"
and Church Union, Th.M. Thesis, McGill University, 1961, pp. 39-48.

[51]S. D. Clark argues that the shift to sectarian movements was
a shift from a religion that was expensive in personnel and buildings to
something more economical. "The Religious Sect in Canadian Economic
Development", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science 12, #4
(November, 1946), 441.

is that external structural union did not mean that a person's attitude
and traditions could change that fast. Church union merely lumped a
diversity of people together who happened to have parallel religious
interests. The insecurity of this amalgam as well as the insecurity
of migration sought a foundation of certitude, and this certitude un-
certain unionists found in Aberhart. Church union had been an organi-
zational maneuver, but there had been no common experience or foundation
with which the external unity could be internally solidified.

The second major problem was that theology had undergone rapid
changes in interpretation. The fact that most United Church members
had a much more conservative background than the liberally oriented
United Church ministers only added to the uncertainty.[52] Most members
were not usually aware of the subtleties of preaching the social gospel
but interpretations of the Bible and taking Biblical criticism seriously
were easily noticeable. Indeed, Barker points out that it was the neg-
lect of definitive theology and the emphasis on social action that had
made union possible in the first instance.[53] When the eternal verities
of theology were needed for a personal anchor amidst rapid social change,
their relative absence provoked near hysteria in some families. In

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[52]An Alberta School of Religion was held in the summer of 1935
under the auspices of the United Church to discuss the relation of
religion to social issues. The lectures were given by Professor J. King
Gordon, a CCF candidate in Victoria, B.C., Professor W. H. Alexander
from the University of Alberta, also a CCF'er, and Rev. H. M. Horricks,
a CCF candidate in Calgary. And this was at the time that the CCF was
making some of its most radical statements. Edmonton Journal, July 9th,
1935.

[53] Barker, The United Church and the Social Question.

addition, the hostilities of World War I and its war hatred were soon

sublimated and turned into social unrest and religious controversy which

expressed itself in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy.[54] While

the need to reconcile the impact of science and changing moral values to

former world-views was a burning issue in the United States, the hysteria

of this concern was also felt in Canada through the preaching of men

like Aberhart and T. T. Shields.[55] The socio-religious chaos and, con-

versely, the need for socio-religious unity on the doctrinal as well

as the structural level made fundamentalism an appealing movement in

Alberta. The highly dramatic and forceful articulations of Aberhart

evoked these common sentiments in Alberta because the province found in

him a champion of fundamental beliefs. To those somewhat bewildered by

both theological and social change and seeking a reaffirmation of

orthodoxy not available in local churches, Aberhart identified their

objects of fear to them and stated unequivocally what they wanted to

hear. Evolution became the symbol of the many aspects of modern culture

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54
     Cf. Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy 1918-1931, p. 23, and Chapters 2 and 3 for sociological and psychological explanations. Also, one of the early works, Stewart G. Cole, The History of Fundamentalism.

55For a discussion on the controversy that Shields created, see J. D. E. Dozois, Dr. T. T. Shields (1873-1955) in the Stream of Fundamentalism, B. D. Thesis, McMaster University, 1963; and W. G. Carder, Controversy in the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec 1908-1929, B. D. Thesis, McMaster University, 1950.

     S. D. Clark has argued that political and religious radicalism in the British colonies drew the population closer to the United States and weakened bonds to the empire. If this was the case in the east, it was much more the case in Alberta. Movements of Political Protest in Canada, p. 236.

which were eroding,[56] and, as a concrete issue, became the focus for

protest in the defense of the Bible. It was not so much that Aberhart's

supporters were fundamentalists in the complete sense but that they

sought an affirmation of basic Christian beliefs which they knew to be

true but which they were not hearing elsewhere. Amidst all of the in-

stability, the statement that the Bible was still the "Word of God"

was an anchor to those affiliated with denominationally-integrated

United Churches. Forms, labels, and organizations may change but basic

Christian truths were perceived to be eternal.

Former Methodists often found the social gospel tradition a bit

foreign. Despite the tension within Canadian Methodism between British

and American influences, evangelical warmth and concern for personal

salvation had long been hallmarks of the denominational faith and

practice. The camp meeting had been a particularly important religious

activity but apparently did not sink its roots too deeply in prairie

soil.[57] Instead, the group dynamics-oriented class meeting under the

supervision of an elder became the common practice. However, slowly

the primary importance of experience and persuasion were replaced by

instruction and interpretation. Ministerial training subverted evangelism

in deference to a more professional orientation.[58] Mass evangelism as

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[56]Willard B. Gatewood, ed., Controversy in the Twenties:
Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution.

[57]J. H. Riddell, Methodism in the Middle West, pp. 232-234. For
discussions of early Methodism in Canada, cf. also, Goldwin French, Parsons
and Politics: The Role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the
Maritimes from 1780-1855; and W. H. Elgee, The Social Teachings of the
Canadian Churches.

[58]H. H. Walsh, The Christian Church in Canada, p. 278.

well as mass meetings of any kind were seldom held. Presbyterians, on

the other hand, were accustomed to singing psalms and classic hymns

rather than the gospel hymns, had a lofty rather than intimate concep-

tion of God, and stressed doctrinal correctness. Presbyterianism was

also much more closely tied with the Scottish tradition so that religious

and ethnic loyalties were often inextricably interwoven. As a result,

some of the largest and strongest Presbyterian churches in Alberta

stayed out of church union.[59] Even though some had moved beyond the

traditional fundamentalist beliefs and the warmth of conviction that

had been part of the Methodist and Presbyterian heritage, while others

were indifferent, the fact remained that many United Church people

were thus susceptible to the influence of Aberhart's religious movement.

Aberhart provided both Biblical certainty and evangelical warmth that

was lacking in the major denominations with the new preponderance of

rationalism.

Theological controversy also plundered the Baptist Union.

Fundamentalist-modernist debate had stalked the halls of Brandon College

and a heresy charge was brought to the annual meeting in 1922.[60]

Aberhart, of course, had used these feelings to point out the propin-

quity of the issue to western Canadians. The conservative-liberal

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[59]
For a history of the Presbyterian Church in Alberta, cf.
Growth: Synod of Alberta of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Many
Presbyterian dissenters in rural areas were said to have left the United
Church and become dormant.

[60]
Baptist Union of Western Canada, Yearbook 1922, Report of the
Brandon College Commission, pp. 53-74. Also, McLaurin, Pioneering in
Western Canada.

tensions appear to have been widespread in all denominations. The Hauge movement in Lutheranism stressed personal piety, and its essential features were based on the fundamentals of Biblical religion. The Missouri Synod Lutherans had discussed the matter of modernism and took a stand that "...receives, accepts, and believes the Bible in all its parts...as God's divine and infallible Word, given by inspiration".[61] These tensions, defenses and affirmations were largely the clash of two world-views: the rural, simplistic, traditional, and agrarian vs. the urban, intellectual, secular, and contemporary. They represented the clash of two styles of living and as such they were irresolvable. Only new shared experiences could change the world-view that was dominant in Alberta. Aberhart articulated this traditional world-view in a manner that agrarian Alberta could understand and in a way that many could support -- regardless of denomination.

The third major reason that Aberhart was able to arouse a following in Alberta was that the frontier left so many persons unchurched, either because of relative isolation or because of lack of interest in the local organization. Much of the problem was caused by a shortage of clergy in combination with the sparse population of the hinterland. Most ministers had responsibilities for a church in a larger town with pastoral oversight for the surrounding rural areas in what were called preaching points. The stronger town church paid most of the minister's salary and thus desired most of his services. The tendency then was that the country points were treated as mere appendages to the work in

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[61]Minutes of the Northern Alberta Pastoral Conference, Missouri Synod, October 24-26, 1944.

the town and thus largely neglected.[62] A small number of ministers

were directly responsible for large units of the population. Total

membership often showed some increase while ministers trained and

willing to serve in the rural environment decreased. In 1926, 242

ministers served 24,875 United Church members, and by 1942, 226

ministers were serving a larger membership of 37,312.[63] Those who were

willing to take on the challenge of a rural ministry were forced to

become itinerant in the manner of the old circuit rider. Socred MLA

J. W. Wingblade reminisced about what Sundays were like for him in pre-

depression Alberta:

> While serving the Brightview and Burnt Lake church
> I also supplied the pulpit Sunday evenings in the
> Scandinavian Baptist Church in Wetaskiwin, now
> called Ebenezer Baptist Church, for nine months.
> Had I had a car and paved roads to travel to and
> from the different stations, it would have been
> quite different. To travel thirty to forty miles
> by horse and buggy on a Sunday and hold three
> services and teach one and sometimes two Sunday
> School classes, was not uncommon.[64]

Insufficient clergy meant that large areas were poorly reached or not

reached at all. Speaking of the area south of Camrose, east of Tofield,

and between Fort Saskatchewan and Vegreville, the Anglican bishop re-

ported,

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[62]Frank E. Wagg, The Rural Church in the West, Chapter 2, p. 5.
A good discussion of the major problems from a church point of view.

[63]J. Hutchinson, The Rural Church in Alberta, B. D. Thesis, St.
Stephens College, Edmonton, 1943, p. 40.

[64]J. A. Wingblade, A Few Memories of Fifty Years in Alberta, a
mimeographed paper, n.d., p. 2.

Owing to the difficulty of securing the right sort
of men in sufficient numbers, these, with many
districts similarly circumstanced, in the present
Diocese of Calgary have hitherto been largely, if
not entirely, uncared for. A living church must
provide for its needy districts as soon as pos-
sible.[65]

The same lack of denominational expansion and discouragement is regis-

tered by this statement:

Twelve months have elapsed since I came as mis-
sionary to this Prairie district. It was a new
field as far as Baptists were concerned. Students
of other denominations had been ministering to the
people for several summers, but usually left for
College leaving the field practically unmanned for
the winter. On such methods it is easy to see how
difficult it would be to establish permanent work.
To reach the scattered farmers and their families
and bring them under the influence of the Gospel
is no easy task; they are a mixed class of people
and live in many cases isolated lives. Many have
got out of touch with church work; others are en-
tirely indifferent to the needs of the soul.[66]

No church group was immune from this feeling of helplessness in attemp-

ting to reach those of their own denominational background. The Lutherans

even complained:

The pastors have difficulty in finding our fellow-
Lutherans and often do not find them at all, be-
cause they do not know where they are. The pastors
ought to be informed when people go to Canada or
get in contact with the missionary before they go
there so that they might know where Lutheran
settlements are to be found.[67]

In an attempt to combat the isolation of individuals from their denomina-

tional churches, committees were often established to maintain communica-

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[65]Synod of Edmonton Reports, op. cit., p. 17.

[66]Western Outlook (February 1st, 1914), Statement by a pastor
[name not given].

[67]J. E. Herzer, op. cit., p. 28.

tion with these persons. Such was the task of the Isolated Baptist

Committee that sent out literature and Sunday School material to the

hinterland:

> A great many isolated Baptists have been visited
> in various parts of the Province and each fall
> hundreds of letters are sent out to these, our
> isolated friends, many of whom make regular con-
> tributions to our Missionary Budget, thus keeping
> contact with our denomination in which they still
> have a deep interest....There is a growing ten-
> dency, however, for our isolated brethren, who
> are far removed from Baptist churches, to link
> up with other denominations where they and their
> families find their religious inspiration and
> fellowship, and this movement is accelerated by
> the wearing thin of denominational convictions.
> It is not uncommon to find in many of the unions
> (United Churches) Baptists occupying places of
> large influence and official position.[68]

The relative isolation of denominational families throughout the province

meant that they were forced to be either organizationally inactive or

were forced to affiliate with a church of another denomination. Many

congregations in these rural areas met occasionally in a school or

wherever an itinerant minister made a visit.

The essential point is that the rural church had lost its inte-

grating role in frontier communities.[69] While the minister was often

highly respected, his presence was too infrequent and diffuse to unify

the community. The lack of adequate church buildings failed to provide

a focus of identity for social solidarity and a convenient place for

regular socialization. The difficulty in appealing to the population

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[68] Baptist Union of Western Canada, Yearbook 1936, p. 41.

[69] W. E. Mann makes a similar point in The Rural Church in Canada, Chapter 4.

to take the religious services that were available seriously is demonstrated in this report:

It is difficult to develop a lively church consciousness when the place of worship is a small schoolhouse, or a community hall in which entertainments have been held on the previous evening. Often these places are cold, dirty and quite unsuited to the purposes of worship. The church is grateful for the privilege of having these buildings but one cannot shut his eyes to the fact that the development of a worshipful atmosphere is rendered difficult in such an environment.[70]

Jean Burnet pointed out that when a minister visited his parishioners infrequently because he was a non-resident or had too big an area to serve, Anglicans, for example, tended either to give up going to church or attended the services at the United Church.[71] To the United Church fell the lot of consolidating the religious interest that expressed itself in most rural areas, and yet this organization also found it difficult to do the job properly. Regarding the Grande Prairie Presbytery, it was said:

This is a Presbytery of big distances, and adjacent to every minister's circuit or mission is a large territory which we cannot possibly cover. There are many Protestant families scattered over this unchurched area, who at present are too far from regular church services to attend, and in our opinion this accounts very often for the fact that these families are lost to the church and its influence.[72]

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[70]
Minutes of the Alberta Conference of the United Church of Canada, 1927, p. 19.

[71]
Jean Burnet, Next-Year Country, p. 66.

[72]
Minutes of the Alberta Conference of the United Church of Canada, 1927, p. 18.

Rural religious organizations were definitely experiencing difficulty

in establishing firm roots and comprehensive coverage of a given area.

The diversity of religious backgrounds contributed to this lack of

consensus and made the church an improbable agent of social solidarity.

The population could most easily be united around occupational interests

which crossed ethnic and religious boundaries in an attempt to solve

contemporary problems. Thus it was not surprising that farmers' move-

ments should have been the most successful in integrating the agrarians

of pre-depression Alberta.

Aberhart and the Bible Belt Thesis

Into this vacuum of clergy shortage, sparse population, mixed

denominational backgrounds, infrequent church services, absence of

viable church organizations, and appealing church buildings, and the

resulting religious inactivity, "Bible Bill" Aberhart began preaching

and reaching the isolated and disaffected over the airwaves. As one

resident of Bow Island in the dry area of southern Alberta stated,

"Everybody listened to Aberhart. He was exciting and spoke of something

that everybody knew. Since we just saw an itinerant pastor infrequently,

he was the most important pastor we had on the radio. And he told it to

us straight and hard. You didn't have to be a churchgoer to listen to

him". Aberhart did not demand organizational membership but he won

personal allegiance. He reaffirmed the basis on which this society could

be built in familiar terms. He stated what was certain and sure when

all else was tenuous and insecure. He literally became the detached

and yet personal pastor to many who had no pastor. Aberhart's growing

religious movement was not the result of a province filled with funda-

mentalists but was the result of a heterogeneous and religiously con-

fused frontier population seeking social consensus and unity on certain

fundamental Christian beliefs which were usually not forthcoming at the

local level. The fact that economic pressures forced the denominations

to retrench further during the depression only heightened Aberhart's

influence and appeal.[73]

Even though our discussion of Alberta has focused on socio-

religious patterns, it is not meant to imply that religious interests

were abnormally high or that they were even significant to the majority

of the population. The frequent popular designation of Alberta as a

Bible Belt has produced inadequate generalizations and presuppositions

about the nature of religious activity in the province. We have al-

ready demonstrated that organizational religious activity was failing

miserably to meet the needs of Albertans. All denominations reported

marked concern that far more reported affiliations with the denomination

in the census than were listed on membership lists. The United Church

complained that in 1928 they were ministering to 18% of the people when

their share was really 30%. Only 12.58% of the children born in the

province were baptized in the United Church.[74] 64% of all congregations

in the province had a Sunday School and only 50% had organized youth

work.[75] Dawson and Yonge found that one-fourth of the farmers in their

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[73]Jean Burnet found that many churches were closed or reduced to
mission status and ministers were withdrawn during the depression in the
Hanna area. Op. cit., p. 144.

[74]Record of Proceedings of the Alberta Conference of the United
Church of Canada, 1929, p. 42.

[75]Ibid., 1930, p. 38.

sample did not attend church at all during the survey year (1930) and another one-quarter only attended once or twice per month. Only one-fifth of the total went to church oftener than twice per month.[76] Poor church attendance was lamented this way by the Lutherans:

> The morning worship is poorly attended in the cities from the eastern to the western boundary of our Conference, while in some fields there have been signs of improvement in attendance at the "Big Service" -- the evensong. In the rural district, whereas a rule but one worship service is held each Sunday, the morning or afternoon worship is preferred. In the towns or cities the favored idol "The Slumber God", ruins our morning worship, and the "Social God" interferes with the vesper services ....In the rural districts the deep snow interferes with the attendance in the winter and the deep mud in the summer, or possibly it can be more bluntly stated by saying that the Winter King rules part of the year through cold, ice, and snow and the Pleasure King the remainder of the year through lakes, picnics, and motoring.[77]

Lutherans claimed that less than 50% of the communicants worship each Sunday and only 30% of the membership worship regularly. Baptists as well spoke of the "spiritual lassitude and religious indifference as prevalent in the province".[78]

Thus the nostalgia about a more religious past in Alberta and the prevalence of a flourish of religious activity in agrarian communities is largely a fond myth. Furthermore, there is no evidence to

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[76]
Dawson and Yonge, op. cit., p. 221.

[77]
Minutes of the 23rd Annual Convention of the Canada Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod, 1936, pp. 9-10.

[78]
Baptist Union of Western Canada, Yearbook 1913, p. 10.

indicate that Alberta was any more or less religious than any other
province. What can be argued, however, is that the agrarian mentality
was far more predisposed to a religious world-view than a rationalist
and purely secular one. And when social chaos and depression descended
as a dark cloud over the province, the voice of the prophet (Aberhart)
filled basic social and spiritual needs with a collective response
stated in western, agrarian, and thoroughly indigenous terms.

Critique of the Analysis of W. E. Mann

In his major work on Alberta, Mann suggested that what required
an explanation was the presence of a rather large segment of the popu-
lation adhering to sects.[79] Using his list of those religious groups
considered sects as well as his membership estimates, it is highly
doubtful that a total membership of 53,000 in a total population of
over 800,000 was either that unusual or that significant. What does
require explanation, for our argument, is not the presence of thirty-
five tiny sects with individual memberships as low as twenty, but the
nature of the religious expression and behavior of the overwhelming
majority who held memberships or affiliations with denominational
churches. While members of sects may be much more active and hard-core
than church members, it is for this very reason that we are interested
in the larger, relatively inactive portion of the population which was

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[79]
Mann, Sect, Church, and Cult in Alberta, pp. 30-31. Much of the
following discussion is based on Tables I and II which list sects and
churches in Alberta separately.

left unministered and existed only in names on membership lists. [80] With

the large radio audience that Aberhart had accumulated, he had to at-

tract far more persons than the members of other sects. Furthermore,

many of the sects that Mann listed either openly repudiated Aberhart

or were sufficiently exclusive and insulated against his influence.

We have hypothesized and demonstrated that if anything significant at

all can be elucidated pertaining to the growth of Aberhart's religious

movement and the widespread support it received, the clues will be

found in the conditions of the churches of Alberta rather than in the

listing of a multitude of small sects which at most composed one-sixteenth

of the total population.

The major difficulty with Mann's analysis is that it seeks to

impose the sect-church thesis on Alberta religious activity. He assumes

that Alberta had a class structure similar to that of an urban society,

whereas, on the contrary, there was a distinct absence of anything but

a rudimentary class structure. An elite of business and professional

people existed in the towns and cities and formed an upper class. Below

them status differences were blurred except for a small group of visible

poor. [81] Stratification was more closely correlated with occupational

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[80]
Mann noted that church membership lists in Alberta carried
many persons not regularly reached by the church so that sects may have
provided up to 35% of the Protestant strength in the province at an
active institutional level. This may have been the case, but, again,
we are interested in the significance of this large, partially socialized,
and relatively inactive population. Ibid., p. 31.

[81]
B. Y. Card, The Canadian Prairie Provinces from 1870-1950: A
Sociological Introduction, p. 14.

prestige or ethnicity than with economics for the majority of the

population. In spite of Mann's eastern or urban presuppositions, [82] it

can also be argued that he never really made it clear what ultimate

criteria he utilized to make arbitrary decisions in differentiating a

church from a sect. Therefore, familiarity with these groups in an

eastern context where tradition and social structure were more well-

defined influenced his classification. Membership size, longevity in

existence, and categorization elsewhere in North America appear also

to have been subtle, primary criteria. Why was the Moravian church

listed as a church and the Free Methodists as a sect? What differen-

tiated the Evangelical United Brethren (listed as a sect) from the

Missouri Synod Lutherans (listed as a church)? Were the sociological

differences between these groups in Alberta that significant to warrant

a distinction? Surely the Seventh Day Adventists were as institutionalized

as the United Church of Canada. The organizational hierarchy was as

distinct with the Salvation Army as with the Presbyterian Church. In

what way was the world-view of the Disciples of Christ different from

the Baptist Union? Were not the Augustana (Swedish) Lutherans at least

as insulated, and the Missouri Synod (German) Lutherans more insulated

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[82]
Perhaps a "churchly" bias is also evident as, for example, when Mann speaks of the numerous "unorthodox religious groups that grew up in Alberta" (op. cit., p. 27). In a country of religious pluralism, the use of the term "unorthodox" sounds strange for it implies a conception or standard of orthodoxy by which unorthodoxy can be judged. Secondly, Mann suggests that this unorthodoxy was a product of the Alberta environ-ment. I will argue below that with some exceptions this was largely an imported or immigrated unorthodoxy and was therefore not a product of the Alberta socio-economic milieu.

from the demands of a hostile society than the Swedish Evangelical

Mission Covenant? What differentiates the German Baptists from the Union

Baptists in ways other than ethnicity? Sociologically, the German

Baptists necessarily appear sectarian because they utilize a foreign

language and perpetuate a close community. In terms of doctrine and

world-view, there was probably little difference between a rural Baptist

Union Church and a German Baptist Church. All of these questions point

out the difficulty and obviously dubious value of classifying religious

organizations in a new society.

Limitations of the Sect-Church Hypothesis

The inapplicability of the sect-church theory to Alberta [83] in

this stage of her development is the result of the fact that religious

differentiation was not based on social location but on immigration.

Groups like the Christadelphians, Cooneyites, Mennonites, Salvation

Army, and Seventh Day Adventists were not native to Alberta, but were

brought to the province through immigration. Statistics of growth do

not allow us to determine whether further recruitment was from addi-

tional immigration or from proselytization. However, with the exception

of Holiness, Pentecostal, and Bible Institute groups, who would tend to

see the growth and continued existence of these small religious organi-

zations as a means to sustain meaningful patterns and to maintain social

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[83]
Goldwin French also questions the use of the sect-church thesis
and the frontier thesis as relevant to Canadian conditions. He points
out that historical backgrounds as well as immediate circumstances are
important. "The Evangelical Creed in Canada", in W. L. Morton, The
Shield of Achilles, p. 17.

ties with those left behind at the point of migration. This is most
obvious with American based bodies such as the Church of Christ,
Disciples of Christ, the Evangelical Free Church of America, and others
whose migrated members added to the list of sects in Alberta. In other
words, to be involved in one of these sects was not as much a means of
social or religious protest in Alberta at this time as it was a means
to maintain meaningful relationships with friends back home. In a re-
cently migrated population consisting of persons with diverse backgrounds,
religious ties provided social stability by uniting those in the area
with similar backgrounds and by reaching outside the new and hostile
area to the established, familiar, and more secure religious community
of the point of origin. For example, German Baptists in the Drumheller
area remained differentiated from the Baptist Union not primarily because
of the language but because of ties they desired to maintain with family
and friends they had just left in Dakota. Likewise, the Evangelical
Free Church maintained their small and struggling group as an identifying
link with like-minded comrades and friends in Minnesota. Other larger
bodies such as the Lutherans and Presbyterians had found that to main-
tain their religious ties was an accepted and secure way to ensure a
sense of community in the strange new world. Religious affiliation was
therefore not a derivative of status or class structure in Aberhart's
Alberta, but was a means to maintain personal stability through identi-
fication with a familiar community of believers which transcended the
unknown surrounding population. Other than the fact that the immigration
process itself tended to appeal to the lower classes more than to the
upper classes, there is no reason to make class a critical explanatory

factor in Alberta's early religious life.

The difficulty in distinguishing church from sect in Alberta in this period is produced by the random immigration of a diversity of peoples to a primarily rural environment that required the adaptation of religion to meet new needs. Every religious organization in Alberta had to adapt in some way and the failure to adapt (e.g., Anglican Church) successfully meant its removal from the heart-beat of religious activity. To the extent that churches and sects had to adopt similar methods (e.g., Bible Schools, radio broadcasts) in order to compete successfully for the population, the distinction between a church and sect was blurred as all attempted to cultivate a degree of piety, Bible knowledge, religious enthusiasm, and morality among their members. Furthermore, while not belonging to a sect, many church members maintained a sectarian world-view that defended traditional concepts, beliefs, and values from encroaching liberalization. Rapid social change in a new society evoked a desire to reaffirm basic ideological elements as, for example, a non-changing belief in the authority of the Bible. The ability to face external social change demanded the stability of traditional changeless beliefs to ensure personal stability. Therefore, it was not solely the more modernist religious world-view in itself that was rejected by many Albertans; rather it was the interjection of these new ideas at a time of considerable social change when alterations to personal world-views were resisted by the prior demands of adjustment to a new environment.

Sectarianism was thus produced by efforts to adapt to the prairie society and by the degree to which modernism was perceived as a

threat to stability amidst social change. This two-pronged explanation

provides a key to the understanding of the means whereby Aberhart se-

cured large support from the population affiliated with the churches.

The Anglican Church was most immune to sectarian encroachments because

it made the least efforts to adapt to prairie conditions or to enlist

new methods and therefore remained doctrinally and liturgically stable.

Mormons and many Lutherans settled largely in blocs so that the re-

ligious community was reasonably co-extensive with the social community.

Their adaptation to Alberta was as a complete community and traditional

religious beliefs were vital to social unity. An attack on the religious

beliefs was considered an attack on the community and therefore the be-

liefs were vigorously defended. To the extent that the Lutherans and

Mormons were aware of the liberalizing of the Christian tradition and

the decaying moral fibres in the society around them, they could stand

within their own communities and applaud Aberhart's ultimate goals.

Most susceptible of all to the sectarian world-view were the

Presbyterians, the United Church of Canada, and the Baptist Union.

The Presbyterians and the Methodists had been most active in forming

congregations and preaching points on the Alberta frontier. With

church union in 1925, people of diverse religious backgrounds had been

glued together in an organizational unit, but they were not one in

belief or practice. Many had at least a vivid memory of participant

evangelical activity. Others lived more within the social gospel

tradition which had become a revolutionary element in the west already.

Distances meant that often persons would attend the nearest church, ,

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regardless of denomination. The lack of uniformity of religious out-

look within the churches is an important element Mann does not elucidate.

There was a definite feeling among the heterogeneous membership of the

United Church that the social gospel advocates had overbalanced tradi-

tional practices and interpretations of Scripture of the more evangeli-

cal variety. Presbyterianism had recently articulated its stand for

traditional doctrine and practice that differentiated itself from a

"liberal" and "watered down" church union. The Baptists had been in

the throes of a modernist controversy at Brandon College. Significantly,

Aberhart made inroads in all of these religious bodies, with his de-

finitive explanations and firm stand. Aberhart's most loyal hard-core

support came from those who rejected the tentativeness and abstractions

of the local church, and exchanged rootlessness for the security of

black-and-white answers. Disaffected United Church adherents were

therefore prime candidates for his movement. Sociologically, this is

a pattern we have come to expect not just among those in the midst of

disorienting social change but also generally among particular segments

of the population.

The point at issue is that whether through heritage, vivid

personal experience, personal predisposition, social demands of an

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The interviews were quite revealing at this point. Attending
the closest church often did not mean there was ever any intention to
join it. This was particularly true of Presbyterians and Baptists at-
tending United churches. One family recounted how they took their
children to the local United Church and attended themselves. In due
time, the children became members but the parents refused to join and
retained their former affiliation.

ethnic group, or the unnerving strains of social change, the majority
of the Protestant population at this juncture in Alberta's history
were predisposed to fundamentalism.[85] It is also for this reason that
the sect-church conceptual framework is inappropriate. It assumes that
official theological positions enunciated by the church leadership
apply to a diffuse population which is still undergoing assimilation
and which is not yet in agreement with the official ideology. It does
not properly consider intradenominational differences, based on rural-
urban residence, occupation, ethnicity, or language. Sophisticated
Baptists and Anglicans in Calgary had more in common in general world-
views with each other than with a fellow Anglican or Baptist in a
rural area.

The Social Marginality Thesis

The theme of Mann's study was that Alberta evidenced "exceptional
religious non-conformity" because of a "high incidence of social mar-
ginality".[86] The key words are "non-conformist" and "marginal". They
imply a standard to which one can measure conformity and a center from
which marginality can be calculated. What the standard or the center is

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[85]
    Fundamentalism is primarily an ideological description whereas
sectarianism is primarily a sociological designation. A fundamentalist
will not necessarily be a sectarian. The important thing is that he pre-
fers a literal interpretation of the Bible, traditional language, and
traditional conceptions of religious beliefs and practices.
    Mann notes that the Alberta Superintendent for the United Church
estimated that 80% of the United Church membership in the 40's in Alberta
were inclined to fundamentalism (op. cit., p. 29).

[86]Mann, op. cit., pp. 3, 155.

for Mann is unclear; suspicions would have it be the industrial center of Canada. However, the effect of comparing Alberta to another population center ought not to be to say that one is marginal to the other but to compare their individual social structure and social patterns. Mann's work conveys a subtle colonialist attitude that perceives Alberta not in its uniqueness but in what sense it approximates what is considered to be a "mature" society. But Albertans were never concerned about conforming to others; they were concerned about understanding themselves, becoming their own unity, and asserting their own desires. Even a cursory glance at the political history of the west reveals this independence. The struggle in Alberta was for integration and social unity among a heterogeneous population. It would be expected, then, that there would be numerous attempts to cement this solidarity through religious or political movements, and such was the case.

Alberta did not produce this "bewildering mixture of competing religious organizations", they were brought to the province by persons when they migrated. We therefore distinguish between a migrated sect and a native sect. A native sect is a product of the socio-economic environment in which it is studied and a migrated sect is brought to an area through the migration of its adherents and there seeks to perpetuate itself and seek new followers. Mann fails to take this step backwards in time and therefore is over-impressed with the numerous religious groups in the province. The stresses and strains within Alberta are not manifested solely by observing the largely migrated religious pluralism but by observing the eruption of religious groups that are indigenous to the environment. To the extent that these groups

arise and develop in contrast to other areas, it is legitimate to speak

of a non-conformist religious population. However, this is hardly the

burden of Mann's argument. Since his membership figures for sects are

merely his own estimates,[87] and since he fails to make similar "informed"

estimates for other provinces, the reader is hardly persuaded that sects

are a larger percentage of the total population in Alberta.[88] Further-

more, it appears to be gross nonsense to interpret the majority of

Albertans as socially marginal. A negative description produces nega-

tive evaluations. What is needed is a description of people living in

a particular geographic region and their struggle to construct a

meaningful society at varying stages of provincial development. It is

for this reason that we have perceived Aberhart's success as the result

of a struggle to give public expression to the elements of a basic

faith held in common. The carving of a provincial political identity

also required the carving of a religious identity if only to help the

individual locate himself in a new society.

Therefore, it was the difficulties in the assimilation and

integration of an expanding, diverse, and recently migrated population,

as well as the strains of economic crisis, that evoked the necessity

for an affirmation of basic beliefs and common symbols as a basis for

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[87]Census data are always inadequate for listing sects and
counting their adherents.

[88]Walsh argues that although Ontario has a greater variety of
sects than the west, sects have greater influence in the west because
they represent a higher percentage of the total population. Again,
Walsh presents no data to support this comparative statement. The
Christian Church in Canada, p. 315.

social solidarity. This is substantiated by the fact that Aberhart

talked less about conversion than about a rejuvenation of faith. For

the most part, he assumed that people were Christians and called them

to a deeper and revitalized form of belief. Aberhart made sure that

people did not have to join a sect in order to be influenced by funda-

mentalist doctrine. Through radio, mass meetings, newspapers and

pamphlets, Albertans were reminded of the basic tenets of the Christian

faith. While the preaching of others eroded the fundamentals of the

tradition, Aberhart dynamically restated it by appealing to the basic

religious feelings and beliefs present in the province which we call

the "populist religion".

A Conceptual Understanding of Populist Religion

Several attempts have been made to understand the nature of the

dominant religious beliefs and practices of the rank-and-file in a

given location. Gustav Mensching points out that the masses seldom

understand the ideas of organized high religion and therefore create

and nurture a folk belief.[89] While attempting to demonstrate that the

folk beliefs of the masses have essentially shown little change since

their foundations in primitive religion, he argues that the masses are

moved by subconscious feelings rather than rationality, and are aroused

by the fantastic and credulous. Mensching asserts further that the

masses can only accept or reject beliefs in wholesale lots and cannot

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[89] Gustav Mensching, "The Masses, Folk Belief, and Universal Religion", in Louis Schneider, ed., Religion, Culture, and Society, pp. 269-273.

tolerate doubt, guard their tradition and conversely guard against innovation and change, and demand authoritative leadership. Mensching's argument was not constructed to be applicable to a society characterized by rationality, technology, and pluralism but he makes three excellent points concerning the folk beliefs of the masses to primitive communities.

More recently, the attempt has been made to describe the nature of the beliefs of the majority of the population in contemporary, religiously pluralist United States. Will Herberg argued that in spite of traditional beliefs within the tripartite divisiveness of religion in the United States (Protestant, Catholic, Jew) what is really worshipped is the American Way of Life.[90] National sentiment is transformed to a type of quasi-religion which the churches celebrate. Robert Bellah, on the other hand, rejects the idea that this religion is part of the shared beliefs of the institutional churches, repudiates the idea that it is a least common denominator, but claims that a civil religion has been separately institutionalized in America that religionizes the national tradition.[91] Martin Marty speaks of the theologically vacuous religion-in-general that conjoins the American creed with Christian revelation.[92] While we do not ignore the conceptual differences between these three men, whether we talk of the American Way of Life, the civil religion, or religion-in-general, we are still speaking

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[90]
Will Herberg, Protestant-Catholic-Jew.

[91]
Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America", Daedalus (Winter, 1967), 1-21.

[92]Martin Marty, The New Shape of American Religion, Chapter 2.

of the nature of beliefs held in common as in some deep sense tied to the national purpose.

We have advocated the use of the term populist religion because our conception of beliefs shared in common by the majority is only indirectly tied to the state. Religion may or may not be an instrument of national integration or national meaning.[93] Populist religion is not usually mixed and transformed into a quasi-religion or something else. It is based on the universal religion[94] which predominates in a country and in which the masses celebrate its most basic, elementary, and traditional conceptions. Populist religion is also not specifically related to primitive or folk religion.[95] It has its roots in contemporary mass society and attempts to find certainty, continuity of tradition, and authority in its belief and practice. It is often dependent on a middle class or rising middle class to arouse other elements of society including the lower class.

"Populist" or "populism" was originally meant as a designation for those who supported a people's political party.[96] When "people's

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[93]Compare S. D. Clark, "Religious Organization and the Rise of the Canadian Nation, 1850-1855", Report of the Canadian Historical Association (1944), 86-96, who perceived a developing close identification between religious union and the national community.

[94]This is also a concept of Mensching's. In this case, the universal religion was Christianity -- primarily in its Protestant manifestations.

[95]The term folk religion appealed to us very much initially, but its usage in relation to primitive societies and magico-religious beliefs made it inappropriate. Cf. I. Hori, Folk Religion in Japan.

[96]J. D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt, pp. 238-239.

party" became cumbersome terminology and difficult to use in conversation, it was suggest that Populist was a better word to indicate "People's" because it was equivalent to Democrat or Republican. While this political usage is foreign to our present conception, the idea of being a characterization of the masses or of the common people is significant. Populism also conveys the idea of rising swells and retreats by the people and this implication we also find agreeable. Populist religion is a structurally parallel phenomenon to populist politics but may or may not be co-extensive with it.

Populist religion is defined as a unity of religious perspective, overtly expressed or a latent predisposition, with which the masses of the population can identify in spite of diversity of religious practice and heritage, and as a result of similar reactions to a common socio-economic environment. It must be noted that this is a unity of perspective or similar world-view and not agreement in every doctrinal detail. Identification with this perspective may be through church membership, actively professed faith, residue of childhood training and socialization, or periodic encounters through cultural accretions. It is what the people feel, think, and do rather than what is official, rational, intellectual, or upper class. To put it another way, populist religion is a religious pattern produced from below rather than that demanded from above. Explicit doctrine or practice is not as important as the common attitudes and goals that they represent. For example, Lutherans, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Pentecostals in Alberta differed in doctrine and practice at particular points but expressed a common attitude of respect for the Bible as the "Word of God". There is no

reason that populist religion need be a class phenomenon but all must interpret an environment in roughly the same way. For instance, a professional man, a farmer, or a shopkeeper can represent different classes but agree on what social justice is in a particular situation. The absence of a well-developed class structure in Alberta at this time fostered a rather rapid articulation of the populist religion.

Furthermore, we perceive populist religion to be a collective response most clearly evoked by a crisis or charismatic leader. Indeed, only when people are forced to unite in a common cause does it become evident so that it can be described with any degree of accuracy. At other times, it exists as a vaguely defined pattern in subterranean style until a crisis forces its crystallization. Populist religion changes through time and another crisis in the same society may evoke a populist religion of a different character. It resists institutionalization and usually expresses itself in movements of protest.

Populist religion does not require the destruction of existing religious structures. It is dependent on a charismatic figure to cross existing organizational boundaries to call people out of the deteriorating arrangements, even though they might return to them at a later date. By calling people out, the dynamic leader is divisive and condemned by the establishment hierarchy; but he also assures and unites because he utters their criticisms and speaks directly to their felt needs. He pinpoints a common need and presents a common solution. When the common need subsides, the following dwindles. The vast majority of the population are touched by the populist religion in some way. It becomes a "hot topic" of conversation for some people while for others it compels

crusading activism. Populism becomes visible when it fills a social

need usually produced by significant social change.

The populist religion in Alberta was evoked from what Tylor

calls a basic underlying unity of beliefs, attitudes, and values among

the farmers in which there was basic agreement over ends to be achieved.[97]

While Tylor over-emphasizes uniformity and consensus at the expense of

differences and uniqueness, he does have an important point that a

similar world-view arose out of a common economic struggle of markets

and prices. The necessity of earning a living and adapting to a new

environment served as a mechanism to wrench people loose from previous

traditions. Populist religion became an important component of the

emerging prairie world-view. It was a non-institutional reaffirmation

of fundamental religious beliefs and was instrumental in providing

the population with a greater sense of cohesiveness because of this

ideological agreement.

Elements of the Populist Religion

In Alberta, Aberhart was able to articulate the basic elements

of this populist religion because the needs of the new environment were

forcing established religious organizations to adapt their methods and

practices. Churches were forced to adopt methods used by the sects in

order to hold their people. The annual reports of every denomination

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[97]Earl J. Tylor, "The Farmer as a Social Class", in Tremblay
and Anderson (eds.), Rural Canada in Transition, pp. 279, 300. J. N.
McCrorie follows (pp. 322-337) with a scathing critique of Tylor's
use of the concept "class".

reflect a widespread concern for the erosion of their credibility unless

their techniques more closely approximated the needs of the populist

religion. Mann fails to point out that the successful efforts of the

sects forced important adaptations by the denominations which contri-

buted to the unity of a religious perspective. Because the sects de-

pended on lay initiative, organizational flexibility, and very basic

ideological conceptions, they were able to arouse populist interest.

If the denominations were to be in on the action, they would have to

cultivate their own adaptations that would fit the emerging indigenous

shape of religion. Transplanted religions would have to be transformed

by the life-styles of the new environment. Thus, in important respects,

church and sect were not polar opposites but had adapted on certain

levels in order to relate to the populist demands for a reaffirmation

of the fundamentals of Christianity. The fact that the sects seized

the offensive in this effort meant that the denominations often copied

their most successful ventures and, at the very least, were forced to

reckon with their appeal to the population. The fact that many denomin-

ations did make significant alterations in their programmes meant that

sectarian organizational growth did not overwhelm the province.

Mann points out that Alberta participated in the Bible School

movement that blossomed in North America after the First World War. He

presents evidence that this was largely a sectarian activity in which

the training in Bible and practical skills was an important educational

venture, particularly for agrarians. What Mann does not state was that

the demand for this activity was so great that other denominations were

forced to construct similar programmes. With schedules built around the

agricultural calendar, the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute was opened

in 1932 at Camrose under the auspices of four Lutheran bodies with 60

students in the fall term and 80 students in the winter term. The

Lutheran hierarchy noted that "The Bible School movement is much empha-

sized by other church bodies to whose teachings we cannot subscribe.

We should, therefore, prayerfully support our CLBI and urge our youth

to attend a Bible School in which we know that the Way of Salvation is

correctly portrayed".[98] Missouri Synod Lutherans began a system of

Bible Institutes lasting a week at various centers throughout the

province. Their great pioneer, W. E. Herzer, made this observation:

> Many other churches called for them, but no men
> were available who could devote their time to this
> blessed teaching service of the church, which soon
> became even more popular with adults than with the
> young. The depth of the depression had the effect
> of creating a "hunger for the Word", and the church
> endeavored to supply the needs with all the facili-
> ties at her command.[99]

Anglicans were more reluctant to participate in this movement but even

managed a few educational meetings on a weekly basis. The founder of

a Baptist Bible School told of how his body became involved in the Bible

training movement. "The existence of other Bible schools made their

presence felt by influencing our young people. Our people came to see

the need for our own school when they saw our own youth being lost to

them. And in my arguments, I used this as leverage to prove the need

for our own school". The United Church deeply lamented the fact that

their youth were not receiving sufficient training based on the Bible,

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[98]President's Message, 21st Annual Convention of the Canada
Conference of Evangelical Lutherans, Augustana Synod, 1934, pp. 11-12

[99]Herzer, op. cit., p. 62.

but its leadership found it difficult to accept the poor scholarship

and traditional interpretations that they perceived to be part of the

Bible School movement. Having passed resolutions that the reading of

Scripture and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer be a requirement in

all public schools, and having established summer schools of religion

for the study of the social gospel, the church hierarchy thought it

had successfully evaded the issue. But in 1938-39, a vocal segment of

the church again raised the idea of Bible Schools as some of their

young people were attending them and finding there "a familiarity with

the Bible and a warmth of religious life and experience".[100] A recom-

mendation was put forward that this interest be met with the establish-

ment of a "Residential School for Young Lay Workers", the creation of

short term schools in selected centers, and the encouragement of weekly

Bible studies. However, such official action was always deferred to

committees year after year and thus came to nought. However, the

important fact is that such interest was there, and it was merely

prevented expression by the tensions within the church organization.

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[100] Record of Proceedings of the Alberta Conference of the United Church of Canada, 1939, pp. 43-44. The tensions within the United Church during these years ought not to be minimized. While being aware of significant exceptions, it is possible to generalize that many in leadership positions preferred a social gospel emphasis and sought to give unofficial backing to the CCF. On the other hand, the more unsophisticated laymen were more concerned with the activities of the populist religion including a Bible School and radio work. The left wing had attempted to recommend that all congregations establish classes and study groups to study the question of a Christian economic order and the development of an understanding of what the Kingdom of God on earth meant. After lengthy discussion, this was also defeated. Record of Proceedings, 1934, p. 26.

The coagulation of the populist religion was made possible by the use of radio as the primary medium for the dissemination of religious inspiration. In an attempt to reach those isolated from their own denominations, and again to counter the offensive thrust of sects, the churches also became involved in broadcasting. A radio programme with these aims would necessarily be quite traditional in form and content and therefore made important contributions to the populist religion regardless of denomination. The United Church broadcast from three centers: Calgary, Edmonton, and Lethbridge.[101] At each location, several United churches rotated being in charge of the programme. Such variation eased the burden of responsibility but produced little listener appeal or continuity of speakers in comparison to Aberhart's broadcast. After a year or two, expenditures were curtailed and all broadcasts were discontinued except for a limited programming schedule for McDougall United, Edmonton, and St. Stephens College.[102] The Lutherans also resolved that the radio be used to develop a "true Lutheran consciousness and Christ consciousness" rather than that it merely bring worldliness into the home.[103] Special broadcasts during

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[101]
See Record of Proceedings, 1931, pp. 20-21 for additional data regarding these arrangements.

[102]Record of Proceedings, 1932. In 1934, competition had again forced the radio issue. The Radio Committee of the United Church of Canada recommended that a programme originate from Alberta rather than the one from Toronto so that it might have community interest, discuss moral problems alternating with a "warm evangelistic message" and be "dressed up with appealing music" (pp. 28-29).

[103]Minutes of the 22nd Annual Convention of the Canada Conference of the Evangelical Lutherans, Augustana Synod, 1935, p. 20.

the Lenten season were begun by the Missouri Synod in 1926, and from

1934 to 1940, the pastors of Calgary conducted a weekly broadcast for
                                          104
six months of the year during the winter.   Again suffering from lack

of listener appeal and continuity, the broadcast had its greatest

ministry among those denominationally committed.

Another area of special adjustment to meet the needs of the

newly settled population was concern for the religious education of

children. The United Church had resolved at its 1925 Conference that

each congregation should make a deliberate effort to enroll all

children at its church school. The fact was, however, that many
                                     105
children could not attend church schools   and the common pattern

followed by all denominations was a Sunday School by post. Lutherans,

Baptists, United, and Anglican all had a fairly extensive Sunday School

via the mails during the depression years and even earlier.

Almost all of the denominational bodies passed regular resolu-

tions in favor of temperance, the Lord's Day Act, and were outspoken

against gambling. The United Church particularly was outspoken in these

issues both before and during the depression. Even though the Anglican

Church hedged on the matter of temperance, there was surprising

unanimity on these points. Noteable exceptions notwithstanding, the

dominant elements of the Protestant ethic -- disciplined hard work and

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104
    Herzer, op. cit., p. 60.

105
    In 1937, it was announced that in the last six years Sunday
School enrollment had decreased by 30,000. Record of Proceedings,
1937, p. 28.

the rejection of frivolous leisure -- were important to a frontier

population seeking economic security. That these elements also became

part of the populist religion strengthened its moral as well as theo-

logical appeal.

What makes Aberhart's Alberta appear so religious is the fact

that much of this activity was evoked in response to Aberhart's personal

success in all of these areas. Often, it was not only that Aberhart

was successful in meeting the religious needs of Albertans, but that

he originated the use of specific techniques to which other religious

bodies were forced to respond. He had been the pioneer of religious

broadcasting in Alberta, had established one of the first Bible Schools,

had an early Sunday School by mail, and had long advocated a hardline

stand on moral issues. It was Aberhart's fortune, as a non-institutional

religious radical protesting against the religious establishment, to

touch a sensitive nerve in the agrarian disposition. It was also his

fortune that whatever techniques the other religious organizations

adopted, Aberhart took the same techniques and utilized them to much

better advantage. Thus his growing following.

In a province with a poorly developed class structure and an

acute sense of external exploitation, populism reigned supreme. Popu-

lism expressed itself in politics with the rise of the UFA. Populism

also expressed itself in religion with the rise of Aberhart. In both

spheres, common world-views and perspectives had existed in a latent,

dormant state barely below the surface even before they were evoked by

the development of a crisis and the structures were created for their

expression. Even the Anglican bishop charged that congregationalism and

individualism were creeping into his churches and were threatening
established traditions.[106] But traditions were not important to
Albertans. They needed to find themselves and discover their own in-
dependent identity, and this they could best do by reaffirming that
which they had in common through collective action.

106
Synod of Edmonton Reports, op. cit., 1922, p. 13.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ENGLISH SOCIAL CREDIT MOVEMENT

Social movements succeed by exploiting the weaknesses and fail-
ures of existing social patterns and institutions. They redefine and
clarify goals and present more viable alternatives to reach them. Social
movements do not merely identify problem areas but provide channels for
remedial action. The elective affinity a follower demonstrates to the
movement's ideology is grounded in the socio-economic milieu from which
a complex of needs and values arise. Social movements succeed to the
extent that they serve human needs. Whether it seeks new norms or new
laws, or whether it assists the follower in a more fundamental reorgani-
zation of motivations or a redefinition of a social situation, a social
movement is an expression of the human struggle to create a more
satisfying culture.[1]

The corollary to these generalizations is that social movements
ebb and grow, and change and refocus as human needs change. Alterations
in the human environment require ideological adaptations and new methods
of goal attainment if the movement is to survive. Aberhart's religious
movement grew not only because it was expressing deep human feelings
and therefore meeting personal and social needs, but because it was an

[1]Neil Smelser considers value-oriented social movements to be
similar in nature to Wallace's conception of revitalization movements.
Theory of Collective Behavior, pp. 120 ff.

180

indigenous attempt by Albertans to come to grips with the new society. Because of Aberhart's uncanny ability to sense the feelings of persons at the grass-roots, sufficient adaptations to the strains of the environment ensured the continual growth of the movement.

This chapter represents an attempt to fill the void that exists in the understanding of the background to Alberta Social Credit. In some ways, it is peripheral to our central argument. Yet it allows us to sketch the theory of Social Credit and to relate its origination to a specific milieu. Our aim is not primarily to present an analytic history of English Social Credit but to make some sociological observations about the development of the movement, its participants, and its essential meaning within British society.

The history of Social Credit in England provides abundant evidence of the factors that can limit and restrict the adaptability of a movement. The manner in which a budding movement will be related to socio-economic pressures is dependent on the nature of the leadership, ideological emphases, and social class appeal as much as it is related to the timing of the appearance of a movement into a vacuum of need. A study of Douglas Social Credit is illuminating because it demonstrates not only how social groups adapt an ideology to meet the needs of their environment but how the form of their adaptation can further delimit the possibilities for increasing the following.

I. The Social Credit Theory

The father of Social Credit was Major (RAF Reserve) Clifford Hugh Douglas (1879-1952). An honors graduate in mathematics from

Cambridge University, Douglas entered the engineering profession and in
the ensuing years was in the employ of Westinghouse in India, Buenos
Aires and Pacific Railway Company in South America, and the London Post
Office Railway in England.[2] Thus it was as an engineer rather than as
an economist that Douglas came to see the need for financial reform.

While engaged as Assistant Director of the Royal Aircraft Works,
Douglas's factory responsibilities and investigations led him to believe
that the total amount of money paid out in wages and dividends over a
given period in an industry was never equal to the collective price of
the goods produced. That is to say, purchasing power would always be
insufficient to buy all goods produced. He constructed his well-known
equation called the "A + B Theorem" in which "A" included payments to
individuals in wages, salaries, and dividends, and "B" consisted of
payments for raw materials, bank charges, and external costs. "A" made
up the total of purchasing power and therefore could never purchase
the cost of a good which was "A + B".[3] In following news reports, it
was abhorrent to Douglas that goods were being stock-piled or destroyed
all over the world because they could not be sold at a profitable price.

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[2]For a brief biographical note on Douglas, see Fifty Years of
Social Credit 1919-1969: C. H. Douglas.

[3]It is not our aim to engage in an extensive analysis and criti-
que of Social Credit as an economic theory for that is really irrelevant
to our problem. We present the essence of the theory in order to demon-
strate the milieu in which it arose, the bases of its support, and the
nature of its attack. At present, only two accounts of Social Credit in
England are available: C. B. Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta: Social
Credit and the Party System; and John L. Finlay, The Origins of Social
Credit in the United Kingdom and Canada, Ph.D. Thesis, University of
Manitoba, 1971 (could not obtain).

This appeared to him to be a totally inefficient use of technology and human effort. Of greater importance was the fact that people were not able to buy the goods they desired (and which were available!) merely because their purchasing power was insufficient to empty the market and keep the economy buoyant. Despite the new technological potential for human living, society was decaying economically and morally as a result of this unacknowledged flaw in the national accounting system. The deficiency of purchasing power was the first problem of the machine age, and if the error could be corrected, a new day would dawn upon the face of the earth.

The second major problem was at the core of the first problem. If people could not participate freely in the distribution of goods, their individuality was slowly being suppressed. The demands of industrialization had already led to a concentration of power whereby man was being enslaved by an impersonal organization. In _Economic Democracy_, Douglas's first book (published in 1920), he wrote: "The existing difficulties are the immediate result of a social structure framed to concentrate personal power over other persons, a structure which must take the form of a pyramid. Economics is the material key to this modern riddle of the sphinx because power over food, clothes, and housing is ultimately power over life".[4] But if Douglas's critique had a distinctly Marxist ring to it, he completely rejected Marx's solution. Socialism was not the answer for it merely exchanged personnel in administration. Instead, society ought to be "based on the unfettered

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[4]_Economic Democracy_, pp. 98-99. All references in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, are authored by C. H. Douglas.

freedom of the individual to co-operate in a state of affairs in which community of interest and individual interest are merely different aspects of the same thing".[5] The benefits of science and technology ought to be utilized in such a way that the individual can complete his freedom and independence.

These two problems encompass the whole of Douglas's theory: the need for a plan to distribute production and thereby to continually stimulate the economy, and the protection and encouragement of the full development of individuality.[6] To solve the distribution problem was the major step to safeguard individuality. Therefore, the solution to the first problem was intimately tied to the second problem. The remedy to the first problem ought to provide the mechanics required to protect the individual. However, even if the accounting problem and its solution would be rejected as an object for reform, the campaign for the defense of individuality would not remain any less acute. Many could agree with the importance of the distribution problem, but few would agree about the means to its remedy. The opposition Social Credit encountered was usually at this level of the nature of the solution required. In contrast, most of the popular support Social Credit accumulated was built on Douglas's ability to pinpoint the problem (i.e., distribution) and the goal (unfettered individualism) rather than on his programme for reform.

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[5]Ibid., p. 152.

[6]Both of these problems are explicitly stated in the first edition of Social Credit I, #1 (August 17th, 1934).

Why was Douglas so aroused to formulate and promulgate an economic theory and to elucidate its goal so explicitly? As an engineer he was convinced that man had made great progress in science in the conquest of material nature. Humanity had entered a new era in "shifting the burden of civilization from the backs of men on to the backs of machines; a process which, if unimpeded must clearly result in freeing the human spirit for conquests at the moment beyond our wildest dreams".[7] The inter-war years merely confirmed this optimism as a new industrial sector was developed in England based largely on inventions developed before 1914. Machines were enabling man to produce considerably more than ever before, so increased production ought to have made man's life more leisurely. Yet the necessity to keep prices and profits high meant that goods were not being consumed, unemployment was rampant, and the population was being demoralized. In addition, the wrong things were often being produced leading to waste, or what was being produced was not being satisfactorily distributed. The high priests of industry had even misused or refused to use modern tools and processes in some cases and thus kept the worker in subjection and the standard of living low.[8] The end result was that the whole purpose for which men associate in collective industry was defeated.[9] Douglas was perplexed because the life-involvement and expertise of the scientist and engineer was failing

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[7]
The Control and Distribution of Production, p. 15.

[8]Credit Power and Democracy, p. 9.

[9]Ibid., p. 19.

to produce the anticipated utopia for the population.

But Douglas's concern was much deeper. The demoralization of large segments of society made them susceptible to movements which promised remedies but in the long run would fail to produce the desired change. Douglas found that his critique of capitalism had at first produced an affinity with some socialists. His first manuscripts appeared in The English Review and The New Age and these journals had attracted the attention of guild socialists. The editor of The New Age was A. R. Orage, a guild socialist, and after his conversion to Douglas theory he opened the columns of the journal to Douglas and enlisted other supporters. The publication of The Control and Distribution of Production in 1922 made it plain, however, that Douglas was not a socialist if it had not been plain before. He castigated the Labour Party for its "incorrigible abstraction from reality" in which centralization would only subordinate the human ego.[10] He opposed state socialism and asserted that only credit need be socialized for this would improve the economic position of all. There was no point in attacking those who do have capital for the aim of Social Credit is "to put more and finally all people in this position, not to remove it from those who are already there..."[11] The whole invective of Social Credit was that it promised reform without substantial change or revolution and in doing so protected the essential social structure. Douglas quoted Orage in response to the Report of the Labour Party, noting that:

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[10]The Control and Distribution of Production, p. 171.

[11]Ibid., p. 39.

> ...these results are brought about with the mini-
> mum disturbance of existing social arrangements,
> yet with immediate social relief. No attack is
> made upon property as such, or upon the rights of
> property. No confiscation is implied, nor any
> violent supercession of existing industrial con-
> trol. No sudden or difficult transformation on
> the part of the State is presupposed...[12]

Social Credit thus had immediate appeal to those with vested interests

in the society and yet who also had an active social conscience awakened

by the restless demands of the impinging masses.

Douglas considered Social Credit to be the safety valve necessary

to save society from the destructive nature of socialism. Another

threat, as he saw it, was the increasing consolidation of world power.

Many socialists, Douglas maintained, had not even recognized that the

essential problem was a lust for power. They dealt only with the tech-

nical aspects of nationalization when it only leads to the same control

of power with different faces as long as there is no decentralized con-

trol of policy.[13] Even though the attack on personal property appeared

to arise from the "less fortunate strata of society", these efforts

were really nothing but a tool of centralized finance to subordinate the

individual.[14] Socialism could thus be debunked because even it was a

facade for the money power. With great horror, Douglas claimed that

the League of Nations was probably the final great attempt to enslave

the world "probably proceeding from exactly the same International

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[12]These Present Discontents and the Labour Party and Social
Credit, p. 15.

[13] Economic Democracy, p. 22.

[14] The Monopoly of Credit, p. 13.

source, as the attempt so recently failed, in which the German people were tools..."[15] At the very core of the League of Nations's idea is "power, final and absolute" in accommodation to the demands of high finance.[16] Douglas considered that the merit of Social Credit was that it attacked these financiers, the abusers of capitalism, and at least exposed their attempts to enslave the people.[17] This attack acknowledged that there was something wrong with capitalism, but found the ultimate responsibility not inherent in capitalism per se but in creditism with which high level financiers replaced capitalism in the early stages of the machine age.

The solution, then, was for the people to take hold of the nation's credit not the forces of production of private property. This real credit as opposed to merely financial credit was "a belief amounting to knowledge" in the estimated potential of all the resources of a society "to deliver goods and services at a certain rate".[18] Money is only "a mechanism" so it is the credit of men, material, and skill which gives money its value.[19] Banks presently create money on the basis of financial credit; but if they would create money on the basis of community potential (real credit) to produce goods and services, all

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[15] The Control and Distribution of Production, p. 102.

[16] Ibid., p. 99.

[17] The means by which the power of these financiers was to be curtailed was never completely clear in Douglas's theory.

[18] Credit Power and Democracy, pp. 105-106.

[19] The Control and Distribution of Production, p. 10.

people could have a share in this wealth. It is not merely an idealist demand that all people should share in a nation's wealth, it is their right. Douglas explained this with the concept of "cultural heritage" in which generations which have gone before us have contributed to our general well-being, and in which resources belong to no single individual but to the community.[20] The collective ownership of this potential can then be the basis for the issuance of a regular dividend to all citizens in which the banks would create money or credits for individual use on the basis of the society's credits. The great possibility of these dividends was that they would stimulate the economy by creating greater markets at home rather than cut-throat fighting for markets abroad.[21]

Douglas disparaged the existing financial system for several reasons. While employed in India, he had had several lengthy discussions with the Comptroller-General, J. C. E. Branson. Branson had argued that the recoining of Indian money was a "superstitious rite" and that money had nothing to do with gold or silver reserves because it was based on credit.[22] Douglas had also seen that in 1914 the British government substituted an emergency paper currency for the gold sovereign. The aim was to prevent a run on the banks and a hoarding of

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[20]Social Credit, p. 57.

[21]Douglas considered this fighting for markets to be the real cause of war.

[22]Fifty Years of Social Credit 1919-1969: C. H. Douglas.

gold because gold for export was vital to pay for the war costs of food

and raw materials. Douglas was also impressed with the way the war had

been financed for four years on credit without additional currency being

put into circulation. And in 1931, the gold standard collapsed in

Britain. All of these events merely confirmed to Douglas that money

could be made available purely on the basis of a society's capacity to

produce and deliver goods and services. Actual money or gold reserves

were not singularly important. Therefore, goods could be consumed and

individuals could be given economic security by virtue of being share-

holders of the credit which belonged to the entire community. Economic

stagnation would be alleviated, technology would accrue its benefits

to all, poverty would be eliminated, and the individual would still be

free to make his own decisions without centralized compulsion. The

dividend was the key from which dawn could break out of threatened

chaos "for all to see the promise of a better Day".[23]

The first problem of a shortage of purchasing power could thus

be corrected quite easily by the dividend and thereby ensure economic

security. Douglas considered this to be a simple stroke of financial

engineering which would bolster the economic foundations of a sagging

system. The second problem was one of financial tyranny that also

threatened the individual. Douglas responded to this problem with a

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[23]
Economic Democracy, pp. 153-154. While it is not our purpose
to discuss the defects in this analysis, particular questions immediately
come to mind. For example, how could the value of all the credits of a
community be accurately determined in a market dominated by the law of
supply and demand? Do banks not base their loans on a fixed percentage
of cash reserves? Or, if dividend credits were made, who could guarantee
that consumers will not hoard their credits instead of spending them?

plan of social engineering whereby the stranglehold of the financiers could be broken.

Douglas Social Credit posited the existence of a small group of individuals whose interests were indissoluably wedded to the present economic and social system and whose power was usually discretely hidden. The ultimate aim of this small group was considered to be complete centralization as a basis for world dictatorship. Douglas located the headquarters of this power at varying points in time as first in Genoa and then transferred to the Low countries from where the Jewish Lombards came.[24] Then in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, London was made the locus of power as their hold became stronger and more entrenched. Shifting with the centers of power, New York has now usurped London for supremacy. At the beginning of the machine age, the individual entrepreneur and the private banker expanded real capital for the benefit of all in a short time.[25] Now the control of loan credit has been assumed by a will-to-power which has created a servile state in which "the root of the evil accruing from the system is in the constant filching of purchasing power from the individual in favor of the financier, rather than in the mere profit itself".[26] Capitalism has been perverted by the will-to-power of a few who desire to keep mankind in subjection. Douglas demanded a deeper penetration of the issue because "poverty is

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[24]
Social Credit, pp. 182-183.

[25]
Credit Power and Democracy, pp. 33-34.

[26]Economic Democracy, p. 69.

in itself a transient phenomena but servility is a definite component
of a system having centralized control of policy as its apex".[27]

According to Douglas, it is this upper-echelon financial control
that makes our conception of democracy a farce. Uninformed public
opinion has made democracy as the rule of the majority "a mere trap
set by knaves to catch simpletons; the rule of the majority never has
existed, and, fortunately never will exist. If such a thing were
possible, it would be the Ultimate Terror, beside which the worst
individual despot would seem a kindly patriarch".[28] As a means to
divert public attention, people incapable of making such decisions have
been asked to vote for methods rather than policy. At present, "the
aim of political wire-pullers is to submit to the decision of the elector-
ate, only alternative methods of embodying the same policy".[29] The
expression of the policy of the majority is real democracy and finds
its opposition among financiers, ecclesiastics, politicians, and career-
ists in the Labour movement. They persuade men of the importance of
community decision-making and yet present them with only "a choice of
tyrants".[30] "Political democracy without economic democracy is dynamite.
The need is to abolish poverty, not to represent it".[31] Individuals

[27]Ibid., p. 16.

[28]Credit Power and Democracy, p. 7. Douglas gives us a hint
here of his basic distrust of rule by the majority.

[29]Social Credit, p. 143.

[30]Credit Power and Democracy, p. 9.

[31]The Monopoly of Credit, p. 86.

need to assert themselves through the general will to demand what they
want.

Policy stands in sharp distinction to methods. The majority
may be trusted to be right in the selection of policy whereas the minority
is frequently wrong.[32] But matters of a technical nature should not be
submitted to a non-technical community. "Policy is the end for which
we strive; process, the means by which we hope to attain that end....
Policy is a matter of public concern. But process is individual and
technical".[33] Methods are the propriety of experts and the public must
set before them the policy for which results are demanded. It is the
lack of demand which has brought us this chaos.[34] If people clamour
long and hard for a change,[35] they can bring it to pass and the power
of the financiers can be broken.

As the economic problem can be solved by the issuance of the
dividend, the moral problem can be solved through the expression of the
general will and effective demand of control of the sources of credit.

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[32]Social Credit, p. 142.

[33]Economic Democracy, p. 92 added in the 1921 edition.

[34]Social Credit, pp. 203-204.

[35]Social change, for Douglas, required both evolution and re-
volution. Change is evolution but does not necessarily mean ascent
and this is where revolution might be needed. Revolution does not mean
a structural change of society; rather, it is an orientation of capi-
talism to the needs of the people by destroying the Money Power. One
follower described Social Credit as "a germ of peaceful revolution".
Cf. Social Credit, p. 214.

"...the general advantage of the individual will lie with the retention
of a measure of co-ordination in all mechanical organization, combined
with the evolution of progressively decentralized initiative, largely
by the displacement of the power of centralized finance".[36]   In both the
economic and moral problems, society best protects the individual when
the financiers are limited in their powers rather than destroyed or
replaced.

These solutions provoked great debate. The clear articulation
of the problem and the desired goal aroused considerable support and
conversation. In general, the degree of attention directed to the
remedial measures suggested by Douglas varied with the needs of the
supporters involved and the pressures of their environment. For in-
stance, the economic critique and solution was more appropriate in
times of depression whereas the moral critique and solution was more
viable during a period of economic expansion. Together these analyses
provided a comprehensive view of the world by which to locate the
bewildering events of each day and an ideal toward which hope and action
could be directed.

Douglas also suggested something of the nature and structure
of a society to be operated under these conditions.

> The essential nature of a satisfactory modern
> co-operative State may be broadly expressed as
> consisting of a functionally aristocratic
> hierarchy of producers accredited by, and ser-
> ving, a democracy of consumers. The business

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[36]
Economic Democracy, p. 80.

> of producers is to produce; to take orders not to
> give them; and the business of the public, as con-
> sumers, is not only to give orders, but to see that
> they are obeyed as to results, and to remove un-
> suitable or wilfully recalcitrant persons from the
> aristocracy of production to the democracy of con-
> sumption.[37]

Thus, in Douglas theory capitalism remained intact in a utopian situation

where the people give orders to the producers and accredit them, and

the producers presumably listen. Douglas anticipated the minimization

of competition and profits for the sake of justice and efficiency to

preclude the necessity for major structural revisions.

II. The Historical Development of Social Credit

Douglas came to his belief in the nature of the accounting

problem in the economic system as a result of his cost analysis in the

aircraft factory at Farnborough, his conversations with Branson, and the

economic events of the day as already outlined. As early as 1917,

Douglas perceived economic collapse in the offing if the flow of pur-

chasing power remained substantially less than prices.[38] However, it

was the publication of articles in The English Review and The New Age

in 1918 and 1919 respectively that became the launching pad for the

Douglas theory. These essays aroused considerable response among those

critical of the contemporary economic system and also disillusioned with

socialist promises. Douglas's critique appealed to small entrepreneurs

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[37]Credit Power and Democracy, p. 99.

[38]W. L. Bardsley, "The Social Credit Movement 1918-1939", The
Social Crediter (December 23rd, 1939).

and intellectuals particularly because it gave them a focus of attack

without destroying their way of life. Social Credit huddled together

in intense discussions those interested in a critique of capitalism but

not desirous of destroying it. It attracted men like Will Dyson, T. S.

Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Wyndham Lewis, who were impressed by the rational

argument of Social Credit. It was a fresh approach to a "hot" issue

and by the end of 1920, over thirty Social Credit study groups were

loosely organized in England.[39] An experimental monthly organ, Public

Welfare, edited by Arthur Brenton, began publishing to bring together

the thinking of interested persons. In the autumn of 1919, Douglas

had been invited to present his ideas to a group interested in economics

in the United States who apparently were more concerned with concrete

proposals than the theoretical statement that Douglas gave them.[40]

Analytical statements were the limit of Social Credit at that early

stage and little came of the visit. Newspapers did begin to take some

notice of these ideas and Douglas's books occasionally rated the impor-

tance of a review. Enough support had been aroused to warrant the

holding of a conference at Jordans in October, 1921, to discuss these

new ideas.

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[39]W. L. Bardsley, "Douglas, Orage: The First Phase", The Social
Crediter (December 30th, 1939).

[40]W. L. Bardsley, "The Social Credit Movement 1918-1939", op.
cit. Professor R. F. Irving of the University of Sydney, Australia,
apparently put Douglas's books on a supplemental reading list for a
degree in economics, and was supposedly later dismissed because of his
refusal to remove them. Cf. his book, The Midas Delusion, in which he
claims that Douglas theories demonstrate the need to adjust our socio-
economic views to the requirements of scientific industrial technology.

The defection of A. R. Orage, and several others whom he influenced, from the guild socialist position evoked a response from the socialists to discredit this new heresy. Orage had collaborated with Douglas in writing Credit Power and Democracy and had written a draft scheme for the mining industry at the end of the manuscript as a preliminary application of Social Credit. The restless miners of Scotland were both interested and puzzled and so requested that the Labour Party investigate the matter. A committee was appointed in 1922, consisting of such illustrious social economists as Sydney Webb and R. H. Tawney, among others. It was no surprise to Douglas when they concluded that Social Credit was "out of harmony with the trend of Labour thought, and is indeed fundamentally opposed to the principles for which the Labour Party stands".[41] Instead of discouraging him, this verdict awakened a stirring idea in Douglas's mind that it was to be expected that his theory would receive a prejudiced hearing. Douglas coped with his rejection by rationalizing that he had touched a sensitive nerve and thus presumably had uncovered the truth. The finality of the denunciations by the committee, mixed with other circumstances in the economic milieu, produced a strange silence in the newspapers regarding Social Credit. Years later, one Douglas supporter put it this way:

> Within a year or two of Douglas's discovery the publicity ceased, and no mention appeared in the press of either Douglas or his theory. This situation gave rise to the suspicion that the control of money was consciously exercised by a small hierarchy unwilling at any cost to give up its power. Not only was knowledge and under-

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[41]Labour Party, Labour and Social Credit.

> standing of the Douglas theory suppressed but
> every means was enlisted to reinforce the de-
> lusion that money itself was a scarce commodity... [42]

This was the genesis of a conspiracy theory that would later be applied

to every rejection or repudiation of Social Credit. [43]   To oppose Social

Credit created the irrational conviction of the opposition being a tool

of the money power. This explanation became an undestroyable defensive

and offensive weapon which Aberhart also later adopted. [44]

Douglas had utilized an engineering approach to economics.

A defect required correction and once it was located, its cause could

be determined and then eliminated. He failed to see the long-range

problems of the economic cycle and, as Macpherson notes, Douglas had

initially conceived Social Credit as merely "an engineering solution

to an engineering problem". [45]   The hopes, frustrations, and anger of

Douglas is conveyed in the following statement:

> If the public of this or any other country is
> really desirous of once and forever freeing it-
> self from the power of the economic machine, and
> using the immense heritage which science and in-
> dustry have placed at its disposal, it has to
> throw up and place in the positions of executive
> authority men who are technicians in so broad a

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[42] W. A. Willox, "Douglas's Unique Discovery", Fifty Years of Social Credit 1919-1969.

[43] According to Hans Toch, conspiracy beliefs are a means to salvage outworn ideas by preserving self-esteem. "Conspiracies are amendments to untenable schemes, which salvage them in the face of clashes with reality". The Social Psychology of Social Movements, p. 70.

[44] See, for example, an address given to an engineering society in London on January 19th, 1938, and published in The Social Crediter (May 14th, 1955 and May 28th, 1955), under the title "Social Engineering".

[45] C. B. Macpherson, op. cit., pp. 120-121.

> sense that they understand that the very essence
> of perfect technology is to devise mechanisms to
> meet the requirements, the policy of those who
> appointed them. There are thousands of such men
> in every country disgusted in their varying degree,
> with the policy to which their abilities have
> been prostituted; but so long as the super-
> producer appoints and supports the man who de-
> livers the goods i.e. profits -- while the public
> elects and supports the man who only talks, whether
> in the Parliament or in the Trade Union, just so
> long will the tail of production wag the con-
> suming dog. There is no hope whatever in the
> hustings; but a modified credit-system could
> transform the world in five years.[46]

If the problem is essentially a technical one, then a technical solution

does not require a mass movement for the average person is not capable

of determining what financial engineering is best. Douglas was persuaded

that the engineering viewpoint was most helpful in economics. He told

the World Engineering Congress in Tokyo in 1929 that its advantages

were in being stripped of emotional relevances and in being able to

state with clarity the incompatible demands of the problem.[47] Rational

deliberation was therefore the primary means to effect a technical

solution. The limitations inherent in the ability of the electorate

meant that the political power structure must be convinced of the

diagnosis. In spite of lapses in populist endeavor, ideological infil-

tration of the power structure was always Douglas's preferred method

to bring Social Credit to fruition.

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[46]
Credit Power and Democracy, pp. 85-86.

[47]
Paper given to the World Engineering Congress in Tokyo, 1929, and reprinted as Appendix II in The Monopoly of Credit, pp. 116-117.

The uncooperative response of the government and financial powers led to the development of a conspiracy theory. The conspiracy theory sprouted and reinforced a persecution complex. Douglas was convinced that the spread of Social Credit publicity from 1919-1923 had evoked the need for defensive measures by the status quo. He thought that the Institute of Bankers had allocated five million pounds to combat the subversive ideas of Social Credit and "other misguided people who wished to tinker with the financial system".[48] The absence of discussions of Social Credit in the press was interpreted as an imposed instruction from the financiers not to use Douglas's name in the press or publish correspondence and contributions on the subject of Social Credit. The construction of a "world plot" theory was also part of the conspiracy in which Jewish financiers were ultimately responsible for world wars, poverty and starvation, and world control of international organizations. The greater the imagined or real persecutions felt by the Douglasites, the more vital it was to promulgate the conspiracy theory as a means to interpret their social world.

Social Credit continued to find support among isolated individuals and small study groups. There was something compelling about the ideas to restless spirits dissatisfied with the alternatives of facing the present evils or embracing socialism. Until the depression intervened, there was no crisis situation to provide a sense of urgency to financial reform ideas, and there was little momentum to broaden the

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[48]
Warning Democracy, p. 138.

base of support. At this stage, the Social Credit movement was largely
an interest group.[49]   Scattered adherents to the Douglas theory were
united by common interests to a set of ideas rather than unity through
an organization. Any socializing was for the express purpose of the
study of ideas rather than to organize a plan of action and implement
goals. There were no requirements for membership or a membership list;
interest in the theory rather than commitment to it was integral. There
was only minimal self-awareness as a group and thus the group made few
demands on the interested person. Adherents to the theory came and
went for there was nothing to solidify support. Even if adherence to
the movement crystallized in an individual, it demanded no alteration
of life-style. In this situation, the movement was maintained purely
through study of common literature, i.e., Douglas's books and the
journal Credit Power (formerly Public Welfare). Persuasion of the merits
of Social Credit was related to reading and rational discussion among
critical and sophisticated thinkers and professional people rather than
as a populist movement. The dominant thinking was that if legislators
could only be convinced of the logic of the theory, Social Credit could
be instituted without direct political action. This emphasis on per-
suasion and conversion at the intellectual level always made Douglas
somewhat dubious and apprehensive of the popular techniques utilized by
the branches of the movement among the masses.

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In this chapter, we are following the model of the three
stages in the development of a social movement which were theoretically
outlined in Chapter II.

The depression revived interest in monetary reform. The urgency
of the situation and the needs of humanity seemed to provide a vacuum in
which Social Credit had to enter if the movement was to grow or even
survive. Discussion had led to a dead end but the depression gave Social
Credit a new reason for existing. The movement from an interested study
of ideas to a planned pattern of action as a means to rally social
support marks the transition to the second phase of Social Credit as
a protest group. Protest required setting the group off from the wider
society and establishing a rationale for this differentiation. It re-
quired the development of an organization 50 to be presented to the
wider society around which allegiance could be coagulated. There was
no room for mere interest; instead, commitment was actively sought.
The group became aware of itself and sought to justify its existence
to the society. In affirming itself as committed to a goal, it con-
structed a protest of the existing goals or means to those goals
accepted in the society. It developed a well-articulated raison d'etre
for its existence and well-formulated objectives. Membership was not
as important as demonstrating one's conformity to the movement's goals
through the performance of group-sponsored roles and tasks. Allegiance
to the group, the leader, and the goals required an emotional commit-
ment which at times displaced rationality. In spite of the fact that

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     Douglas had felt the need for a central coordinating body in
December, 1933, which led to the establishment of the Secretariat. Cf.
Social Credit (September 7th, 1934), 47. Stipulations and requirements
for election to the Council of the Secretariat were specified in the
September 14th, 1934 issue (p. 58). A manual for electoral campaign
workers was written and leaflets and pledge forms were distributed.

the movement set itself off in protest from other groups, the group

failed to establish boundaries for recruitment and membership in the
                              51
sectarian sense.

Douglas and his associates were inclined to wait for the pene-

tration of Social Credit ideas. It is easily understood why the poor

and unemployed in the depression would not be so patient. As might be

expected, Douglas did not initiate concerted protest on behalf of

Social Credit. He had stated the goal of economic security (via the

dividend) and individualism and defined the enemy as a small group of

world-dominating financiers. But popular support required more than

rational discussion among interested people. It required the develop-

ment of charismatic leadership, dynamic organization, socially observable

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        Interest has recently been developing in the concept of
"political sect". Benton Johnson made fleeting reference to it in his
recent article "Church and Sect Revisited", Journal for the Scientific
Study of Religion 10, #2 (Summer, 1971). More exhaustively, Professor
Roger O'Toole, of the University of Toronto, has prepared a thorough
study of the use of the term "sect" within the various subdisciplines of
sociological endeavor, for which I am deeply indebted. "A Consideration
of 'Sect' as an Exclusively Religious Concept: Notes on 'Underground'
Traditions in the Study of Sectarianism" (mimeographed paper presented
at the Annual Meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of
Religion, Chicago, Illinois, October, 1971). O'Toole suggests that the
best single piece of work on the political sect has been produced by
Lewis Coser ("Sects and Sectarianism", Dissent, 1, #4 [Autumn, 1954],
360-369). Coser's broad definition of a sect has the same primary
sociological characteristics as Wilson's description. Coser argues
that a sect is a restricted and closed group which rejects customary
norms, creates its own norms, and thus cuts itself off from the main body
of society. Was English Social Credit a political sect? Using the same
basic characteristics Coser elaborates regarding a closed group and norm
creation, and comparing this analysis with the application of Wilson's
similar criteria to religious sects, we would have to conclude that
sociologically, English Social Credit was not a sect. It is best under-
stood within the social movement tradition in which our analysis has.
proceeded.

goals, and techniques to gather and maintain support.

The first adherent of Douglas theory to protest the conditions

of the depression with mass support and popular techniques was John

Hargrave.[52] On August 18th, 1920, Hargrave had founded The Kindred of

the Kibbo Kift (or Kibbo Kift, the Woodcraft Kindred) as an outgrowth

of the Scout organization to restore the individual personality in an

industrial age and to attain economic security for each individual.

Skills in camping, nature lore, handicraft, and agriculture were cul-

tivated in order to counteract the demands of the industrial struggle.

The Woodcraft Kindred were "To act as an educational 'incubator' for

the full development of the personality of the child in close contact

with the healing and health-giving forces of nature..."[53] The Kindred

would thus be an instrument of social regeneration at the same time by

insisting on the just price, service to the world, and on restoring

spiritual values to a materialistic age. This movement had gained a

strong following among the working classes in factory-ridden areas.

The Kibbo Kift provided an elaborate pattern of organizational activity

stressing gemeinschaft and a welcome relief from machines and concrete

in the return to nature. It gave people new life and was invigorating

to them. Something of this feeling is conveyed in the following quo-

tation:

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[52]
Hargrave was born in Sussex in 1894. He invented the Hargrave
Automatic Navigator for Aircraft in 1937, and was Chairman of Hargrave
Aviation Ltd.

[53]
John Hargrave, The Confession of the Kibbo Kift, pp. 62-63.

It is as a vehicle of the Spirit that the Kindred
comes to each of us. It is not a cut-and-dried
scheme. It is not a dead formula, a thesis, a
logical abstract, but a living fraternity, a
cheerful company of steadfast human beings doing,
so far as is in their power, what they know to be
right. There is something herewith a beating
heart which, by its own tiny effort, is calling
men to repent, to turn away from the folly of a
devasting materialistic age, and to live. Is that
worthless -- is that nothing? For lack of this
spiritual vision our civilization goes hurtling
from one catastrophe to the next.[54]

Society was perceived to be slowly disintegrating, and Hargrave con-
structed a "Noah's Ark Policy"[55] among the Kindred to protect the
individual by mutual efforts.

The depression brought economic concerns to the fore in place of
woodsmanship and social relations. In 1930-31, the Kindred of the Kibbo
Kift became the Green Shirt Movement for Social Credit[56] with the ob-
jective to "reconquer Britain for the British people" by capturing the
dominating money power.[57] Green was "the color of the economics of
life" in opposition to the Fascist blackshirts which stood for death.[58]
With slogans like "Let the Machines do the Work! Demand Money to Buy
the Goods!" and "No Fascism! -- No Planned Poverty!", their newspaper,
Attack, demonstrated its self-styled allegiance to Douglas theory. Their

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[54]
Ibid., pp. 164-165.

[55]Ibid., p. 113.

[56]Solar Message (August, 1950).

[57]Attack 24 (April, 1934), 1.

[58]Ibid., p. 2.

goals were specified in three demands that the power of credit issue be vested in a National Credit Office and taken from the Bank of England, that national dividends should be issued above wages to all, and that the scientific price adjustment be instituted.[59]   Once this was accomplished, the countryside was to be preserved, an ingenious plan to build new towns and cities was proposed, and means should be taken to ensure adequate food supplies. On May 14th, 1934, at 12 o'clock noon, the London Green Shirts marched from their headquarters to the Bank of England to present Governor Montagu Norman with the first of a series of letters to consider and implement social credit, but all to no avail.[60]

This movement had terrific appeal to the unemployed of the working class.[61]   The Green Shirts were appropriately attired in green shirts and green berets and engaged in disciplined marches of protest and demand with the color of flying flags and the crisp sound of drums. Hargrave called it "a patriotic revolution".[62]   Douglas acknowledged that the Green Shirt movement was not his promotion but was merely "one of the movements that supports me" and allowed them to wear a flash of the green Douglas tartan on their uniforms.[63]   When Alberta voted Social

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[59]
   Ibid., 25 (April, 1934), p. 1.

[60]Ibid., p. 3.

[61]Ibid., p. 1.

[62]
   Ibid., 31, p. 1.

[63]Ibid., p. 4.

Credit in 1935, the Green Shirts marched around the Bank of England

three times on August 23rd to "celebrate the fall of the walls of il-
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lusion".   On September 16th, 1935, the movement became the Social

Credit Party in an attempt to consolidate the numerous independent

candidates using a Social Credit platform. One candidate was run in
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the following election, but the attempt failed.   The social signifi-

cance of the Green Shirt movement was not in its political platform

or proposals but in providing a framework of meaning and activity for

people most severely threatened by the socio-economic crisis. Hargrave

was convinced of "the hidden power of Finance" and the "wangles of credit-
                                                        66
mongers, banker-money-lenders, and their political sheepticks".   He

was also convinced of the threats to individuality by Fascism and

socialism and he was equally dubious, as Douglas was, of the ability of

the majority to rule via present parliament. Hargrave's methods with

the working class were not to the liking of Douglas and his intellectual
                                67
and professional class of support.   But Hargrave had demonstrated to

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[64] Ibid., p. 4.

[65] W. Townend, B.A., was to be the candidate for South Leeds as the test candidate for all England. Attack 32, 1. Also see #33 for election results.

[66] Ibid., 36 (1935).

[67] On July 22nd, 1938, the Canadian Press reported a chaotic meeting of Social Crediters in London where blows were struck and police were summoned. Among other reasons, Hargrave denounced the leadership of Douglas "because he failed to seize the golden opportunity presented by the 1935 electoral victory in Alberta". Although he had been in attendance at this meeting, Douglas characteristically absolved himself as a by-stander with no interest in party politics. Cf. Premiers' Papers, Alberta Provincial Archives.

Douglas the possibilities of collective efforts in goal attainment.

Social Credit had stirred great interest around the world by 1934, and Douglas eagerly embarked on a world tour, visiting Australia, New Zealand and Canada and meeting with government leaders and commi-ttees.[68]   Many Douglasites and pseudo-Douglasites had written books and pamphlets on Social Credit from varying perspectives which circulated outside England and increased the conviction that the theory was a viable alternative.[69]   Vigorous support had been gathered in Australia and New Zealand[70]   and efforts were intensified to educate   the popu-lation to demand the results the people wanted in protest of the existing arrangements. The same procedure was utilized in Alberta by William Aberhart. But Aberhart's self-styled approach to Social Credit in bringing it to the masses, his popular techniques of education, and his domineering personality soon separated him from the New Age Club (orthodox Douglasites) in Calgary. Douglas appeared before the Agricultural Committee of the legislature in Alberta and was later hired as reconstruction advisor by the UFA government under pressure from the

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[68]It was reported that Douglas was given a state reception in Australia and addressed a crowd of 12,000 who paid admission at Rusheutters Bay Stadium with another 5,000 or 6,000 who could not gain entrance, in addition to a continental broadcast. A. L. Gibson, "What is This Social Credit?" in The Social Credit Pamphleteer, p. 5.

[69]The most notable of these "secondary" interpretations of Social Credit was Unemployment or War by Maurice Colbourne, published only in the United States and which was the introductory material on Social Credit for Aberhart.

[70]Cf. "Social Credit Round the World", Social Credit (February 15th, 1935), 11 ff.

people. Douglas's visit to Alberta had been sponsored by the orthodox
intellectuals. However, during his visit it became obvious to him that
the bulk of the popular support was behind Aberhart, which a perceptive
Douglas was reluctant to criticize. But it was clear to Douglas that
Social Credit had "caught fire" in Alberta. In another part of the
world, Rev. G. S. Carruthers, B.A., was elected on a "straight" Douglas
Social Credit platform in Tasmania. As the first elected Social Credit
member of any parliament, Carruthers received a telegram from Douglas
exuding great optimism and exclaiming, "Congratulations! There will be
many others but only one first".[71]

In England, the movement had been divided by a split in 1933
over the primacy of the objective of monetary reform versus the objec-
tive of freeing the individual from tyranny.[72] In order to prevent
further ideological dispute, the Social Credit Secretariat was organized
to conduct lectures and examinations for those desiring to become a
"fellow" or to receive a diploma from the Secretariat.[73] At this
point, we see the further evolution of the movement in that the attempt
was made to circumscribe like-minded comrades and reliable associates.
Yet the relatively small number that completed this rigorous intellec-

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[71]Social Credit (August 17th, 1934), 9.

[72]B. W. Monahan, An Introduction to Social Credit.

[73]In a later book (Elements of Social Credit, published by the
Social Credit Secretariat in 1946), it was stated that the first lec-
tures and examinations were given in 1937 and two diplomas were awarded:
Associate's Diploma and Fellow's Diploma. The book also consisted of
lecture outlines and regulations to be followed.

tualization and socialization meant that no clear social boundaries of group-ness could be drawn. The fear of mutilation and misinterpretation of the theory evoked the desire for tests of merit for the hard-core followers to demonstrate worthiness for membership. An organizational hierarchy was created to establish rules in order that the protest to the wider society might be consistent. The rationale for this action was as follows: "For the protection of the public and to safeguard the prestige of diploma-holders, it shall be within the power of Major C. H. Douglas, or of someone else nominated by him to exercise it on his behalf, to withdraw any diploma at any time, and to announce his action publicly in such a manner as he deems expedient..." [74] The Secretariat was to be the guardian of doctrinal purity with ultimate authority invested in the leader who maintained full control. The growing following dictated that the movement provide a means to socialize and discipline its adherents in order to prevent the protest from eroding.

Increased interest in Social Credit had produced demands for more literature which, in turn, increased the financial contributions. To facilitate the business activities of Social Credit, a limited company was formed in 1935. [75] All issues of <u>Social Credit</u> included an explicit statement of identity. The Social Credit Secretariat Ltd. was described as a "non-party, non-class organization and it is neither connected with nor does it support any particular political party,

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[74]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 2.

[75]<u>Social Crediter</u> (September 17th, 1938).

Social Credit or otherwise".

The economic depression had evoked a host of discussions on monetary reform propounded by such unlikely people as clergy, chemists, lawyers, accountants, biologists, and sociologists.[76] Several competing organizations had been formed such as the Monetary Reform Association (an attempt to consolidate all points of view on monetary reform), the British Banking Reform League, the Eleventh Hour Movement, Economic Freedom League, and the Banking and Currency Reform League and many others. Some of the Social Credit study groups had sponsored the publication of pamphlets on Social Credit (e.g., the Leicester and Bernard Street London study group), and others sponsored lectures (as the Caxton Street Social Credit Club in London on March 21st, 1935, with 2,700 people present). Social Credit was being disseminated not only as a matter of interest but as a matter for commitment. Such commitment was not without its missionary zeal as numerous persons took it upon themselves to interpret Douglas to particular segments of the population.[77] Social Credit was thus becoming aware of itself by differentiating itself in protest from the wider society, by insulating itself from attack, and by presenting a coordinated offensive.

Douglas had returned to Britain filled with new hope of the possibilities for the future of Social Credit. He had seen what

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[76]Arthur Kitson (an engineer), Hewlitt Johnson (a clergyman), Maurice B. Reckitt (a "Christian" sociologist), and C. Marshall Hattersley (a lawyer).

[77]Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury, had travelled to Holland to give a series of lectures on Social Credit. For a report, see Social Credit (October 26th, 1934), 127.

organization and public pressure could do in the Green Shirt movement

and in Alberta. By this time (1934), eighty study groups had affiliated

with the Secretariat.[78] The turning point came for Douglas on June 9th,

1934, when he delivered his famous Buxton Speech.[79] In elucidating his

theory of Social Dynamics,[80] he advocated a limited activist programme

as a means to increase the demands of public pressure. This theory was

partly conciliatory to the opposing camps of Douglas support. Some

wanted to educate the masses through a programme of teaching and con-

versation. Others thought the objective ought to be to convert the

leaders and the masses would soon follow. Still others wanted Social

Credit to be a popular movement. Douglas opted to mobilize support

through an Electoral Campaign in which they would engage in door-to-door

salesmanship but not as a political party. Voters were asked to sign

a pledge of desire for the dividend or a pledge of "demand and under-

taking"[81] to support only candidates who would follow the general will

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[78] In this period, it is interesting to compare the Social Credit journal with the Green Shirt newspapers. The Green Shirt publication has much bold type with many pictures. The Social Credit appeared as an academic journal, devoid of pictures, numerous announcements of luncheon lectures, and with discrete advertising pertaining to car hire, made-to-measure clothes, and hotels. The difference in social class appeal is obvious.

[79] The speech was printed in Social Credit (August 24th, 1934) under the title "The Nature of Democracy".

[80] Edward Hewlett, "The Emergence of a Dynamic", The Fig Tree (September, 1936), 115.

[81] Ibid., p. 119. The Elector's Pledge: "I believe that in this age of abundance, poverty can be abolished. It is my will that I, together with all others, shall enjoy the plenty, freedom and security that modern progress can provide. I therefore pledge myself at the next election to vote only for the candidate who undertakes to demand payment of a NATIONAL DIVIDEND to every citizen, and to defer all other legislation till this is done". Social Credit (November 30th, 1934), 214.

of the people. Candidates were asked to sign a pledge to agree to obey

the will of the people and/or support the dividend. After eighteen

months of such campaigning, an average of 65% of the electors confronted

were pledging and thirty-five candidates for parliament agreed to sign.[82]

This work was accompanied by great optimism.

> In these two years since Buxton our Movement has
> advanced from its first stage of academic discus-
> sion and tentative effort to a certain knowledge
> that the objective is within its grasp, granted
> but one thing, steady, persistent work in the
> Electoral Campaign. Such are the facts; and
> therein lies the opportunity of taking part in
> this conclusive drive which will at last achieve
> human liberty.[83]

In the end, the Campaign was more successful in providing an activity

outlet for supporters than in securing any electoral results. Nothing

was gained or harmed by signing a pledge of will that demanded no action

or test of commitment. Candidates as well signed more for political

expediency that out of conviction for Social Credit theory. Douglas

still insisted that the confrontation be maintained through rational

argument by ringing doorbells and convincing people. Few of the people

so recruited developed any sense of loyalty or _esprit de corps_ to the

movement.[84]

The combination of Douglas's unwillingness and his lack of or-

ganizational expertise contributed to the failure of the Electoral

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[82]_Ibid._, p. 119.

[83]_Ibid._, p. 120.

[84]The editor of _Christendom_ and a former support of Social Credit,
Maurice B. Reckitt, perceived Douglas's passive policy as "wishful
thinking" and founded on "implicit political ambitions". _As It Happened._

Campaign. Douglas had shrouded this activism with the hope that such

interim techniques could be dismissed when the federal powers became

convinced of the merits of Social Credit. But in place of electoral

pledges, a local objectives campaign (in 1936-37) and a Rates Campaign

(1938-39) were substituted to keep supporters active and to fan dwind-

ling enthusiasm.[85] These campaigns mobilized pressure groups from a

population area to demand, for example, lower taxes, more and better

playgrounds, the erection of traffic lights, and raise objections to

the construction of new city council offices. All of these local ob-

jectives were designed to demonstrate to the people that they could

get what they demand for small objectives would restore the self-

confidence of people in their power over their own government. The

key element in Douglas's theory, financial reform, had thus been dis-

placed by a demonstration of political methods.

The third phase of the movement began in this frustration of

the late thirties. In September, 1938, a power struggle in the move-

ment had reached the breaking point so that Douglas resigned from the

Social Credit Secretariat Ltd. (publisher of Social Credit) and ap-

pointed loyal friends to the new Social Credit Secretariat (publishing

a new journal, The Social Crediter) with headquarters in Liverpool.[86]

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[85]Elizabeth Edwards, "The Democratic Field", The Fig Tree
(December, 1937), 639 ff., lists places where Social Credit has been
using the democratic principle of demanding results.

[86]For a detailed explanation of the schism, see C. B. Macpherson,
pp. 180-181; Social Credit (October 14th, 1938); The Social Crediter
(September 17th, 1938). Several of the last issues of Social Credit
(late 1838 - early 1939) indicate an abhorrence for Douglas's increasing
emphasis on the world plot theory and the name-calling it required.

The organization had slowly lost its vitality through insistence on autocratic control.[87]   In addition, the lack of tangible results in the pledge campaigns decreased interest.   Third, as the effects of the depression began to pass, Douglas's financial theory had less urgency and credibility and had itself been transformed by the leadership into a purely moral and political theory.   Continual defeat and discouragement had produced a state of cognitive dissonance.   Douglas found comfort in the degeneracy of conditions in the world and visualized sabotage by a few financiers who were mostly Jewish.[88]   In these later years, Douglas was less impressed with the progress man was making.   He perceived technology to have become, not the catalyst for a better era, but more of a tool to control man.   All of his criticisms which had been latent in the earlier economic proposals now were refurbished and sharpened for his attacks on the church establishment, Jews, financiers, and government leaders.[89]   The promulgation of the world plot theory in the 1940's was the product of the development of persecution syndrom and the need for a scape-goat.   These were the signals of a movement in retreat.

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[87]In the 1940's and early 1950's, supporters were urged to contribute to the Social Credit Expansion Fund, the monies from which were to be disbursed "at the sole discretion of Major C. H. Douglas".   Notices to this effect were placed in numerous issues of The Social Crediter in this period.

[88]Programme for the Third World War, pp. 26-28.   Germany, Great Britain, and the United States are dictated to mostly by German Jews.   A "blacklist" of people involved was occasionally published in The Social Crediter.

[89]Cf., for example, Programme for the Third World War, The Policy of a Philosophy, The "Land for the Chosen People" Racket, The Brief for the Prosecution, The Realistic Position of the Church of England.

The English Social Credit movement may have been ignored politically and defeated economically, but this did not mean the end for Social Credit. By the late thirties, Social Credit had curiously developed into a perspective group. Committed and routinized nuclear support established itself at the organizational center surrounded by a fairly large peripheral following of adherents to the principles for which Douglas stood. The Social Crediter became the unitive force linking the organizationally and doctrinally committed with the diffuse base of support of those ideologically interested.

> Additionally to many loyal and generous supporters
> over many years, there is now a large and increas-
> ing number of unseen supporters, who are personally
> unknown to us, and with whom we can communicate
> only through the pages of The Social Crediter.
> They are not direct subscribers to the paper.
> Since war broke out, the circulation of The Social
> Crediter had doubled...[90]

A later issue of the journal refers to the development of this commitment at the organizational center as "the deep loyalty and goodwill for which the personnel of the Social Credit movement are remarkable".[91] Strong bonds of perspective and friendship were formed with Dr. Tudor Jones of Australia and Douglas appointed him Deputy Chairman. An organizational structure was established with a director for each of political strategy, revenue, external relations, overseas relations, propaganda and publications, and women's work. Although many of the directors were not full-time and were usually unpaid, the rationale

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[90]The Social Crediter (February 23rd, 1946).

[91]Ibid. (September 5th, 1953).

for this institutionalization was to coordinate the work of a geographi-
[92]
cally diffuse membership.

Outside of the hard-core supporters committed to the organization

and its perspective, Douglas continued to enlist adherents on the or-
[93]
ganizational periphery who maintained other allegiances as well.

Though he had lost organizational control of some proponents of his

theory, including Alberta Social Credit, Douglas still functioned as a

resource person in being the father of ideas now disseminated throughout
[94]
the world.   At this point, Douglas was revered as the spokesman for

principles which represented this perspective rather than as an auto-

cratic leader who demanded obedience. Each follower selectively inter-

preted some principle of Douglas theory. For instance, by-words such as

economic security or the dividend were conveniently extracted from

Social Credit theory and paraded under the Social Credit banner regard-

less of whether other agreements existed. An example of selective

adaptation is found in a pamphlet written by a British Israelite to

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[92]Ibid. (November 7th, 1953).

[93]Notices in The Social Crediter in this period indicate a fair
degree of comraderie among interested persons distinct from propaganda
efforts as "lunch-time rendezvous" or "monthly meetings".

[94]Proposals were made in 1938 regarding the conditions whereby
overseas supporters could affiliate with the Secretariat. Acceptance of
Douglas policy was always central. Cf. The Social Crediter (November
5th, 1938), 11. See also, September 5th, 1953, p. 11. 1. "The Social
Crediter is read more widely abroad than hitherto". 2. "Fresh sub-
scribers at home and abroad almost exactly replace those terminated by
death or other causes". Yet the need for an organizational activity via
revival of the group system was repudiated. Douglas complained that,
"They think it is very important to keep all the converts together, the
exact reverse is the case" (November 21st, 1953).

demonstrate the congruence of Social Credit with their religious
ideology.[95]

A residue of support was still also obtainable from those former-
ly associated with the Green Shirts or monetary reform in general.
Others could identify with the world plot theory as a means of explana-
tion to bewildering global events. To those seeking meaning amidst
despair, Douglas pointed out that the hopelessness of things was not a
result of personal failings; the present discontents were inherent in
the unjust system of world domination.[96] Through his journal, Douglas
carried on a continuous yet relatively detached commentary on the
progress of Social Credit in Alberta as well as current events through-
out the world. Even if Douglasites were somewhat ambivalent about
Aberhart's movement, the existence of a Social Credit government in
Alberta justified their claim to be engaged in the promulgation of
something significant.[97] The federal restrictions to the introduction
of Social Credit in Alberta also provided additional evidence for their
conspiracy ideas. Continued interest in this Social Credit perspective
remained even after the death of Douglas in 1952 to warrant the main-
tenance of a Social Credit Co-ordinating Center, presently located at

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[95]Clive Kendrick, The Case for Social Credit.

[96]This was the conviction of Douglas. The Development of World Dominion, p. 7.

[97]Douglas somewhat righteously declared in the July 29th, 1938 issue of Social Credit, "As Mr. Aberhart himself complained, he was opposed by the Social Credit movement in Alberta, an opposition which was only silenced by a personal appeal from myself". Cf. also, an article at Aberhart's death, The Social Crediter (June 5th, 1943).

Mexborough in Yorkshire.   Dr. Tudor Jones succeeded Douglas as Chair-

man, and Jones was later succeeded by another Australian, Dr. B. W.

Monahan. The removal of the movement's leadership from England did not

mean that quiet education by rational persuasion would cease. The

publication of Social Credit literature continues in England, Australia,

and now in California, and a periodical entitled Abundance is published

quarterly.

The sociological character of Social Credit in this phase was

considerably different from the third phase of Aberhart's religious

movement. Whereas for Aberhart this phase enlarged the total signifi-

cance of the movement, the corresponding phase in the Douglas movement

evidenced decreased support. We have outlined several reasons for this

trend and explained the dominant factor as an ideological failure, a

leadership failure, and an organizational failure. The intellectual

leadership continued to evoke support among free-thinking individuals

who appreciated reform without social disorder. The more radical

pronouncements of men like Hewlett Johnson were considered to be undesire-

able, so much so that he noted that "my presence in the movement became
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obnoxious to many of its well-to-do supporters". The organization and

its institutions became something to preserve, and the best method to

succeed was by quiet rather than radical protest. Articles in The Social

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[98]For a statement of the purpose of the movement in this phase,
cf. ibid. (July 2nd, 1949).

[99]Hewlett Johnson, Searching for Light, p. 138. Johnson had
created a stir in Britain by openly repudiating Fascism in Spain.

Crediter became more restrictive in general interest with intellectual

discussions on Whitehead, science, and philosophy. Rationality main-

tained its primary position in spite of brief lapses in populism through-
out the cycle of the movement.[100] However, implicit in the quiet

protest against the wider society was still a deep interest in some

type of socio-financial reform which ought to usher in the long-sought

utopia of "the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth".[101] It was on this basis of

discussion rather than concerted action that Douglas's perspective

found continuing though diminishing support.[102]

English Social Credit, then, was primarily an intellectual re-

form movement founded as a reaction to the threat of socialism and in

the face of cognizant discrepancies and failures inherent in the capi-

talist enterprise.[103] In many ways, it is quite obvious that Douglas

never really wanted Social Credit to become an organized mass movement.

His professional background and education were more conducive to his

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[100]The high intellectual emphasis of Social Credit is conveyed in these sample examination questions for the diploma. "Enumerate the chief of the various kinds of taxation with which you are acquainted. State the fundamental principle underlying them, and trace their chief economic effects". "Why are Social Crediters interested in what some people call 'The Jewish Question', and other people 'The Gentile Question'? To restrict your answer, regard Social Crediters from their functional, not their personal aspect". The Social Crediter (November 7th, 1942).

[101]W. A. Willox, op. cit., p. 7.

[102]Macpherson, op. cit., p. 93, attributes the failure of Social Credit to the lack of an anchor in an homogenous class. Douglas did opt for a class anchor but it was in a class who were not interested in large-scale change.

[103]Cf., for example, a series of articles by Dr. Bryan W. Monahan entitled, "Why I am a Social Crediter?", beginning August 3rd, 1957 in The Social Crediter.

becoming the father of an idea of engineering brilliance rather than the father of a social or political movement. The people he gathered around him were of similar background, middle and upper middle class professional people threatened by increasing powerlessness due to the rise of socialist ideas among the masses and the concentration of money and political power among a privileged strata. The success of Social Credit as an enduring option depended upon more charismatic leadership and better social techniques to make the theory plausible to larger elements of society. The necessary divergence from Douglas's stress on rational argument that such populist efforts required fragmented the total cause of Social Credit. Activist movements to implement Social Credit were therefore relatively independent from their ideological originator and lacked the cooperative involvement of his leadership. The lack of a populist base in England, particularly after the demise
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of the Green Shirts,   meant that Social Credit continued as merely a

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        The Green Shirts led by Hargrave gradually became a metaphysical movement. When it had been activist, its emphasis was on economics. When it was retreatist, its emphasis became metaphysical. Hargrave began to unite the aspirations of the Spirit with rational techniques of science and economics in a "fight for life against the forces of death" because the Social Credit idea for him arose from the impulse to be fully alive. In the newsheet, "The Solar Message", with the slogan, "Arise and Fight, Ye Sons of Light", Hargrave advocated the use of a "Great Mandala" for meditation and concentration for not more than 63 seconds and not less than 7 seconds at 7 p.m. each day. God was not only in heaven but he was within you (John 10:34, Jesus said "Ye are gods") and such meditation would set up the spiritual atmosphere in which the Social Credit state could begin to take shape. In "The Message from Hargrave" (January 19th, 1951), the objective of a heaven on earth and within you is plain. Political activity was confined to AWK squads delegated to asking awkward questions in "raids" of political meetings and in shouting three times "Social Credit the only remedy" three times in the House of Commons which was designed for a newspaper reaction.

lingering idea rather than a potential force. Slowly the financial reforms of the early Douglas degenerated into frustrated attacks on national and world leadership. In Alberta, this shift was far too negative to a government in power and merely reaffirmed the independence of the Canadian movement from its ideologue.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION AND SOCIAL CREDIT IN ENGLAND

Before exploring the nature of the relationship between religion

and Social Credit in Alberta, it is important to determine whether this

relationship was unique to the Alberta movement or whether a religious

world-view or religious overtones had been part of the political and

economic philosophy of Social Credit from the beginning. Did Aberhart

accept Social Credit because of a fundamental congruence with his own

religious and economic beliefs? Was Social Credit in England in any way

something religious and more than mere economics? Did Aberhart trans-

fer a religio-political world-view to Alberta that was inherent in

Social Credit or were the religious overtones of Alberta Social Credit

merely a product of Aberhart's own life-orientation? To answer these

questions we acknowledge the fact that organizationally, Aberhart's

movement was independent of the Douglas movement.[1] Aberhart, however,

obviously engaged in heavy ideological borrowing from Douglas who pro-

vided him with the basic explanation of and remedy for the existing

socio-economic arrangements. Knowing the primacy of Aberhart's religious

interests, we would expect to find definite parallels with the world-view

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[1]Irving details the sequence of events whereby this took place.
Cf. especially op. cit., pp. 63-85. Macpherson, op. cit., makes a good
case for similarities in ideological commitment but does not point out
the divergencies that arise from and contributed to organizational inde-
pendence.

of Douglas as an explanation for Aberhart's proclivity to adopt Social

Credit. Despite differences in social milieu, similar social positions

must have led to the construction of similar definitions of the situa-

tion.

The aim of this chapter, then, is to determine Douglas's view

of religion and to consider whether his religious concerns affected his

analysis of society. An understanding of the role of religion in his

theory ought to give us a clue as to the extent to which Aberhart

adapted Social Credit ideology to correlate with his own world-view,

and possibly also suggest why Social Credit was an appropriate explana-

tion to him in the first place. Therefore, we will examine the secular

themes of Douglas theory for religious parallels which might have made

the intertwining of religion and politics in Aberhart and Alberta more

feasible. The influence of restatements and secondary interpretations

of Douglas theory also need to be examined for contributions to this

inter-relationship.

The Critique of Society

Douglas laid the groundwork for his economic theory by mounting

a criticism of society and its existing institutions. He noted that in

spite of man's mastery over material nature, an obvious discontent

among the masses of people has produced "crumbling institutions and dis-

credited formulae".[2] At the root of all our upheavals today is the

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[2]

Economic Democracy, p. 3.

struggle,

> ...between freedom and authority, between external
> compulsion and internal initiative, in which all
> the command of resources, religious dogma, educa-
> tional system, political opportunity and even,
> apparently, economic necessity, is ranged on the
> side of authority; and ultimate authority is now
> exercised through finance.[3]

If finance controls society, then the key to man's independence and free-

dom is economics. While rejecting the Marxist demand for the control of

production by labor, Douglas fully accepted an economic determinism as

the fundamental principle of human existence. "It seems clear that only

by a recognition of this necessity can the foundations of society be so

laid that no superstructure laid upon them can fail, as the superstruc-

ture of capitalistic society is most unquestionably failing, because the

pediments which should sustain it are honey-combed with decay".[4] Like

Marx, Douglas scrutinized the economic arrangements of a society in

order to explain any problems in the superstructure. But unlike Marx,

Douglas accepted the phenomenon of the superstructure as legitimate and

valid in itself and attacked only its perverted manifestations.

Such an analysis required numerous value judgments concerning

good capitalism and bad capitalism, good use of technology and bad use

of technology, and good Christianity and bad Christianity. Christianity

had not failed, it had never really been tried. However, the medieval

period, according to Douglas, most closely approximated the ideals which

modern society was lacking.[5] Real want was unknown, there was no usury,

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[3]Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[4]Ibid., p. 6.

[5]Ibid., pp. 97-98.

and the just price was the medium of exchange. Douglas suggested that our goal ought to be to regain the best elements of medievalism while yet retaining all the benefits of mechanical progress.

The Critique of Religion

According to Douglas, there are basically two kinds of Christianity: Judaic and Graeco-Roman.[6] While it was regrettable that institutional Christianity had declined, it was understandable because Judaic Christianity had dominated and destroyed the Graeco-Roman form. The Christianity that had come out of Judaism had gone into the banks and thus had perverted its real message and polluted its adherents. The result was that, "The decay of doctrinal religion has to a large extent deprived humanity of any clear objective, attainable or otherwise, and it would appear that indirect progress, or the solution of the problems of life from day to day in the light of experience, is for the moment the only solid ground upon which to build".[7] Christianity under Judaic influence had crumbled at the core and no longer gave direction to the organization and ultimate ends of society. It served merely as ideological support for the existing socio-economic arrangements. Douglas was convinced that the established churches attest to this fact in that the Archbishop of Canterbury was "the Chief Public Relations Officer of the dominant philosophy, which can be variously described as Judaeo-Christianity or Liberal Judaism, Big Business or Centralization of Power".[8]

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[6] The Development of World Dominion, pp. 8-9.

[7] The Monopoly of Credit, p. 67.

[8] The "Land for the Chosen People" Racket, p. 40.

The British brand of Christianity was merely a liberal Judaism, and, as a result, the Church of England had not been interested in the evils or injustices of society.

Douglas argued that the key to this Judaic perversion of Christianity could be found in the fact that Christians adopted the Jewish textbook -- the Old Testament. Douglas insisted that even a cursory reading of the text revealed that the Old Testament is nothing but "a repulsive tribal ragbag".[9] From his studies of Cromwell and the Stuart kings, he observed that:

> ...there is the closest relationship between the
> type of so-called religion which delights in the
> savagery in the Old Testament, read literally,
> and financial tyranny under which the world is
> groaning, and through which it may yet be wrecked
> for centuries to come. Cromwell himself was the
> nephew of a rich money-lender and was financed by
> Manasseh-ben-Israel as well as by the English Whig
> bankers....William of Orange was alike the nominee
> of Lutherna-Calvinist preachers and 'Dutch'
> Finance, and the Georgian era is outstanding for
> its coarseness and brutality...Scotland, itself,
> whose present plight is one of the world's trage-
> dies, stems, in its condition today, direct from
> John Knox.[10]

The point was that a fundamental affinity existed between the collective asceticism, discipline, and subordination of individuality found in Judaism and Puritanical Protestant movements. The basic patterns for marshalling people together were contained in the Old Testament. In the

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[9] The Fig Tree (December, 1937), 611. Douglas rejected the prophecies of Daniel as a fabrication by a Palestinian Jew. He also rejected the idea of a "chosen people" as a myth whereby less intelligent people could be made slaves to a collectivity. Programme for the Third World War, pp. 37-41.

[10] The Fig Tree (December, 1937), 611-612.

light of this tendency, Douglas asserted that:

> Speaking for myself, I should reject the so-called
> old testament as containing little which, for the
> purposes of contemporary religion, is not purely
> negative -- a warning. Its connotation with 'the
> chosen people' myth has distorted any usefulness
> it might have, and if it is to be retained, it
> requires treatment in a highly critical spirit,
> completely divorced from reverence. It is only
> necessary to observe the extent to which the world
> tragedy is complicated by Zionism to recognize its
> vicious effects. The Jewish question is a mass of
> untruths, half-truths, and false materialism, and
> one of the essentials of any solution is to strip
> it of the occultims which is its chief ally. What
> has the Church of England to say of Secret
> Societies?[11]

The Old Testament was therefore not only rejected because of its content

but primarily because of the behavior which it supported.

Douglas was critical of the type of Christianity which he con-

sidered to be founded on Semitic conceptions of society. It was Jewish

sources, he noted, who were responsible for the origination of the

theory of rewards and punishments by which the human emotions of fear

and desire were effectively manipulated.[12] They had defined social order

as obedience to externally imposed restraints in order to ensure a stable

society.[13] Thus, the motto of the reward-punishment behavior syndrom

was that, "He who will not work shall not eat", as based on Paul's ad-

monition in II. Thessalonians 3:10. Douglas argued that such thinking

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[11]
The Realistic Position of the Church of England.

[12]
Social Credit, pp. 50 and 78.

[13]
The Monopoly of Credit, p. 8.

was contrary to the teachings of Christ -- the "apostle of freedom" and
"the Great Reformer".[14] Douglas rejected the idea that discipline and
work were the only claims to goods.[15] Surely, Christ's parable of the
laborers demonstrated that the concept of justice we have is a misleading
abstraction. Technology ought to enable us to take advantage of in-
creased leisure and the fact of unemployment ought not to be viewed as
a symptom of economic catastrophe but a herald of our considerable
progress. "Not only do people want more goods and more leisure, and
less regimentation, but they are increasingly convinced that it is not
anything inherent in the physical world which prevents them from at-
taining their desires".[16] If one man does twice as much work as another
man, he ought to be able to do so if he enjoys doing the work without
demanding compensation via increased personal distribution of goods.
The power to reward and punish was obtained through the control of
money and "the primary inducement by which the co-operation of the great
majority of persons is obtained is through the necessity of 'getting a
living'".[17] The use of rewards and punishments has become a weapon in
the hands of centralized power and finance to control large populations
and to keep them in subjection.

Not the least of the Christian themes which supported the dominant

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[14]*Social Credit*, p. 220. Also, *Credit Power and Democracy*, p. 9
ff., and *The Control and Distribution of Production*, p. 15.

[15]*Social Credit*, pp. 22-23.

[16]*Ibid.*, p. 9.

[17]*Ibid.*, p. 201.

power was the idea of a future reward. Since the goal was not for the
workers to take control of industry, it was signally important to dis-
tribute more fully the products of industry in the total population in
the present. Happiness and economic security ought to be guaranteed
immediately because of the great progress man has made and ought not to
be relegated to a distant future.

> It is not a coincidence that the Whigs, Quakers,
> and non-Conformists, became bankers and collabor-
> ators with the Jews, both resident and continental.
> They were fundamentalist. The 'Old Testament' was
> the record of the sayings and doings of an omni-
> potent if somewhat irrational ruler, who spoke
> Elizabethan English and had a private staircase
> to Mount Sinai. Consistency was not to be expected
> of Him. What we should now call masochism, the
> glorification of pain, was explained by the idea
> that discomfort in this life automatically ensured
> bliss in a future existence. Carried to its logi-
> cal conclusion, as many of Cromwell's semi-
> barbarians were prepared to carry it, the most
> certain way to prepare a general Heaven was to
> create a Hell upon earth. This philosophy...is
> a denial of personal initiative and judgement,
> and the substitution of a set of transcendental
> values incapable of, and indeed almost resenting,
> any attempt at proof.[18]

In this sense, eschatological religion has been an obstacle to the full
development of man's life on earth. "That is to say, it may be taken
as a scientific statement of fact that one of the most dangerous oppo-
nents of a better, cleaner world, is the sentimental spirit which is
entirely concerned with the beauties of a prospective Heaven, whether
that Heaven is theological or moral".[19]   In addition, the failure of the
Labour Party to prevent its own "incorrigible abstraction from reality"

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[18]The Brief for the Prosecution, p. 15.

[19]Social Credit, p. 219.

was at least partly the result "of generations of 'religious' instruc-
tion specifically directed to the preaching of 'other-worldliness'".[20]

Douglas made it clear that, except for his own interpretation of Christ,

he was skeptical of much of the Christian tradition. So it was not

only that Christianity had obfuscated and minimized man's economic

needs, it had also supported the Jewish ethic required by the financial

powers and substituted future rewards for the possibilities of the

present.

Therefore, Douglas argued that a religious solution to the

problems of man in modern society was misleading and of little conse-

quence. The Classical or Aristotelian perspective had erroneously

blamed the defects in social organization on defects in the characters

of persons composing the society.[21] In this view, crime was caused by

immoral people, poverty existed because people were lazy and idle, and

war was the result of selfishness and wickedness. The religious or

moral demand for a "change of heart" in these situations was inept.

"Changed personality will only become effective through changed social

structure".[22] Criminality was essentially the result of economic

deprivation, and inebriety and prostitution were the results of indus-

trial overstrain.[23] The point, then, was to remove the root cause and

not merely the symptom. The economic problem of distribution of goods

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[20] *The Control and Distribution of Production*, p. 171.

[21] *Social Credit*, pp. 2-4.

[22] *Economic Democracy*, p. 99.

[23] *Social Credit*, pp. 91-92.

must first be solved. The problem was not that of a lack of moral

qualities in a labor force but a lack of economic power and indepen-

dence for self-development. It was not that ideas and ideals were se-

condary, but "...before human ideals (including the Classical and

religious ideals) can be brought into any effective relationship with

and control by the great mass of the population, that population must

be released from the undue pressure of economic forces".[24] Here we

have the crux of Douglas's argument concerning religion. Religion was

only important as a factor that hastened or retarded the primary goal

of the freedom of individuality. If it contributed to that end, it was

useful to Douglas and if it did not hasten this fulfillment it was

severely criticized.

Douglas actually wrote little about Christianity, hardly under-

stood it, and could not be considered a religious person in the tradi-

tional sense. Whenever he invoked religious terminology or concepts, he

did so either to legitimate his proposals or to criticize a perverted

religion that obstructed his goal. For instance, Douglas felt that one

of the fundamentals of Christianity was that the only true focus of

power was the individual. And, according to him, it was largely due to

Christ's conviction on this matter that he was crucified. "The conscious

man is not born to be ruled, neither is he born to rule over other people.

Jesus said so, and the Jews crucified Him. They could do no other".[25]

Douglas sought to legitimate his theory by demonstrating its essential

[24]Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[25]Programme for the Third World War, p. 43.

continuity with the message of Christ. In another instance, the same

inference was made. "Social Credit is Christian, not primarily because

it was designed to be Christian, but because it was painstakingly "dis"

-(un)covered reality. If Christianity is not real, it is nothing; it

is not 'true', it is Truth. 'You shall know the Truth and the Truth

shall make you free'".[26] Here the argument moves to equate Social Credit

with Christianity, reality, and truth by utilizing a well-known verse

from the Scriptural text. The shallow manner in which Christian con-

cepts are used indicates a very deliberate manipulative legitimation.

On the other hand, doctrines like the concept of original sin were a

hindrance to his theory. He strongly objected to the fact that human

desires and human nature could be considered evil and therefore such a

moral code could not be authentic Christianity.[27] It was interesting

that despite Douglas's intense feelings regarding the Old Testament, a

motto taken from Micah 4:4 was emblazoned on the cover of every edition

of The Fig Tree. "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under

his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid". The verse substantiated

Douglas's theory of individual independence and leisure living and dir-

ectly or indirectly invoked the authority of the Bible as support.

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[26] The Development of World Dominion, p. 15. This was a rela-
tively late statement by Douglas and one of the very few in which Social
Credit is directly claimed to be Christian. Nothing like this is found
in the earlier writings and it almost appears that he learned from his
interpreters the advantage which such legitimation produced in securing
support.

[27] The Monopoly of Credit, p. 7.

Douglas's Personal View of Religion

Even though he claimed to be a member of the Church of England,[28] orthodox religion meant little to Douglas personally except as an ally or opponent of his moral and economic ideas. However, the manner in which Douglas structured his theories gives ample evidence that they were functioning as a religion substitute. He redefined religion to represent his own quest being "to bind back life to reality".[29] He also defined religion as truth -- there being no religion higher than truth.[30] It was obvious that for Douglas, religion was not tied to any doctrinal statement, organized religious group, or for that matter any transcendence at all. The religious quest was a matter of peeling back those things that hide truth and was usually more of a socio-economic investigation than a meditative or spiritual one. The nebulousness of this belief was exhibited in Douglas's own statement.

> Now it is my own belief, and I might almost say that it is almost my only religion, that there is running through the nature of the Universe something that we may call a 'canon'. It is the thing which is referred to in the Gospel of St. John as the 'Logos', the 'Word'. It has an infinite variety of names. The engineer and the artist refer to it when they say that they have

[28]In a personal communication with Douglas's daughter, dated September 28th, 1971, it was stated: "Major Douglas was brought up in the Anglican Church and while living in Scotland attended the Scottish Episcopal Church. He was buried in the Kenmore burial ground which serves the parish in which he lived, according to the rites of the church".

[29]The Development of World Dominion, p. 19.

[30]The Fig Tree (September, 1937), 515.

> got something 'right'. Other people mean the same
> thing when they talk about absolute truth, or
> reality.[31]

Again, the canon, Douglas goes on to say, is determined by whether some-

thing corresponds to reality.

There is some evidence that Douglas favored Protestants more than

Catholics in the initial stages of his movement, but this later appeared

to be reversed. Most of the statements against Puritanism, the Protestant

ethic, and Protestant leaders were found in later writings. Conversely,

most of the accusations against Roman Catholicism were found only in the

early writings. For example:

> It is quite certain that the fundamental difference
> between political Roman Catholicism and political
> Protestantism (all religions are the basis of po-
> litical systems) is that the first is essentially
> authoritative and the second is individualistic
> ....But the simple fact remains that when stripped
> to its essentials the Roman claim is a claim for the
> surrender of individual judgement and, in any im-
> portant crisis, of individual action...and it is
> the great reason why the Hierarchy of Rome, as
> apart from the many delightful personages to be
> found in it, is a danger to peace, freedom, and
> development, wherever it is entrenched.[32]

This statement which appeared in the first edition in 1922 was entirely

omitted in the 1934 edition. Douglas had at first perceived the Catholic

hierarchy and authoritarian control over its membership to be contrary

to his coveted prize of individuality. But it appears that a shift in

his thinking was provoked by a preference for the forthright stand taken

by Catholicism against Communism and socialism -- a united front which

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[31]Social Credit (January 11th, 1935), "The Pursuit of Truth", .
299-300.

[32]The Control and Distribution of Production, p. 165.

Protestantism or the Church of England failed to give him.[33]   There was

no evidence of any other reason for this change. By the time of the

publication of The Development of World Dominion, Douglas had politically

sided with Catholicism.

> We have from time to time expressed the opinion
> that the Roman Catholic outlook on economics and
> sociology is the essentially Christian outlook;
> and that no other Christian body of opinion is
> so consistent in its official attitude. It is
> beyond question that the anti-Christian venom of
> the Communists is focused on Roman Catholicism,
> and that Protestant bodies, when not used as
> tools (and even then), merely excite contempt.[34]

This statement apparently was issued not as a result of a religious com-

mitment but represented an attempt to seek an ally in his fight to pro-

tect and refurbish capitalism.

. Therefore, we can assume that traditional religious activity and

Christian belief were not particularly important in Douglas's personal

life and in no way did it represent the wellspring around which the rest

of his life was organized. He merely tacked Biblical concepts onto his

theory and sought organized religious support to justify and bolster the

Social Credit position. The primacy given to his basic philosophy

rather than to Christian convictions was expressed in an edition of

Social Credit where it was stated that Social Credit was not a religion

but at the same time it was posited that no true religion could contain

anything but the fundamentals of Social Credit.[35]

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[33]This point is made in the later publication of The Realistic
Position of the Church of England.

[34]The Development of World Dominion, p. 49.

[35]Social Credit (June 17th, 1938), 2.

The Religious Elements of His Secular Theory

We might easily argue that Douglas's intense devotion and vigorous

missionary spirit regarding Social Credit demonstrated its nature and

function as a religious surrogate.[36]   The ills of the world could be

blamed on the evil desires of the high priests of finance. What was

needed was the message of Social Credit to set aright the evils of the ·

injustices of society and at the same time to protect the existing social

structure from unnecessary revolutionary change. Operational Social

Credit, for Douglas, was not so much an ideology as an attitudinal

commitment of faith and hope regarding the possibilities of a society's

future. Thus, real credit was defined as the

> ...correct belief or estimate of the capacity of
> a person or community to materialize its desires.
> It is, as one might say, a blueprint of a state
> of affairs which the community can achieve but
> has not yet achieved. It is the same thing as
> that sort of faith which was defined as 'the sub-
> stance of things hoped for, the evidence of things
> not seen', and fundamentally it takes its rise out
> of that marvellous faculty of human nature which
> consists of first imagining a state of affairs
> and then successfully reproducing the thing ima-
> gined in the every day world.[37]

Or, put in another way:

> But, nevertheless, there is a weapon to hand --
> that faith, that credit, based on the unity-in-

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[36]The view of Social Credit functioning as a religion substitute
was expressed by Maurice B. Reckitt, the editor of Christendom, in his
autobigraphy As It Happened, pp. 176-177, and also by Kingsley Martin in
Hiskett and Franklin, Searchlight on Social Credit, p. viii.

[37]Warning Democracy, p. 26.

> diversity of human needs, which in sober truth has
> moved moutains; without which the Panama Canal would
> never have been cut or the St. Lawrence spanned. In
> the temple of this faith the money-changers have
> entered; and only when they have been cast out shall
> we have peace.[38]

Economic credit was thus tied not only to a financial mechanism but to

an optimistic belief in that which appeared well-nigh impossible. In

this definition, credit was equivalent to faith -- but faith in what?

Faith in man's ability to do the things he wants to do in the immediate

future. Faith, basically a religious term, has nothing to do with super-

natural religion in this context. It is faith in man's ability to de-

mand results and to achieve these results by united human effort. "So

great is man's mastery over the forces of nature, as a result of our

marvellous inheritance of science, skill, organization, and natural re-

sources, that there is virtually nothing which reasonable people care to

demand that cannot be provided".[39] This was Douglas's basic assumption

and confidence in the capability of man. He had utilized religious

terminology to restore confidence in and affirm the autonomy of indivi-

dual expression. Douglas stated his conviction in a way strongly reminis-

cent of a Biblical injunction. "Systems were made for men, and not men

for systems, and the interest of man which is self-development, is above

all systems, whether theological, political, or economic".[40] The primary

doctrine of Social Credit was thus the unfettered freedom of individuality

and the defense and promulgation of this doctrine became the missionary

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[38]Credit Power and Democracy, p. 146.

[39]Social Credit (June 17th, 1938), 2.

[40]Economic Democracy, p. 6.

passion of C. H. Douglas and his followers.

The Vision of a New Earth

Although Douglas had an acute sense of an impending millenarian-

type conflict, leaders of English Social Credit had an intense dislike

for Biblical prophecy in that it suggested human fulfillment was only a

long-term plan which could be directed by no other agency but God. In

response to a book on prophecy and the return of Christ by Oswald J.

Smith of the People's Church, Toronto, The Social Crediter pointed out

that:

> This millenium tale must be debunked. It is making
> the lazy-minded the tool of the Totalitarian,
> whether he be Jew or Gentile. Surely we should ask
> ourselves whether the story is credible. Why should
> God only want a peaceful world for a thousand years?
> Why should God consider the Jews a Chosen People?
> The whole thing appears to me to be a fantasy, and
> utterly contrary to the Christian philosophy, which
> has been clouded by the spill-over from the Old
> Testament.[41]

However, Douglas did adapt the Christian idea of the Anti-Christ and

explained it as the force which aimed to keep mankind in collective

subjection.[42] In his logic, the Anti-Christ was in conflict with the

goal of Christ which was to foster the emergence of self-governing and

free individuality. Without stating the exact time, Douglas was never-

theless convinced that history was moving to a showdown. "But it is

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[41]"World Problems in the Light of Prophecy", The Social Crediter
(April 15th, 1944), 3.

[42]
The Realistic Position of the Church of England.

safe to say, that whether after the lapse of a few months, or of a very

few years, the conception of a world governed by the concentrated power

of compulsion of any description whatever, will be finally discredited

and the instruments of its policy reduced to impotence".[43]   The question

of victor here is quite clear. If the centralized control of power

could be solidified long enough to unite public opinion against it, a

vigorous thrust could be made to overthrow it.

In perceiving the future of the present social and economic in-

stability, Douglas argued that man was to have another chance to set

things straight before catastrophe would set in.[44]   This was to be a

"pause for reflection" but amounted more to a period of mounting aware-

ness, criticism, and mobilization. It was that "a comparatively short

period will serve to decide whether we are to master the mighty economic

or social machine that we have created, or whether it is to master us

...".[45]   What would be done in these last days would determine the result

of the impending conflict. Two possibilities were stated. If the

efforts of the missionaries of freedom took hold, we could expect a

Golden Age bringing "the full light of a day of such splendor as we can

at present only envisage dimly".[46]   But if man's eyes are not opened, we

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[43]Economic Democracy, pp. 147-148. Cf. also, Warning Democracy,
Chapter 9, for a discussion of the prophecies of a world crisis and
Douglas's own notion about this inescapable conflict.

[44]The following argument is based on pp. 215-217 of Social Credit.

[45]Ibid., p. 217.

[46]Ibid.

can expect a retreat into the Dark Ages characterized by "...the fall
of humanity back into an era of barbarism".[47]   To ensure that we stood

on the threshold of the millenium, the community needed to seize con-

trol of and create credit. If this would be accomplished, within ten

years "class war would be reduced to an absurdity and politics to the
status of a disease".[48]

What hindered this development of heaven on earth, according to

Douglas, was the denigration of human nature by the doctrine of original

sin. This conception of the sinfulness of man was naturally opposed to

Social Credit because it Puritanically asserted that "it is not good for

people to have what they want, that human nature is essentially bad, and

that life should consist to a very large extent in running to see what
Johnny is doing, and telling him he mustn't".[49]   However, man's desires

and goals were inherently good and not evil. To facilitate action more

appropriate to the age of leisure, Douglas proposed a new moral code in

which

> Belief in the absolute nature of sin has been
> replaced by what can be described as a moral
> relativity, and the adjectives good and bad are
> taking on meanings which can be better expressed
> as suitable or unsuitable. Not only do we de-
> sire a new earth, but we conceive a new heaven,
> in which static concepts have no place.[50]

The second barrier to the new age which Social Credit advocated

was the old conception of the essentially ennobling character of work.

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[47]Ibid., p. 216.

[48]The Control and Distribution of Production, p. 55.

[49]Warning Democracy, p. 27.

[50]The Monopoly of Credit, p. 7.

Opponents of Social Credit feared that civilization would be destroyed

if the fear of poverty were no longer operating to force people to
work.[51] But there was no longer need for either poverty or lengthened

working hours in the machine age. This is what made the new age so

appealing and so utopian. Labor and poverty would be replaced by un-

fettered self-development and fulfillment. Douglas noted:

> It used to be a very common argument that the spur
> of economic necessity was ennobling to the charac-
> ter. Frankly, I don't believe it. If you will,
> and I am sure you will, look at the question from
> a detached point of view, I think you will agree
> that the man who is engaged in 'making money' is
> neither so pleasant or so broadminded to deal with,
> nor so fundamentally efficient, as the man who,
> while yet exerting his capacity for useful effort
> to the utmost, is by fortune lifted above the neces-
> sity of considering his own economic advantage.[52]

Therefore, Douglas differentiated work from creative artistry of one's

own choosing. To overthrow the system of rewards and punishments which

was built on work rather than leisure would be to take full advantage of

the possibilities of technology. It was to be expected that the core

of financiers would exert their Satanic influence to keep man under con-

trol by requiring hard labor. Social Credit had a mission to destroy

this evil, and Douglas was convinced that, "The Anglo-Saxon character

probably remains the greatest bulwark against tyranny that exists in the
world today".[53] If thinking Anglo-Saxons were to be the evangels to a

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[51]Cf., for example, Warning Democracy, p. 28, and Social Credit, p. 132.

[52]The Control and Distribution of Production, p. 38.

[53]Social Credit, pp. 167-168.

troubled world, it could be expected that the work ethic would be uti-
lized to thwart their efforts to prevent the further subjection of man.

Traditionally, economic activity has been either an end in it-
self or a means of constraint. Instead, it ought to be a means to free-
dom. Douglas was somewhat unsure of the goal and purpose of human exis-
tence, but he was sure of the means by which life must be lived. Only a
human laissez-faire policy that allowed the individual to be free can
lead to happiness. "...the end of man, while unknown, is something to-
wards which most rapid progress is made by the free expansion of
individuality, and that, therefore, economic organization is most effi-
cient when it most easily and rapidly supplies economic wants without
encroaching on other functional activities".[54]   With its new-found
freedom, we can expect the entire human race to benefit by the possi-
bilities accruing to man in his released condition.

> Having more leisure he is less likely to suffer
> from either individual or national nerve strain,
> and having more time to meet his neighbors can
> reasonably be expected to understand them more
> fully. Not being dependent upon a wage or
> salary for subsistence, he is under no necessity
> to suppress his individuality, with a result that
> his capacities are likely to take new forms of
> which we have so far little conception.[55]

If there was any reason for optimism regarding the future, the removal
of economic encumbrances would be the springboard to a new earthly life.

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[54]
    Warning Democracy, p. 38.

[55]
    The Monopoly of Credit, p. 81.   Cf. also, The Control and Dis-
tribution of Production, p. 31, where Douglas hints at his apprehension
of suddenly throwing large sections of the population out of their usual
pursuits.

Social Class and an Interpretation of the World

The thoroughness with which Douglas developed his theory and
the stringency with which he held his theory, and the considerable ef-
forts directed into promulgating it indicated the degree to which Social
Credit had become the means whereby Douglas interpreted and defined the
world. Social Credit was the key to understanding all reality in much
the same sense as Berger speaks of the world-building and world-mainten-
ance qualities of religion.[56] Everything could be explained or judged
by reference to the theory. The forces of evil that constrained man were
identified and exposed. The forces of good were identified as being
within man himself. The need for salvation from subjection was obvious.
Man did not need to be saved from himself but from his oppressors, and
his oppressors were using economic techniques as a tool of coercion.
Therefore, the ingredients for the new life which Social Credit offered
needed to be shared with everyone, and they then could unite to demand
the utopian society for which they had longed. Douglas even intimated
that wars would cease, mental illness would be reduced to a minimum, and
man would be able to become a new creature when he would be allowed full
freedom in his existence. Yet a conflict was inevitable. If man could
not rise up and defeat the centralized power of finance, he was lost.
But if he took heart and kept the goal ever before him, he could slowly
destroy the props of ecclesiasticism and religious thinking, among other
things, that have supported the constricted way of living. Man has

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[56]Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological
Theory of Religion. Cf. especially Chapters 1 and 2.

proven himself scientifically and technologically. He has brought
human life to the threshold of a new day. Now, Douglas argued, man
needed to escape the shackles of an outworn economic and social system
to obtain complete freedom.

It was this vision of a new world which quickened the social
consciences of upper class persons, but primarily provided a balm for
the insecure middle class struggling to reconcile their own social
position with the demands of the lower class and the life-style of the
upper strata. Each adherent to Douglas theory interpreted and trans-
lated Social Credit to their associates in a manner that was relevant
to their social location and personal interests.

We have already pointed out the nature of Douglas's convictions
and his peripheral interests in Christianity. However, we would expect
that some of his disciples with more active interests in Christianity
might perhaps have a greater desire to connect Social Credit more dir-
ectly with the Christian faith. Perhaps it is here we may find that
appropriate bridges were built from Douglas to Aberhart.

Secondary Interpretations of Social Credit

The book that Aberhart read which introduced him to the full
argument of Social Credit theory was entitled Unemployment or War by
Maurice Colbourne. Colbourne worte several books that were published
in England, but while on an extended visit to the United States, he had
Unemployment or War printed in New York. This book was mostly signifi-
cant in making Social Credit material easily available to North American
readers. It is not without merit that Colbourne's first book, The Wicked

Foreman, was a plea to institutional Christianity to become relevant and to serve as the "leavening force" in society.[57] He attacked complacent Christians as well as the clergy for allowing traditions and dogma to displace a vital faith. He argued that a return to simplicity in Christianity was needed. Christ was the incarnation of the spirit of love and God was seeking to establish this kingdom on earth. As one who had felt a "call" to become a minister but overcame it, Colbourne felt it important that laymen speak out. It is not known whether Aberhart knew of this background when he read Unemployment or War, but Colbourne made it clear in this new manuscript that man was only paying lip-service to religion and its ethics because "the struggle for existence will not let him" give religion full attention.[58] He argued that people who are most religious are failures in the world's eyes because they have the least interest in the economic fight which prevents the real practicing of Christianity anyway. Without negating religion, Colbourne noted that, "...a fervent belief in, say, Christianity should not blind us to the fact that Christians are not practicing it, and indeed cannot practice it -- while Scarcity lasts. A true estimate therefore of religion's influence upon economics, or the art of living, sets it perilously near zero".[59] Colbourne's later book, Economic Nationalism,[60] was a rather

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[57] Colbourne expresses his motives and feelings for writing the book in the preface.

[58] Unemployment or War, p. 13.

[59] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[60] Economic Nationalism (the 4th edition was entitled The Meaning of Social Credit, 1935).

simple and nontechnical but faithful parrot of Douglas theory.

Another person whose personal interests and the prestige of his office were significant to the development of the Social Credit movement was the Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, often referred to a bit later as the "Red Dean".[61] Johnson engaged in extensive discussions with Douglas in the pre-Economic Democracy days (before 1920), and later became one of the primary spokesmen for Social Credit at numerous public meetings. As a prominent representative of established Christianity, and as a possessor of developed skills in public speaking, Johnson made a valuable contribution to the promulgation of Social Credit and to its legitimation as congruent with the Christian tradition. What Douglas could only say in a secular, technical manner, Johnson embodied with theological articulation. For instance, he argued that human nature was not evil for God had "...bestowed upon all the gift of His only begotten Son, trusting Him into the hands of us human beings, just be-cause of his ultimate faith in the goodness and possibility of human nature".[62] Johnson also added a touch of sacred mystery to technology which Douglas could not provide. "And here I see the machine, sacred and God-given because it has grown out of the toil and tears of scientists and inventors and educationalists and God-fearing, peace-loving men in the society we call Christendom".[63] While neither Douglas nor Aberhart

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[61]For his own account of his interest in Social Credit, see his autobiography, Seaching for Light, pp. 136-139.

[62]"Unto this Last", The Fig Tree (September, 1937), 535-536.

[63]Ibid., 534.

were in any way dependent on Johnson, both men found him a convenient
legitimating agent for their programmes. Johnson provided Douglas with
a theological rationale to justify Social Credit theory and laid the
groundwork for others with a similar preoccupation. However, Aberhart
did not need this suggestion. In the election battle, he utilized
Johnson as a prestigious foreign authority of high intellect who could
verify the authenticity and reliability of Social Credit to rural
Alberta. As the years went by, Johnson leaned more and more to the
left, convinced that Social Credit could be a temporary measure at most,
and anticipating the more radical break that socialism and communism
demanded.[64] But Johnson's rejection of Social Credit did not crystal-
lize until a decade or so after Social Credit came to power in Alberta,
and by that time Douglas and his disciples had learned of the importance
and specific manner in which Christian concepts could be related to
their theory.

Social Credit as Religion

Invariably, Douglas's supporters sought and found more than a
financial mechanism in Social Credit. To those who sought a fresh and
more meaningful interpretation of the world, Douglas theory provided
comprehensive explanations in a belief system that projected a future
hope. C. Marshall Hattersley, a lawyer who went to Alberta in 1951 to
work on a revision of Alberta statutes, expressed this conviction at an

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[64] This shift is expressed in his book, Christians and Communism,
where conflicts are dissolved between the two positions and their essential
similarities and points of contact are enthusiastically elucidated.

early stage in 1922.

> But the movement offers something more than a bare
> economic framework. It holds out an ideal and it
> shows how that ideal can be attained. Therefore
> the Social Crediter feels he has something to work
> for -- something well worth working for. He has
> gained a new outlook on life, an outlook full of
> hope. He knows that he is in possession of a very
> great truth, and that it is 'up to him' to pass it
> on.[65]

A *Social Crediter* was thus called not only to be a believer but to be a

missionary. The ideology was not only a source of personal integration

but was the "good news" the rest of the world ought to hear. The religious

implications of such an appeal were obvious. But to be so highly moti-

vated in a Christian-oriented society required Christian sanctions to

demonstrate the acceptability of any additions or deviations in the new

world-view. A. L. Gibson, in an address at Westminster Hall in London,

expressed a common feeling among the followers of the relationship between

Social Credit and Christianity. "Major Douglas has not stated it in so

many words, but my own view is that the Social Credit philosophy is

based upon one of the fundamental principles of the Christian faith, that

is, the sacredness of human personality, the infinite value of the

individual man, woman, and child".[66] This was typical of the legitima-

tions that were eagerly sought by the disciples of Douglas even in the

pre-Alberta days. An innovative yet not radical ideology required familiar

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[65]C. Marshall Hattersley, The Community's Credit, pp. i-ii.

[66]A. L. Gibson, "What is This Social Credit?", an address given
at Westminster Hall, London, March 21st, 1935, and printed in The Social
Credit Pamphleteer.

and acceptable symbols and terminology to bolster its claim on the popu-

lation as a whole and to psychologically ground the converted within

their own culture. Social Credit may have been new in its method and

approach but it was viewed as essentially continuous with the fundamentals

of a common Christian tradition.

Not all elements in the Christian tradition were easily adapted

to support Social Credit. In fact, opponents of Social Credit used the

Bible against the basic premises of the theory. II. Thessalonians 3:10

was often quoted as evidence that work was uplifting and leisure was

evil. Paul notes in this particular verse that if a man does not work

he shall not eat. Social Credit had rejected the ethic whereby work was

the primary requirement for the receipt of the distribution of goods.

English Social Credit was thus alert to any new statements by religious

leaders, such as the Pope, who might support their position.[67] Whereas

Catholics were most impressed by statements from religious authorities,

Protestants leaned heavily on extracting significant Bible stories and

phrases from the Scriptural text. For example, Rev. G. R. Robertson

pointed out that the fundamentals of Social Credit were contained in the

teachings of Jesus.[68] In cleansing the temple of the money-changers, in

his story of paying the laborers according to human need and not according

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[67]Father Coffey argued that Pius XI had condemned the interpre-
tation of Paul's statement that made work the sole basis for the goods of
life, and therefore suggested that this divine command to labor was mis-
leading. Father P. Coffey, "God or Mammon: A Catholic's Point of View",
The Fig Tree (December, 1936), 231.

[68]G. R. Robertson, "Fundamentals of Social Credit in the Teachings
of Jesus", The Fig Tree (March, 1937). Cf. also, Norman Webb, "Social
Credit and the Christian Ethic", The Fig Tree (June, 1937).

to length of time worked, and in his parable of the forgiven debtor who failed to forgive his fellow debtor, it was argued that Christ's teachings were essentially in harmony with Social Credit.

However, it would be a mistake to regard the Social Credit movement in England as either an essentially Christian movement or a movement with religious goals. It was neither preoccupied with securing religious legitimations nor was it interested in religious discussions. But it did become a religion in itself for many Social Crediters. We have already demonstrated that Christianity was only of peripheral concern to Douglas personally. In his view, Christian institutions and Christian ideology were a hindrance to the attainment of the new possibilities in society. Only if they could be manipulated to serve his ends were they useful. Needless to say, not all of Douglas's disciples shared his ambivalence to Christianity. While he never became actively involved in constructing theological justifications for his theory, Douglas allowed others more inclined to do so.[69] These followers made explicit, to varying degrees, what Douglas left implicit; Social Credit was Christian because it restored the individual to pre-eminence. While many Social Crediters felt no need for this justification, the statements of religious elites were useful to provide the necessary rationale of continuity to legitimate the changes demanded and to widen the base of support.

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[69]For instance, L. D. Byrne, an advisor to the Alberta government sent by Douglas, readily used Biblical concepts in his statements regarding Social Credit. He conceived of it as "a holy war" and "a Crusade for a Christian and democratic social order against the forces of the Devil -- the Father of Lies". "Alberta Leads", The Fig Tree (March, 1938), 746.

Having specified Douglas's view of society, the role of religion
in his theory, and the religious elements of the Social Credit world-
view, we are now in a position to complete the task which was suggested
at the outset of the chapter: a specification of why and how Social
Credit was adapted to Alberta.

CHAPTER VI

IDEOLOGICAL AFFINITY OF SOCIAL CREDIT TO ALBERTA

The color of the events leading up to the election of the first

Social Credit government in the world in 1935 indicates that Social Credit

was no mere fleeting idea. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate

how and why the ideology took strong root in Aberhart, the leader, and

in Alberta, the society as a whole.

The paradox of economic expansion, new technological possibilities,

and developing markets on the one hand, and unemployment, wars, debts,

and poverty on the other had provoked a restlessness and a deepening

conviction of the need for some type of invigorating reform. In many

parts of the world, theories were being promulgated and seeds of reform

were being sown as a counter-attack to the disillusionment of the post

World War I period. Nurtured in this fertile soil of discontent,

Douglas's ideas began to germinate and sprout.

The Social Credit Heritage in Alberta

Long before Aberhart ever seriously considered economic problems,

Social Credit was being discussed and debated in Canada. In searching

for new approaches to economic frustrations, the House of Commons

Committee on Banking and Commerce asked Douglas to present his theory

and proposals before their session as early as 1923. A series of dis-

satisfactions had produced the Progressive movement in Canada and an

openness existed to new models for the economic reconstruction of society.

Since 1913, a group within the UFA, led by George Bevington, had been

urging monetary reform as a means to economic stability.[1] Many American

immigrants had also been followers of William Jennings Bryan and his

famous speech "Shall Humanity be Crucified on a Cross of Gold?" The

United Farmers of Alberta, as a branch of the Progressive movement, in-

cluded Social Credit books and pamphlets on its list of suggested

reading material and utilized the theory as an additional explanatory

device for economic instability and the lack of purchasing power.

Social Credit had the advantage of including a socialist critique of

society in its theory without embracing socialist conclusions. As an

explanatory device, Social Credit was useful to the Progressives and

warranted study on that basis. William Irvine, a UFA member of

Parliament, had long encouraged discussion of the monetary proposals of

Social Credit, and could have taken a leaf out of Douglas's book when

he wrote:

> Capital must be used to greater advantage for the
> common good; it must be made to serve. Capitalists
> will not be destroyed; they will be called to the
> higher service of managing capital for national
> well-being; and governments will be fulfilled in
> being made to represent the people truly, and to
> manage with honesty and efficiency the public
> business. The philosophy of the new social order
> is positive, constructive, and fulfilling. It
> brings the more abundant life as well to those
> who have as to those who have not.[2]

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[1] H. E. Nichols, *Alberta's Fight for Freedom*, Part I. For addi-
tional discussion of the introduction of Social Credit ideas into the
west, and particularly its effect on the UFA, cf. Irving, *op. cit.*, pp.
145 ff. and 226 ff.

[2] William Irvine, *The Farmers in Politics*, p. 97.

However, while many Progressives had a world-view similar to the Social Credit perception of the condition of society, active interest in the implementation of its monetary proposals was another matter. Aberhart's contribution was not unique in that it presented the Social Credit analysis of society for the first time for that had been done in similar and parallel forms before economics became important to him. What separated Aberhart from all previous forms of protest was that he went beyond the critique and took Social Credit as a remedial measure seriously. Social Credit was not merely an explanatory device, it was valuable because it provided the financial mechanisms by which the problems could be overcome.

It appears that Douglas theory recruited its first adherents in Alberta from a social class similar to those attracted to Social Credit in England. Sophisticated organizations devoted to intellectual pursuits such as the Knights of the Round Table and the Open Mind Club engaged in considerable discussion on Social Credit as a theory for the cerebral exercise of their generally well-educated members.[3] Scattered around the provinces were also several individuals who were students of Douglas theory. While grading Grade XII departmental examinations in Edmonton in 1932, Aberhart was introduced to Social Credit by one of these individuals. Charles M. Scarborough, an engineer and chemistry teacher at Victoria High School in Edmonton, and himself persuaded of the merits of Social Credit by an engineer, persistently argued with

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[3] Irving, op. cit., p. 51.

Aberhart regarding the value of monetary reform in alleviating the eco-
nomic distress and attempted to simplify Douglas theory so Aberhart
would accept it. On a warm summer's evening at the height of the de-
pression, Scarborough's efforts bore fruit when the popular presentation
in Colbourne's Unemployment or War convinced and "converted" Aberhart
that Social Credit was the answer to the economic disaster in the west.[4]

I. The Relationship of Religion to Social Credit

With Social Credit as an economic plan rather than a political
programme, Aberhart continued his religious broadcasting in the fall of
1932 with an occasional reference to Douglas theory as a means to illu-
minate the reasons for the economic conditions of the west. Since the
study of prophecy lent itself to discussions of the state of the world,
it became easier and easier to weave fibres of Social Credit into his
religious analyses. As the effects of the depression were felt in poor
diets, unemployment, unpaid mortgages, and a general demoralization,
public interest in the search for a cause increased. Aberhart brought
economics down from the lofty heights of academic and technical dis-
cussion, and provided an understandable explanation for the common man.
Following a familiar pattern, Aberhart began to solidify support by
organizing a study group that met in the Institute and by publishing
leaflets to present Social Credit with greater precision and clarity.

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[4]Irving states that Scarborough deliberately sought to convince
Aberhart because he knew Social Credit would need an advocate with ora-
torical abilities and a dynamic personality to succeed in implementing
these ideas. Ibid., pp. 47-49.

Among those in Aberhart's first study group were several individuals

deeply troubled by the depression and who sought to learn more of Douglas

theory, but because of their own intellectual capacities preferred to

give prior allegiance to orthodox Douglas thought than Aberhart's

popularized version. As a means of asserting their independence, these

well-educated persons formed the New Age Club and officially affiliated

with the Social Credit Secretariat in London. At first, a reasonable

working relationship prevailed in the attempt to attain mutual goals.

However, a combination of personality conflict, the popularization of

the theory versus the orthodox theoretical line, leadership conflict

and jealousy, and indifference or dislike for the integration of Social

Credit with a religious enterprise drove a permanent wedge in the forces

of Social Credit in Alberta that at the very least contributed to

Aberhart's position as a maverick Douglasite.[5] The fact that Douglas's

later visit to Alberta was sponsored by the New Age Club and divorced

from Aberhart's populist efforts further contributed to his ideological

and organizational independence.

Nevertheless, in this period of ascendency, independence was not

to be confused with repudiation of Douglas. Although both sides vied

for the Douglas endorsement, Aberhart, with his growing following, was

not as directly in need of this validation to establish his credibility.

Douglas had stimulated his thinking, but Aberhart then moulded the theory

to fit his own mind-set, his ultimate interests, and the Alberta environ-

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[5]This schism that developed among Alberta Social Crediters is
thoroughly traced by Irving, ibid., pp. 63 ff.

ment. Once the explanation for the depression and the exploitation of the westerner had been formulated in his own mind, Aberhart could independently proceed to elucidate his own brand of Social Credit. However, his lack of economic expertise meant that Aberhart relied considerably on Douglas as a distant authority and an expert on remedial techniques when his own resources were exhausted.[6]

The Adaptation of Social Credit

It was established earlier that Aberhart's primary life interests focused on his religious activities. Why then could he be so easily distracted by Social Credit? The suffering around him, growing unemployment among his graduates, and the reduction of his own salary were obviously danger signals that roused him to action. His opponents, however, suggested that Aberhart had more ulterior motives.[7] They claim that the Institute work and the broadcast were deteriorating and that Aberhart sought a gimmick by which to arouse new interest. There is no evidence that this was the case, although it is likely that the expense of coming to the Sunday meetings reduced the attendance during the depression and the shortage of money reduced the financial contributions. While these factors may have stimulated him, it is more likely that the ultimate

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[6]Interestingly, Aberhart's Social Credit Manual (published early in 1935), also known as the "Blue Book", does not mention Douglas's name at all. Aberhart considered Douglas to be somewhat of an expert who, in applying Douglas's own theory, could be dismissed if he failed to produce the results the people demanded.

[7]Irving, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

catalyst for Aberhart moving into the strange field of economics was
his conviction of the congruence of Social Credit with Bible prophecy.
It was not that Social Credit was Biblically based as much as that the
Social Credit interpretation of the world ran parallel with the Bible
prophetic interpretation of the world. Especially at this early stage,
the assumptions of Social Credit fitted the ultimate purposes of Bible
prophecy. It was not that Social Credit was of value in itself but
because it was a secular reinforcement of his Biblical theory[8] that he
could project his total energy and the facilities of the Institute to
its promulgation.

We are arguing that it was the structural similarities in ideo-
logy that fostered the incorporation of Social Credit into the religious
enterprise. Aberhart was not accommodating religion to economics. He
was accommodating economics to a religious world-view and therefore he
failed to see the basic differences that existed between Douglas and
him.

All of the major accounts of Alberta Social Credit have suggested
that an ideological affinity existed between Aberhart and Douglas, but
the nature of this affinity has been poorly traced. Macpherson noted
the "remarkable similarity" of Social Credit with evangelical religious
doctrine in its "denunciation of the world as it was" and the promise of

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[8]
This is somewhat different from Irving's statement that Social
Credit ideas for Aberhart were a fulfillment of fundamentalist and
prophetic Christianity (op. cit., p. 51).

a new life to all who were suffering.[9] For Schultz, the similarity was one of a priori presuppositions and universals that related Social Credit with fundamentalism.[10] Irving observed that Social Credit was grafted on to prophetic Christianity as its fulfillment.[11] None of these themes have been developed and have only been suggested. Our task, then, will be to sketch the structural similarities between Aberhart's religious views and Douglas theory as a means to explain Aberhart's abrupt involvement in Social Credit and the ease with which he and his supporters accepted it.

Socio-Economic Differences in the Settings of the Theory

Strangely enough, Aberhart and Alberta had little in common with Douglas and England. The British population exhibited a relatively well-defined social structure and included a large industrial working force. In contrast, the Alberta population was largely rural with vaguely demarcated social strata, a farming population, and a diversity of ethnic groups coexisting side-by-side. England's economic activity centered around industrial factory enterprise whereas Alberta was dependent on her agricultural products. Indeed, Social Credit emerged from the problems of a highly industrial and urban state and its curious adaptation to Alberta was always somewhat of an anomaly to its founder.

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[9]Macpherson, op. cit., p. 145.

[10]H. J. Schultz, "Portrait of a Premier: William Aberhart", Canadian Historical Review (September, 1964), 194.

[11]Irving, op. cit., p. 51.

Douglas, as an engineer, was thoroughly impressed with the machine age

and the new role of man within it. Work would not only be made lighter

but the necessity of working at all would be minimized. In Economic

Democracy, Douglas suggested that a working day of just over three hours

would be sufficient to meet normal demands of consumption and deprecia-
tion.[12] Therefore, Douglas was the prophet for an age of leisure in

which the abundance of wealth in nature and human knowledge could be

developed to the full and distributed for the benefit of all mankind.

Alberta knew very little of leisure in this period. Virgin

soil was being broken. Farmers were struggling to make mortgage pay-

ments on land and machinery. It was only by diligent effort and indus-

triousness that a man could "make something of himself". Machinery had

not yet displaced the need for hard labor. Long hours, thrift, self-

denial, and hard work were the demands of pioneering. Even in towns

and cities, the struggle to build equity and security was most acute.

Douglas's pronouncements stood in stark contrast. He vehemently de-

nounced the necessity for full or long employment. Work had nothing to

do with man's eligibility for participation in the basic activities of

life. One should do that which one chooses because of a natural affinity

rather than primarily with the object of gainful employment.[13] Douglas

abhorred the Puritan ethic because it coerced man socially and personally

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[12]Economic Democracy, pp. 103-104. This work rate would only be required of adults between the ages of 18 and 40.

[13]Douglas, Credit Power and Democracy, pp. 19-20. Aberhart was careful to stipulate in the Social Credit Manual (p. 9) that, "Leisure is not idleness. It is the opportunity to do the work which the man desires to do". It was this qualification which made Douglas's use of leisure credible in Alberta. In a period of high unemployment, leisure was viewed negatively as forced unemployment.

through guilt feelings to idolize work and therefore enslaved him -- an obsolete ideal in an age of technology and abundance.[14] Alberta was yet to reap the benefits of technology, and abundance was a foreign word to her pioneers.

Philosophical Differences

Human nature was essentially good for Douglas. He condemned the doctrine of original sin and Puritanism for its penchant to denigrate human desires and objectives as evil.[15] It was the moral code that needed correction rather than human nature. If man did not have an evil nature, then the "change of heart" thesis was also unnecessary. Man did not need an inner transformation to mitigate his sense of evil. In the fundamentalist tradition, Aberhart taught that man was evil and needed to be converted from his evil ways. However, the gulf that appears here between the two men at first glance is not really as wide as it seems.[16] Aberhart's emphasis on prophecy placed the evil not only within man but on evil forces that were externally gathering and forming in the world. Prophecy encouraged people to be ready for the return of the Lord[17] and more effort was expended in perceiving the signs leading to that point

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[14]Douglas, Social Credit, p. 8. Unemployment was a sign of economic progress for Douglas rather than a symptom of industrial breakdown.

[15]Douglas, The Monopoly of Credit, p. 7.

[16]Schultz, op. cit., p. 194, suggests that this difference in the conceptions of human nature was irresolvable.

[17]Aberhart, God's Great Prophecies, Lecture No. 2, p. 15.

than in grovelling into the evils of human nature. That man was sinful was a basic presupposition that needed no elaboration in Aberhart's thinking. What needed articulation were the global manifestations of evil wilfully mounting to rule the world in opposition to Christ. This prophetic externalization and centralization of evil minimized the difference with Douglas regarding the essential nature of man. Secondly, Aberhart argued that man has two natures: "one received by natural birth, which is wholly and hopelessly estranged from God and the other received through the New Birth, which is the nature of God himself, and therefore wholly good".[18] Aberhart noted that the Christian experiences continual conflict between these two natures. However, the good can emerge victorious in a person and this new nature cannot sin (I. John 3:9). So while human nature by itself was not essentially good, there was the possibility that it could be cleansed so that human desires would be purified. It is interesting to observe that Douglas even admitted on occasion that the problems were not just social or economic but were due to a morality of an internal "lust of power" or "a will-to-power".[19]

If Douglas was seeking allies for his protest, he did not expect to find them in the Christian church. In his thinking, the church was too rigidly tied to the status quo to be willing to clamor for change.[20] Aberhart's concept of the church, in contrast, was much broader and less

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[18]Aberhart, Systematic Theology, Lesson 4, pp. 14-15.

[19]Douglas, Economic Democracy, p. 22.

[20]Douglas, The Realistic Position of the Church of England.

institutional. The church of Christ consisted of those "born again",

thus spanning denominational and institutional boundaries as a movement

of faith that could criticize and protest against establishment religion. [21]

Therefore, religion was primarily a source of doom for Douglas, in con-

trast to its existence as the essential basis of hope for Aberhart.

Douglas's concept of democracy evidenced great parallels with

Aberhart's brand of congregational polity. The majority were to decide

on policy or demand certain results while the experts who had the

training and ability were to decide methods. Douglas had insisted that

these experts were to be expendable if they failed in achieving the

expressed results demanded by the general will. In his religious work,

Aberhart conceived himself to be the expert. However, in the economic

theory, he considered himself to be the spokesman for the people and

partial expert. When he reached his limits, he expected Douglas to be

the expert who should be held responsible.

The ultimate focus of prophecy was on the future. Past events

were only significant in terms of how they informed us about the present

and prepared us for the future. Prophecy was a blueprint for the future

which, by identifying portentous events to come, interpreted and organ-

ized the present and the intermediary period. Therefore, prophecy was

preoccupied with existing conditions only as the pathway to the antici-

pated future.

21
    Aberhart, God's Great Prophecies, Book No. 6, "Babylon, Rome,
and Denominationalism".

The Fate of Society

In spite of the progress man had made in the technical sense,

the problems of society seemed to loom larger than ever before. Aberhart

noted that learning and science had produced moral and religious de-
cay,[22] and Douglas was disturbed that in place of social ascendancy,

social discontent was threatening man's ability to reach his full po-
tential.[23] Man was restless because his freedom was gradually being

circumscribed and he was being enslaved by satanic forces. Aberhart

claimed that the devil was blinding man to the message of prophecy;

but more than that, world leaders ("International Deliberations") were

tools of the forces of evil that would eventually lead to the emer-
gence of the Anti-Christ in a final effort to rule the world.[24] The

difficulty Christians were having in bringing the world to Christ was

the result of the desire for power and glory of Anti-Christian forces.

Douglas made a similar comment. Centralization and the monopoly of

credit in the hands of a few power-hungry men was distinctly based on
a synthesis of Anti-Christian principles.[25] For Douglas as well, world

organizations, such as the League of Nations, were the means by which

this "invisible government" was attempting to enslave all men of the

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[22] Aberhart, ibid., Lecture No. 12, p. 3.

[23] Douglas, Economic Democracy, p. 3.

[24] Aberhart, God's Great Prophecies, Book No. 3, "The Anti-Christ: System or Individual", and "The Anti-Christ: Demon".

[25] Douglas, Warning Democracy, p. 73.

26
world to its own desires.

Eventually this chaotic condition would lead to a final conflict.
And there was a feeling that this conflict was impending. Aberhart
argued that the inevitability of this show-down was obvious to all: "It
is surely obvious to the dullest intelligence that the Human Race is
gradually approaching a supreme crisis in its history. Nothing like the
27
events of today has ever marked the history of human life on earth".
Douglas was also aware of this crisis point in history. He asserted
that sometime "in a few months or a few years", an inescapable conflict
would mean that "...the breakup of the present financial system is cer-
28
tain. Nothing will stop it". The eschatological hope for the future
was that the tyranny and chaos would be destroyed, and man could enter
into a new stage of his existence. For Aberhart, this age of peace and
freedom would be inaugurated by the return of Christ. "When Jesus Christ
returns ALL ISRAEL shall be gathered back into Palestine and a splendid
reign of righteousness, known as the Kingdom of God, shall be established
on earth, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed during the
29
MILLENIUM". Douglas expected that it was also imminently possible

[26]Douglas, Social Credit, p. 78. I agree with Macpherson (op.
cit., p. 101) that the explicit articulation of the world plot theory
was a later development; but there is no doubt that it was present even
in the early phase of Douglas thought.

[27]Aberhart, God's Great Prophecies, Lecture No. 2, p. 1.

[28]Douglas, Social Credit, p. 215.

[29]Aberhart, op. cit., p. 13.

"that we could move into the millenium".[30] A new day would dawn upon

the face of the earth, suffering would cease, and all would have plenty

in a utopian existence.

Douglas expected the millenium to be ushered in by the efforts

of men who were experts in bringing to fruition the policy and goals

demanded by the majority. In contrast, the millenium was to be God-

directed and supernaturally inaugurated in Aberhart's conception.

Therefore, while both men spoke of a new earth, there was an important

difference in who would bring it to pass. Aberhart may have had an

affinity with Douglas theory because of a structural similarity in

ideology regarding an impending conflict and the dawn of a utopian day

upon earth, but this important difference in the inaugural agent placed

them poles apart. Aberhart would have had difficulty grafting a humanly

activated utopia on to his theological view of history. And yet he

could do so without destroying his supernatural conception of history

because Douglas, for all his hope in the future, failed to advocate

an activist plan whereby this millenium could be introduced. Douglas

did not call for class warfare, bloodshed, or destruction to achieve

the Golden Age. He called for intelligent confrontation with government

leaders to organize a new system. There was no dynamic to this type of

a millenium that would distract from or negate the need for the millenium

that would be divinely initiated. Social Credit for Aberhart was merely

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[30]
Douglas, The Monopoly of Credit, p. 84. Douglas's use of the
term "millenium" was not in the Christocentric sense but was purely a
secular expression of a new earth.

an intermediate step to relieve the population of undue economic pres-
sures in order that religious ideals might be taken seriously.[31]   As

Schultz points out, Aberhart had no misguided hopes that the attempt to

solve the economic problems through Social Credit would ever solve

spiritual problems.[32]   In other words, Social Credit did not pre-empt the

glory of the return of Christ. Had Douglas suggested a more demanding

confrontation in which people would have to risk their lives merely for

economic security, it is doubtful whether Aberhart could have accepted

it since present troubles were only evidence that history was moving

to its own inevitable Christocentric climax in any case.

The Theme of Reform

Aberhart and Douglas thus agreed that man's responsibility was

reform not revolution. It was via mechanical adjustments rather than a

fundamental reorganization that the world could be put on a proper

course. The sick condition of the country's religious life evoked from

Aberhart the demand for reform rather than the construction of a new

religious system.

> During the last 50 years, as the rank and file of
> God's people have been gradually losing confidence
> in these vaporings that were regularly declared
> from certain platforms, pulpits, and church papers,
> there has arisen a steadily-increasing interest in
> the study of the Holy Writ. Finding no certain
> help in philosophy and skepticism of the Higher
> Critical type, they have thought to return to the

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[31]Douglas, Social Credit, pp. 5-6.

[32]Schultz, op. cit., p. 194.

33
faith of their fathers.

Aberhart conceived it to be his task to restore people's confidence in the Bible and to return them more closely to the orthodox faith of their fathers. It was not that established religious institutions were all wrong, but that they had been corrupted and were desperately in need of reform. Douglas made a similar structural evaluation of the economic system. It was not that capitalism had always been bad or that it was inherently evil, it was just that its present form needed to be changed
34
and adapted to the new level of social development. Both prophecy and Social Credit were considered to be viable means to reform the old order rather than coercive instruments to create a new order.

Aberhart's primary mechanism for religious reform was to come through making the Bible available and meaningful to all. It was for this reason that he started Bible Study groups, the Radio Sunday School, and the Bible Institute. If more people would not only read the Bible but would know how to read the Bible and thus would take it seriously, religious decay could be alleviated. The Bible then would teach man his place in history, and give him a better idea of his role in society. The mechanism for economic reform in Douglas theory was to restore the credit of a community to its own control. Credit was not the sole property of bankers but belonged to the community in much the same sense that natural resources ought not to be private property but part of the

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33
Aberhart, God's Great Prophecies, Lecture No. 12, p. 3.

34
Douglas, Credit Power and Democracy, p. 40.

cultural heritage of all persons in the community.[35] The equal distri-

bution of a community's credit would have the effect of producing a more

just society. The means by which this credit would be distributed would

be via the dividend which would be available to all without property or

educational qualifications, or indeed any requirements at all. In much

the same manner, Aberhart pointed out that salvation through Christ

"belongs equally to all believers".[36] There is no particular denomina-

tion or person who could claim exclusive rights to salvation and it

ought to be available to all. Salvation is obtained through the grace

of God which is his "free, unmerited favor".[37] It cannot be earned or

paid for and is not dependent on any social or economic qualifications.

The religious message and the economic message both suggested that the

means to reform was to encourage the participation of all in the elements

of the society that indeed had originally been created for the benefit

of all.

Basing his theory on the validity of several assumptions (e.g.,

the return of Christ, the prophecies of the Old Testament as future

occurrences, his interpretation of the symbols of the book of Revelation),

Aberhart produced an argument of tight internal logic which called for

personal belief. It was not enough that the theory be known and under-

stood, it also required belief. After all, the Gospel was only salvation

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[35]Douglas, Economic Democracy, p. 117.

[36]Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, Systematic Theology "A" Course, p. 17.

[37]Ibid., p. 10.

to those who believed.[38] Aberhart considered it his task to present the logic so cogently and convincingly that people would automatically believe the presuppositions and the resulting explanation of world affairs. Restoring the Bible to its rightful place was not enough, one had to live in belief and expectancy for the events of the future. Belief required faith that the God who worked in the past events of history would continue to reveal Himself in the future. Indeed, the entire religious world-view that Aberhart promulgated demanded faith and belief.

Just as faith was a necessary requisite for salvation and a new life in Aberhart's proclamations, so faith was a necessary component in the tallying of a community's credits and establishing a new society in Douglas's theory. Real credit was a belief in the potential of a community. Credit was not explained in financial terms, but Douglas noted that, "It is the same thing as that sort of faith which was defined as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen..."[39] In the last chapter, it was pointed out that this concept of faith was essentially a belief in the capacity of man. While Aberhart would not share the full implications of this position, it was considerably easier for him to adopt an economic theory that required faith regarding future social possibilities because of his own predisposition to religious

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[38]Aberhart, God's Great Prophecies, Lecture No. 12, p. 4. Based on Romans 1:16.

[39]Douglas, Warning Democracy, p. 26. Cf. also, Credit Power and Democracy, pp. 105-106.

faith regarding the future. Aberhart, as a man of faith, found little difficulty in doing the mental gymnastics that Douglas theory required. No doubt his personal organizational expertise also gave him great confidence in the possibilities of bringing faith to fruition. Therefore, he did not think it necessary to construct an unassailable plan that answered all difficulties in the implementation of Social Credit before he promulgated the idea.

> A man may have in mind the general outline of the character of the house he intends to build. He may know the number of rooms that he intends to have and their relation and connection one with the other, but he does not ask the architect to draw the plan until he knows the size of the lot, the position in which the house will be placed, the materials available and so forth. So it is with a detailed plan for Social Credit in the Province of Alberta.[40]

Appearing before the Agricultural Committee of the Provincial government in 1934, Aberhart argued:

> I know that we can get into the intricacies of higher mathematics in trying to understand it, but I assume that evidence of the condition is of more value than an attempt to explain an intricate philosophical theory.[41]

All that was needed was a projected goal and suggested means of attaining it. The feasibility of the project was not a matter for question or doubt but demanded utter faith and trust, and that was a commodity that depression suffering Albertans were willing to surrender to the right

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[40]Aberhart, The Social Credit Manual, p. 3.

[41]Agricultural Committee, The Douglas System of Social Credit, p. 13.

person.

Therefore, Aberhart, consciously or unconsciously, had an affinity to Social Credit because the same structural elements were present in both the religious and economic theories. Social Credit as a remedy for the world's ills had direct parallels to his interpretation of Christianity as a remedy for the world's ills. A general outline of this similarity can be schematized.

	Christianity	Social Credit
Symptoms of Illness	meaninglessness, social and individual depression	poverty, unemployment, economic depression
Problem (focused on the individual)	shortage of faith in God, man separated from God	shortage of personal purchasing power
Responsibility (outside focus)	the "devil", "Anti-Christ"	financiers
Solution (available to all)	salvation based on "grace of God"	monthly dividend based on "cultural heritage"
Method (focused on the individual)	turn away from old ideas and goals	turn away from old political ties
Result	spiritual security	economic security

Douglas and Aberhart each saw their prophetic role to be that of exposing the enemy, unmasking their aims, and placing them in their true light. Both theories attempted to account for the chaos in the world by locating evil forces that worked in opposition to the true end of man. The hope for the future was the promise of a better day. It was only by crusading and agitating against the existing order that the established institutions could be reformed to lead to the rightful development of man.

Douglas Social Credit had been elucidated in such a manner that its

ideological structure employed the same cognitive features to which

Aberhart was accustomed. Thus it was not difficult for him to adopt the

economic theory and then to promulgate the religious and economic inter-

changeably or simultaneously. While the "International Deliberators",

the "World Conspirators", and the "Fifty Big Shots" were not necessarily

the same persons, nor necessarily in legion with the Anti-Christ, they

were all hidden and external manipulators of the lives of men that were

bringing mankind to ruin.

Furthermore, Social Credit, in specifying the gathering forces

seeking to enslave man, in identifying the poverty and unequal distri-

bution of goods, and in demonstrating the loss of freedom and decay of

democracy was merely pointing out to Aberhart what his religious doctrine

had taught him to expect. He knew that in preparation for the Second

Coming, the world would decay and conflicts would mount as power

struggles became more intense. The continuous struggle was between good

and evil as revealed in the angel's prophecy in the Garden of Eden.

> In that great prophecy we have the clear predic-
> tion that during that period of time from the fall
> of man until the binding of Satan at the beginning
> of Christ's millenial reign on earth, there would
> be a continual struggle between the forces of evil
> and of good; of destruction and of construction;
> between Satan and his seed, his followers, the
> enemies of the welfare of the human race; and the
> Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind and His followers.[42]

In Aberhart's eyes, Social Credit's critique and analysis was incisive

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[42]
Premiers' Papers, Prophecy No. 3.

because it was a secular verification that Bible prophecy was ultimately correct. He did not expect that Social Credit would be oriented to the same Christian crowning point of history, but as far as it went its economic analysis was considered to be valid. Douglas theory was thus absorbed into the religious theory[43] and the whole movement slowly was being energized toward practical action.

Fundamentalism usually contains a strong other-worldly orientation. Aberhart also had a particular interest in the life to come. In fact, the first lecture of the God's Great Prophecies series was entitled "The Ear-Marks of the True Religion or What Takes Place after Death?" It was directly given to refute heretical ideas and to affirm the nature of man's immortal existence. It has become a common-place in socio-religious analyses that a religious preoccupation with life after death is not conducive to any this-worldly involvement. Yet, how does one explain Aberhart's active participation in economics and politics? Again, for an ideological point of view, it was the emphasis on prophecy that altered his perspective.[44] Since prophecy was a means

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[43]In attempting to explain Aberhart's adoption of Social Credit, there is only one way to perceive it, and that is as something understood as congruous with his religious interests. We are rejecting the notion that Aberhart was seeking to become a political figure and deliberately accommodated his religious activity to other ends.

[44]Although Aberhart had millenial interests, his continual emphasis on prophecy as a means to interpret all of history rather than primarily an anticipated terrestrial change makes his movement a weak candidate as a millenial movement. Roland Robertson does point out, however, that millenial movements have a unique capacity to fuse concrete goals and religious beliefs into a "genuine form of religious this-worldliness". The Sociological Interpretation of Religion, p. 166.

to interpret all of history, Aberhart was interested in the events of

today for the light it shed on man's progress to the anticipated future.

This world is where God works. Prophecy kept world events ever before

his eyes and did not permit an exclusive futuristic day-dreaming. His

socio-economic position was not that depressed that all status and hope

would have to be projected to another world. Plenty was happening in

the world right now, and as long as a person's Christian faith was strong,

he would be safe from the ultimate destruction anyway. And if the

efforts to institute Social Credit by a band of concerned Christians

could be made to be a practical demonstration of Christian principles

in an evil world, those who stand outside the faith might be persuaded

of its merits "before it is too late".

II. The Affinity of Social Credit to Alberta

The affinity of Aberhart's religious thought with Social Credit

thought would have been insignificant and coincidental had it not been

for the affinity between Social Credit ideas and the Alberta social

milieu. It was not merely good organization or the momentum of a social

movement that evoked a response, it was the appropriateness of particu-

lar elements of Social Credit to their social and economic needs that

nutured the large-scale grass-roots appeal.

In England, Social Credit appealed to those who were isolated

from positions of power and yet had the ability and desire to exercise

power. These persons were not activists but were middle and upper middle

class intelligentsia who sought an explanatory formula of the social

chaos and a blueprint for a utopia to appease their idealism. Because

pragmatic concerns were always subordinated to ideals, the explanation

and the ideal model were articulated more clearly than the possibilities

of implementation and feasibility. By advocating a programme of reform

rather than revolution, and by specifying that reform be the protection

of individuality, Social Credit met the needs of a middle class threatened

by the struggle between the laboring class and the upper class. Status

insecurity was the primary motivating force with an acute desire to

protect present social position. The existence of a relatively small

middle class in England meant that Social Credit had a small group to

draw from and its intellectual approach limited its appeal to those of

higher status but in possession of social consciences. The best means

to advocate reform and yet to protect their class position was to locate

the source of the problem outside the social structure. Ultimate

responsibility was laid at the feet of a small, barely visible group

of financiers who sought to control the world's industry and economic

activity with their control of credit. The whole mood of society would

change if justice and morality were demanded to call these "Money-

Wizards" to order. It was not society that needed to be changed but

the forces of evil behind the society that needed purging. Such an

ideology fitted a social class that possessed both individual initiative

and sufficient personal expertise to maintain or improve their class

position. Present social disturbances were disquieting because they

threatened their hopes of status maintenance or social mobility. Thus

it was because Social Credit combined a Marxist critique of contemporary

society with a reaffirmation of an ideal concept of society that pre-

served the status quo, that an impractical, educated, middle class group

attempted to have the best of both worlds without losing the benefits

of their own hard-won achievements.

The Socio-Economic Milieu

The absence of a well-developed class structure in Alberta some-

what weakens the credibility of a class explanation for the rise of

Social Credit there.[45]   A small but powerful upper class, representatives

of eastern business interests, and fledging professionals constituted

one end of the social strata, and at the other end were a host of small

merchants and agriculturalists who were heavily mortgaged and who sought

to build equity and security. And yet it is precisely because of this

poorly defined class situation that status insecurity was so great.

Many persons had migrated to Alberta precisely because channels for

mobility and independence were blocked in their country of origination.

They possessed great hope that a new society would allow them to expand

their initiative and to become upwardly mobile. In periods of prosper-

ity, diligent labor and thrift ensured progress in this achievement

orientation. When economic decline set in, anxieties were raised and

hopes were shattered. It is at this point that Macpherson's description

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[45]
James McCrorie points out the temptation to explain the agra-
rian protests as class conflict or class politics and the desire to see
farmers as an appendage of the larger working class movement. After
deliberation and examining further evidence, he rejects the idea that
the agrarian community is a class. "Change and Paradox in Agrarian
Social Movements: The Case of Saskatchewan", in Richard J. Ossenberg,
Canadian Society: Pluralism, Change, and Conflict, p. 40.

of Alberta as a quasi-colonial economy is well taken.[46]   There was

nothing wrong with Alberta society, it was the forces outside that were

impeding her progress.

In this period, the economy of Alberta was almost exclusively

dependent on the production of agricultural commodities. Wheat was the

staple crop and its rate of yield was dependent on the forces of nature

from year to year. Southern Alberta was particularly vulnerable to dry,

hot weather, soil drifting, insect plagues, and hail, which reduced crop

expectations particularly in the time period between 1919 and 1930.[47]

Furthermore, Alberta was dependent on external markets and relied upon

rail transportation to ship the wheat to the pricing point. High freight

rates, shortage of freight cars, and elevator storage had become chronic

problems for farmers in the west and had already evoked a host of

farmers' organizations to deal with the difficulties.[48]   In addition to

the problems of production and transportation, the difficulties of a

variable market created uncertainties and risks that were again born by

the producer. In 1924-25, No. 2 Northern Wheat was selling at a high

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[46]Macpherson, op. cit., p. 6, is not the only one to make this
point, but he is the only one who makes it in this way.

[47]G. K. Wright, The Administrative Growth of the Government of
Alberta 1905-1921, M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1952, pp. 111 ff.

[48]Three excellent accounts of the problems of western Canadian
farmers and their efforts to seek remedies are found in Paul F. Sharp,
The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada; G. E. Britnell, The Wheat
Economy; and David G. Embree, The Rise of the United Farmers of Alberta,
M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1956.

of 168.5¢ per bushel. [49] By 1932, the price of No. 1 Northern had dropped

to 38¢ per bushel delivered at Ft. William. With freight and storage

charges by middlemen deducted from this price, a farmer was receiving

only 22¢ per bushel at the local country elevator. Facing such diffi-

cult odds, it was no wonder that cooperative efforts among grain growers

became "a veritable religion". [50] Harvests were either too great, as in

1930-34 with poor markets and low prices, or unfavorable weather condi-

tions reduced the yield. These economic conditions produced enormous

hardships because of a lack of purchasing power. Wheat was being burned

in stoves as the lack of cash prevented the purchase of coal. [51] Eggs

brought 5¢ per dozen. Cattle were often shot to salvage their hides

because they brought higher returns than on the hoof. Difficulties were

made more cumbersome by the fact that not only did farmers have to sell

their products on a variable, fluctuating, open market, but they were

forced to buy goods they needed in a protective market. Many manufac-

tured products particularly could be obtained more cheaply from the

United States. Nevertheless, the Canadian government had established

protective tariffs to ensure western markets for goods manufactured in

eastern Canada. Again, a smaller volume and high transportation costs

kept the price of these goods fixed and relatively steep. The western

farmer was thus at a triple disadvantage: uncertain crop yields,

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[49]D. A. MacGibbon, The Canadian Grain Trade 1931-1951, p. 4.

[50]H. S. Patton, Grain Grower's Co-operation in Western Canada,
p. 405.

[51]H. E. Nichols, op. cit., pp. 15 ff.

uncertain market conditions, and high prices on goods.

Subsistence living was a severe enough test of stamina without
the fear of confiscation of personal property. Yet the absence of hard
cash meant that no payments could be made on mortgages. Until 1929,
borrowing was a relatively simple matter for farmers. Eastern finan-
cial concerns were willing to advance loans on the security of land
value. But mortgage payments and interest charges were regular and
fixed and failure to honor the contractual agreement meant the threat
of the repossession of all property. Thus the lack of cash threatened
to suffocate and strangle the very existence of the western farmer.

In all of this hardship, Albertans stood helpless. Markets,
tariffs, interest, and freight rates were all beyond provincial juris-
diction. Few Albertans possessed any vital ties to federal parties,
and even if they did, their voice was not forceful enough in the ar-
rangements of the balance of power. It was at this stage that Alberta
found Social Credit meaningful because it located the source of the
problem outside the immediate society and placed the blame on groups of
individuals who apparently sought to control mankind -- at least in the
west. Social Credit provided the ammunition and all Albertans had to
provide were the appropriate targets. In turn, they were specified as
the merciless financiers (Fifty Big Shots), the Canadian Manufacturers'
Association, and old-line political parties and their henchmen who were
exploiting other human beings for their own benefits. Huston suggests
that Social Credit removed the farmer's incipient sense of guilt and
was ideologically appropriated because it restored his confidence by
justifying his own claim to what was considered to be rightfully his

anyway.

> Thus, a doctrine which assured the people that
> their poverty was not due to any fault of theirs,
> but the result of the chicanery of the "50 Big
> Shots", was assured a receptive hearing. At the
> same time, the doctrine constantly emphasized the
> importance of the people. The consummer -- and a
> more all-embracing class could not be devised --
> was the most important element in the state. It
> was through their association, through the inven-
> tive genius of their ancestors, that tremendous
> increases in the value of the social product had
> come about. It was to them, therefore, that Social
> Credit, in the form of basic dividends, rightfully
> belonged.[52]

The economic plight and remoteness of the Alberta farmer contributed to

the sectional feeling among farmers so that, as Jean Burnet observed,

when they looked beyond their local community to the federal power struc-

ture, they did so as a minority group.[53] In this instance, the feeling

of minority status was brought on by a sense of exploitation, manipula-

tion, and persecution by eastern business interests.

The agrarian population of Alberta was not unique in its economic

world-view. In fact, this development of distrust and suspicion was

merely one of the later expressions of protest among farmers in North

America. Fossum's study of agrarian movements in North Dakota suggests

that the animosity that was felt between the farmer and the middleman,

railroad owners, grain buyers, and government policy was at least partly

the result of the physical separation of the producer from the market so

that he felt loss of control of the grain after it left his hands.[54]

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[52]Mary L. Huston, The Rise of the Social Credit Movement in Alberta 1932-1935, p. 94.

[53]Jean Burnet, Next-Year Country, p. 26.

[54]Paul R. Fossum, The Agrarian Movement in North Dakota, p. 12.

Carl Taylor quotes from a Populist document in Kansas that perceived

the struggle for control to be:

> "...not between the Populists and Republicans as
> political organizations, but between the common
> people of the State and the Eastern mortgages and
> alien railroad owners; between the common people
> and those scheming, purse-proud foreigners, who
> seek to make of this beautiful, fertile state
> another Ireland, between the common people and the
> miscreants, who, by low-shielded, pitiless oppres-
> sion, would drive struggling Adams and Eves from
> the prairie Edens they have labored in poverty,
> in privation, in tears, but in hope, to make
> beautiful and fruitful.[55]

The common element of an external evil force was adopted because hard

work and coveted independence had, paradoxically, turned hope into des-

pair. Many farmers had a meager education, and as foreign-born, were

not always quick to understand the intricate marketing system. If the

marketing system was not understood, then it was something to be feared

and something that was manipulated.[56] The debtor economy did not re-

quire a restructuring because farmers were willing to shoulder their

responsibilities as a result of their long-range hopes. But immoral

uses of captialism needed to be re-oriented to "service instead of profit"

and devoted to "unselfishness and the brotherhood of man" through

agencies that were of "Christian origin instead of the devil".[57] Hicks

points out that populism was the inevitable response to a crisis when

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[55]C. C. Taylor, The Farmer's Movement 1620-1920, p. 289.

[56]Fossum, op. cit., p. 45.

[57]Saloutos and Hicks, Twentieth Century Populism, p. 230. This
contains a good analysis of the various agrarian populist movements in
the United States from 1900 to 1939.

new frontiers were no longer available to siphon off those disgruntled
and oppressed.[58]   In other words, the social safety valve of migration

to another area of cheaper land had disappeared, and coupled with the

desire to maintain an established residence, farmers were forced not

only to adjust but also to come to grips with the problems of their

vocation in that area. Financial and marketing difficulties were best

expressed in moral rather than technical terms. "The Populist philo-

sophy thus boiled down finally to two fundamental propositions; one,

that the government must restrain the selfish tendencies of those who

profited at the expense of the poor and needy; the other, that the

people, not the plutocrats, must control the government".[59]   Farmers

may have been an exploited sectional minority but they were learning

the moral, psychological, as well as the political, value of organized

activism.

The United Farmers of Alberta

Already in 1911, agrarian revolt in western Canada manifested

itself with the federal rejection of reciprocity with the United States

which would have meant cheaper consumer goods and machinery for the

struggling settler.[60]   The United Farmers of Alberta electoral victory

in Alberta in 1921 became the culmination of this heritage of agrarian

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[58]John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt, p. 2.

[59]Ibid., p. 406.

[60]W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, p. 26, suggests
that 1911 was really the year of the initial agrarian revolt.

protest with its organized activism. With the desire for more govern-

ment by the people, the chief ideologist for the UFA, Henry Wise Wood,
[61]
had urged the alignment of occupational groups for cooperative action.

As the dominant occupational group in Alberta, the UFA was a grass-roots

"class" organization of farmers which had 37,721 members in more than
[62]
1,500 autonomous locals by 1921.   The one-party dominance of the

Liberals was replaced by the one-party dominance of the UFA in the

provincial election of that year as the UFA garnered 39 seats to the

Liberals' 14. The UFA combined three traditions of radicalism which
[63]
formed the background to cooperative endeavor.   Earlier participation

in agrarian movements in eastern Canada (e.g., the Grange), experience

in British trade unions and socialist experiments, and personal involve-

ments in American agrarian movements (e.g., Farmers' Alliance, Society

of Equity), some of which were transplanted to Alberta soil (e.g.,

Alberta Non-Partisan League), had prepared the population for attacks

on old-line parties and the party system itself. It was in southern

Alberta that the agrarian protest had its deepest roots and this is

also where most of those who had farmed in the United States had settled.

Sharp points out that:

[61]The best account of UFA political theory is contained in
Macpherson, op. cit., pp. 28-61. Wood never became actively involved in
the political aspects of government and indeed had initially rejected
the organization for direct political action as violating UFA educational
goals.

[62]Robert Gardiner, Presidential Address, 1937 UFA Convention,
in UFA File, Glenbow Alberta Institute.

[63]Sharp, op. cit., p. 58.

> American farmers carried with them an agrarian poli-
> tical experience which had a profound effect upon
> the political life of the prairie provinces. Reared
> in the atmosphere of Populism and agrarian discon-
> tent, they were well aware of the potential politi-
> cal power of the farmer. This experience combined
> with a lack of loyalty toward traditional (Canadian)
> parties, gave the ex-Americans a political view-
> point different from anything yet experienced in
> Canada.[64]

The impact of this American influence is at least partially evidenced

in its contribution to the leadership of protest movements in western

Canada. Leaders of the Winnipeg General Strike and the later CCF tended

to be either British-born or Canadian (e.g., J. S. Woodsworth, William

Ivens, Salem Bland, Tommy Douglas, etc.). The leadership of the UFA,

in contrast, consisted of many American-born (e.g., Wood was from

Missouri, Percival Baker from Kentucky). The traditional American

defense of private enterprise put a brake on the UFA critique of society

which steadfastly maintained the need for reform while yet having no

disposition to socialism.

The utter dependence of western farmers on the forces of nature,

government policy, federal tariffs, interest rates of finance companies,

and open markets were all forces that were external to Albertans and

beyond their control.[65] There was no point in changing western society

-- if the trouble was elsewhere. Agrarian protest in Alberta provided

its participants with a sense of "doing something about it" -- even

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[64]Ibid., p. 20.

[65]For an excellent account of the Canadian context of the depres-
sion, cf. A. Safarin, The Canadian Economy in the Great Depression.

though their real power was limited. Farmers were private producers, proud of their independence, and willing to sacrifice now for a future sense of accomplishment and future returns. The debunking of old-line parties was the most visible way to express this regional protest against their perceived minority status. The UFA remained the overwhelmingly dominant force in Alberta politics from 1921 to 1935 because it provided a sense of solidarity by attacking the external encumbrances to provincial development not as a political party but as a farm organization taking political action.[66] However, the UFA proposal to join the emerging CCF in 1933 was too radical a step for private producers because it threatened their independence by beginning with the reorganization of their own society instead of merely blaming external forces.[67] The dilemma of the depression made it obvious that Albertans were not at fault. What was needed was not a reorganization of society CCF style but someone who could get the present society working in an equitable fashion. Aberhart's Social Credit was far more appropriate to depression-ridden Alberta because it increased the protest against the eastern forces, explained the bewildering world events, and most noteworthy, provided a money mechanism to stimulate the economy in order that just capitalism might operate. Social Credit taught security at

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[66]Priestley and Swindlehurst, *Furrows, Faith, and Fellowship*, p. 116.

[67]Lipset has pointed out that "proposals for radical change tend to get a hearing only after the more moderate possibilities have been exhausted" (*Agrarian Socialism*, p. 135). After the elections of 1934 and 1935 in Saskatchewan, Lipset claims that the CCF leaders realized that "emphasis on socialist principles does not win elections" (pp. 147, 148).

the same time that it taught independence. Farmers who were not middle class but had middle class aspirations and expectations could then join hands with Alberta's numerous small retail entrepreneurs in the Social Credit doctrine which protected their status and hopes by demanding financial reform rather than social reform.

Financial Reform in North America

Financial reform as a mechanism to protect social status was a common goal in social movements in North America during the depression. The Townsend Movement was an effort to protect the aged from the effects of the depression by proposing a federal pension of $200.00 per month to all over the age of 60.[68] By requiring that this money be spent within thirty days, the hope was the old people's dignity would be maintained at the same time that new purchasing power would be interjected into the economy. Bitterly opposing socialism, Townsend wanted to make capitalism work by giving buying power to the masses and thus end the depression. Another movement that sought to deal with the effects of the depression was led by Father Coughlin of Detroit.[69] Coughlin urged that gold be revaluated, silver be remonitized, and that the banks be nationalized in a manner similar to the post office. Forming the National Union for Social Justice as a pressure group, not a political party, and attracting a radio listening audience of ten

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[68]Schlesinger, "The Old Folks Crusade", in The Politics of Upheaval, pp. 29-41.

[69]Ibid., pp. 16-28.

million people weekly, his appeal was mostly to the industrial working

class and urban lower-middle class who wanted industrial profits

limited and taxes reduced. While Coughlin repudiated economic indivi-

dualism, he definitely preserved the sanctity of private property at

the same time that he crusaded against economic oppression. In another

location, Huey Long crusaded against the socio-economic and political

dominance of large corporations in Louisiana.[70] With his slogan, "Every

Man a King, but no one wears a crown", Long led a revolt against op-

pression and colonialism that broke the power of Louisiana's oligarchy.

Protection of social status was not as important as the improvement of

social status. It was the emergent middle class that would benefit

the most by legislation that would provide exemption from property

taxes, debt moratoriums, and the abolishment of poll taxes.

Even though each one of these reform movements made different

proposals, they had certain elements in common. They were leader-

dominated movements that advocated financial reform rather than revolu-

tions. They represented an attempt to revitalize a decaying society

in which their followers' positions became more and more insecure.

They succeeded because they gave unorganized sections of the population

a sense of "doing something" about the problems in which the labor

unions threatened them from below and the corporations from above.

Schlesinger observes:

> The followers of the demagogues mostly came from
> the old lower-middle classes, now in an unprece-

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[70]Ibid., "The Messiah of the Rednecks", pp. 42-68. The Edmonton
Journal carried sporadic reports on Huey Long's crusade even during the
heat of the 1935 election campaign.

> dented stage of frustration and fear, meanced by
> humiliation, dispossession and poverty. They came
> from provincial and traditionally non-political
> groups in the population, jolted from apathy into
> near-hysteria by the shock of economic collapse.
> They came, in the main, from the ranks of the
> self-employed, who, as farmers or shopkeepers or
> artisans, felt threatened by organized economic
> power, whether from above, as in banks and large
> corporations, or from below, as in trade unions.[71]

Present society was not inherently wrong or bad; it only needed to be

made to work fairly and therefore needed reform not revolution. Each of

these economic reform efforts rejected traditional political parties

and were conceived and led by persons with no special claim to economic

expertise.[72] While criticizing the operation of society, they did not

disturb the structure of society.

Social Credit can be interpreted as belonging to this same era

of bewildering world events, economic failure, and status insecurity.

Profit was not the problem, it was those who were trying to control the

profit that required censorship. Such an ideology had its greatest

appeal among those whose hopes for status improvement and mobility were

brightest but had temporarily receded. Pinard has argued that it is

economic change rather than a stable condition of poverty or wealth that

breeds social movements.[73] Fluctuations back and forth from prosperity

to poverty that threaten a life-style desired or once maintained are what

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[71]Ibid., p. 69.

[72]Townsend was a medical doctor, Coughlin a Catholic priest, and Long was a lawyer.

[73]Maurice Pinard, The Rise of a Third Party, pp. 118-119, and Poverty and Political Movements", Social Problems 15, #2 (Fall, 1967), pp 358-373.

produce unrest and activism. Political movements then arise as a result of gaps between group expectation and existent conditions.

The Appeal of Social Credit

Alberta found Social Credit congenial because it laid the blame for the failure of capitalism at the feet of financiers and big business distantly located from Alberta. The west was entirely dependent on the east for goods and services. While Albertans faced the tragedy of poverty, eastern financiers became the scape-goats as stories of their luxurious living standards circulated among the people. The total sacrifice demanded in the breaking of new soil made it absolutely incongruous to place the responsibility at any other door. It was not that free enterprise could not work, it was that forces outside Alberta were preventing its efficient operation. This emphasis was nothing new to Albertans. However, the fact that Social Credit had a definite place for external oppression in its ideology fostered its acceptance by the population.

Douglas had conceived Social Credit as a valiant effort in a last stand to protect individualism. Democracy demanded individual freedom and responsibility rather than state or financial control. Albertans cherished their independence for migration and the frontier had required individual strength and resourcefulness. But mortgage payments and high prices threatened their individualism by heaping them under foreign control. It was not without significance that frontier religion expressed the same ideals. Individual accountability to God without institutional or functionary mediation was central. Aberhart

underlined this approach to Protestantism by encouraging individual

Bible study, Christian discipleship, and personal conviction. Social

Credit, politics, and religion were merely different instruments on

which the theme of individualism was played. Social Credit may have

been a protest ideology that originated outside of North America, but

it could hardly be maintained that an ideology that emphasized individual
[74]
initiative and social order was something foreign or revolutionary.

In a period of dark depression, Social Credit reminded Albertans

of their faith in the potential abundance of the province and their

belief that it was there for all citizens to enjoy. It went beyond

the theoretical proposals of other parties by promising immediate

financial relief via the dividend. In being non-party in scope and

aim, Social Credit transcended the traditional "tools of financial

interests" and sought to unite all people who wanted certain results.

Social Credit was thus significant to Alberta because it met the needs
[75]
of the milieu and provided a functional definition of the situation.

Ideologically, Albertans took to Social Credit because it defined the

situation within a framework which they already understood.

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[74]Huston, op. cit., p. 93.

[75]Lipset, op. cit., p. 156, suggests that whether rightest or
leftist in ideology, Social Credit, the CCF, the Non-Partisan League
(in North Dakota), or Coughlin's Union Party, all served the same role
of providing a functional definition of the situation and therefore the
ideological bent of the movement was not as important as its basic
functional role.
          Pinard (op. cit., p. 96) points out that there need not be
agreement in ideological specifics, but there must be a generalized be- ·
lief acceptable to the population that identifies the source of strain
and conceives an overall cure.

The successive years of good crops, bad market; bad crops, good market; or good markets and crops and bad markets and crops produced severe frustrations in planning. With several good years, a farmer might have ventured out to accept greater debts only to be crushed by several bad years. Such variations and unpredictability produced widespread insecurity in which optimism was thwarted. Following Pinard, we would expect a political movement to arise in these conditions of alternating heightened expectations and pessimistic despair.

If CCF socialism had to be restructured and redirected after several years of activism in order to become palatable to the population of Saskatchewan in an election victory, this certainly was not the case with Social Credit in Alberta. An obvious affinity existed between the principles of Social Credit and the ideals and goals of Albertans. Though Aberhart made some technical changes in Douglas theory, there was no need for any large-scale ideological adaptation. Social Credit defended the hopes and dreams of Albertans and therefore was easily acceptable as an ideology.[76] In the baffling experiences of the depression, Social Credit provided all of its students with reasonable answers to the problems when no one else had answers and thus made them economic experts and gave them a framework of meaning for trying times. What needed defense and promulgation was the validity of the monetary mechanism which Social Credit advocated. It was here that interesting

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[76] Compare D. E. Morrison and Allan D. Steeves, who concluded that movement participation in the NFO was more closely correlated with higher aspiration than with being economically disadvantaged. "Deprivation, Discontent, and Social Movement Participation: Evidence on a Contemporary Farmers' Movement, the NFO", Rural Sociology 32 (1967), 414-434.

sociological factors of organization, leadership, and legitimation
contributed to the success of Aberhart's persuasive efforts.[77]

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[77]
Indeed, Irving, op. cit., p. 119, underplays the role of
ideology and stresses the personal attachment to the prophet himself as
the predominant motivational factor in the acceptance of Social Credit.

CHAPTER VII

THE CRUSADE: UNITING THE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL

We have suggested to this point that Douglas was merely the
father of an idea that struck responsive chords in depression-ridden
Alberta. The split between the Douglasites and Aberhart in Alberta in
1933 represented a cleavage between the intellectuals and the masses,
between the discussion of ideas and concerted action, and between
loyalty to an imported theory and loyalty to an indigenous interpreta-
tion. Aberhart was broadening his popular support and therefore was
becoming the father of a native movement. Douglas theory was acceptable
because it provided an explanation of the state of affairs that was
appropriate to a debtor economy and suggested a solution that was ap-
pealing to those committed to private enterprise. In no way did this
mean that Douglas had been accepted as leader or that his theory was
being faithfully and identically parroted. Aberhart was their real
leader, and, while Douglas had been their illuminator, he and his
writings were curiously invoked to legitimate the demands of the people
at appropriate moments. As an engineer and a well-educated Englishman
in a distant land, Douglas served the ideal purpose of a deep-thinking
intellectual with no practical acumen and thus dependent on Aberhart to
make his penetrating insights a reality. Albertans liked this view of
Douglas and Aberhart liked it too. It gave Aberhart the flexibility to
adapt theory to the "real" demands of the people without appearing self-

styled or deviant. Most of all, this view provided the people with a visible leader with whom they could identify rather than the colorless Douglas.

The grim conditions of the depression had already begun to weld everyone into a new comraderie.[1] Thus Aberhart's Social Credit following was coagulating much more rapidly but in much the same way as his religious following. In both cases, he clearly articulated what the people suspected and reaffirmed principles that most of them considered to be basic to the development of any society. He aroused latent feelings and uncovered overt needs and restated what people already knew. It was this sensitivity which fostered an increasing response and trust among the general populace. But the thing that made him their leader, as opposed to merely their spokesman, was that Aberhart told them not only what they knew already but told them with confidence what they wanted to know, i.e., this is your plight but there is a way out. By appealing to the higher authority of the Bible, the writings of Major Douglas and other prominent persons, Aberhart coordinated a plan around his leadership whereby the problems could be alleviated. The lack of interest in reform among both religious and political power structures made it increasingly obvious to his supporters that Aberhart would have to be the one to spearhead any remedial efforts.

At first glance, it appears that Aberhart was balancing two reform movements at once: a religious movement and a politico-economic

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[1] J. G. MacGregor, Edmonton: A History, p. 248.

movement. However, limitation of time and energy and center of focus

prohibited such a bifurcation and distinction. We have argued earlier

that Social Credit was initially adopted by Aberhart because of its

structural congruence and reinforcement of his primary passion --

Biblical prophecy. Social Credit was slowly absorbed into the religious

movement so that what was essentially two thrusts became united in one

movement. This could be accomplished because Social Credit was under-

stood primarily in moral terms. Morality could easily be grafted into

a religious endeavor without displacing the religious goals, and indeed,

could be made to be inherently a part of those goals. The religious

movement was prior in time and though its character changed somewhat

with the addition of Social Credit and a political goal, it was still

primarily a religious movement. As a non-party political effort,

Alberta Social Credit under Aberhart was an expression of populist

politics in the same sense that the Calgary Prophetic Bible Conference

led by Aberhart was an expression of populist religion. Aberhart led

them both by stimulating the grass-roots and marshalling their response

in a non-institutional crusade of the people.

A crusade was naturally the approach most familiar to Aberhart.

Everyone must have Social Credit, just as everyone must have the Gospel.

Because Christian truths were considered "right" and universal, and as

it seemed without question to him that Social Credit was "right" and

universal, it appeared appropriate to put the two "rights" together and

universalize them in the province via the technique of a crusade.

The Concept of a Crusade

A crusade is not only characterized by enthusiasm and fervor but exhibits goal-directed behavior that moves outside existing social structures and norms to attain the restoration of flagging, eroding, corrupt, or forgotten ideals and patterns. A crusade is a deliberate attempt to reconstruct specific aspects of a culture in a manner more satisfying to its participants. It is an effort to unite a diversity of people for specific short-range goals that appear to be distinctly realizable. While the goals of a crusade are particular and well-formulated, they are conceived as contributory to the attainment of a larger purpose. Since this larger purpose is complex and contains long-range implications, goals are selected that are concrete and immediate and which provide an outlet for anxieties and a visible object of reform.

The Aberhart Social Credit Movement was not party politics or churchly religion. It was a crusade under God[2] to meet urgent human needs in the crisis of the depression. The concrete goals of the crusade were moulded by the financial catastrophe but became representative of the long-range goals of independence, private enterprise, and proper morality. Working outside existing social institutions, the crusade attempted to restore hopes in the fulfillment of social dreams by providing an appropriate socio-economic milieu. It is in this context that

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[2]Irving, op. cit., p. 180, also makes this point but fails to specify the implications or nature of this crusade. He uses the term "crusade" primarily in a descriptive sense whereas we will use it as a primary analytic category.

the proposed dividend of $25.00 per month ought to be seen. The much-discussed and anticipated dividend became the dominant symbol of the crusade for social justice. In the depression, the dividend was the concrete rallying point and was symbolic of broader concerns that were more difficult to specify.[3] The dividend was the particularistic goal which became a short-hand identification among supporters sharing a protest and desired style of life.

In one sense, we may speak of a crusade as a social movement that has become sacralized. It is not merely protest for the sake of protest or reform for the sake of reform. It is protest and reform in the name of some higher virtue, i.e., for the good of all mankind, for our children and their children, for justice and equity, or for the glory of God. The crusade seeks universal legitimation that gives collective human efforts cosmic significance. The goals are not the selfish desires of a chosen few but are seen as representative of the needs and desires of all men. It was because the Aberhart Social Credit crusade was endowed with considerable moral and religious legitimations that the movement was taken out of the realm of the mundane. Social Credit was not merely economics and politics but economics and politics for a higher purpose.

It is the aim of this portion of our argument to specify in

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[3]Compare Joseph R. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade, pp. 166-167. Gusfield discusses the Prohibition movement as symbolic in that it had a range of meaning beyond itself that struck at the root of a status protest by the old middle class. Prohibition became the central symbol in the struggle for status between two divergent styles of life.

what sense it is possible to refer to the Aberhart Social Credit move-

ment as a crusade rather than solely protest politics. Evidence will

be marshalled from Aberhart's own personality and his ability to develop

crusaders, the moral and Christian legitimations of the ideology and

the movement, the role of religion in the populism already expressed

in Alberta, the successful adaptation of the techniques of the religious

movement, and the willing response of members of other religious or-

ganizations.

The Crusader

By profession, Aberhart was not an economist or a politician

but an educator and administrator. By temperament, he was no ordinary

teacher or principal but a crusader for academic excellence. An

inspector of high schools made this evaluation of Aberhart's disci-

plined teaching methods in January, 1932:

> Mr. Aberhart is very thorough, systematic and
> convincing in the presentation of Arithmetic.
> A strong effort is made to have the students
> master thoroughly all of the underlying prin-
> ciples of the course. His clearness and rate
> of presentation enable the average student to
> assimilate the different steps in the develop-
> ment of a new principle. He shows the class
> a good example in logical, orderly and neat
> blackboard work. He still has a tendency to
> emphasize too much type problem work. I was
> favorably impressed with the attitude of the
> students to this subject and with the progress
> they are making.[4]

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[4]At the time of this evaluation, Aberhart had thirty-two years
of teaching experience of which seventeen years were in the same school.
The evaluation also pointed out the forcefulness of Aberhart's persona-
lity.

Aberhart was also neither a parish minister or producer of polished
sermons but a crusader for belief in the fundamentals of the Christian
faith. Whether it was mathematics, fundamentalism, or Social Credit,
Aberhart emphasized the imparting of knowledge as a dynamic goal-oriented
experience that had great urgency and required high motivation. At
Crescent Heights High School, Aberhart was not content with ordinary
teaching methods but organized homework campaigns in which students were
to sign pledges of promise to do extra hours of study, organized col-
lective efforts to enter competitions to bring honor to the school,
and established a company among the students that sold shares for the
purchase of a Morse projector (which were later redeemed at par plus
a dividend) as a lesson in free enterprise.[5] Education was not just
teaching and learning, it was a crusade for academic proficiency that
required diligence and discipline. It was not surprising that the
same techniques were transferred to religion and politics. Religion
was not just worship and prayer, it was a crusade of fervor and enthu-
siasm for a deeper commitment to faith among all people. Thus,
Modernism and the depression became the two-pronged catalysts for the
crusade that demanded total emotional commitment to the reaffirmation
of a desired style of life. It was this crusading spirit engrained in
Aberhart's personality, that impatiently and compellingly demanded
either full allegiance or complete repudiation of the movement. You
either joined him or were against him, were fast friends or firm
enemies, accepted the crusade completely or did not accept it at all.

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[5]Irving, _op. cit._, pp. 22-23.

It was thus consistent with Aberhart's temperament that something

ordinary should be wholeheartedly promulgated as something extra-

ordinary if it was worthwhile at all.

Emotion rather than rationality predominates in a crusade.

Total commitment and participation displaces reasoned debate and un-

answered questions. Opposing points of view cannot be tolerated for

they detract from the security which the activism of the crusade pro-

vides. On a radio broadcast on CFAC, given on March 24th, 1935, one

Albertan related an experience regarding this intolerant enthusiasm:

> May I give you my experience of last Monday? I
> was actually pulled up in the street with this
> remark: 'You made a lot of enemies in this city
> yesterday. How dare you oppose Mr. Aberhart?'
>
> I explained that I was in disagreement only with
> the gentleman's political ideas, and suggested
> that many of my friends were not in complete
> political agreement with myself. I added,
> 'Surely that is no cause for enmity'.
>
> To my utter surprise the man shook his fist at
> me and said, 'You will get fixed for this'.
>
> I ask the simple question, 'Cannot the ideas of
> the leader of this new political party be dis-
> cussed? Are they not debateable? Has the man
> been deified, and is this just the beginning of
> the falling away of our democratic privilege?
> There is no doubt that an attempt is being made
> to raise this man above the human stratum and
> to place the seal of God upon his ideas.[6]

The fervor and enthusiasm generated in a crusade fanatically rejects all

challenges to its goals and means to these goals. Defense of the leader

is equated with defense of the ideological presuppositions. The activity

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[6]Harry Humble, Social Credit for Alberta?, p. 8.

of the crusade becomes an end in itself in the alleviating of personal

anxieties and therefore it is not critically evaluated in the time of

crisis. An editorial in the Vegreville Observer noted this function

after a rally attended by 2,000 persons and addressed by Aberhart was

held in that town:

> There is no question that he is an able speaker
> with good platform presence, fluent language, ex-
> pressive but not too emphatic gestures, and a
> knowledge of what O. L. McPherson calls "mob
> psychology" which lets him get away with state-
> ments which sound clear and convincing, but are
> not so when subjected to analysis...one of the
> audience at the arena expressed his opinion that
> Mr. Aberhart is a skillful combination of a re-
> vivalist preacher, a side-show barker and a
> politician — admittedly a mixture to the
> popular taste. He is astute enough to make
> good use of these gifts anyway, in capitalizing
> on public discontent. For it is public discon-
> tent with inaction that rallies people to schemes
> such as Mr. Aberhart proposes; his scheme would
> never get anywhere in the world except at a time
> of economic distress.[7]

The crusade received its dynamic from the heavy emotional investments

made by the supporters to the cause. While the rhetorical abilities of

Aberhart and his ideological message were significant to his following,

it was their spontaneous response to his leadership in a desperate

situation that produced crusaders. Aberhart did not have to program

their responses or tell them what to think or say. He merely uncovered

their deepest feelings and articulated what they already knew in a

manner unmatched by anyone else.

Aberhart excelled at placing the primary responsibility for the

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[7]Vegreville Observer, March 6th, 1935.

success of the movement into the hands of his supporters. The crusade

was dependent on the crusaders rather than the leader or the enemy,

Aberhart argued, in spite of his dominant role.

> He challenged them: 'You have your chance at the
> next election, and if you have ever cast your ballot
> you will cast it at that time, or you will never
> need to cast another....You have to decide what you
> are going to do'.
> 'But if you have not suffered enough, it is your
> God-given right to suffer some more'.[8]

Aberhart carefully cultivated this populism by stepping down at oppor-

tune moments only to be thrust back into a position of authority by a

wave of mass support.[9] At the close of the first convention in Calgary

prior to the election in April, 1935, the crusaders were urged:

> Do not go home from this convention and rest on
> your oars, your great work has only just started,
> you have only just commenced to forge ahead with
> the ship of Social Credit, you have appointed
> your Captain, now make yourselves a crew of hard
> workers and real fighters. Piratical crews of
> the great capitalistic fleet will be on hand on
> every side to scuttle and sink your ship of
> Social Credit, fight manfully, you have right on
> your side, and right must overcome might. Carry
> on your good work unceasingly, let Social Credit
> be on every tongue, talk it, eat it, drink it,
> and PRAY FOR IT.[10]

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[8]This was an oft-repeated catch-phrase of Aberhart's which has been frequently documented. Cf., for example, The Alberta Social Credit Chronicle, April 12th, 1935.

[9]For instance, in 1934 Aberhart resigned as President of the Social Credit movement over his published interpretation of Social Credit as contained in the Yellow Pamphlet, which was not given Douglas Social Credit approval as orthodox. Especially after Douglas's appearances in Edmonton and Calgary, it was plain to the followers that Aberhart was the one who understood them and represented them best. Posed as persecuted and martyred, his followers rallied to Aberhart's defense. Irving, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

[10]Alberta Social Credit Chronicle, April 12th, 1935.

If Social Credit was to be a reality, every Albertan would have to work

hard to bring it to fruition as the foremost matter in their lives.

Yet the strong call for prayer at the end of the challenge indicates

that the movement was considered to be in some type of relationship

with the eternal destiny of man. If Social Credit was succeeding, it

was not merely human effort but eternal designed that was allowing it

to develop.

Sacralizing the Crusade

The sacralization of the crusade was possible because Social

Credit theory was perceived as an extension of Biblical principles.

At a rally attended by 4,000 at the Victoria Park Arena in Calgary in

April of 1935, Aberhart pointed out the nature of this congruence:

> Referring to the Easter season, Mr. Aberhart
> stated that the Social Credit movement was
> perfectly in accord with the spirit of Easter.
> Greed, corruption, and exploitation were in
> vogue more today even than in the days of
> Christ upon earth. Are conditions not similar
> today to the time when the Master drove the
> money changers from the temple? The Easter
> message is a message of "Hope", a message of
> deliverance, of salvation. Miracles have been
> performed before and God will work a miracle
> again to bring his people into the place of joy
> and prosperity. 'Is not this a wonderful
> message to all believers in Social Credit',
> asked Mr. Aberhart.[11]

Throughout its history, the Alberta Social Credit Chronicle printed

articles on the affinity of Social Credit with Christianity with titles

such as "Was Christ a Social Crediter?" "God's Plenty is for All", or

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[11]Ibid., April 26th, 1935.

"The Church and the Money Power". An editorial in the <u>Chronicle</u> rationa-

lized the religious legitimation of Social Credit in this way:

>A well-known Calgary citizen informed the Chronicle
>that if Social Credit was to be a successful issue,
>it would have to cut out religion. If religion is
>taken out of Social Credit, then Social Credit will
>be a bad failure, and Social Credit without religion
>would be like an automobile without gasoline -- it
>could not run.
>
>One of the finest and greatest exponents of Social
>Credit was Jesus Christ himself. His one mission
>in life was to feed and clothe His people, to love
>His neighbor, to care for the children, to look after
>the old, infirm, and sick. He had no use whatever
>for the money grabbers, the pharisees, the money
>lenders, the tax collectors, and His one constant
>thought was the care of the poor and needy.[12]

The implication here is that Social Credit is not only in harmony with

religion but that it receives its dynamic from religion. It is that

religious motivations have given the crusade its character, its impetus,

and its passion. In a familiar argument before the Social Credit

Convention in Calgary in April, 1935, Aberhart argued: "You know, I

have always believed that a religion that amounts to anything should be

practiced in every span of life. I do not think it was a very good

crack of the <u>Herald</u> to put in about the feeding and the clothing of the

people. The day is past when religion should be put up on the shelf

and taken down on Sundays".[13] It was frequently stated that Social

Credit was "practical Christianity" and as such could easily be made a

part of a religious movement.

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[12]<u>Ibid</u>., October 5th, 1934.

[13]<u>Calgary Herald</u>, April, 1935.

We have suggested that the crusade was not only sacralized by

Christian legitimations but was also sacralized by continual reference

to moral virtues so that politics and economics were conceived in moral

terms. Debt was not just economic liability, it was an evil.

> In fact, there are few homes throughout the country
> into which the clammy tentacles of the octopus we
> call debt have not found their way, draining the
> economic security of the family and enslaving them
> to the fear of losing all they possess. I ask you,
> is that not a subject for our consideration?[14]
>
> I want you to know that these all-powerful vultures
> swoop down on the helpless debtor and dispossess
> him of everything he has when conditions prevent
> him from complying with the terms of his mortgage
> or debenture. Such a system is not only vicious,
> it is diabolical, essentially unfair and thoroughly
> un-Christian.[15]

Aberhart could be excused for weaving economics into his prophetic

broadcasts because it was a matter of doing his Christian duty by cor-

recting the moral evils of the world that were enslaving men. "I have

no use for the cold storage type of religion. When I started to preach

Social Credit they came out strong and said I had no business preaching

politics on Sunday. I said I have no use for politics. I am preaching

economics, a new deal for the common man".[16] It was not as a political

party that Aberhart organized the people but as a people's movement for

moral righteousness. Old political parties were specialists in decep-

tion:

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[15] _Ibid._, p. 36.

[16] _Edmonton Journal_, September 17th, 1935.

> Prior to elections the silver-tongued orators of
> the capitalist party flood our platforms, and with
> subtle tongues tell us of the wonderful days in
> store for the people...but they don't tell you
> that it will only be until the day following the
> election, and then they find it best to revert
> back to the old order of things. The big finan-
> cial moguls sit back in their easy chairs...[17]

Because of his innumerable denunciations of immoral financiers and their
exhorbitant interest rates, unjust tariffs, and unconcern among the
exploiters about freight rates and poor markets, as well as corrupt
political parties, Aberhart was convinced he was engaged in a moral
crusade rather than a political one. Justice, honor, security, fair
dealing, and up-right character knew no religious or political boundary.
In explaining his purpose, Aberhart asserted:

> I'm not anti-Catholic, anti-Jew, or anything
> else, all I ask them to do is to look up to God
> and ask him for enlightenment and guidance. I
> don't ask everyone to be the same religion as
> myself, but I do ask them to try and live
> straight, true and honest lives thinking only
> of the needs and sufferings of their fellow men.[18]

Few people could reject such widely accepted moral values, and few
could argue that these virtues were not the basis for a "Christian
concept of society".[19] The Social Credit movement easily became a
crusade under Aberhart because it was sacralized in the name of Biblical
and moral principles. Politics and economics were thus removed from
the mundane to a level of cosmic significance, e.g., right versus might,

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[17]*Alberta Social Credit Chronicle*, August 3rd, 1934.

[18]*Ibid.*, May 3rd, 1935.

[19]Nichols, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 3.

and militant materialism versus Christian freedom. In a sense, Alberta

was visualized as the localized battleground for the confrontation that

was facing the world.

The Crusade as Social Gospel and its Boundaries

Aberhart would have rejected the social gospel movement out of

hand as an element of liberalism and modernism. What he did not realize

was that by invoking Biblical legitimations and claiming that Social

Credit was practical Christianity, he was engaging in his own brand of

social gospel. Perhaps it is not too much to generalize that whenever

a Christian body champions social concerns, regardless of its ideologi-

cal bent, it is forced to minimize personal salvation and other-worldly

themes because it seeks Biblical analogues to the present situations to

reinforce its claim for commitment, and to justify worldly activity

that has no direct religious significance.

Even though Aberhart personally held his other-worldly concerns

and his this-worldly interests in a tight balance, many of his followers

joined the crusade primarily because the social gospel this-worldly

motif was most predominant and acceptable.[20] Rev. Roy Taylor spoke to

a crowd at the IOOF Hall in Bellevue in December, 1934 on Social Credit

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[20]The importance of the social gospel as an agent of reform
within Social Credit is demonstrated by the fact that in the 1935
Federal election, Baptist minister Tommy Douglas ran on the CCF ticket
in southern Saskatchewan but was endorsed and supported by Social
Credit as their candidate. Robert Tyre, Douglas in Saskatchewan: The
Story of a Socialist Experiment, p. 68.

as socialized Christianity. As a United Church minister, he justified

his involvement this way: "It is both futile and contrary to the

principles of true Christianity to urge spiritual values upon men who

are undernourished and in most cases humiliated by an inhumanitarian

society".[21] The implication was that engaging in activities of social

justice was not merely preliminary to something more spiritual but was

an expression of true Christianity in itself. As one former Bible

student of Aberhart's put it: "Aberhart was a son of Rauschenbusch

but he didn't know it. He preached a social gospel but he didn't

realize it".[22] While many would disagree with Aberhart's religious

theories, it would be difficult to deny and repudiate his humanitarian

concerns. For others, it might have been embarrassing to support his

religious enterprise, but they could readily accept his sensitivity

to the needs of the people. Such was the prompting of one United

Church minister of a prominent Edmonton congregation, as told by his

wife:

> My husband didn't care for his [Aberhart's] parti-
> cular brand of Christianity but at least Aberhart
> was concerned over the welfare of the people and
> he was doing something. My husband had to counsel
> a lot of frustrated people because of the depres-
> sion, including family problems, and as a downtown
> church we saw a lot of idle people. The church did
> a lot of relief work including serving meals. So
> it wasn't so much that he was a Social Crediter
> as much as he thought that Aberhart presented a
> possible solution.

This type of reasoning was what allowed Social Crediters to rent

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[21]Alberta Social Credit Chronicle, December 14th, 1934.

[22]August Rauschenbusch was a primary spokesman of the social
gospel movement in the United States in the early decades of this century.

buildings such as the spacious and centrally located McDougall United Church[23] in Edmonton for a rally in 1934 and one in 1935. Social Credit was not considered to be politics but something proposed to alleviate human suffering. This also explains why other United Church ministers, as well as ministers of other denominations, fully participated in Social Credit when other ideological agreements were lacking.

However, even though Aberhart suggested that Social Credit could bring a new world into being, it was only on occasion, when he was carried away with his enthusiasm, that he implied that a paradisic existence could be attained in Alberta. In general, the idea of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth so characteristic of the social gospel movement was a conclusion that Aberhart only left by implication or was a conclusion drawn by his supporters alone. The essential point remained, however, that Christianity for Albertans was practical, concretized, and removed from the realm of abstractions in Social Credit which became a testing ground for the demonstration of true Christianity.

It is significant to note the effect of Aberhart's religious orientation or the extent to which socio-political protest could be taken. Douglas, Hargrave, and others, made statements many times to the effect that the inauguration of Social Credit was at least a major

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[23]McDougall United Church was used for a variety of city functions such as celebrity concerts in those days because it was the largest auditorium in the city of Edmonton with a seating capacity of about 2,000. Secondly, the church encouraged such use of the building on a rental basis because the church was considerably in debt for its structure. So its availability was not just philanthropy. Social Credit also paid a fee.

step in the attainment of heaven on earth. In spite of lapses of en-

thusiasm, Aberhart generally did not make such statements, although he

did say that the future would definitely be brighter if Social Credit

were adopted. A heaven on earth could be anticipated but it was not

to be ushered in by the efforts of man. It would only begin upon the

return of Christ. Revolutionary action promising a heaven on earth

would have been inconsistent and would have run counter to the need

for the Second Coming. However, a reform rather than revolution would

correct the immediate difficulties without precluding the anticipated

event.[24] Indeed, Aberhart challenged the people: "If you allow us to

fail, remember hungry hearts and wild-eyed men and women may turn to

violence. We are fighting to save the people from revolution".[25] Even

when federal constitutional dis-allowances later blocked the passage

of Social Credit legislation initiated by the Aberhart government, the

desire for the implementation of Social Credit was not strong enough

to insist on the revolutionary activity that would have been required

to bring it to fruition. But again Aberhart's religious orientation

provided one brake to such activity for thwarted attempts to inaugurate

Social Credit only proved how futile such human efforts really were.

Aberhart's privileged position and changing economic circumstances

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[24]S. D. Clark argues that radical politics was checked by
sectarian religion because it was conservative. While his statement
agrees with our basic argument, he fails to note the essentially
radical nature of sectarian religion. "The Religious Sect in Canadian
Politics", American Journal of Sociology 51, #3 (November, 1945), 211.

[25]Edmonton Journal, September 17th, 1935.

notwithstanding, it was his final interests (Second Coming) which over-

ruled his present interests. This put limits on his vision of a new

day which expressed itself in moral reform as an aspect of spiritual

reform rather than revolution.

A comparison can be made with the rise of socialism in the

neighboring province of Saskatchewan.[26] Both provinces had a similar

social structure consisting largely of small-scale capitalists engaged

in agriculture and merchant middlemen. Provincial status was attained

in 1905 by both provinces and the level of economic development was

similar. Yet Alberta was to become the ground for a people's movement

that reaffirmed capitalism in Social Credit, while Saskatchewan, a bit

later, fathered a socialist movement in the CCF. While economic and

political explanations for this dichotomous development might be

proffered, we would suggest that the religious factor also had a

significant role. The socio-religious composition of Saskatchewan was

surely little different from Alberta. Without in any way suggesting

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[26]It might be suggested that the socialism that took root was
not the hard-core socialism. Lipset argues that the CCF in Saskatchewan
slowly dropped its more radical socialist platform as it moved to power
(e.g., the nationalization of land was replaced by the defense of the
family farm) in "ideological compromise to gain an electoral majority"
(op. cit., p. 184). In this sense, both Social Credit and the CCF ap-
pealed to the same people with the same needs. However, this does not
minimize the differences in the nature of the solutions proposed. While
the CCF did not destroy private enterprise, it did engage in some nationa-
lization of industry -- something Social Credit never even suggested
(Chapter 7). See also the Chapter, "Agrarian Pragmatism and Radical
Politics", by John W. Bennett and Cynthia Krueger, pp. 347-363, for a
repudiation of CCF as radical, left-wing, and socialist; and Evelyn
Eager, "The Conservatism of the Saskatchewan Electorate", in Norman Ward
and Duff Spafford (eds.), Politics in Saskatchewan, who objects to the
"legend of radicalism" regarding acceptance of new political systems or
extreme change in Saskatchewan. For background reading, cf. David E.
Smith, "A Comparison of Prairie Political Development in Saskatchewan and
Alberta", Journal of Canadian Studies (February, 1969), 17-25.

a theory of religious causation or religious derivation of a political
ideology, an important explanation comes to light in the religious
orientations of the leadership of both movements.

Tommy Douglas was the dominant figure in the CCF movement in
Saskatchewan. Both he and Aberhart were popular preachers and were
affiliated with the Baptist tradition. Both leaders appealed to
Christianity as congruent with their political ideology. Douglas
argued that "The program of the CCF is therefore an honest endeavor
to apply the social message of Christianity to life. It is comple-
mentary, rather than in opposition to the work of the church".[27] In a
manner very much reminiscent of Aberhart's objection to cold storage
type Christianity, Douglas stated that "...we are not trying to abolish
religion but rather endeavoring to persuade people to practice it on
week-days as well as Sundays..."[28] But here the similarity ends.
Douglas was an ordained minister in the Baptist Union of Western
Canada -- a denominational group which Aberhart had repudiated because
of its modernism at their schools of higher education. Douglas himself
had been educated at these schools -- Brandon College and McMaster
University, and had a sophisticated theological education which forced
him to grapple with the critical issues facing traditional orthodoxy.
Aberhart had obtained a basic B.A. degree via extension courses and
was self-taught or lay-trained in Bible and theology. Despite their

[27]Farm Labor News, June 15th, 1934.

[28]Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, August 2nd, 1938.

similar denominational labels, they represented different theological

orientations. Douglas preferred a liberal perspective and preached

the social gospel in which man ought to be actively involved in the

struggle to construct the Kindgom of God on earth.[29] There was some-

thing fundamentally wrong with society and it was society that needed

to be changed urgently rather than the individual.

Aberhart preached the Kingdom as a future God-directed event

rather than a man-directed event. In the meantime, there was not

something fundamentally wrong with society but with its financial and

political leaders. It is corrupt business and government leadership

that is not alert to human need that requires correction. Whereas for

Douglas the urgent cry was primarily for a Godly socio-economic

system, Aberhart crusaded for Godly leaders who had the welfare of

the people at heart.[30] Society could only be changed if men were

changed but the attainment of a utopian society would have to wait

until it was supernaturally inaugurated. This basic difference in

religious conviction partly reflected and partly moulded and shaped

the nature and extent of the critique it made of the existing society.

In both cases, religious beliefs simultaneously legitimated and put

limits on the type of reform demanded.

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[29]Douglas also had difficulty keeping political ideas out of
his sermons and frequently "prophesied" about a new social order.
Robert Tyre, op. cit., pp. 7 and 67.

[30]Early in the campaign, Aberhart challenged his radio listeners
to send in names of men with honest and forthright characters in his
famous appeal for "One Hundred Honest Men" from whom candidates could
be chosen.

The Moral Elements of the Crusade

In a crusade, the role of the leader is to inspire the crusaders

and provide an untarnished example of sacrifice consistent with the

goals with which followers can identify. The leader has placed the

onus for support on his followers but they in turn look to him to em-

body the movement in himself. To defend the leader is to defend the

crusade. This type of response was reflected in a letter written from

Ryley and printed in the Vegreville Observer:

> Mr. Priestley dubs our leader as a propagandist.
> Yes sir, we know he is, but we also know that
> his propaganda is for the God of Heaven. I would
> like to ask Mr. Priestley who his propaganda is
> for: is it for the God of this world, gold,
> silver, etc., or is it for position and power?
> I see a shadow of both I fear. So the members
> of the UFA-CCF legislature think that by throwing
> dust in the air and throwing mud at Mr. Aberhart
> they will gain their objective. I tell them nay.
> For the voters of Alberta will just grit their
> teeth and boost all the more for Social Credit.[31]

Aberhart in turn was allowed to be their leader because of what he

contributed to their own self-esteem to inspire them to continue in

the battle. An old-timer remarked:

> First of all you have to remember that Aberhart's
> movement wasn't just economic. It was encourage-
> ment. Anything that held out a ray of hope would
> be tried. Aberhart's meetings were always great
> for singing. And when things looked bad, here
> was a man who brought us all encouragement not
> only to face it but to end it.

In a time of crisis or urgent united effort, the crusade forms itself

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[31]
Vegreville Observer, March 6th, 1935.

into a collectivity in which solidarity is formed through interaction with the leader. Aberhart literally became the embodiment of the goals and ideals of the movement and he provided the mechanisms whereby their support was solidified by speaking to felt needs. Therefore, while the crusade was definitely a movement rooted among the people, the high degree of trust and the large-scale projection of personal feelings onto the leader meant that Aberhart dominated the movement. As one elderly lady pointed out: "I don't claim to understand the fine points of the system, but if Mr. Aberhart says it is so, then I am sure everything will be all right".[32] He reassured people and gave them encouragement to face the bleak realities and suggested where collective efforts could be the source of hope.

Since morals in an economic sense were a primary issue in the crusade, it is not surprising that personal morals also became an issue in determining who was more interested in the welfare of the people. As Aberhart slowly took on the character of a messianic figure about to lead his people out of bondage and into the promised land, his supporters perceived in him the purest of motives and spirit of self-sacrifice for others. Everyone knew that he was the principal of a large high school, a full-time task, and had taken up his religious work in addition to regular employment. He astounded people who admired him if for nothing more than the great number of leisure time hours he put into non-remunerative work. The maintenance of

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[32] Alberta Social Credit Chronicle, August 10th, 1934.

secular employment meant that he was not dependent on his following

for personal financial support and this added a sense of virtue to his

enthusiasm.

> This, then is the foundation of Mr. Aberhart's
> power -- a leadership built up through unself-
> ish, unrewarded religious service, for 25 years
> in Alberta. Established as a leader of things
> spiritual, it was natural that he should be
> looked to as an adviser on things material.
> His followers knew him to be a godly man,
> skilled in learning, able of mind, clear of
> vision, and sincere of purpose.[33]

Aberhart came to be seen as the perfect embodiment of self-sacrifice

through his untiring efforts, and his adoption of Social Credit merely

confirmed to them his devotion as a "servant" of the people. "If any

person reading these articles believes that William Aberhart organized

a political party, with a sensational slogan, which has carried many

good Albertans off their feet, merely to get himself into the center

of the stage, or even to sweep into office, he should abandon the idea

for there is nothing further from the truth".[34] Aberhart was never

perceived as a politician but as a champion of the cause of the people

-- an apostle of good cheer. Because it was his religious following

that prepared the way for him wherever he spoke, he was a "man of God"

rather than a political agitator. The decision at the Calgary Conven-

tion in 1935 to make the hymn "O God Our Help in Ages Past" the theme

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[33] Vulcan Advocate, March 28th, 1935.

[34] W. M. Davidson, The Aberhart Plan, p. 27, made this statement because he wanted to point out that Aberhart was a prophet with good intentions but that he was misguided in his thinking. Interestingly, Davidson was a former MLA and was the owner and editor of the Calgary Herald.

song only reinforced feelings of the purity of Aberhart's motives and
ultimately legitimated the virtue of his every activity. Surely a
crusade meeting that began with prayer was not partisan selfish politics.

It was not only Aberhart's projection of the spirit of self-
sacrifice, his willingness to take on the servant role, and his re-
ligious prescriptions and activities that gave him a claim to lofty
motives among the people in their selection from the possible politi-
cal alternatives, but it was also the moral blemishes that marred the
UFA administration that further elevated Aberhart in the eyes of the
people. In 1934, Premier Brownlee was involved in a lawsuit over
charges of extra-marital relations which was brought into the courts
by relatives of the third party. Brownlee was finally convicted and
forced to pay a fine.[35] He terminated his leadership of the UFA and
the publicity from these events did much to tarnish the character of
the leadership as well as the UFA party itself. O. L. McPherson,
Minister of Public Works in the Brownlee government, had been involved
in a divorce case, rumors of frequent drinking among government
officials circulated, and the increasing arrogance of party officials
in communication with the grass-roots made Aberhart's bid for power
all the more attractive and virtuous.

> The U.F.A. party also finds itself in anything but
> a happy position according to the survey. Without
> exception dissatisfaction is found in every con-

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[35] The nature of Brownlee's involvement is still a matter of
great dispute. Many still see it as a plot by those affiliated with
other parties to discredit Brownlee and the UFA. The suit was brought
by Vivian MacMillan, a stenographer formerly employed in the Attorney
General's Office, alleging seduction.

> stituency among members of this party, largely
> because of the lack of leadership and action on
> the part of the government, and also because re-
> commendations made to the Premier and his col-
> leagues by the various U.F.A. conventions in the
> past few years have been almost entirely ignored.
> The personal troubles of the former U.F.A Premier
> and his minister of Public Works are also proving
> too heavy a burden for some U.F.A. candidates to
> shoulder, as they feel that the records of these
> two party leaders are indefensible.[36]

More than downgrading the UFA, these events served to deify Aberhart as

the epitome of selflessness and sacrifice. A letter to the editor in

the Calgary Herald put it in these terms:

> Now Mr. Brownlee, you are not fooling the people
> of Alberta and don't you think if you wiped your
> slate good and clean before starting on a man
> like Mr. Aberhart, who has the interest of all
> at heart, and who has spent the biggest portion
> of his life teaching children, without a blemish
> on his character, it would get you more friends
> than to be always out knocking?[37]

The untarnished morality that was thus identified with Aberhart was

transferred to the whole crusade. Supporters felt no hesitancies in

freely sending financial contributions to him without it being accounted

for because they were convinced of the morality of the man and eagerly

sought to be a part of this stand for morality. Thus, the morality of

the movement was established by appeal to the leader who challenged

others to the same high ideals:

> William Aberhart, founder of Social Credit in
> Alberta, has no axe to grind, he is out for the
> benefit of the people, he is not in any way

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[36] Lamont Tribune, August 1st, 1935.

[37] Calgary Herald, May 18th, 1935.

> bound by the chains of the money magnates....He
> does not want you to believe him. Read about it
> yourselves; give it careful consideration and
> study; ask questions about it and be satisfied
> in your own mind...[38]

Aberhart made a definite contribution to the crusade-like character of

the movement through personal moral attributes both achieved and ascribed.

Qualities perceived in him were linked to the cause of Social Credit

as a whole which was an effort at moral reform anyway. This appeal to

virtues and ideals gave Social Credit an emotional dynamic urgency,

and mission that was highly significant in propelling it to power.

The Unity of Morality and Religion

A moral interpretation of economics and politics was easily

cemented to Christianity by extolling Christian principles and Christian

virtues as practical manifestations of the faith. Great efforts were

expended to demonstrate the congruency of Social Credit with these

principles extracted from the Bible. While it was not always explicitly

stated, the implication was always subtly present that to oppose Social

Credit was to oppose Christianity. As one opposed to the new movement

remarked, "The inference has gone abroad that a person must be a Social

Crediter to be a Christian, and, furthermore, not just a Social Crediter,

but an Aberhartite".[39] Members of political parties were put in an

uncomfortable and awkward position as a Liberal party leader in the

province noted:

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[38]*Alberta Social Credit Chronicle*, August 3rd, 1934.

[39]Harry Humble, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

> For fourteen years the UFA had pictured to the
> Alberta people the corruption and villany of the
> "Old Line Parties". Brother Aberhart put the
> last touch on that talk. He just included the
> UFA in the old-line parties, and then drew a
> picture from the Bible and put horns and a tail
> on all of us, so the UFA, Liberals, and Tories
> are in Alberta the direct descendents of His
> Satanic Majesty.[40]

The Social Credit crusade was therefore an agency in the reaffirmation

of what was good, moral, and Christian, and all who opposed it must, of

necessity, be agents of what is evil and degenerate. Aberhart argued:

"If the people of this province asked that question why did Jesus Christ

die, as often as they asked the question, where will the money come

from, they would understand. These people who will scoff at you are

reprobates concerning the faith".[41] He went on to draw the parallel

of Moses appearing before the Egyptian magicians who attempted to dis-

credit his authority even though he had the freedom of the people in

mind.

Aberhart had no equal in the province with the religious stature

and ability to articulate who could refute his arguments theologically

in an impassioned way. Several ministers used their pulpits to object

to the Christian sacralization of the crusade, as, for example, Rev.

H. A. McLeod of the Robertson United Church in Edmonton. He justified

a discussion of Social Credit in his sermon by noting that:

> ...inasmuch as Social Credit is heralded with
> evangelical zeal and hymns, inasmuch as its de-
> votees possess a religious fervor, and inasmuch

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[40]Premiers' Papers, Alberta Provincial Archives.

[41]From a sermon preached March 22nd, 1935, and found in _ibid_.

>as at least some of its advocates infer that aloof-
>ness from Social Credit is hostility to true
>religion, it may properly occupy attention in a
>congregation meant for worship.[42]

Dr. A. S. Tuttle, President of St. Stephens College and past president

of the Alberta Conference of the United Church of Canada, cautiously

criticized Social Credit for its Biblical legitimations:

>Social Credit as propounded either by Major Douglas
>or Premier Aberhart is solely in the realm of
>economics. Whether it is good or bad economics
>remains to be seen....But while the efforts of
>Social Crediters to point out evils in the system
>under which we live, and the desire to curtail
>these evils are in harmony with Christian prin-
>ciples, yet any attempt to find support for this
>particular economic theory in any part of the
>Scriptures is fantastic and beside the mark.[43]

The chairman of the Edmonton synod of the United Church of Canada was

more charitable in observing that the moral and religious implications

of Social Credit "cannot be ignored by any Christian institution".

The compelling effort that the crusade must have had on the membership

of church people was reflected in a statement by Rev. W. C. Smalley,

General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Western Canada: "No man

should be forced to enter into any religious crusade or participate in

any kind of applied religion. Social Credit, as its name implies, is

social rather than religious". That churches must have suffered from

the priority of time, effort, and finances contributed to Aberhart's

crusade must have been significant enough to warrant this effort at its

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[42]Edmonton Journal, April 30th, 1935.

[43]This quotation and the two following quotations were taken
from a news service article that appeared in the Lamont Tribune,
September 19th, 1935.

separation from religious endeavors. The United Church of Canada was
the most likely of all institutional churches to look upon social
action as a primary expression of Christian devotion. In fact, the UCC
has always been more concerned about the pragmatic values of Christianity
than other churches who were more concerned with proper doctrine and
belief. Social Credit as "applied religion" or "practical Christianity"
could then be expected to appeal to churches that had a strong social
conscience such as the UCC, which indeed was the case.[44]

It was difficult to refute Social Credit from a Biblical and
theological point of view for the unsophisticated mind in an economic
crisis was not in the mood for rational arguments and fine distinctions
of theological disputations. The popularity of Social Credit as an
agent of social solidarity and social unity was reflected in the re-
sponse to an announced sermon by Dr. A. R. Osborn "Social Credit and
the Ethics of the Bible" at the conservative First Presbyterian Church
in Edmonton.[45] Even though Osborn suggested only cautious support of
Social Credit, the church was packed, people stood in the halls, aisles
and choir loft, and one hundred people were turned away.

If little assistance was forthcoming from theological arguments
in the criticism of Aberhart's Social Credit crusade, his opponents'
second court of appeal was to attack the fanaticism which the crusade

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[44]The leadership of the United Church was a bit more negative
regarding Social Credit than the constituency because the educated
leaders were suspicious of Aberhart's fundamentalist background even
though many of his Biblical analogies were within the social gospel
tradition. Furthermore, many of them were already more inclined to the
CCF-UFA social critique and plan for social reorganization.

[45]Edmonton Journal, April 15th, 1935.

engendered, and call for an appeal to reason. The Economic Safety League

printed on the cover of its pamphlet The Dangers of Douglasism a Bible

verse from Isaiah 1:18 "Come let us reason together". By depicting

Social Crediters as closed-minded, misguided fanatics, anti-Social

Crediters sought to discredit the movement as mass religious hysteria.

In a speech in Lethbridge, ex-Premier Brownlee stated, "It is a tragedy

for any man to go before our people with hopes that cannot be fulfilled,

working them up in religious frenzy to the point where they refuse to

listen to reason. Social Credit as offered by Mr. Aberhart spells

chaos and disaster". [46]

At the same time that Aberhart's opponents castigated him for

using religion and religious techniques in support of his work, they

were increasingly forced to seek similar methods as a means of combat-

ting this threat to their existence. In a direct attempt to counter

Aberhart's offensive, a programme entitled "Sunday Meditations" was

broadcast Sunday afternoons at 4:00 p.m. (during the latter half of

Aberhart's broadcast) on CFAC. Using religious themes but with nowhere

near the passion, an effort was made to siphon off disgruntled

Aberhartites. At a non-political meeting at Calgary's Pro Cathedral,

Mayor Gerry McGeer of Vancouver spoke out against usury using the same

language Aberhart would use. "You can't get to heaven with a Bible in

one hand and a foreclosure on your neighbor's house in the other". [47]

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[46] Ibid., May 11th, 1935.

[47] Alberta Social Credit Chronicle, January 25th, 1935. McGeer
spoke at the invitation of Bishop L. Ralph Sherman, who suggested that
it was the church's place to give people "moral direction in changes or
reform in our present social system".

Sermons were delivered by a few ministers using the Bible to discredit Aberhart as a dictator, to oppose capitalism, or to advocate ideals for a future social order. None of these endeavors ever gained much of a following. Religion was a poor legitimator of the dire state of the status quo. The need for change was too obvious.

Since most people did not understand the intricacies of economics anyway, an economic critique of Social Credit was fruitless. The Economic Safety League, an alliance of businessmen who felt threatened by the swelling tide of the "new economics" ideas, published brochures and sponsored broadcasts, but all to no avail. The most convenient and controversial and identifiable target was Aberhart himself.[48] He was accused of using religion for his own quest for power, of being a dictator, of being a spell-binder and manipulator, of being a religious fanatic, of being a deluded economic reformer. But Aberhart always had an answer. By parading his critics as villains and comparing his own motives, the criticism produced a persecution complex that had the reversed effect. Aberhart argued, "What would you think of a man who would praise and defend and support one guilty of fornication or graft, whose actions are wrong and detrimental to society, and at the same time would criticize and find fault with an effort to help society and your fellow-men to live decently and respectably".[49] It was not that Aberhart was the economic expert but that he had pure desires and

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[48]Probably the most outspoken publisher and critic of Aberhart himself was a one-man campaign by J. J. Zubick of Calgary who edited a paper called The Rebel.

[49]Premiers' Papers.

selfless motivation. "They were striving to prejudice Major Douglas

against me by telling him I am a religious fanatic; they say do not pay

attention to him, he is crazy on religion. Well we are most of us

crazy about something".[50] In a day when financiers, businessmen,

corporate bodies and party politicians were all suspect, having some-

one crazy about practical religion at the helm sounded like a good

choice. That was a better alternative than someone aiming for power

or large capital gains. Therefore, to be accused of being crazy about

religion was a definite asset in this crisis.

Religion and Morals in Pre-Social Credit Alberta

However, religion, politics and morality were not new elements

in the public life of Alberta introduced by Aberhart. They were dis-

tinctly yoked with a populism that emerged already in the time of the

Liberal administration. In 1913, agitation had led to the passage of

a direct legislation bill in Alberta whereby popular ballot could

determine the passage of legislation on popular issues.[51] Both the

prohibition campaign (1915-1916) and woman's suffrage (1916) represented

large-scale efforts at the mobilization and organization of the popu-

lation for specific objectives.[52] They demonstrated to the people the

possibilities of their united political strength outside the legislature,

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[50]Ibid.

[51]Paul F. Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada: A Survey Showing American Parallels, pp. 70-72.

[52]J. P. Bate, "Prohibition and the UFA", Alberta Historical Review 18, #4 (Autumn, 1970), 1-6.

or party caucus and gave large numbers of people experience in politi-
cal participation.[53] In consequence, the President of the Alberta
WCTU, Louise C. McKinney, was the first woman elected to the legisla-
ture in the British Empire. Both prohibition and woman's suffrage
were primarily moral issues with religious overtones fought by persons
of religious convictions in the political arena.

In an effort to step outside the constrictions of the political
parties, William Irvine was elected as a representative of labor in
East Calgary in 1917. Working in conjunction with the recently formed
Alberta Non-Partisan League, Irvine touched the sensitive nerves of
restlessness and dissatisfaction found in Alberta. As a clergyman,
and with the organizational assistance of Rev. J. W. Woodsworth, he
assisted the troubled to articulate their problems in moral terms.
Party politics must be denounced in the name of morality and justice
which, for him, was the crucial point of Christianity. Therefore, be-
fore Aberhart ever began his crusade, Irvine argued for the sacraliza-
tion of the world. "The new religious spirit is the very soul of the
world movement for justice. It is the champion of the weak against
the strong; it elevates the human values to a height of paramount im-
portance....This kind of religion cannot be kept out of politics.
Being inseparable from life it permeates its every department, and
extends the domain of the sacred to what have been called material
things. The line between the sacred and secular is being rubbed out.
This does not mean that everything is becoming secular; on the contrary,

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[53]L. G. Thomas, The Liberal Party in Alberta, pp. 163-166.

[54]
everything is becoming sacred".   Farmers' grievances in marketing,

interest rates, and consumer costs were not just material goals but

were moral problems of political corruption, anti-democracy, economic

tyranny, and moral degeneracy.   The Grain Grower's Guide spoke of the

plight of the western farmer as the "New Feudalism".   Methodist

Minister J. S. Woodsworth had a weekly column in the GGG entitled

"Sermons for the Unsatisfied".   The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919

was largely spearheaded by clergymen such as Woodsworth and William

Irvine who sought social justice and the rights of collective bargaining

for labor through the use of religious legitimations and techniques
[55]
such as labor churches.   Each one of these efforts achieved great

publicity for the fact that religion was directly applicable to daily

life and provided a heritage for religio-political involvement in
[56]
western Canada.

The Non-Partisan League in Alberta was a further experiment in

religio-moral populism that united a heterogeneous population for a

collective effort.   Power, politics, and prestige were abhorred in

favor of conscience and conviction.   Engaging in a bit of self-analysis,

the Non-Partisan noted: "We found our origin among religious people,

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[54] William Irvine, The Farmers in Politics, p. 53.

[55] D. C. Masters, The Winnipeg General Strike.

[56] Richard Allen argues that the farmers in central and eastern
Canada were not as susceptible to this type of social gospel because
they were "more deeply schooled in traditional evangelicalism".   The
Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928, p. 202.
We must also add that the geographical factor of distance, a crisis in
that distant location, and a newly organized society required the emer-
gence of indigenous means of coping with their own problems.

and were called into being by forces just as sincerely moral as those which launched the movement for prohibition, or those that launched the movement against slavery"[57]. As the complaints of farmers were more and more translated into grievances of moral injustice by their leadership, the non-party tradition grew in Alberta and appeared as the only viable alternative to the Liberals, especially as long as the Conservatives were perceived as agents for big business.

The United Farmers of Alberta organized as a non-political movement in 1909 with a membership of around 2,147.[58] Under the leadership of Henry Wise Wood, the UFA sought to benefit from the cooperation of persons in a similar economic group, e.g., farmers. With the lack of an adequate alternative to the faltering provincial Liberal government, and with the merging of the Non-Partisan League with the UFA forces in 1919, the demand for a progressive political endeavor began to be expressed. In spite of Wood's desire that the UFA remain as an educational and pressure group, a seven point resolution was adopted in 1919 to begin organization for political action. Landslide victories were won in a provincial by-election at Cochrane in 1920 and a federal seat at Medicine Hat in the same year. Local organization increased drastically and UFA membership reached 30,079 by 1920. By

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[57]The Alberta Non-Partisan, April 12th, 1918.

[58]For accounts of the organization and ideology of the UFA, cf. G. K. Wright, The Administrative Growth of the Government of Alberta 1905-1921, M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1952; Norman F. Priestley and Edward B. Swindlehurst, Furrows, Faith, and Fellowship; David G. Embree, The Rise of the United Farmers of Alberta, M.A. Thesis, University Alberta, 1956; and C. B. Macpherson, op. cit., Chapters 2 and 3.

June of 1921, 1,500 locals organized a membership high of 37,721. In

the provincial election of July 18th, 1921, the UFA obtained control of

the government through its grass-roots organization in obtaining 38 of

58 seats. Largely appealing to the agricultural sector of the popula-

tion, the UFA was another important venture in populist politics among

the masses in revolt against eastern parties, eastern finance, and

eastern industry. To that extent, the UFA was significant as an

indigenous protest in the resolution of local problems. The National

Progressive Party collapsed in the election of 1925 but the UFA in

Alberta maintained its political control until 1935.

In her study of an eastern Alberta community, Jean Burnet

suggested that the UFA replaced or at least competed with existing

religious organizations.[59] Meetings were often held on Sundays, were

begun with prayer, and included a woman's organization, plus a full

slate of weekday leisure time activities. Sharp points out that the

UFA did not exist merely for economic reasons but as a moral revolt

demanding political reform.[60] The UFA programme was an integral means

of seeking moral consensus in the community by pin-pointing the moral

problems that required a remedy and collective attack. Indeed, the

UFA was no mere secular organization but involved its membership in a

precursory form of religio-economics that was to pave the way for its

full-developed form in Aberhart Social Credit. Evidence of this can

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[59]Jean Burnet, Next-Year Country, p. 125. W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, p. 28, argued that farm organizations and reform movements functioned as religious compensations.

[60]Sharp, op. cit., p. 176.

be cited in the leadership, organizational procedures, and perceptions

of members.

Three prominent leaders of the UFA, among others, had active

theological concerns. Henry Wise Wood had had some training in a

Disciples of Christ College in Missouri and was a member of the

Disciples of Christ. He claimed that the inspiration for his theory

of cooperation came from the Apostle John rather than Marx.[61] Signifi-

cantly, at the time of his death, he was writing a book on "The Social

Aspects of the Life of Christ". As the primary ideologue and President

of the UFA, Wood sought to put Christian principles into practice,

and therefore "looked on agrarian cooperation not only as an instrument

of political reform but as a method of bringing about social regenera-

tion".[62] His speeches and UFA Presidential address were full of

Biblical references and phrases and were often more like sermons, ac-

cording to Rolph. The struggle against competition and for cooperation

was considered to be a battle against the forces of evil. Another

leader in the movement was Norman Priestley who had served student

pastorates in Alberta at Onoway, Wabumun, Lac Ste. Anne, and full-time

pastorates at Wainwright and Coaldale. With his Methodist background,

Priestley considered the policies and philosophy of the UFA to be

expressions of Christian social ideals and preached many sermons at

UFA services in support of that assumption.[63] We have already noted

[61]Ibid., p. 144.

[62]For more biographical details, cf. William K. Rolph, Henry
Wise Wood of Alberta, p. 63.

[63]Cf. Priestley Papers, Glenbow Alberta Institute.

that William Irvine actively sought to involve Christianity in the

affairs of this world. After graduation from Wesley College in

Winnipeg, Irvine pastored a church in Uno, Ontario, where his ortho-

doxy was severely questioned.[64] He preached socialist doctrine, did

not believe in the resurrection or hell, wouldn't sign articles of

faith, and was even accused of being an atheist. Having developed a

very liberal theological orientation, Irvine accepted the call of a

Unitarian church in Calgary which he used as a beachhead for his

social activism. The roles of these men in shaping the nature of the

UFA social analysis and critique are not to be underestimated. Allen

asserts that the whole Progressive movement, of which the UFA was a

part, was a direct relative of the social gospel.

> The Progressive triumph was, among other things,
> then, a triumph of the social gospel. Not only
> were leading figures of the social gospel promi-
> nent in every stage of progressive political
> development, but their ideas, from their theology
> through to their various tactical proposals, had
> made a deep impression upon the movement. Their
> sense of the immanence of God in his creation,
> moving men to cooperation in the establishment
> of a kingdom of justice and good will, provided
> a sense of ultimate significance which made even
> difficult problems matters of secondary importance.[65]

Religion was not merely belief but it was a life centered on concern

for your fellow man. The UFA emphasis on cooperation, mutual help,

and solidarity was a direct outgrowth from Christian convictions by

persons with high religious ideals. The role of ministers in the

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[64]Interview with William Irvine by Una MacLean (available at
Glenbow Alberta Institute).

[65]Richard Allen, op. cit., p. 218.

movement demonstrates the distrust of those not committed to ideals and

perhaps often tempted by financial gain. Ministers were perceived as

outside the economic sphere and thus primarily committed to the good of

the common man. That Aberhart could capitalize on this popular concep-

tion of religious functionaries enabled him to readily gather a fol-

lowing.

If the UFA was considered to be a non-political movement, [66] the

aims of the church and UFA were therefore largely synonymous -- both

were concerned about the welfare of people, albeit from different

perspectives. Yet these perspectives were conceived to be congruent.

One man exclaimed:

> We are accused sometimes of confining ourselves
> too much to the material side of life. It is well
> that we should be reminded sometimes of the really
> Christian basis on which the UFA rests. Many of
> us agree with the old saying, 'Unless the Lord
> build a house, vain is the work of the builders',
> and such a UFA Sunday gathering together of men
> and women of many churches and of no church might
> help to foster a spirit of union which the numer-
> ous sects greatly need.[67]

The UFA became an agent of community solidarity by appealing to farmers

on both the economic and spiritual level. Ethnic, political, and de-

nominational differences are to be set aside, at least to the extent

that a community unity might be expressed. To the recently arrived

citizens of Alberta, the UFA became an important vehicle of integration

and a significant instrument in the attainment of some type of social

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[66]The UFA maintained that even when they formed the government
they were not a political party but a farm organization taking political
action. Priestley and Swindlehurst, op. cit., p. 116.

[67]Unmarked clipping, UFA File, Glenbow Alberta Institute.

consensus. The idea of a UFA Sunday was first conceived by the Roseview

local and was held on May 25th, 1914. As one member observed,

> We saw that our local was composed of people of many
> churches and nationalities, all working for the good
> of each other and the highest and best in our com-
> munity life, who in work and play were all one people,
> but when we come to worship we each went our differ-
> ent ways. We thought that one day in the year we
> could gather, Catholic and Protestant, to worship as
> a unit, and in a public way acknowledge our depen-
> dence on God and seek inspiration and help.

> Being both in the church and UFA we know that the
> aims of one were to a large extent the aims of the
> other, but as a whole neither realized it...by
> bringing these two great forces for rightness to-
> gether and showing their unity of aim, it might
> help toward goodwill and cooperation.[68]

On May 24th, 1916, UFA Sunday was made an official event for all locals

[69]

to encourage the discussion of the UFA from a religious point of view.

These meetings were usually held outside "in God's great out-of-doors,

sometimes with the aid of a public address system or a piano atop a

large farm truck". Churches were often the largest gathering places

available and many of the annual UFA conventions were held alternately

in the First Presbyterian Church in Edmonton and the First Baptist

Church in Calgary. At the 1916 convention of the UFA in Calgary, for

example, the choir of the First Baptist Church rendered a musical

programme.

The pre-political UFA and the church were definitely unofficially

yoked and mutually supportive as neutral agents of community solidarity.

When the UFA became active in politics and in its later years more

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[68]Ibid.

[69]Priestley and Swindlehurst, op. cit., pp. 50 ff.

secular, the religious connotations remained implicit in its world-view.

Aberhart merely made explicit what the UFA had allowed to deteriorate

and thus wrenched the Christian symbols from their control. What had

been a successful attempt to unite people in an economic movement with

religious legitimations in the UFA became a religio-economic crusade

with overt Biblical legitimation in the crisis of the depression under

Aberhart.[70] As Allen has remarked, "The epilogue of the social gospel

is the prologue of the Radical Christianity of the years of the great

depression".[71]

Alberta therefore had a legacy of religious participation in

secular affairs long before Aberhart began to preach Social Credit.

The UFA had also developed a stereotype explanation regarding the ex-

ternal causes of Alberta's difficulties which Social Credit inherited

in the form of a persecution complex. A sense of the possibilities

of a people's movement and direct influence over government had been

cultivated and old-line parties had been definitely rejected. Aberhart

had only to reaffirm and reinforce these old ideas to establish his

genuineness and credibility and then use them as a base to propose

remedial measures.

One manner of perceiving the defeat of the UFA might be that

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[70]For example, at the 1917 convention, H. W. Wood talked only of the ideals of the UFA as strengthened through responsibility to a higher unseen power. "I have an abiding faith that the United Farmers are going to follow these high ideals...they will receive their strength as a deep responsibility to a higher unseen guiding hand..." Aberhart would have used more explicit Christian terminology and made the legiti- mation more open. Ibid., p. 52.

[71]Allen, op. cit., p. 356.

the UFA had become too secular to face the utter despair and hopeless-
ness of the depression. By 1932, H. W. Wood was no longer able to exert
his powerful influence over the UFA as Christian ideologue, for he had
resigned in 1931. The scandals of Brownlee and MacPherson had cast a
moral shadow over the strength of character of the UFA. The rejection
of Aberhart Social Credit as a plan on the UFA platform at the conven-
tion of 1935 was not merely the rejection of Social Credit theory but
to many people it was the rejection of a selfless Godly man who gave
Christian ideals priority. The UFA had no Christian crusader to
counter Aberhart and therefore, of necessity, appeared worldly and
secular. The momentum definitely was with Aberhart as many teachers
and preachers who were the defenders of moral virtues in each community
deserted the status quo government of the 14-year old UFA leadership
for a more holy endeavor. Dissension was rampant in the UFA ranks
over the decision to align with the emerging CCF body in the west.
Important decisions were being made by party bureaucrats. Aberhart
filled the void of unimportance and non-participation felt at the
grass-roots with the challenges of the crusade for Social Credit.

The UFA thus functioned paradoxically for the development of
the Social Credit crusade. On the one hand, it was an important pre-
cursor of religion related to populist politics and economics. On
the other hand, the UFA could easily be discarded as another old-line
party. The massive shift in popular support is reflected in the fact
that, by 1936, UFA membership had declined from a high of 37,721 to 5,882.[72]

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[72]R. Gardiner, President's Address, 1937 UFA Convention, UFA
File, Glenbow Alberta Institute, p. 2.

The Adaptation of the Religious Movement

The fourth reason the Aberhart Social Credit movement took on the character of a crusade was that it utilized the organizational channels already in operation for the religious movement. What had once been solely religious slowly became religious-economic-political. They were all so inextricably intertwined that opponents found it difficult to make consistent attacks on the movement. But because politics and economics had been absorbed into the existent religious organization rather than vice versa, religious elements always made their presence known. Hundreds of Bible Study groups had been organized throughout the province, many of which maintained an unstructured affiliation with the Institute. Bible correspondence courses and Radio Sunday School material were reaching into thousands of homes. Aberhart, therefore, had a large following who were accustomed to the study of his religious literature and who recognized his authority in things spiritual. It was but an easy step to include Social Credit literature with Bible Study material and to utilize his well-developed mailing list for the crusade. Many of those who were primarily committed to Aberhart as religious leader were the first to accept his authority in ecomonic matters. Having been urged to share their Christian beliefs with others, these persons also eagerly sought to share Social Credit and make converts to the economic cause. In many instances, Bible Study groups and Social Credit study groups became synonymous, for Aberhart urged people not just to take his word for it but to study the theory for themselves. In speaking to 700 women

at the Institute on January 17th, 1934, Mrs. W. W. Rogers urged them

to join a group for the following reasons: "There is no membership fee

in the groups and no fee from the groups to the central executive. All

services are given voluntarily...the movement is purely educational and

is non-political and non-sectarian".[73] Social Credit pamphlets written

by Aberhart included review questions just as his religious pamphlets

had. Utilizing this didactic technique of guided self-discovery,

Aberhart succeeded in making firm converts to Social Credit. Group

study provided adequate socialization into the theory and supplied

social reinforcement for convictions developed. It provided close-

knit social relationships among interest community members regardless

of distance from the leader. It was the study groups that solidified

personal commitment in a concrete way which filled the void created

by the mass appeal of the broadcast.

Furthermore, Aberhart was able to win over numerous locals

from the UFA. Each of these locals already were small groups of well-

developed comraderie and accustomed to collective action. Nichols

notes that by the time of the election there were over 2,000 study

groups meeting throughout the province and many of these were converted

UFA locals.[74] At least one delegate at the UFA convention in January,

1935 had threatened that if the UFA did not adopt Social Credit, the

support of his local would go elsewhere.[75] When locals joined Aberhart

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[73]Cited in Schultz, William Aberhart and the Social Credit Party, p. 91.

[74]Nichols, op. cit., p. 16.

[75]Priestley and Swindlehurst, op. cit., p. 113.

as a unit or with a majority of old members, the old organization only needed to be adapted to the new goals.

The Role of the Broadcast

However, it was the religious radio broadcasting that initially made Aberhart a famous personality. We have already established the reasons for his popularity and influence as a religious broadcaster. By the time Aberhart began to include Social Credit on his programmes, the Aberhart movement was saturating the air waves on CFCN on Sundays. Besides the Calgary Prophetic Bible Conference programme from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. as the most important broadcast, a programme was aired particularly for children from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m., followed by the morning service from the Institute Church from 11:00 - 12:15 p.m., and an evening hymn programme from 6:00 - 6:30 p.m. Frequent exposure of the leader and his work in a day when radio was both a novelty and an important communication link, and most of all on a day of leisure, meant the maximum penetration of the Alberta community. The addition of Social Credit to the broadcast, particularly on Sunday afternoons, no doubt would have been completely unacceptable to his radio audience and religious following except for the gravity of the depression. But the destitution of the people and the fact that Aberhart promulgated Social Credit initially for education and moral purposes rather than as a political campaign made it not only acceptable for his religious followers, but increased his following and listening audience among those already attached to religious communities as well as those with only minor religious interests.

The effect of the growing movement was definitely felt by
local churches, as one Anglican minister from Sylvan Lake complained.

> Since Social Credit has been added to the Bible
> Institute, the (number of) radio listeners have
> been greatly increased. As I pointed out in my
> previous letter it has become more difficult to
> maintain our morning and our afternoon Sunday
> School and services. When the well-to-do people
> only have radios and remain home to listen, it
> leaves us only with the poorer people who cannot
> afford radios and cannot afford to support a
> church....From the Bible Institute you put on
> such a splendid program so much superior to that
> we can have in the little church or the little
> red schoolhouse that we cannot blame the people.[76]

A letter to Aberhart from Coalhurst, Alberta, suggests the widespread
interest that he stirred:

> We deeply appreciate the Bible Class of Radio
> and your afternoon services. Sunday chores and
> occasional necessary Sunday journeys are timed
> to fit in between the services. Last Sunday it
> was touch-and-go as to whether we could be home
> for the afternoon service. You would have been
> pleased to see the race between Mrs. _____
> and our ten year old son, out of the car and into
> the house to switch on, they just made it, your
> first word was on the air, as I followed them
> into the room.[77]

One man reported walking fifteen blocks to visit his girlfriend on a
warm Sunday afternoon in Calgary and claimed not to have missed one
word of Aberhart's broadcast. People were sitting on the porches of
their homes with their radios on. Another person remarked that people
in small towns often gathered in one place to listen to the broadcast
together at the height of the depression. It appears that Aberhart

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[76]Premiers' Papers, correspondence dated June 22nd, 1936.

[77]Ibid., correspondence dated October 15th, 1935.

offered an irresistible package of religion and economics, certainty

and hope for troubled times that demanded a response.

Aberhart was not merely a pioneer in religious broadcasting in

the west, he was a master at public speaking and debate and the utiliza-

tion of these techniques successfully on the air. Using radio drama,

acknowledging and reading correspondence from listeners, asking for

contributions and responses, sending out literature, using a variety

of voice inflection, announcing group meetings and his personal speaking

schedule, presenting excellent music, taking the radio audience into

his confidence, and praying for the success of Social Credit, Aberhart

developed a rapport and relationship with his audience that few could

match. Mr. Love, station manager of CFCN, has stated that Aberhart

often re-edited his scripts and substituted poor grammar and collo-

quialisms to reach his audience more effectively.[78] The programme was

so entertaining and enjoyable that even those not enthused about

Social Credit or Aberhart's brand of religion would tune him in merely

because everyone else did. The Soby Yardstick of Audience Value gives

some indication of the size of Aberhart's following on the air in

Calgary.[79] CFCN had only 19.3% of the audience as an average for the

day, whereas CFAC averaged 50.3%. Thus, in Calgary, CFCN was not a

popular station. However, from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. on that Sunday, CFCN

increased remarkably in its listening audience to 50% of the total

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[78]Schultz, op. cit., p. 123.

[79]This rating was taken on Sunday, April 14th, 1935, and measures
only the listening audience in Calgary. Since Aberhart's primary support
came from rural areas, these ratings under-estimate the size of his fol-
lowing. Premiers' Papers.

audience from 3 - 4 and 60.7% from 4 - 5, at the same time that CFAC

reached their lowest points for the day of 40% and 32.1%. If Aberhart's

most loyal followers were rural people, these figures give us a good

indication of how much stronger his ratings would have been among

agriculturalists. Irving estimates Aberhart's listening audience at

this point to be half a million people.[80]

By 1935-36, the enrollment in the Radio Sunday School had

reached 5,650 and was still climbing. Parents and children together

had developed a sense of loyalty and respect for Aberhart. The re-

ligious following was accustomed to making financial contributions to

him, his voice was familiar, and his abilities were well known to

them. These persons were an established supporting group Aberhart

could count on immediately for the crusade. He did not have to start

from scratch: a following had already coagulated among Albertans.

The Albertan asserted:

> When he had worked out his plan he propounded it
> but there waited for this message a vast audience
> built through 35 years of teaching; built out of
> a little Bible class of about 60 which used to
> meet in the public library back in 1913 and from
> which sprang the institution now known as the
> Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute with its numer-
> ous departments, its extension courses and its
> Sunday School organization extending throughout
> the province and reaching at least once a week
> with a series of graded lessons more than 5,000
> boys and girls to say nothing of unestimated
> thousands of adults.[81]

economics and politics were absorbed into the religious organization and

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[80]Irving, op. cit., p. 110.

[81]Calgary Albertan, March 23rd, 1935.

therefore if economics or politics ever became pre-eminent, it did so

with a religious base. We are suggesting that religion not only pro-

vided the dynamic to the crusade with its high degree of moralisms but

that it also provided the structure by which the crusade would be

promulgated. Study groups, radio broadcasts, and the Institute were

the primary religious structures adapted to the needs of the Social

Credit crusade.

Obviously Aberhart was able to meet the eagerness of his multi-

pronged efforts from voluntary contributions both at the Institute

meetings and by mail. One church member put it this way:

> I was an usher one Sunday and a lady gave me $3.00
> at the door for the work of the Institute and Social
> Credit. And I knew that lady. She was really poor
> and I knew -- but what could I do. You wouldn't
> believe the money that came in. I remember seeing
> that table in the office just covered with contri-
> butions by mail. That was real sacrifice for 80%
> of the people who sent them in.

There was no evidence that considerable surplus cash was the rule or that

money was being channelled to personal pockets. However, some unexpected

gifts of fairly large sums were made available in wills and testaments.

For example, in May, 1934, the Institute received $13,131.00 from the

estate of Lidie A. Knowles. Numerous small contributions from the

grass-roots probably paid the current expenses but it was this special

type of gift that provided breathing room. In 1932, CFCN built a new

transmitter at Strathmore and the Institute loaned the station $8,000.00,

in September, 1934, taking a mortgage on the station property as security.

The financial condition of CFCN had been weak for several years pre-

viously, but when the station was unable to make payments, Aberhart

threatened foreclosure. Realizing that such action would give him the equipment but no license to broadcast, Aberhart took the payment of the mortgage in radio time. This paid air time for his broadcast until 1939. Another loan was given to Charles Pierce, the treasurer of the Institute, to secure property for a home in the amount of $2,000.00 in December, 1934. However, it was the thousands of small contributions from the grass-roots that provided a vital feeling of participation by persons who could look upon it as "our" crusade. That there was no way to separate contributions to the religious work of the Institute from the contributions to the Social Credit crusade of the Institute is evidence of the essential unity of the work.

The Role of the Institute

The functional significance of the Institute to the movement can never be under-estimated. As a building it provided a visible and identifiable location for all activities as headquarters. People came for miles in pilgrimage fashion to attend a service, see the building, and see Aberhart after they had pictured these items in their minds for years from the impressions of radio. Individual study groups would make a periodic trek as a group to the Institute service. The Institute also served as a coordinating and distributing center. Many of the same office staff concerned with the religious work were just as involved with the Social Credit appeal. The teaching and training of Social Credit leaders took place in the same rooms as the teaching and training of lay religious leaders. Beginning as early as 1933, Bible instructors, such as Ernest Manning, became instructors in Social Credit

as well. Social Credit literature was distributed from the Institute
and the assignment of speakers for Social Credit meetings was made by
the headquarters office. All the speaking tours beginning with the
summer of 1933 which Aberhart and Manning made together were coordinated
through the Institute office. Ladies' teas and money-raising bazaars
were commonly held at the Institute. Therefore, as a center constructed
primarily for religious purposes, the Institute lent itself rather well
as the focal point for the crusade. The physical facilities and key
personnel of an independent movement of religious populism were merely
adopted to include new goals. Since Aberhart effectively controlled
the governing body of his organization, and since Social Credit was
perceived as essentially a financial remedy to a moral problem, the
Institute incorporated the Social Credit thrust into its programme
without debate.[82]   If prophecy was God's message for the people, so
was Social Credit. Both messages needed to reach the people and the
utilization of the Institute to accomplish that task was made possible
by the full acceptance of Social Credit into the existing structures.

Mass Meetings as a Crusade Technique

Not the least of the religious techniques which could be adapted
to fit the demands of the crusade was the public meeting or mass rally.
Aberhart had cultivated the art of not only providing entertaining
speeches but also informative speeches. In addresses and radio rallies

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[82]One Institute church member recalls hearing only one complaint
about using the Institute for "political" work. "Because Social Credit
involved church people and non-church people, occasionally cigarette butts
and beer bottles were found in the basement and some complained about that".

primarily in southern Alberta, Aberhart took the big cloth chart of

the dispensations with him to illustrate the points of his talk. There

was always good religious music and then Aberhart came right to the

point and drove home Biblical truths in his own graphic and dynamic

style. In the summer of 1933, when Aberhart and Manning began touring

and holding rallies to propagandize for Social Credit, they used

basically the same format and the same techniques. For 95% of those

who attended the meetings at this stage were regular listeners to

Aberhart's religious broadcast anyway.[83]   The same hymns were sung:

"What a Friend We have in Jesus", "Tell Me the Old, Old Story", and,

of course, the heart-rending theme song "O God Our Help in Ages Past".

As religious folk-tunes shared by all, these hymns expressed basic

religious sentiments, evoked nostalgia, and tended to blanket the

entire meeting with divine significance. Meetings began with prayer.

The famous chart of the blood stream of the state was conspicuously

posted, and Aberhart spoke authoritatively, yet simply, mixing his

speech with many "homey" illustrations. In this regard, he was not

Puritanical. One of the oft-recited illustrations concerned Pat and

Mike and the business that was transacted to empty two kegs of beer

with only one dime. Using slogans as "Prime the Pump" and "Give the

Economy a Transfusion", Aberhart graphically portrayed the function of

Social Credit with common analogies that all understood.

In the fall of 1934, The Man from Mars series was begun on the

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[83]Irving, op. cit., p. 60. This figure is Manning's estimate.

broadcast. This mysterious visitor from another planet found the situation in Alberta abhorrent and drove home the moral that he could not understand why Albertans did not remedy the matter when the possibilities lay at hand. When the Man from Mars later appeared in person at Social Credit rallies, he resembled more closely the religious figure from Nazareth than a man from another planet. Dressed in a flowing white robe with white beard and Arab-style headdress, the Christian reference was at least subtly present. One person noted:

> It didn't really mean much on the surface. None of us knew what a Man from Mars looked like anyway. But visually, this man looked like most of us would picture Jesus. He spoke with fatherly wisdom and concern for all of these poor helpless creatures.

The implication was certainly indirect, but powerful none the less. At a picnic at St. George's Island at the end of July, 1934, and attended by 3,000 persons, Aberhart announced that he had travelled over 2,500 miles in the last month on behalf of Social Credit, and delivered thirty-nine addresses to approximately 34,000 people.[84]

For years, Aberhart had been ridiculing and castigating those whose higher education and scholasticism had produced the sterile radicalism of modernist religious thought. The appearance of Professor G. A. Elliot of the Department of Economics of the University of Alberta at the hearings of the Agricultural Committee on the Douglas System of Social Credit supplied Aberhart with a target for the transference of this religious anger to politics. Elliot had argued that

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[84] Alberta Social Credit Chronicle, August 3rd, 1934.

Social Credit was unworkable constitutionally and financially and
thus defended the existing economic arrangements. Since Elliot took
a very orthodox economic position, Aberhart created a stage character
called "Professor Orthodox Anonymous". This professor, often dressed
appropriately in black, would interrupt Aberhart with planned questions
at public rallies in a highly intellectual manner, and then, to the
delight of the crowd, Aberhart would ridicule the professor's theories
and always come out the victor in a series of retorts that made Social
Credit theory credible. This is an excellent example of the adaptation
of a technique and world-view that was unified in the religious move-
ment and then transferred to the political arena, as well as verifying
our theory that Aberhart fought the political battle as a religious
crusade because religion was the world he knew and breathed. If
politics was incorporated into the religious work, then the utilization
of the methods of the religious world-view would be both necessary and
appropriate.

Numerous other gimmicks were created to maintain the attention
of the audience. Mr. Kant B. Dunn and C. C. Heifer were some of the
characters who asked common questions that everyone was asking, and to
which Aberhart would give a persuasive reply. A Young People's Social
Credit Orchestra was organized to provide music at meetings and to
interest talented young people. At the beginning of one service at
the Institute, Aberhart entered by walking down the aisle with gunny
sacks around his legs to illustrate poverty and the people roared their
approval. He stirred people emotionally and it was hard to remain
neutral in his presence. "No recital of Aberhart's platform performance

can ever do justice to the man. He had a genius for projecting con-
viction, for getting inside the hearts of those who came to jeer, so
that they stayed to cheer".[85] As a dynamic orator and master showman,
Aberhart deftly controlled the crusade by shaping intellects and
charging emotions.

Not to be forgotten were the hundreds of meetings and rallies
held throughout the province under the auspices of secondary leaders
or local study groups. Much of the real groundwork was laid by the
independent initiative of unsponsored speakers such as R. E. Ansley,
J. H. Unwin, and Mrs. W. W. Rogers, who travelled only with the promise
of a noisy collection at the end of their speech to cover hall rental
and gas expenses. Faithfully proclaiming the Social Credit message
and loyalty to Aberhart to small and to large groups, their boundless
energy and personal sacrifice contributed to significant conversions
at the grass-roots and prepared the way for he who was to come later.
There is no evidence that these travelling speakers had any specific
religious interests or indeed even sought overt religious legitimations
for their arguments. However, they did draw similar parallels between
Christianity and Social Credit which they had acquired from Aberhart.
Invariably, local meetings were arranged by local groups or by contact
persons suggested by Aberhart from his list of Bible broadcast supporters
and usually always included the participation of local clergymen,
particularly in rural areas.[86] Many times these ministers were actively

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[85]James H. Gray, The Winter Years: The Depression on the Prairies,
p. 206.

[86]H. J. Schultz, "Aberhart the Organization Man", Alberta
Historical Review 7, #2 (Spring, 1959), 23.

interested in and committed to the promulgation of Social Credit. For instance, the High River Times reported that Rev. J. Serby of Hanna filled the Town Hall at High River and gave a two and a half hour exposition on Social Credit on a February evening in 1935.[87] Wherever possible, meetings were held on neutral ground rather than in a particular church so that church leaders could participate in Social Credit without giving it a strong local denominational stamp.

Efforts were not spared to reach specific social groups. Two meetings per week were being held in the Labor Temple in Calgary in order to reach the working class. These meetings were not led by Aberhart but were led throughout by articulate Social Crediters. The crusade also harnessed the energies of many unemployed and provided meaningful goal-directed activity for those whose hopes had been shattered. In addition, Aberhart request that Hermann Streuber of Winnipeg translate several Social Credit pamphlets into the German language for use in reaching the large German communities of Alberta.

The eloquence and organizational expertise of Mrs. W. W. Rogers and Mrs. Edith Gostick were largely responsible for the response of women in large numbers. The role of women at the grass-roots in the gathering momentum of the crusade has perhaps been under-emphasized heretofore. Women might be more impressed by the morality of the crusade, by the virtue and sacrifice of Mr. Aberhart, and by the religious overtones of the movement. They would be less impressed by the strictly economic aspects of Social Credit. They would be most appeased by the promise of a monthly dividend by which they could

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[87]High River Times, February 28th, 1935.

purchase household consumer items such as food and clothing for their
families. Women were also most available for participation in women's
organizations which made the study and promotion of Social Credit
their primary goal. That women relayed the good news of Social Credit
to their families and neighbors in a most enthusiastic fashion contri-
buted much to the growth of the crusade and to the strength of Social
Credit organizations through the years.

Aberhart was an innovative and organizational technician and
contributed far more than his rhetorical ability, platform showmanship,
and religious organization to the success of the movement. He per-
sonally supervised the organization of Alberta into groups, zones,
constituency associations, and divisions.[88] Each level had their own
elected officers which formed the next level of organization in order
to tightly integrate the entire crusade. Over 2,000 study groups had
been organized, and while many of them were reconverted UFA locals,
they all had to be united for concerted political action.[89] Aberhart's
method of selecting the appropriate candidate to represent Social
Credit in each constituency became a bone of contention at which the
opposition could pick, but was really a masterful play to develop unity
in the movement. Three or four names were to be forwarded by each
constituency to an advisory board headed by Aberhart who, in consultation

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[88]For a sketch of the organizational framework, cf. M. L. Huston,
The Rise of the Social Credit Movement in Alberta, 1932-1935, M.A. Thesis,
University of Alberta, 1959, pp. 57-58. Huston points out that the
Social Credit organization was structurally similar to the UFA although
a bit more thorough and all-encompassing the province.

[89]Nichols, op. cit., Part I, p. 16.

with constituency representatives, made the final choice. This method of selection was not only a way to screen opportunists and renegades, but a subtle means by which each candidate selected would also be personally responsible to Aberhart. The final decision of the advisory board was kept secret until the election was called so that all worked equally hard and together until the last possible moment.

Lines of communication were provided by the Alberta Social Credit Chronicle which began publishing July 20th, 1934, with Charles K. Underwood as editor and F. Hollingsworth as manager. Established to counter the unfavorable position of the Calgary Herald to Social Credit and its alleged selective reporting, the Chronicle, with a peak circulation of 16,000, was a useful vehicle to present the correct doctrine as well as to provide news of Social Credit activities that were considered favorable. Group solidarity was fostered not only through the study groups, the broadcast, and the Chronicle, but also by the staging of special events to instill enthusiasm and to unite the faithful. One of the most unforgettable of these events was the Social Credit Picnic held on July 6th, 1935, for the followers in northern Alberta. A full programme of races, carnival, food stands, platform show, and a comedy horse race between the four political parties, liberally sprinkled with the singing of old favorite hymns provided exciting entertainment and a greater sense of unity of purpose. Aberhart concluded with an emotional plea for Social Credit and all went home recharged for the political fight.

It is difficult to describe the fanatic enthusiasm and the zealous agitation undertaken in the name of Social Credit in the campaign.

Aberhart's movement had not only touched their pocketbooks, he touched

their hearts. The fanaticism was reflected in Rimbey, for example,

when an opponent asked Aberhart a question and the crowd booed long and

hard so that Aberhart did not have to answer it.[90]   Or in early July

in Lethbridge, O. L. McPherson asked Aberhart a question much to the

chagrin of the noisy Social Credit crowd. Aberhart shouted to the

crowd "'Are you going to let this man cross-examine me?' 'No! No!' the

crowd exclaimed. The place was in an uproar and Mr. McPherson was

forced to retire".[91]

Social Credit offered the last strand of hope and meaning, and

to have entertained doubts concerning its validity was to erase the

only hope that remained. Those who criticized the theory and pointed

out its foolishness could therefore only be viewed as anarchists,

oppressors, or unchristian. Absolute certainty was a function of the

actual uncertainty that prevailed in Alberta. In order to counter

this uncertainty, Social Credit was promulgated with boundless vigor

and intolerance in the face of opposition.

Religion as the Basis for Recruitment

The fifth reason that it is possible to speak of the Alberta

Social Credit movement as a crusade is that it tended to evoke solid

support from persons of various religious affiliations. The appeal

for Christian leaders and Christian principles was an irresistible ideal

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[90]Edmonton Journal, July 25th, 1935.

[91]Ibid., July 6th, 1935.

that few could reject. The comment of one evangelical church leader

was typical of the viewpoint of many church people. "Most of our people

listened to Aberhart and I dare say most all of them voted for him.

He appealed to them because he was a Christian man and what better com-

bination could you have as your political leader! Most of them weren't

that interested in politics anyway but they knew something was wrong.

You can't hardly vote against a man who has the gospel at heart, can

you?" In spite of a little jealousy expressed from some sectarian

groups, Aberhart's strong defense of the Bible and dynamic offensive

against modernism made him a significant ally and important representa-

tive of a conservative Christian position. Fine points of doctrinal

detail were unimportant in the depression crisis, as one Wetaskiwin

resident pointed out. "Even though we couldn't go all the way with

him on all of his religious theories, I know of no church people who

condemned him politically because of it". Those who respected Aberhart

for his religious stand would thus be predisposed to accept his leader-

ship in political or economic matters. Religious respect rather than

religious conversion was the key element as Aberhart's position as a

religious leader was at least indirectly functional in the acquisition

of political support. If his following was not based on doctrinal

affinity, then it was based on the virtues of his religious leadership

role which implied honesty, self-sacrifice, and humanitarianism. A

Lutheran leader asserted "Theological agreement was never really even

considered. It was more that 'Here's a man preaching. We're new here.

It must be a good thing because he is interested in the deep questions

of life'. Aberhart got a lot of mileage out of the fact of just being

related to the church". In a time when the morals of political and business leaders were suspect, Aberhart's religious activities and bold authority enhanced the strength of his claim to power particularly among persons with church connections who would be especially impressed by this type of virtue.

The Attitude of Religious Leaders

As a general rule, the rank-and-file of those with religious interests or church affiliations were more favorably disposed to the support of Aberhart's crusade than the religious leaders. Denominational ideologues and bureaucrats were far more discriminating and protective of the established religious order and therefore rejected Aberhart or were fearful of the consequences of his growing following. When he turned to economic matters, these leaders were reluctant to give Aberhart their support. A minister at Vegreville observed: "He 'knows' so much about the Bible that is not so, that we hesitate to accept him as an authority upon our economic problems".[92] Usually these leaders were well-educated and took offense at the flagrant Biblical legitimations and intolerance that was part of the crusade. The Baptist Union of Western Canada, which had been directly challenged by Aberhart, passed a resolution at their 1935 convention that deliberately sought to censure Aberhart's techniques.[93] In support of the Lord's Day, the

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[92]A statement by Rev. G. D. Armstrong, in the column "The Study Window", The Vegreville Observer, March 6th, 1935.

[93]Baptist Union of Western Canada, Yearbook 1935, p. 77. The Alberta Conference of the UCC also passed a similar resolution.

resolution urged that political propaganda be banned from radio stations

on Sundays in order to free Sundays from partisan political controversy.

The equation of Social Credit with Christianity was also an assumption

that provoked much hostility among church leaders who often had estab-

lished connections with the major political parties. This is to say

that many of those who found religious protest reprehensible also found

economic and political protest obnoxious, particularly when it was

under Aberhart's leadership. Thus while most of the ministers of the

churches of established denominations either rejected Aberhart Social

Credit outright, or attempted to follow a laissez-faire policy in order

not to alienate the masses, the popular feeling in the congregations

was much more positive.[94]   The attraction of honest Christian leader-

ship had overwhelming appeal to a discouraged and exploited population.

However, the exceptions to this aloofness or repudation by

religious leaders are also significant. Many ministers refused to

enter into political sponsorship on the basis that they had no res-

ponsibility for that segment of human endeavor. This was particularly

the case with Baptist, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Lutheran ministers.

The most noticeable active contributions to the crusade came from

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[94]Larkham Collins reported to Brownlee on an address he gave to
the Ministerial Association at the Bible House in Calgary. "The senti-
ment of the meeting was strongly in my favor (although representatives
of Mr. Aberhart were present and allowed to ask questions) as evidenced
by the number of ministers who rose to say that the reasons I had ad-
duced in the demonstration on the inapplicability of the plan to the
Province, were very satisfactory to them. They have all suffered a
good deal at the hands of Mr. Aberhart and any ammunition I could give
them seemed to be well received". Premiers' Papers, correspondence re-
garding the Douglas System of Social Credit, letter dated April 23rd,
1934.

United Church ministers. Unofficially, the UCC in Alberta had closer

interests with the emerging CCF. At the 1932 Alberta Conference, it

was recommended that all Presbyteries organize groups to build up a

body of informed public opinion to enable people to take action to

modify and adjust present economic conditions to hasten the inaugura-

tion of the Kingdom of God.[95]   The 1933 Conference urged that production

for profit be replaced by production to supply human needs.[96]   The

acute awareness of dire human need visibly obvious to sensitive ministers,

Aberhart's intended projection of Social Credit as practical Christianity

which was easily translatable into social gospel terms, and their own

interests in the social gospel as community leaders meant that rural

United Church ministers particularly, often took a vital interest in

Social Credit. Chief among these crusaders were three ministers who

became candidates in the 1935 election: Roy C. Taylor, Peter Dawson,

and William Morrison. All three men had grown up in Alberta, received

their education at St. Stephens College in Edmonton, and legitimated

their participation in social gospel terms. Morrison resigned his seat

shortly after the election to open the way for Aberhart, but both

Taylor and Dawson ran into opposition from church members who had ties

to other parties and objected to their personal involvement in politics

as ministers.

The most successful non-institutional community religious

leaders and participants in the Social Credit crusade were J. A. Wingblade

[95]Record of Proceedings (UCC), op. cit., 1932, p. 39.

[96]Ibid., 1933, p. 13.

and Norman James. Neither man was doing church work as a full-time occupation and both usually acted outside established denominational boundaries. Wingblade, in the Wetaskiwin area, was known as "the non-church going people's pastor". His significant role in officiating at rites of passage is explained in his own words:

> One funeral director said I must have had one thousand funerals but I doubt that it was that high. I married couples in my home -- usually people who had no church fellowship. I made sure that they were not forgetting their own pastor unless the proper arrangements were made. When people needed someone for a funeral, they would say to the funeral director: "We don't know a minister, but we know Wingblade".

James played the same role as Wingblade in officiating at funerals and preaching at services held in schoolhouses. Having no theological training or license of ordination, James functioned as a lay minister but was prevented by law from performing marriages. He acknowledged the fact that he had the "dangerous habit" of mixing Social Credit as practical Christianity into his sermons. In spite of this, he expressed something of the license he felt free to take as a free-lance minister, "I knew it wasn't orthodox, and was rather frowned upon by the clergy, but being a humble 'lay-preacher' I didn't feel the same responsibility to 'the cloth' that inhibited most of the preachers".[97] Without fear of denominational censure, not being dependent on a congregation for financial support, and the non-denominational community nature of their efforts to "help people out" who were in need, both of these men freely contributed their own style of Christian legitimation, as well as their

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[97]N. B. James, The Autobiography of a Nobody, p. 158.

influence to the cause of the crusade. The absence of institutional

demands on their role provided the freedom necessary to support the

movement wholeheartedly.

Thus it was not that Aberhart enlisted crusaders among all

Albertans because they were his religious followers but because they

accepted his leadership as a Christian authority and as the best choice

among the alternatives. Many people who ordinarily had little time

for politics or who were insufficiently socialized into Alberta

political life accepted Aberhart's authority solely because he linked

humanitarian concern with Christian principles. As an Edmonton old-

timer asserted:

> Lutheran immigrants were not interested in the
> finer aspects of politics. They were busy get-
> ting established, busy working the land, and
> were concerned about getting settled economically.
> It was just that here was a Christian man of God
> who could be trusted in their eyes, and if he
> wanted to set things straight, what better man
> was there.

Even marginal church people were impressed with religious protest as an

ally to economic protest, as this statement attests: "I was attracted

by Aberhart's attempt to get Christianity out of the church. It seemed

to me that this was long overdue and he did it pointedly". Even though

Aberhart gathered his support from among those with differing or weak

religious interests, his appeal to common Christian symbols and

Biblical stories became the bridge to union with the crusade. Religion

therefore was a catalyst for the political awakening and political in-

volvement of many who ordinarily were relatively passive about politics.

Regardless of the type of affiliation with denomination or sect, persons

with religious interests found a basis for unity in common religious

symbols and standards and thus formed a conditioned audience for participation in a crusade.

As a religious non-partisan engaging in non-partisan politics, it was understandable that Aberhart the Protestant would appeal to the majority of Protestants that dominated Alberta's populist religion. What does require some explanation, however, is the large response of two relatively large communities, the Mormon community in southern Alberta, and the French Catholic community north and east of Edmonton. While it would be inaccurate to speak of a total bloc vote according to religion or ethnicity,[98] consistently strong support of Social Credit by these communities demands an investigation of causal factors. Most obviously, it could be argued that the unrest of the depression coupled with the momentum of the crusade drew these communities into its wake purely for economic reasons. We would suggest that their participation may have had an economic cause but that it was hastened and intensified by religious factors.

Mormon and Catholic Support of the Crusade

Three reasons relating to religion may be specified to account for the Mormon support of the crusade. Mormons as a collective body had no distinct record of political participation in Alberta. They were primarily interested in and well-known for the social welfare of

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[98]Milnor's analysis of such communities in Saskatchewan led him to speak of definite "ethnic religious biases". A. J. Milnor, Agrarian Protest in Saskatchewan, 1929-1948: A Study in Ethnic Politics, Ph.D. Thesis, Duke University, 1962, p. 17.

those in their own community. To that extent, no direct hand was taken in politics unless it involved a moral question that affected them locally. For instance, liquor laws were enacted to prevent Cardston, the home of the Mormon Temple, from becoming wet. Mormons tended to become publicly outspoken when moral issues were involved. It follows from this that Mormons could be aroused by political issues that were put in moral terms, as Aberhart did for them. The depression was not something external but was a crisis that was felt deep in their own community. A moral battle could arouse them from their communal iso- lation for participation with Gentiles in a common effort. In this regard, Aberhart's personal morality (including absention from tobacco and alcoholic beverages) as well as his conduct of the crusade in moral terms contributed to the securing of Mormon support. Two devout Mormons emphasized just this point. "I don't think this would be stretching it but a good Mormon would be impressed with a Christian leader. He doesn't have to be Mormon. We knew of Aberhart and Manning's convictions. We also knew their moral stand and that's what we also teach. I think many of us would vote Social Credit for that reason alone". "Social Credit has always had Christian leadership....They al- ways managed to get my vote. At least we knew what they stood for and what kind of lives they were living". Since religion for Mormons is highly correlated with positive morals, it was appropriate and acceptable that they join Aberhart in his crusade.

The second reason for Mormon interest in the crusade may have been the affinity of Aberhart's prophetic world-view with prophecy as a significant element in Mormonism. Both perspectives included a definite

concern with the millenium. In both cases, this millenium was not to

be inaugurated by man but was to lead to the enjoyment of man. Charles

O. Card had prophesied that, "...this would become a fruitful land and

that in time it would be a haven of rest for those of our people who

desired to serve the Lord".[99]   John W. Taylor had perceived during the

depression that "while they were suffering from depreciating values at

the present time, they would see the day when there would be actual

scarcity in the land, when the Ten Tribes would come out of the north

country".[100]   Dawson also reports the existence of a "chosen people"

mentality among the Mormons in that fasting and praying were often en-

gaged in to secure relief from poor weather or pestilences.[101]   The

theocractic strivings among Mormons[102]   and their acute awareness of the

moving of the hand of God in history demonstrate strong parallels to

Aberhart's concept of an acting God. They were therefore ripe candi-

dates for participation in Aberhart's crusade and many came to trust

in him as an agent of God in history.

Thirdly, while Aberhart Social Credit was definitely an attack

on exploitative capitalism, it was, on the other hand, a deliberate

defense of free enterprise. Mormons were also champions of a laissez-

faire individualism and personal property. "We believe that no govern-

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[99] C. A. Dawson, Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada, p. 263.

[100] Ibid., p. 265.

[101] Ibid., p. 267.

[102] In The Doctrines and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Section 134.1, p. 250, it is stated that "We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man..."

ment can exist in peace, except such laws that are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life".[103] Furthermore, in Section 134.5, Mormons were urged to uphold their governments, for sedition and rebellion were unacceptable. It was thus clear that Mormons would have greater affinity to a political programme that sought limited reforms of the present socio-economic system in order that it might run more efficiently rather than a wholesale re-arrangement of the economic system in which their way of life might be altered or threatened. To counter the possible oppression of free individualism in private enterprise, Mormons advocated a community of mutual help and therefore were against welfare by an external agency as a general principle. Socialism was thus a political concept that threatened their enterprises and entire community social patterns and was rejected out of hand in deference to Social Credit.

Probably equally significant to the adoption of Social Credit in these communities was the conversion of an influential person within the community who could translate the crusade to his fellowmen. Under the leadership of Solon Low, a schoolteacher, and later an MLA, cabinet minister, and National Party Leader, the Mormon population in Alberta were led to the support of the crusade.[104] Low actively sought to relate Social Credit to Mormon doctrine and life-style and did so in persuasive fashion. Nathan Tanner, presently second in command among

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[103]Ibid., Section 134.2, p. 250.

[104]Irving, op. cit., p. 212.

Mormons as First Counselor of the Presidency in Salt Lake City, also

was an influential interpreter of Social Credit as an MLA and cabinet

minister.

In northeastern Alberta, Lucien Maynard interpreted the gospel

of Social Credit to the French and Catholic communities. As a lawyer,

Maynard used the power of intellectual debate to point out the con-

gruence of Social Credit with Papal Encyclicals and thereby established

Social Credit as an acceptable theory for adoption by Catholics.[105]

This was not to say that he obtained official church approval for many

priests had strong and lengthy ties with the Liberal Party. But he did

point out that Social Credit was not the same as the condemned socialism

and thus released a flood of interested support for Social Credit.

In the Encyclical Rerum Novarum of 1891 and Quadragesimo Anno

of 1931, the Pope had acknowledged his awareness of the restlessness

in the world caused by the antagonism between the property-less wage-

earners and the superabundant riches of the fortunate few. While the

need for an adequate remedy was certain, socialism was denounced out-

rightly in Quadragesimo Anno as a poor solution. Socialism was rejected

because it threatened the right to private property which was "...given

to man by nature or rather by the Creator Himself, not only in order

that individuals may be able to provide for their own needs and those

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[105]In the 1940 election, Maynard ran an advertisement that read:
"Your Easter Social Duty. Vote Social Credit for Social Justice". As
editor of Today and Tomorrow, a newspaper for the northern constituencies
originally including some French articles, manuscripts and reports of
bishops were printed that concluded that Social Credit was not tainted
with socialism.

of their families, but also that by means of it, the goods which the
Creator has destined for the human race may truly serve this purpose"[106].

It was further pointed out that the right of property must be distin-

guished from its use. Furthermore, socialism was concerned only about

immediate advantages, and was atheistic, thus neglecting the end for

which man exists both temporally and eternally to bring praise and

glory to his Creator[107].   This denunciation of socialism suggested that

reform was necessary but should never attempt to confiscate private

property and build state control. Instead, Pius XI argued that

"economic life must be inspired by Christian principles....There can

be no other remedy than a frank and sincere return to the teaching of

the Gospel"[108].   Clearly, the Social Credit crusade was advocating such

a reform. Without denouncing private property, Social Credit was pro-

posing a reform based on Christian principles. The long-standing ties

of the Catholic Church with the Liberal Party in Canada notwithstanding,

the dour financial straits of Albertans convinced of external exploita-

tion, the growing momentum of the crusade, and the active agitation of

men like Maynard who made Social Credit palatable to the Catholic com-

munity all contributed to evoke widespread Catholic support.

The congruence of religious doctrine and practice with Social

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[106]James P. Sweeney, Five Great Encyclicals, p. 137.

[107]Ibid., p. 157. Cardinal Villeneuve of Quebec announced in
1934 that a good Catholic could not support the CCF.

[108]Ibid., p. 163. An attempt to show the congruence of Social
Credit with Catholicism was made in a pamphlet by George-Henri Levesque,
Social Credit and Catholicism, 1936.

Credit was thus an important element in gaining the support of two

large non-Protestant groups, the Catholics and Mormons.

One of the keys to Aberhart's success was that he did not limit

his choice of close friends or approval of candidates to those with

similar religious interests. His pragmatism and preference for victory

meant that he sought support from a host of persons with diverse affilia-

tions and occupations. It is true that those with a heightened moral

sense were more easily attracted to the crusade. These included

teachers, preachers, and active Christian laymen who were inclined to

study books, were actively aware of human need, and who made morality

a vital part of their life style.[109] This accounts for the large-scale

participation of these persons and the large number in this category

who actually became electoral candidates. However, other candidates

had no specific religious interests but were chosen for their moral

stature in their community. To be actively interested in religion was

certainly no guarantee of election. For example, Mark Robertson was

a fundamentalist Baptist as well as a lodge member and failed to win

election in Edmonton in 1935. What can be said is that the movement

did attract persons with religious interests more readily because it

was a crusade. That it did not do so exclusively meant that Aberhart

broadened his support by discrediting the accusation of being prejudiced

while still maintaining personal control.

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[109]Gray, op. cit., pp. 82-84.

The Climax of the Crusade

The heat of political battle produced a large turnout at the polls. Many of the old-line parties were so infiltrated that their scrutineers and poll workers disappeared just when they were needed. More than half the candidates lost their deposits. The general disgust of the newspapers is reflected in this description of election day, August 22nd, 1935:

> Not only was there 'wailing walls' at St. Paul and Bonneyville, but Mallaig also...our correspondents report that they would pass their opinions on nearly every voter coming to cast his ballot for Social Credit. 'There goes another poor deluded and misled mortal going to lose his vote!' Plank seats accommodated the crowds to hear the results in front of Spahn's garage which were put up on a blackboard like what is flashed by the big dailies.[110]

The same general excitement existed at the Institute where the heartbeat of the crusade steadily quickened. One old-timer from Calgary stated something of his personal sense of exhilaration.

> The night of the election was exciting at the Institute. The street was blocked and people were milling around everywhere. And the church was packed. They used to really pack that place. People were standing lined up along the sides of the church on the inside while others listened through the windows. With that sort of enthusiasm and interest you really felt like you were part of something big!

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In Edmonton, 73% of the total possible votes were polled by 3:30 p.m.

As the results came in, the crusade reached its zenith. The

[110] St. Paul Journal, September 11th, 1935.

[111] Edmonton Journal, August 22nd, 1935.

attainment of the expressed goal -- a Social Credit government -- appeared to be within grasp. Of 301,752 votes cast, Social Credit received 163,700, Liberals, 79,845, and the UFA, 33,063. With 54.2% of the popular vote, Social Credit won 56 of the 63 seats and the Liberals and Conservatives won 5 and 2 seats, respectively. Previously holding 39 seats, the UFA did not elect one member and lost every seat they had held to Social Credit. In the two major cities, Social Credit's strength was noticeably weaker. In Edmonton, Social Credit only won two of six seats, while in Calgary they fared a bit better with four out of six. The victory had been a landslide and was overwhelming.

The crusade had succeeded!

CHAPTER VIII

WIDENING THE CRUSADE IN THE POST-ELECTION YEARS

The crusade had performed significant functions for the population of Alberta. Populist religion and populist politics had both been indigenous attempts to express religion and politics within the framework of the needs and world-view of Albertans. By at least partially rejecting transplanted organizations and social patterns, the crusade sought to redefine the situation within the western Canadian context and provide locally directed mechanisms by which to interpret the world and resolve their problems. Participation in the crusade meant a selective resocialization by an immigrant population into the Alberta world-view so that they were no longer merely Albertans by residence only but also by internal conviction and commitment. The crusade forced the minimization of old loyalties and fostered a personal realignment of allegiance with and defense of Alberta. The intense emotional commitments that the crusade demanded in the financial crisis wrenched Albertans away from their laissez-faire individualism and the isolationism of establishing a basis for family security, and converted them to the benefits of social unity as a prerequisite for future provincial prosperity.

Aberhart's evocation and articulation of the populist religion began the task of consolidation of the heterogeneous population. However, the nature of his appeal was such that Anglo-Saxons and those

with previous United States residency were the most easily persuaded to participation in the religious movement. Ethnic concentrations and religious communities were little influenced by Aberhart's religious efforts. It took the depression to force these enclaves out of their relative isolationism for participation in the wider culture. Thus where Aberhart's religious movement failed to appeal to the Mormons, Mennonites, French Catholics, Ukrainians, large German and Scandinavian communities, as well as those with little interest in religion, the addition of Social Credit enabled the growth of social unity to reach its zenith. The crusade was important, then, because it was an agent of social integration and the vehicle by which unity was forged of migrated diversity. More specifically, the religious aspect of the movement was most significant in fostering individual re-integration while the political aspect encouraged the social integration of Alberta society.

The crusade transformed Albertans both internally and externally and therefore moulded dedicated followers for a long time to come. Thus we are able to speak of Social Credit not primarily in terms of its ideology, but for its function in the defense of a way of life and as an agent of provincial unity. Political, economic, and religious protest combined in one movement to give Albertans a collective sense of identity.

Social Credit in Office

However, the attainment of power and the day-to-day demands of operating a government eventually made the protest theme sound rather

hollow and inadequate. The culmination of the crusade in political

power -- the stated objective for the inauguration of Social Credit --

heightened anticipations for the fiscal change in Alberta policy. Yet

Aberhart's first move was to journey east to arrange financial backing

and secure the advice of an orthodox economist, R. J. Magor, much to

the chagrin of Douglas and the more orthodox Social Crediters. Instead

of the expected repudiation of establishment economics and the emergence

of a self-styled fiscal independence, Aberhart accepted the old system

and preferred not to frighten investors. His approach was that reform

of the outmoded financial programmes must come gradually, and the first

goal must be to correct errors of administrative policy and mismanage-

ment.[1]

The controversial question that caused most of the dissension

in Aberhart's first term of office was whether Aberhart ever really in-

tended to institute Social Credit's monetary theory as government policy.

If he did, the half-hearted manner in which he persevered and sought

advice from persons committed to the present system produced only weak

attempts to meet the caustic demands of the most orthodox Social

Crediters. Aberhart often threatened but never seriously challenged

the existing monetary system. It would be more likely that the movement

perhaps was one of administrative and moral reform rather than finan-

cial reorganization. If Aberhart had no intentions of implementing a

hard Social Credit policy, then a psychological and sociological func-

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[1]Cf. E. J. Hanson, "Public Finance in Alberta Since 1935",
Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science (August, 1952).

tional theory is alone significant for understanding the role of the movement among the population in providing an activity outlet in which to work out personal and collective frustrations for a depressed population.

Throughout the campaign, considerable controversy raged over whether Aberhart said or did not say that Social Credit could be implemented in Alberta. While the implication was strongly positive even in the face of constitutional and federal restrictions, the populist feeling was that the will of the people could not be thwarted by some external law. Aberhart's own position on this matter was somewhat unclear. We have established the fact that Aberhart maintained organizational and ideological control over the movement while yet acknowledging Douglas as primary ideologue. Douglas was viewed as the brilliant inventive mind dependent on Aberhart for the interpretation of the theory to the people and for marshalling populist support. Particularly in the pre-election fervor, Aberhart often tended to usurp the role of ideologist as well as acting as interpreter and organizer in an attempt to make definitive and authoritative statements to rouse his following. However, despite lapses of dogmatism and simplified analogies of Social Credit economics, it was increasingly clear that he was unsure of his own capabilities in the matter. Whenever his confidence waned, he would invoke basic Social Credit theory that the people should be organized to demand what they want and then he would turn to Douglas as the expert who would be responsible to produce the desired results. After encouraging supporters to attend the Institute nightly during the week of August 11th (1935) for Bible study and prayer, Aberhart announced

on his broadcast that if his party was elected, he would have Douglas come to Alberta to introduce his (Douglas's) plan.[2] Despite all his promises, the evidence is quite strong that Aberhart recognized his limitations of expertise in fiscal theory and his ultimate dependence on Douglas if "real" Social Credit was to be a desired reality.

Douglas himself perceived the important role Aberhart was playing in developing the principle of Social Credit that the people ought to make their demands in policy that experts in turn would be commissioned to carry out. In 1935, Douglas stated during a stop-over in Winnipeg on his way to Alberta that, "Mr. Aberhart is supplying the dynamic will of the people toward reorganization of the economic system, and to that extent he has the whole of my sympathy".[3] He suggested that if Aberhart could "get the people in the right frame of mind", he could provide the administration to institute Social Credit. Even though Douglas had been alienated by Aberhart's self-styled adaptation of the theory and had been influenced by the venom heaped on Aberhart by the orthodox Douglasites and the UFA government, who had employed him as economic advisor, he was reluctant to castigate Aberhart, for he saw him as a skillful organizer of mass support. In a letter to Attorney General Lymburn, dated June 1st, 1935, Douglas hesitated to critize Aberhart for he sensed Aberhart's own weaknesses.

> ...should Mr. Aberhart be placed in a position of
> responsibility in regard to the attainment of these
> objectives, it is most improbable that he would

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[2] Edmonton Journal, August 12th, 1935.

[3] Calgary Herald, May 11th, 1935.

> either have the time or the inclination to deal
> with the purely technical aspects of the matter.
> While my contact with Mr. Aberhart has been of
> the slightest, and is in fact confined to two
> short interviews in which only the most general
> aspects of the matter were discussed, I am in-
> formed that he also takes up this position.[4]

Douglas may have somewhat under-estimated Aberhart's ambition but he

does indicate a certain reliance which Aberhart appears to have placed

on Douglas. Aberhart would proceed as far as he could without Douglas's

assistance, but as long as he knew Douglas "the expert" was in the

background, he could be appealed to in an emergency or be used as a

scapegoat in times of failure.

We have argued that Aberhart was merely a "lay" economist but

was made into an authority by the dogmatism of his own assertions and

by the demands of the people. As such he was caught by his own acknow-

ledged limitations of experience and expertise, the projections of his

followers to him as leader, and his own personal dispositions to main-

tain control of the movement. Probably speaking as much for himself as

he was for the people, Aberhart challenged them just prior to the

election.

> You don't have to know all about Social Credit be-
> fore you vote for it. You don't have to understand
> electricity to make use of it, for you know that ex-
> perts have put the system in, and all you have to
> do is push the button and you get light. So all
> you have to do about Social Credit is to cast your
> ballot for it, and we'll get experts to put the
> system in.[5]

Here the implication is clear that the movement and its leaders would

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[4]Premiers' Papers.

[5]Edmonton Journal, August 14th, 1935.

secure knowledgeable persons to do the things they themselves were in-

sufficiently capable of doing. Yet an uncertainty always remained.

Would the demands of the people be sufficient to make Social Credit

possible in spite of federal and constitutional restrictions? This was

never clear and at times even seems to have been unimportant. Some-

times Aberhart talked as if he had no plan for the implementation of

Social Credit, and at other times he implied he had one. "We will make

a plan as soon as we get the facts. Now we need a Social Credit govern-

ment first. There will be a lot of housecleaning to do first before we

can put it into effect". This is to say that the attainment of a Social

Credit government became an end in itself and the most important goal.

The next hurdle was to do the "housecleaning" and administrative re-

organization, followed by the implementation of Social Credit monetary

theory. This hierarchy of political acts was always implicit in

Aberhart's leadership.

For the rank-and-file, the implementation of Social Credit meant

the long-awaited monthly dividends. Aberhart had initially asked for

eighteen months in order to issue them. In the meantime the Social

Credit government embarked on a vigorous programme to restore the

fiscal strength of the government and to make budgetary and administra-

tive changes. By 1936, the provincial debt had reached a high of

$167,027,000.00 and the interest charges on this debt alone prevented

significant reductions in the principle so that the debt continued to

mount yearly.[6] Alberta Social Crediters took it upon themselves to

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[6]Rose P. Madsen, The Fiscal Development of Alberta, M.A. Thesis,
University of Alberta, 1949, p. 126. Madsen points out that the overly-

make the reduction of this debt one of their primary achievements. By

adopting a pay-as-you-go policy, the budget was initially balanced by

increasing taxation on such items as liquor, and civil servants took

voluntary reductions in salaries. Furthermore, mortgage and debt

legislation was passed to secure the farms and personal property of

Alberta citizens, and a procedure was established for the registration

of citizens for the dividends in the Social Credit Measures Act and

the Alberta Credit House Act of 1936.[7] The Alberta Citizens' Registra-

tion Covenant asked citizens to cooperate with the provincial govern-

ment and to accept Alberta credit in return for a dividend and interest

free loans. All of these preparations heightened expectations but

also were an activity outlet that permitted a stalling for time.

Farmers, citizens, manufacturers, and retailers were roused to a show

of solidarity and provincial protectionism by being urged to buy and

sell goods made in Alberta. "What Alberta makes makes Alberta" was

the slogan. Stamped scrip was issued as an experiment in creditism in

the form of Prosperity Certificates particularly for relief road work,

but difficulties in its acceptance as payment for goods led to its

early failure. But Aberhart was at his organizational best in this type

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optimistic policies of the Liberal government (1905-1921) in providing
highways, telephones, irrigation, etc., to a scattered population was
largely responsible for Alberta's later debt problems.

[7]For an account of the legislative activity of the Aberhart
government, cf. Hugh J. Whalen, The Distinctive Legislation of the
Government of Alberta (1935-1950), M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta,
1951. See the Alberta Gazette, 1936, pp. 818-826 for the four types of
covenants Albertans were urged to sign. The most thorough analysis of
the attempt to establish Social Credit in Alberta is found in J. R.
Mallory, Social Credit and the Federal Power in Canada.

of administrative leadership. His greatest pride was his contribution as Minister of Education, besides acting as Premier, in which he reorganized a haphazard provincial school system into consolidated school districts functioning as larger and more efficient units.[8]

Anchoring the Crusade

Realizing the distinct advantages in having Social Credit legislators in Ottawa, the crusade was broadened to include the federal constituencies in Alberta in the national election two months later. Social Crediters took 15 of 17 seats with the complete support of Aberhart and the movement's leadership. In an effort to completely reorganize the province, Social Credit fielded candidates in the Calgary civic elections of November 20th. The crusade faired poorly here with the candidate for mayor, W. R. Herbert, defeated by Andrew Davison by less than 2,000 votes. But on other fronts the Social Credit forces consolidated themselves. Since communications had been vital to the emergence of Social Credit populism, steps were taken to ensure the reliability and continuation of these efforts. On January 17th, 1936, it was announced that the Alberta Social Credit Chronicle was to merge with the Calgary Albertan and thus serve as the official organ of the Alberta Social Credit League and as the reliable voice of the Social Credit government. It was also announced that radio station CJCJ had been purchased from the Alberta Publishing Company. Social Credit

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[8]Cf. Winston Crouch, "Alberta Tries Consolidation", National Municipal Review 32 (January, 1943).

maintained these media as links of propaganda and communication with the grass-roots. The hostility of the major dailies, owned by eastern interests, was expressed in alleged inaccurate news reports and biased editorials that denounced Social Credit policy and mocked Aberhart's brand of fundamentalism-come-politics.

Alberta was thus largely committed to Social Credit and completely saturated with its ideology and leadership.

Aberhart had argued that Social Credit was not merely a monetary theory but was a means to the expression of practical Christianity in that it utilized basic principles extracted from the Bible. As such, Social Credit became a God-ordained solution delivered to the people by a Godly prophet. A new world could be built on this foundation of salvation and Aberhart, as God's instrument, would help them build it. Aberhart himself preferred to conceive his role in these terms rather than as a politician or economist. His repeated Biblical legitimations and the religious following at the core of the crusade continued to reinforce this self-conception of the nature of his efforts as well as emphasize the sacral qualities of the movement in the popular mind. Hence, it is appropriate to speak of the early Social Credit government as somewhat theocratic in nature. God would direct the government of the province through his representatives in the attempt to eradicate all foreign sources of evil in order that the people might live in harmony, freedom, and peace.

In the last chapter, we demonstrated how religion was the primary agent in providing social cohesiveness and in supplying the dynamic

by which the attainment of power was successful. In this chapter, we will argue that religion was an agent of stability by which power was maintained in spite of political adversity.

The new demands of political power and the governing of a province did not reduce the importance of religion, as might be expected, but heightened it as the chief means of maintaining the leader-follower relation already established in the crusade. This can be demonstrated in three ways: the role of the pulpit and the use of religious rhetoric in maintaining contact with the grass-roots, the role of faith, trust and projections of religious virtue on Aberhart's leadership, and the use of the Institute broadcast to make political pronouncements and explanations.

The Pulpit as a Political Vehicle

As the spiritual home of the crusade, the first caucus of the elected members was held at the Institute on August 28th, 1935. Here began the pattern that was to continue throughout the Socred administration of beginning each caucus with a prayer usually spoken spontaneously by a more religiously articulate MLA. Here also began the practice of seeking to make the caucus the primary place of debate and disagreement in preparation for the presentation of a united front and the relatively rapid passage of legislation in the legislative session. The ritual of prayer was not perceived as a pious act but the continuation of the perception of the need for Divine guidance in governing the people in an earnest quest to be "His instruments". In response to a question from Orvis Kennedy, Aberhart remarked "....My Christian faith

has led me to believe that as God directs the affairs of the universe,

He is also superintending the affairs of this province".[9] Prayer was

merely the natural response to the conviction that Alberta was the

initial location for the supernatural drama among men on earth. Thus,

while it was seldom stated explicitly, the Social Credit government

possessed the spirit of being a non-denominational non-partisan ex-

pression of how God was moving through men in the present events of

history (at least partly a correlate of the prophetic view of history).

As a result of this deeply ingrained conviction, Aberhart ad-

dressed his audiences more often from behind the pulpit than from the

political platform, especially after the elections were over. He

continued his weekly preaching responsibilities and often accepted

preaching invitations for special occasions at churches throughout the

province. Even outside the province Aberhart addressed the packed

First Presbyterian Church in his hometown of Seaforth, Ontario, in a

speech on September 16th, 1935, that was surely as political as it

was religious. Pleading for their prayers and support in pre-election

fashion, Aberhart asserted his optimism regarding the future inauguration

of Social Credit.

> With God's guidance and power it can be done; without
> His aid nothing can be done. Bless the governments
> and may God give them vision and give the people
> vision in making the decision which they must make
> in a short time in the face of this crisis to choose
> trusted and able men to save them from the terrors
> that may come upon them. Don't you think it would
> be a better world if Christian men and women took

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[9] *Today and Tomorrow*, April 4th, 1940.

more interest in the government?[10]

Here we see an argument that was often repeated, particularly in the post-election period. Social Credit theory might have been an extension of Christian principles but what made the movement a crusade in addition to its ideology was the fact that its leaders were Christian and thus possessed the right motives and goals. Thus it was conceivable that the Social Credit government deserved support if only because of this leadership motif. Such an argument was effective and convenient especially when the implementation of Social Credit became difficult. Journeys on government business thus became important vehicles to arouse interest in the crusade in other provinces. The Calgary Herald reported that in early December, 1935, Aberhart spoke to 3,500 persons who filled St. James United Church in Ottawa, the federal capital, in order to counteract erroneous impressions of his party as "religious fanatics", and himself as a "ranting evangelist".[11] Holding meetings in churches of all denominations, Aberhart was demonstrating that Social Credit was respectable and above all broadly "Christian" in a way that knew no sectarian boundaries.

The pulpit functioned as an effective and familiar base for exhortation. It provided a medium of one-way communication in which irksome questions and debate were not permissible to prevent Aberhart's convincing rhetoric and psychological arousal from achieving peak persuasiveness. The pulpit or religious platform also legitimated the

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[10]Edmonton Journal, September 17th, 1935.

[11]Calgary Herald, December 9th, 1935.

Social Credit cause and endowed it with sacral qualities. Speaking from pulpits of churches endowed Aberhart with the virtues of a religious leader (as well as being subject to its criticisms) and established an immediate primary identification of him as a religious leader rather than a political leader. Even when he was Premier, many people viewed him primarily as a religious leader who had merely taken up the cause as champion of the people.

The visit of the Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, to Alberta shortly after the election in the fall of 1935, also had a useful effect on the movement. Interestingly, Douglas had suggested that Johnson make a tour of Canada in order to achieve firmer backing for Social Credit among the upper classes of society. Douglas had always been somewhat suspicious of what could be accomplished by the masses and Aberhart's brand of populism left him a bit uncomfortable. In a letter dated September 5th, 1935, Douglas urged Aberhart to use Johnson to "plan the moral obligation of supporting you squarely on the shoulders of the well-to-do and more conservative section of the population".[12] As an accredited emissary of Douglas's and particularly a religious authority of an established church, Johnson brought credibility to Social Credit that UFA leader Norman Priestley denounced. In objecting to Johnson's support of Aberhart and the religious nature of Social Credit, he argued:

> Without doubt such pronouncements appearing fre-
> quently in the public press will have the tendency

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[12]C. H. Douglas, The Aberhart Experiment: An Interim Survey, p. 128.

> to at one and the same time dignify the type of
> religious interpretation which Aberhart has laid
> before us throughout the past ten years, a type
> poles apart from the scholarship and learning of
> the established Church of England, and at the
> same time to elevate a technique for social and
> economic reform.[13]

The religious dilemma that the crusade presented is nowhere better

exemplified than in the Dean of Canterbury's visit to Edmonton. While

the Mayor of Edmonton, Premier Aberhart, and the President of the

University appeared on the platform with Johnson, the Bishop of the

Anglican Diocese refused to attend the meeting on the grounds that the

meeting was political. This caused some controversy, for most Albertans

had understood the crusade to be a movement beyond politics and thus

in a deep sense something very spiritual. Before a crowd of 2,000 at

the Victoria Park Pavilion in Calgary, Johnson placed Social Credit in

perspective, using a similar preaching manner and parallel religious

rhetoric as that utilized by Aberhart. After being introduced by Dr.

Kelloway, minister of Knox United Church in Calgary, Johnson stated,

"This is a matter above party politics. It is a matter for the

Christian Church as a whole. It is in that kind of way that I wish you

to think about me tonight".[14] Johnson's endorsement as a representa-

tive of the respectable Church of England and his use of the pulpit

and religious rhetoric in support of Social Credit and Aberhart's

leadership did much to sanction the movement and maintain its pan-

Christian consciousness.

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[13]Priestley Papers, memorandum dated September 24th, 1935,
Glenbow Alberta Institute.

[14]Alberta Social Credit Chronicle, October 4th, 1935.

The Effect of Political Success on the Religious Work

The Social Credit crusade and then the attainment of political power had a mighty influence on Aberhart's original religious organization. Once Aberhart committed himself to Social Credit, there was no way he could ever shed its mantle for purely religious pursuits. The Institute and the Institute Church were so closely tied to Aberhart's leadership that there could be little independent functioning without him. The Bible Institute work went on as usual when Social Credit took over the governing reigns of the province, and Cyril Hutchinson, a graduate of the school as Manning also was, was placed in administrative responsibility. Yet Aberhart's religious influence was not only felt in the political arena in the post-election era but through graduates of the Institute and through personal contact, his unique teachings had an impact on individual persons and churches. Several churches affiliated with other denominations began to practice baptism "in the name of the Lord Jesus" and were practicing the laying on of hands. Branch churches affiliated with the Institute, although not in any great number. However, there is no doubt that the momentum of this work was lost once he became heavily involved in promulgating Social Credit and in serving as Premier. The only aspect of the work that directly benefitted from his increased exposure was the Radio Sunday School which was stimulated by the interest in his broadcast as the communication media for the crusade. In 1930-31, there were 2,841 students enrolled, which doubled by 1935-36 to 5,650, and reached an all-time high of 9,141 by 1938-39. The Radio Sunday School functioned

to cement family units to Aberhart's leadership, as expressed by this

letter from a resident of a rural town, dated September 4th, 1938:

> I wish to thank you and your fellow workers of the
> Institute for the service over the air every Sunday.
> They are like green spots in the desert, and we
> really feel gratefully refreshed after each one...
> our children have been taking Radio Sunday School
> lessons for the last three seasons and enjoyed them.
> It seems to me God is blessing Alberta because of
> your efforts to uphold his name to all people....
> If we remain true to the principles of Christianity
> we are bound to win in the end. God can make it
> so, even if we mortals are a little bit weak-kneed
> ....I feel this province of all the world is a
> sanctuary of peace, because our Premier and govern-
> ment tries to do things the way the Master would
> have done...[15]

This letter reflects a type of immunity from political criticism which

Aberhart possessed as a result of his followers' conceptions. If they

did not elect him primarily for his political platform, as we have sug-

gested is often the case in a crusade, then they were not prone to de-

nounce him later on that basis. Perhaps it is fair to say that the

non-rational factors that elected him were also the factors that kept

him in power. The broadcast, Institute work, and Radio Sunday School

cultivated the province to enable the full blossoming of factors sup-

portive of Aberhart that were completely unrelated to his government

policies.[16] As the revered leader of the crusade, he was often

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[15]Calgary Herald, Fred Kennedy Papers, Glenbow Alberta Institute.

[16]Aberhart's religious concerns became the righteous base for his
appeal to the people. "Some unscrupulous enemies may tell you that my
religion is a cloak", Premier Aberhart said, "You know when you try to
find fault with another man's religion, be sure your own is right first.
All I can say is that I have faithfully preached the Word of God and the
salvation of Jesus Christ for over 27 years, and that was long before I
thought of entering any parliament. If the people had never been con-

supported on the basis of who he was rather than for what he was doing once he was in office. The pulpit had developed and continued to re-inforce non-political factors as the basis for staunch political support.

When government responsibilities forced Aberhart and Manning to move to Edmonton, it was logical that the crusade establish the same type of populist base in Edmonton that propelled the movement to power in Calgary. The leadership interpreted this need as the desire to present the gospel to northern Albertans particularly as it relates to the prophetic perspective of the Scriptures. Therefore, the Edmonton Prophetic Bible Conference was organized in mid-January, 1936, and meetings were held in the Strand Theatre. Manning had organized a small Bible class that met at the Orange Hall on 114th Street on Sunday mornings already in the fall of 1935, but this was enlarged to include a more convenient place and time.[17] Eventually, Aberhart and Manning

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vinced of me, I would never have been given the position of principal of one of the largest high schools in the province....If my religion is but a cloak, what have I got out of it for the past 25 years?" Premier Aberhart asked. "I have preached regularly for all that time without remuneration of any kind. Why do we carry on the great work of the Radio Sunday School? It would be much easier to join an influential church, and take things easy. I am working too hard to put on a cloak". Calgary Herald, June 7th, 1937.

[17]Some of the more zealous of this group eventually organized the Fundamental Baptist Church in 1942, with meetings first in the Masonic Lodge, then in the basement church at Jasper Avenue and 118 Street. Through the years, few have joined the church as transfers from other Baptist churches but usually come from other churches with which they were disaffected, such as the United Church. Manning is an apostle of this church and the pastor has full responsibility.

alternated between Edmonton and Calgary every Sunday. Both meetings were broadcast: Calgary in the afternoon on CFCN, and Edmonton in the evening over CJCA. It was immediately asserted that the Edmonton Conference had no intention of leading people away from their own churches but sought to "fulfill the needs of hundreds scattered throughout remote areas of the province". While the Edmonton meetings at the Strand developed a loyal local band of supporters, it was true that the meetings and broadcast did serve as an important beachhead and communication link with rural areas where religious services were infrequent and which coincidentally had become Social Credit's primary locale of support. As in Calgary, many rural people eagerly looked forward to their opportunity to attend one of these meetings in person. Thus the two meetings and broadcasts saturated the province and provided all citizens with audible access to Aberhart and Manning's voice every Sunday. The crusade did not lose its momentum because it maintained its communication with the grass-roots via the pulpit.

The pulpit was also used to celebrate anniversaries of the 1935 victory. While the pulpit on these occasions was not in a church, the meetings were conducted as a church service. The first anniversary of the Social Credit victory was a Thanksgiving Service held on Sunday evening, August 30th, 1936, at the Edmonton arena. Musical selections presented by the Edmonton Boys' Band and Orpheus Male Choir included "The Crusaders Hymn", "The Little Church", and "All Through the Night". Hymns sung by the audience consisted of "O God Our Help in Ages Past", "What a Friend We have in Jesus", and "Onward Christian Soldiers". Aberhart's address was entitled "The Problem of the Hour" and was based

on James 5:4. The cover of the programme emblazoned the verse of Psalm 126:1 "The Lord hath done great things for us: whereof we are glad". Bankers and loan companies were likened to Biblical money-changers and the "interest racket" was denounced with reference to Deuteronomy 23:19, 20; Leviticus 25:35-37; Nahum 5:1-13; Ezekiel 22:12-15; and Mark 11: 15-18. The week previously a similar service of Thanksgiving had been held at Victoria Park in Calgary with the Social Credit Choral Society singing "Abide with Me" and "Comrade's Song of Hope". Complete with prayers and hymns,[18] these meetings were mass church services held on neutral ground and based on the conviction that Social Credit had been victorious only as a result of Divine intervention on behalf of His people. It was a fitting ritual of commemoration by which to remember "crossing the Jordan" and reinforced feelings regarding the crusade-like nature of the movement. On the Second Anniversary, a similar gathering was held -- a picnic on St. George's Island in Calgary, on August 28th, 1937, with approximately 20,000 in attendance.

The Nature of the Leader-Follower Relation

We have suggested that non-political factors had developed the leader-follower relation to an intense devotion that precluded any easy shifting of loyalties when difficulties arose. The naivete and stead-fastness that this devotion entailed was due to the emotional nature

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[18]Compare Roland L. Warren, who argues for the functional simi-larity between Christian hymns and political party songs. "German Parteilieder and Christian Hymns as Instruments of Social Control", Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 38 (1943), 96-100.

of the crusade which often had its roots in religious factors. An

analysis of populist attitudes and individual feelings regarding the

new government reveals that, once in power, the ideology of Social

Credit was not nearly as important as the character of the leadership

in sustaining support.

> Congratulations, though, as many others, I do not
> see how Social Credit can be worked, yet I thank
> God for a Christian Premier and Christian legis-
> lature members who will seek guidance from an
> Almighty God.[19]

> We may not be able to see through the theory of
> Social Credit but we do have great confidence in
> the integrity of the members elected...[20]

> We follow you dear Premier and we will carry your
> banner to certain victory even though you may
> have to smite the rock as Moses did to bring
> water to the thirsty and deliver us from this
> economic and moral desert.[21]

> Although my knowledge of Social Credit is limited
> Mr. Aberhart, I can see that you are a man for
> the good of the people and not for your pocket
> and sincerely hope you have success in putting
> 'the Money Grabbing Politicians' in their place
> and making things brighter for the people.[22]

> From the first Sunday it was my pleasure to see
> and hear you in Calgary, I realized that Almighty
> God had called you to do this work.[23]

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[19]Premiers' Papers, telegram from Edmonton, September, 1935.

[20]Pincher Creek Echo, August 29th, 1935, editorial.

[21]Premiers' Papers, communication from a small businessman in
Lethbridge dated December 7th, 1937.

[22]Ibid., communication from Winnipeg dated October 11th, 1937.

[23]Ibid., communication from Edmonton dated August 25th, 1937.

Aberhart received many letters from persons who offered their help or prayers. Poems, mottos, hymns, and letters of encouragement were sent and very frequently included a "God bless you" in its contents. These persons completely identified with Aberhart and were convinced that this was truly their movement -- a movement of the people. A small businessman in Calgary wrote:

> Yours is a great responsibility; You have accepted leadership of the people in their fight against injustice and oppression....You will be condemned and damned but as a man of God you will press forward, and even if you should not reach the final objective, thousands will bless you for having shown them the way to ultimate victory. Your personal effort and heroic sacrifice has advanced the people's cause...[24]

It was as though Aberhart had performed such an invaluable psychological and sociological function to Alberta that it almost did not matter if full Social Credit was attained or not. Needless to say, there were many who disagreed with this point of view, but to ignore this total allegiance is to ignore continual electoral successes. Thus it was the virtues of the leadership that displaced the ideology as the primary claim for support. Ideology per se was far more important when the movement was not in power and sought to coagulate its support.

The yoking of religion and politics in the crusade definitely was an asset in mobilizing support. But it also had its hazards. It aroused bitter controversy and dispute and sharply demarcated political battlelines. After the election, occasional hostility made itself felt among previous supporters who were beginning to object to the gross

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[24]Ibid., August 25th, 1937.

legitimations that were perceived as manipulations of Christianity.

Once in power, and especially in crises, the legitimations appeared to

have been more direct than subtle in an attempt to justify actions and

excuse inactions. Perhaps Aberhart himself became more acutely aware

of the significance of religion in maintaining electoral support. But

there is no doubt that his approach was even becoming too strong for

some followers in his own religious coalition.

> I have been wondering a lot since hearing you often
> preaching the Gospel over the Radio, before you
> entering (entered) into politics, whether you are
> fully aware of what you are preaching now. I have
> been listening to some of your messages in the last
> three years over the radio but they are not in-
> spiring as they used to be. There is no warrant
> to preach any other message save the Gospel of
> Christ...[25]

At the peak of election fervor, religio-economics was acceptable, but

when several years of governing had gone by, such interweaving in

preaching lost its urgency and necessity and began to smack of deviance

from the "real" gospel. One of the most vociferous opponents of the

use of religion for political ends was J. J. Zubick. Carrying on a

on-man campaign to discredit Aberhart for no other reason than the in-

voking of religious sanctions, Zubick edited and published The Rebel

from April 24th, 1937 to January 7th, 1938. He argued that:

> One of the chief reasons why Aberhart gained the
> support of so many people lies in the manner in
> which, Sunday after Sunday for years, he has been
> playing on their emotions by twisting Holy
> Scripture to further his special designs. His
> so-called sermons from the Prophetic Bible
> Institute in Calgary and latterly from the Strand

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[25]Ibid., June 23rd, 1938.

Theater in Edmonton, are invariably a diabolically
clever concoction of religious truths, half-truths,
politics, slander, innuendo, etc., the whole mess
obviously designed to befuddle the minds of the
people and to induce a blind, unreasoning faith
in trusting souls who in their goodness of heart
cannot believe that any honorable man in his right
mind would deliberately stoop so low as to use the
Word of God for such fiendish purposes...[26]

A very alert listener from Radway, Alberta, wrote to Aberhart early in

1939, noting that he was:

...disappointed when you suddenly turned the sweet
atmosphere of worship into political acrimony. It
seemed as though you had made up your mind that
God's peace and Social Credit were synonymous. I
cannot understand why you do this Mr. Aberhart, and
it bothers me to think of the thousands of young
people who never get any religious education save
what they get from you. Do you not see the terrible
responsibility which is yours? You are teaching
them the Word of God which is eternally true, and
you are sandwiching between it a political philosophy
based on a man-made economic theory which, to say
the least, is debatable. If, and when Social Credit
is proven fallacious there is a grave danger that
these people's faith in God will be buried along
with the ruins of Social Credit. You have a
perfect right and a duty, since you believe in it,
to propagate Social Credit and to show the defects
of the other parties and we can admire you for a
vigorous stand against them. But you should not
take for granted that God has specially blessed
Major Douglas' economic conclusions.[27]

Another letter from a fundamentalist objected to the social gospel that

Aberhart appeared to be preaching:

Many think that your Bible School work is the most
important vocation in the world, and that you made
a step-down when you entered politics. In the
course of your Legislative duties you have endea-

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[26]The Rebel, May 14th, 1937.

[27]Premiers' Papers, communication dated January 31st, 1939.

> voured to convince your people that if they would
> follow a certain prescribed course in economics,
> ideal conditions would result. By so doing you
> may have left the inference that they could be
> their own saviours, thereby engendering false
> hopes. You are aware, I am sure, that world con-
> ditions are as they are as a result of man thinking
> he can grow crops, run a government, and control
> his appetites and passions all without divine aid.
> God plainly told us in His Word that man would
> make a mess of attempting to run this world.[28]

Seeds of disgruntlement were already being sown that questioned the

viability of a crusade when the immediate goal of election of a Social

Credit government had already been conquered. That is, when the ob-

ject of the crusade had been attained, it was no longer necessary to

continue to use the techniques of the crusade for they were already

beginning to outlive their usefulness. What was permissible in the

intense stages of the crusade began to become obnoxious and manipula-

tive when the protest was muted by continuous power. The threat of

this growing conviction was slowly gnawing at Aberhart's power until

his death.

In spite of this hazardous element of mixing religion and

politics, Aberhart's apparent humanitarian concern conveyed such virtue

that it was folly to launch an attack against it. Norman Jacques, soon

to be elected a Social Credit M.P., remarked in October of 1935:

> We all know that Mr. Aberhart is in this movement,
> not for his, but for our benefit. Consider what
> it has cost him to leave his home, his city, his
> friends, his school, and his beloved Institute.
> He has given us his word never to turn his back on
> the foe, and we know that he never will. Now
> maybe the real fight is yet to come, and if, and

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[28] *Ibid.*, communication dated July 24th, 1937.

> when it does, shall we stand by him as he has stood
> by us, without thought for himself, or shall we
> turn our backs on him?[29]

In fact, it was argued that concern for human need was not secondary to

the religious mission but could in itself be responsible for greater

evangelism. Aberhart insisted that:

> The eye shut to human need on the part of our citi-
> zens spreads more irreligion than anything else in
> the world. Do not be a Levite...I maintain that
> true Christianity applies in brighter homes, better
> schools, happier communities, and cleaner govern-
> ments. Show me a man who loudly proclaims his
> Christianity, but ignores to provide for his home,
> and I shall have to read to you 1st Timothy 5 and
> 8. Show me a man or woman who attends church
> regularly and takes part in religious services, and
> is boldly indifferent to the graft of present day
> governments and I shall tell you why it is that
> state affairs are as they are. Matthew 14 and 15.[30]

His primary examples of helping others were found in the Good Samaritan

story and Christ washing the feet of the disciples at the Last Supper.

Thus, his goal was no longer to establish what was correct religious

doctrine just as correct political doctrine was no longer an end in

itself for the government in power. Christianity had a pragmatic end:

to unite all men to help the weak.

> The Christian philosophy is not the philosophy
> that might is right. The Christian philosophy
> says help the fellow that is weak. The Christian
> philosophy is that you minister unto the one that
> needs help, the one that is knocked out by the
> wayside. You must altogether unite to that end.[31]

Aberhart was very much aware of the unitive elements of

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[29]Norman Jacques, On to Ottawa with Social Credit (pamphlet).

[30]Calgary Herald, Fred Kennedy Papers, April 24th, 1938.

[31]Ibid., January 3rd, 1937.

Christianity. It not only provided a foundation for social action but was seen as a significant agent for psychological and social integration.

> No matter how blue you feel, sing a song. I might
> even remind you that the great movement of the
> Social Credit philosophy was carried on to the
> strains of that 123rd Psalm: "O God Our Help in
> Ages Past". I feel like stopping a moment to
> hear you sing that. A singing people is a con-
> curring people. You cannot be divided while you
> sing, then why should you be so glum. Oh yes,
> the way is hard -- you did not expect much else
> in this life did you, but God says sing.[32]

The fact that Christianity was perceived as God's truth to provide the framework for social harmony and social unity somehow easily became the framework for a similar conception of Social Credit as God's truth with Aberhart as the chief evangelist. To those who questioned his new missionary goals, Aberhart retored:

> This friend evidently believes we should not do
> any thing to relieve suffering until everyone is
> converted, so he suggests we should start to
> preach the gospel from the housetops, rather than
> help our fellow man. I have broadcast over this
> radio the lessons of the gospel of Jesus Christ
> for over 15 years. Conditions have been so un-
> bearable in the West that the people cannot hear
> the Gospel. We are taking action to deliver the
> people from their trouble. God had declared his
> truth, and God has asked us to deliver our
> people.[33]

In this quotation, Aberhart's sense of divine mission is clear. It was this deep sense of mission and eternal destiny that allowed Social Crediters to make such statements and assumptions about the nature of their crusade. It was this sense of conviction that served a useful

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[32] Ibid., April 10th, 1938.

[33] Ibid., August 18th, 1937.

function to block out any doubts and uncertainties about the validity

of this untried theory. It was this sense of conviction that fostered

a deep feeling of loyalty and faithfulness in spite of challenges by

the federal government and the criticisms of political opponents.

Religion thus was a stabilizing force in the maintenance of the unity

of the crusade-turned-government when protest had to be subverted to

bureaucratic administration.

The Political Use of the Broadcast

The third way in which religion was significant to the Social

Credit crusade in power was that the Institute religious broadcast be-

came the primary medium whereby contact was maintained with the grass-

roots to explain the activity of the Social Credit government. In

other words, the broadcast continued to be used as the vehicle to

inform, instruct, and solicit response from the masses. The Rebel

somewhat caustically complained of this procedure as it related to

Aberhart's legislative duties.

> One need but ponder over the significance of the
> fact that the Prophetic Bible Institute is little
> else than a glorified propaganda joint and a
> spiritual headquarters of a political party --
> now the government. It is from there, instead
> of from his proper place in the Legislature, where
> Aberhart propounds his "policies" of government.
> It is from there sectarian religion is made to
> serve political ends: and it is there the head
> of a government uses the office of premier to
> further sectarian religion, and his "pastors" and
> "students" are trained to preach the gospel of
> Aberhart.[34]

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[34]The Rebel, June 11th, 1937.

Aberhart shunned legislative debate even though he was regular in at-
tendance at sessions. However, by his own admission, he under-valued
legislative debate in preference for caucus and publicity via the
broadcast which reliably presented his own interpretation of events.
In one of Aberhart's infrequent legislative speeches, during the winter
session of 1939, he asserted:

> Now, Mr. Speaker, I have taken up considerable
> time. I have departed from my usual policy and I
> wonder if I have accomplished anything. I am sure
> our members are fully aware of everything I have
> said. The public I can reach by the radio, so
> why take up the time of the House with a long
> address. There is an old Chinese proverb "Crow-
> ing hens lay no eggs". If I must choose, I would
> rather be a hen that lays eggs for the good of
> mankind than a hen that crows and never takes
> any action.[35]

In Aberhart's view, the legislature was merely the institutionally pre-
scribed place for the passing of bills required to put the demands of
the people into action. Aberhart perceived debate as the necessary
activity at the populist level, but once the people had spoken, their
legislators became representatives of the general will to ensure the
implementation of the policies of the plebiscite.[36] The broadcast then

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[35]Fred Kennedy Papers. Johnson and MacNutt suggest three reasons
why Aberhart was largely silent in the legislature: a schoolmaster could
not tolerate the interruptions of parliamentary debate, with little op-
position debate was a waste of time, and he was following Douglas theory
in which policy was left to caucus of representatives and methods were
left to the experts. Aberhart of Alberta, p. 165.

[36]In its general outlines, we agree with Macpherson that Aberhart's
government under-valued the legislature and annual conventions and favored
a plebiscitarian democracy in which the general will determined general
policy but left the rest to "trusted" experts. However, we see this not
so much as a tactic for political control as a further demonstration of
Aberhart's conception of the movement as a populist revolt demanding

became the means to report to the people what was happening and the medium whereby loyalty and faithfulness to the crusade and its leadership could be perpetuated. The use of the radio to go to the people made it plain that elected representatives were no substitute for the leader-follower relation and that the government was truly a movement very closely tied to its leader. After all, Aberhart had asserted, "I want the people of Calgary and Alberta to know that any criticism of their M.L.A.'s is a direct attack on me".[37] Taking the reigns of government did not change Aberhart's conception of the movement as a crusade.

The role of the religious broadcast in Aberhart's administration is best expressed by focusing on the major crises that faced the Social Credit government. Interspersed with statements of a religious nature over the air were repeated references to challenges to his leadership and to his government policy.

The year 1937 was an extremely stormy year for the government. Aberhart's failure to pay the anticipated dividends at the end of eighteen months in office reached a crisis in March. On the March 28th broadcast, Aberhart announced his failure to keep his promise, and strangely, his honesty and open admission of failure articulated in appropriately sentimental fashion aroused considerable sympathy and maintained much support. Instead of going to the news media, whom he

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reform but lacking the expertise, and of his conception of his government as a social movement or crusade in which he carried out the wishes of the people but in doing so definitely dominated the leadership role.

[37]Calgary Herald, August 24th, 1936.

distrusted, the Financial Post reported how he retreated to the security of the pulpit from where the crusade had been launched. "Using his traditional outlet of the Prophetic Bible Institute pulpit, Alberta's prophet-premier this week declared that he was not quitting his post unless the people desired it, and proposed the somewhat unconstitutional procedure of getting his constituents' stand while still hanging fast to the reigns of office".[38] Instead of appealing to the economic and constitutional difficulties, the irrational and sentimental elements so characteristic of the crusade became front-line defenses of the movement. Norman James, MLA, broadcast in April, 1937 at the Edmonton Prophetic Bible Conference that Aberhart ought to be supported in spite of his mistakes and "human frailties" because he was honest and "sincere of purpose".[39] Failure to inaugurate Social Credit was not to be considered the decisive point for criticism; rather it was the character and intentions of the leader that were to be the ultimate criteria. Economic policy and failure were thus slowly subverted to ideal factors which had given the crusade its dynamic in the first place.

The second crisis of 1937 was occasioned by the orthodox budget, also brought down in March. Social Credit backbenchers led a revolt within the party over the lack of haste and positive measures brought forward to institute Social Credit in the province.[40] The demand for

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[38]Financial Post, March 6th, 1937.

[39]Calgary Herald, April 12th, 1937.

[40]For a complete chronicle of the events of this revolt, cf. H. J. Schultz, "The Social Credit Backbenchers' Revolt, 1937", Canadian Historical Review (March, 1960), 1-18.

the implementation of Douglas theory produced a severe split within the

party and was only settled by a compromise in which a Social Credit

Board was established to pursue the matter further, make legislative

recommendations to the government, and educate the people as to the

necessary steps to be taken. In a play for power and unity amidst this

insurgency, Aberhart again went to the people via his Sunday broadcast.

"You should definitely instruct your M.L.A. whether he should cross

the floor in opposition to the present government or not. It is surely

evident that there should be no serious criticism from the Government

side of the House".[41] In this crisis situation the broadcast undoubtedly

was the primary instrument of cohesiveness by which Aberhart could re-

tain control of the movement. Every week the latest developments were

discussed by Manning, Aberhart, or one of the trusted MLA's or cabinet

members. Aberhart made his leadership role in the movement very clear

in 1936 by defending his government appointees as products of his in-

fluence. "If any member of the Cabinet does anything which does not

please you, I am responsible".[42] Either Aberhart would direct the

movement or there would be no movement. A year later, his own consti-

tuents challenged him on just this point as a recall petition was

circulated in his own constituency of Okotoks-High River. A general

disenchantment with his unfulfilled promises began to gain momentum.

Earlier in the year, the Recall Act had been passed as a general check

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[41]Johnson and McNutt, op. cit., p. 170.

[42]Kennedy Papers, August 24th, 1936, a statement by Aberhart at
the 1st Anniversary Picnic in Calgary.

on representatives -- a bill very characteristic of agrarian populism.

However, in the fall of 1937, the Act was repealed retroactively and
Aberhart's seat was saved.[43]

Religious Interpretations of Politics

If the climb to power was accomplished through generous use of

religious legitimation, it would be expected that a crusade in power

would seek similar legitimations when it faced critical difficulties.

Aberhart was quick to point out that the personal attacks on him as,

for example, the threat of recall, were not without Biblical precedent.

> There never was a reform, ladies and gentlemen,
> there never was any great progress made without
> vigorous opposition of the uninformed and selfish.
> Christ declared that fact in that expression of
> his "A prophet is without honor in his own coutry".
> Will the common people never learn to stand to-
> gether and assert their will and their rights?
> They must not allow the slander, the mud-slinging,
> the efforts of anyone to upset or discourage them.
> Some human beings are like fountain pens. This is
> how the fountain pen instructions read: "When
> this pen flows too freely, it is a sign it is
> nearly empty" (applause).[44]

Nehemiah, the Old Testament leader, was also a good example of being

loyal to the truth above all else. Nehemiah's enemies tried to dis

suade him from his work and when he stood firm, they began to spread

untrue distressing stories about him. Moses also was one who had to

face persecution from the same people whose very interests were the

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[43]It appears that sufficient signatures were being obtained to
make recall a live possibility, thus prompting remedial action.

[44]Kennedy Papers, transcribed Sunday Radio Addresses, October
10th, 1937.

closest to his heart.   Aberhart argued:

> It was not dividends in those days -- it was water.
> How they did ride Moses about it. He had not a mo-
> ment of peace. They forgot all about the bondage
> they had in Egypt previous to this. They refused
> to recall Pharaoh's cruelty to them. They had no
> water and Moses was to blame in trying to bring them
> out of Egypt, and so he was to blame and they
> grumbled about it. How ungrateful people are?

He went on to liken not only himself to Moses's reception by the people,

but, also, in the face of his inability to inaugurate Social Credit, to

point out that deliverance from oppression cannot be an act of man but

only an act of God.

> The Lord told Moses to write the whole story as a
> memorial in the book so the people could read it
> and realize that he is ready to deliver the people
> from oppressors from generation to generation, to
> those that call upon Him....People too often look
> to men -- too often look to governments, or
> political parties. They forget that it is only
> God that can give the deliverance.[45]

Therefore, Aberhart could argue that he was not leading the people but

was only an instrument of God. The success or failure of the movement

was dependent on the will of God and his part in it was nothing but

humble submission.

> If this council or this work be of man, it will
> come to naught, but if it be of God, ye cannot
> overthrow it. I claim it is our duty to submit
> to the will of God. I have today through no desire
> of my own -- I have never had any ambition to be
> Premier, but now that I am there, I want to be
> merely an instrument in the hands of God. What
> God calls a man to do, he must do, or suffer the
> consequences. I would not undertake to resist
> any man or work, or to govern half a dozen sheep

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[45]Ibid., June 19th, 1938.

> if I did it of my own self will and stubborn-
> ness.[46]

On one hand, statements such as these appear as gross manipulative

legitimations to substantiate political power. While empirically the

assertions strongly smack of naivete, it is highly important to under-

stand Aberhart's life orientation. If, as we have established, religion

was the passion of Aberhart's life, and if the only way Aberhart knew

to coordinate a movement was as a crusade, we would expect his strong

sense of God-consciousness to also be present while in office.[47] Thus

while he used the broadcast to provide religious legitimations of the

Social Credit experience in office, it was largely consistent with the

nature of the movement and the personal goals of the leadership that

religion was not primarily to be an instrument of power, but an orien-

tation to a particular way of life.

The effect of this type of legitimation on the people was

highly significant. While it alienated persons who objected to the

connections between Christianity and Social Credit theory and govern-

ment, it united others who were so deeply committed to the movement as

a crusade that the repeated reference to Biblical precedents and

analogies provided convenient explanatory devices amidst division and

uncertainty. Constant criticism and repudiation of Aberhart was not

anything new, for this was the lot of heroes gone by who have suffered

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[46]Ibid., October 10th, 1937.

[47]Observe the following statement by Aberhart. "Some people
say to me, 'Do you think you will be elected again Mr. Aberhart?' My
reply is I do not know -- I am prepared for whatever comes, I do not
care which it is because to be out of the will of God is foolish". Ibid.,
July 24th, 1938.

for the truth. "I sometimes think back to the days when Christ was establishing the new era of his day -- the live and let live doctrine he taught. As soon as he taught the truth he was tabooed".[48] When Social Credit legislation was disallowed or declared ultra vires by federal authorities (including the Privy Council) on constitutional grounds, Aberhart again had a rejoinder:

> Christ himself would say on occasions of this kind:
> 'The constitution was made for the people -- not
> the people for the constitution' (applause). I say
> that in his name because he himself made a state-
> ment similar to that in connection with that well-
> known and wretched law of sabbath observance. I do
> not want you to think for one moment that Christ,
> the master of the world, was lawless or wanted the
> law removed. But he did point out that the inter-
> pretation and application of the law must be for
> the welfare of the people, generally, and not as an
> experiment in the hands of the few to oppress, or
> cause misery for them (applause).[49]

The Catholic lawyer, Lucien Maynard echoed the same feeling in crusade-like theological terms before the legislature in response to the declaration of unconstitutional legislation:

> Mr. Speaker, there is something greater than the
> law of men, and that is the law of God, and I main-
> tain that when human legislators have so forgotten
> themselves as to pass laws that contravene the
> divine law, every man is bound in conscience to obey
> the divine law rather than an iniquitous and per-
> verse human law...if the contention of the banks
> and of these lawyers expressed in the papers today
> is correct, that we must let our people starve be-
> cause we have not the right under our constitution
> to provide them with food when we have such an
> abundance of it, then I claim that the constitution

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[48]
Ibid., October 24th, 1937.

[49] Ibid., August 18th, 1937.

is unjust and in contravention of the law of God.

Aberhart had made it plain that the Bible recorded not only God's past

action in history but that it dealt with the moving of history to its

climax. It was therefore natural that the supernatural direction of

present history had its roots in the Bible so that the invocation of

Biblical examples in understanding the parallel events of today was

considered appropriate and normal. Alberta was not just a province, it

was God's country in which God would reveal His plan of economic sal-

vation to mankind.

> I feel that this is a Christian country -- I always
> thought it was -- and what makes a Christian country
> is the people believe in Christ. You cannot find a
> story of Christ in any other book and if you are
> going to have your ruler, your premier, or any
> member of government made fun of because he believes
> his Bible, I wonder what kind of country we are
> living in. I suppose I would be better able to
> govern if I had a bottle or a deck of cards in one
> hand.[51]

The feeling that something unique was happening in Alberta or was about

to happen was part of this special destiny idea inculcated by the emo-

tional fervor of the crusade. The implicitly theocratic conception of

the Social Credit government thus freely appropriated Scripture as

analogies or mottos in defense of their position. Social Crediters were

urged from the New Testament text, "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable...", and

admonished "If God be for us, who can be against us". To vote for

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[50]
        Speech in legislature delivered August 6th, 1937, and published
under the title "Human Law must Bow to Divine Law", by United Democrats.
Edmonton.

[51]
        Kennedy Papers, October 16th, 1938.

Social Credit had been a step of faith in much the same way that Christian belief had been such a step, and therefore religion had provided the framework in which the crusade was championed and defended in spite of threats to its existence.

Several reasons may be proffered for why a crusade was an acceptable manner of operating a government in power. These are the continuing sense of political powerlessness felt in Alberta, the widespread acceptance of the social principles of Christianity as integral for the public good, and the continuing need for personal and social integration amidst instability.

The Crusade as an Instrument of Power

The first reason that a crusade was still important was that the increasing realization that Social Credit could not be inauguarted provincially reinforced feelings of powerlessness, uncertainty, and maintained the fear of hidden external forces. The passage of thirteen bills relating to various aspects of Social Credit theory had been either disallowed or declared _ultra vires_ by federal courts.[52] Such blockage, instead of discrediting Aberhart, actually worked in his favor for it meant that external oppressive powers were denigrating the will of the people. Social Credit could not be condemned on that basis because federal authorities would not allow it to be tried. A crusade then was still appropriate because Albertans were being perse-

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Cf. Whalen, _op. cit._, and Mallory, _op. cit._, and A. F. McGoun, "Social Credit Legislation: A Survey", _Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science_ (1936), 512-524.

cuted. Aberhart's refusal to make the interest payments on the provincial debt to eastern bondholders in 1936, the legislature's refusal to grant the Lieutenant Governor his living allowance in 1938 when he reserved the controversial legislation, the attempt to muzzle a hostile and eastern-owned press by forcing the printing of government-approved statements regarding government policies as stipulated by the provincial Accurate News and Information Act of 1937, and the imprisonment of Socred MLA Joseph Unwin and Douglas adviser G. F. Powell for defamatory libel in attacking the banks and referring to their old-time party opposition by name and with the accusation of being "banker's toadies" was all evidence to Albertans that Aberhart was radical enough to strike back at her oppressors. Such action endeared him to the rank-and-file and provided a sense of power and retaliation in the midst of powerlessness. As most Albertans desired it, Aberhart played the game demanded by the system but occasionally insisted on "our" rules rather than always "your" rules in an attempt to seek redress for long-standing grievances. Once the initial disappointment was overcome regarding the impossibility of the implementation of Social Credit in Alberta, it was clear that a crusade was still necessary for final victory could only be achieved if the nation were conquered by the forces of the movement.

Widening the Crusade

Aberhart made three vigorous attempts to enlarge the boundaries of the crusade. The first one was to carry the banner into the provincial elections of the neighboring provinces of Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Rev. Ernest Hansell was sent to British Columbia and,

except for a smattering of successes in particular locations,[53] never

really attained the intended goal until the collapse of the Liberal-

Conservative coalition in 1952 which produced a brand of Social Credit

government completely outside the heritage of the Alberta crusade.[54]

The 1938 elections in Saskatchewan had evoked widespread participation

and campaigning by the Alberta crusaders who had great hopes that a

similar victory could be obtained next door. The CCF had a gathering

momentum but the Catholic Church and Cardinal Villeneuve of Quebec, in

particular, had spoken out against the CCF as a result of it being a

"socialist" organization.[55] The 1935 federal election had resulted in

CCF receiving 19% of the votes while Social Credit made a strong

showing with 20% of the votes.[56] Yet Lipset points out that many

Saskatchewan voters saw an ultimate congruency of protest and justice

in the two parties with many locals shifting their support to one

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[53]In the June elections in 1937, Social Credit fielded 18 can-
didates in British Columbia and all were defeated.

[54]Martin Robin, "The Social Basis of Party Politics in British
Columbia", Queens Quarterly 72 (1965-1966), 675-690.

[55]Milnor points out that non-English ethnic groups were moving
to protest parties with their religion playing a major role in which
protest they adopted. Social Credit was neutral to the Roman Catholic
Church and so became an acceptable channel of protest. East European
Catholics tended to support the CCF because of ill feeling they had toward
the Roman Catholics. Andrew Milnor, "The New Politics and Ethnic
Revolt 1929-1938", in Ward and Spafford (eds.), Politics in Saskatchewan,
pp. 164-167. For a discussion on the Catholic stand against socialism
in Saskatchewan, as well as its eventual resolution, cf. Milnor, Agrarian
Protest in Saskatchewan, 1929-1948: A Study in Ethnic Politics, pp. 92-
104; and the Regina Leader Post, March 3rd, 1934, May 16th, 1934, and
November 30th, 1938.

[56]Lipset, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

movement or the other according to the situation. However, the re-

duction of Catholic hostility to the Saskatchewan CCF party by 1938,

which had removed the word "socialist" from its platform and eliminated

its more radical proposals, in combination with the seemingly foreign

invasion by Alberta of Saskatchewan as opposed to an indigenous move-

ment led by and for Saskatchewanites produced a disappointing victory

of only two seats for Social Credit. As could be predicted, Aberhart

explained the electoral results in a manner consistent with his theo-

centric view of the entire movement:[57]

> I am quite satisfied first with the results permitted
> by God, and second with the splendid letters from our
> people. Now, quite recently, I have been reading the
> story of Israel's deliverance and, by the way, I am
> sure you have noticed it as well as I have that Moses
> did not win every conflict he went into. He did not
> bat 100% average every time he came to bat, and what
> is more, people did not write him letters of encour-
> agement either.[58]

Two elements are visible here. While the sense of disappointment was

acute among Social Crediters, it was nonetheless accepted as that which

was not meant to be by the prime mover of history. Secondly, the

voluminous mail that Aberhart continued to receive was a continual

source of encouragement to him and became a fountain of optimism that

scattered adherents across the country might some day be moulded into

an effective political unit.

57
    Ibid., pp. 142 ff. Milnor, op. cit., pp. 162-163, aruges that
Social Credit failed in Saskatchewan because it was "pure protest" in
that it knew more "what it was against than what it was for".

58
    Kennedy Papers, June 19th, 1938.

It could easily be argued that the onset of the war and the

failure to make substantial gains in Saskatchewan despite considerable

investments of time and energy reduced the momentum of the Social

Credit crusade and stifled it permanently. Yet, Aberhart was to make

two more related attempts to carry the crusade across Canada and there-

by to establish a society based on Social Credit principles. Major

W. O. Herridge, former Canadian Ambassador to Washington, had been

travelling the country in the late 30's in an effort to unite people of

varying viewpoints who were interested in monetary reform. While he

avoided any specific commitments in his role as coordinator and agi-

tator, he sought and obtained the support of Aberhart and the Social

Credit movement. As a reform movement, Aberhart supported New Democracy

as an attempt to gain federal attention for the mutual problem of

money reform. Hallett argues that Aberhart saw in New Democracy the

chance for Social Credit eventually to become a national party and there-

fore found the existing movement to be a convenient and useful link with

Social Credit converts across the nation.[59] Herridge stressed good

Social Credit themes as individual security, the ineffectiveness of

old-line parties, and the need for new monetary principles, but because

he lacked the expansionist motives of Aberhart the crusader, the co-

operation was minimal. Aberhart had instructed the federal members of

parliament in Ottawa to project themselves not just as representatives

from Alberta but as representatives of the new movement in the country.

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[59]Mary Hallett, "The Social Credit Party and the New Democracy
Movement: 1939-1940", Canadian Historical Review 47 (1966), 309, 325.
A good description and analysis of the New Democracy Movement.

When it became obvious to him that Herridge was an independent type and
would never cooperate with him the way Aberhart desired,[60] and thereby
was undermining Aberhart's leadership with his individualism, a new
organization was established known as the Democratic Monetary Reform
Organization (DMRO).

The first meeting of this body was held at the Marlborough
Hotel in Winnipeg from October 27th-29th, 1941, with the explicit pur-
pose of serving as a coordinating body for branches in each province
which would exist as autonomous units. Because the largest delegation
came from Alberta, it was plain that Aberhart would have an influential
leadership role and would attempt to use the organization for the ulti-
mate ends of the crusade which had begun in Alberta. In a press state-
ment released on June 8th, 1942, Aberhart used the familiar tactics of
pointing out that this was not to be construed as the emergence of a
political party but as an effort to educate the people and unite them
to demand the results they wanted.[61] Again, not unexpectedly, the
first objective of the DMRO was stated in terms of the sacral ideology
of the crusade: "To foster and encourage the universally recognized

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[60]
In a letter dated June 22nd, 1939, Aberhart declared to
Herridge something of his feelings of personal neglect as the leader of
Alberta. "You say 'Long ago you offered me your friendship and co-
operation to ensure success. And I accepted them most genuinely'. I
hope you do not mean by that that I agree to step out of the picture al-
together. Evidently you have no particular need for my advice and I
have no desire whatever to inflict the same upon you. I am, therefore,
awaiting patiently to ascertain what you mean by the word co-operation".
Premiers' Papers.

[61]
Premiers' Papers.

principles of Christianity in human relationships". With this as a basis, Aberhart took to the radio and in a series of lectures, entitled Post-War Reconstruction Broadcasts, he sought to arouse Canadians to call for and prepare for the changes that would be necessary at the war's conclusion. At least thirty-five talks were given of fifteen minute duration on a weekly basis and heard over fifteen stations from Fredericton, N.B. to Vancouver, B.C.[62] In a manner reminiscent of the 1935 campaign, Aberhart called for five hundred "honest, able, progressive and fearless men" from districts across the country whose names were to be submitted to him. These broadcasts began with considerable religious discussion but this slowly decreased as the Alberta crusade heritage was met by increasing hostility among people who could not relate to the Alberta experience and found its tactics, which had been forged in the crucible of a province's particular needs, inappropriate. While the DMRO was surely meant to be a beachhead for the broadening of the crusade, the social and economic climate across Canada was not ripe for the growth of a federal movement. In addition, Aberhart Social Credit was too narrowly preoccupied with sectional interests and insufficiently experienced in the structure of federal politics to be considered seriously. In such a stiuation, religion and other ideal factors lost their dynamic.

62

The dominant role of Alberta in spreading this economic gospel as compared with the interest in other provinces is revealed in the broadcast donations to the National Social Credit Association for the Post-War Reconstruction Talks from April to September, 1943. Alberta, $1,337.43; Manitoba, $138.00; British Columbia, $57.50, and Saskatchewan, $52.65. Premiers' Papers.

However, there was still need for a crusade as a component of

Aberhart's leadership by which to mount a counter attack to the res-

trictions to institute Social Credit, and as the medium to enlarge the
movement beyond Alberta's borders. [63]   It was Aberhart's own restless-

ness and life convictions that ensured that the movement could not be

carried on in any other way. Thus, under Aberhart, Social Credit was

a leader-dominated movement-in-power rather than an organized party
turned government-in-power. [64]

Religion   in the Maintenance of Power

The second reason why a crusade was still acceptable to

Albertans after Social Credit became the government was that the empha-

sis on the social principles of Christianity was considered to be a

good basis on which the province should be operated. Lay people of

other denominational persuasions were willing to put up with some

idiosyncratic doctrine in exchange for the stated goal of Christianizing

the social order. "You have heard today letters from some people living

on these western prairies having listened to our teachings for 12 to 15

years, and are still listening with enjoyment and profit. There are

parts of our teachings with which they do not agree, still they like the

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[63]
The 1941 Annual Convention of the Social Credit League met as a unit of the DMRO under the theme "God will enlarge thy borders", and noted its foundation in Isaiah 54:2-4.

[64]
Cf. J. R. Mallory who argues that Aberhart was no parliamentarian or party politician and failed as leader of a "political movement-in-being". "The Prophet in Politics: William Aberhart", The Canadian Forum (March, 1951), 275.

vigorous manner in which we handle the Bible and its practicable appli-
cation".[65] The emphasis on Bible principles and Bible application

rather than Bible doctrine meant that Aberhart was able to weld a loose

coalition of all for whom Christianity had meaning. In his public

political life, Aberhart would have had no quarrels with the following

resolution passed by the Alberta Conference of the United Church in

1938 at their annual sessions:

> We believe that the present order of society,
> based as it is on materialistic conceptions and
> practices, is conspicuously failing to bring the
> abundant life to the people. We agree that our
> only hope is the building of a civilization upon
> the principles of Jesus Christ, namely love, the
> supremacy of human and material values, the
> Golden Rule; and we dedicate ourselves to the
> giving of leadership in this task.[66]

Comparing this with Aberhart's assertions that "what the Christ of

Calvary taught was to be a friend to men", we see that doctrinal edges

had been blunted by the appeal and success of the social gospel empha-
sis.[67] Few Christians of whatever denomination objected to this type

of preaching in the midst of war and in facing the 1940 election. The

distrust of established structures and patterns was too deeply engrained

in the western agrarian mentality to disagree with the demand for a new

basis of society. "What a tremendous responsibility this places upon

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[65]Kennedy Papers, July 10th, 1938.

[66]Record of Proceedings, Alberta Conference of the United Church of Canada, 1938, p. 13.

[67]This is clear in Aberhart's statement that, "Social Credit is not a panacea for all the ills of life, No, you know that our greatest headway will be made when we combine Social Credit principles with spiritual values -- love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness and kindness". Kennedy Papers, July 23rd, 1939.

every one of us", Aberhart challenged them, "to dedicate ourselves in all humility to the task that is set before us of establishing a new Social Order in which the Christian ideals of individual liberty, security, and righteousness shall prevail".[68] Those who had faced the turmoil and despair of the depression and now the Second World War did not need to be reminded of the need for a new social order based on Christian principles. The new chaos and uncertainty brought on by the war was certainly a significant factor in maintaining the appropriateness of religious assertions and religious sanctions. But most significant was the fact that the war hastened the burial of orthodox Social Credit monetary theory and substituted the basic principles for which the theory stood. From this point onward, these principles rather than a monetary policy increasingly came to be what was meant by Social Credit.

The election of 1940 was carried out in the same tradition of the crusade. Most famous of this campaign was the "Big Book" which set forth the goals and achievements of the Social Credit government in a super-large book placed on the platform at all rallies that all could read. Again, Aberhart was attempting to impart truths in a way that was most familiar and consistent with his life orientation. The words of this song were emblazoned on one of the pages of the Book:

> A Better Day is Coming
> A Morning Promised Long
> When Girded Right
> With Holy Might
> Shall Overthrow the Wrong.

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[68] Edmonton Bulletin, March 11th, 1942.

In spite of the fact that all opposition parties formed a coalition to strike a united offensive at the Social Credit government, Aberhart's crusade was again victorious, albeit with a smaller margin of 36 seats (63% of the seats, as compared to 89% in 1935). The primary themes of the campaign, however, were not the just price or $25.00 per month, but good government and "Honest Abe".[69] World War II had meant the displacement of domestic issues by cooperation with the federal government. The attention of Albertans was thus diverted from the local issues on which the government could be chastized and reproved in an election. While Aberhart's personal following began to ebb and show some signs of disillusionment, the lack of a suitable alternative and the appeal of a God-honoring, fast-talking premier "who could set those easterners on their ear" made him still a favorite choice. He represented Alberta's minority group status to federal authorities well enough to defend their coveted way of life often referred to as agricultural fundamentalism.[70]

Religio-Politics and the War

We have shown that Aberhart's prophetic interpretation of the

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[69] For an account of the 1940 campaign, cf. Harold J. Schultz, "A Second Term: 1940", Alberta Historical Review 10, #1 (Winter, 1962), 17-26.

[70] Agricultural fundamentalism is the assumption that farming is not only a way of life rather than just a means of earning a living, but also the most basic and important industry in society upon which the health of the rest of the society is dependent. Cf. Joseph S. Davis, On Agricultural Policy 1926-1938, Chapter 2 entitled "Agricultural Fundamentalism". Also, Earl J. Tylor, "The Farmer as a Social Class", in Tremblay and Anderson (eds.), Rural Canada in Transition, p. 300.

Bible led him to see the hand of God in both past and present history.
If this was the case, the war must be fitted in to the Biblical frame-
work. Aberhart had unquestionably made prophecy a larger issue than
usual in Alberta's religious life and in the dark night of war persons
with such interests would turn to Aberhart for an explanation of these
bewildering events. To the largely agrarian population distressed by
the frustration of depression and now the threat of war, Aberhart gave
assurance based on the Bible rather than his own wisdom.

> I base my faith of ultimate victory for the British
> Commonwealth of Nations and the United States upon
> something far deeper and more authentic than our
> unprecedented production of war materials and the
> splendid fighting qualities of our soldiery...I say
> I base my faith upon a divine promise given 700 or
> more years before the birth of Christ....It should
> be clear to every student of the Bible that the
> British Commonwealth, the United States, and their
> allies are truly God's battle axe at this time.
> His covenant for us is to be found in Isaiah 54:17.[71]

Identifying Ephraim of the lost ten tribes as Great Britain and Manasseh
with the United States, Aberhart suggested their historic role as God's
instruments is now coming to fruition in the defense of Christianity
against "the anti-Christian paganism of the Nazis".

> Yes, God is going to give us victory in this war.
> Remember no weapon that is formed against Israel
> shall prosper. The present United Nations are God's
> great battle axe to overthrow those who would take
> freedom, righteousness, happiness, and Christianity
> from the earth, and in their place attempt to estab-
> lish bondage, paganism, regimentation, and infidelity
> or the rule of hate. The United Nations will win.[72]

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[71]Edmonton Bulletin, March 11th, 1942.

[72]Ibid.

In destroying unwarranted speculation, he rejected any identification of Hitler with the Anti-Christ because the rapture of the Church, in his interpretation, must precede the appearance of this character and that had not yet occurred.[73] Aberhart also repudiated the anti-Semitism to which Douglas had been given.

It is impossible to determine precisely what effect Aberhart's religious counsel regarding the war had on the population as a whole and to how many it provided a suitable explanation. But it can be assumed that even though interest in his broadcast was waning somewhat,[74] the crystal clear authoritative voice of one familiar with the needs and anxieties of Albertans and one who had easy access to their homes might be accepted as comforting and reassuring.[75] It was natural for those who had made emotional commitments to the crusade at the height of the depression to continue their allegiance during the disaster of war. Since both the war and the depression had causes that were external to Alberta and were beyond their control, the same explanatory framework could be employed. In addition, Aberhart's personal confidence regarding the outcome of the war which was freely expressed over the radio buoyed flagging spirits and provided encouragement to those most

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[73] Kennedy Papers, November 13th, 1938. In addition, Aberhart argued that the Anti-Christ would come from Russia.

[74] In May, 1939, the number of broadcast sponsorers had dropped off somewhat and Aberhart threatened to conclude the broadcast.

[75] At the outset of the war, Aberhart stated on the broadcast: "I hurried home Thursday from my holidays, not because I could do anything particular, but because I wanted to be at the post so if need arises, we could do all we can". Kennedy Papers, September 3rd, 1939.

bewildered by the complex world events. Throughout the war, Aberhart

preached patriotism and loyalty to the Crown and minimized the sec-

tional interests of western agrarians.

Religion at the Grass-Roots

The third reason why the crusade was still acceptable to the

majority of Albertans was that it was providing the necessary means for

social integration at the grass-roots. Again, it was the broadcast

that played the primary role. Individual Social Credit study groups

would sponsor each broadcast, their names might be mentioned, and

Aberhart might reminisce about experiences he had at a rally at that

country point. Special messages would be given, as, for example, "to

the boys at the Ogden shops" in Calgary, on the air. Study groups

would be informed of the activities of other study groups and Albertans

as a whole would develop strong ties and interests in what was going on

in other parts of the province. The war only reinforced this demand

for social unity and a sense of solidarity. The sense of unity which

the broadcast and the crusade fostered was not only at the provincial

level but also at the community level, as this description from Delburne

suggests:

> I was very grieved at the thought of so much in-
> gratitude on so many persons' part. But we are
> not all that kind. Let me try and picture to you
> what your sermons mean to people as a whole.
>
> Take last Sunday for instance.
>
> We will say it is 2:45 o'clock. Soon they begin
> to gather at a neighbor's where a radio is close.
> For ten minutes or so they visit -- then someone
> suggests 'it is almost three o'clock'. The radio

is turned on and our battle song is thrown over the
air with much feeling. Then they hear your voice.
Now watch the people's faces. With a satisfied
smile they settle down. 'There is our leader, Mr.
Aberhart'. Everything is quiet but your broadcast
-- unless an old familiar hymn is sung. Most of
them join in -- young and old.

When your sermon is on -- if you could only see the
rapt expressions on their faces. One person's face
is peaceful, eyes closed. Another's is alive with
interest. One appears asleep -- until you see a
tear creep from under their closed eyes and slip
quietly down their cheeks. Each and every one are
deeply touched by your friendly, Christian advice
and warning. God alone can tell you what good work
you are doing. No one ever moves until your last
clear clarion call rings out over the air. Miss it!
Not if it is possible to hear it. I can show you
Catholics that listen every Sunday and say truth-
fully, it is the first service they would be
bothered listening to.[76]

The crusade provided a common basis for community socialization and es-

tablished common ground and a common perspective to unite people with

divergent interests, nationalities, and traditions to a common purpose.

What had begun in the organization of the UFA and reached its peak in

the depression activity of Social Credit merely continued into the war

years as a defense against world chaos.

The non-sectarian nature of Aberhart's efforts sought a common

denominator for collective action and social solidarity in Christianity.

In July, 1939, Aberhart called for his listeners to send in a line

stating "I am one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and I shall

join you in prayer for the welfare of This Province". He was careful

to point out that denominational membership had nothing to do with this

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[76]Ibid., June 8th, 1936.

appeal. "I am not asking you to join any church. We merely want to act as official recorders over the radio. No matter to what church you belong, as long as you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ".[77] It was not that Social Crediters must believe in Christ but that "Social Credit was a form of organization which makes it easier to be religious".[78] Aberhart was not demanding allegiance to doctrinal specificity but was continually appealing to the basic elements of the populist religion as a means to broaden and strengthen his appeal in populist politics.

Psychological Functions of the Crusade

Earlier in the chapter, we suggested that considerable debate has arisen over whether Aberhart ever intended to establish Social Credit as a monetary policy. While it is difficult to state anything conclusive about intentions, it could be argued from a functional point of view that it really did not matter for the crusade was highly significant to the development of Alberta society. In a province of considerable lack of social organization,[79] resentment of external manipulation, and removal from the center of power, the crusade was a vital instrument in establishing social and individual integration as a bulwark to face

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[77]Ibid., July 9th, 1939.

[78]Ibid., July 23rd, 1939. Aberhart's basic and underlying hope that economic stability would open men's hearts to religious concerns is quite evident here.

[79]We have purposely rejected the use of the term "social disorganization" which implies something negative and chaotic. It was more the lack of social organization that characterized Alberta society. It was not disorganized but unorganized.

these problems. Aberhart suggested as much when he explained the purpose

of the broadcast in 1936.

> The purpose of our broadcast is two-fold — to remove
> doubt regarding spiritual matters, by calling the
> people's attention to the plain words of the holy
> Word of God. That is our first purpose. Our second
> one is to discover and teach, if possible, to the
> people of this western land, truth concerning the
> economic problem that at present distresses us, so
> that the people may be able to understand what the
> trouble is — where the difficulty arises.[80]

The two key verbs are "to remove doubt" and "to teach". Aberhart did

both by making bold affirmative statements in the midst of uncertainty.

He reaffirmed belief in the Bible and taught the errors of others who had

undermined their confidence in it. He reaffirmed the belief in private

enterprise and taught his followers the reasons why it was not working.

In other words, he reaffirmed a style of life by dispelling doubts

about its potential and providing simple arguments to defend it. Prop-

hecy and Social Credit theory were the means by which this was done,

but the means were never as important as the ends, and therefore they

were easily minimized. What was important was that a way of life needed

to be defended from erosion. Albertans were not interested in or pre-

pared for intellectual speculation about the origin of the Bible, the

nature of the Constitution, or the rules of economics. They needed

someone to convince them that their optimism in settling in Alberta

would not lead to ruin but to prosperity. Thus Aberhart greeted his

listeners knowing full well that the depression was not only an external

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[80]
Kennedy Papers, November 22nd, 1936.

phenomenon but also an inner feeling. "Once more we greet our radio friends, and all who hear us in our regular Sunday afternoon program. We bring you again a little encouragement and inspiration for the struggle of life".[81] The activism that the crusade demanded helped dispel discouragement by channelling energies into constructive goal-directed action. Everything may have been in a state of flux and uncertainty but Aberhart and his proclamation of timeless Biblical truths appeared constant. As one Calgary listener gratefully acknowledged, "...you give me encouragement to carry on, lots of times I want to give up but when I think of what you have endure(d) of the dissatisfaction of people way better off than I, it just makes me carry on..."[82] In a broadcast of the Edmonton Prophetic Bible Conference on CJCA in 1939, Manning remarked:

> We want first of all to thank all those who have written to us during the last two weeks to express their appreciation of our broadcasts. Some liked the band very much. Others liked the singing. A few enjoyed the studies and most of you told us of the uplift and encouragement derived from listening. This is most satisfactory to us. As long as our audiences are getting help we feel that our work is not in vain.[83]

From this statement, it is possible for us to conclude that in its populist phase, the crusade was far more important for its function in bringing personal encouragement and support amidst adversity than for its purely ideological contents of religion and economics. The

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[81] Ibid., December 12th, 1937.

[82] Premiers' Papers, June 7th, 1936.

[83] Ibid., undated.

psychological effect of the crusade on the population of Alberta was such that collective depression was turned into collective strength and optimism.[84] And as long as collective despair was present in the province, the crusade would be appropriate and functional.

The Response of Elites to the Crusade

While the masses at the grass-roots may have found the crusade congenial in scope and content, the elites (political, economic, religious) abhorred both the nature and tactics of the crusade. Most leaders of established community, political, religious, or economic institutions felt threatened by the inroads the crusade made into their domains, and the unpredictability and erratic hysteria of the intolerant masses made them vulnerable to attack and rebellion. Their vested interest in the status quo caused them to exercise extreme caution. However, they were also the persons who felt the impact of the depression least severely. When the educated clergy attacked Aberhart for his theological interpretations, he retorted, "What have these few preachers done for the people in the last few years?" And then, baiting the people for a response, he challenged them. "I am willing to have the people of Alberta judge for themselves...you are not so subnormal as

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[84]In an editorial, the Western Producer, June 3rd, 1943, told the story of why Aberhart became a populist leader in Alberta. "It was in these circumstances, when frustration and despair bore down on them from every side, that the ringing, challenging voice of Aberhart roused them to a new hope, put faith and courage into their souls, firing them with the conviction that, with determination and boldness, they could surmount their difficulties, confound their oppressors and lead the way to a new and better life".

they think you are....You say the word, and you will not hear my voice

again. You must decide who is the menace to the good of the people".[85]

The definition of what constituted a menace to the good of the people

produced sharp cleavages in the social structure. In contrast to

Lipset's finding that the CCF in Saskatchewan was led by the normal

community leaders,[86] Social Credit in Alberta, particularly under

Aberhart's selection procedure, was more centralized, leader-dominated,

and deliberately repudiated those with former political connections and

high community leadership roles.[87] Aberhart's personal domination

meant that he sought local representatives who would fully acknowledge

his leadership and this tended to alienate ambitious community leaders

with high personal initiative.[88] Therefore, the movement attracted

those who would be motivated by ideal factors such as sacrifice and

justice and whose personal predispositions did not exude too much

aggressiveness. Teachers, preachers, and small businessmen, most of

whom had little active leadership positions, particularly in the

political arena, became supportive secondary leaders in deference to the

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[85]Kennedy Papers, October 5th, 1936.

[86]Lipset, op. cit., p. 229.

[87]Compare Walter Young, who also argues that Social Credit was
a movement of the lower middle class and not led by the normal community
leaders. Democracy and Discontent: Progressivism, Socialism, and
Social Credit in the Canadian West, p. 94.

[88]Aberhart's desire for consensus on the terms of his leader-
ship led to the early resignations of four cabinet ministers within the
early years of government: C. C. Ross, Charles Cockroft, J. W. Hugill,
and W. N. Chant.

primary leadership of Aberhart. This is to say that the crusade was at least slightly repugnant to the normal community leaders.[89]

Considerable hostility was aroused against the Socred government among those who had made financial investments in provincial bonds or invested in personal loans. The legislation that the government passed assisting in debt reduction and attempting to control unjust usury ruined anticipated income from investments. The Reduction and Settlement of Debts Act of 1936 (later disallowed), and the default on the provincial bonds raised the ire not only of private investors but of institutions and organizations. While Aberhart led this bold stand against usury on behalf of the masses and to their delight, he noted on the broadcast that "one of the churches that has been living on usury is squawking". In November of 1936, the Calgary diocese of the Anglican Church conducted an appeal for $8,000.00 to replace income lost through the Social Credit policy. The United Church of Canada Pension Fund also suffered some loss of income. To those classes of people and institutions who had financial reserves and who invested them as a source of income, the legislation of the crusade was threateningly unorthodox and was perceived as an attempt to deliberately undermine their existence and established position. It was because such profit was perceived to accrue at the people's expense that the masses

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[89]The Alberta Conference of the UCC attempted to censor its ministers who had become too involved with Social Credit by arguing that, "...we do not consider it possible for a minister to fulfill faithfully and efficiently his duties in a pastoral charge or other office sanctioned by the church while serving as a member of legislature or parliament..." Record of Proceedings, 1938, p. 35.

of Albertans who had no such investments resented the economic elite
and establishment organizations who did.

Leadership elites in Alberta were perceptive enough to see that
it was the broadcast that solidified the people and was the primary
organizational medium to coordinate the movement. If the broadcast
could be prohibited or restricted on legal grounds, the movement might
be effectively quashed. As a result of some lobbying, the Canadian
Broadcasting Act had been passed June 23rd, 1936, in which Section 22.3
prohibited "dramatized political broadcasts". Under this pressure,
the series of the bearded Professor Orthodox Anonymous was discontinued.
However, contrary to popular belief, there was no statement in the Act
prohibiting Sunday political broadcasts. But Aberhart defended himself
again by appealing to the Bible. He asked how it was possible to even
discuss characters from the Bible such as Joseph, Moses, and Daniel,
for their lives were largely political in nature. Regarding the stories
of these men, Aberhart said:

> You cannot read them without dealing with the
> politics of that day. Why even the story of the
> birth of Jesus tells us that Joseph and Mary had
> to go to Bethlehem to pay taxes to the government
> in power. Peter and some of his friends dis-
> cussed with Christ the propriety of paying taxes
> ....Are the words of Christ such as not to be
> fit to be discussed on Sunday?[90]

Another dispute in 1936 raged over whether the broadcast was to be
charged political or religious rates. Some of the Sunday afternoon
rallies had been transferred to the Calgary arena, and if it could be

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[90] Kennedy Papers, September 12th, 1937.

understood as a political broadcast, the rates would have to be $1.50

a minute for two hours. Those looking in at the proceedings of the

movement from the outside never understood how deeply its participants

felt that it was a non-partisan crusade and not politics. Norman

Priestley, leader of the UFA, expressed this feeling shared by other

elites. "Was there ever anything more despicable than the attempt of

a pseudo-religious group to get religious rates for broadcasting on

the air, of a nature that is more partisan and political than anything

we have ever seen".[91] The broadcast monopolized the attention of

Albertans and prevented the exercise of the free development of other

political groups. Thus it was because of the thorough success of the

crusade in stifling all opposition that the elites struck out at the

inclusion of political references on the religious broadcast.

The Edmonton Prophetic Bible Conference began broadcasting

over CJCA on Sunday evenings from 8:00 - 9:00 in mid-January of 1936.

However, the time of the broadcast was directly in competition with

services held by individual churches who had difficulty matching

Aberhart's more interesting and entertaining programmes. Therefore,

organizations such as the Athabasca All Saints Church Committee, the

Edmonton Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church, and the Leduc Social

Credit study group made official requests that Aberhart refrain from

broadcasting in the evening during church hours.[92] Such complaints

provide some indication of the breadth and cross-sectional appeal of the

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[91]Priestley Papers, memorandum dated August 25th, 1936.

[92]Much of the evidence for this controversy regarding the broad-
cast and federal regulations can be found in Premiers' Papers. The

broadcast. However, after considerable debate and dispute, the broad-
cast was taken off the air in March, 1936, on the grounds of some prior
station commitments to the national programme distributed by the Radio
Commission entitled "Atlantic Nocturne".

Broadcast harassment was considered an effective means to con-
strict Aberhart's movement, but in the end it only reinforced the per-
secution complex already present in the crusade and heightened the
conviction that they must be really threatening the elites to evoke
such strong opposition from them. Rumours and threats continually
made themselves known throughout Aberhart's administration that the
broadcast was in some way in contravention to federal law. In 1941,
considerable pressure was placed on CFCN by a federal censorship board
that it was violating the prescription that during the period of war
emergency, all addresses of a political nature must be confined to
studio broadcasting. Again the question arose as to whether Aberhart's
broadcast was religion or politics. In a letter to CFCN dated July
18th, 1941, Aberhart argued that his broadcast was not politics but
religion and economics. However, since CFCN's license was threatened
and the Defense of Canada regulations placed full responsibility for
violation on the station managers, Aberhart was forced to comply and
did part of his broadcast from the Institute and part from the studio.
From the personal observations of those interviewed, it was around this
time that the listening audience showed a sharp decline. However, during

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Calgary Herald, May 29th, 1937, reported that the Alberta Conference of
the UCC petitioned the CBC to eliminate partisan political propaganda
and commercial advertising in Sunday broadcasting.

this period, two strictly religious half-hour broadcasts were added: Lamplighters, taken from the Biblical text "Thy word is a light unto my feet"; and Christian Reveille, consisting of inspirational messages, music and Bible teaching.

The Fate of the Crusade

The paradox of the Socred administration under Aberhart was that the crusade continued even though the vigorous protest had decreased. And this increasingly made the crusade obsolete. Protest politics out of power had been forced into compromise politics once in power. True, Aberhart had flexed his muscles of protest enough times to convince the population that he was retaliating against the economic stranglehold of Alberta and he was surely adept at representing the sectional interests of Albertans. But he was reluctant to step outside the boundaries of orthodox finance and was unwilling to do more than periodically challenge the Constitution with the demands of his own people. After 1937, hard-core protest began to be replaced by the ideal of good and honest government, and the onset of the war stifled protest in the name of cooperation and national unity. And yet Aberhart continued to lead the people and react to their representatives as if they were still in a crusade. The religious legitimations and the use of religious activities as mediums to reach the people continued unabated even where it was not clear what was being crusaded for. The demands of the war, a drop in active crusade participation,[93] and the

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[93]Social Credit League membership was 40,782 in 1937, 24,359 in 1938, and dropped to 8,377 in 1944. Premiers' Papers.

emergence of agrarian prosperity called for a different type of leader-
ship and administration. Aberhart had tried to carry the crusade across
Canada but had met with little immediate success. The only thing left
to crusade for was post-war reconstruction but that lacked the sense
of urgency and appropriateness while the war was still being waged.

Not only was there no crucial issue to crusade for but Aberhart's
crusading spirit began to falter for he had spent himself completely on
his work. While in Vancouver on vacation after the legislative ses-
sions in the spring of 1943, Aberhart took seriously ill and died on
May 26th. The funeral service was not held at a Baptist church but at
the Canadian Memorial Church, with the Rev. G. Harrison Villett
officiating minister. As a former pastor of McDougall United Church
in Edmonton, Villett had befriended Aberhart and was sympathetic to
the crusade. Even the funeral was no occasion for sectarian loyalties
to express themselves for at the time of his death, the chief crusader
was to identify most closely with those who had been his staunchest
crusaders, i.e., the majority of the common people who had affiliations
with the United Church. Hymns of the crusade were sung, such as "O
God Our Help in Ages Past" and "Onward Christian Soldiers". A memorial
service was also held on May 30th at the Institute in Calgary and at
McDougall United Church in Edmonton.

The annual convention of the Social Credit League in December,
1942, had been turned into a Reconstruction Conference. As his closest
crusaders recalled it, Aberhart had somewhat quietly spoken on the theme
"To you the Torch is Passed", and it was only a few short months later
that he died. These followers thus were left with the challenge to

carry on the crusade without the chief crusader. Yet political survival would require the necessity to decide whether a crusade was still viable or whether sweeping changes in the movement would be demanded in order to adapt to a changing environment.

CHAPTER IX

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: THE MANNING YEARS

The Social Credit movement under Aberhart had been no ordinary

social movement. The fact that it had been moulded in the face of

province-wide desperation and frustration meant that it did not exist as

a casual option for leisure-time participation among Albertans. The

emotional and social upheavals caused by the depression made neutrality

an impossibility. The thoroughness with which the movement had saturated

the province from rural areas to cities made Social Credit the dominant

topic for conversation and commitment. It demanded a response that

promised hope, security, and action in the place of despair, insecurity,

lethargy. Social Credit ideology had been important in that it reaffirmed

and defended a desired way of life and served as the rallying point for

the unification of participants in protest against present conditions

and acceptable means of dealing with them. The Aberhart Social Credit

movement was thus extra-ordinary in its thorough impact on the province

because it was nurtured in the psychological condition arising from

economic stress and because it attained unexpected political power.

However, the uniqueness of the movement was not limited to the

extent of its penetration of a geographic area, but included the manner

in which the movement was promulgated. Instead of merely appealing to

appropriate virtues and ideals of general import to legitimate the group

goals, the movement was distinctly constructed on the presupposition

that its goals and ideology were not only consistent with Christianity

but were in some way a front-line defense of the vital elements of a

decadent Christianity. In this sense, Social Credit was thought to have

a special role to play in the world which would begin in Alberta. What

might have been merely an economic movement was thus turned into a

crusade in which Christian ideology and religious methods were perceived

to be consistent with the leadership, collective goals, and daily

activities of the social enterprise. The battle for Social Credit be-

came a crusade for the maintenance of a way of life of which Christianity

was conceived as its anchor. To crusade for Social Credit was to cru-

sade for and defend Christianity, i.e., a belief system in which the

individual was pre-eminent. Social Credit was thus a secular expression

of the on-going battle between "good" and "evil", and between Christian

and anti-Christian forces that were being waged in the world. Social

Credit was a fight for and defense of Christianity and private enter-

prise and both of these aspects reinforced each other. Because the

crusade for Social Credit blended both of these goals into one movement,

no ordinary political party could contain its dynamic.

Under these self-conceptions and conditions of operation, the

constrictions of governmental policy and protocol also could not contain

its dynamics. The crusade had been a social movement with limited goals

that aimed at the revitalization of a depressed society and when it was

suddenly thrust into power, it had neither the personnel nor the temper

for ordinary political activity. Protest and proposals had to be con-

verted to practical procedures, emotion and hysteria had to be displaced

by administration and routinization, and suspect institutions, previously

repudiated demanded compromise and acceptance. But a crusade-turned-government, particularly under Aberhart, could not adapt so quickly. The emotion and enthusiasm had been too great and the conditions under which the movement had arisen were still too forcefully present to allow for any sudden cooling of fervor. Aberhart's premiership must be viewed as the period of transition in which the crusade slowly gave way to compromise and routinization, and with his personal death, only vestiges of the crusading spirit remained.

By the time of Aberhart's death in 1943, the destitution of the "dirty thirties" had passed its high-water mark, markets for Alberta's wheat had opened, and crop yields had improved considerably. Prosperity was returning to Alberta, the war had rechannelled hostilities and debate, and a new optimism regarding the future surged throughout the province. It had become increasingly obvious in the latter years of Aberhart's administration that a crusade was no longer politically viable for the conditions which had evoked the crusade were no longer present. The decreased electoral vote for Social Credit from 54.25% in 1935 to 43.02% in 1940 was some evidence that the concept of a crusade and its tactics were no longer considered necessary and appropriate to the same degree. Monetary reform had been sublimated by the demands of the war and the increased trade and markets which it brought in stimulating the economy. Without monetary reform as a crucial and burning issue, the crusade lost its urgency and its momentum. Better economic conditions reduced the need for monetary reform among the general populace who once again saw hope in their situation. Thus the need for a crusade became increasingly minimal.

The choice of a successor to Aberhart as leader would be most significant for that person would have to be alert to the environmental changes which were having a direct effect on the evolutionary development of the movement or else face the threat of electoral defeat. The survival of Alberta Social Credit outside of the depression in which it was born and devoid of its persuasive charismatic leader would be dependent on its capacity to make the necessary structural and ideological changes within the movement while yet stressing the continuity of goals, principles, and methods to maintain its original support from the hard-core followers at the grass-roots. We would expect that the religious elements in the movement might still be present but that the relationship between religion and politics would change as the movement became more secularized and championed different goals.

The Transference of Leadership

The crusade had been a leader-oriented movement in which secondary leaders were sought to coordinate activities at the grass-roots but not to detract from the authority of the primary leader. The whole movement had been dependent on the leader, a position which Aberhart cultivated and preferred, and secondary leaders knew that their own positions were dependent on his successes. Should Aberhart have relinquished his position, Alberta Social Credit could easily have disintegrated. The significance of Aberhart to the movement can never be overestimated. And yet the crisis needed to be faced at Aberhart's death as to who would take the reins of leadership and prevent the movement from disintegrating. Aberhart had built the movement from the grass-roots

and had personally secured his support for Social Credit from the masses.
The continued existence of Social Credit was thus not dependent on the
decisions of a vote at caucus or a decision of the party hierarchy but
was dependent on the ability of the selected leader to maintain that
dogged support from the grass-roots which had catapulted Social Credit
to power in the first place. This leader would have to be a strong
leader, would have to speak authoritatively to the masses and on behalf
of the masses, and would have to thoroughly understand the feelings and
sentiments of the Alberta Social Credit tradition. Initially, the leader
would have to stress the aspects of continuity as Aberhart would be
memorialized and become the patriarch of a tradition; in the long run
and for the sake of the maintenance of power, he would have to make
considerable changes to ensure political survival.

There never was really any question about who would succeed
Aberhart as party leader and Premier. Whether Aberhart was consciously
aware of what he had done or not, he had tailored and schooled Ernest
C. Manning to be his successor.[1] Manning had left his hometown of
Rosetown, Saskatchewan, as a young man to come to Alberta to study the
Bible under Aberhart. As one of the first students of the Calgary
Prophetic Bible Institute and a member of the first graduating class,
Manning had been taught largely by Aberhart himself and he thus became

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[1]This is not to say that Manning achieved his legitimacy through
an act of designation whereby the original charismatic leader selected
his successor, as in Weber's discussion of the routinization of charisma.
Aberhart had made no official choice but there was not much doubt about
what that choice would have been. Cf. Weber, The Theory of Social and
Economic Organization, p. 365. Manning was elected leader by vote of
the MLA's.

an approved teacher of others at the Institute. Upon graduation,
Aberhart kept Manning at the Institute to teach and perform administra-
tive duties. Especially since Aberhart did not have a son, Manning
developed a favored position in the Aberhart family and became a trusted
confidante of Aberhart himself.[2] By 1930, Aberhart entrusted the broad-
cast into twenty-one year old Manning's care when he went on his vaca-
tion and therefore Manning's voice and name became familiar to the
listening audience. His frequent public appearances with Aberhart and
his schooling under Aberhart fostered in him the development of a
parallel world-view, similar voice inflections and mannerisms, and a
public sense of identity obtained from Aberhart. For many followers of
the religious movement, Manning's supporting role as assistant to
Aberhart was so frequent and had become so adequate that he could hardly
be considered merely as a "substitute" or "fill in". Manning was slowly
emerging as a dynamic orator and leader in his own right, though always
careful to give Aberhart ultimate authority.

Manning therefore had become closely identified with the move-
ment when it was still preoccupied with religious concerns. As with
Aberhart, it can also be said of Manning that religion was the ultimate
passion of his life. He also first encountered Social Credit with
"religious eyes" and grafted Social Credit on to his world-view as an
extension of religious concerns. Religion was then the foundation of
his life and Social Credit was expressed as part of the superstructure.

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[2]During his second and third years as a student at the Institute,
Manning lived with the Aberharts in their home. For the best account of
Manning's early life and his formative contacts with Aberhart, cf. Tony
Cashman, Ernest C. Manning.

The lengthy discussions that Aberhart had with Manning regarding Social Credit theory, particularly in 1932–34, meant that Manning had not only been one of the original participants but that he understood and had even helped formulate the religious rationale for this secular involvement. Thus he could fully participate in the crusade with the same fervor and drive as his mentor, and with the same virtue in the popular mind as one only interested in the welfare of the people.

When Manning became Premier he was certainly not an untried leader, political novice, or stranger to the Alberta movement. First acting as chauffeur, and then as campaigner, Manning had been by Aberhart's side during the 1935 campaign and was just as familiar to the people of Alberta as Aberhart himself, even though he was not the acknowledged leader. The continuity in leadership was striking. He had fought the same battles Aberhart had fought. He knew the mind of Aberhart if anyone did. He shared the same religious fervor and eloquently elucidated the same Biblical perspective. He knew the feelings at the grass-roots for he had toured the province several times over. He had travelled the rocky road of the victories and defeats the movement had faced and knew something of the diversity of the popular mood. He understood the goals of the movement, its allies and enemies, and was accustomed to defending Alberta from external encroachments. Most important of all, Aberhart had groomed him and given him his nod of approval.

While these elements of continuity were important vehicles in the maintenance of political support for Manning, the marked differences and changes in the nature of the leadership were just as important in

retaining that support. In a very real way, the premiership of Manning represented the inauguration of a new era in Alberta Social Credit. Without lessening the role of religious conviction, he brought the crusade to an end and institutionalized the movement. Stated succinctly, in post-Aberhart Social Credit the nature of the alliance between religious populism and political populism was changed through the process of routinization and compartmentalization.[3] The aim of this chapter is to specify the changes that took place in the movement in Manning's administration with regard to the leadership, political goals, and the base of support and to suggest the role of religion in these developments.

The New Leadership Role

Manning took over a movement that formed a government already in power. He inherited a legacy of protest at a time when the cause for protest had been largely reduced. He had neither the personal crusading temperament of Aberhart nor did he have the economic crisis to force him to action. The dynamism of grass-roots protest had receded and the movement had lost its sense of urgency and effervescence. The very nature of being the government automatically reduced the protest in an attempt to deal with reality rather than merely advocate theoretical ideals. The staunchest Social Crediters had been at least temporarily appeased by the creation of the Social Credit Board and the inauguration of the Interim Program in 1939 by which Alberta asserted

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[3]Theoretically, this has been described as the change from sectarian politics to churchly politics in that polarization of viewpoints is exchanged for compromise.

her independence in the establishment of provincial treasury branches and
a provincial marketing board.[4] Aberhart had begun with a utopian ideal
scheme and held great hope for its implementation, but Manning was
faced with the same scheme after it had been restricted and contained
little hope for immediate implementation. Manning was left with an
emerging Social Credit ideology in which monetary reform was slowly being
displaced by the distillation of principles that continued to support
private enterprise. In short, Alberta Social Credit was no longer a
social movement; it became a political party of the people that culti-
vated popular support through its organization and sought to develop
the art of re-election.

Because we have argued that a crusade was no longer appropriate
to the needs of Albertans, we would expect a marked alteration in the
nature of leadership in the Manning government. Aberhart had been
highly charismatic and had developed a full-blown leader-follower rela-
tion. While he took advice from others, he kept firm and personal
control over most aspects of the movement and the government. He was
William Aberhart, B.A., a champion of the people's interests. Manning
had no academic credentials to legitimate his leadership. He possessed
considerable personal charisma. But part of his charisma, particularly
in his early leadership, was the result of the fact that he was
Aberhart's protegé and merely carried the same banner. He was not as
dominant and forceful in personality and more easily delegated respon-
sibility.

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[4]Cf. B. A. Powe, The Social Credit Interim Program and the
Alberta Treasury Branches, M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1951.

Manning transformed the leader-follower relation to an administra-
tor-citizen relation. Rationality superseded emotion. He brought to
fruition the routinization of charisma in the leadership of Alberta
Social Credit. Whereas Aberhart had created his role and the movement,
Manning had been given his role by the movement. Now it was compromise
rather than a polarization of the electorate that was needed to maintain
political support and to carry on the business of government.

The transformation of the leader-follower relation was as much
a matter of personal temperament as it was a demand by the changing
environment. Cashman notes:

> Aberhart loved a fight; Manning prefers peace but
> will not back away from a fight.
> Aberhart shook his fist; Manning put his hands be-
> hind his back and squeezed the knuckles white
> rather than lose his temper.
> Aberhart was a talker; Manning is a listener...
> Aberhart thought there was one side to an argument.
> If you're arguing one side of a question, Manning
> will argue the other side even if he agrees with
> you.
> Aberhart was dogmatic; Manning is diplomatic.
> Aberhart said "I'm going", and he was gone;
> Manning says "I'd like to get there" and usually
> does.
> Aberhart instilled either love or hate in people;
> Manning instils confidence.
> Aberhart won friends and influenced people by his
> fire; Manning does it with his cool perception.
> Manning is the better administrator; but it's
> doubtful whether even an older Manning could make
> such a political breakthrough as Aberhart did in
> 1935.[5]

The emerging prosperity in Alberta and the new possibilities for revenue
obtainable from the extraction of natural resources in the province
meant that a crusader was no longer needed; what was needed was an

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[5]Cashman, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

administrator who could lower his voice and negotiate contracts on be-
half of the people. There was no need to incite people to action, no
need to dramatically arouse people to make collective demands, and thus
no need for a dominant leader. People wanted to be left alone to estab-
lish themselves economically. Manning responded by assuming the role
of manager rather than leader of the province. He did not seek or de-
sire disciples. The heavy emotional attachment to the Premier was
therefore minimal under Manning as he sought to earn votes rather than
arouse votes.

Change in the Broadcast

With the death of Aberhart, Manning was left with the burden of
both the Calgary and Edmonton broadcasts in addition to his political
responsibilities. Cyril Hutchinson, a Calgary city employee who had
also graduated from the Institute, had been appointed as administrative
head of the Institute when Social Credit came to power in 1935 and fre-
quently participated on the broadcast and occasionally took complete
charge of it. After 1943, it became increasingly difficult for Manning
to lead both broadcasts, even on alternate Sundays, and Hutchinson, of
necessity, assumed a larger responsibility. Slowly, the Institute
broadcast at the time-honored hour of 3 o'clock lost its appeal in the
absence of a dynamic orator and an exciting and urgent presentation.
At the decision of the Board of Directors of the Institute, Manning
consolidated his efforts at the Institute in Calgary and travelled
there each week-end for the service. The broadcast assumed a new name
-- Canada's National Back to the Bible Hour, and beginning in 1948, new

cities and stations were added to its outreach. CFRN, in Edmonton, was first,followed by Vancouver, Regina, Grande Prairie, Vernon, Victoria, Winnipeg, Barrie, Ottawa, Sarnia, Halifax, Hamilton, and Saskatoon in the succeeding three years.[6] According to a station executive at CFRN, the broadcast was always of good quality with excellent music, and a rational Bible presentation. When the pressures of commuting to Calgary appeared too great and the crowds had thinned down considerably, the musicians travelled to Edmonton, beginning in 1951, where the live service originated from the Capitol Theater every Sunday.[7]

Changes within the broadcast had considerable effect on changing the leader-follower relation. First of all, Manning had learned a lesson from past experiences that hostility had definitely developed regarding the discussion of political or government issues on the religious broadcast. Manning largely confined his comments over the air to matters of religious import. But this in turn reduced the size of the listening audience as the broadcast became merely one of many religious broadcasts from which to choose. The more spectacular play-by-play commentary of provincial and world events in the light of the Bible was missing and the entertaining element of the broadcast became minimal. Listeners were recruited less from the general public than from those with strictly

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[6] By 1969, the broadcast was being carried on stations in 33 cities across Canada.

[7] Under the direction of Mrs. Manning, a very capable pianist and musician, excellent renditions of well-known hymns were presented. The style was distinctly more classical, as one of the musicians was Mary Short, concert master of the Calgary Symphony Orchestra, and Mrs. Manning herself had formal musical training. In other words, there was nothing "hill-billy" or "country and western" in the broadcast.

religious interests. The broadcast was no longer the means whereby

loyalty to the leader of a movement was instilled. It was no longer

an overt, political activity couched in religious dress whereby the leader

explained his government's actions to the politically unaware electorate.

It was no longer the medium by which the leader-follower relation was

cultivated and maintained. Manning made the broadcast purely a

religious activity in which listening support was supposedly unrelated

to political preference.[8]

Secondly, the change of location of the broadcast from the

historic Institute to an Edmonton theater represented the culmination

of a marked shift in its nature. Strong ties to the old battleground

were considerably lacking -- almost to the extent that the role of the

Institute and its work had died with Aberhart. The fact that the broad-

cast took on outlets across Canada also meant that its outreach went

far beyond the confines of the province and therefore its political

usefulness to Alberta alone would be severely limited. Its religious

appeal was no longer tied to vivid political memories of the Institute

location or provincial boundaries. The broadcast was slowly seeking

its own identity in which Aberhart was more a fond memory than a dominant

patriarch. Changes in broadcast origination and expansion of broadcast

areas meant that Manning was developing his own public identity in

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[8]Yet, A. J. Hooke notes that the effect of being a religious
broadcaster had an effect on Manning's government relationships. "His
Sunday religious broadcasts created about him an aura of such magnitude
that many felt themselves to be inferior in his presence". 30 + 5: I
Know, I was There, p. 219.

which the old Aberhartian leader-follower pattern was obsolete. When the broadcast was no longer recorded with a live audience in the mid-sixties, visible personal attachments to the leader were allowed to decline further.

An additional reason why the leader-follower relation decomposed was that the followers had splintered among themselves. The tradition of Aberhart did not remain intact. Even after Aberhart had become Premier, men who were called to minister to the Prophetic Bible Institute Baptist Church built up resentments regarding the secondary role which they were forced to play in congregational leadership. Aberhart, as founder and the real dynamic force that brought the church its identity and congregation, alienated both Pastor Bergat and Crouse in succession in the late 30's over this very issue. Crouse particularly had objected to the political aspects of the broadcast and had found that his participation and inclusion in the weekly programme was not actively sought which, in the battle of egos, was taken as a personal affront. In a speech of protest at the Calgary Public Library in June, 1939, Crouse exclaimed "I am willing to work with a man but not under him" as a chorus of "Amens" replied from the audience.[9] Restlessness within the congregation often crystallized over such personality issues in which Aberhart's local base of support weakened.

The Decline of the Religious Work

Financial questions were also reaching a crisis point by 1939.

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[9]Kennedy Papers.

No one knew exactly what happened to the money given to the Institute, and rumors were rampant about unpaid loans. The inability of members to participate in decision-making which was held exclusively by the Board had led to threats of legal action to decentralize the autocratic power. The ill feeling that developed as Aberhart was forced to devote the major share of his time to his political responsibilities was the result of him taking his supporters for granted and assuming power without carefully cultivating his relationships with the following. One former Aberhartite in Calgary stated:

> We worked with Aberhart quite closely and he made us mad enough so that we left his church. It was hard to disagree with him because he always wanted unity -- but unity around his conceptions of how things ought to be. I also felt that the financial affairs and actually all decisions by the board were far too secretive. That didn't go over with us either, but to this day, and even though I didn't vote for him, I still think that he was genuine and sincere in his efforts on behalf of the people. But it was his methods that got a lot of people upset.

Two things happened to his religious work while he was Premier. People left the church individually when they became disgruntled, and secondly, the church congregation and the Sunday afternoon audience had become different crowds. People who were attending the Baptist Church were contributing and attending very little to the afternoon broadcast. The Sunday afternoon broadcast was attended mostly by Social Credit followers. Because Aberhart gave the broadcast preference with his time, the church was more and more dependent on other leadership in the management of its affairs. And yet the church was restricted by its subordination to the Board. Repercussions of this unsatisfactory situation were to be

felt later.

The data suggest that a crusade is not a durable social pheno-
menon. Because of its dependence on emotion and fervor, these feelings
cannot be maintained at a high level continuously regardless of whether
the source of stress has been removed. People with primarily religious
interests were soon alienated by the prostitution of religious ideas and
secular interests which dominated the movement. While they may have
accepted it from a distance, the crusade could not sustain their active
participation because it was not solely religion or solely politics.
As a political figure, Aberhart had difficulty removing political and
economic concerns from the broadcast, for these concerns had originated
on the broadcast and in his thinking could not be divorced from it. If
the broadcast had been the means by which interest in Social Credit had
been aroused and disseminated, then, in his mind, it was appropriate
that the broadcast be the vehicle by which interest in Social Credit
be sustained. Among the masses, Aberhart became a far more acceptable
political leader than a religious leader. Persons with religious interests
had become suspicious of his religious leadership even though they res-
pected him. When the crusade waned, they either returned to the
stability of established religious institutions or assumed a religiously
inactive position. However, it was the membership of the Bible Institute
Baptist Church who were seeking stability. The uncertainty and insta-
bility of the leader-follower relation was no longer appropriate to
the membership who sought the security of institutionalization. The
fact that time limitations forced Aberhart to reduce his participation
in the church and give priority to the broadcast meant that his charisma

was increasingly less important to the daily functioning of the church.

After Aberhart's death, the gravity of the situation increased. Intense loyalties to Aberhart were no longer present to ward off disagreements. While Manning had established his political leadership, the secondary leaders in the religious activities were more or less equals without a leader. Again, because of time limitations, Manning was forced to leave much of the responsibility in local hands. Then when he did participate, he was in some sense merely a disciple and confidante of Aberhart's and a graduate of the Institute in much the same way that Charles Pierce and Cyril Hutchinson, respectively, were. Those who had been accustomed to the high-handed authority of Aberhart were now left with no one to define the boundaries of their tasks and make ultimate decisions. Board meetings were held more infrequently and some of the Board members were more concerned with the preservation of the tradition than of adaptation to a new situation (or to put it in the words of one close observer, they had "lost their vision"). Above all, Cyril Hutchinson, who had assumed a large share of the responsibility of both the Institute and the church, was not on the Board.

A rift began to develop over finances. The Board and its Treasurer, Charles Pierce (who was also treasurer of the church), began to put pressure on Hutchinson to remedy the shortage of finances since he was in charge of the broadcast and this had always been the chief source of income. Hutchinson in turn demanded a financial statement from the Board which it had never been their policy to make public. The Institute was desperately in need of finances for salaries for teachers, because the educational programme was becoming more institu-

tionalized and less dependent on voluntary help. Manning's enforced

neglect of the operation meant that less tactful people, like Pierce,

took control of the many smaller but rubbing decisions. On the evening

of the provincial election in August of 1948, Hutchinson had a note

placed on his desk that he was fired. Shortly after, the entire faculty

resigned and the mailing list was taken with them. Most of the student

body also left and the school year 1948-49 was spent at a Missionary

Alliance Church on 13th Avenue S.W. The new school, to be named Berean

Bible College, bought land for its new site in the winter of 1949 and

immediately began broadcasting on CKXL on Sunday afternoons.

In spite of the split, the church continued to meet at the

Institute for awhile, though Hutchinson taught a Bible class across the

street at the Henderson Secretarial School. The rest of the Sunday

School met at the Institute where all joined together one hour later

for the morning service. As one participant remarked, "Those Bible

studies were really booming. We used to have about 200 packed in. It

was exciting to be the persecuted ones". Services continued at the

Institute until one Wednesday night prayer meeting when they were locked

out. This event forced the definite and final break from the Institute

and the Elks Hall was then rented for Sunday services.[10] A few people

stayed at the Institute Church, but it finally dissolved. Louis

Johnson remained at the Institute and assumed administrative responsi-

bility for night classes and the broadcast. But with fewer students and

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[10]This is presently the flourishing congregation known as Bethel
Baptist Church and is still led by Cyril Hutchinson.

several years later the removal of the broadcast to Edmonton, the

Institute was no longer functioning and was thus only housing fond

memories. The decline and fall of the nerve center only proved that

the crusade was dead.[11]

The death of Aberhart had brought to further chaos the decompo-

sition of the original leader-follower relation. The unacceptability of

the crusade and the priority of political responsibilities meant that

the unity of the religious movement was sacrificed and the strong local

base of religious support disappeared. Properly speaking, the fall of

the Institute signalled the end of a religious movement and thus the

decay of an integral arm of the political movement. In spite of a cross-

Canada listening audience and numerous efforts to stir a widespread

religious awakening, Manning's religious efforts never attained anything

of the force of a social movement that had been present in Aberhart's

Alberta. Coinciding with the political change to an administrator-

citizen relationship, Manning transformed the leader-follower relation

to a preacher-listener relationship in the religious realm. This was

the final step in the routinization of a charismatically originated

religious movement.

Aberhart was a leader of men; Manning was a leader among men.

While this personality disposition was felt in the decline of Social

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[11]In 1953, a pastor's fellowship known as the Gospel Missionary
Association was expanded to include representatives of former branch
churches of the Institute or churches established through student in-
fluence from the Institute. These initially included Rosebud, Langdon,
Innisfail, Longview, Arrowwood, Bethel (Calgary), Leslieville, Kingman,
Bethany (Red Deer -- formerly Bible Institute Baptist Church of Red Deer),
and later the Fundamental Baptist Church (Edmonton). This body still
exists and has given the organization a denominational character.

Credit as a social movement, it was the demands of a changing environment, the longevity of political office, and the institutionalization of a party organization (with salaried organizers) that contributed to the need for a change in type of leadership. That Manning preferred the administrator-citizen relation and that he had learned to make distinctions between the religious and the political earned him the confidence of the electorate for twenty-five years as Premier until his resignation. Changes in the religious broadcast and in the organization of the religious arm of the movement were both contributors to and manifestations of broader changes that Social Credit supporters demanded of its leadership.

The Shift in Political Goals

The advent of the Manning administration also meant a slight shift in political goals. We have established that Social Credit from its inception had been constructed and made its greatest appeal as a result of it being a defense of private enterprise. Alberta interpreted this defense through the potentially middle class eyes of small-scale entrepreneurs, i.e., farmers and small businessmen. Yet much of Aberhart's administration was taken up with the monetary mechanisms related to Social Credit theory, such as dividends, the establishment of a provincial bank, and the passage of appropriate legislation. As the chief promulgator of Social Credit monetary theory in Alberta, Aberhart always worked under the shadow of his election promises and his convincing teaching about the theory in pre-election days. He was morally committed at the very least to pay occasional lip-service to Social Credit techniques

and attempt to inaugurate them. But where Aberhart had judicial dis-
allowances and the preoccupations with war to distract public attention
and excuse his inability to inaugurate Social Credit, Manning had in-
creasing farm prosperity and a developing extractive industry to relegate
the demand for Social Credit techniques to oblivion. Already in the
later years of Aberhart's leadership, the emphasis on Social Credit as
basic principles rather than a monetary theory began to develop. With
Manning, Social Credit definitely came to be defined as a set of
principles all within the Social Credit tradition but devoid of any
explicit financial formulations. These principles were declared to
be beliefs that:

1. The individual is the most important of all
   of God's creation on this earth.
2. The major function of any Government is to
   bring the people the results which they (the
   people) want in the management of their
   affairs.
3. Security alone is not enough. We must have
   freedom with security.
4. That which is physically possible and de-
   sirable can and must be made financially
   possible.[12]

It is plain from these statements that Social Credit opposed any type of
socialism or centralization that restricted individual freedom. More-
over, the implication was that there is religious support for this view
of individualism in that the climax of Biblical creation was man who
was created as an individual. Such a supposition fitted easily into the
life-style of Albertans who had attained a new level of economic

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[12]These principles were printed in various pamphlets -- one of
which was Principles and Policies of Social Credit by Orvis Kennedy,
first printed in 1951.

optimism. Without making religious statements that were too direct, post-Aberhart Social Credit reaffirmed its ultimate congruence with Christianity. This type of subtlety alienated no one purely on religious grounds and served instead to unite all those committed to the way of life of democratic individualism.

If Christian ideology was to have any function at all in the Manning years, it was to point out the unChristian and atheistic elements of capitalism's direct opposite -- socialism. He continually warned against the dangers of "God-less materialism" in opposition to Christian democracy.[13]

On a series of weekly broadcasts entitled "The Social Credit Hour", in 1947 and 1948, Manning argued:

> The subtlety and increasing viciousness of the many attempts being made today to discredit and destroy the Social Credit Movement is perhaps the greatest proof that the enemies of the true Christian democracy which we are fighting to establish recognize that the Social Credit Movement and the Social Credit government must be destroyed before the way will be opened for them to impose their supreme state doctrines on the people of this province.[14]

> The essential of this first choice is socialism. Supporting it is communism. The CCF says it did not seek and does not wish the support of communism. But why have the CCF leaders not denounced communism and its scheming, ruthless intentions ...the parade of world events in recent times has proven beyond all doubt that the steps into socialism with its state control and planned existence for its subjected people is the long step

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[13]For example, Edmonton Bulletin, November 26th, 1948.

[14]Premiers' Papers, Social Credit Hour, No. 21.

forward to communism.[15]

The ultimate point was that communism was atheism. Therefore, Social Credit government was "...the one effective bulwark against the sullen tide of state socialism with its undertow of atheistic communism..."[16] Manning seldom overdid this point and used it generally as the final court of appeal. But the connection was always implicit that religious and political freedom was dependent on individual freedom and this be-came the battle cry of Social Credit.

Social Credit under Manning made the defense of individualism against the threat of socialism its primary political goal. What had been previously implicit now became explicit. Albertans were accustomed to polemical politics that championed causes and any government, Social Credit or not, that lost its fighting spirit might appear to be losing its effectiveness in representing sectional interests. As a third party that had been nurtured in protest, Manning was quick to perceive the role that Social Credit must continue to play if it was going to maintain its dominance. The ascendency of the CCF to political power in Saskatchewan just a few months before the Alberta election set the stage most dramatically. The platform of the CCF had been tempered but was still radical enough to incite widespread interprovincial interest. Their critique of the present socio-economic situation had been similar to Social Credit's but their proposals differed quite markedly. Fearing

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[15]Premiers' Papers. Furthermore, communism was blamed for the moral decline in which truth and the absolutes of right and wrong were being undermined. Edmonton Journal, November 24th, 1960.

[16]Premiers' Papers, Social Credit,Hour No. 2.

an invasion of Alberta in much the same form that Social Crediters had

invaded Saskatchewan in 1938, and fearing that the momentum of the move-

ment might spread, Social Credit formed new alliances in an attempt to

stave the socialist thrust. Big business was increasingly coming to see

that Social Credit was essentially conservative despite its radical

streak and that it was a far better alternative than the CCF.[17] The

more radical elements within the Social Credit party had slowly drifted

to the provincial CCF party and there appeared little doubt that a col-

lective stand against socialism could only be accomplished through the

well-organized Social Credit Party. In opposing centralization and

monopoly which became synonyms for socialism, Manning asked, "If it

is wrong in finance, industry, and commerce, as Socialists claim it is,

why is it not wrong in the state? This would be the greatest monopoly

of them all".[18] What people did not realize, according to Manning, was

that socialism was an ideological tool for the financial powers to en-

slave the people. "The instrument being used for the purpose is the

Cooperative Commonwealth Federation — the political party which is

being built up by the International Money Power as the means for carrying

out in Canada its plans for World Dictatorship".[19] Socialism was a

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[17] A settlement with eastern bondholders was made in June, 1945, in which the provincial debt was refinanced and the withheld unpaid interest adjusted. Mallory points out that this helped dissolve the severe conflicts felt between Social Crediters and the eastern financial interests and demonstrated particular conciliation on Alberta's part. Cf. Social Credit and the Federal Power in Canada, p. 162.

[18] Edmonton Journal, July 26th, 1944.

[19] Today and Tomorrow, August 3rd, 1944.

threat to the individual and his freedom in this argument for it was only

Social Credit that promised both security and freedom. An evaluation of

the performance of the present government was not nearly as important as

the larger issue that would determine the destiny of Alberta. "The

issue in the election was clear-cut. The fight was between the free

democracy of Social Credit and the State Socialism of the CCF, with the

Independent Party intervening to persuade electors that 'the good old

days' of the pre-war years was what they wanted".[20] This strategy of

overstressing an issue was highly successful as the CCF captured only

three seats, Independents, three seats, and Social Credit, fifty-one

seats with 51.88% of the vote in 1944.[21] From this point on, the attack

against socialism became a regular part of the Social Credit platform

and at times developed into an obsession. Something of the aggressive-

ness and activity of CCF supporters in Alberta is evidenced by this de-

fense and counter-attack by Manning in 1948:

> Everywhere I have found the people completely dis-
> gusted with the gross misrepresentation of facts
> which characterizes the CCF's leaders' tirades
> against the Social Credit Government. I feel I
> owe the CCF leader a vote of thanks for the effec-
> tive way in which he has turned thousands of
> people against socialism by his whining criticism
> of everything constructive and his constant barrage
> of misrepresentation whenever he discusses the
> policies and actions of the Social Credit Govern-
> ment. Nor is the public overlooking the fact that
> the CCF leaders in this manner are working hand in
> glove with the most rabid community agitators in
> western Canada. Every Communist publication in

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[20] *Ibid.*, August 10th, 1944.

[21] Cf. Morris Shumiatcher, "Alberta Election", Canadian Forum 24 (September, 1944).

> western Canada today is plugging for the CCF and
> trumpeting the very same anti-government propa-
> ganda as the CCF leaders themselves. There is no
> need for me to dwell on the significance of this
> questionable wedding between the two socialist
> groups. The people of Alberta are quite capable
> of appraising this situation for themselves.[22]

The strategy was convincing again in 1948 as the CCF lost one seat and

retained two, while Social Credit won fifty-one seats with 55.63% of the

vote.

We have suggested that religion was at least partially related

to the defense against the socialist scare.[23] In a sense, the appeal to

religion was unnecessary as thousands of optimistic rural entrepreneurs,

small town businessmen, and city merchants were eagerly anticipating

the threshold of socio-economic stability on which they appeared to be

standing. For most Albertans, socialism was practically synonymous

with communism which was not particularly well-known for its public

freedoms. But in another sense, the appeal to religion was a meaning-

ful and expected procedure in a province that had just concluded a

crusade. Albertans had just been united by an appeal for "practical

Christianity", regardless of denomination, and this had precipitated a

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[22]Premiers' Papers, Social Credit Hour, No. 45.

[23]Benton Johnson, for one, has established the link between tra-
ditional Protestant theology and the inclination to support political
movements that emphasize private enterprise, limited government, and
individualism. "Theology and Party Preference among Protestant Clergymen",
American Sociological Review 31 (April, 1966), 200-208. For a discussion
of this same point in the Canadian context, cf. Fred Schindeler and
David Hoffman, "Theological and Political Conservatism", Canadian Journal
of Political Science 1 (December, 1968), 429-441.

type of civil religion in which Christian principles had become norma-

tive to the social order.[24] Therefore, considerable excitement could be

generated over a threat to this basis of society if socialism, communism,

and atheism were all equated. Again, the inclusion of religion in the

defense aroused passions and provided the dynamics for the resistance

of the socialist threat. Religion added to the urgency and need for

thoroughness of the socialist repudiation and aroused those who again

would have been inclined to apathy in politics.

The New Role of Religion

The burial of the crusade did not mean that the role of religion

in Alberta public life had come to an end. The decline of the crisis

meant that populist religion was no longer engaged in dynamic assertion.

It had not died but passed into another form -- civil religion. In

this theory, the difference between populist religion and civil religion

is not only a matter of intensity but also of essential nature. Populist

religion is the collective dynamism of the personal faith of individuals

who share elements of belief. Civil religion, according to Bellah, is

distinguished from private religion as the "genuine apprehension of

universal and transcendent religious reality" as seen in or revealed

through the experience of a people.[25] Bellah argues that the major

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[24]What we are saying is that the Alberta legacy of Christian
activism laid the groundwork for the meaningfulness of this type of re-
lationship which had not been the case in Saskatchewan to the same degree.

[25]Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America", Daedalus (Winter,
1967), 12 ff.

symbols of the civil religion are forged in times of trial as, in the case of the American experience, the Revolution and the issue of slavery. In the Alberta experience, the depression and to a somewhat lesser degree the war had been a time of trial in which the major symbols of the emerging civil religion had been formed. The crusade had forged the symbols centered around the 1935 election in which Aberhart had been the Moses to lead the people out of bondage, point them to God, and demonstrate the viability of Christian principles in practical life. The Social Credit victory became a sacred event for many Albertans. The defense against socialism was a way of preserving that sacredness and the underlying belief in God, for through it Alberta came to understand more fully her own identity. The civil religion in Alberta secularized the crusade and yet still maintained its meaning. It kept the experience of Alberta within the framework of ultimate reality without making highly personal demands on its citizens.

The evidence for the existence of this civil religion is sprinkled through the speeches of Social Credit candidates and the speeches of Manning himself. The depression had been the crucible in which this awareness had been formulated.

> May the people of Alberta never forget and may the
> people throughout all Canada learn that the strength
> and power of the Christian crusade for human jus-
> tice, security and freedom launched in this province
> ten years ago comes not from its promise of material
> gain or the temporal blessings it seeks to assure to
> all men as their human right. The hidden source of
> its enduring strength and power is its association
> with the eternal principles of justice and righteous-
> ness inherent in the true Christian way of life.[26]

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[26]Premiers' Papers, 10th Anniversary Broadcast, August 26th, 1945.

At the conclusion of the first broadcast of the Social Credit Hour,

Manning inserted this hope:

> Above all else I desire for the people of this
> great province a genuine revival of the faith
> of our fathers and a renewal of their trust in
> God -- a deepening of their reverence for things
> spiritual, and a strengthening of their alle-
> giance to that divine truth and righteousness
> which exalteth a nation.[27]

Without any greater theological explicitness, Manning deftly made this

broad appeal as though it underlie the political structure of Alberta

and because it was a religious generality with which few could violently

disagree. Above all, belief in God was often coupled with social unity.

In his Victory Day Message at the close of the war, Manning urged that

this not be a day of hilarious festivity but a day of consecration:

> Let us throw open our churches and fill them to
> capacity with all our people singing praises to
> Almighty God, yielding prayers of thanksgiving
> for our deliverance and beseeching that he may
> give us courage and strength and guidance as we
> advance...[28]

On other occasions, Manning also made general reference to the Divine.

> United by this common objective, and with our
> trust in God, let us go forward together in
> confidence and goodwill to finish the task to
> which we have set our hand.[29]
>
> May God grant us clarity of vision, soundness of
> judgment, and unity of purpose as standing to-
> gether with firmness in the right we chart our

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[27] Ibid., Social Credit Hour, No. 1, October 28th, 1947.

[28] Ibid., Victory Day Radio Message, May 8th, 1945.

[29] Ibid., CBC Broadcast, January 7th, 1947.

course to that end.[30]

> May 1948 hold for each of you good health and much
> of happiness and may the blessing and guidance of
> Almighty God be yours and ours as we go forward
> together to make Alberta a province of which it
> may be truly said: It is a good land, wherein men
> may live secure from fear and want and tyrants
> through all a land where men acknowledge God, and
> give the hand of brotherhood to each and to all.[31]

Religious belief was considered to be the groundwork of social unity
but in a far different sense than under Aberhart's leadership. The
references on political broadcasts were always to less specific religious
content. This is not to say that it was merely as a ceremonial act;
rather, out of genuine conviction that the experience of Albertans was
only meaningful if it was tied to ultimate reality. The fact that
Manning frequently included such statements in his speeches right up
until his resignation points up the depth of this feeling.[32]

The stand against socialism was not only required to ward off
the threat to the government's power but such a fight stood firmly
within the tradition of Social Credit theory. The primary spokesmen
for Social Credit theory in the province had become the Social Credit
Board. This Board maintained close relations with Douglas propaganda
and parroted Douglas criticisms and programmes quite closely. The

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[30] Ibid., September 27th, 1946.

[31] Ibid., Social Credit Hour, No. 10.

[32] The transference of this conviction to Canada as a whole is
evidenced in the theme song of the Back-to-the-Bible Hour which, for
several years, was "Lord of the Land, Make Canada Thine Own".

Annual Report of the Board for 1942 revealed that 300 public meetings had

been held by Board members to disseminate information on the Social Credit

world-view and 130,000 pamphlets were distributed.[33] However, not only

did the Board make suggestions regarding monetary reform but it carried

out an analysis of federal and world events in a manner very similar to

that done by Douglas. Attempts were made to find evidence of conspiracies

and evil plots involving world leaders and the powers behind them to

enslave individuals and restrict their freedom.[34] Following Douglas,

they called for the abandonment of the secret ballot and urged the

formation of a Union of Voters who want certain results irrespective of

race, religion, or party affiliation.[35] But the continual reference to

a world plot and its extremes of anti-Semitism which had developed in

Douglas thought was becoming a bit too embarrassing to the Manning

administration who were seeking financial investments in Alberta's

mineral resources. Manning himself was forced to walk the tightrope

between reverence to the Socred ideological tradition and the demands

of changing socio-economic conditions.

In 1946, the Alberta Bill of Rights was passed as a response to

these conflicting pressures. While the idea of a just price and divi-

dends appeared to be abandoned, the right to Social Security pensions

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[33]Annual Report, The Social Credit Board, year ending December
31st, 1942, p. 1.

[34]For example, A. J. Hooke, The Eclipse of Democracy (pamphlet).

[35]Annual Report, Social Credit Board, 1946.

and medical benefits were granted to senior citizens over 60 years of

age and to those physically disabled. The second part of the Act

established the mechanisms whereby credit could be controlled and ex-

panded in the province.[36] One can only speculate why these different

proposals were tied together in one act, but the Supreme Court declared

the Bill ultra vires in 1947 as dealing with matters outside provincial

jurisdiction.

The need for a reorientation of Socred policy became obvious as

Alberta prepared for a new economic era. The major step was that the

Social Credit Board was dissolved in what was known as "Manning's purge".

Manning also called for the resignations of two officials who had sup-

ported the Douglasite insurgency in 1937: R. E. Ansley, Minister of

Education, and L. D. Byrne, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and

Douglas's emmissary to assist Alberta inaugurate Social Credit. This

was the final turning point in the redefinition of Social Credit identity

in Alberta.[37] Social Credit was no longer to be viewed as a theory of

monetary reform but as a set of socio-political principles to assist

the government and the people in making their decisions.

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[36]Manning and Maynard, Your Charter of Freedom: An Explanation of the Alberta Bill of Rights (pamphlet). Radio addresses given April 17th and 25th, 1946.

[37]J. A. Irving refers to this purge of the more orthodox Social Crediters as the third schism the movement faced in Alberta. "The Evolution of the Social Credit Movement", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science (August, 1948), 321-341.

The Principalization of Social Credit

The advantage of the "principalization" of Social Credit theory was that continuity within the movement could be stressed rather than change. At the close of the 1947 session, the Socred caucus reaffirmed the validity of the Social Credit principles of Aberhart and declared that the government would follow them. In the broadcast of the Social Credit Hour, Manning declared:

> We reaffirm our unswerving allegiance to the principles of Social Credit and our unshakeable determination to carry through to a successful conclusion the fight for social and economic security with individual freedom initiated in this province by the late Premier William Aberhart...there is absolutely no change in our position today from that which we have maintained consistently ever since the Social Credit Movement was started in this province under the leadership of the late Premier William Aberhart fourteen years ago.[38]

While the statement asserting that there had been "no change" was stretching things a bit, the key was that loyalty was affirmed to Aberhart rather than to Douglas's interpretation, and that the reference was to the "principles" of Social Credit which gave greater latitude than the mention of specific reforms.

Ideological adaptation would only be successful and consistent if there was a rationale for ideological continuity. The grass-roots seldom objected to the subtle adaptive changes the government made for once the depression passed, these changes were usually beneficial to

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[38] Premiers' Papers, Social Credit Hour, No. 21. Note the visible inclusion of the protest element with the word "fight" — a paradoxical description, yet one familiar to Albertans.

their immediate interests in any case. While party elites were reluc-
tant to publicly discuss long-term changes within the party in the 40's
and 50's, the eagerness to seek new routes came from none other than
Manning himself at the leadership convention of 1968. In urging dele-
gates to select the appropriate leader, he suggested:

> Make your decision with your eyes fixed on the
> future. I do not mean that I am unequivocally
> opposed to any abandonment of the great principles
> which have guided us these many years. But I do
> mean that it is imperative that we recognize that
> loyalty to our principles and our past is valuable
> only if it motivates us to face and to successfully
> solve the many problems of the present and the
> future. The great founder of our movement, the
> late William Aberhart, was a man whose thinking
> was twenty years ahead of his time....He would not
> be refighting the grim battles of 1935.[39]

Manning was articulating both the need for continuity and for change.

He was attempting to be the bridge to another new era. He was pointing

out that Social Credit was not to be viewed as a depression phenomenon

and philosophy that had been forged for one particular decade but that

its principles were eternal even though they needed to be moulded to

meet the needs of a new age. Those who insisted on refighting the grim

battles of the thirties in the sixties were considered to be fixated and

to have lost the vision of Social Crediters as vanguards of the future.

If Social Credit was to be viewed as a set of principles of

which the supremacy of the individual was primary, its conservative cast

as a defender of private enterprise became more noticeable as contracts

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[39]Manning, speech at the Leadership Convention, December, 1968.
Tape recording of this speech is available at the Provincial Archives.

were made with extractive industries. Small businessmen and farmers
were all participating in economic expansion and they desired little
government interference -- only government assistance in opening markets.
As long as the sectional feeling was strong, the Social Credit government
was an effective mediator of the interests of both large and small
entrepreneurs. But as the sense of provincial alienation decreased,
greater affinity was felt with the federal Progressive Conservative
Party which maintained similar principles and could provide a more ef-
fective voice in parliament. The last years of Social Credit government
in Alberta demonstrate this transition, for, primarily under the western
charisma of John Diefenbaker, Alberta began to send Conservative MP's
to Ottawa while still retaining the independent provincial Social
Credit government.

Alberta Social Crediters made several persistent attempts to
bring the political gospel to the rest of Canada even in Manning's
administration. Social Credit candidates were entered in federal
ridings in Alberta and links were formed with interested Socreds through-
out Canada via such journals as The Canadian Intelligence Service,[40] an
underground-type tabloid begun in 1951 and edited by former Albertan
Ron Gostick, to preserve Christian culture and expose and defeat
Marxism by pointing out evidence of a world plot and international
gangsterism; and The Canadian Social Crediter which represented the ex-

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[40]This newspaper was similar in world-view to the paranoia of
the later Douglas -- naming conspirators by name and identifying agents
of enslavement. Needless to say, it received no encouragement from the
Manning government.

pansionist aims of the movement. In 1953, Manning made a tour of cities

carrying the religious broadcast across Canada. Religious meetings were

also often held in cities when Manning was east on business. Complete

motivations were never always clear and some perceived a subtle attempt

to test the winds for Social Credit, as this editorial suggests: "After

all, Preacher Manning may never mention politics, but everyone knows

that it is Premier Manning who is doing the preaching. The recent

personal appearances of Preacher Manning in Ontario may well be the pre-

lude to a campaign in that province next year by Premier Manning, when

the appeal will be for votes".[41] Without mentioning politics, Manning

had spoken to a crowd of 6,000 in Ottawa that indicated widespread

curiosity, if not interest in this political reformer.[42] Solon Low had

resigned from his provincial responsibilities and became the first

National Leader of the Social Credit Party of Canada in 1944. Even at

the opening of the new Social Credit League Headquarters in February,

1960, it was stated that the aim of the Social Credit Party in the next

twenty-five years would be to achieve national power in Canada.[43] How-

ever, outside of the victories of the maverick Social Crediters in

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[41] Edmonton Journal, November 13th, 1952.

[42] Ottawa Journal, November 3rd, 1952.

[43] Edmonton Journal, February 18th, 1960. Obviously much more could be written about Social Credit's failing efforts to attain federal power. However, this is beyond the scope of our purpose. The important point is that these attempts were unsuccessful and that it brought serious alterations to the thinking of party elite as well as the grass-roots.

Quebec,[44] little progress was made; in fact, even Alberta Social Credit
eventually lost all her federal seats.

Identity Crisis

The inability of the Social Credit movement to grow and expand
nationally produced a dilemma. The party could take an isolationist or
sectionalist position and concentrate on maintaining a strong provincial
base or it could rethink its position within the federal context. The
regional alternative appeared to fit neither the philosophy of Social
Credit nor the position of Alberta as a dominant economic unit on the
national scene. The other side of the dilemma possessed two alternatives:
use different strategy to attempt to expand the same federal movement,
or realign Social Credit with those of similar perspective into a new
political unit. Fully consistent with Alberta's politico-economic
position and yet somewhat of a surprise to his hard-core provincial
supporters and the more orthodox Douglasites, Manning published a book
entitled Political Realignment[45] in 1967 in which he took the latter
position. Manning sought ideological realignment to a Social
Conservative position as a prelude to party reorganization. Denying
that such a shift would be a superficial merger or compromise, Manning
advocated a genuine synthesis of those committed to free enterprise as

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[44]The best account of Social Credit in Quebec with interesting
theoretical implications is Maurice Pinard's The Rise of a Third Party.

[45]E. C. Manning, Political Realignment: A Challenge to
Thoughtful Canadians. Much of the research of the book was done by
Manning's university-educated son.

well as humanitarian values as a direct contrast to the socialist wel-
fare state alternative. Not desiring to form a new party but intending
to polarize the electorates by the new alternative, he suggested that
the Progressive Conservative Party had the greatest potential to ac-
complish the realignment of federal party politics provided it was
willing to undertake the necessary fundamental reorganization.

Several facts immediately stand out. Douglas theory was again
rejected in favor of the principles which had been extracted from
Aberhart Social Credit. Secondly, Manning was expressing a willingness
to sacrifice the Social Credit name and movement for a higher ideal.
And thirdly, it was an expression of a protest movement come of age that
sought to defend its new interests within the matrix of federal politics.
All of these factors produced a crisis of identity among Alberta Social
Crediters that was no small factor in the ultimate defeat of the party
in 1971 after thirty-six years of government control.[46]

Social Credit thus had largely reduced all elements of its pro-
test whether regional, economic, or political. It had not abandoned
original principles but was more concerned with seeking conciliation
among those of like mind. Co-extensive with these subtle changes in
political world-view, and in some ways preceding it, was a natural change

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[46]For a published negative reaction of a former cabinet minister
under Manning and a stalwart defender of Social Credit theory, cf.
Alfred J. Hooke, 30 + 5: I Know, I was There, particularly Chapter 22.
Premier Bennett of British Columbia also reacted negatively, arguing
that "We're not a party of the extreme right or left, we're a party of
the center and of the people". Edmonton Journal, August 8th, 1967.

in religious world-view.[47] While the prophetic interpretation of the

Bible was still maintained, sermons on prophecy on the broadcast became

less frequent. Interviews revealed that there was less interest in

prophecy and little awareness that prophecy was unique to or a signifi-

cant part of the service. As one old-timer remarked who had been a

leader in the church Manning founded in Edmonton (the Fundamental

Baptist Church), "Prophecy was a matter more for the broadcast and I

cannot remember the last time a sermon on prophecy was given at

Fundamental -- even by Mr. Manning. This is not the dominant emphasis

though it is still a part of the belief. Emphasis is now placed on

Christian growth and expression". Prophecy was no longer needed as a

road map for understanding bewildering world events. Instead the call

was for "Christian Activists" to give local leadership in spiritual,

moral, economic, and political rejuvenation. The world was still a place

for God's activity but somewhat less directly so. The stand for the

Bible and fundamental doctrines was just as strong and listeners were

urged to plead and be faithful if their own minister minimized this

position rather than start another church. However, the fact that the

broadcast was no longer restricted to an Alberta audience meant that

even if the need arose, it would never serve as a vehicle of provincial

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[47]We are not arguing for a causal relationship between the reduc-
tion of religious protest and political or economic protest. They were
somewhat simultaneous although it could be argued that the more mission-
ary interests of the religious goals propelled it to broaden its appeal
first. It is important to remember that when Manning removed politics
from the religious broadcast, he was forced to redefine its contribu-
tion to religious life and its reason for existence.

integration or unity. The expansion of the broadcast sacrificed a possible greater development of local interest for the higher ideal of spreading the gospel across Canada. Intensive activity in Alberta and restriction to that province was thus subordinated to the goal of uniting those of similar perspective across Canada. Religious protest had also come of age and sought to defend its interests in the matrix of national religious life. A realignment of Canada's religious forces was what was needed so that those who believed in the fundamentals of the Christian gospel might be united regardless of denomination against the materialism of modernism.

Population Changes

The third major change that affected the character of Alberta Social Credit was the rearrangement of the social and economic milieu so that the basis for electoral support began to shift. A political movement nourished in the poverty of the depression experienced new demands for its relevance as hardship was replaced by prosperity and optimism replaced despair. Demographic changes meant that not only the social characteristics of Albertans had changed but also the social needs.

Pre-Social Credit Alberta could be described as predominantly rural and agrarian, socially unintegrated, and ecologically differentiated by diffuse clusters of religio-ethnic communities. The population was still largely in the early stages of the settlement process in which personal dreams and ambitions were sufficient motivation to engage in self-pursuits with little dependence on others. Individualism was only

interrupted by experiments in cooperation to relieve marketing problems
or economic difficulties and the rest of daily life was preoccupied
with consolidating one's claim on the land as a basis for future security.

The later years of the Social Credit regime exhibited numerous
changes in the social landscape. The primary development was the re-
latively rapid urbanization of the population. Table VIII demonstrates
that within thirty years, from 1931 to 1961, the ratio of rural to
urban population almost reversed itself. The percentage of the total
population in rural areas decreased from two-thirds to one-third and the
urban population increased from one-third to two-thirds. Two factors
are important here: the rural-urban shift and the location of new immi-
grants in Alberta in urban areas. Instead of being forced to engage in
the only industry -- farming -- other industry and service occupations
attracted the new population to urban areas. Furthermore, new population
was not recruited from among United States or European agriculturalists,
but from foreign urban environments where little interest or capability
in agrarian pursuits had been cultivated. Farms increased in size as
technology reduced the need for manpower while still permitting the
growth of farming acreage. The decisive shift took place between 1941
and 1961 with 1951 being the median year in which the percentage of rural
and urban population most closely approximated each other. By 1961,
slightly under 50% of the urban population were residing in cities of
100,000 or more. The growing predominance of Edmonton and Calgary as
population centers became more significant and they increasingly housed
not merely most of the urban population but also the majority of the
total Alberta population. Agriculture was still a significant industry

TABLE VIII

Percentage of Population of Alberta in Rural and Urban Areas

at Specified Intervals

Year	Total Population	% Rural	% Urban
1901	73,022	83.8	16.2
1911	374,295	70.6	29.4
1921	588,454	69.9	30.1
1931	731,605	68.9	31.1
1941	769,169	68.5	31.5
1951	939,501	54.2	45.8
1961	1,331,944	36.1	63.9
1966	1,463,203	31.2	68.8

Note: Cities, towns, and villages over 1,000 are classified urban.

Source: Adapted from Alberta Bureau of Statistics, Alberta Industry
and Resources, 1968, p. 129.

in Alberta, but its relative importance to the bulk of the total popula-
tion decreased. The agrarian way of life became less familiar to Albertans
as agricultural operations became differentiated from more urban pursuits.

Alberta in 1931 had been a virtual ethnic mosaic in which the do-
minant population group was from the British Isles (53.20%) but in which
the other half of the population came from a variety of European countries
-- none of which had a clearly dominant role. According to Table IX, the
British majority had been reduced to 45.18% by 1961, while all other
ethnic groups demonstrated increases in their percentage of the total
population except Scandinavians and Russians. As a province in 1931 and
in comparison to the rest of the country, Alberta had a normal predomin-
ance of persons from the British Isles but was under-represented in
persons of French origin. All other ethnic groups made a larger pro-
portionate contribution to the Alberta population in contrast to their
dispersal throughout the nation except the Italians, according to the
Location Quotient. In 1961, the position of those of British and French
extraction remained the same and, except for the larger relative increase
of those of Dutch origin, only small increases in the Location Quotient
were registered while the remaining ethnic groups displayed distinct
decreases. Alberta thus did have more than its share of numerous
European ethnic groups. The change from 1931 to 1961 was primarily that
European ethnic groups began to play a more dominant role over those of
British extraction though this change is largely cancelled by the rela-
tively complete assimilation of the earlier immigrants into the new
culture.

TABLE IX

Location Quotient of Alberta Ethnic Groups

	1931	(% Alta. Pop.)	1961	(% Alta. Pop.)
British Isles	1.03	(53.20)	1.03	(45.18)
French	.19	(5.25)	.21	(6.26)
Austria	1.95	(.92)	2.05	(1.19)
Slovak	3.03	(.88)	2.33	(.93)
Dutch	1.29	(1.86)	1.77	(4.17)
German	2.23	(10.18)	2.39	(13.76)
Hungarian	1.92	(.75)	1.67	(1.15)
Italian	.68	(.65)	.46	(1.13)
Polish	2.06	(2.89)	1.72	(3.04)
Russian	2.64	(2.24)	2.08	(1.35)
Ukrainian	3.52	(7.64)	3.06	(7.95)
Scandinavian	3.48	(8.46)	3.40	(7.20)
Indian & Eskimo	1.68	(2.08)	1.77	(2.14)

Source: Data compiled from information in 1931 Census of Canada (DBS)

Table 32 and 1961 (DBS) Table 37.

Table X indicates that the tendency to cluster had been lowest
for the British in 1931 but had progressively increased for the other
ethnic groups with the French, Ukrainians, Polish, and Italians showing
a high tendency to cluster in terms of spatial residence. We have argued
earlier that this areal segregation of some ethnic groups or ethnic sub-
groups reinforced old-country traditions and contributed to adjustment
by the slow assimilation of the subgroup. However, nationality as the
basis for personal residence became less important by 1961. Ethnic
concentrations had all been reduced in strength except for two small
groups. Rapid assimilation had meant that segregation was less impor-
tant and even for those who were clustering in a geographic location,
ethnic traditions and folkways had been reduced in significance. The
largest exception to this generalization were the post-war urban
migrants who settled in Alberta's cities but, in contrast to the earlier
migration, had come to Alberta as individuals or nuclear family units
rather than as ethnic aggregates.

The data enable us to conclude that while the ethnic mosaic be-
came more varied rather than less varied in the span of thirty years,
the three factors of assimilation, urbanization, and dispersal of ethnic
clusters produced a situation in which ethnically related variables were
far less important in Alberta political life.[48] Traditional social

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[48] Woycenko, for example, sees the John Decore – Anthony Hlynka
political battle in Vegreville in the federal election of 1949 as the
test of political integration in that ethnic loyalty directly opposed
party loyalty. "...the election results among Ukrainians showed that the
majority of Ukrainians in Canada had integrated politically, and though
they were very much a part of the group ethnically, they alienated their
ethnic loyalties from their political beliefs". The Ukrainians in Canada,
p. 117. This is also a form of compartmentalization.

TABLE X

Index of Areal Segregation for Alberta Ethnic Groups

	1931	1961
British Isles	.22	.17
French	.92	.66
Austrian	.48	.33
Slovak	.58	.71
German	.38	.35
Hungarian	.67	.58
Dutch	.40	.34
Polish	.76	.41
Russian	.55	.62
Italian	1.23	.80
Scandinavian	.43	.32
Ukrainian	1.10	.81
Indian & Eskimo	2.47	1.50

Source: Data compiled from information in 1931 Census
of Canada (DBS) Table 32 and 1961 (DBS) Table
37.

patterns, old country world-views and pioneering dreams were replaced by the emergence of a provincial culture, world-view, and heritage with which the new generations could identify rather than that of parental origns. Politically, this meant that the second and third generations were far more secure, better assimilated and experienced far less discrimination so that the necessity for protest and distrust of major federal parties was almost non-existent.

Ethnicity usually demonstrates a strong correlation with religious affiliation. Part of an immigrant's transplanted culture is usually his religion and we have established in an earlier chapter that church affiliation was an important avenue of ethnic solidarity. At first glance, we would expect a general reduction of the segregation of religious groups if these groups were tied to ethnicity. However, Table XI reveals the difficulty in establishing this pattern. Since churches are voluntary social organizations that would not include all members of an ethnic group, and since several religious organizations may draw from the same ethnic group, correlations are often more dependent on the strength of the local organization than on ethnicity as a dominant factor -- particularly in the later homogenization of Alberta. The tendency of Mormons, Mennonites, Jews, Greek Orthodox, Christian Reformed, and Ukrainian Greek Catholics to cluster would be expected. But the fact that some of these groups displayed an increasing tendency to cluster is somewhat unexpected. To what extent this result is caused by a shift in census divisions[49] cannot be determined, but perhaps

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[49]The census divisions were changed in Alberta in 1956. The shifting of division boundaries makes comparisons difficult and places limitations on the full significance of these changes in the index.

TABLE XI

Index of Areal Segregation for Alberta's Religious Groups

	1931	1961
Adventists	.44	.64
Anglicans	.23	.19
Baptists	.37	.43
Christian	.61	
Greek Orthodox	1.06	.92
Lutherans	.36	.30
Jews	.74	1.60
Mennonites	.92	1.15
Mormons	1.26	1.54
Pentecostal	.54	.40
Presbyterians	.30	.46
Roman Catholics	.55	.27
Salvation Army	.46	
United	.27	.19
Christian Reformed		.71
Ukrainian Greek Catholic		1.02

Note: This list was compiled of all religious groups listing

2,000 members or over in the 1931 Census, Table 41,

vol. II; and all religious groups over 10,000 members

in the 1961 Census, Table 44, vol. I, Pt. 2.

religious bodies have attracted their own kind from other areas and those who remained at a distance slowly became engulfed in another religious organization or none at all. Proximity to the hub of religious activity and religious socialization reinforced religious identity whereas distance tended to dissolve these ties. The concentration of some of these religious groups in one or two rural locations or in the two major cities increased the numerical value on the segregation index since there were few adherents in other areas as, for example, the Mormons and Mennonites. The increase in the index of Adventists, Baptists, and Presbyterians could have been caused by the consolidation of particular centers of religious activity and the abandonment of other areas where the number of adherents was small to groups such as the United Church. The lowering of the tendency to cluster of the United, Roman Catholic, and Pentecostal groups was evidence of their growing popular appeal that crossed ethnic or traditional boundaries. These groups were rather evenly diffused throughout the province.

Table XII reveals that the United Church indeed had attracted a larger share of the Alberta population, from 24.17% in 1931 to 31.45% in 1961. No other previously enumerated group demonstrated such an increase. All other major religious denominations as Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian showed decreases in the percentage of support in the total population. Alberta also increased in its share of the United Church support as measured by the Location Quotient. Catholics and Jews were under-represented in Alberta while Anglicans, Baptists, and Presbyterians had a normal national representation. All other religious bodies with sectarian or ethnic qualities, though a minor part

TABLE XII

Location Quotient of Alberta's Religious Groups

	1931	(% Alta. Pop.)	1961	(% Alta. Pop.)
Adventists	3.87	(.58)	2.79	(.39)
Anglicans	.98	(15.44)	.89	(11.76)
Baptists	.98	(4.17)	.98	(3.19)
Christians	2.91	(.32)		
Greek Orthodox	3.65	(3.61)	2.72	(3.56)
Lutherans	2.96	(11.26)	2.53	(9.20)
Mennonites	1.31	(1.13)	1.45	(1.22)
Mormons	8.57	(1.80)	7.11	(1.92)
Pentecostals	2.00	(.50)	1.43	(1.13)
Presbyterian	1.17	(9.85)	.92	(4.15)
Catholic (including Greek Catholic, 1931 only)	.56	(23.02)	.49	(22.43)
Salvation Army	9.13	(2.74)	.50	(.25)
United	1.24	(24.17)	1.57	(31.45)
Jews	.33	(.50)	.32	(.45)
Christian Reformed			2.47	(.84)
Missionary Alliance			3.40	(.34)
Christian Science			1.18	(.13)
Church of Christ, Disciples			1.82	(.20)
Nazarene			5.43	(.38)
Evangelical United Brethren			3.07	(.46)
Jehovah Witnesses			1.51	(.56)
Ukrainian Greek Catholic			2.55	(2.65)

Source: This list was compiled of all religious groups listing 2,000 members or more in the 1931 Census, Table 41, vol. II; and all religious groups over 10,000 members in the 1961 Census, Table 44, vol. I, Pt. 2.

Note: The 1961 Census was far more comprehensive in listing religious groups and to what extent this limitation of choice affected responses in 1931 cannot be determined.

of the total population, were over-represented.

Again, the data enable us to conclude that the religious mosaic became more varied rather than less varied through the course of thirty years, and that urbanization, assimilation, and the dispersal of religious clusters produced a more normal situation in which local socioeconomic factors led to the emergence of sectarian bodies that were a product of the Alberta milieu rather than merely a carry-over of a former residence. Religious affiliation earlier had a strong ethnic correlation such as Lutheranism with Germans and Scandinavians, and Mormonism with British-American backgrounds. However, through interfaith marriages, proselytization, or community socialization, this correlation has slowly decreased, the ethnic background recedes, and the religious group becomes merely one among many in a situation of religious pluralism.

The decline of religious and ethnic communities not only in terms of spatial location but also in terms of weakening gemeinschaft relationships based on traditional mores and values meant the reorganization of Alberta communities. The increasing rural-urban migration meant that rural communities found new bases for stability determined by socio-economic factors and new social bonds formulated through collective community efforts such as the Social Credit crusade. In their three phases of the development of the prairie community, Zimmerman and Moneo suggest that the period up to the depression could only be described sociologically as the settlement phase in which the primary goal was the possession of the land and the establishment of a new home.[50]

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[50]C. C. Zimmerman and Gary W. Moneo, The Prairie Community System,

After the depression, the prairie community reorganized and consolidated
the population around definite roles and a division of labor for farming
was becoming big and specialized business. Thus, social and economic
differentiation reorganized social patterns which facilitated the post-
war economic expansion.

In addition to the growth of the major urban areas in the pro-
vince, the rural community itself was rearranged by such factors as the
increasing use of automobiles and the consolidation of schools. "Farm
cities"[51] emerged as trading, entertainment, and·retirement centers
which drew the surrounding hinterland together. The primary group re-
lationships of the immediate community were threatened and encroached
upon by the secondary relationships at more distant centers. While these
new social patterns increased the solidarity and stability of the pro-
vince by removing isolation tendencies, they contributed to the decay
of earlier rural social organizations.[52] Family relationships and
family unity deteriorated as common goals were lost and new styles of
life characterized family members living in different environments.[53]

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p. 3. The authors see the present period as the stabilizing period in
which the community evolves and organizes a folklife.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Darwin Solomon gives a concise summary of the trends in the
regrouping of voluntary organizations among rural people in "The Impact
of Technological Change on Farm People", Canadian Journal of Agricultural
Economics 18, #1 (1960).

[53]For a good discussion on family life in rural areas in the
west, cf. Government of Saskatchewan Royal Commission on Agriculture and
Rural Life, The Home and Family in Rural Saskatchewan, Report No. 10.

Children often left the farm upon completion of secondary school and went to the city only to return for occasional visits with a different world-view.[54]

The increasing size of farms meant that fewer rather than more people were needed or decided to settle in rural areas. The declining rural population produced marked pressure on the existing social organizations. New abilities to travel greater distances with ease decreased the importance of these organizations as primary socializing units and, as numbers dwindled, often reduced their appeal to personal involvement. One of the primary organizations to feel this deterioration and loss of vigor was the rural church.[55] Geographic mobility and heavy population loss meant that many country churches were closed or moved to larger towns. Amalgamation or consolidation of churches could be considered a significant signal of the disintegration of the old ethnocentric communities. Easy access to other communities meant that traditional boundaries were obliterated and confused while being enlarged. The United Church of Canada made this observation of the situation: "One of the consequences is that the geographical areas in which our church

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[54]As evidence, note this comment from Redwater: "Families aren't as close as they used to be. They may have a son or daughter go to the city and then they start to think differently. Even if they come back, its not the same. Sometimes they don't feel the way we do about politics. If everybody here votes Social Credit, they have to vote something else".

[55]One of the few sociological studies of the effect of urbanization on the rural church in Canada can be found in Donald R. Whyte's manuscript in M.A. Tremblay and W. J. Anderson, eds., Rural Canada in Transition.

buildings were established years ago are no longer communities. The

people who live in these areas belong in a multitude of communities,

some of which know no geographic, religious, political or cultural

barriers".[56] The relocation and reorganization of the rural church was

an important result of the rural-urban transition. The fact that it

was increasingly removed from the center of close-knit communities

meant that the church became more of an option for personal participa-

tion and less an effective agent for community integration.

When religious organizations began to suffer from these two

factors of mobility and population loss, the result was that either

personal involvement dwindled or denominational differences had to be

minimized in order to maintain a cohesive and viable organization.

Bureaucratic decision often sought to realign the boundaries of pastoral

charges to make more efficient use of ministerial manpower, and consoli-

dations and amalgamations were sought.[57] Often it was sentimental

reasons that were proffered to resist such shifts for the disturbance

of meaningful social patterns tended to alienate those committed to

the church primarily as a social institution. The other factor was the

reduction of denominational differences. Already being an amalgam of

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[56]United Church of Canada, Proceedings of the First National
Seminar on the Rural Church, Saskatoon, April 17th - 18th, 1963, p. 32.

[57]United Church of Canada, New Prospects for the Rural Church.
Another problem of the 60's was that whereas previous candidates for
the ministry had been raised in rural areas, most candidates at that
time were raised and trained in urban areas with little interest or in-
clination for service in rural areas. Cf. V. W. Larson, The Minister
and the Church: An Exploratory Study of Some Characteristics and
Attitudes of United Church of Canada Clergymen in Manitoba and
Saskatchewan.

three Protestant bodies, the United Church tended to attract stranded

Protestants of other denominations, at first on a temporary basis but

with oncoming generations on a more permanent basis. An Edmontonian

remarked:

> My sister lives out near Bashaw and she is a Baptist.
> Went there right after she got married over 20 years
> ago. She stayed a Baptist too and did not join the
> United Church though she went there all the time be-
> cause there was no Baptist Church. But now their
> children have grown up in the United Church and
> have become members. But my sister is still a
> Baptist.

The United Church reaped the harvest in regions settled by persons of

mixed background and where the total population with religious interests

was low. Thus it is fair to say that the United Church played a com-

paratively larger role in prairie communities as it became a unitive

agent for the assimilation of a heterogeneous population. Whereas 25%

of the rural population of Canada belonged to the United Church, a

higher percentage of 33% of the rural population in Alberta, Saskatchewan,

and Manitoba claimed to be affiliated with the United Church.[58] The

dominant position of the United Church on the prairies meant that it

gave the basic shape to the religious life of Alberta.

Sociologically, the United Church in Alberta could be described

as an organization in which correct doctrine is not nearly as important

as the correct ethic that proceeds from that doctrine. Thus leaning to

the left, it unites those who are committed to basic Christian ethics

as an important element in the socialization of children and as the

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[58]Proceedings of the First National Seminar on the Rural Church, op. cit., p. 35.

backbone to the moral fibre of the society. The emphasis on a social gospel and the large-scale commitment to a demythologized theology among the leaders reinterprets traditional Biblical conceptions.

In spite of this trend, Manning continued to take a decisive stand against this type of modernism and reaffirmed the less intellectual, basic, and fundamental conceptions of the Bible and Christianity that stand at sharp contrast with United Church theology. We are left with a paradox here in which we must explain our original hypothesis that religion was also a factor in Social Credit's electoral support during the Manning administration. The data in Table XII point out the growing affiliation with the United Church, and the still relatively small affiliation with sectarian bodies. Even Baptists, Lutherans, and Presbyterians who took a high view of the Bible held a declining percentage of the population. Either Alberta had undergone such secularization in the face of prosperity that religion was no longer politically significant or religion was still a vital factor but had shifted in its contribution to the political arena.

The nature of this relationship was closely tied to the changing economic environment. Scientific agricultural techniques led to more diversified farming, and the gigantic wheat crops were given some market security through the establishment of such agencies as the Canadian Wheat Board. The provincial government provided mechanisms for aid to those afflicted by natural disasters and the general outlook was much more favorable to the farmer with greater crop security and mechanized agriculture which required fewer employees. While the first crude oil was found at Turner Valley in 1936, peak production was hit

in the forties. But the great oil boom was yet to be ignited by the

discoveries at Leduc in 1947 and Redwater in 1948. Oil and natural gas

not only provided additional income to fortunate farmers but produced

unexpected receipts for a depleted provincial treasury. The Social

Credit government was thus in an enviable position of having additional

income that was not dependent on personal taxation.

In this period of economic optimism and expansion, the govern-

ment took on a new role. It was not an arbitrator of conflicting

occupational groups, and it was no longer the united voice of protest

by the masses; rather, the government became the middleman to mediate

the interests of the large capitalists and the masses.[59] Without hurting

either party, the Manning government sought the necessary compromises

to obtain maximum public benefit without alienating private enterprise.

Extracting revenues from royalties, rentals, and sales of crown re-

serves, revenue from petroleum accounted for at least one-third of the

total revenue for almost two decades each year since 1949 and as high

as one-half for two years in the mid-fifties.[60] The Department of

Mines and Minerals was established in 1949 as the government administering

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[59] Organizer Orvis Kennedy's primary aim was exclaimed to be to "keep the 'brass' in touch with the 'grass'". J. A. Irving, "Social Credit in Alberta after 25 Years", Saturday Night, January 9th, 1960, p. 15.

[60] For accounts of the government activity in regulating the extraction of petroleum resources, cf. Harold E. Bronson, A Review of Legislation Pertaining to Petroleum Resources: Government of Alberta 1930-1957, M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta; and John E. H. Condor, The Disposition of Crown Petroleum and Natural Gas Rights in Alberta, M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta.

agency with the pleasant duty to encourage orderly development of the industry, prevent waste and assure greatest recovery, prevent monopoly and encourage private enterprise, give the people of the province a fair share of the returns, and ensure compensation to the owner for surface rights.[61] Managing resources on behalf of the people had far greater compensation than beating the air for monetary reform.

What then were the factors that enabled the Manning government to secure votes and what was the significance of religion in the continued dominance of the Social Credit government?

Religion and the Middle Class World-View

We have already argued that the stand against socialism was often understood in view of its religious implications. That this religious concern was based on personal convictions as well as its legitimating defense of a fledging economic system is without doubt. Something of this feeling was expressed by a Missouri Synod Lutheran.

> In our own circles I would regard the coming into power of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation which, I believe, is definitely a possibility, a threat to the preaching of the cross. In spite of all acts and assertions by that body of non-cooperation with Communism, it seems to me that the ochre is there and a more thorough stirring up and mixing in the pigments will change its

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[61]
    In some quarters, the Socred government was viewed as "hard bargainers" in insisting that no oil company could get a monopoly on the oil it finds, drilling leases must be auctioned to the highest bidder, and the government demanding a bonus for the right to drill plus a royalty percentage of every barrel of oil produced.

color from its present pink to a decided red.[62]

This religious argument was particularly appropriate and acceptable not merely for religious reasons but because it defended a coveted way of life in which individual enterprise was the keystone. The fact that Manning trumpeted this defense so skillfully and loudly meant that those with religious interests often found this approach doubly appealing because of their economic interests. Farmers whose individual dreams seemed about to come true with the new wave of agrarian optimism were not about to surrender the fruits of their toil to a socialist government. As those continuing to farm enlarged their owner-operated enterprises, they became staunch supporters of Social Credit policy. Such persons, as Straus's study in rural Washington concluded, adhere more closely to traditional rural values, particularly in the diligence of the work ethic with the assumption that work is good in and of itself.[63] The religio-economic defense of private enterprise thus was an important component of the Socred vote among rural people.

While initially somewhat more reluctant to give support to Social Credit because of the dubious end of their fiscal proposals, small merchants and businessmen increasingly came to appreciate the Socred stand against socialism. In fact, a 1940 edition of Today and

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[62] A. H. Raduenz, "The Church's Contribution to Post-War Planning", a paper given at the Northern Alberta Conference for Pastors, Teachers, and Professors of the Missouri Synod Lutherans.

[63] Murray A. Straus, "Personal Characteristics and Functional Needs in the Choice of Farming as an Occupation", Rural Sociology 21 (1956), 257-266.

Tomorrow pointed out that many of the newcomers to Social Credit were

"numberless small businessmen" whose financial and status security was

dependent upon defense of a healthy status quo.[64] As Martin Trow's

study in a Vermont town in 1954 demonstrates, support for the right-

wing McCarthy could not be simply understood as political intolerance

but as an expression of insecurity and dissatisfaction with the present

order.[65] Trow pointed out that it was small businessmen who were

McCarthy's greatest supporters because they feared that the centraliza-

tion of socialism threatened their previously high community status and

their socio-economic displacement. Similarly, in Alberta,persons in the

middle class who had interiorized the work ethic and had obtained rela-

tively small interests in the status quo exhibited the greatest status

anxiety and therefore backed the Social Credit defense of the democratic

- free enterprise way of life.

Religious values were important to the way of life desired by

the expanding middle class. It is here where Manning obtained the

greatest share of the popular vote. His own religious interests had

some appeal to sectarians and the religious perspective of the lower

class who were politically aroused by a fundamentalist leader. But

Manning's important coalition was completed by his support from the

upper class and big business. Manning was always eager to point out

that "Individual enterprise is the most efficient way to develop any

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[64]Today and Tomorrow, March 7th, 1940.

[65]Martin Trow, "Small Businessmen, Political Tolerance and
Support for McCarthy", in Lewis Coser (ed.), Political Sociology, pp.
181-203.

resource and it is essential to our free and democratic way of life".[66]

Business corporations and investors easily agreed with this position and

found that the decisiveness with which he made religious pronouncements

carried over to the sincerity of his political statements. Just as

Manning's stand for the Bible was unshakeable, so politically "When he

said something, you could take his word for it he meant business and

he wouldn't turn around and change his mind".[67] Again Manning's

mediatorial role between private enterprise and investors (particularly

in the oil and natural gas industry) and the public of Alberta pro-

vided Socreds with an unbeatable combination of both campaign funds and

votes.

The Compartmentalization of Religion and Politics

Post-war prosperity and new revenue from oil deposits meant that

a crusade was no longer appropriate. Conciliatory politics was needed

to satisfy the demands of conflicting segments of the population. Be-

cause of the economic expansion of the Manning years, internal conflict

was minimal. What was desired was honest and sound administration and

the provision of welfare services without cost or at low cost. The

messianism of the movement was transformed into the sound administration

of a political party.[68] The expert negotiation of oil contracts was a

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[66]Edmonton Journal, September 14th, 1950.

[67]Interview with an Edmonton newspaper reporter who covered the legislature.

[68]J. R. Mallory, "Social Credit: Party or Movement?", The Canadian Forum 35 (June, 1955), 52.

considerably different endeavor from attacking eastern bankers and in-
dustrialists. Therefore, the need for a populist movement vanished.
Membership, activity, and involvement in Social Credit activity no
longer had urgency. And side by side the decline of Social Credit as a
populist movement was the decline of the populist religion that had
crystallized during the depression.

Aberhart's crusade united the religious leader and the political
leader in one person. As a result, the radio broadcast was as much
political as religious because they were inseparably linked in a crusade
that represented the total needs of mankind. Manning overtly separated
the political leader from the religious leader. The radio broadcast was
thus no longer a political tool because Social Credit was no longer a
crusade.[69] The broadcast became "Canada's National Back to the Bible
Hour" with simply "Ernest C. Manning speaking". Biblical prophecy and
its relation to world events, while present, was no longer dominant and
had been replaced in emphasis by reasoned Bible exposition and basic
Christian truths in fundamentalist perspective. Statements regarding
government policy were considered off-limits.

Despite the demands of government, the broadcast has continued
as an indication of Manning's convictions and primary passion in life.

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[69]For a good example of opposition to Manning, both politically
and religiously, see a booklet entitled Have They Turned Their "Back to
the Bible?" by I. V. Macklin. As a Christian socialist, Macklin de-
nounced both private enterprise and prophecy. See also, Edmonton Journal,
October 10th, 1967, for an article entitled "Manning: Preacher and
Politician", which interprets Manning's comparison of the early church
with today's church as a condemnation, lack of respect, and intolerance
for established churches.

He personally disliked being considered a politician and preferred the
role of administrator for the people. When he spoke as a political
leader, he spoke merely as a leader having particular Christian convic-
tions. Manning compartmentalized religion and politics for the seculari-
zation and routinization of the crusade demanded such a separation.

The compartmentalization of religion in the modern world has a
history that can at least be traced from the religious activism of the
Reformation and the ensuing growth of rationalism. Max Weber called it
the "disenchantment of the world" (Entzauberung der Welt) in which
theological categories were reduced to an independent sphere because
they were no longer needed to deal with an increasingly rationalized
world.[70] R. H. Tawney noted that the religious concerns of the Reformation
contributed to a later secularization of political thought so that
religion was "converted from the keystone which holds together the
social edifice into one department within it", i.e., religion and the
secular aspects of life become "parallel and independent provinces".[71]
In contemporary society, religion has been compartmentalized institu-
tionally from other institutions in the social milieu.[72] Religion is
ordinarily compartmentalized from the sphere of politics. Government

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[70] Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation", in H. H. Gerth and C.
Wright Mills, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, p. 155.

[71] R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, pp. 228-
229.

[72] Harry H. Hiller, "The New Theology and the Sociology of
Religion", Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 6, #3 (1969),
182.

in the modern world is not by divine right and only weak attempts have been made to establish a theocracy. Religion and politics are considered independent spheres for alternate human activity. Aberhart Social Credit represented one attempt to bridge the gulf between the two worlds, but this was only permitted because of widespread distress in the society and an inability to deal with it. The machinery of politics alone had failed to bring relief, so politics was reinterpreted and religion was reinterpreted and they were fused in the interests of a moral world. But the removal of deprivations meant that politics was again a viable sphere of independent activity requiring no further legitimations. In a unique sense, the duration of Manning's leadership brought about the disenchantment of the Social Credit movement. Compartmentalization was at least partly dictated to him by the society which was as secular as it ever was and which itself was compartmentalized.[73] The crusade was only a momentary interruption in a secular society that provided a framework of meaning in response to distress.

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[73]We are again rejecting the hypothesis that Alberta is a Bible Belt. The crusade was a peculiar development evoked by the depression and could never have been acceptable even ten years later. The fact that the religious activity of the leadership has been well-known has contributed to this aura, but there is no evidence to assume that religious activity in Alberta is proportionately higher than elsewhere. It was more that Alberta had leaders that evoked basic religious sentiments on occasion in a manner that was never evoked in other provinces. For an account of Alberta that concludes there has been no trend away from fundamentalist religion over the province in the past twenty-five years, and using data and presuppositions which we have challenged, cf. Donald C. Harper, Secularization and Religion in Alberta, M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1971.

In this situation of compartmentalization and the secularization of government activity, it is highly doubtful if the Manning government was supported for religious reasons.[74] However, a rising and expanding middle class could support a leader who stood for high morals, industry, sobriety, and possessed good business acumen. Religion and politics might have been officially separated but they were linked through moral commitments. Instead of a morality with a focus outside the province, as during the crusade, morality now became a matter for personal commitment within the province. If religious ideology was compartmentalized and separated from political activity, it would only be important in what it contributed to morals. We would expect then to find that morality was the bridge to the attainment of support from the largest Protestant body in Alberta, the United Church, for fundamentalists were only a small part of the total population.

Anderson's study of the Alberta Social Credit Party membership (N = 715) in 1968 reveals that Protestants overwhelmingly dominate the party and that Anglican and United Church people form the largest majority (Table XIII). This is somewhat at variance with the widespread assumption that Social Credit party members are all fundamentalists.[75]

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[74]One Socred MLA who is also a clergyman (but without denominational affiliation) gave me his own analysis of the Social Credit vote. "Some time ago we took a survey in Calgary and only 15% went to church regularly, and of that number only 3% were evangelical or fundamental. That means that you need more than Christians of our type to vote for you if you are going to be elected". While the statistical significance of these figures is unreliable, the point is that Socreds were in no way dependent on religious evangelicals or fundamentalists for their electoral success.

[75]Hulme's study of the fifteenth Alberta legislature points out

TABLE XIII

Social Credit League Membership by Religion

Anglican and United	29.09%
Other Protestant	22.94
Roman Catholic	9.93
Lutheran and Mennonite	7.83
Baptist and Brethern	6.99
Latter Day Saints	5.59
Pentecostal, Church of God	3.92
Others (Hindu, etc.)	1.12
Not Ascertained	9.79
Inapplicable	2.80

Source: Owen Anderson, The Alberta Social Credit Party: An Empirical Analysis, unfinished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Alberta.

Note: The peculiar unity of different religious bodies, such as Lutheran and Mennonite, and the existence of a large "Other Protestant" category prevent any meaningful comparisons of membership in the Social Credit League with representation in the general population.

The imprecision in defining of what "Other Protestants" consist and the lumping together of two denominational bodies in one category makes it difficult to make any further observations. The fact was that Manning's religious ideology was unimportant; it was his commitment to the Protestant Ethic which made him an appealing leader to the largely middle class and theologically "liberal" United Church members in both urban and rural areas.

Manning himself has said, "Politics has no place in religion but religion belongs in politics". While the separation of the two spheres was personally accepted, their absolute distinctions were rejected.

> The Christian who isolates himself from the political
> processes...may be surrendering by default positions
> of responsibility in world affairs which believers
> ought to occupy if God's will is to prevail. By at-
> tempting to practice an absolute separation of
> religion and politics, the Christian may be making
> artificial and injurious distinctions between inter-
> related spheres of human activity which cannot or
> should not be totally separated.[76]

The means of bridging this gulf was by an institutional compartmentali-
zation in which the church refrained from involvement in political affairs

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that religion was not an important factor for an MLA to secure the party nomination. However, cabinet ministers claimed a much higher rate of regular church attendance (81%) than backbenchers (60%) and deputy ministers (41%). Manning himself has agreed that other things being equal, a person with Christian convictions would be preferred by him as a cabinet appointment. The Senior Executive and the Fifteenth Alberta Legislature: A Study in the Social and Political Background of Membership, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1970.

[76]
    Preston Manning, Christians and Politics, p. 3. Preston Manning's position is representative of and endorsed by his father.

but in which individual Christians felt it their Christian duty to become involved in the political process. Even though church leaders of the larger denominations felt an obligation to take public positions on moral issues, the general consensus among Albertans paralleled this differentiation and connection, as this Lutheran statement reveals:

> The business of the church is to inculcate faith
> and the fruits of faith as the handmaiden of the
> Holy Spirit; the business of the members of the
> church in a free country is to live as befits a
> Christian, to exercise the right of plebiscite,
> to hold office, if such is the wish of his fellow
> citizens, and to carry out the duties of his
> office so that they may be in conformity with the
> precepts of God.[77]

It was clear that while religion and politics were compartmentalized institutionally, they were to be linked via the individual largely through morality. Therefore, the secularization of the political process gave religion a secondary role even though the two spheres were compartmentalized.

Morality as a Secular Religious Theme

The Socred government successfully succeeded in presenting a public image of morality, honesty, and good administration and this became an important factor in re-election. Albertans could see enough of the tangible benefits of the government oil policy that they were convinced of the pure intentions and public interest of their elected leaders. Cabinet Minister David Ure suggested that Social Credit demanded

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[77]
  A. H. Raduenz, op. cit.

support on the basis of the morality of their administrative policy:

> And so the Social Credit government has said what
> any sound honest businessman would say, let's get
> development, let's prevent waste, let's prevent
> monopolies, let us see that the people of the
> province share in the benefits of this production
> and let us protest the rights of the individual
> who owns the farm.[78]

The important role of morality in obtaining public support in the Manning

administration is revealed by the almost devastating effect that moral

issues had on the 1955 election. Similar to the elections of 1940, but

without a united opposition, Social Credit managed only 43.77% of the

popular vote and took only 37 seats to the opposition's combined total

of 24 seats. The Liberal opposition had attempted to undermine public

confidence in the government by accusing MLA's who had loans from the

Treasury Branches to be in violation of the Legislative Assembly Act

that prohibited elected officials from having contracts with a govern-

ment agency. While Manning had personally asked for the expulsion from

caucus of John Landeryou and Roy Lee for a violation under the same Act

of collecting rent from the government on a building purchased from the

government and then leased back to the government, the opposition also

attempted to use this example as evidence of corruption. Questions

were also raised over Manning's dealings in land and mineral resources,

but the government managed to maintain its power and resist this threat.

As one MLA who was in the middle of the disputations in this election

asserted, "Manning's religion was evident in politics in that he was a

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[78]David Ure, Minister of Agriculture, on CBC broadcast, July
26th, 1948.

strict moralist". As a measure of vindication, a commission was appointed after the election which cleared the government and cabinet of any corruption.

In March, 1957, a dividend payment programme was announced whereby Albertans were to share in the capital wealth of the province. A bit reminiscent of the original promise of $25.00 per month but in a cash payment rather than in non-negotiable certificates, all adults with a minimum of five year's residence in Alberta were given a dividend payment of $20.00 in 1957 and $17.50 in 1958. While abuses of payments led to the suspension of this procedure, funds for this project were channelled into a five-year development programme in 1959. Having walked circumspectly and having rewarded the people for their confidence, Social Credit returned to its usual majority of 61 seats and 55.48% of the popular vote in 1959. Such large majorities of the elected members were maintained until the defeat of the government.

Manning had learned from the episodes of Landeryou and Lee and from the private interests of men like Nathan Tanner and Alfred Hooke that even only apparent conflicts of interest must be dealt with immediately, publicly, and firmly. Such was the case with Manning's request for the resignation of Provincial Treasurer Edgar W. Hinman in 1964. Taking a relatively restrictive position that did not imply any gross misconduct, but in an attempt to prevent the arousal of public suspicions, Manning refused to allow ministers of the Crown to take part in the active promotion of business projects whether or not there was any direct conflict of interest.[79] The appointment of the Kirby Commission

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[79]Edmonton Journal, August 1st, 1964.

and their verdict in 1968 cleared both Hooke and Hinman of using their offices for private gain.

While it is true that the Manning government was not particularly avant garde in its liquor legislation, blue laws, or the teaching of evolution,[80] these items were not particularly important to a society seeking new levels of stability in a period of economic expansion. In fact, Manning trumpeted his position on these issues in just such terms: "I am against destroying standards period. Once society loses its standards, it doesn't have much to keep it stable".[81] The majority of Albertans had so internalized the Protestant Ethic that any standard was supported that facilitated the consolidation of assets and the preservation of a life-style by the dominant middle class.

While it is clear that most Albertans did not support Social Credit for the religious beliefs of its leader, the electorate could identify with the morality of the leader which obviously sprung from his religious convictions. Thus religion again and again, as revealed in the interviews, contributed to a development of trust in the leadership. The editor of a rural newspaper analyzed the situation perceptively:

> I'm really a Conservative and I don't say this to
> everyone, but I think Manning was a brilliant
> leader because people knew where he stood on some
> of the great moral issues that face government

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[80]Curriculum must always be approved by the Minister of Education. Aberhart had always insisted that evolution should be taught as a theory not as a fact, and for many years a pamphlet explaining alternate views to evolution was supplied along with the high school textbooks.

[81]Edmonton Journal, August 31st, 1961.

> leaders. And there is no doubt that his religion had
> something to do with that. Probably what people
> didn't do themselves, they demanded of their leader.
> People could joke about his religious stand or his
> feelings on liquor and yet at the same time down
> deep they probably knew he was right. They left him
> to do the governing because they knew that when they
> were apathetic or confused, he would probably do
> what was best for them.

Alfred Hooke, former Socred MLA and cabinet minister, made a similar

statement: "Time after time I have heard many men remark that while

they themselves were in no way particularly religious, they were pleased

and satisfied that the premier of our province subscribed to the re-

ligious views he preached".[82] The nature of the Socred party as leader-

oriented and the capitalist commitments of Albertans to their own

personal enterprises contributed to the larger influence of this factor

in Manning's leadership than ordinarily probable in representative

government. People freely stated that they voted for Manning or the

Social Credit government rather than the personal qualities of the

local candidate. While some objected to the subtle ties of Social

Credit with religion, others found it to be largely a neutral factor.

A Mormon fromTaber asserted "We don't care what religion you are. As

long as he represents us well and is honest, we don't care. We knew

Manning had strong religious convictions and that means a lot". Across

denominational lines, the same feeling echoed, as this statement from

Pincher Creek reflected:

> I'm Catholic and always supported Social Credit.
> There used to be a lot of study groups here in

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[82]A. J. Hooke, op. cit., p. 198.

> 1935 but I guess only one is still really going,
> if you can still call it that. No, the priests
> never said anything about us supporting Aberhart.
> They seemed to be mostly French at that time and
> weren't really in the middle of things. But I
> don't care what religion a man is -- all we care
> about around here is honesty and that is what
> we're looking for.

A Wetaskiwin farmer placed these same feelings in a Christian framework:

"Social Credit is not a Christian political party. It just has good

Christian leadership which we can trust". Or the statement of a church

leader in Edmonton: "Few of our people listen to Manning's broadcast

but he has been a Christian gentleman and we can support that for sure".

The issue of morality in Alberta Social Credit was not new with

Manning. Aberhart had made morality a primary reason for his political

endeavors, but for him it was the means by which he fused religion and

politics together. On the other hand, for Manning morality was the

means by which the gap between religion and politics was bridged while

still being kept apart. In both cases, morality made an important

contribution to the attainment of electoral support and in both cases

religion was at least an element in the moral fibre. Perhaps, to genera-

lize a bit on the basis of our data, we can conclude that in a situation

of religious pluralism in a secular society, religion is most likely

to impinge on other segments of society through morality. Religious

ideology and religious affiliation have little consequence but are

allowed to influence other aspects of society secondarily through the

ascribed virtues of personal morality.

Conversion as a Political Experience

The final factor that contributed to the continued dominance of

Social Credit in the province during the Manning years was that the in-

tense commitment and participation demanded by the crusade in the depres-

sion had been so thorough and so arresting that it served as a virtual

conversion experience for its participants. A former Liberal candidate

in Vegreville pointed out the intense emotional feelings that Social

Credit generated among its followers. "Social Credit is a cult. It's

not politics. One man came up to me with tears in his eyes after the

election. He told me he had voted for me but would never do it again.

He said he just didn't feel right voting Liberal". Social Credit re-

channelled and intensified the feelings that had originated in the UFA

and committed those feelings to a new and dynamic political movement

that gave new meaning to frustrated living. Social Credit had been con-

ceived as the only available means of salvation and once old allegiances

were surrendered to this new leader and new movement, followers were

given new hope and new life. Social Credit had truly been a revitaliza-

tion of individual lives. Thus it was natural that these persons who

had been converted to Social Credit in the depression would be religiously

zealous and persistent in support of the party.[83] Irving stressed the

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[83]We are arguing that this secular conversion might conceivably
have been a type of substitute for a religious conversion, or indeed
that it might have been profoundly religious in nature and scope. Vatro
Murvar found that revolutionary and sectarian messianism in Russia
shared fundamental religious attributes because they were structurally
and functionally interdependent. "Messianism in Russia: Religious and
Revolutionary", Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion (Winter,
1971), 277-388.

enduring nature of the Socred commitment. "No aspect of the response

of the people to Social Credit is more impressive than its <u>enduring</u> hold

over them. Once a person got the philosophy into his head it was well

nigh impossible to dislodge it. Hence the slogan, "Once a Social

Crediter, always a Social Crediter".[84] We would expect, then, that by

the end of the Manning administration, party membership would include

a large percentage of older people who had been original participants

in the rise to power. This is indeed the case. Anderson's study, as

shown by Table XIV, shows that 53.15% of the membership consists of

people 50 years of age and over, with the age group 30 - 49 years of

age comprising 37.62%. The relative absence of young persons on the

membership rolls and the high percentage of older people demonstrates

that participation in the early years of the crusade had served as a

type of conversion experience which reoriented political preferences

for the rest of their lives. In a very deep sense, Social Credit main-

tained its non-political nature and became "a way of life".[85] Younger

persons without the depression experience had greater difficulty relating

to the party, its ideological commitments, and its leadership.[86] By far

the majority of Social Crediters had been those who had participated in

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[85]J. A. Irving, "The Evolution of the Social Credit Movement", <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 338. In another article, Irving speaks of Social Credit functioning as a religion. "An Interpretation of the Movement", <u>Canadian Journal of Psychology</u> 1 (September, 1947), 127.

[86]Anderson also found that housewives were the largest occupational group in the party membership (26.15%), farmers (23.92%) followed next by white collar workers (10.77%). Therefore, even as late as 1968, Social Credit strength was still primarily among rural people -- to say nothing about recent rural migrants to urban areas who were still Socred supporters.

TABLE XIV

Social Credit League Membership by Age

Groups

Age Group

15 - 19	.70%
20 - 29	7.13
30 - 49	37.62
50 - 64	32.45
65 +	20.70
Not Ascertained	.84
Inapplicable	.56

Source: Owen Anderson, The Alberta Social Credit Party: An Empirical

Analysis, unfinished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Alberta.

the origination of the party and had a rural background. As the percentage of those converted to the Social Credit ideals in the depression dwindles in proportion to the population as a whole, or as the number of those on the voting lists who have shared the experiences of the depression decreases, Social Credit electoral support can be expected to wane.

In an expanding economy, all classes were impressed by good administration and found no need for political change. By acting as moral watchdog over conflicts of interest and keeping the scandal ratio low, Manning thereby validated his own leadership as moral. The dynamic emotional commitments required by the crusade had so strongly converted Albertans that Manning continued to reap the harvest of their loyal support. Nevertheless, with Manning's resignation, the proportionate decline of "converted" Social Crediters in the population, the levelling off of economic development,[87] the declining rural population, the lack of a new leadership image, and the rise of a new type of secular charisma in Peter Lougheed of the Conservatives,[88] the Social Credit Party fortunes began to decline.

As the needs of the population changed, so the role of religion in the society changed. It is therefore conceivable and probable that

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[87]One signal of this shift in emphasis was the White Paper on Human Resources of 1967, in which Manning attempted to set some guidelines for meeting social concerns and to use private industry to develop not only physical but human resources.

[88]Lougheed was the first serious contender among the opposition to insist that the Socreds had done a good job but had reached the end of the line, making change necessary. Without denouncing Social Credit, Lougheed emphasized a change would be merely continuity of good government -- maybe even better government. He played on the same sympathies Aberhart and Manning had touched and in a very real sense kept charismatic leader-oriented politics alive in Alberta.

in a stable socio-economic environment, the privatization[89] and compart-

mentalization of religion will ensure that religion is only a nominal

factor in the future of Alberta Social Credit.

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[89]There is another sense in which privatization has taken place.
Just as religion had become a very personal matter, so also had politics
become less boisterous and more quietly personal for Social Credit
supporters. An Edmonton executive made this remark about the later
Manning years: "You never know who is a Social Crediter. Few people
talk about it. They just vote and Social Credit keeps winning".

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the free enterprise ideology of Social

Credit was appropriate to a province on the threshold of economic ex-

pansion. It is equally true that as a third party, Social Credit

emerged as a political protest in rejection of eastern domination and

the perceived inadequacies of the old-line parties. Similarly, it is

possible to interpret the social disorganization of the frontier as

contributory to radical politics and radical religion. While these

variables produce important perspectives on the success of Social Credit

in Alberta, they do not explain the total, comprehensive, and dominant

role which the movement had in the province for thirty-six years.

Social Credit was not primarily politics or economics. It was

surely not a financial mechanism or a dividend. Neither was it essen-

tially an ideology or a more democratic political vehicle. It was not

primarily important because it was radical or conservative, rural or

urban. What was important was that Social Credit was a movement that

gripped the people of Alberta. Instead of judging the nature of the

movement by its relation to the external environment, Social Credit

needs to be viewed in the context and among the people in which it arose.

It is what Albertans were saying and doing by participating in the

movement that gave it such zest and meaning. The dilemmas between

federal constitutionalists-provincial interests, eastern industrialists-

agrarian debtors, market prices-agricultural costs notwithstanding, the

Social Credit movement was significant for what it meant within the
provincial context.

Alberta Social Credit arose in response to a crisis. As is often
supposed, this was not a uni-dimensional crisis but a multi-dimensional
one. The most obvious crisis was the economic crisis produced by the
financial ruin of the depression. But a deeper analysis reveals that
the depression was merely the climactic point of explosion of a host of
other crises. It was not the economic disaster alone that produced the
Social Credit movement. In fact, economics had only a small part in the
success of Alberta Social Credit even though it became the touchstone.
Other areas in North America also faced the depression and, in view of
this common plight, monetary theories such as Social Credit were widely
disseminated. If Social Credit dominance is to be understood at all, it
must be understood as a means to the resolution of internal crises most
pronounced within Alberta and nurtured by unique conditions.

Stated succinctly, Alberta was facing numerous crises of identity.
To be officially decreed a province in 1905 by federal statute did not
mean that a geographic location was in possession of any sense of self-
understanding. Alberta did not know her national role for she had not
assessed her own needs, her own people, or her own goals. A weak
colonial identity had been replaced by a struggling farmer's government
in 1921 which sought to give the agrarian province an identity within
the matrix of her primary occupational problems. Part of the burden of
the UFA had been to denounce the old-line parties as alien political
organizations. But when the UFA failed to obtain provincial political
unity, it too became old-line and was rejected for its aloofness from

populist demands. The political crisis was caused by the lack of unity which the province faced at the party level. To construct her own identity, Alberta would first have to establish a sense of political consensus by which her interests could be defended and she could face the world.

Alberta also faced a religious crisis which we have sketched in some detail. The transplanting of old-world or eastern Canadian religious institutions and methods to the new environment produced strains and divisions that obscured common elements Albertans could share. Furthermore, the ineffectiveness of these transplants in reaching the population and in adapting their methods to agrarian needs produced a religious vacuum. Attending the closest church meant a crisis of religious identity for many who were raised in different denominations and traditions. Lutherans, Methodists, and Catholics were usually so closely tied to their ethnic roots that suspicions and heresies became common defenses for lack of communication and understanding of mutual goals. Religious differentiation was tied to ethnic differentiation and prevented a provincial sense of solidarity even amidst religious pluralism.

A social crisis was also evident in the province. Ethnic clusters were often pre-occupied with the maintenance of their own cultures. Nuclear family units were seeking bridges of understanding with their new neighbors. All persons were predominantly concerned with attaining their own economic security and only occasionally sought avenues of sociability. When settlers did seek social activity, they had to construct the appropriate organizations and community centers, as they were usually non-existent. Psychologically, the new residents of

Alberta all had to face the difficulties of uprootedness, migration, and a new environment, and were forced to face the despair, loneliness, and frustrations of agrarian adjustment.

These political, religious, social, and psychological crises that Alberta faced were the crises that fostered the electoral success of the Social Credit movement. The economic despair was only the trigger that set off the explosion. But it was the fact that Alberta was struggling to find the answers to the other problems that enabled the movement to develop and succeed.

Individual Albertans, then, needed to know who they were in relation to their environment. They needed to establish new social bonds. They needed to discover common interests, problems, and goals. They needed to become inwardly rooted in and a part of Alberta rather than merely residents. They needed to be wrenched loose from their old traditions and social patterns and formulate a new basis for sociality. Only when individual bases for unity could be forged would it be possible to present a collective identity to the nation. The depression provided the occasion for the forging of this social unity and collective identity, and Aberhart was the primary instrument in accomplishing it.

The success of the Social Credit movement was the result of the confluence of these crises and the emergence of a prophet to point the way to their resolution. In this sense, the movement was a response by individuals under stress to consciously organize and deliberately construct a more satisfying society.

As an effort to revitalize a fragmented society, the Aberhart movement went far beyond economic proposals and succeeded in establishing

a basis for consensus within the province. It moulded Alberta as a geographic area into a social unit by presenting common goals, charismatic leadership, and by saturating the province with the dynamism and momentum of the social movement. It forced ethnic clusters to look beyond their immediate communities and to develop a new awareness of public affairs and other Albertans. It forced nuclear family units to set aside self-interested independence and discover new social bonds in collective action. Albertans were suddenly made aware of each other. For at least a few moments, ethnic, political, or denominational labels did not matter as all were caught up in the frenzy of the campaign and united by the common goal. The Social Credit movement provided a meeting point for the heterogeneous population. It gave meaning to life in Alberta and made its participants acutely aware of being an Albertan rather than a Swede, a Lutheran, or a Liberal. Aberhart was successful because he provided a new basis for personal and social integration.

Without denouncing old allegiances, the movement sought to establish an operational framework for consensus. It knitted together the solutions to the religious, economic, political, social and psychological crises into one movement and thus touched its respondents most deeply. Thus, even in the later years, there remained a reluctance to speak of Social Credit as a political party for it was far more than a political loyalty that evoked their allegiance.

Religion and Populism

In view of the comprehensive nature of the movement in attempting to find a new basis for stability in numerous areas of life, it is not

surprising that a religious leader should have developed a significant role in accomplishing the task. Populist movements in North America have been most easily aroused and entrusted to religious leaders. Seldom do these leaders operate within the framework of religious institutions but seek non-institutional means to arouse their following. Fundamentalist religion is most appropriate for the channelling of such leadership because it holds the Bible above the religious structures which it considers to be man-made. The anti-institutionalism which they possess in religion carries over into politics, economics, and other segments of society and allows their religious populism to easily incorporate political populism. Their self-appointed religious office conveys a sense of freedom, trust, non-traditionalism and lack of institutional encumbrances, and a sense of neutrality that appeals to persons who seek to break the bonds of their own traditions.

Populist movements usually arise in response to chaotic conditions. They represent attempts to establish a base for consensus and then seek to construct a more viable alternative to the previous chaos. We have suggested earlier that religion can be a conservative or radical force in society. What we are suggesting now is that religion can be both a radical and conservative element, not at different times, but at the same time. Because religion is not necessarily dependent upon social institutions for its expression, it becomes an appropriate channel for the origination of populism.

The Aberhart movement arose originally in response to religious chaos. By adding Social Credit theory and developing worldly interests, the movement became an additional response to socio-political and

economic chaos. Working outside the boundaries of established institu-
tions and traditions, and appealing to the masses with its graphic des-
criptions of conditions and presentations of promising solutions, the
movement developed a strong populist base that attempted to bring order
and stability out of unorganized life in Alberta. The election of a
Social Credit government became symbolic of the quest for a new basis
of social unity and the search for meaning and order.

Evaluating the Hypotheses

But before there could be a break from the old order, the old
traditions and institutions, common elements had to be extracted as a
basis for a united demand for change. It was not so much that the de-
mand for change needed to be legitimated but that there must be a vehicle
whereby unity could be secured to make the demand for change effective.
Our first hypothesis suggested that religious symbols and themes could
be culled from the old society and utilized as a bridge to the construc-
tion of the new society. We are now able to go beyond this hypothesis
on the basis of our data and note that the availability of religious
themes and symbols for use outside of their institutional contexts means
that they can serve as an appropriate rallying point for those concerned
to bring about broad social change. The reaffirmation of the Bible and
fundamental Christian beliefs became a means to establish social unity
amidst other differences and permitted later changes to occur. The
fact that these religious themes and symbols could be held independent
of transplanted institutions meant that they could serve as an Archimedean
point to which support could be aroused from various quarters. Whatever

other changes were necessary in the society, these religious elements
were permanent and secure. Thus, this Archimedean point was important
not primarily for displacing emotional commitments to the old order
but for being the independent unitive element for tying together diverse
factions in a mixed population.

Therefore, religious symbols and themes were a significant
element in uniting Albertans for their populist endeavors. This gave
them common ground that transcended political party, religious denomina-
tion, or ethnic community from which further collective action could be
taken. Religion was therefore a conservative stabilizing force because
it formed a basis on which an important degree of social consensus could
be obtained. The addition of the novel Social Credit theory to that
populism only made the inviolate Bible and fundamental beliefs that much
more significant as an anchor for radical innovation.

But religion was more than an anchor amidst social change. We
have hypothesized (Hypothesis #2) that the Social Credit movement
utilized Christian ideology to sanction their collective action and
goals so that the movement became a secularized form of religious ex-
pression with the same emotions, enthusiasm, and commitment that had
centered on previous religious patterns. Our data have led us to vali-
date this hypothesis, but in a much stronger sense that we had antici-
pated. Religion and politics had not only been united but were trans-
formed into a new social phenomenon -- a crusade. The emotional demands
of the crusade had been so severe, and the commitments required so all-
encompassing, that a life-long conversion resulted. Social Credit
themes were not secularized religious themes, they were demonstrated to

be co-extensive with Christian and religious themes. A social movement that became a crusade was thus no short-term effort to effect social reform but was an attempt to find and create meaning, not as a result of social change but as a creative response to social change. The fact that the movement had so thoroughly succeeded in bringing order to unordered diversity, and meaning to frustrated meaninglessness, meant that it had functioned as a form of religion for Albertans. In a Durkheimian sense, Social Credit was a religion that affirmed the solidarity.

We had anticipated that religious ideology would be useful to legitimate the movement and social change in general. What we had not anticipated was that religious ideology would be so tightly interwoven with political values and economic goals that the final product would take on much of the character of a religion itself. Christianity was not only a vehicle for change as the bridge from the old order to the new order but had combined with the other segments of society in an attempt to construct a meaningful way of life. In a unique sense, Social Credit was a form of religion that sought to give sacral bonds to the establishment of a cohesive society that was pre-occupied with the mundane.

Hypothesis #3 attempted to come to grips with the failure of Alberta Social Credit to expand its movement throughout Canada. We had suggested that the use of the same religio-political techniques and indeed the same ideology had been inappropriate because they had been the result of experiences shared only by Albertans and forged in the socio-economic milieu of unorganized depression-ridden Alberta. Our

data have demonstrated how closely the movement was tied to a specific time period and particular milieu. The fact that it represented the attempt of a protesting people to develop internal cohesion in a manner most appropriate to their own world-view and life-style meant that other peoples in other areas could not relate to an imposed movement. The hypothesis has been confirmed.

Two important points do emerge from this hypothesis. First, religion is most likely to have its greatest effect in social movements during a time of crisis. Religion is relegated to its own sphere in times of relative equilibrium and segmented from the other aspects of society. Crises demand a sense of meaning obtainable from sacral ideology and a cosmic reference to assist in crisis resolution. When the crisis dissolves, the need for a political demonstration of overt religious activity diminishes. The fact that other Canadians could not share this same sense of crisis made the religious factor relatively insignificant for them.

Secondly, social movements arise in response to social needs and the geographic spread of a particular social movement is dependent on the structural similarities of social needs in other locations. But more important than this similarity for the spread of a social movement is the degree of identification a movement has with its location of origination. Because Social Credit had been more than a movement to resolve economic needs and had represented Alberta's own attempt to establish her own identity as well as the unity of her residents, it had been too closely tied to one province. If any other province were to adopt Social Credit, it would have to be on their own terms, as in

British Columbia, where meaning could be created out of chaos by a third party. Thus, it is not surprising that Alberta and British Columbia Social Credit have little in common.

We are now in full view of an important function of third parties: to create meaning and order out of chaos and to provide a more suitable means of conflict resolution.

Our fourth hypothesis anticipated that the resolution of the crisis and the pressures toward secularization would force the bifurcation of religion and politics. We labelled this differentiation "compartmentalization" but expected to find the two spheres united by the cords of morality. Our data largely confirmed this hypothesis. Morality was particularly important to post-war Alberta because of the lengthy period of economic expansion in which the long-thwarted rising middle class sought the rewards and security that the diligent application of their Protestant ethic had promised. An honest administrator of their rewards was far more important than a skillful politician. Religious activity and religious participation was significant only to the extent that it reinforced the moral commitments to this ethic and way of life which Albertans cherished.

Adherence to a religious ideology may be considered a personal and private matter, and may remain a private matter, unless the society is made aware of its moral results. Perhaps, in view of increasing secularization, the only overt social role left to religion will be the public effect of declared moral commitments.

Initially, we sought to determine what role religion plays in social change. Through our hypotheses, we have pointed out that religion

can be an anchor amidst change, a vehicle for change, a framework of
meaning to interpret change, and a basis for moral commitments to en-
sure orderly change. In this context, non-institutional religion was
an integral factor in the emergence of an indigenous political movement
that came to dominate Alberta.

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    B. Supplemental Books and Pamphlets with Reference to Douglas Social Credit

II. Sources Pertaining Specifically to Alberta

    A. Books and Articles

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    C. Church Reports

    D. Newspapers

    E. Archives

III. Sources Pertaining to Canadian Society

IV. Sources Pertaining to Theory and Non-Canadian References

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