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OLIGARCHY AND DEMOCRACY:
A STUDY OF THE POLITICAL LIFE OF A LOCAL UNION

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A STUDY OF THE POLITICAL LIFE OF A LOCAL UNION

By

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ABSTRACT

The theory still used to explain the political life of democratically structured organizations stems primarily from Robert Michels' "iron law of oligarchy" which holds that all organizations must inevitably be controlled by small well organized groups. Lipset, Trow and Coleman have modified this theory by showing that some voluntary groups develop a system of competing slates or parties because of certain organizational features, but they admit this is a rarity.

Despite widespread acceptance of this theory of oligarchy there has accumulated much evidence to show that in many large trade union locals a system of slates or parties which compete for political power is the rule rather than the exception. This study of Local 1005 of the Steelworkers, located in Hamilton Ontario, an organization which has had slates for many years, is an attempt to explore once again the social forces which shape the political life of a democratically structured organization in order that we may more adequately understand these issues of oligarchy and democracy.

In our view part of the problem with this body of literature is that previous studies have been flawed by a limited understanding of democracy, and a focus on organizations in one point of time. Our approach broadens the definition of democracy to include both the existence of opposition and evidence of high levels of participation. It also adopts a political economy approach which emphasises the importance of understanding historically the economic and political

forces that shape the local and focuses on internal organizational features. Perhaps the most important contribution of the study, therefore, is its unique focus on factors that are both external and internal to the organization.

The findings of the study show that the influence of societal economic and political factors on the life of the local have been quite important. The level of militancy of the membership is determined primarily by broad economic conditions, and it in turn creates either demands for political change or feelings of complacency in the local. The industrial relations system is a constant influence on 1005's political life because there are serious frustrations built into the system that cannot be resolved. External political influences are also important because members of similar political persuasion have grouped together, and because ideologies originating in society influence the political activists.

The study also found that certain internal features of the local shape its political life by sustaining the system of slates. One of the most important is the division of this large steel mill into different departments. As a result a type of delegates system has emerged where prominent leaders are able to deliver the votes of their department to the slates they support. The system also depends on the constant elections at membership meetings because they force the slates to stay active. Finally the social characteristics of leaders has played a role in grouping people of similar backgrounds into slates.

Oligarchy in voluntary organizations is, therefore, by no means inevitable, but there are both democratic and oligarchic elements to all

groups. This study shows that Local 1005 has had highly organized slates competing for political power for much of its history thus satisfying one element of the definition of democracy, but high levels of apathy continue, and, therefore, the local is still oligarchical when judged by its level of participation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I: THEORY AND METHODS	1
CHAPTER 1: OLIGARCHY AND DEMOCRACY	1
Oligarchy and Institutionalized Opposition	3
Opposition and Participation	17
The Political Economy Approach	23
Conclusions	26
Footnotes	29
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODS	33
Political Economy and the Study of Local Unions	33
Methods Used to Study the Historical	
Development of 1005	37
Methods Used to Study the Industrial	
Relations System	40
Methods Used to Study the Internal Political	
Life of Local 1005	41
A Special Note on Interviewing	46
Presentation of the Findings	47
Footnotes	49
PART II: LOCAL 1005 AND ITS HISTORY	50
CHAPTER 3: THE FOUNDING OF THE LOCAL	50
Before the Merger	50
Stelco and the Amalgamated Association	57
The Independent Steelworkers Union	63
The CIO and SWOC	66
Left and Right Factions	73
Organizing Lodge 1005	76
Struggle for Control of SWOC	82
Certification	84
Footnotes	89
CHAPTER 4: THE '46 STRIKE	96
Early Negotiations	96
A Faction Fight	98
Preparation for Strike	102
Struggles on the Picket Line	110
The Politicians Become Involved	115
Siege by Air, Sea and Land	119

Law and Order	122
The Settlement	125
Footnotes	131
CHAPTER 5: THE RISE OF SLATES	136
Founding of the New Industrial Relations System	136
Factions and Oligarchy	141
The 1958 Strike	147
The Rise of the Left	151
The 1962 Election	161
Left, Right and Autonomy	165
The New Militancy	172
Footnotes	173
CHAPTER 6: MILITANCY AND APATHY 1966 TO 1976	178
The 1966 Wildcat	178
Expulsions	189
The Left Comes to Power	196
Slates are Reorganized	201
The 1969 Strike	206
Yellow and Green Slates	212
Negotiations and Elections	220
Footnotes	225
CHAPTER 7: HISTORY AND THE POLITICS OF LOCAL 1005	231
Economic Influences	231
Political Influences	236
Local 1005 as Part of a Social Movement	239
Political Economy and the Political Life of Local 1005	240
i Left and Right Factions 1936-1946	241
ii Oligarchical Control 1946-1958	244
iii Ideological Politics 1958-1970	246
iv Institutionalized Slates 1970-1976	249
Crisis and Politics	251
Conclusions	253
Footnotes	255
PART III: THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM	257
CHAPTER 8: STELCO AND THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM	257
Three Stages in the Industrial Relations System	258
Stelco's Monopoly Position	263
Advocacy and Co-operation	269
Conclusions	273
Footnotes	275

CHAPTER 9: LOCAL 1005 AND THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM	277
Two Concessions that helped Establish the Union	277
Negotiations	279
Co-operative Wage Study Program	288
Grievances	294
Business Unionism at Stelco	304
Business Unionism and Political Life at 1005	308
Conclusions	311
Footnotes	312
PART IV: INTERNAL FACTORS SUSTAINING POLITICAL LIFE	314
CHAPTER 10: POLITICS AND THE ORGANIZATION	314
Local 1005 and the Theory of Oligarchy	314
Historical Development of the Institutional-ization of Opposition	320
The Activists as Political Delegates	324
Committee and Convention Elections	328
How the Slates are Governed	330
Executive Elections	332
Conclusions	333
Footnotes	336
CHAPTER 11: THE LEADERS	339
The Leaders From 1962 to 1976	340
Social Characteristics of the 1976 Leaders	345
British and Canadian Unionists	351
Leadership and the Membership	355
Conclusions	359
Footnotes	361
PART V: CONCLUSIONS	365
CHAPTER 12: THE SOCIAL FORCES SUSTAINING THE POLITICS OF LOCAL 1005	365
Societal Factors	366
Internal Organizational Factors	370
Historical Growth and Development	374
The Political Economy Approach	376
Democracy or Oligarchy?	377
Possibilities for Future Research	379
Footnotes	382

BIBLIOGRAPHY	383
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE 1005 LEADERSHIP STUDY	388
APPENDIX B: PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION OF THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SLATES	393
APPENDIX C: STATISTICS ON THE STEEL COMPANY OF CANADA	394

PART I: THEORY AND METHODS

CHAPTER 1

OLIGARCHY AND DEMOCRACY

"Who says organization says oligarchy,"¹ wrote Robert Michels in his classic work on the politics of democratically structured organizations.² Despite strong beliefs of members of groups which favour rule by the people, Michels claimed, the needs of an organization were such that inevitably small oligarchies would emerge who effectively held power. This "iron law of oligarchy," as he called it, has become the dominant way of explaining the political structure of organizations of this type, but it appears that there is one organization which contradicts this rule. The well known study of the International Typographical Union, by Lipset, Trow and Coleman, called Union Democracy,³ found that the ITU had a two party political system that operated much like political parties in the broader society. Here, Lipset and the others claimed, was a deviant case where a democratic rather than oligarchic system existed and they went on to analyse the organizational factors which sustained the system.

In light of the supposed uniqueness of the International Typographical Union it was with some surprise that we learned that Local 1005 of the United Steelworkers of America had a similar system of political parties or slates. The union, which in 1976 was made up of the approximately 12,000 members who are employed in the Steel Company of Canada's Hilton Works located in Hamilton, Ontario, has long had organized slates which openly compete for political power. For the past fifteen years a

system of political conflict between two and sometimes three slates has existed in the local. To a remarkable degree the rank and file members have had the opportunity to choose among different leaders and different approaches to the problems and issues facing the local. It appeared as if this could be a rare research opportunity. Here was another deviant case, much like the ITU, that possibly could lead to insights into the theory of oligarchy and the organizational features which supported what Lipset and the others called democracy.

However, from the outset there seemed to be a number of problems with both the theory and various facts which did not fit the theory. One serious problem was that in spite of Local 1005's active political life, a relatively small number of members participated in the politics of the union. If this was a "democratic" political system in which there was "rule by the people" then what did it mean for democratic theory that so few of the members participated? An even more serious problem was that from the very beginning of discussions with union leaders we learned that Local 1005 was not as unique as the writings of Michels, the authors of Union Democracy, and others might lead us to believe. Several large Steelworker locals in both Canada and the United States have systems of competing slates, and one study claims that in union locals of over 4,000 members, this type of political system is the rule rather than the exception.⁴ Other problems with the theory came to mind. Was it legitimate to call a union "democratic" only because there were competing political slates, and what importance should be given to the fact that the slates themselves were oligarchic political groups?

These are major problems that have added confusion and misunder-

standing to the study of the political system of democratically structured organizations. Much sociological literature still uncritically accepts Michels' theory of oligarchy but it appears as if a great deal of evidence has been collected that contradicts the "iron law". This area of social enquiry is still very pertinent to our understanding of organizations and because of this we undertook an empirical study of Local 1005 to answer the question: What are the social forces which shape the political life of a democratically structured organization?

Oligarchy and Institutionalized Opposition

Robert Michels' work Political Parties, published in 1911, is the germinal work on the study of oligarchy in organizations. He was part of a school of sociologists who have since come to be called "elite theorists".⁵ The foremost leaders of this group, Gaetano Mosca,⁶ and Vilfredo Pareto,⁷ held that democracy in any real sense was an impossibility. ~~Whatever the form of government, power is always in the hands of an organized minority, "the ruling class."~~ Despite the fact that there could be struggle between different groups in society and that one group may come to replace another, political change, they felt, simply resulted in the replacement of one political elite with another. Both Mosca and Pareto maintained that the reasons for this were complex but that the essential factor was that the size and complexity of industrial societies, and the emergence of bureaucratized forms of organizations made democracy impossible to attain.

The contribution of Michels to sociological literature was his application of this theory of elites to the study of the political system of democratically structured organizations. His basic hypothesis was

that even in organizations committed to the realization of democratic values there inevitably arise strong oligarchic tendencies which present an insuperable obstacle to the realization of democracy.

In his studies of the socialist trade unions and the social democratic political parties of Germany, Italy and France, all organizations sharing a very strong ideology supporting democracy, Michels found small oligarchies that effectively monopolized political power. He explained that this was because of organizational constraints. Size was one of the most important factors. Once a democratically structured organization reaches a certain size there is the need for rapid decision making and a growth in the complexity of tasks. Size makes major problems in the communication with the members, the growth of bureaucracy demands a specialized division of labour and there is the need for full time leadership.

Other organizational factors support this tendency towards oligarchy. The apathy and lack of involvement of the membership, Michels thought, contributes to control by the leaders. The membership tend to look to the leadership to weld them into an effective group, and in time this can even lead to "hero worship." The emergence of parliamentary leaders in social democratic parties, he also pointed out, increases this tendency because their special status within the party gave them added prestige and political leverage. The longer they held office, the more the power of the leaders was unquestioningly accepted and the more they became impossible to replace. It was because of these organizational features, Michels argued, that small oligarchical groups arose to control democratically structured organizations. Despite an ideology of democracy,

therefore, oligarchy was inevitable.

Michels' approach to the issue of oligarchy is essentially from the perspective of an organizational sociologist. He attributed oligarchic tendencies not to the ambition of the leaders, or the lack of sophistication of the membership, but to the needs of the organization itself. What is more he claimed that oligarchy was an inevitability; it was an "iron law" which would hold true no matter what the ideology of the group, its historical period, or the structure of the organization.

In the over sixty-five years since Political Parties was published the theory of oligarchy has continued to have a great impact on the study of democratically structured organizations, and in the study of the political life of trade unions it remains a major analytical tool. Different modern writers, however, take various positions on the question of oligarchy.

Sayles and Strauss in their book The Local Union⁸ stress that there is a great difference in the way union political systems function depending on the particular level of the organization. Local unions tend to be much more democratic while at the level of regional, national, or international offices strong oligarchies usually hold power.

Joel Seidman's work Democracy in the Labour Movement⁹ follows the argument of Sayles and Strauss closely and gives fascinating detail about the way leaders of international unions use their power to ensure the re-election of members of the oligarchy. He also points out that local unions are much more democratic because "rank-and-file members have the power to affect decisions to change the leaders and the policies with which they disagree."¹⁰ Seidman stresses, however, that most of the

important decisions of unions are increasingly made at the national level, and, therefore, although locals may be democratic many things are still beyond their control.¹¹

Philip Taft examined the existence of oligarchy in unions and found it widespread, but unlike others researching the field he does not find that this tendency is alarming. "Mutually warring factions are a luxury most unions cannot afford,"¹² he comments, and goes on to point out that the prestige, acquaintance with the membership, and ability of the head of the union may be such that a challenge is not likely to succeed. Taft is not concerned about the existence of oligarchy for he believes that the primary function of a union is to give workers economic power. Because of this they must stress discipline and collective bargaining strength rather than democracy and should not be judged on other grounds.

Alice H. Cook in a comprehensive study called Union Democracy: Practice and Ideal¹³ examined a number of different unions. She found factionalism, or caucusing to be a common practice in many locals and like others discovered that democracy was much more prevalent in locals than at the top levels of unions.

All of these studies are valuable and interesting but none of them have moved much beyond Michels. Each has used a definition of oligarchy as the absence of opposition to the controlling group, and although their work tends to disprove the theory of oligarchy by finding much more opposition in unions than Michels predicted, they still generally conclude that the tendency towards oligarchy is very strong. These modern researchers debate the importance of the issue of democracy, and how extensive they find the phenomena of oligarchy, but nonetheless they stay

within the Michels' tradition.

The notion of oligarchy also provides the theoretical perspective of two other important works on unions: the Lipset, Trow and Coleman book Union Democracy,¹⁴ and the more recent work Comparative Union Democracy¹⁵ by David Edelstein and Malcolm Warner. Both of these studies address the general question of oligarchic tendencies in organizations but, unlike others, they have built on Michels' work to develop different conceptions. Because of the important modifications to the theory that they try to introduce it is worth focusing in more depth on these two works.

In their analysis of the International Typographical Union the authors of Union Democracy point out that this organization has developed a two party political system. This had evolved slowly. For many years a variety of different groups and secret societies played an important part in the life of the union, but finally, in 1912, the Progressive Party was formed to challenge the administrative group.¹⁶ Since that time formal elections have been open competitions between the two political groups in which no single party has been able to dominate the life of the union, and, in fact, there have been a number of sharp reversals of policies as one side and then the other won elections.

In their analysis Lipset and the others pinpointed what they feel are a number of factors which sustain their type of political system in the ITU. One of the most important, they claim, is that the salaries of union officers are similar to the income of other printers. This "is probably the major factor sustaining the democratic system in the ITU for it reduces the strain on the ITU officers who return to the print shop following defeat."¹⁷ Printers also have a very high occupational

status and as a result are discouraged from going into other occupations. As a person gradually takes on the identity of his occupation he begins to look for status among his own group rather than outside it. In the ITU union involvement is prescribed as a legitimate form of leisure time activity, and leaders have high prestige. These factors result in high levels of membership involvement.

The high status of printers, Lipset, Trow and Coleman feel, support the system of political parties of the ITU in another way. Theories of democracy as early as Aristotle have suggested that this type of political system can exist only in a society which is predominantly middle class. A society with a wide distribution of income would result either in a dictatorship of an elite or dictatorship of the masses. They go on to conclude:

Applying this proposition to trade-union government, we would expect to find democracy in organizations whose members have a relatively high income and more than average security, and in which the gap between the organizational elite and the membership is not great.¹⁸

The findings of their study, Lipset and the others claim, support this proposition. Printers around the world have high status. They have always thought of themselves as the "aristocrats of labour" and as having a higher skill than other workers.¹⁹ This factor made a significant contribution to the "democracy" of the ITU.

The size of the local is another factor that the authors of Union Democracy claim is important in sustaining the political system of the union. It has long been held that democracy works best in relatively small units in which a large proportion of the citizenry directly observe the operation of their governments. Lipset, Trow and Coleman trace this

idea back to Thomas Jefferson and John Dewey, but it is also fundamental to the ideas of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and to the Greek concept of the democratic city state where all citizens guided public affairs. Their findings tend to contradict this theory. Small locals in the ITU are not as politically active because they must depend, in part, on the services provided by the International. As a result they have tended to support the party in power no matter what their policies. The big locals, on the other hand, often employ as many as ten full-time officials, and they guard their autonomy jealously. These locals tend to be much more independent and have led the swing when there has been a change in administration.

Since de Tocqueville liberals have stressed the importance of voluntary associations in strengthening democratic institutions. It is believed that these organizations become centers where ideas are generated and where people learn how to participate in the democratic arena. Lipset and the others point out as well that "autonomous sub-organizations... can function as centers of opposition or as independent sources of organizational communication."²⁰ The ITU is unique among trade unions because of its vast array of voluntary associations. It is no accident, they contend, that these types of associations exist in a union where there is strong grassroots control.

The main argument of the Union Democracy study is that the two party system of the ITU is a unique set of circumstances. Lipset et. al. make it very clear that they think that these findings modify Michels' theory of the "iron law of oligarchy" but it does not fundamentally change it. Oligarchy is the rule in most democratically structured

organizations, they claim, but under certain rare circumstances opposition can develop and be sustained over long periods of time.

Union Democracy is clearly an important modification of the theory of oligarchy that appears to have direct application to the two party system that exists at Local 1005. However, when many of the findings are compared to the union a number of major problems are immediately obvious. Perhaps the main difficulty is the way Lipset, Trow and Coleman approach their subject. The authors apply a historical analysis to the issues of the ITU but rarely do they relate events in the union to events in the broader society or even the trade union movement. Almost the entire analysis is restricted to factors which are internal to the life of the ITU and the craft of printing. They point out that the two political parties in the union generally represent "right" and "left" wing approaches to the issues,²¹ and mention at different times the parties' differing perspectives on different issues. The ideologies of the two groups, however, are assigned little importance.

Anyone who knows anything about the history of the American trade union movement must find this a peculiar emphasis. There have been many important debates that have divided unions almost from their very beginnings. Ideology is crucial in determining such factors as what are legitimate economic goals, who should be organized, and what should be the union's political objectives. In spite of this, the ideological content of the political groups in the ITU are ignored in Union Democracy.

Such an important omission must have been intentional. The focus of the study is solely on the factors internal to the union that sustain political life. The authors' theoretical orientation is such that they

simply ignore the broader political and social environment. This leaves a peculiar impression. Whether they intend it or not Lipset, Trow and Coleman imply that the printers developed this complicated political life only because it was a good way to administer the affairs of the union. Upon reflection that makes little sense. The political parties in the ITU call themselves "left" and "right" because they recognize that they share a political orientation that is broader than their own union. A decisive factor in sustaining the political life of the union, therefore, is the political life in the broader society.

Another important factor contributing to the type of political life in the ITU is that there is little status differential among printers. Almost the exact opposite is the case in 1005. The steel mill where the local's members are employed is a highly complex operation demanding a variety of skills from labourer to specific specialties within trades. There is also a large proportion of immigrant workers in the plant who find it difficult to even follow the political debate because of language problems. Moreover the 12,000 workers in the plant are employed in a wide variety of mills and departments scattered over a large geographic area, making communication particularly difficult. There is even a basic division between "production" and "trades" workers which has encouraged rivalry and suspicion among the members. These factors have had an important impact on the life of the local, but they have not been a barrier to the operations of the slates.

Finally the assumption that the authors of Union Democracy make that the ITU is a democracy is based primarily on the fact that there has been a long history in the union of open competition between political

parties. Nowhere in this work do they make their definition very clear. At one point they define it as "the possibility that an official can be defeated for re-election."²² The primary definition that they give, however, is the existence of "institutionalized opposition." This definition leads to a number of problems. Mosca and Pareto, who both believed that democracy was an impossibility, conceded that at times there was competition among elites. Even the evidence provided by the authors points to the fact that under their own use of the term the different slates in the ITU are oligarchical.

It is this one point of the definition of democracy that has caused more difficulties to Lipset than any other, and significantly this is the point of departure used by Edelstein and Warner in their recent study Comparative Union Democracy. The authors point out that the traditional literature treats oligarchy and democracy as opposite categories. Either an organization is defined as oligarchic or democratic and there are no categories in between. This is not a very adequate description of political behavior. Not only are there many oligarchic features about what some would define as democratic organizations but opposition can exist in even the most highly oligarchic group.²³

The definition that Edelstein and Warner develop is based on the notion that oligarchy and democracy must be seen as a continuum. On the one hand there are oligarchic organizations run by small political elites which allow little opposition to their rule, and at the other pole there are organizations which allow participation of the membership, opposition, groups to exist, give rights to minorities and other things that we have come to associate as democratic. The vast majority of organizations,

however, fall somewhere between these two extremes.

Edelstein and Warner are skeptical that any accurate estimation of the democracy of an organization can be made in any definitive sense and comment: "since democracy is multi-dimensional, no systematic way can be offered to arrive at a general combined measure of the overall democracy."²⁴ Despite this skepticism they do provide a working definition.

Democracy in a large organization or a society is a decision-making system in which the membership actively participates, directly and indirectly through its representatives in the making and implementation of policy and in the selection of officials, for all levels, on the basis of political equality and majority rule. Furthermore, the system operates on the basis of the accountability of officials, the legitimacy of opposition, and a due process for the protection of the rights of individuals and minorities.²⁵

If one of the major contributions that Edelstein and Warner make is in extending and deepening the concepts of democracy and oligarchy, their second significant contribution is in recognizing that there are many different types of political systems in voluntary organizations and a complex of factors which sustain them. As they point out the sociological literature until now has made the assumption that all oligarchies are the same,²⁶ and they show, with considerable insight, that there are a variety of different types of oligarchical systems which are sustained by varying historical relationships and structural features. Altogether they describe and analyse seven different types of oligarchies.²⁷ In a similar way they draw out several organizational features that they claim sustain democracy.²⁸

In their study of fifty-one American and thirty-one British unions the authors of Comparative Union Democracy found a much higher

level of democracy than the traditional political theory would suggest.²⁹ The reason for this is not difficult to determine. Their definition of democracy is much broader and more flexible than was given by writers such as Michels and Lipset and consequently they were able to define a much wider set of organizational features as democratic.

Despite the differences in the way they conceptualize democracy and oligarchy Edelstein and Warner still remain part of a tradition begun by the elite theorists at the turn of the century and extended by Lipset and the other authors of Union Democracy. They clearly repudiate the "iron law of oligarchy" but their whole approach has been deeply influenced by this group of theorists. Firstly, Edelstein and Warner like the others focus primarily on internal features of the organization to explain how the political system of democratically structured groups is sustained and virtually ignore broader economic or political factors. In a study of organizations such as trade unions this can hardly be justified. Since their very inception unions have been shaped in a fundamental way by economic factors,³⁰ and historians point out the intimate relationship between political and social movements in the broader society and in unions. All of these influences are bound to have major repercussions in the political life of unions and yet these writers have virtually ignored them.

Secondly, despite widely differing definitions of democracy the key factors in all of these works is the notion of opposition. Michels seemed to use a definition of oligarchy as an organization controlled by a small elite group to the exclusion of all others. Lipset and his associates call an organization democratic when there is a two party

system of institutionalized opposition. While Edelstein and Warner use a much more flexible definition and take into account the notion of participation by the rank and file, the one element they focus on is the existence or lack of opposition.

This focus on opposition leads to a conservative approach to these issues. What these writers have done, and this is particularly apparent in the Union Democracy study, is take the ideal of the two party system of the twentieth century parliamentary democracy and use this as a measure to judge whether an organization is democratic. This ignores totally all of the criticisms that have been leveled against this type of political system and how it has been a vehicle for the rule by small elites. V. L. Allen commenting on this approach to unions said:

In the minds of some of the advocates of political democracy there developed a rather naive and exaggerated belief that it (the party system) could be applied anywhere and that it was not only the sole legitimate form of government for national communities but that it was also the only satisfactory method for governing any association of men and women.³¹

Thirdly, an approach shared by the modern writers of this school is that the one major indicator of opposition is contested elections. Like many other contemporary political theorists they seem to hold that elections are crucial to the democratic method because it is primarily through them that the rank and file are able to have control over their leaders. Political decisions can be influenced between elections by active groups who bring pressure to bear on the politicians, but the primary way that a member of any democratically structured organization participates is by the choice of leaders.³²

The consequence of this approach is that the participation of

the members in the political life of the organization tends to be ignored in any circumstances other than during elections. In fact participation is viewed by many contemporary political theorists as a threat to the system. Theorists like Joseph Schumpeter have argued that high levels of participation bring instability to organizations and should not be used as an indicator of democracy. He supports his belief by saying that high levels of participation were simply utopian and impossible to realize.³³ Lipset shares this point of view. In his book Political Man he argues that low levels of participation may in fact reflect stability.³⁴ He comments: "Non voting is now, at least in the Western Democracies, a reflection of the stability of the system (and) a response to the decline of major social conflicts."³⁵ Edelstein and Warner would not go as far as Lipset and they do mention that the level of participation of the rank and file should be an indicator of the level of democracy of an organization but in their actual study they give it little importance.

These few critical comments indicate that there are many limitations to theories which have accounted for the political life of organizations on the basis of the theory of oligarchy. Like other aspects of current American behaviorism: "What emerged was the now familiar mixture of 'science' and a wary conservative brand of liberalism."³⁶ However, despite these limitations the theory of oligarchy does give insight into the political life of democratically structured organizations, and it is possible to adapt some of these views to develop a more realistic and socially meaningful set of criteria to judge the relative democracy of organizations.

Opposition and Participation

The problem of the definition of democracy and what are its indicators is at the heart of the issue of how to judge the nature of politics in an organization. The difficulty is not so much the ideological nature of the definition used by writers such as Lipset and Edelstein. Any definition of a concept such as democracy will be a reflection of ideology. The major problem is that a definition restricted to the notion of the existence of opposition is simply inadequate to take into account what we have come to understand as democracy.

The traditional definition of democracy is "government by the people,"³⁷ and it has long been thought that the way to achieve this ideal is through the participation of citizens in political decision-making. This emphasis comes to us primarily from Jean Jacques Rousseau.³⁸ He believed that by the participation of individuals in decision-making, good government, attuned to the needs of the citizenry, could be attained. He also believed that there was an added social benefit to decision-making in this way because citizens would become educated to develop socially responsible attitudes which in turn would lead to a better society. Rousseau's theory, therefore, sees that through participation the society would develop the best policies but also the citizen would benefit by becoming educated to accept his social responsibilities.

From Rousseau's day to the middle of this century the notion of participation has been a central concept for liberals. John Stuart Mill believed that it was essential if the individual is to learn democracy that he participate in the political life of his community. G. D. H. Cole in a similar way believed that the individual could learn about democracy

by participating in the industrial system.³⁹ It was only towards the end of World War II that liberals such as Schumpeter turned away from the notion of the participation of the citizenry in political decision-making, and much of the modern theory on democracy ignores this dynamic.

The concept of participation of the citizenry has also been a fundamental element in the approach to democracy by socialists and anarchists. Karl Marx wrote very little about the socialist state he would like to see emerge, but in his writings he implied that he favoured a direct form of democracy in which all the workers would participate in the making of decisions. In The Civil War in France he stated that the central assembly should be like the Paris Commune of 1871, "a working not a parliamentary body; executive and legislature at the same time."⁴⁰ Its delegates, he claimed, should be elected by direct assembly and subject to recall at any time. In addition the officials were to work for working-men's wages and their terms of office were to be short, judges were to be elected, and the standing army and police were to be abolished.⁴¹

The anarchists, Marx's old enemies in the working class movements in the middle of the last century, shared an ideology which was similar. Their aim was to establish justice, fraternity and equality in society by eliminating the state and all social means of coercion. Society, they believed, can and should be run by means of a network of agreements among individuals and groups. Their aim was to create a society in which all citizens participated equally in the creation of associations which would deal with the relationships between men.

It was Lenin who transformed this belief that all men should

participate in making the rules that govern them, into an argument that, for a time, at least, in the development of a socialist society, citizens should have no rights. "As a general principle," he claimed, "we Marxists are opposed to all and every level of the state."⁴² The error of the anarchists lies not in favouring the abolition of the state but in preaching that the state can be abolished overnight. This is quite incorrect, added Lenin. We need the state for a certain period so that "we can break down the resistance of the bourgeoisie; to inspire the reactionaries with fear; to maintain the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie."⁴³ What is needed, for a short time at least, is the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

Lenin's influential argument is fascinating because, although he did not repudiate the ideology of the stateless society, he provided the justification for the growth of strong state control in socialist countries. Stalin was able to capitalize on this to justify his own rule. He wrote: "the dictatorship of the proletariat must not be regarded as a fleeting period of 'super revolutionary' acts and decrees, but as an entire historical era, replete with civil wars and external conflicts."⁴⁴

The influence of the Russian socialist orthodoxy for some years led to a lack of interest in the left with questions of democracy but in recent times that has changed radically. Beginning in the 1950's with the establishment of workers councils in the Hungarian and Polish revolts, and particularly with writings about Yugoslavian experiments with worker's control, there has been a renewed interest in questions of democracy and participation. Today many figures in the movement that has come to be called the "new left" hold positions on democracy and government much like

the socialists in the pre-Russian Revolution period. Essentially they argue that democracy can emerge only when the people participate in the decisions that directly affect them. Stanley Aronowitz, for example, levels a devastating attack on modern trade unions primarily from the point of view that the union leadership tries to contain the demands of the members rather than lead them to achieve their aims.⁴⁵ The well known French socialist writer Andre Gorz believes in a type of direct democracy. He rejects representative government and sees democracy as an expression of the general will of the membership.⁴⁶

Carole Pateman in Participation and Democratic Theory argues that participation is the only legitimate definition of democracy. In a similar way as Rousseau, she claims, that it is only through real participation that citizens can control their government and the rank and file can govern organizations. She denies emphatically that the focus on participation is utopian or unrealistic and shows that those who reject the importance of the concept as a means of judging democracy in political life do so because they feel that high levels of involvement threaten the stability of democratically structured groups.

This recent interest in participation and its relationship to the democracy of organizations has obviously been influenced by political currents in the "new left," but it is not a new emphasis in political thought. Its history can be traced back to both liberal and socialist ideology, and it is perhaps the most important element of what has traditionally been thought of as the conditions for democracy. If an adequate definition of the term is to be developed then it must be taken into account.

The various theories of democracy, therefore, provide us with two different types of definition. The first coming from theorists like Schumpeter, Lipset and Edelstein holds that democracy exists when opposition is allowed and where there is substantial competition for elected positions. The second definition comes from Rousseau, nineteenth century liberals, socialists, and the new left. They hold that democracy exists where there are high levels of participation from the rank and file. We propose in our study to use both of these conceptions.

To summarize these points into a working definition: Democracy in a large organization or society occurs when: first, opposition to those holding power is tolerated and where there are frequent contests for election, and, second, when there is a high level of participation among the rank and file members and where these members have a meaningful input into the making of the policy of the organization or society. An oligarchical political system, on the other hand, is one in which there is no opposition to the ruling group and where there is little or no participation of the members.

The definition, therefore, is a continuum of two variables. One is the existence or absence of opposition to those in power, and the indicators that will be used to study this element will be around the existence of opposition groups in the organization and the frequency of contested elections. The second variable used in the definition is participation by the membership. A highly oligarchical organization would be one characterized by a lack of interest by the membership, and uninvolvement by a large proportion of the members in the political life of the group. A democratic organization would be one with an active

membership involved in shaping the political decisions of the group in a meaningful way.

This definition of oligarchy and democracy can be visually represented as follows:

	OLIGARCHICAL ORGANIZATIONS	DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATIONS	
LACK OF OPPOSITION	--No opposition to the ruling group. --Elections are rarely contested. --Infrequent changes of those who hold elected positions.	--The acceptance of opposition. (ie. institutionalized opposition.) --Well organized opposition groups. --Contested elections. --Frequent changes of those who hold elected positions.	STRONG OPPOSITION
LITTLE PARTIC- IPATION	--Low interest by the members in the organization. --Low turn out to meetings. --Political decisions made by a small group. --Low participation rate in elections.	--High interest by members. --The membership plays a meaningful role in political decision-making. --High turn out to meetings. --High rate of participation in elections.	HIGH LEVEL OF PARTIC- IPATION

According to this definition there are two ways of judging whether an organization is democratic or oligarchic. It is possible, therefore, that a particular organization could be considered democratic on one of the criteria and oligarchic on another. Some small trade union locals, for example, are able to get a high percentage of their members to attend meetings, but there is no opposition to the leadership, and the same individuals are re-elected time and time again. Other organizations, and the ITU may be an example of this, have a high degree of competition for top positions but low membership participation.⁴⁷ The conclusion that has to be drawn in these cases is that the organizations have both

democratic and oligarchic elements. A democratic group is one that has strong opposition to the leadership and a high involvement by the rank and file while a strongly oligarchic organization lacks opposition and meaningful participation by the membership.

This definition is one which has been developed from a broad tradition of political and social theory. It has been operationalized to the point where, theoretically at least, it is possible to give a judgement of the degree to which the political life of an organization is democratic or oligarchic. It will be this definition which will be applied in the study of the political life of Local 1005.

The Political Economy Approach

Part of the criticism we made of the traditional way of viewing oligarchy in democratically structured organizations focused on the inadequacy of the definition of democracy. The other criticism that we leveled was at the approach social scientists have taken to the study of political behavior in unions. These studies have stressed factors which were almost exclusively internal to the organization to account for political life and have tended to ignore almost completely the broad social, economic and historical factors which have played an important role in shaping events. It is important if we are to move beyond this limited vision to adapt a different way of approaching these questions.

Before the rise of modern social science the approach to the study of a wide range of social issues was often called political economy. Adam Smith, Ricardo, Karl Marx and others all used this term to describe their method of social enquiry. By this they meant that they intended to study society in its entirety and they insisted that there was a

fundamental link between economic relations and social relations. To Marx, the most important of these classical political economists,

Relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society--the real foundation on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.⁴⁸

But political economy to Marx could not be the same within each country or from generation to generation. It was because of this that he saw it as essentially a historical science dealing with "the economic structure of society and its interrelationship with, on the one hand the social productive forces, and on the other the social superstructure."⁴⁹

Political economy in our own day has seen a revival as some scholars have attempted to move away from the limited empirical view of social science to a broader and more integrated view of the way society functions. Daniel Drache in a recent publication outlined seven different variants, or schools, of political economy developed by Canadian writers.⁵⁰ They range from those who share a liberal view which affirms the legitimacy of the capitalist social system to critical attempts to understand Canadian society from a Marxist perspective.

Modern practitioners, despite their different political orientations, share a similar approach to the study of society and stand squarely within the tradition of the nineteenth century political economists. Like their classical predecessors they "believe that the task of political economy is to identify and analyse social relations as they relate to the economic system of production;"⁵¹ they try to understand social relations in terms of the mode of production;⁵² and they stress the

interdependence between various elements of society.⁵³

As it is practiced today political economy is not a rigorous methodology or a unitary approach to the study of society. In fact its adherents often use the methods of social science. Where they differ is in their interpretation. Essentially political economy is a general orientation to the study of society which insists that social phenomena must be understood in the way it relates to the economic structure of society and its mode of production.

Inherent in this approach is an attack on empirical social science. The Union Democracy study that we have reviewed, for example, would be critized by political economists for its very limited focus. Although it is a study of the political life of a trade union the authors ignore such issues as the influence of working class consciousness, and the influence of the political life of the society on the politics of the ITU. Even more important they accept uncritically the advocacy role that the union plays in relation to the private employers and do not relate economic conditions in society or the industry to the development of the political life of the union. Their only interest in work relations, in fact, is in demonstrating that the characteristics of the production process in the printing industry gives workers leisure time to discuss the politics of the union and shift work often forces printers to spend their leisure time together.⁵⁴ This, they claim, helps sustain the system of institutionalized opposition. What the authors of Union Democracy have done is analyse the political life of the ITU focusing almost exclusively on internal factors and have ignored the interdependence of the union with other aspects of society.

The advantages of applying the political economy approach to the study of the politics of unions are considerable. Whereas contemporary social scientists studying the issue have provided essentially a static analysis, accounting for political behavior by analysing factors internal to the organization at one point in time, the political economy approach leads to a critical examination of the union's political life by looking at broad economic and political factors and relating changes in the organization to changes in society. It is a dynamic approach demanding a broad social analysis that explains the political life of the union by what we generally have come to call environmental factors, but at the same time it does not ignore influences that are internal to the organization. Its chief advantage, therefore, is that it leads to a much more comprehensive and adequate explanation of the political life of the union. Because of these advantages it was decided to adapt the political economy approach to the study of the politics of Local 1005.

Conclusions

In this study of the social forces sustaining the political system of slates or parties in a democratically structured organization we do not propose a radically new approach. We have built on the existing literature by modifying the definition of democracy and applying the political economy method. The consequence of this adaptation is, we feel, a more adequate way of studying these issues.

The definition of democracy that we will use in our study of Local 1005 includes the key concepts of opposition and participation. To quote our working definition:

Democracy in a large organization or society occurs when, first, opposition to those in power is tolerated and where there are frequent contests for election, and, second, when there is a high level of participation among the rank and file members and where these members have a meaningful input into the making of the policy of the organization.

What is more, the decision on the nature of the political system of the local will not be made simply on whether the organization is democratic or oligarchic, but it will be viewed on a continuum between the ideal of democracy on the one hand and its opposite pole of oligarchy on the other.

The theoretical underpinning that will shape and guide the study is provided by the political economy approach. This does not mean that we feel all previous studies of the politics of organizations are invalid or claim their research techniques are inadequate, but these studies have been seriously flawed because they focus almost exclusively on factors internal to the organization to account for political life. What the political economy approach insists upon is that social phenomena such as organizations are interdependent with other elements of society and social relations must be understood as they relate to the economic system. Consequently it is essential in studying the political life of any organization to focus on the way broad economic and political forces have shaped it. Only then is it possible to understand how the internal features contribute to political behavior. Our approach, therefore, builds upon existing theory and empirical studies to develop a new approach to the study of the political life of democratically structured organizations.

Local 1005 provides not only an opportunity to study once again issues of oligarchy and democracy that have absorbed sociologists for so

many years, but it also provides an opportunity to test out new formulations of democracy and gives a chance to see if the political economy approach can lead to fresh insights in the study of the social forces which shape the political life of a democratically structured organization. It is a unique opportunity to test in the field theoretical ideas that have interested social theorists for many years.

One final note needs to be emphasized. Although the issue of participation is important this thesis is primarily a study of the leadership of Local 1005 rather than the rank and file, and therefore focuses on the issue of opposition. However, considerable insight into the role of participation on the political life of Local 1005 can be gleaned from an analysis of the data.

Footnotes

¹Robert Michels, Political Parties, (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1959) p. 401.

²The term 'democratically structured organizations' is used through this thesis to indicate organizations whose constitution or structure allows for free election of positions and participation by the membership.

³S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow, & J.S. Coleman, Union Democracy, (Glencoe Ill.: The Free Press, 1956).

⁴William A. Faunce, "Size of Locals and Union Democracy," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 68, No. 3, Nov. 1962, pp. 291-298.

⁵To be accurate it is wrong to characterize the elite theorists as a 'school.' Despite the similarities of their views Mosca and Pareto had a bitter and public squabble as to which of them was the first to develop the idea of elite dominance of society. However, their ideas are very similar and the term school is an apt description.

⁶Gaetano Mosca, The Ruling Class, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939).

⁷Vilfredo Pareto, The Mind and Society: A Treatise on General Sociology, 4 vol. (New York: Dover, 1963).

⁸Lenard R. Sayles & George Strauss, The Local Union: Its Place in the Industrial Plant (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953).

⁹Joel Seidman, Democracy in the Labor Movement, (Cornell University: New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, 1958).

¹⁰Ibid., p. 9.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 9-10.

¹²Philip Taft, The Structure and Government of Labor Unions, (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954) p. 239.

¹³Alice H. Cook, Union Democracy: Practice and Ideal, (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1963).

¹⁴Lipset et. al. op. cit.

¹⁵J. David Edelstein, & Malcolm Warner, Comparative Union Democracy, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976).

¹⁶Lipset et. al. op. cit., p. 48.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 120.

²⁰Ibid., p. 77.

²¹Ibid., p. 35.

²²Ibid.

²³Edelstein and Warner, op. cit., p. 28.

²⁴Ibid., p. 30.

²⁵Ibid., p. 30.

²⁶Ibid., p. 34.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 36-52.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 68-81.

²⁹Ibid., p. 4.

³⁰John R. Commons, et. al., History of Labor in the United States, (New York: A.M. Kelly, 1966) Economic factors are stressed in this book.

³¹V.L. Allen, Power in Trade Unions, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954).

³²Carole Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) p. 14.

³³Ibid., p. 3.

³⁴Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man, (Garden City N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1959) pp. 180-184.

³⁵Ibid., p. 181.

³⁶M. Freeman, "Social Science and Democratic Theory," Political Studies, Vol. 21, No. 1, Feb. 1973, pp. 70-74.

³⁷This is the definition of democracy given by virtually all modern dictionaries and encyclopedias.

³⁸J.J. Rousseau, The Social Contract, (London: Penguin Books, 1968).

³⁹For a good discussion of these issues see Pateman op. cit.

⁴⁰Quoted in Edelstein and Warner, op. cit., p. 57.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 57.

⁴²V. Lenin, The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution, (Moscow: Little Lenin Library, No. 9) p. 48.

⁴³V. Lenin, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, (Moscow: Little Lenin Library, No. 18) p. 34.

⁴⁴Quoted in: Alexander Gray, The Socialist Tradition: Moses to Lenin, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968) p. 470.

⁴⁵Stanley Aronowitz, False Promises, (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1973) pp. 214-226.

⁴⁶Edelstein and Warner, op. cit., p. 58.

⁴⁷Lipset and the others claim that there is a high level of participation by the rank and file in the ITU, but they also allude to the fact that the majority of decisions are made by a handful of people who are the leaders of the slates. The reason they ignore these vital issues is because they have defined democracy as the existence of institutionalized opposition and their only concern is to explain how this system is sustained. The level of participation in the political life of the union is of little concern to them.

⁴⁸Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, (New York: International Publishers, 1970).

⁴⁹C.D. Kernig (ed.) Marxism, Communism and Western Society, Vol. III (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) p. 45.

⁵⁰Daniel Drache, "Rediscovering Canadian Political Economy," in A Practical Guide to Canadian Political Economy, (eds.) Wallace Clement & Daniel Drache, (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company Publishers, 1978).

⁵¹Ibid., p. 4.

⁵²Ibid., p. 5.

⁵³Maurice Dobb, Political Economy and Capitalism, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1945).

⁵⁴Lipset, Trow and Coleman, op. cit., pp. 119-159.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODS

The task of this project is to study the social forces which have influenced the political life of Local 1005 of the United Steelworkers of America. However, the political economy approach, which has shaped this study, emphasises that organizations are influenced by factors other than those focused on by previous studies. Because of this it is important to explain why certain aspects of the local union and its environment were studied and how we went about the collection of the data. This is the task of this chapter.

Political Economy and the Study of Local Unions

The political economy approach insists that all social phenomena are interdependent and it is fundamental in analysing social relationships to see how they relate to the economic system. In a capitalist society such as our own a union is an outgrowth of specific historical conditions and as a consequence both the economic and social conditions which created the reasons for the development of the union have had a profound influence on the local's political life. If we are to understand 1005 we must first understand the economic reasons for its existence and the type of economic role it must play in the industrial relations system.

But if economic factors provide the substructure, organizations are also influenced by a wide variety of other factors. A union is a working class organization and it is fundamentally influenced by such

societal factors as the political life of the working class, class consciousness, the politics of other unions, the objectives and tactics of political parties, the class structure, and a whole host of other factors.

Finally, although this approach stresses the importance of societal factors, it does not ignore the influence of factors that are internal to the life of the organization. For example, Lipset, Trow and Coleman found that voluntary groups within the ITU had a very important influence on the political life of the union because they provided centers where opposition could grow and people could learn about the politics of the organization.¹ We were aware that the political life of Local 1005 could well be influenced by these and other factors internal to the organization.

This general overview shows that from the outset the approach that we had adopted led us to believe that there were a very broad and complex set of factors which influenced the political life of the local. Our ultimate goal was to achieve a precise understanding of the social forces influencing the political life of organizations, but we realized that it was premature to think we could set up a sophisticated study that would rigorously test hypothesis about the political life of organizations. In light of the level of development of our theory it was far more apt to approach these problems in an exploratory way. Because of this the design of our research was such that it focused on the union local only.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to this type of approach. This is a case study method and it is widely recognized that it can bring the richness of detail that comes in social research only

through in-depth analysis, but its major limitation is that it is difficult to generalize from this one particular case to others. Our research of Local 1005, therefore, remains exploratory, but it allows us to do the type of detailed analysis that is essential if we are to study a complicated subject such as oligarchy and democracy.

Not only would this study be exploratory research in its approach, but we also recognized that our attempt to determine whether 1005 was oligarchic or democratic would also have to remain at an exploratory level. At this stage in the research it would be inappropriate to develop rigorous indicators for our variables of opposition and participation. Possibly this can be done in the future but for the moment we felt it best to define the variables in a flexible way.

The question remained, however, how to go about the task of studying the social forces that shape the political life of Local 1005? On reflection it seemed obvious that the best way to study both the economic substructure and the broad political and social influences on the local union was by historical analysis. If the assumptions of the political economists are correct then economic and political changes in society should be reflected in the history of the political life of the union. It was because of this that we adopted as our most important method of enquiry a broad historical analysis relating social changes to changes in the political life of the local.

Historical analysis would be a beginning to understand the economic and political influences on the local union, but there are other economic influences, more particular to 1005, which also are important. The

relationship that 1005 has with the Steel Company of Canada has a fundamental influence because the specific role the union must play is to represent the workers both individually and collectively with the company. Special attention was, therefore, placed on the industrial relations system to understand the way it influenced the politics of the local.

The third major focus of the research was on the internal factors which shaped the political life of 1005. Other studies had found that there were internal factors which sustained the political life of organizations, and we expected to find similar features in Local 1005.

To summarize, the political economy approach led the research into three specific areas:

1. A detailed, historical account of the development of the local, emphasizing the relationship between events internal to the organization and the broad economic and political environment.
2. An analysis of the industrial relations system that has been established between the union and the company in order to understand the way it influences the political life of the local.
3. Finally, a focus on the internal organizational features of 1005, concentrating on such issues as how the slates operate, who are the leaders, and what are the organizational factors which sustain political life.

In order to study these three areas adequately it was necessary to use a number of different research techniques. Ultimately the research led to the following areas.

Methods Used to Study the Historical Development of Local 1005

1. The literature on the politics in trade unions was reviewed in preparation for this thesis. This proved to be an invaluable starting point because it provided a broad understanding of the economic and political forces which influence unions. The most pertinent of this material deals with the Canadian trade union movement from the 1930's to the present.
2. A very important part of the data collection comes from the archives of Local 1005. Thanks to the efforts of the Labour Studies Group at McMaster and the 1976 leadership of the local, all of the old records of 1005 are now located in Mills Memorial Library at McMaster University. They are composed of three separate types of papers:
 - a. The minute books of the local from May 22, 1937 to December 1972, with the exception of the book covering the period of July 1945 to May 1950. In spite of efforts of a number of people this book can not be located. It is particularly unfortunate because this loss means there is no official record of the 1946 strike, or the period of transition when the union changed from a small, semi-clandestine organization to a firmly established, legally recognized local.
 - b. The archives hold a number of documents going back to June 20, 1932 and range up to the present. They include a variety of material from the 1944 certification documents, to information as recent as papers on the 1974 collective agreement.
 - c. Finally, the collection holds the papers of the late Tom McClure. McClure, a member of the old sheet mill gang who had formed a union

prior to the appearance of the Steelworkers, was one of the first presidents of local 1005, and the most important leader of the old Left Wing Group. His notes, often written in his own hand, give a vivid picture of the problems of organizing in the days before union security while detailing issues in the Steelworkers' union from a left wing political perspective.

In the course of the research two other archival sources on 1005 were consulted:

a. All the past issues of Steel Shots, the official newspaper of the local union, from September 1951 to 1976 were reviewed. Although this publication gives an uncritical view of Local 1005, frequently ignoring the political issues that were polarizing the membership, and not once mentioning the existence of political slates, the time and effort devoted to this review was worthwhile because it helped familiarize the researcher with some of the issues and the political leaders.

b. The Hamilton Public Library maintains a newspaper clipping service on local events and their large file on 1005 was reviewed. As well as this a daily review of the back issues was made of the Spectator (Hamilton's only daily newspaper) for the critical periods of the 1946, 1958 and 1969 strikes as well as the 1966 wildcat.

c. Local 1005 has existed for a little more than forty years and many of the early leaders are retired and still live in the Hamilton area. To give as complete a historical record as possible a number of these people were interviewed. Altogether we talked to twelve of the old leaders. This included five previous presidents of the local and six

were people who had held prominent executive positions in 1005 for long periods of time.

The one major problem was in finding members of the old Left Wing Slate that had been prominent in the 1930's and 40's. This group had been very small and it seemed that all the members had disappeared. However, one member of this group was located. With the information that he provided and the notes of McClure, a coherent view of the history of this old Left Wing Group in 1005 was pieced together.

The interviews with these retired leaders followed what has come to be called the non-directive approach in which "neither the exact questions the interviewer asks, nor the responses the subject is permitted to make are predetermined."² This type of interview is inherently more flexible than the standardized lists of questions and as Selltiz, Johoda, Deutsch and Cook explain:

The flexibility of the unstructured or partially structured interview, if properly used, helps to bring out the affective and value-laden aspects of the subject's responses and to determine the personal significance of his attitudes. Not only does it permit the subject's definition of the interviewing situation to receive full and detailed expression; it should also elicit the personal and social context of beliefs and feelings. This type of interview achieves its purpose to the extent that the subject's responses are spontaneous rather than forced, are highly specific and concrete rather than diffuse and general, are self revealing and personal rather than superficial.³

There are problems with this type of technique. The non-directive nature of the interview does not allow a comparison of the answers of the respondents, but the unstructured interview technique was ideally suited to meet the problems of this stage of the research, because the primary information requested from the respondents was a personal interpretation

of a wide variety of historical events. A structured interview schedule would not have allowed for the type of probing necessary to get this information.

The interviews with these retired leaders were lengthy and at times they were allowed to ramble in the hopes of finding new and rewarding topics to research. The questions centred on issues such as membership in political parties, the development of slates, what it was like to work in Stelco in the pre-union days, the problems facing the local once it was firmly established in the company, and the political issues which divided members at different periods. At times these retired leaders gave interpretations to events which were personal and self-congratulatory, but generally they had a very solid understanding of the events in which they had been involved and talked about them with little reservation.

Methods used to Study the Industrial Relations System

4. One of the major areas of research regards the industrial relations system that had been established between Local 1005 and Stelco. Over the years there has been a growing body of literature on this topic and in preparation for this research much of this material was reviewed.

5. As part of the analysis of the collective bargaining relationship it was important to understand Stelco and the Steel industry of Canada.

This research included three general areas:

- a. A variety of books and articles on the steel industry in both Canada and the United States were reviewed.
- b. There is a considerable amount of information about Stelco that is available to the public. William Kilbourn's book The Elements

Combined,⁴ a company-sponsored history, gives details about the early days of the firm. This was supplemented by reviewing the "Financial Post Corporation Service" on the company.

c. It was also helpful to review the newspaper clipping file on Stelco found in the Hamilton Public Library.

6. In the course of the research three company officials were interviewed who were prominent in the industrial relations department. These people were able to give detailed information on company policy towards the union. Again, the interview technique used was the non-directive approach.

Methods Used to Study the Internal Political Life of Local 1005

7. The bulk of the data collected for this study came from interviewing the current leadership of 1005. Many of these people had been involved in the politics of the local for a number of years and the opportunity of the interview was taken to collect information about a great many historical details, but a large part of these interviews focused on the topic of the internal political system of the local.

This project was designed to understand the political life of Local 1005 and, therefore, focused primarily on the leadership. An important question was to define who are the leaders of the local union. It may be argued with some justification that they are the current and past executives, but what of the people who had been defeated in elections? It may well be that some of these people are more important than those elected. Another consideration was that the focus of this study is on the political life of 1005. Since the political slates are a very important aspect of this life it was necessary to interview people from all political groups in the local.

The solution arrived at was one designed to meet these problems. Altogether there were three political groups who competed for power at Local 1005 at the time of the research. Two of them, the Green and Yellow Slates, are large and have existed in different forms for approximately 15 years. In past elections they have run full slates and their power and success has been relatively similar. The White Slate, on the other hand, is much smaller and has existed for little more than two years. In the 1976 elections they did not run a candidate for every position. In light of this it was decided to interview fifteen leaders from both the Green and Yellow Slates and eight from the White Slate. Although the numbers appear somewhat arbitrary they reflect the relative strength of the slates.

The selection of who to interview was very important because it could alter the whole perception of the local. What was decided was to interview the slate leaders, but how could it be determined who were the top leaders of the group? The field research for this project was carried out primarily in the summer and fall of 1976, only a few weeks after the local's executive elections. The problem of what leaders to select was solved by interviewing all the candidates of the slates who had run for election. The definition of who were the leaders of the local, by using this technique was, therefore, made by the slates themselves rather than the researcher.

By defining the leadership in this way thirteen Yellow Slate leaders and twelve from the Green Slate were selected.⁵ This left two Yellow Slate and three Green Slate members to make up the full complement

of fifteen. They were selected because in the course of the interviews they were pointed out as important slate members. The eight members of the White Slate that were interviewed had all run in the previous election. Finally, four people were interviewed who at the time of the research were independent of the slates. These were all individuals who had once held executive positions in the local, and had been active in the slates, but for one reason or another had become independent.

The interviews undertaken with the retired leaders were what has been called "non-directive." They were unstructured with the interviewer allowing the respondent considerable freedom to direct responses in ways that he felt were important. The interviews with the current leaders, on the other hand, were more highly structured because there was the need to collect some standard information on each of the respondents so that comparative data could be assembled. However, it was still important to allow enough flexibility so that rewarding areas could be investigated. The solution to this problem was to follow what Merton, Fiske and Kendall call the "focused interview."⁶

As Selltiz et. al. describe it the main function of the interview in this type of research is to focus attention upon a certain experience and its effect. The interviewer

Knows in advance what topics, or what aspects of a question, he wishes to cover. This list of topics or aspects is derived from his formulation of the research problem, from his analysis of the situation or experience in which the respondent has participated, and from hypotheses based on psychological or sociological theory. This list constitutes a framework or topics to be covered, but the manner in which questions are asked and their timing are left largely to the interviewer's discretion.⁷

Before going into the field an interview schedule was developed which is reproduced in Appendix A, and these questions were asked of the leaders. However, in every case the interview went much beyond this outline and collected detailed information about the history of the slates, the role of each individual in the slate, opinions on political issues and so on. Most of the respondents were active in the stewards' body and many interviews concentrated on topics such as the grievance procedure, the co-operative wage study program and the process of negotiations.

By the time the research was complete forty-two people had been interviewed who were currently involved in an active way with the political life of the local. Possibly this could be criticized because it was not a large enough sample, but from the outset the project was an exploratory, in-depth case study of the politics of the local. Comparative data on the characteristics of the leaders was part of this explorative research, and would give information on the function and selection of the leaders, but because of the limited numbers, it was recognized that this information could not be broadly generalized.

8. In the course of the interviews with the political leaders of the local a great amount of election material of the different slates that had been passed out at plant gates was given to the researcher. Gradually these were developed into bulky files on the elections and were separated into different slates and different election years. An analysis of this literature was made to try and see the type of political appeal that groups were making at different times.

9. During the period of intensive field work membership and department

meetings were attended to get an idea of the way the business of the local was conducted. The field notes made at the time later served to help focus issues in interviews and understand the question of why many people found it difficult to participate in the political life of the local.

10. In the course of the research four International Steelworker officials were interviewed who had been involved in some way with 1005. This was helpful for two major reasons: firstly the International's involvement in the local union's affairs has long been a contentious political issue at 1005, and it was important to understand how steel staff dealt with that problem, and secondly, for comparative purposes it was important to get some insight into the political behavior of other steelworker locals. These officials were able to give some understanding of those questions.

11. Finally, special note should be made of two published accounts of 1005 which were important in giving background material on the local and helpful in formulating research.

a. Maxwell Flood's study, Wildcat Strike in Lake City⁸ was an invaluable source not only for its careful description of the causes of the '66 wildcat and what happened to the slates as a result of this incident, but also for his analysis of the way the political system functions at 1005.

b. A paper prepared by R. Malanchuk of the University of Western Ontario called "Stelco Strike of 1969"⁹ was also useful. The description he gives of the bargaining between Stelco and the union local was a useful supplement to information that had been received from other sources.

A Special Note on Interviewing

As this summary shows material was collected for this study of Local 1005 from a number of different sources, but the bulk of the information came from people directly involved in the political life of the union local. Altogether 57 separate interviews were undertaken over a four month period with a wide variety of people.¹⁰

Before the field research was begun we applied for and received a special research grant of \$2000 from the Department of Labour in Ottawa. This money was used primarily in the transcribing of the interviews of a number of people that we felt were important in the local's political life. Altogether the interviews of 28 people were transcribed and this amounted to a total of 630 single spaced typed pages. The interviews of the others were recorded by hand by the researcher.

Special care had to be taken in the guarantee of confidentiality. Unlike some studies of this type which try to disguise the subject of the research, it was decided from the very beginning that it would be revealed that this was a study of Local 1005. The main reason for this is simple honesty. In Canada it is impossible to disguise a union local as large as 12,000 members. Further, this type of research is much more interesting if it is known what place and political group is being discussed.

The problem of confidentiality was dealt with in a straightforward way. Before every interview a short explanation was given about the purpose of the research and every individual was assured that controversial statements would be presented in such a way as to hide the identity of the source. This created some problems in referencing the recorded

interview material in the dissertation. It was solved by dividing the typed transcripts into three volumes and numbering the pages. In the text they are referred to as: William B. Freeman, "Interviews with Local 1005 Activists, 1976," (unpublished Interview Material) followed by the volume and page number. In this way the anonymity of the respondent was protected but easy access to the material was maintained.

The interviewing stage was the most enjoyable part of the research. People were interviewed at their homes, in restaurants, at Stelco offices or the Steelworkers' Hall, and on more than one occasion they were met over a beer in the union social club. Perhaps in part it is a characteristic of political activists, but the people who were interviewed were friendly and interested to talk to someone from outside the local about their political activities. Their knowledge and insight into complicated issues was remarkable, and they expressed themselves in an articulate forceful way.

Presentation of the Findings

The political economy approach led this research into three distinct areas: A detailed historical account of the local, an analysis of the industrial relations system, and a focus on the internal organizational features of Local 1005. The presentation of the findings of the research follow a similar pattern. The historical examination of the way the environment has shaped the political life of 1005 is presented in Part II. Then, in Part III, the economic basis of the local is examined more systematically by studying the industrial relations system that has been established between the union and the company. Finally,

the features internal to the union which have shaped its political life are analysed in Part IV. In the very structure the thesis takes, therefore, the political economy method has been maintained.

All of the techniques used in the collection of the data for this research have been used many times before, and because of the exploratory nature of the study there was no intention of making sophisticated statistical manipulations of the data. However, the research moved in a logical way from the formation of the theory, to the adoption of the research techniques so that information could be gained relevant to the theory. It remains for the study itself to confirm or reject the usefulness of the political economy approach in understanding trade union political life.

Footnotes

¹S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow, & J.S. Coleman, Union Democracy, (Glencoe Ill.: The Free Press, 1956) pp. 77-91.

²Claire Selltitz, Marie Jahoda, Morton Deutsch & Stuart W. Cook, Research Methods in Social Relations, (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1959) p. 263.

³Ibid., p. 263.

⁴William Kilbourn, The Elements Combined, (Toronto, Clarke, Irwin and Company Ltd., 1960).

⁵One of the candidates became very ill and ultimately died while the research was underway.

⁶R.K. Merton, M. Fiske, & P.L. Kendall, The Focused Interview, (Glencoe Ill.: The Free Press, 1956).

⁷Selltitz, op. cit., p. 264.

⁸Maxwell Flood, Wildcat Strike in Lake City, (Ottawa: Task Force on Labour Relations, Study No. 15, 1968).

⁹R. Malanchuk, "Stelco Strike 1969," (Unpublished paper, The University of Western Ontario, 1971).

¹⁰According to the description above 60 people were interviewed: 11 retired leaders, 3 company officials, 42 union activists, and 4 staff members. At this point in the paper the claim is that only 57 were interviewed. The reason for this discrepancy is that of the retired leaders two are now steel staff officials and one works for the industrial relations department of Stelco. From these three people information was collected about both of these areas, and therefore, they were counted in each category. The correct total figure, however, is 57.

PART II: LOCAL 1005 AND ITS HISTORY

CHAPTER 3

THE FOUNDING OF THE LOCAL

Historical analysis in the political economy approach is more than an attempt to provide the background for a study. It is an indispensable method that is used to show the way broad societal influences shape particular social phenomena. Because of this an understanding of the historical development of Local 1005 is essential in a study of its political life.

The next four chapters describe and analyse the establishment of 1005, and its growth to its present size as one of the most powerful local unions in the country. The focus in this section is on the way social factors shape the organization but it also explores the internal political life of the union and explains the reasons for the rise and fall of the fortunes of various political groups. Chapter 7 concludes the section with an interpretation of this historical data to show how the internal life of the organization responds and adapts to broad economic and political influences.

Before the Merger

Since 1945 Local 1005 of the United Steelworkers of America has been the official bargaining agent for the hourly-rated employees at the Hamilton Works of the Steel Company of Canada. This union local did not emerge on the scene fully grown, ready to defend the rights of the Steel

Company employees. In part it was the result of the conscious struggles of workers in the plant going back at least thirty-five years, but it was also the result of a broader class struggle that emerged in Canada as the country rapidly industrialized in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To analyse the changes in the social structure and the various manifestations of the class conflict is beyond this study, but it is worthwhile exploring the developments of two organizations which had an immediate effect on the founding, development and growth of Local 1005: The first is the Steel Company of Canada, and the second the United Steelworkers of America.

The Steel Company, or Stelco as it is usually called, is the product of the development of the steel industry that originated during the earliest stages of industrialization. The Canadian iron and steel industry can be traced as far back as the French era,¹ but its first substantial growth occurred in the Cape Breton area of Nova Scotia² and Lachine, Quebec, during the 1850's.³ However, it was not until after the National Policy was enacted by the Macdonald government in 1879, granting the iron and steel industry a high tariff protection, that it began to rapidly develop. Although Naylor comments that "it is difficult to unravel the importance of the National Policy to the industry or to ascertain the degree to which higher duties were necessary for some other purpose than simply bolstering dividend levels,"⁴ it is true that in the long run high tariffs, and the introduction of federal bounties for steel production were a major stimulus to the industry.

It was not until the 1890's that Hamilton became a steel making

center. A group of New York capitalists, realizing that high profits could be made in the protected Canadian market began searching for a site to locate a steel mill. It is not surprising that they chose Hamilton. Industrial concentration in the last decade of the nineteenth century was occurring in the Upper St. Lawrence and Western Lake Ontario regions. A steel mill located in Hamilton would be close to its major markets and have the advantage of excellent water and railway transportation facilities. The chief problem of the location was that it was far away from the source of its two major raw materials. Coal had to be brought the entire distance from the Pittsburgh area in the United States by rail, and iron ore had to be shipped from the mines at the head of Lake Superior to Point Edward on Lake Huron and brought from there by rail to Hamilton.⁵ Limestone and scrap, the two other major raw materials used in the steelmaking process, were both readily available in the area.

One other important resource helping to make Hamilton an attractive location for the development of an iron and steel industry was its abundance of skilled labour. The city was in the center of one of the most urbanized parts of the country and by the 1890's a large, diverse work force was available to employers. Hamilton is also relatively close to the large steel centers of the United States and workers with experience and skill in the industry could be attracted to the area.

However, it is unlikely that a steel mill would have been located in Hamilton if the city council did not offer a variety of inducements. When council learned that these New York businessmen were searching for a site to produce steel, they offered them "long term tax exemptions, a

free site of seventy-five acres of land and a bonus of \$100,000 if a \$400,000 blast furnace and a \$400,000 open hearth were built and running by fixed dates."⁶ In 1893 the offer was accepted.⁷

The site chosen for the new development was a small piece of land on the shore of Hamilton Bay, in the east end of the city, known as Huckelberry Point. This beauty spot, popular for boating, fishing and duck shooting, was soon to become one of the most important locations of heavy industry in the country.⁸ However, before the steel mill could begin to operate a number of misfortunes came to plague it. The brick furnace stack was blown down in a gale which delayed the project several months and the deadline date set by city council had to be extended,⁹ but, more important, the original investors "fell under suspicion of financial malpractice,"¹⁰ and the company had to be reorganized. The new group of investors were almost all Hamiltonians. They included the publisher of the Hamilton Spectator, William Southam, who later founded his newspaper chain with profits made from steel, Senator Alexander Wood, a wholesale hardware merchant and John Milne a foundryman.¹¹

The next few years were difficult ones for the company. It was not until 1896 that the blast furnace was fully operating,¹² and it was 1900 before the first open hearth steel was poured. But development in the first decade of the twentieth century was rapid. Steel production jumped from 29,000 to 882,000 tons a year from 1901 to 1911 and pig iron from 252,000 to 923,000 tons. The industry more than trebled in size in the decade.¹³ Hamilton Steel and Iron Company grew rapidly to take a share of the market. A second blast furnace was added in 1907 rising

iron capacity to 180,000 tons, about one quarter of the steel market in the country.¹⁴

In spite of this phenomenal growth, the Canadian iron and steel industry in 1910 was in serious difficulty. Three firms dominated the primary steel production in the country: the new steel mill in Sydney Nova Scotia, the Algoma plant in Sault St. Marie Ontario, and Hamilton's new steelmaking facility. However, a host of finishing mills, located primarily in the Montreal and Southern Ontario areas, were struggling for survival. With the seasonal swings in prices, periodic depressions of the era, and the strong competition among the firms, the possibility of economic ruin was real.¹⁵ The companies joined into associations to try to control prices but they were never very successful because they could not control the entire industry or the many imports that periodically flooded the country.¹⁶

The solution to a similar problem in the United States had led to the creation of the huge U.S. Steel Corporation. In 1901 J.P. Morgan, the investment banker, bought out the Carnegie interests and nine other firms to build a company which dominated the entire American steel business. After its creation U.S. Steel controlled three fifths of the whole American industry and was the world's first billion dollar corporation.¹⁷

The lesson of this and other mergers was not lost on Canadians involved in the finishing part of the steel industry. It was obvious to them that they needed a more secure economic environment, and the only way this could be achieved was by the amalgamation of a number of different companies so that competition could be controlled. In 1910 Max Aitken

(later Lord Beaverbrook) of Royal Securities Corporation brought together the representatives of five different steel companies at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. They included the Montreal Rolling Mills, Dominion Wire Manufacturing Company, Hamilton Steel and Iron Company, Canada Screw Company, and Canada Bolt and Nut Company. When the bargaining was finally over the Steel Company of Canada had been created which had a large primary steel making capacity and which dominated the finishing stages of the steel industry in the country.¹⁸ As part of the agreement control of the new company was to remain with the Hamilton group and within a short time the decision was made to concentrate development at Huckelberry Point.¹⁹

Paralleling the rise of Hamilton as a manufacturing and steel making center was the development of the trade union movement in the city. As early as 1833 a Hamilton branch of the Typographical union existed,²⁰ and by 1872 the workers of the city were the leaders of the nine hour a day movement which briefly became a major political force in the province.²¹ Through the last decades of the nineteenth century unions in the city grew, a number of strikes were held, and they became actively involved in politics.

By the first decade of the twentieth century the trade union movement was a powerful political force in Hamilton. In 1902 union leadership caused the defeat of a referendum which was to grant a bonus of \$50,000 to the Deering Agricultural Implement Company for locating in the city. The unions were opposed to the grant because Deering was an anti-union company in the United States.²² In 1906 Allan Studholm,

a member of the stove-moulder's union and an active supporter of union demands, was elected to the first of three consecutive terms in the provincial legislature, and at the same time unionists were elected to the city council.²³

Union organization in the Hamilton Steel and Iron Company prior to the Stelco merger of 1910 was slow and strongly resisted by management. Years later Tom McClure, once the president of Local 1005, wrote:

As far as can be learned organization in the early days of the plant was more or less of a spontaneous nature... The rolling men and puddlers were paid on a sliding scale based on the average of the production over the previous sixty day period. Sometimes a steep increase in the selling price was not reflected in the pay envelope. Tongs were banged, the whistle blown, the mill stopped rolling, the men marched to the office, and as a general rule the appropriate changes were made in the rates of pay. An exception to the rule occurred in 1906 when a short strike resulted in the upward adjustment of rates of pay called for by a sharp rise in the selling price. The strikers were told that it was not necessary for them to organize (into a union) to be certain of getting their just due. 'We'll pay the scale'.²⁴

This description shows a type of direct rank and file militancy. Whenever there was a grievance, "the tongs were banged, the whistle blown, the mill stopped rolling, and the men marched to the office." Its success depended on a shop floor solidarity among the workers that could not be ignored by the company, rather than an established relationship between the two parties. McClure's description is unclear, but it seems as if this activity was located with the rolling mill men, the most skilled group of production workers in the plant. Even though they were not organized into a regular union, the activity followed the dominant pattern of unionism of the day by restricting union organization to skilled workers.

The company policy at this time shows they were opposed to any

form of union. They may have been willing to pay the scale but this was only to keep the union out of their plant. On at least one occasion Italian workers were brought in by a special train from Buffalo to break a strike.²⁵ Stelco's attitude towards their workers, Kilbourn claims, was one of "tolerant paternalism,"²⁶ but other sources indicate that many supervisors were autocratic tyrants over their men. The workers were expected to be obedient, uncomplaining, and willing to perform almost any job no matter how difficult or dangerous.²⁷

Stelco and the Amalgamated Association

With the Stelco merger of 1910 the company was in an excellent position to control its markets. Management began to plan an ambitious building program. New finishing mills were built and the open-hearth capacity was increased from 80,000 to 200,000 tons a year. "The most important expansion was the building of a new complex of plants for breaking down steel ingots into blooms, bars and rods."²⁸ When this was completed in 1913 Stelco was in possession of one of the most modern steel mills in the world.²⁹

No sooner was this expansion completed when the North American economy went into a serious recession. Stelco, faced with strong American competition, found its markets contracting, demand for steel fell off and there were persistent rumors that the company might be forced into receivership.³⁰ When war broke out in 1914 in Europe, conditions became worse as uncertainty swept the country. Employment, which had reached a high of 6200 men in 1913, was now cut back to 4400 and many of the workers had little to do.³¹

As the war ground on conditions for Stelco suddenly reversed. By 1915 the Steel Company was producing shells for the army and demand for steel by most of the regular steel users returned to pre-war levels.³² By 1916 the company's ingot production was over double its pre-war level, and the number of employees reached the high of 7800. In 1917 net profits were over \$4 million in spite of high wartime taxes. In 1918-19 the company extended its monopoly control of the industry by purchasing mines in the Minnesota iron range and the Pennsylvania coalfield.³³ The First World War, more than any other set of events, created the economic conditions which led to the establishment of Stelco on a firm financial footing. Never again did the company experience a crisis as severe as that of 1914-15.

Before, during, and after the First World War the Canadian trade union movement grew and shrank in response to the trade cycle. Membership was at a peak in the pre-war boom of 1913. By the 1914-15 recession members had fallen 20% and strikes and lockouts were at their lowest levels since figures had been compiled. With the resumption of boom conditions during the war, membership of unions sharply increased so that by 1919 they had grown three times their 1915 size to 378,000.³⁴

The year 1919 was a time of radical union activity in Canada. As Jamieson points out, "One of the most important factors underlying the mounting unrest of the late war and immediate post-war years was the inflationary price spiral. The cost of living index had remained virtually unchanged until the end of 1915. It jumped from then on, by 8% in 1916, more than 18% in 1917, and 13½% in 1918".³⁵ But in the

meantime wages had inflated very slowly. Added to this there was widespread suspicion of wartime profiteering.³⁶ As a result strike activity in Canada reached very high levels and finally climaxed in the Winnipeg General Strike during May and June of 1919.

However, it was another set of events in the steel industry of the United States that acted as the catalyst for union activity in the Steel Company of Canada. On September 22, 1919, 365,000 American steelworkers, led by William Z. Foster of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers of North America went on strike in fifty cities across the country. This included virtually every plant of the enormous U.S. Steel Corporation and most of the other big producers. For three and a half months the strikers battled the combined forces of the government, the press, and the power of the companies led by Judge Elbert H. Gary of U.S. Steel. The police and army were used against strikers, leaders were run out of towns, and mills were kept open by Black and Mexican strike breakers. As David Brody comments, "Nothing weakened the resolve of weary strikers more, the Steel Companies well knew, than the sight of smoke rising from the mills, and the sound of whistles announcing the change of the shift."³⁷ The men drifted back to work and finally, in January, the union admitted defeat.

It was during this bitter struggle that unionization finally began at Stelco. On October 8, 1919 Lodge 7 of the Amalgamated Association (the AA as it was called) was founded. Its charter originally covered workers in a variety of different mills. Within a few months membership had reached 1,300 and on the advice of the Canadian vice-

president, Ernest Curtis, three separate lodges were formed: Lodge No. 7 included the 10" Merchant Mill, Lodge No. 9 the Sheet Mill, and Lodge No. 10 the West End Bar and Guide Mills.³⁸

In spite of this display of strength the company refused to grant the AA lodges any recognition and within two or three years Lodges 7 and 10 had been dissolved. However, Irondale Lodge No. 9, formed in the Sheet Mill, remained for more than a decade. In 1918 Stelco had purchased new equipment to roll sheet iron and had recruited a number of skilled workers from the United States to operate it. McClure later wrote:

Most if not all of these men were, or had been members of the AA, knew the score in regards to wages and working conditions, and, if tales told of those days have any foundation in fact, were fairly vocal.³⁹

One old timer tells of being a member in those early days, of an Irondale Lodge Union Committee which sought an interview with the then Works Manager R.G. Wells. Mr. Wells said he was willing to meet a committee of employees but not a 'union committee such as the one before him.' The group withdrew and 'suspended' one of their members whose dues were in arrears, then returned as a committee of employees to discuss their problems with the Works Manager.⁴⁰

It is not known whether it was at this time or another, but in the early 1920's Irondale Lodge No. 9 was able to get the company to agree to pay the Amalgamated scale of wages for Sheet Mill workers which was about 20% higher than the previous scale. The reason for the union's success is clear: the sheet mill workers had skills the company needed to run their operation and the U.S. workers "declared they would go back home if the union rates were not made effective."⁴¹

Through the 1920's Stelco expanded and prospered. The recession of 1921-22 reduced productivity and profits, but by 1929 output was again

at an all-time high, profits were in excess of \$3 million, and the number of employees almost reached 6000. Wages, which had been raised by the company to meet the post-war inflation and union militancy, were reduced in the 1921-22 recession but afterwards they gradually rose.⁴² Other improvements included a pension plan in 1918, a sick benefit plan in 1928, and finally in the 1920's the seven day week was ended for everyone in the plant.

But working conditions in Stelco's Hamilton mills remained grim. The ten and twelve hour day were the rule, heavy labour was a common feature of many of the jobs, the heat in some of the mills was difficult to bear, and safety features were almost non-existent. In 1918, out of a work force of 6,709 there were 33 fatal or permanently disabling accidents, and in 1919, the first full year of Stelco's safety program, the number was still 16.⁴³

Lodge No. 9 of the AA, although not formally recognized, was tolerated by the company through the 1920's.

Notifications of the regularly held meetings were posted, by permission of the company, on the change house bulletin board, delegates sent to the Hamilton and District Trades and Labour Council, and yearly a delegate, whose expenses were defrayed by donations, openly solicited in the sheet mill, went to the AA convention.⁴⁴

The decisions of the conventions primarily related to the rate of pay agreed on between the union and the companies represented by the Western Sheet and Tin Producers. Stelco had not granted the union recognition but had agreed to pay the scale. "The union members received the Amalgamated Journal with the scale of rates. The non-union men cadged the rates from them to figure out their pay, or took just what was handed

and let it go at that."⁴⁵ Throughout the twenties Stelco continued to pay the scale to the Sheet Mill men and make the bi-monthly fluctuations.

Wages and working conditions for the Sheet Mill men were relatively good during the 1920's by comparison to the rest of the workers in the plant. They had been granted the eight hour day in 1919 while the rest of the mills worked ten and twelve hour shifts. Average pay in the plant was a little less than \$30 a week, but at times the Sheet Mill workers could earn as much as \$20 a day with their piece rates.⁴⁶ The union had considerable support from the Sheet Mill workers. McClure observed: "As a rule those whose skill entitled them to higher rated jobs (such as the) rollers and heaters...were among the strongest supporters of the union and most regular in their monthly payment of dues."⁴⁷ However, as the mill grew larger the ratio of union membership to working force decreased.⁴⁸

With the beginning of the depression in 1929 and '30 the Amalgamated Association began to lose support. As the price of steel became lower the sliding scale of wages sunk with it, and the Western Sheet and Tin Producers, who represented the U.S. employers, forced the AA to accept even lower rates. Stelco, following these trends, allowed wages to sink in the Sheet Mill to the lowest level in years. Dissatisfaction resulted, the workers stopped paying their dues, and finally in 1932 there were only three members in good standing in Irondale Lodge No. 9. After a series of letters between the then lodge secretary Milton Montgomery and the International Union the lodge was informed that:

The International Executive Board met on this date (July 26, 1932) and after due discussion I was instructed by action of

the Board to inform you that due to indebtedness of the Irondale Lodge to the International Lodge, that our laws will not permit the payment of any claims for benefits, or the issuing of cards, unless it was possible for your lodge to either pay up its indebtedness, or reorganize the lodge. If this can not be done then your lodge is then defunct, and the Charter, Seal, Rituals, etc., would have to be returned to the International Lodge.⁴⁹

As a result the Stelco Sheet Mill workers allowed their charter to lapse on October 4, 1932.⁵⁰

The Independent Steelworkers Union

In the following months wages for Stelco workers sunk even further. No one in the Sheet Mill was now a member of the union so they did not receive the AA journal to check the wages against the scale. It was sometime, therefore, before news reached them that the rate of pay Stelco was giving them was lower than the scale. McClure describes what happened:

The upshot of all this was very hot meetings of the men involved, deputations interviewing the company in the person of the superintendent, a meeting in the change house where the superintendent explained the company's attitude, their problems and the competition they had to meet. Great stress was laid on the alleged fact that the Roosevelt New Deal in the United States set a new and different pattern of unorthodox economics which was not followed in our country and consequently the AA scale could not be paid here in Canada.⁵¹

The company did, however, respond to the worker's pressure and a 10% increase in the rate of pay was granted across the plant, which brought the wages of Sheet Mill workers back up to the AA scale.⁵²

This set of events brought home to the Sheet Mill men "the great loss they had suffered when they lost their charter."⁵³ Immediately they began to form their own organization which they called the "Steelworkers' union." It was to be independent but open to affiliation later on,

initiation was set at \$1.00, and monthly dues were set at 75¢.⁵⁴

The organization was started in 1934 but initially very little was accomplished. Meetings were poorly attended and the company simply ignored the new union. McClure noted that: "The financial secretary who had collected the dues was seriously concerned. There was over \$400 surplus in the treasury. If the local expired what happened? Why not call a meeting to decide whether to distribute the money on a pro rata basis."⁵⁵ But rather than disbanding the union, when the members met they wanted to know why nothing had been done by their executive. A new committee was formed and given specific instructions, but after a series of meetings with the company nothing was resolved. Finally, in a meeting on a Saturday morning in May 1935, the Sheet Mill workers voted not to return to work until there was a settlement between the union and the company. A strike committee was set up which was ultimately chaired by Tom McClure, and on May 13, 1935 the department struck. McClure later wrote:

The strike was solid by the Sheet Mill workers. The balance of the plant was not involved and no attempts were made to involve them, but picket lines were maintained 24 hours a day. Communications were good. The strikers were a closely knit group who had a high regard for each other. Reporters buying beer and seeking information and opinions were referred to the press committee, and on one occasion the picket captain walked into the beverage room of the Brightside Hotel and announced that in his opinion our fellows had been there long enough. They left at once.⁵⁶

In the bargaining the company acceded to many of the demands drawn up by the workers but they refused the most important: the return to the AA sliding scale. When the strike committee brought a recommendation to accept the company's offer after two weeks on the picket line there was

opposition, but it was accepted by the majority and the men returned to work.

The struggle of the Sheet Mill workers in Stelco for their own union in the 1920's and '30's illustrates much about the state of industrial relations in North America at the time. Other than the tradesmen, the Sheet Mill men were the most skilled workers in the plant. This placed them in a strong negotiating position because the company depended on their skill and could not replace them without serious disruptions and loss of production. The Sheet Mill workers used this to negotiate for themselves special concessions. The company followed a policy set in many other steel mills by resisting every effort of the union. They were forced to tolerate union activity in the Sheet Mill, but were careful never to formally recognize it. All of these patterns followed the prevailing practices in North America of the day. Unions were organized primarily among skilled workers, the steel industry was anti-union, and avoided recognition as much as possible.

The actions of both sides of this conflict in the next few years show how closely each followed the precedent set in the industry. Within a month of the conclusion of the 1935 strike Stelco announced an Employee Representation Plan. The plan called for the establishment of a Works Council made up of ten employees elected by secret ballot from each of the plant's divisions, and another ten company appointees. The chairman and secretary were provided by the company. The council would meet monthly and any issue could be discussed that was brought forward by the representatives. Appeals could be referred to the president of the

company whose decision would be final and binding.

The Employee Representation Plan introduced at Stelco followed a movement established in the United States. From 1934 to the end of 1935 the number of company unions, as these plans came to be called, increased in the U.S. steel industry from seven to ninety-three, and the percentage of Steelworkers affected by them rose from twenty to ninety percent.⁵⁷ These efforts were clearly an attempt to head off the rising militant drive for unionization by providing some vehicle for the expression of worker's grievances, but the structure of the councils still left the power firmly in the hands of management.

The members of the Independent Steelworkers Union located in Stelco's Sheet Mill met to discuss the proposal. The company planned a plant wide referendum vote asking the employees to support the plan and the union decided to oppose it on the grounds that it was an "emasculatation of true collective bargaining."⁵⁸ They issued a leaflet demanding that the plan be rejected, but in the overall plant vote the employees narrowly accepted it by a ratio of 4 to 3.⁵⁹

The CIO and SWOC

Shortly after the 1935 strike and the establishment of the Employee Representation Plan a set of events occurred in the United States that had a profound effect on industrial relations in Stelco. The trade union movement across North America had been dominated by craft unions dedicated to organize workers on trade lines. The Amalgamated Association, located in the Sheet Mill of Stelco, was an example of this type of unionism. Workers of a particular skill or craft were

organized into unions for their own protection and all others were ignored. From the beginning of the trade union movement, another model of unionism had been advocated by militants. They believed that only by organizing all workers who were employed in a single plant or industry, regardless of skill, could real protection against an employer be ensured, and they also saw this as a way of extending the benefits of unionism to large groups of workers. This style of unionism, called industrial organizing, was opposed by many craft workers who dominated the American Federation of Labour, (A.F.L.) the major association of unions in the United States of the day.

In 1935 a number of unions including the United Mine Workers, the International Typographical Union and the Clothing Workers set up an organization within the A.F.L. called the Committee for Industrial Organization, (C.I.O.) and they set out to organize workers into industrial-styled unions. This group was strongly opposed by the old craft unionists and in October 1935, at an A.F.L. convention, the split finally came.⁶⁰

Just prior to this split the Wagner Act had been passed in the United States as part of the Roosevelt New Deal. The act gave workers the right to join a union of their choice and bargain collectively with their employers. Soon C.I.O. unions were organizing in mining, heavy industry and textiles. Other industrial-styled unions began joining the C.I.O. and in 1936 the remnants of the old Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers broke away from the A.F.L. and became a member. In June of that year the Steel Worker's Organizing Committee (SWOC) was founded as a member of the C.I.O. with the task of organizing

in the steel industry and the AA joined forces with it.

From the beginning, SWOC campaigns met with success. Headed by Philip Murray, a veteran of John L. Lewis' United Mine Workers, the union opened a series of offices across the United States with hundreds of organizers and over \$500,000 in reserves. The drive began what Murray called "the biggest task ever undertaken by organized labour within the memory of man,"⁶¹ the task of organizing the workers of the steel industry --"the heart of the open shop."

The organizing of SWOC went rapidly. By November 1936 they had 82,000 members and every month saw more rapid growth. The success of the Autoworkers' sit-down strike in the General Motors Flint plant gave added impetus to the union drive, and at its conclusion there were 150,000 members of SWOC. Then, unexpectedly, John L. Lewis negotiated an agreement with Myron C. Taylor, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of U.S. Steel. On March 2, 1937 it was announced that SWOC had won a 10% wage increase, a forty hour week, and union recognition.⁶²

Even SWOC officials were surprised. In 1919 U.S. Steel had been the most bitter foe of the AA and yet in 1937 they capitulated to the union without even one strike. The reasons for the victory include the facts that 1937 was a good year for business after many years of depression, and the company could not afford a strike. As well as this, in the few months of their existence, SWOC had taken over the Works Councils in virtually all the U.S. Steel plants and Taylor realized that the company simply could not win a long and protracted battle against the union. In spite of the fact that SWOC faced another five years of bitter struggle

with "Little Steel" before they had virtually the entire industry organized, this agreement with the giant of the steel industry marked the firm establishment of the union in the United States.

These events in the United States had an important impact on the Canadian trade union movement. The excitement and momentum of the organizing drives infected Canadian as well as American workers and the CIO unions rapidly expanded. In April 1937 a new Autoworkers local in the General Motors Oshawa plant struck for two weeks and created a major political crisis when management, backed by the Ontario government of Mitch Hepburn, refused to negotiate with the International Union. The strike ended with a reduction of the working hours, and other minor concessions but no formal union recognition.⁶³ However, it was a dramatic indication of the growth and influence of the CIO with Canadian workers.

The unionists at Stelco were well aware of the development of the CIO. On Sunday, June 21, 1936 a group of eighteen Stelco workers became charter members of Lodge 1005 of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee.⁶⁴ This was the very same month that SWOC was formed in the United States. The leadership of the new lodge was provided primarily by the Sheet Mill men who by this time had long experience dealing with the company. When they joined SWOC they dissolved their Independent Steelworkers Union and dedicated themselves to organizing the workers of the entire company into one industrial union.

Joining a union in the midst of the 1930's depression was a dangerous step for workers to take and yet it was not long after Local 1005 was formed that many had made a commitment to unionism. There were

many reasons for this. In part it was the result of the phenomenal growth of the CIO in the United States, the extreme economic insecurity of workers during the depression and other factors relate to the political beliefs that were prevalent at the time, but one of the major reasons why workers at Stelco joined the new union was because of widespread grievances they had against the company. One person who worked for Stelco during this period explained his experience:

It was the depression and I had been ridin' the rods. I got sick of fightin' fires in the north so I came back to Hamilton and went down to Stelco. They told me they were hirin' only married men. So anyway I got married that fall and after Christmas I went down and they gave me a job. That was February 1935. I started in the 10-12 mill--steady nights. I didn't mind that part of it but you'd pack your lunch and go down and they'd say 'you stay, you stay, you stay' and the rest would go home. I think in my first pay I got \$12 for two weeks. That meant I was workin' about three days a week. I got sick of it 'cause I could see how the others got on. I found that some of them would bring the foremen bottles of wine and groceries and they would lay them down behind a machine for him. So after about a month and a half I was to line up for my job at the office of the superintendent, and I went in and I said that I was quittin' and he said what for? And I said there was a lot of bullshit goin' on around here. So I told him and showed him where the baskets were of booze and stuff. He got pretty mad about it and after that things were better in that department.

Another time I was laid off and I really needed the work so they put me on a job fillin' in for summer holidays. It went on for six weeks and I knew the others were makin' about 20¢ an hour more than me. So I went into the office and said how about this money, and they said you're only learnin', and I said I've been learnin' for six whole weeks. But there wasn't anything I could do. That was the way Stelco ran things.⁶⁵

Another worker explained why he got involved in the union.

I used to own a barber shop and with the depression I lost it all. So I bummed on the railway for a time lookin' for work, but I couldn't find anything. My father was a foreman in Stelco and when I came back home he gave me a letter to take down. Now those were slack times, 1936, and men were bein' laid off with up to twenty years experience, only they kept me on 'cause I was

a foreman's son. Other guys were kept on 'cause they brought a bottle to the foreman or cigarettes with a few dollars in the package. That really got me mad so when there was talk of the union I joined up.⁶⁶

Religion and ethnic origin played a major part in the running of Stelco.

I happened to work in a department that favored Anglo-Saxon Catholics. I don't know why. They usually hated the Micks. Anyway in this department a new supervisor came in and removed every ethnic worker from key jobs and replaced them with Anglo-Saxons preferably of R.C. faith. By some accident I happened to fill both of these roles and found myself in a senior position in the mill. I replaced a person I thought to be a truly great man. A big Pole, twice as big as I am, strong and hard working, and absolutely fearful of any form of supervision. The company couldn't have had a better man. He was the kindest person to me, a 17 year old kid, trying to hold up my end on a 10½ hour night shift. This man did everything to help me, and it was just terrible the way I had to take his job. I didn't want to do it and in fact I went into the office, with my cap off by the way, and told the superintendent that it was unfair. He told me to get out on the job or get the hell out of the plant. The supervisors had absolute authority and they used it ruthlessly.⁶⁷

Another man who became an active unionist said:

When I started at Stelco there were no Catholic bosses at all and yet the majority of the workers were R.C. What you had to have in Stelco was the Masonic ring and the secret handshake. Even to this day few Micks ever make it high up in supervision. The ethnic workers had it worst of all. They were in the hot and dirty jobs: the open hearth, the bar mills and the blast furnaces. In the 1930's they were the first laid off and the last taken back. It was really rough on them.⁶⁸

Kilbourn, in his Stelco sponsored history, claims the company's "labour policy during the depression remained what it had always been in the past, a firm but benevolent paternalism."⁶⁹ This could well have been the policy but social conditions were such in the 1930's that lower levels of management, dealing directly with the workforce, could be authoritarian, grossly unfair and even ruthlessly corrupt, and the workers could do little to defend themselves. By 1938 almost half of the total number of

employees had been with the company for ten years or more,⁷⁰ but this does not reflect the high morale, as Kilbourn suggests.⁷¹ The depression conditions made workers hold onto their jobs because they knew the alternative was destitution for themselves and their families. Social conditions allowed management to impose their will on the work force, but in turn their actions provided a substantial number of grievances which were a major contributing cause of the growth of the union within the plant.

The growth of SWOC in Canada was much slower than in the United States. The first success came at Dosco, the Sydney Nova Scotia steel plant. Silby Barrett, the director of the United Mine Workers in Nova Scotia, had been appointed the Canadian head of SWOC in the fall of 1938. Within two months he had succeeded in signing up 2600 of Dosco's 2900 workers into Local 1064. The new Nova Scotia Trade Union Act had forced the company to recognize the union, prohibiting them from dismissing any worker for union activities and compelling them to deduct union dues from the worker's wages. Although it was 1940 before SWOC got their first agreement with Dosco, this was the first important breakthrough of the Canadian branch of the union.⁷²

In Ontario, where the big steel mills were located, the lack of enabling legislation was a real hindrance to organizing efforts. In the Algoma plant an Independent Steelworkers Union was formed in 1935. In view of the prevailing attitudes of the day, management was remarkably tolerant of this new union and even signed an agreement with them in 1936. For some years there was co-operation between the union and the company that was noticeably absent from virtually all other SWOC locals in Canada.

In Hamilton, now the largest steelmaking center in the country with its two giant plants Stelco and Dofasco, union organizing was much more difficult.

Left and Right Factions

There can be little doubt that the split between Left and Right factions dominated much of the political life of the small group of unionists at Stelco and hindered organizing efforts in the plant. In January 1930, following the directions of the Communist International (the Comintern) based in Moscow, the Canadian Communist Party founded the Workers Unity League (WUL). Its express purpose was to "bore from within" established unions and direct them towards the interests of the Party, but its other declared aim was the organization of the unorganized. By 1934 the WUL had met with some success by organizing several thousand workers, and had led a number of important strikes.⁷³ In the minutes of the Independent Steelworkers Union of Stelco Sheet Mill Workers for April 14, 1934, there is a notation that a letter had been received from the Worker's Unity League asking that two of their leaders be allowed to address the meeting, but opposition to the Communist faction even then was strong, for the motion to allow them to speak was defeated.

The struggle between the Communist Party and groups that later became the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) was particularly bitter in the early 1930's. To Tim Buck, the leader of the Canadian Communist Party, J.S. Woodsworth, later the leader of the CCF, was "the most dangerous enemy we have at the present time. The eyes of our party membership must be focused upon the menace of social reformists."⁷⁴

In 1930 every effort was made by the Communists to try and prevent his re-election to the House of Commons. When the Canadian Fabian Socialists founded the CCF in 1933, the Communist Party of Canada opposed them because the Comintern declared that "democratic socialism not capitalism nor even fascism was the main enemy."⁷⁵ Buck wrote that the Communists must "expose and combat the anti-working class ideology of the CCF leaders." The CCF, he charged, "systematically pursues policies which support monopoly capitalism."⁷⁶

The attitude of the CCF towards the Communists reflected the different nature of the parties. Although the leadership opposed the CPC and worked actively against them, the rank and file tended to view the Communists as allies and supporters of the same cause.⁷⁷ Caplan writes: "It is clear that, except on the important question of violence, most Socialists did not believe the difference between themselves and the Communists to be irreconcilable."⁷⁸

In 1935 the policy of the Communist Party took another sudden shift. In August of that year it was announced in Moscow that it was "the duty of Communist Parties to fight hard for the preservation of civil liberties,"⁷⁹ This should be done primarily by opposing all fascist organizations. "The Communists were strongly advised to desist from the kind of attacks on socialists for which (they) had been notorious between 1928 and 1934. Instead they were to woo the socialists and even liberals."⁸⁰

Canadian Communists tried to achieve this policy by working with a variety of different groups but still tried to maintain the image of left-wing radicals. The Worker's Unity League was disbanded and the

members dispersed with the intent of moving into positions of influence and possibly control of established unions. In spite of their previous opposition the CPC tried to establish good relations with the CCF, their strident criticism was stopped and the two groups soon were co-operating in a variety of organizations. As an indication of this new co-operation, at the 1936 founding meeting of SWOC in Hamilton both Sam Lawrence, a prominent Ontario CCF leader and then a provincial member of the legislature for Hamilton East, as well as J.B. Salsberg, the past organizing director of the Worker's Unity League and member of the Canadian Communist Party, addressed the assembled Steelworkers.⁸¹

Because of this change of policy the battles between the Communists and the CCF seemed to disappear in the latter part of the 1930's, but this was more illusory than real. The two political parties were locked in a struggle for the leadership of the Canadian working class and during this stage it was uncertain who would emerge the victor.⁸² If peace existed it was an uneasy one, and the battle was ready to resume with little provocation.

The first central Canadian organizer of SWOC was Ernest Curtis, the former Canadian vice-president of the Amalgamated Association, who worked out of a sub-office located in Buffalo New York. In early 1937 he died and later that year Silby Barrett, the Canadian director, appointed three men with organizing responsibilities for Ontario: Milt Montgomery, a Stelco Sheet Mill worker, former member of 1005 and an assistant of Curtis, and two previous organizers of the Workers' Unity League: Dick Steele and Harry Hunter. Steele was assigned to the Toronto office and

Hunter to Hamilton. Barrett would have been well aware of the Communist membership of these two men but there was co-operation in the CIO of members of all political factions and there could be little doubt that Steele and Hunter with their background in the Worker's Unity League were the most experienced and best qualified people for the job.

Organizing Lodge 1005

The task of organizing a union for the activists of Lodge 1005 was a difficult chore. The basic tactic of SWOC was to sign as many members as possible into the union and then demand recognition from the company once it was thought they had sufficient support. At first things went well. By late 1936, 400 to 500 men were paying dues. In May 1937 the company granted a 10% wage increase and raised the labour rate to 41½¢ an hour. Included in this adjustment was the first vacation plan for plant workers, one week for those with 25 years service,⁸³ and the union claimed credit for these improvements. The real reason for the improvement in wages and conditions, however, was that "late in 1936 came the strongest surge of business activity the country had known since the disastrous autumn of 1929."⁸⁴ Whatever the reason for improved wages the union benefited from these changes and grew enormously, but in 1938 hard times resumed. There were massive lay-offs in the plant, and the membership of the lodge fell so dramatically "it was only [through] the dogged determination of a faithful few that the union local survived."⁸⁵ What these fluctuations reveal is the way union membership increases when economic conditions are good and decreases in times of depression. It illustrates the intimate relationship between the economic substructure and trade unions which is an ever present influence on the movement.

The leadership of the SWOC local in the late 1930's was still drawn from the Sheet Mill. Milt Montgomery, one of the early leaders, had been appointed to union staff shortly after 1005 was formed but there were a number of capable men from the mill who made a major contribution. These included men such as Gordon Holsey, William Orgar, George Jones, John Shipperbottom, who worked in the sheet mill shipping department, and Tom McClure. In those years it was McClure who gave the most consistent and determined leadership. He was a left winger, and in spite of the fact that he later denied ever having been a member of the Communist Party of Canada, the policies he advocated in the local always followed the lead of the party. For the nine years following the founding of the local, he was elected over and over again to the top positions of the executive. A person active in the 1930's but never allied with McClure on the Left Wing Slate commented:

The Communists were a force to be reckoned with in those days. They were honest men, and Tom McClure was the best of the lot. He was sincere and hard working, dedicated to the cause of Communism, but you'd never find a stronger union man in the plant.⁸⁶

Initially the Sheet Mill workers and their Independent Steel Worker's Union had opposed the institution of the Employee Representative Plan, but when it was approved by a vote of the workers in the plant they decided they would have to become involved in it in order to have some input. At first Milt Montgomery was the Sheet Mill representative. When he resigned to join SWOC staff Tom McClure was elected to take his place.

The minutes of the Works Council show McClure as the most effective

voice of the workers. On grievances he argued each case on their individual merits and even mounted a critique of the whole basis of employee relations in the plant. One of the most important cases dealt with by the council involved William Orgar a onetime president of Lodge 1005. Orgar was dismissed by his foreman for going home when the mill was down. When he protested he was called into the office of Mr. Gilles, the Assistant Works Manager, who gave him "A thorough verbal castigation and informed him at no time would he be employed in any plant in the Steel Company of Canada."⁸⁷ The elected representatives on the Works Council brought this issue up again and again, but could not get the company to change its decision. McClure demanded that the issue go to Mr. McMaster, the company president, and after a delay of several months McMaster again reaffirmed the decision of the works manager.⁸⁸

The Orgar case illustrates much about the Stelco industrial relations policy in the days of the Employee Representation Plan. The company was using the council essentially to co-opt the employees by providing a vehicle to express grievances, but in reality it gave no protection to the workers at all. When Orgar disobeyed company policy he was dismissed immediately, and obviously many felt it was because of his prominent role with the union. With an equal representation of ten elected employees and ten appointed from management, as well as the clause that all unresolved disputes would be referred to the president, the situation of the Works Council meant that control still effectively lay in the hands of management.

The minutes of Lodge 1005 show that on the surface there was

little political discord during the latter part of the 1930's in the union, but political divisions existed not far below the surface. For example at a meeting of a council of several Hamilton SWOC lodges on March 14, 1937, it was "Moved that Robert McClure (the brother of Tom) be appointed as Business representative of the council under the same conditions as other officers are elected." The motion was carried unanimously.

A few days later, on March 19th Lodge 1005 met and discussed this appointment. In a letter sent to Silby Barrett, the corresponding secretary later wrote:

We (the members in attendance at the meeting) are convinced that the appointment of this man would be decidedly detrimental to the chances of organizing the plant. The objections were:

1. That Robert McClure was never a Steel Worker or connected with the steel industry.
2. That he is ineligible for membership in any Steel Workers' Lodge.
3. That his recorded position as official secretary of the Communist Party of Hamilton would further alienate the sympathy and moral support of Steel Company of Canada Workers towards SWOC.⁸⁹

Clearly the principle objection of the members was that Bert McClure was a Communist because even then many organizers had never worked in a trade before becoming employed by unions. Partisan politics was playing an important role. On the one hand McClure was promoted for this position by the CPC faction, but he was also rejected because of his association with the Left Wing. McClure was never appointed by Barrett to the position.

Organizing in the late 1930's was not going well for SWOC in the Hamilton area. On June 11, 1938, in the midst of a new recession, Harry Hunter, the Assistant Regional Director, reported to the Ontario Conference of SWOC members:

The problems of organizing a big steel plant are well known: the problems of shifts, language difficulties, and the very nature

of the work itself present great difficulties. However, in spite of these difficulties and the weakness of our policy for Canada, we (were) forging ahead...Then something happened; Hepburn (the provincial premier) came out openly in support of the financial barons and a period of repression in the plants began...The steel barons began an organized attack on SWOC. For instance in Dominion Foundry and Steel (Dofasco) a whole union executive was discharged or so severely intimidated that they resigned. Spying and repression was organized to a degree never known in Hamilton before. We have a neighborhood in Hamilton where a union organizer dare not be seen entering a house or where a worker dare not be seen speaking to an organizer. The bosses on occasion tried to provoke fisticuffs with our shop paper distributor and a police department was organized in Dofasco with a liberal sprinkling of "Hepburn Hussars."⁹⁰

However by 1939 business activity was again expanding in Canada and with the outbreak of the Second World War new opportunities emerged for union organizing. The federal government called upon unions and business to co-operate in the war effort and the members of Local 1005 used this in an attempt to gain union recognition. In November an intense campaign was launched to sign up union members. Leaflets were handed out at the plant gates and union cards were collected from those willing to sign. Then, with this demonstration of increased support, on November 27 Tom McClure, the president, and David J. Davis, the recording secretary, wrote to H.G. Hilton, the vice-president of Stelco requesting negotiation. On November 30 Hilton replied:

Over a lengthy period the CIO has tried in every way to undermine the relations of this company with its employees. These efforts have been supported by the frequent distribution of circulars containing many false statements and misrepresentations and by other tactics. Since Canada entered the war this campaign has been intensified which is directly contrary to the promise of co-operation with the Dominion government.

He concluded by saying:

So long as the government of the province and the federal government are not the subject of control of any foreign power, this

company declines to negotiate with any organization with communistic associations and supported by U.S. funds in any endeavor to secure control over its employees.⁹¹

Hilton's letter marks the opening of an aggressively anti-union policy on the part of the company. In the Canada Works division of Stelco (at that time a part of Lodge 1005) the union controlled all five seats on the Works Council and had signed a large proportion of the men into the local. In an attempt to combat these organizing efforts the company fired nine employees, six of whom were shop stewards and another two active unionists.⁹² Lodge 1005 requested the federal department of labour to investigate the dispute by establishing a Board of Conciliation, but the government refused because "The union had not proven to its satisfaction that a majority of the employees had requested that the board be established."⁹³

An issue that added to the grievances against the company, but did not directly involve the union, arose early in the war when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police requested that the company fire a number of employees of foreign birth who were considered a security risk. The majority of these men were of Italian origin, some with twenty-five or thirty years of service with the company. Stelco management defended the position of the police saying: "We are satisfied that everyone of those dropped at one time or another were connected in some way with activities not Canadian."⁹⁴ Although pleas of the unionists on the Works Council to save these men their jobs met with no success, many later cited this incident as one of the major reasons of solid union support by many ethnic workers in the plant.

Struggle for Control of SWOC

Economic conditions during the war favoured the growth of unions but the political disputes in the Steelworkers along Communist non-Communist lines hindered the organizing efforts and had a serious impact on the life of Local 1005. From the beginning of SWOC in Canada a group of Communists led by Dick Steele and Harry Hunter had dominated the Ontario region. In May 1939 Charles Millard, who originally rose to prominence in the Autoworkers, was appointed the CIO representative in Ontario.⁹⁵ Millard was a well known CCF supporter, and he was a threat to the Communist influence in the district.⁹⁶ It was not long before reports were being sent by Millard to Philip Murray, the President of SWOC, and after a visit to Hamilton, Murray ordered an enquiry into the Ontario situation. The issue took some time to be resolved, but finally by June 1940 Dick Steele and Harry Hunter, both members of the Communist faction, had been fired and replaced by organizers loyal to Millard and the CCF.⁹⁷

The political background of this dispute goes further than SWOC. From 1935 to 1939 there was general accord between the CPC and CCF factions in the trade union movement, but with the outbreak of war these two political parties resumed their attacks on each other. Russia had entered into a non-aggression pact with Hitler and participated in the division of Poland in 1939. Canada, following the lead of Britain and other allies, declared war on Germany. The Communist Party of Canada, following the directions of the Comintern, denounced the war as imperialist and called on Canadians to resist the war effort. The CCF was divided. Its leader

J.S. Woodsworth remained a pacifist, but party members overwhelmingly supported Canada's involvement in the war. Once these positions had been taken the struggle between the CCF and the CPC resumed its intensity, and the ousting of the CPC faction from positions of leadership in SWOC was one of the consequences.

Steele and Hunter did not submit to their firings without a struggle. A number of Ontario SWOC locals met on 29 September 1940 to discuss the situation. "They unanimously adopted a resolution stating that they had no confidence in the Canadian leadership of SWOC and were appalled by its autocratic behavior."⁹⁸ They decided to set up their own "Ontario Executive" of SWOC, to no longer recognize Millard as having any authority over them, and pay their dues to this new union group.

In Local 1005 McClure supported the efforts of the Ontario Executive but ultimately he was not able to carry the local on the issue. On April 19, 1941 a conference was held in Montreal by SWOC to resolve the problem. From Local 1005 the two delegates were Tom McClure and Milt Montgomery, a member of each of the two factions. However, the resolution passed at the 1005 membership meeting reads: "Our delegates are to be instructed to use every effort to solidify Canadian labour under Philip Murray." McClure was required, therefore, to support Millard and the Canadian leadership of SWOC. At the conference, the Ontario Executive was badly defeated and shortly afterwards disbanded.⁹⁹

Over the next four years relations between Tom McClure at Local 1005 and the Millard faction in SWOC deteriorated. On February 2, 1941, for example, McClure wrote Philip Murray, complaining that Millard and

his group were doing no more than co-operating with the government and the whole effort of SWOC in Canada was sinking. He concluded by saying:

I would state that I am not opposed to a policy of real co-operation with our government in the interests of the working people of my country, but to give blindfolded promises of co-operation to a government whose labour department has not yet put one man back in work against a hostile management and whose Department of Justice has interned many of our best trade union leaders without trial is in practice a policy of complete betrayal of the Canadian workers.¹⁰⁰

However, after the summer of 1941, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union, McClure's attack on Millard and the CCF Group completely reversed. Suddenly the policy of the Communist Group swung from total opposition of the Canadian war effort to total support. In the words of one of their leaders, it was now "A just war, a people's war of national freedom and liberation."¹⁰¹ Time and time again the Communists called for the Canadian people to make sacrifices and became "Enthusiastic supporters of various drives to increase production, reduce waste, subscribe to war loans and collect funds for the Red Cross."¹⁰²

Certification

Millard and the Canadian section of SWOC had supported the war effort from the outset, but they were also determined to continue to organize workers into their union and see that conditions were improved. They refused to enter into a no-strike pledge, and they attempted to get labour legislation changed. The two factions were bound to come into conflict. McClure was determined to follow the policy of the CPC by concentrating on efforts to improve war production, while Millard, was equally determined to give priority to efforts to get Stelco workers into the union.

The initial tactic of SWOC at Stelco had been to sign up as many workers as possible into the union and then demand recognition for the company, but with Stelco's stubborn resistance this was not successful. In 1942 the union decided to take over the Works Council. In November they ran eight members for the eleven elected positions on the council and were successful in getting them all elected. The campaign was an open one. The Steelworkers (SWOC formally became the United Steelworkers of America after their founding convention in 1942) candidates were identified as union members, and it was well known that their objective was union recognition.

On the first meeting of the Works Council, held January 20, 1943, the elected representatives requested union recognition, but were refused by the company. They then asked for a vote to determine the bargaining agent and promised to abide by the outcome, but again were refused.¹⁰³ On January 31 the members of Local 1005 met to discuss their next course of action. A motion supported by the International Union, was put forward instructing the union men on the council to resign. Tom McClure, then the local's president, opposed it, ostensibly because he claimed it would weaken the union position, but in reality because he wanted the union to support the goal of high production for the war effort. After a lively debate the motion to resign was defeated.¹⁰⁴

At almost the same time another issue emerged which created even more divisions between McClure and his supporters and the CCF faction at 1005 and in the Steelworkers. From January 12 to February 1, 1943 steelworkers at both the Algoma and Dosco plants struck for better wages.¹⁰⁵

Steelworker staff wanted Stelco unionists to pull out the plant and shut down the entire industry but again McClure opposed them on the floor of a membership meeting and this time he was able to win the issue. At the time of the crisis he said in a speech to the "Citizens of Hamilton":

Workers of Stelco understand the supreme importance of maintaining and increasing the uninterrupted supply of steel. We are 100% for doing everything to win the war...We...deeply regret the situation that arose that caused the strike at Algoma, Sydney (Dosco) and Trenton Steel plants...The position of Local 1005 has been and is positively against any strike, lockout, stoppage or interruption which would halt or hinder steel production.¹⁰⁶

McClure's stand at the time was unpopular with many of the members in the plant. A petition was circulated calling for his resignation,¹⁰⁷ and the debates were heated, but he was able to carry the votes at the membership meetings. However, finally on the issue of the Works Council McClure was defeated and on March 15, 1943 all the union members on the council submitted their resignations.

The fight for the union in the next few months quickened. As soon as the unionists resigned from the Works Council the Steelworkers applied to the Ontario Labour Court for certification as the legal body entitled to negotiate on behalf of Stelco workers. The company in a final effort of opposition helped to found a group called the "Independent Steel Workers Association." In their brief to the Labour Court the Steelworkers protested that this new Association was a company union. They argued that the notices of the election of officers of the new group had been posted throughout the plant, and that the company had permitted the members to hold meetings and an election on company time and company property. By contrast the Steelworkers were not able to get co-operation of any kind from the company.¹⁰⁸

The 1005 case for certification was held before the Labour Court in October 1943 and it appeared likely that they would be turned down. The company laid great emphasis on the fact that the union could not be said to represent the work force because only a small group were "willing to show loyalty to the Union by the regular payment of union dues."¹⁰⁹ The Steelworkers admitted that at the time of the proceedings they had only 259 members and the highest they ever had was in January 1943 when the number stood at 771.¹¹⁰ However, the Labour Court finally ordered a vote of Stelco employees to determine the bargaining agency. This was held on February 2, 1944 and the results showed an overwhelming support for the Steelworkers. "Out of a total of 4,467 eligible votes 3,781 ballots were cast. Out of these 2,461 were in favour of the United Steelworkers, 889 for the Independent Association and 393 for neither."¹¹¹ The order of certification was issued on April 6, 1944.

In the final stages of the struggle to found Local 1005 it was changing economic circumstances and political action outside the local union that were the determining factors. The Second World War had created full employment and the need to maintain high levels of production particularly in the vital steel industry. These circumstances transformed labour into a powerful force with real negotiating power. The wave of strikes in 1943 demonstrated that the unions were determined to win concessions, and it forced the government to change the legislation for fear that "unless steps were taken the whole economy might dissolve in conflict."¹¹² As a consequence, P.C. 1003, Canada's first major legislative change in industrial relations since 1907, was passed in January 1944.

This order in council brought Canada's legislation more into line with the United States. "It included the main principles of the Wagner Act concerning protection of worker's rights to organize, certification of bargaining units and compulsory collective bargaining."¹¹³ It was under the protection afforded by this legislation that Local 1005 of the Steelworkers was finally certified as the agency to represent Stelco workers.

Footnotes

¹William Kilbourn, The Elements Combined: A History of the Steel Company of Canada, (Toronto: Clark, Irwin and Company Limited, 1960), p. 8.

²Ibid., pp. 52-53.

³Ibid., pp. 3-32.

⁴Tom Naylor, The History of Canadian Business, 1867-1914 Volume I, (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, 1975) p. 53.

⁵Kilbourn, op. cit., pp. 126-127. In 1932 with the opening of the new Welland Canal, iron ore could be shipped from Lake Superior directly to Stelco's warfs in Hamilton. In June 1965 Stelco started receiving iron ore pellets from its Wabush Mine in Labrador.

⁶Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 48.

⁷This was only the first of a variety of tax concessions and subsidized sales of land given to the company by different public bodies. The most recent was the 1971 sale to Stelco of 208 acres of water lots by the Hamilton Harbour Commission.

⁸Kilbourn, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

⁹Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 49.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 49-50.

¹²Ibid., p. 49.

¹³Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 29-30.

¹⁶Tom Naylor, The History of Canadian Business, 1867-1914, Volume II, (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, 1975) p. 183.

¹⁷Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 31.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 83-84.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 73.

²⁰Charles Lipton, The Trade Union Movement of Canada 1827-1959, (Toronto: New Canada Publications, 1967) p. 7.

²¹Ibid., p. 29.

²²Bill Freeman, "The Welfare Business Hamilton Style", Our Generation, Vol. 12, No. 4, p. 24.

²³Marjorie Freeman Campbell, A Mountain and a City: The Story of Hamilton, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1966) p. 245.

²⁴Tom McClure's notes, pp. 2-3.

²⁵Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 124.

²⁶Ibid., p. 120.

²⁷One of the most consistent things mentioned by the unionists that were interviewed was the autocratic nature of the supervisors before the union was established. This is hinted at by Kilbourn on page 124 and yet he consistently claims the company was only being paternalistic. If this was true it is unlikely that a union would have ever been organized in the plant.

²⁸Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 93.

²⁹Ibid., p. 93.

³⁰Ibid., p. 94.

³¹Ibid., p. 95.

³²Ibid., p. 102.

³³Ibid., p. 103.

³⁴Stuart Marshall Jamieson, Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-66, (Ottawa: Department of Labour, Task Force on Labour Relations; Study No. 22, 1971) p. 158.

³⁵Ibid., p. 159.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 159-160.

³⁷David Brody, Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960) p. 254.

³⁸M.T. Montgomery, "Stelco Story," Information, (United Steelworkers of America, Aug. Sept. 1954, Vol. 3 #3) p. 5.

³⁹McClure, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

⁴⁰Montgomery, op. cit., p. 5.

⁴¹McClure, op. cit., p. 5.

⁴²Kilbourn, op. cit., pp. 302-303.

⁴³Ibid., p. 123.

⁴⁴McClure, op. cit., p. 11.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁴⁶Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 122.

⁴⁷McClure, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁹Letter from David J. Davis, Secretary Treasurer of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers to Milton Montgomery, July 26, 1932.

⁵⁰Montgomery, op. cit., p. 5.

⁵¹McClure, op. cit., p. 16.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 17-18.

⁵³Ibid., p. 18.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 18. McClure quoted the men as saying: "If it isn't worth a dollar its not worth anything."

⁵⁵Ibid., 19.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 4-5.

⁵⁷Robert McDonald Adams, The Development of the United Steelworkers of America, 1936-1951, (Kingston, Ontario: M.A. Thesis, Queens University, 1957) pp. 45-46.

⁵⁸Montgomery, op. cit., p. 7.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 6.

⁶⁰The story of the split of the AFL is told in a number of standard texts on Labour in the United States. One of the most interesting is found in Saul Alinski's biography of John L. Lewis. Saul Alinski, John L. Lewis, An Unauthorized Biography, (New York: 1949).

⁶¹Richard O. Boyer & Herbert M. Morais, Labor's Untold Story, (New York: United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, 1955) p. 312.

⁶²Ibid., p. 312.

⁶³Jamieson, op. cit., p. 252.

⁶⁴Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 155.

⁶⁵William B. Freeman, "Interviews with Local 1005 Activists, 1976," (Unpublished interview material) Vol. 1, p. 125.

⁶⁶Ibid., Vol. III, p. 2.

⁶⁷Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 272-273.

⁶⁸Ibid., Vol. I, p. 114.

⁶⁹Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 153.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 154.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 153.

⁷²Irving Martin Abella, Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973) p. 55.

⁷³Ivan Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975) pp. 71-72.

⁷⁴Quoted in Avakumovic, Ibid., p. 68.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 41.

⁷⁶Tim Buck, Thirty Years, 1922-1952: The Story of the Communist Movement in Canada, (Toronto: Progress Books, 1952) pp. 111-115.

⁷⁷Gerald L. Caplan, The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism: The CCF in Ontario, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973) pp. 42-45.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 82.

⁷⁹Avakumovic, op. cit., p. 96.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 96.

⁸¹John M. McMenemy, Lion in a Den of Daniels: A Study of Sam Lawrence, Labour in Politics (McMaster University M.A. Thesis, October 1965) p. 50.

⁸²Caplan, op. cit., p. 82.

⁸³Montgomery, op. cit., p. 6.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 6.

⁸⁵Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 155.

⁸⁶Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 113.

⁸⁷Works Council Minutes June 1937.

⁸⁸Works Council Minutes April 16, 1940.

⁸⁹Unsigned letter from Lodge 1005, Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers of America to Silby Barrett March 24, 1937.

⁹⁰Harry Hunter, Assistant Regional Director of SWOC, Address to SWOC Ontario Conference, June 11 and 12, 1938, p. 1.

⁹¹Letter from H.G. Hilton, vice president Stelco, to Thomas W. McClure, President Lodge 1005, dated November 30, 1939.

⁹²Report of Circumstances pertaining to application for a conciliation board under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act by Lodge 1005, Canada Works Division.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Works Council Minutes, June 19, 1940.

⁹⁵Abella, op. cit., p. 32.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 55.

⁹⁷The firings of Communists and their replacement by CCF supporters had a decisive influence on the character of the Steelworkers in Canada and was very important for the development of the CCF/NDP. In the course of these interviews one of the top Steelworkers commented that if it was not for the Steelworkers it was unlikely that the NDP would exist today. This may be exaggerated but in terms of the financial and manpower commitment that the Steelworkers make to the party there can be little doubt that they are tremendously important. The beginning of that commitment must be dated from the time the Millard Faction gained control over the union in 1940.

⁹⁸Abella, op. cit., p. 59.

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 63-64.

¹⁰⁰Letter from Tom McClure to Philip Murray, February 2, 1941.

¹⁰¹Leslie Morris, quoted in Avakumovic, op. cit., p. 148.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁰³Local 1005 Submission to the Board of Conciliation (Undated)
p. 2.

¹⁰⁴January 31, 1943, minutes of Local 1005.

¹⁰⁵Jamieson, op. cit., p. 286.

¹⁰⁶Tom McClure speech to "The Citizens of Hamilton" (undated)
p. 1.

¹⁰⁷Letter to C.H. Millard, from members of Local 1005, 24 Feb. 1943.

¹⁰⁸Local 1005 submission to the Board of Conciliation (undated)
p. 3.

¹⁰⁹Department of Labour, Canada. Copy of Report of Board of Conciliation in the dispute between the Steel Company of Canada and Local 1005, U.S. OF A. Dec. 19, 1944, p. 2.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 2.

¹¹¹Local 1005 submission to the Board of Conciliation (undated)
p. 4.

¹¹²H.C. Pentland, A Study of the Changing Social, Economic and Political Background of the Canadian System of Industrial Relations, (Ottawa: Task Force on Labour Relations, 1968) p. 203.

¹¹³Jamieson, op. cit., p. 294.

CHAPTER 4

THE '46 STRIKE

By April 1944, when Local 1005 was certified as the collective bargaining agent for Stelco hourly employees, the struggle between the union and the company was already eight years old. The agreement, rather than bringing this conflict to an end, changed virtually nothing. The company continued its anti-union policies, and the primary concern of the unionists was a simple struggle for survival. As a commentator of the day noted, the reason this happened was that,

Management in these recently unionized industries had been forced into many a shot gun marriage with organized labour because government could not tolerate turmoil during the war years. But collective bargaining had never been firmly established.¹

It was to take a much more intense period of conflict before the union and the company evolved a new type of relationship.

Early Negotiations

In the negotiations subsequent to the April 1944 recognition there was little common ground between the union and the company. By summer it was apparent that no agreement could be reached and the Ontario Department of Labour was brought in to help settle the dispute. A Conciliation Board was appointed and after hearings they made a number of recommendations. On the basis of their report the first collective agreement was signed on February 24, 1945. The agreement set up grievance procedures and a seniority clause, but no wage increases. (Wages were fixed by wartime regulations). Although the union was recognized as the official bargaining agent of the

employees, the union security clause calling for compulsory union membership and dues check-off was rejected.

Local 1005 now had a legally enforceable contract, but it did not mean a great deal. It was soon obvious that the company intended to cooperate only within the strict limits of the law, and in the next few months nothing changed in the way they treated their employees. Few grievances were settled,² the autocratic behavior of the foremen and supervisors continued and management tried as much as possible to ignore the union. The Steelworkers were no longer a clandestine, semi-secret organization within the plant, but the stewards still had to personally collect union dues from the members, and under the full terms of the agreement this would have to be off company property. In December 1944 the local had only 373 paid up members out of a possible 4500.³ Over the next two years the numbers fluctuated but never grew much beyond 400.

These practices at Stelco followed patterns set in almost all Canadian industry in the late war period. Employers failed to recognize that the expanding economy and full employment created by the demands of war had radically changed economic conditions by putting labour in a strong negotiating position. They resisted change and "seemed to assume that their undiluted authority could not--or at least, should not--ever change."⁴ Union activists felt increasingly frustrated. Their unions were often recognized in name but not in fact while in the United States CIO unions had been established for some years. For a time there was an impasse.

* Throughout most of the war an immovable object--the intransigence of employers--was poised against an irresistible force--the determination of Canadian workers to bargain collectively through unions.⁵

But this situation could not go on forever.

A Faction Fight

The year the first contract was signed, 1945, was also the time when political differences between the CCF and Communist factions finally came to a head in the local. The struggle between these two political parties had become more and more intense in the last years of the war. Since 1941, when Germany had invaded Russia, the Communists had strongly attacked the CCF for not giving what they considered 100% support to the war effort. The policy of the CPC at the time was to build a coalition of left wing support, and when the CCF refused to join with them they looked to the Liberals.

During the latter war years the CCF was in a very strong political position. In 1943 they had come within four seats of being the largest party in the Ontario legislature, and in 1944 it was widely predicted that they would win the next federal election.⁶ As the war drew to a close in 1945 two key elections were called to test the feelings of the population. The new Conservative minority government in Ontario called an election on June 4th, in an attempt to gain a majority, and seven days later, on June 11, a federal election was scheduled.

As a result of these elections the CCF activists became convinced that the main intention of the Communists was to engineer their defeat. In the provincial election three Liberal-Labour candidates ran in the Windsor area, one of whom was a member of the Communist Party and all had Communist support. But more important than this the Communists ran candidates against the majority of the sitting CCF members. It is questionable whether this had much effect on the election but CCF members at

the time interpreted their sweeping defeat on the fact that the Communists split the left wing vote in many ridings.⁷ In the Ontario election the Conservatives decisively won a majority government and the CCF were reduced to eight seats.⁸ A week later, in the federal election, the CCF fared even worse. They won only twenty-eight seats and had 16% of the federal vote. East of the Manitoba border the party was all but eliminated and did not win one seat in Ontario.⁹

Whatever the reasons for their defeat in these two elections the CCF at the time, and even to this day, blame the Communists. It seemed to many of the social democrat activists that this was a time when they could make major political gains. When they lost at the polls in the 1945 elections it was a bitter disappointment and it intensified their opposition to the Communists.

In the Steelworkers at the time the Millard CCF group dominated the political life of the union on both the national and provincial levels but the CPC faction was still very active. In November 1944 the Communists had run a slate for the top positions of the union. Tom McClure, the president of 1005, stood for the position of District Director and played a prominent role in the election. They were all defeated, but the Communists still felt they had some reason to be optimistic. Although they were not winning many elections in the Steelworkers they still held many positions at the local level, they were the only opposition to the CCF group, and in time they felt they could mount a challenge for the political control of the union.

As feelings between the two political parties polarized in national

political life, the lines between the two factions became clearly drawn in Local 1005. In the spring of 1945 Larry Sefton was sent to Hamilton as Area Director of the Steelworkers with the specific task of ousting the Communists. Sefton, only twenty-three at the time, was already experienced in factional union battles. He was a hard rock miner from Kirkland Lake where he had fought the Communists in Mine Mill and he brought with him a reputation as a tough organizer and a competent administrator.

When he got to the city he found the CCF Group in 1005 confused and lacking leadership. One of his supporters active at the time described the situation:

We were as green as a 14 year-old girl before Sefton came in. McClure and the other left wingers were real orators, and they could swing a meeting any way they chose. But Sefton wouldn't put up with it. He had a terrible temper, and he'd get up at a meeting and let them have it and never back down. That gave us confidence and in time we could take on the left wing too.¹⁰

Sefton acted as the catalyst to bring the CCF supporters together and forge them into an effective political group at 1005. His initial objective was to defeat the Communists and by June he had achieved his goal. Reg Gardiner, the man who defeated Tom McClure for the presidency, explained what happened.

I became involved in the local in about 1943, and from the start it was well known that I supported the CCF. Now in the course of my work at Stelco I met lots of people and they'd say to me that if that Commie (McClure) is going to head the union again then I'm going to drop out. So I'd say to them why don't you run against him, and a lot of them had much more experience than me, but they'd say I don't want the job or give some other excuse. Finally I said I think the membership is entitled to a choice and if you want I'll allow my name to stand.¹¹

Gardiner's decision to run for the presidency was a personal one but once his name was put forward he was supported by Sefton and the entire CCF Group that had been organized by that time. There were only 290 to 300 members in the entire local and the election was held on June 13, 1945 at a general membership meeting. In the balloting Gardiner won by a mere three votes.

If judged only on the individual merits of the candidates the results of the election are surprising. For years McClure had played a leadership role in the local. Over and over again, at risk of his own livelihood, he had defended his fellow workers, and demonstrated his ability in his dealings with the company. There can be little doubt that his leadership was at least partly responsible for the growth of the local to the position where it was legally recognized with a signed collective agreement and he seemed to have been well liked by everyone who knew him. By contrast Gardiner had only been involved with the union for two years, and the only elected position he had held up to that time was as a grievance committee man on the open hearth.

The real reason Gardiner won the election was that he was attached to the CCF Slate. It is significant that this election in the local was held only two days after the 1945 federal election and nine days after the provincial election that saw a new height of bitterness between the members of the two political parties. This made the CCF group more determined than ever to halt the CPC influence in the local and the election of Gardiner was a consequence of the political polarization both within the union and in the broader political arena.

opposing pos^{ts} or views.

Preparations for Strike

The Second World War ended in August 1945 and almost immediately the leaders of Local 1005 felt political pressure from the rank and file for more militant action. The economic and political reasons for the increase in labour militancy at this time are clear. The war was a period of sacrifice for Canadian workers. The government had purposely dampened domestic consumption and in the immediate post-war period there was inflation, and fear of more inflation, which seemed destined to decrease workers' standards of living. In Jamieson's words, there had been

restrictions, inhibitions and bottled up frustrations imposed during the war, as well as the hostility and combativeness generated by war time conditions. There was also the widespread suspicion, in labour circles, of wartime profiteering and an uneven distribution of the war's financial burden between labour and capital.¹²

Although there may have been a concern on the part of some in the business community that there would be a return to the depression conditions of the 1930's, to the workers, after seven years of full employment, this seemed unlikely. The growing feeling was that Canadian people had made sacrifices for six years and now they wanted to have some of the fruits of their labour. A large percentage of the industrial work force in Canada turned to the trade union movement to achieve these aims.

There were, however, many Canadian capitalists who opposed unions and were determined to keep them out of their plants as long as possible. One of the most anti-union figures of the time was the then president of Stelco Hugh G. Hilton. Hilton had joined the company

as a young engineer in 1919. Through the 1930's and early 1940's he was the manager of the day to day operations of the plant, and in 1944 was appointed president. Kilbourn describes him as "an incredibly hard worker, poor at small talk and public speaking, inclined to be gruff and shy with those outside his circle of intimates, Hilton shared with his clannish fellow production men their single-minded obsession for the making of good steel."¹³ Others describe him as a small, intense man, capable of inspiring loyalty and respect, but a traditionalist who believed that the only way to run a steel mill was by an authoritarian chain of command. He was opposed to unions because he felt that they would threaten management's right to control their plant and in time lead to disaster for the company.

In 1946 the Steelworkers decided that they would make a unified set of contract demands from the three big steel companies that they had unionized: Stelco, Algoma and Dosco. From the start they were aware that the most important and difficult of these contracts would be with Stelco. The Steel Company's anti-union reputation was well known, and Hilton, the new President, clearly showed that he and the other members of management tolerated the union only because the law forced them to do so. But the negotiations with Stelco were also important because this company was the industry's pace setter. The Steel Company of Canada had always paid the top wages and had given the best working conditions and benefits. If the Steelworkers could thoroughly unionize this giant Hamilton steel mill they could use these agreements to set the pattern with other companies, and the capitulation of such a strongly anti-union employer would be a significant

moral victory which would aid in the organization of workers across the entire steel industry.

On January 27, 1946 the membership of Local 1005 met in Hamilton's Labour Temple to discuss their demands in the forthcoming negotiations with the company. The proposals set forth by Millard and his staff were the same set of demands requested from Algoma and Dosco. In all there were four points: the program called for a 19½¢ an hour raise of wages (this would raise the minimum wage from 64½¢ to 84¢), a forty hour week, two weeks paid vacation after five years service, and finally a union shop with automatic check-off of dues.¹⁴

* Of these demands union security was the most important. A few months before, the Autoworkers had struck the Ford plant in Windsor for several months in an attempt to gain union security. The strike had ended in a stalemate and both sides agreed to submit the dispute to arbitration. After studying the case Mr. Justice Rand of the Ontario Supreme Court ruled in favour of a check-off of union dues from all bona fide employees whether they were union members or not.¹⁵ It was * this "Rand Formula" that the Steelworkers hoped to get from all of the big steel firms.

As the negotiations opened in the spring of 1946 the company made it clear that they intended to oppose the Steelworkers by making a counter offer so low that they knew it would be totally unacceptable. They offered to increase wages by 5½¢ an hour but completely rejected the request for the Rand Formula. However, a number of events made the union convinced of the justice of their position. On February 15th a nation-wide steel strike in the United States ended with a large

increase in wages. The new U.S. minimum wage in the industry was 97½¢ an hour which was almost half as much again as the Ontario minimum. As well as this, check-off and union security became virtually standard across the U.S. industry.¹⁶

The second major event that firmed the union's resolve was the announcement in April by the War Pricing Board of the federal government that they were authorizing the steel companies to raise the price of steel by \$5.00 a ton. According to legislation wartime wage and price controls were not to be lifted until 1947 and the federal government of MacKenzie King still claimed that their policy was to hold the line on inflation until the economy got back to a peace time footing. Obviously, allowing the price of steel to rise was contrary to this policy, and when the Steelworkers learned of the increase they attacked the government and the companies claiming that they were in collusion to raise prices and increase profits while holding down wages.

Hilton counter-attacked the Steelworkers media campaign in an aggressive way that was to characterize many of his public statements in the course of the strike. In one statement he complained how the union had called him a liar in a pamphlet and on a radio program.

No self-respecting person will permit himself to be called a liar as I have been in the past week and not state his case fully to men with whom he has worked for many years and whose respect as a square-shooter he values. I am sure you will watch with interest to see whether those responsible for the untruthful statements contained in the radio script and hand-bill have the fairness and decency to admit to the public that they have misrepresented the facts.¹⁷

But whether the union had misrepresented Hilton's statement or not was immaterial to them. The point the Steelworkers were making to the

public and their own members was that a major price increase had been granted to the steel industry for the asking; while the government was still stating that they intended to hold the line on wages.

The third major event that contributed to the union's determination occurred in May and June of that year. The Canadian government attempted to convince the unions to limit wage increases to 10¢ an hour, claiming anything more would be inflationary. In British Columbia the management of the lumber companies broke the government policy and directly offered their workers an increase of 12½¢. After a short strike the Woodworkers settled for a 15¢ an hour increase. This was a precedent-setting agreement, because not only had the companies directly negotiated with the union but their settlement was 5¢ an hour above the government ceiling. As a result all the CCL unions who were negotiating at the time took up the policy of by-passing the government wage boards and the 10¢ was now totally out of the question.¹⁸

On May 11 Local 1005 took a vote of all Stelco workers who were in the negotiating unit to see if they supported a strike to gain the Steelworker's demands. The result showed 3,114 in favour of striking while only 80 were opposed.¹⁹ This gave the leadership a new sense of confidence. In spite of the fact that they still had only a small number of dues paying members the outcome of the vote clearly showed that the rank and file workers strongly supported the union's demands.

In the face of these developments the company stubbornly resisted the union demands, and there were indications that Hilton was planning to maintain production if the plant was struck. On July 4th a group of veteran Stelco employees, calling themselves the Independent

Steelworkers Association, suddenly surfaced to attack Local 1005 for trying to bring about a strike. They claimed that the 19½¢ an hour demanded by the union was too high and asked for a settlement somewhere between the 5½¢ offer of Stelco and the union demand. The Steelworkers immediately denounced the group as a tool of the company. Hilton denied that he had anything to do with the association, but appeared to endorse their views when he raised the company's offer to 10¢ in line with the Labour Board, and he demanded that the federal government supervise a secret vote on the proposal. Local 1005 declared that this was merely an attempt to subvert the collective bargaining process and promised to boycott any vote that the government ordered. None was ever taken.²⁰

As the July 15th deadline for the strike approached the company began its preparations in earnest. Iron ore, coal, and other raw materials were stockpiled, and Stelco began bringing in supplies of food and bedding. "A long stretch of land in the north-east area of the works beside the water had been cleared and smoothed down. As the job reached completion it became clear that the company was not beginning a new construction project or indulging in an extra bit of good housekeeping. The yard crew discovered that they had been building an air strip."²¹ Even more ominous was the fact that extra help was hired in early July, many of whom were high school students. Now it was clear that Hilton was planning to operate the plant right through the strike.

Millard in a last attempt to head off the strike before the deadline, led a group of unionists down to see Hilton in his office.

Reg Gardiner, the local's president, remembers that he said:

'Mr. Hilton you are treating your employees very callously.' He replied, 'I know that there are thousands of our employees who will not go out on strike.' With equal vehemence I told him that I was sure thousands would.²²

George Martin, the local's vice-president at the time, was also at the meeting and remembers a different part of it:

He threatened us with being Commies and all that sort of thing and I said to him, Mr. Hilton what are you talking about Commies for? You seem to want to brand everyone with being a Communist. I said you know my father isn't a Commie. He's been working in this plant for years--helped you build it. My brother--you had enough confidence in him to make him a foreman. Now you'd like to brand me as a Communist, but even if I was it wouldn't make any difference. All I want is what I think is coming to me.²³

After the meeting it was obvious that resolution of the dispute without a strike was hopeless. The two sides were totally opposed to each other. Hilton was determined to drive the union from the plant or leave it so weak its power would be negligible. Whether he believed all the unionists were Communists or not is unknown but clearly he felt that unionization was some dreadful new ideology which would make it impossible for management to control the workforce. For the Steel-workers the issues were simple. If their organization was to survive they would have to force Hilton and Stelco to accept the fact that Local 1005 had a legitimate role to play in the daily life of the plant.

Through the spring and early summer the government had been widely criticized for its inactivity in the field of labour. They had appointed Mr. Justice W.D. Roach to mediate the steel negotiations but he was largely ignored by both parties. The federal government War Labour Board had the legal power to impose wage settlements but the

British Columbia Woodworker's strike showed they were unwilling to take any action. Now three of the four basic steel plants in the country were on the brink of strike and nothing the government could do seemed to be able to avert it. Then on July 11, just four days before the strike deadline, the government acted. By Order of Council the three companies were placed under the authority of a government controller, F.B. Kilbourn. Any person refusing to work for him, without lawful excuse, would be subject to a \$20 a day fine and anyone obstructing the exercise of his authority was liable to a fine of \$5,000 and a five year prison sentence.

The government takeover of the three steel companies could be interpreted as an attack on management, but coming when it did, just days before the strike deadline, it appeared to the unionists that it was merely a ploy to "club the Steelworkers into submission."²⁴ In a speech at the time Millard said: "So far as I can gather the government is quite prepared to rush to the side of the employer."²⁵

The Order in Council faced the union leaders with a difficult decision. If they were to comply with the government order they would have to admit defeat, the Steelworkers would be condemned, perhaps for years, as a small group in Stelco and their loss of prestige with the workers could mean they would never organize the plant. Already the Communist faction was demanding more militant action. If they backed down now it would seem to prove their charge that Millard was afraid to call a strike.²⁶ But now, after the Order in Council, the very act of urging workers to strike in the steel industry was a violation

of the law. It could be interpreted immediately as a challenge to the government, with overtones of a political strike, inviting retaliation.

In spite of the government action it was obvious to Millard and his supporters that it would be impossible to back down at this late stage. On Sunday July 14, 1946 the membership and supporters of 1005 met in the Playhouse Cinema on Sherman Avenue North to discuss their position, but there was never any doubt in the course of the action. The men, crammed into the old, dingy movie theater, listened to the rousing speeches of the union leaders predicting victory. Then "suddenly the doors opened, the crowd came out of the theater and they all marched north on Sherman Avenue to Burlington, and right to the Wilcox Gate. The strike was on!"²⁷

Struggles on the Picket Line

Almost immediately after the strike started it became clear that Stelco intended to maintain production. Hilton was attempting the same strategy that Judge Gary of U.S. Steel had used so effectively against the Amalgamated Association in 1919. He would keep producing steel, starve the workers into submission, and force the union to come to the company's terms.

As the strike approached the workers were put in the position of choosing sides between their employer and the union. It was a difficult choice for many of them. Hilton not only called on the loyalty of the workers but wages were increased 10¢ an hour, in keeping with the contract offer, and anyone staying in the plant for the strike was paid for three shifts a day. One eighteen year-old who stayed in the plant described his action this way:

'I was in the civil engineers. The strike started and people in that particular department were not unionized at all. I guess we were open to join the union if we wanted. I never enquired about it and nobody ever approached me to join.' He stayed in (the plant) after conferring with three friends. 'Money, I guess, was one factor. We were getting paid triple time. I was getting 60¢ an hour straight--that was damn good money then.'²⁸

Money was clearly a factor for many of the strike breakers, but the rejection of unions and loyalty to a company that had a reputation of being a good employer, led by as forceful an individual as Hilton, must have been important as well.

The union, could offer the workers little more than hope of improved conditions once the strike was over, a chance to demonstrate their solidarity with their fellow workers, and the promise that they were fighting for a just cause. Everyone going out on strike knew there would be financial sacrifices for themselves and their families. The Steelworkers had no strike fund, there would be little support from other sources, and it was a real possibility that they could lose their jobs as a result of the strike. But, in spite of the odds, the majority of the Stelco workers chose the union cause. In the ten years of their existence the Steelworkers had been able to convince the workers in the industry that the struggle for a solid trade union movement would be of lasting benefit to them all.

The consensus of many of the people who went through the strike is that it was ethnicity that was the most important factor determining what side the workers supported. One person summed it up:

(It was the foreign people who were the backbone of the strike: the Poles, Ukrainians and Italians. They were the ones who came out solid. They had been badly treated by foremen for

years, and they worked in the worst jobs of the blast furnaces and open hearth. The Canadian born weren't bad, but it was the English, Scotch and Irish who stayed in. They had the best jobs and a lot of them hated the union.²⁹

(4) * Friends and families split on the issue and many would never have anything to do with each other again. "My brother stayed in."

One person said thirty years after the event. "We've patched it up now but for years I wouldn't talk to him. I still believe he was a bastard for doing it."³⁰ The intensity of the feelings expressed around the strike shows that individual decisions, whether to go out on strike or stay in the plant, not only had an influence in determining the course of one of the most important industrial disputes in Canada, but for many it affected their lives in a very personal way.

At the end of the first day of the strike the opening round of what was to be an intense battle for public support was launched in the press. On July 16th Hilton reported to Kilbourn, the Government Controller and the newspapers, that 2,000 men were still in the plant and that 2,000 tons of steel had been produced in the first 24 hours of the strike. Eamon Park, the Steelworker's spokesman, denied the company's claims. In his words the strike was 85% effective. At most there were 800 out of the 4,800 production workers and 400 foremen still in the plant.³¹

Although Stelco was trying to keep its plant going in Hamilton, the Steelworkers' strikes at both Algoma and Dosco were solid and management had closed down operations. In Hamilton the strike situation had become serious. On the 24th of June, 1500 Rubber Workers had struck Firestone, and on July 5th, 4,000 United Electrical Workers in

the Westinghouse plants of the city joined them. By July 15th two out of every eleven workers in the city were out on strike and another 2,000 were soon laid off.³²

The Steelworkers' union had cause for concern about the Stelco strike. Press reports focused on how effective the company was in keeping the plant operating.³³ Not only were wages increased and triple time paid, but The Spectator reported that the men were very comfortable in the plant. They slept in double decker cots and ate good food in one of five dining rooms. The strike breakers could contact their families by phone and the company even opened a "Family Information Office." Morale, the paper claimed, was very high.³⁴

The strikers retaliated quickly. Homes of the workers still in the plant were painted with signs saying "scabs" and their families subjected to a barrage of abusive telephone calls. On July 19th the company claimed that strikers had climbed over the fence surrounding their property, pulled wires out of cars and put sand in gas tanks. The union, however, denied that they had been involved in any of these incidents.

The first real battle occurred a few days after the strike began. In the middle of the night of July 16-17th the company tried to get a train of 20 cars out of the Stelco main gate and across Burlington Street. As the train paused at the gate three hundred men, "armed with pick handles and rubber hoses attacked the pickets,"³⁵ driving them back with bricks and rocks. Then the company men rushed to open the gate, remove the ties blocking the rail spur line, and pry open the spiked switches. The picketers shouted for help, strikers from the

other gates ran to their aid, and the battle raged with bricks and stones raining down on each side until the Hamilton police arrived in four cruisers to restore order. Half an hour after it began the company men gave up trying to clear the track and retreated back into the plant.³⁶

The press reported conflicting views about the incident. The company claimed that they were attacked by the unionists with rocks and billys. Eamon Park said the company had provoked the incident and the strike breakers had used all sorts of weapons. Stelco claimed the Hamilton police "made no attempt to stop the strikers but had forced our men back onto company property."³⁷ There was no resolution of the issue but significantly the acting police chief was quoted as saying: "If the Steel Company doesn't force our hand my opinion is that the steel strike will be conducted in an orderly way."³⁸

A few days later there was a similar incident. Most of the railway men of both the CNR and CPR had promised not to cross the picket line. When a TH&B train approached the Burlington Street Gate, preparing to cross the line, the picketers massed themselves and made very explicit threats. If the trainmen made an attempt to cross the picket line there would be retaliation. The railway men hesitated and then retreated.³⁹ From then on there was never another attempt to cross the lines by rail for the duration of the strike.

Both sides knew that keeping goods from crossing the picket line was essential for the strikers. The company could make all the steel it wanted, but if they could not move it through the picket line to their customers it would do them little good. In those days most

steel was delivered by rail and with that access cut off the company's operations were crippled. Stelco appealed for support to the politicians to get free access in and out of the plant but this was exactly what they did not get.

The Politicians Become Involved

On the municipal level the strikers had considerable support. Just four days after the strike had begun Mayor Sam Lawrence took part in a march supporting the strikers. Lawrence was a stone mason by trade and a lifetime trade unionist. He had been elected to Hamilton city council first in 1922 as an alderman and in 1928 won a position on Board of Control. Lawrence held this position until 1935 when he was elected for one term as the only CCF member of the provincial legislation. When he was defeated in 1937 he again returned to city politics and was elected mayor of Hamilton in 1943. At the conclusion of the march thousands of supporters gathered in Woodlands Park, close to the steel mills. When the mayor got to his feet he left no doubt where his loyalties lay. Declaring he was a "labour man first and a chief magistrate second," he went on to say, "I want to raise my voice in protest against the most vicious Order in Council that is denying the workers the right to strike." He concluded by saying that, as a union man, he was 100 percent behind the workers in their struggle.⁴⁰

The onus to enforce the law fell squarely on the federal government. Wartime controls still gave power to the federal government over wages, and the Liberal cabinet had made the Order in Council, giving themselves complete control over the industry, just days before the strike, but it was obvious that the King government was in a quandry

over what to do. To use violence to break the strike would be unpopular, but they had to do something or they would be blamed for not enforcing the law. As a tactic to divert attention away from their own inactivity, the government set up an all-party parliamentary Industrial Relations Committee to investigate the steel strike.

The first major witness to appear before the committee was Charles Millard, the Canadian Director of the Steelworkers. He struck out at both the government and the company. "The one cardinal factor in the present dispute," he stated, "was the attempt by the government to impose a 10¢ an-hour maximum to wage increases." By doing that "The government threw collective bargaining out of the window." Until this arbitrary limitation was removed he held no hope of settling the labour disputes in Canada. Turning then on Stelco, Millard accused Hilton of adopting an unreasonable attitude towards the union from the start. "The company had planned to break the strike for months."⁴¹

When Hilton appeared before the committee three days later his testimony was equally provocative. The company was not opposed to collective bargaining or the principle of trade unions, he claimed. "We do, however, protest against the policy of coercion and violation of the law which has prevailed since the CIO started operations." He indicated that wages and union security were still the most important issues dividing the two sides. The company was not prepared to go beyond the 10¢ offer and opposed the voluntary check-off of union dues. "If we consider the revokable check-off this year it will be something else next year all leading up to the closed shop." Finally, Hilton made an appeal to law and order. "I am sure the sentiments of right

thinking Canadians will be that the government is derelict in its duty unless it requires that the union obey the laws that allows us to produce steel."⁴²

The only way the government could enforce the law was by arresting the leaders under the provisions of the Order of Council and using force to open the picket lines. Millard later claimed that he was certain at the time that they would act and he was prepared to go to jail.⁴³ Certain elements in the government supported the company position. Price controller Donald Gordon testified that he was convinced any settlement more than 10¢ an hour would be inflationary and he seemed to have the support of the powerful cabinet minister C.D. Howe,⁴⁴ but the Mackenzie King government was unwilling to act because they knew it would have been tremendously unpopular. As an indication: "Of the 166 members of parliament questioned about the justice of the union's wage demands 149 said they supported them, 17 did not reply and none registered any kind of disapproval."⁴⁵ If this was the feeling of the members of parliament, then the strikers must have had widespread popular support across the country.

The issue of "law and order", however, was one that was soon used by other politicians. Nora Francis Henderson, a Hamilton city controller who had been prominent in city politics for many years, complained about the action of the mayor in supporting the strike and deplored the city's "state of lawlessness."⁴⁶ She insisted that the provincial police be called in to open the picket lines and deal with the emergency. On August 2nd she marched alone down to the picket line and demanded to be let into the plant. The picture of her tiny figure

surrounded by a huge crowd of big Steelworker picketers was spread across the front pages of Canadian newspapers making her a symbol of those who believed the union should be forced to obey the law. But instead of denying her entry the strikers avoided a confrontation by courteously letting her through the lines.⁴⁷

When she reappeared from the plant Nora Francis Henderson argued the issue of law-and-order to its fullest. "This form of picketing is illegal," she said to the press. "There is intimidation and threats of violence... What burns me up is that 2700 men inside the plant are denied free access to the municipality."⁴⁸ Later she said: "I will not bow to mob rule," and called for a Board of Control meeting to deal with "the state of lawlessness in Hamilton at the present time."⁴⁹

On August 9th council meeting was held to deal with the issue. Thousands of strikers and their supporters converged on city hall only to find that all the seats of the chamber were taken by the office personnel of the city's strike-bound plants, but a huge crowd stayed to hear the outcome. Whenever Mayor Lawrence or the union supporters on council spoke they were booed and heckled by the office workers, and whenever Controller Henderson or her supporters took the floor the strikers treated them the same way. The most important moment of the evening came when the Police Chief Joseph Crocker claimed that there were no major problems on the picket line and to date only 33 arrests had been made. After four hours of debate council voted 9 to 7 that provincial police were not needed.⁵⁰

On the way out of City Hall Sam Lawrence smiled and waved to the wildly cheering crowd of strikers, and Controller Helen Anderson, a Labour Progressive Party member, was also given a big ovation. But when Nora Francis Henderson appeared the crowd of 2,000 suddenly became unruly. They sang, "We'll Hang Nora Francis to the Sour Apple Tree," and when the Controller began to walk through the crowd, an alderman on each side to give her support, she was met with jeers and taunts. When she got to her car for a moment it looked like the crowd would turn it over but with the help of a policeman she was able to drive away unmolested.⁵¹

Accounts of the incident differed. The Spectator implied that a riot was narrowly averted, while Alderman Jennings paid tribute to the eight to twelve union men who effectively were able to control the crowd. The next day the police chief issued a stern warning stating violence of any kind would not be tolerated. The Steelworkers also issued a statement showing they were sensitive about their public image and the political battles going on in the trade union movement. "We wish to make it explicitly clear that the demonstration at the city hall last night was in no way organized by the Steelworkers Union." It concluded: "The actual organization of the crowd at the city hall emanated not from the union movement of the city, but from the Labour Progressive Party rally held the previous evening."⁵²

Siege by Air, Sea and Land

The battles between the strikers and the company took many different forms. On July 30th the union sent up an air plane to shower leaflets on the men inside the plant offering them safe passage if they

wanted to join the picket line. The union plane, operated by Walter Kubicki, an air force veteran with 85 missions over Europe,⁵³ had made a couple of runs when suddenly a company plane, operated by another RCAF veteran came racing in front and forced the union plane into "a violent and undignified climb."⁵⁴ The dogfight continued for several minutes, watched by thousands of strikers and non-strikers on the ground before the two broke off their engagement and returned to their respective airports.

The skirmishes on the waters of Hamilton Bay were more serious. Stelco had a large and easily accessible waterfront. It was difficult to get through the picket lines but fairly easy to shuttle men and materials across the Bay. Early in the strike the union bought a motor launch from a Hamilton bootlegger and re-christened her the Whisper. She was powered by two huge Chrysler engines that could push her speed up to 40 miles an hour, easily making her the fastest boat on the Bay.

Day and night through the course of the strike the union boat patrolled the waters of the harbour. Whenever a boat approached the Stelco dock the Whisper would speed in and try to swamp it with its huge wake. More than once there were fights as the crew surprised a company boat loading a cargo for Stelco. Once the Whisper got stuck in the mud not far off the company property and her crew had to go shoulder deep in the water to push her free while on shore a group of company men bombarded them with huge chunks of slag.⁵⁵ On another occasion three shots were taken at the boat.⁵⁶ Finally in September, after a running battle in which the Whisper chased a company boat out into the

lake and was able to stop it unloading in Burlington, the Harbour Police impounded it. Ultimately some of the Whisper crew were fined but the boat had served its purpose in harassing the company and keeping up union morale.

As the strike wore on there were signs that things were not going well for the unionists. On August 13th 3,000 tons of steel were shipped out of Stelco aboard the lake freighter Selkirk.⁵⁷ This was a serious crisis. If the company could get their product to their customers in time they could break the strike. However, the next day it was announced that the Lachine Canal workers in Montreal would not handle a ship filled with "scab steel," and the Selkirk had to float at anchor for the duration of the strike.⁵⁸

By mid-August even the once solid picket lines were beginning to show signs of weakening. One person who was on the executive of the local at the time described the situation like this:

We never let on to the others but things were grim. Boats were operating across the Bay and scabs were coming in and going over the fence all the time. Even trucks started getting through the line. This day I went into our office on James Street and Larry Sefton was there and Charlie Millard and John Mitchell. They were really depressed. So I said what's wrong and they said trucks were going in through the lines one after the other, strikers were going out to find other jobs and all the rest of it. So I said to Millard, 'Look, you go on the radio and tell all the pickets in Hamilton to be down at the plant gates at 1:00 o'clock.' He wanted to know why but I wouldn't tell him. Anyway, he got on the radio and by 1:00 there were guys down there by the hundreds. Big strong guys--lots of Italians and Poles--determined men. So I got them together and I said the next truck that comes down this street over she goes. So the next truck comes and everyone grabs it and over she went. It was a dairy truck bringing the picketers milk, but we didn't care. The truck that came along after that was a big Imperial Oil tanker, and he couldn't get by on account of this dairy truck that we had turned over. As soon as he stopped, the pickets upped the hood and pulled

the wires out--the whole business. That stopped them for awhile. We had to do that sort of thing or they would have busted our union wide open.⁵⁹

There were other things that the union did to try and frustrate the company. Union loudspeakers blared day and night to interrupt the sleep of the workers inside the plant. The pickets had learned that many of the company men slept in a building close to the fence and they spent their time throwing rocks off the corrugated iron roof to keep them awake.⁶⁰ and late at night union commandos, with blackened faces, slipped over the fences to carry out a variety of acts of sabotage.

Law and Order

The strike dragged on into late August with little apparent change but then on August 21st a skirmish took place on the picket line between sixty policemen and one thousand strikers. It was followed by the blunt admission by the police chief that law and order could not be maintained without "extensive reinforcements."⁶¹ At the police commission meeting of August 23rd a resolution was put forward asking for reinforcements. Despite Mayor Sam Lawrence's opposition it was passed and the request was sent to the provincial government. Immediately the Ontario Attorney-General announced that 250 provincial police officers were to be moved to Hamilton to meet the emergency and shortly afterwards the federal government matched this amount by sending 250 members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to the city.

The situation on the picket line was tense. On August 26th a group of veterans from the Studebaker plant organized a protest march. By the time the group reached the Stelco main gate 10,000 people were in the parade. For a moment it appeared that the crowd might storm

into the plant and take possession, but they simply melted away.⁶² There were rallies and marches of support across the city.

Deputations arrived at strike headquarters from groups of union and non-union workers with promises of support on the picket line if the police should break it. The newspapers daily announced decisions by city centrals and unions throughout Canada for strike action if the police should move against the striking steel workers.⁶³

As the police began moving into their barracks in Hamilton they met with resistance. Kitchen staff of the wartime service house where the Mounties were billeted refused to work for them and waitresses in the North End restaurants would not serve them if they came in wearing their uniforms.

The Globe and Mail of August 28th carried this account of the mood on the picket line.

Out on Burlington Street, on the patchy gray grass, sit sympathizers. They sit along curbs, smoking, chatting. Pickets join them in their spells off duty. Many of the watchers are women. Women come and go all day long, most of them accompanied by children, down to visit their dads on the lines...

Today a long line of war veterans, mostly servicemen in the Second Great War, came down the street, headed by a sound truck playing marching songs. They carried placards with statements like, "We vets are in the union army now." There were several hundred in their ranks...

Women cheered and some cried with excitement. Two girls from an adjoining plant...walked down the road and stepped into the picket line. A little boy broke away from his mother, rushed up and took his dad's hand and walked solemnly in the shuffling circle. A mother with three little girls held each up so they could wave at their dad...

At the time the dread expectation hung over the dusty scene that the police were coming. Nobody wanted the police to come, it seemed, yet everybody was ready...

At suppertime tonight a big crowd of spectators gathered, as it does every night, to watch the pickets and occasionally cheer

for them. They anticipated possible police action, but as none came, the crowd dwindled. The picket line kept up its monotonous chain-gang walk, waiting for something, word of peace made at Ottawa or the arrival of the police.⁶⁴

But the police did not come. The strike went into September with continuous attacks on strike breakers homes, occasional skirmishes on the picket lines and incidents on Hamilton Bay. There was talk in the Toronto Labour Council of a general strike and other unionists in Hamilton advocated a work stoppage across the entire city, but nothing came of either move.⁶⁵

Other attempts were made to bring an end to the strike. Union and government representatives met in Ottawa on August 31st to discuss new terms of a settlement, but they were turned down by the 1005 membership on September 8th by a show of hands. Then on the 18th of September Hilton made a direct appeal to the striking Stelco workers by sending letters directly to their homes, but all he did was repeat the offer that had been made before the start of the strike. Wages would be increased by 10¢ an hour and on the union security issue he simply restated his old position: "Most emphatically the company will not be a party to any arrangement which might result in employers being compelled to pay union dues against their wishes." He then asked the employees to mark their ballots and send them to Mr. W.H. Lovering the city registrar of deeds, and concluded with a confusing explanation as to why each of the ballots were numbered.⁶⁶

Hilton's letter was an attempt to appeal directly to the Stelco workers and by-pass the union, but it is hard to understand how he could have imagined that this could have been acceptable. Eamon Park, the

spokesman for the Steelworkers, ridiculed the offer. "Mr. Hilton wants a Hitler election so we'll give him a Hitler election...In order to protect our members from discrimination we are urging them to vote yes." He attacked Hilton for involving the county registry office and then condemned his scheme of marked ballots. Finally he hammered the union message home: "The strike will end only when the union, certified by law to represent the Hamilton Works employees, decides that satisfactory terms have been reached. It will not end one minute sooner."⁶⁷

The Settlement

In the end it was pressure from the government which ended the strike. The shutdown was beginning to have a serious effect on secondary industry which was hard hit due to the lack of steel. If a recession was to be avoided a speedy settlement was necessary. Charles Millard later told the story of the conclusion of the strike in this way. By chance he had met Thomas Rahilly, a former managing director of Algoma Steel Corporation and then president of Toronto Iron Company, who offered to act as an intermediary between the two parties. But first he asked Millard:

'Do you believe in socialism?'

Mr. Millard replied: 'With all my heart. But I'm a democrat. I don't think we'll see it in our time.'

'Then that's all I need to know.' Mr. Rahilly said.⁶⁸

Within a few days of this encounter Millard met the government controller in Montreal who had the company's consent to make a new offer. They agreed on terms in 15 minutes. The settlement gave the union an immediate increase of 13½¢ an hour and an additional 5¢ before the end of the year. Other issues were to be decided later. On October 1st,

the men voted 2173 to 112 to accept the contract offer. That day the strikers in Algoma and Dosco accepted the same terms, and the two Hamilton plants Firestone and Westinghouse later accepted a contract that was virtually identical.

On October 3rd the picket lines around the huge plant were lifted and the same day the RCMP and Ontario Provincial Police went home. The seige of Stelco was over. The company men who had stayed in the plant came out through the gates and were met by the jeers and taunts of the strikers. It would take many years for those on both sides of this bitter industrial dispute to forget about the strike that had pitted them against each other in the summer of 1946.

On March 1, 1947 a collective agreement was finally signed between Stelco and the United Steelworkers of America. It dealt with the important issue of union security by providing for a voluntary irrevocable check off of union dues if fifty-one percent of the employees approved within thirty days. It took only four days of the check-off authorization period for the required number of workers to give their approval.⁶⁹ The union was now firmly established at Stelco.

The series of strikes from 1945 through to 1948 represent a watershed in the history of the Canadian trade union movement, and one of the most important of these was the '46 Stelco strike. As Jamieson⁷⁰ and others⁷¹ have pointed out the strategy of many companies that year was to avoid incidents and force the unions into an endurance test. When the unions made a wage demand they would make a counter offer which was so low that the unions would be forced into the position of strike.

Once on the picket line management planned to wait until the workers were starved into submission.

Unexpectedly the Stelco strike became the one dispute that signaled the future of industrial relations in Canada. The reasons were not only because of the attempt by the company to break the union but also because of the importance of the company and the union. Stelco is a huge firm which played a central role in the Canadian economy. The steel industry was already considered to have high wages and any new increases would set precedents. As well as this the Steelworkers, although relatively small in Canada at the time, were the wing of a powerful U.S. union, and they had a large potential growth in this country. If the company clearly won the struggle it would have been a signal for others to try the same, but a union victory meant that large Canadian firms would have to find accommodation with the trade union movement.

The results of the struggle show that the union clearly won the strike. At the time there was talk about how the agreement was a compromise and that neither side clearly won. Kilbourn still holds this position.⁷² But this cannot be supported by the facts. Although the Steelworkers did not get their entire wage increase or full union security, Hilton was not able to drive them out of the company and this was his fundamental objective. When the men walked back into the plant on October 4, 1946, they went in on a much different footing than when they had left the previous July. Now the company could not ignore the union. They would have to make the grievance procedure work and nego-

tiate in good faith. That was the victory of '46. The union was given recognition in law in 1944, but real recognition from the company was won on the picket line in 1946.

For the members of Local 1005 the '46 strike also played a crucial role in the creation of their union. Before the strike the unionists were only a handful of dedicated men who faced the possibility of discrimination from the company for their activities. Afterwards the local was literally 4,000 strong, and the conflict and hardships faced on the picket line had bound them together into a militant group with a sense of loyalty and dedication to their union.

For the United Steelworkers of America the '46 Stelco strike contributed a great deal to the creation of the Canadian branch of the union. Before that time their organizing drive was faltering, but as Millard later pointed out, the spirit of the strike "Set the Steelworkers on its expansionist course."⁷³ Bill Mahoney, Millard's successor as Canadian Director noted: "We established a fighting tradition then that has served us well over the years. It was a banner year for Canadian labour, and Steelworkers played a leading and decisive role."⁷⁴ Within a short time the Steelworkers were the largest Canadian union representing almost the entire primary and secondary steel industry, many of the Canadian miners, and a share of manufacturing employees.

The '46 Stelco strike also marks a ^{major turning pt.} watershed for federal government policies on labour relations. Since industrialization had begun in this country various governments had become involved in disputes almost always on the side of the employer. With the Second World War their involvement had even broadened. The events of the '46 Steel

strike changed the government's role radically. At first they were accused by the unionists of taking the company's side in the dispute, and in the end they were simply ignored by both parties in spite of the fact that for the entire strike period they technically had control over the entire industry. One of the major results of the strike is that it contributed to a change of government policy that made companies and unions battle issues out by themselves with as little interference as possible. This has remained the policy for successive governments for almost thirty years. (For a time at least this policy ended on October 15th, 1975 with the introduction of wage and price controls.)

Finally, the 1946 Steel Strike marks the ascendancy of the CCF unions and particularly the domination of the CCF faction within the Steelworker's locals. During the war the Communists had damaged themselves politically by their frequent changes of policy. When bitter rivalry between the two factions resumed the Communists were vulnerable and quickly lost support. The CCF group was in a strong position to take credit for the '46 strike. The West Coast Woodworkers, a union dominated by the CPC faction at the time, had started the campaign for higher wages and union security in the spring of 1946, but it was the Steelworkers at Stelco who, through the summer and fall, dramatically fought it out for the unions. The steel strike, led by Millard and the CCF group, took on the government, paralyzed the entire steel industry, and fought and defeated a powerful employer who had been determined to break the union. All of this occurred in the glare of publicity that kept the strike on the front pages of newspapers across the country for

months. The Communists played an important role in maintaining a spirit of militancy in Hamilton, and some claim they forced Millard to keep the strike going until the workers got a better settlement, but they played a secondary role in the strike, and the political benefits of the struggle went to the CCF faction within the union.

Footnotes

¹Canadian Forum (Toronto: December 1946) p. 1.

²M.T. Montgomery, "Stelco Story," Information, (United Steelworkers of America, August/September 1954, Vol. 3 #3) p. 8.

³Department of Labour, Canada, "In the Matter of Dispute Between the Steel Company of Canada and Local 1005, United Steelworkers of America," (Ottawa: December 19, 1944) p. 6.

⁴H.C. Pentland, A Study of the Changing Social Economic and Political Background of the Canadian System of Industrial Relations, (Ottawa: Task Force on Labour Relations, 1968) p. 199.

⁵Ibid., p. 199.

⁶Gerald L. Caplan, The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism: The CCF in Ontario, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973) p. 104.

⁷Ibid., p. 158. There is some question as to whether the CPC actually singled out the CCF and attempted to damage their chances to get elected. Both the CPC and the CCF got a working class vote in Ontario and it is not surprising that the Communists would select working class ridings, held by the CCF, to run their candidates. The point is, however, that the CCF interpreted this as an attempt to damage their electoral chances in 1945, and it is one of the major reasons for the intense animosity between the two parties at the time. It is interesting that Caplan, today a prominent member of the NDP in Ontario, does not give the alternative explanation as to why the Communists ran in CCF held ridings in 1945.

⁸Ibid., p. 191.

⁹Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁰William B. Freeman, "Interviews with Local 1005 Activists, 1976," (Unpublished Interview Material) Vol. III, p. 129.

¹¹Ibid., Vol. II, p. 265.

¹²Stuart Marshall Jamieson, Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-66, (Ottawa: Department of Labour, Task Force on Labour Relations, Study No. 22, 1971) p. 295.

¹³William Kilbourn, The Elements Combined: A History of the Steel Company of Canada, (Toronto: Clark, Irwin and Company Limited, 1960) p. 152.

¹⁴Robert McDonald Adams, The Development of the United Steelworkers of America, 1936-1951, (Kingston, Ontario: M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, 1957) p. 130.

¹⁵Jamieson, op. cit., pp. 318-319.

¹⁶Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 186.

¹⁷Letter from H.G. Hilton to All Employees of the Hamilton Works of the Steel Company of Canada, April 11, 1946.

¹⁸Canadian Forum, op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁹The Spectator, (Hamilton, Ontario: Southam Press, July 10, 1976).

²⁰Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 187.

²¹Ibid., p. 187.

²²The Spectator, op. cit., July 10, 1976.

²³Freeman, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 8.

²⁴Canadian Forum, op. cit., p. 1.

²⁵The Spectator, op. cit., July 11, 1946.

²⁶Canadian Forum, op. cit., p. 2.

²⁷The Spectator, op. cit., July 10, 1976.

²⁸Ibid., July 10, 1976.

²⁹Freeman, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 10.

³⁰Ibid., Vol. I, p. 142.

- ³¹The Spectator, op. cit., July 16, 1946.
- ³²Kilbourn, op. cit.,
- ³³The Spectator, op. cit., July 16, 1946.
- ³⁴Ibid., July 16, 1946.
- ³⁵Ibid., July 17, 1946.
- ³⁶Ibid., July 17, 1946.
- ³⁷Ibid., July 17, 1946.
- ³⁸Ibid., July 17, 1946.
- ³⁹Kilbourn, op. cit., pp. 191-192.
- ⁴⁰The Spectator, op. cit., July 18, 1946.
- ⁴¹Ibid., July 20, 1946.
- ⁴²Ibid., July 23, 1946.
- ⁴³The Globe and Mail, Toronto, August 7, 1971.
- ⁴⁴The Spectator, op. cit., July 27, 1946.
- ⁴⁵Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 194.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., p. 192.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 192.
- ⁴⁸The Spectator, op. cit., August 2, 1946.
- ⁴⁹Ibid., August 7, 1946.
- ⁵⁰Ibid., August 9, 1946.

⁵¹Ibid., August 9, 1946.

⁵²Ibid., August 9, 1946.

⁵³The Globe and Mail, op. cit., August 7, 1971.

⁵⁴Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 195.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 196.

⁵⁶The Spectator, op. cit., August 12, 1946.

⁵⁷Ibid., August 13, 1946.

⁵⁸Ibid., August 14, 1946.

⁵⁹Freeman, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 11.

⁶⁰Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 198.

⁶¹John M. McMenemy, Lion in a Den of Daniels: A Study of Sam Lawrence, Labour in Politics, (McMaster University: M.A. Thesis, October 1965) p. 108.

⁶²Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 197.

⁶³McMenemy, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

⁶⁴The Globe and Mail, op. cit., August 28, 1946.

⁶⁵McMenemy, op. cit., p. 113.

⁶⁶H.G. Hilton to all Stelco Employees, September 20, 1946.

⁶⁷The Spectator, op. cit., September 21, 1946.

⁶⁸The Globe and Mail, op. cit., August 7, 1971.

⁶⁹McMenemy, op. cit., p. 115.

⁷⁰Jamieson, op. cit., p. 297.

⁷¹Canadian Forum, op. cit., p. 1.

⁷²Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 199.

⁷³The Globe and Mail, op. cit., August 7, 1971.

⁷⁴Ibid., August 7, 1971.

CHAPTER 5

THE RISE OF SLATES

When the 1946 strike was over, and the men went back into the plant, the problems faced by the union were very different from those of the previous ten years. Now what had to be done was to create an organization which firstly, represented the interests of the workers on a day to day basis, and negotiated with the company on issues of concern such as wages and benefits, and secondly, the union had to develop a political system, satisfying the international constitution which could run the affairs of the union. How the members of Local 1005 achieved these goals represents a very important aspect of the historical development of the union since its recognition in 1946.

Founding of the New Industrial Relations System

After the strike the chore of extending the union organization through the plant was accomplished relatively easily. Stewards, Assistant Chief Stewards, and Chief Stewards were elected for every department. Meetings of the members of the different departments were held regularly, and the monthly membership meeting became the most important forum for the discussion of current issues in the plant and the debate between members who aspired for political leadership of the local.

The grievance procedure dated from the 1945 contract, but because of initial management resistance it had been unworkable. After

the strike both sides were resolved to make the system work and within a short time the process was set in motion where grievances moved through the various steps to final arbitration. The issue of dealing with autocratic and arbitrary foremen was one of the most important problems but often the show of union power rather than the application of the grievance procedure resolved many of these issues. After the strike the company was anxious that supervisors not show favoritism, and unionists active at the time, claim management moved quickly to discipline foremen if this rule was broken. The problem of the autocratic supervisor who tried to intimidate the workers was more difficult to deal with, but now the stewards had power and they did not hesitate to use it until things were changed.¹

One of the most sensitive issues was the problem of signing the men into the union who had stayed inside the plant during the strike. (The "scabs" as they were universally called by the unionists.) Understandably there was tremendous bitterness between these two groups, but the union leaders saw that it was important to sign as many of these people into the union as possible or their organization would be weakened. For a long time many of the unionists refused to take on this task. The Steelworkers finally brought in Stew Cooke, a recent University of Toronto graduate, and CCF supporter, to head up the drive and after some time it was accomplished. However, by 1960 there were still 200 employees in the bargaining unit who refused to join the union.²

Another important dispute with the company was over the definition of who was in the bargaining unit. Reg Gisborn, the man who headed

up the committee on this issue for the union, gave this explanation of what happened:

What we had to do after the '46 strike was determine the status of the employees--who would be in the bargaining unit and who wouldn't. It was an awful fight. The company had more foremen lined up than enough. They had about one foreman for every five men. We had to fight tooth and nail to beat them down. They kept crying confidential capacity and we kept saying they were part of the union. What they were doing was trying to dilute the bargaining unit so that if there was a strike they would have enough men to run the plant. We said to hell with that and finally broke them down.³

What was going on over these first few years after the strike was the gradual establishment of a new relationship between the company and the union. At first Hilton took every opportunity to attack the union. At the 1947 Stelco annual meeting, for example, he said that the company believed that organized labour had:

A proper place in our society but some labour leaders...persist in employing abuse of the companies and the management of the companies...and depend upon fomenting suspicion and distrust as a stimulus to greater interest in unions.

He followed this up with his old charge.

There is serious reason to believe that the leadership of certain labour unions is more interested in furthering political and socialistic aims than improvement of the legitimate organized labour movement.⁴

It was not long, however, before the change in the company's policy was evident to the unionists. One of the members involved at this time credits two of the company executives:

Old Aubrey Lott was the Industrial Relations man. He was a politician from Gananoque and after a time he could see that we were serious. Another fellow we saw a lot of was Ray Alden. He was the backbone of this new relationship with the company. He was a new man and a good head who knew they had to play ball, but he had a hell of a time convincing the company.⁵

However, it was more than simply the influence of these two men which changed company policy. The new relationship had been forced onto the company as a result of the 1946 strike. These two men were the ones active in seeing the policy implemented.

These changes in the policies of the Steel Company reflect a movement that was going on in industry right across Canada. After the round of strikes of 1945-46 there was a gradual enlightenment of employers. Many established personnel departments and downgraded the arbitrary authority of foremen. As Pentland points out a good many big employers saw their best interests were served by establishing and maintaining good relations with the unions representing their workers.⁶

The best indication of this new relationship at Stelco was the acceptance of the Co-operative Wage Study Plan (CWS) in 1952. Up until the time it was introduced there were literally hundreds of different rates of pay throughout the Steel Company. After the '46 strike the union included in its negotiating demands the need to simplify the wage structure and make it more equitable by introducing a joint union-management job evaluation plan such as had existed in the U.S. Steel Industry since World War II.⁷ When this was finally accepted it was a mark that the company was willing to co-operate and trust the union.

However there was another reason why the company was willing to co-operate with the Steelworkers: Union militancy that had climaxed in the 1946 strike, rapidly subsided. The reason why this happened in Stelco and other Canadian companies was because of economic and political changes after World War II. Many had expected that Canada would return to conditions of depression after the war, but the new age became one

of unprecedented growth. From the beginning of the Korean War to 1956 output increased and unemployment remained at low levels. As a result of rapid technological change the size of the blue collar work force stayed relatively stable, but the size of the low level, non-unionized white collar work force grew dramatically. All of these factors put the highly skilled, the educated and the unionized workers in a strong bargaining position and gradually their wages increased relative to other workers.⁸ This growth in real wages tended to reduce militancy.

There were also political changes within the trade union movement that reduced militancy. The Cold War, which began in Canada as early as 1946, led to demands, even by unionists themselves, that radical unions and Communists operating within other unions be purged. In 1949 the Communist led unions within the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) were expelled, and by 1950 any form of Communist association within the Steelworkers was illegitimate. Added to these problems were bitter inter-union disputes and wide publicity of corruption in some unions. As Pentland comments, "given the suicidal character of unions from 1947 to 1949 its influence was bound to decline."⁹

As a consequence of these factors militancy in unions across the country sagged. Now rather than organizations with numbers of committed members willing to make sacrifices to bring unionization to the unorganized and fight both legally and illegally for recognition and increased wages, they increasingly became routine bureaucratic organizations limiting their role to representing workers in the collective bargaining process. They had become what is called business unions who carry out a specific economic function and ignore broader political objectives.

Factions and Oligarchy

All of these societal influences had a profound influence on the political life of Local 1005. Until 1952 politics in the local followed patterns established before the '46 strike.

There were two clearly identified slates. The Right Wing, led primarily by Larry Sefton, the Hamilton Area Director of the Steelworkers and men such as Reg Gardiner, were clearly part of the CCF wing of the trade union movement that held power in steel, and a number of other industrial unions. At 1005 this group was made up of members who were primarily Canadian born production workers who had risen to prominence during the strike. Their only organized opposition was the remnant of the Left Wing Slate led by Tom McClure. This group was clearly inspired by the Communist Party of Canada and had links to the CPC wing of the trade union movement such as the Mine Mill and the United Electrical Workers. In Hamilton the CPC had influence at the municipal level, in several union locals and in the Hamilton and District Labour Council.

For a time after the war it appeared as if the Left Wing Group at 1005 would have considerable power. Andy Craig, a member of the group ran for the position of Area 6 District Director of the Steelworkers and was able to get 3,000 votes in Ontario and the West. This attests to the fact that the CPC faction, who gave the only organizational support for the campaign, still had some power. However, it was soon obvious after the '46 strike that the Left Wing Slate in the local was in serious difficulty. At most their members amounted to seven men: two of them were British, one a Swede, and the rest Canadian production

workers. The group even denied their contacts with the Communists. (Even Tom McClure, who had run for the LPP in 1943, frequently denied he was a member of the Communist Party.) Larry Sefton spent much of his time organizing the Right Wing Slate within the local and for a time the membership meetings were filled with hostile speeches as the two sides battled each other. Then, gradually, the Left Wing Group became increasingly isolated and lost what little support they had in the membership.

The real reason for their collapse was that the Communists were losing support rapidly in the country, and this was reflected in the life of the local union. On July 12, 1950 a member of 1005, using a new provision of the International Constitution, charged the entire Left Wing Slate, with the exception of Tom McClure, with being Communists.¹⁰ The charge was quietly dropped, but it does give some indication of the bitter feelings between the two groups. One person who was active during this time is still anxious to demonstrate the link between the Communist Party and the old Left Wing Group within 1005 in the belief that this would discredit them. In an interview he said:

The union used to have an office on Barton Street and the LPP office was right across the street. Whenever 1005 had a meeting they'd (the Left Wing Group) have one upstairs in the LPP office. We'd be in progress for say half an hour, then the light in the LPP office would go out and a half a dozen of them would come trooping in. From then on it was hell on wheels.¹¹

By 1952 this concerted attack on the Left Wing Slate was having an effect. The group consistently lost elections and even Tom McClure, once the most popular unionist in the plant, could not get elected to even minor executive positions. Gradually the small group fell apart.

One of their members died and two of them were fired for minor infractions by the company. In interviews three people mentioned that in one of these cases the union could possibly have done more to help the man keep his job. Nothing could show the bitterness of the struggle more than the fact that unionists, dedicated to protect worker's rights, could withhold support simply because of the individual's political beliefs. Even without the firings the group's influence was at an end. They were not effective at the membership meetings, their following in the plant was negligible, and they could not recruit new members. Finally the only one remaining was Tom McClure and he was isolated from everyone in the local.¹²

There was a long period after the '46 strike that the CCF faction, or the Right Wing Group as they were later called, almost totally dominated the political life of the local. The members of this group were essentially business unionists. Their goals included support for the policies of the International Union, strong support for the CCF party, co-operation with the company and a practical unionism geared around the improvement of benefits to the workers. Acceptance of this set of policies does not mean that the leadership of Local 1005 simply rubber stamped the policies of the Steelworkers without debate, but during this time the prestige of the International Union and its officers was very high and the Right Wing Group in the local looked to them for leadership.

The effective leadership of the local at the time was taken by the steel staff officers. It was Millard and Sefton who did most of the negotiating with Stelco,¹³ and although 1005 had its own Negotiating

Committee they were relatively powerless. Larry Sefton played a very important role in the internal life of the local. Not only did he direct the debate against the Left Wing Group, but he was the most important organizer of the Right. One person who later went on to be a leader of the Right Wing Group described an event which shows the broad influence of Sefton:

The first election we had after the '46 strike was in 1947. I'd been active and I was ambitious to move up so I threw my hat in the ring to run for recording secretary. Now, on a few occasions during the strike I had opposed some of the things Millard was doing. Anyway, Sefton was so scared that I might be a Commie that he went out in the middle of the night and got John Lisson out of bed and convinced him to run for the position. I was damn mad about it.¹⁴

In its political affiliation, after the '46 strike, the local followed Millard's policy of total support for the CCF. By 1950, 1005 was affiliated to the party and large amounts of money were donated to it through the Political Action Committee. In May 1952 the local went so far as to take a mortgage on Woodsworth House, the CCF party headquarters in Ottawa. Even more important, many of the candidates of the CCF in federal, provincial, and municipal elections, during the 1950's, were drawn from the leadership of the local.

By 1952 the Right Wing Group had almost total control over the political life of Local 1005, but in that year a serious split developed in their ranks which caused a great amount of internal dissention within the group. A small number of people emerged who were not only CCF and supported the International Union but were also deeply involved in religion and the temperance movement. Reg Gardiner, the most important rank and file leader of the local at the time, was the chief proponent

of this position. He explained what happened after he was re-elected to the presidency in 1952:

During the next two years I antagonized quite a large portion of the big wheels in the union. We had a convention in Niagara Falls and sent 13 delegates. I thought they had abused their privilege by absenteeism, debauchery, drinking and all sorts of things. When I came back to Hamilton I told the girl in the office to stop payment of lost time to these men. (The local pays the wages of the member when he is away on union business.) Let me tell you that didn't make me popular with the others.¹⁵

Another member who was caught in this attempt to discipline the delegates explained the other side of this dispute.

They (Gardiner and the others who supported the religious temperance point of view) didn't believe that one could gain anything by getting in smoke-filled rooms and having a beer and talking with other delegates...The issue was whether or not there was any value at all to members of the local spending time other than on the convention floor. I felt, and I still feel, that in those social contacts you learn a hell of a lot about being a unionist.¹⁶

This was a serious dispute within Local 1005. Motions were put on the floor of membership meetings to have "sobriety and attendance reports" brought back from conventions,¹⁷ and an effort was made to block a movement to establish a beverage room in the basement of the union hall on King William Street. However, Gardiner and his followers were outnumbered and outvoted on these issues. As one man commented, "Temperance is never going to go far with a bunch of steel workers."¹⁸ The issue was never completely resolved, but finally disappeared when Gardiner resigned from the presidency of the local in November 1954 to become the Hamilton Director of a Co-operative Insurance organization.

Following the Steelworker's constitution, John Lisson, the Vice-President, became the new president of the local when Gardiner retired. Only 36 years old at the time he took the position, Lisson

had enlisted in the army during the war and rose out of the ranks to the position of Captain. He had a lot of prestige in the local, but many resented his authoritaitian way of running 1005. "John was a strong man," one person said. "But he was a bit of a dictator. The old army Captain giving orders to his troops."¹⁹

During the time of his presidency Lisson was the leader of the Right Wing Group and a strong supporter of the policies of the International Union, but unlike his predecessor and most of his supporters he was not a member of the CCF. This created some friction, but a more serious problem developed between Lisson and the Steelworker staff in Hamilton. In January 1953, almost two years before Lisson became president, Larry Sefton had been elected to the position of Director of District 6 of the Steelworkers. His replacement in Hamilton was Stew Cooke. Lisson and Cooke did not get along with each other. Cooke wanted to continue with the practice of Steel Staff having a dominant influence in the affairs of the local, and Lisson, a strong political leader in his own right, was opposed to it. Often there were clashes between the two men and finally Cooke was removed from direct responsibility for the local union but left in charge of the Steelworkers for the Hamilton area.

The period of the 1950's in the local union was marked by its political stability and the domination of the CCF Group. In the five elections from 1951 to 1958 there were altogether three presidents, but the other four top positions on the executive rarely changed. In these elections there were only a total of seven men that filled

these four positions, and three of them were brothers: Bill, Brian and John Lisson.

The 1958 Strike

The event that was to ultimately change this system of oligarchical control by the CCF Group was the 1958 strike. The economic and political forces that caused this strike were totally different from the events that caused the '46 strike. After gaining recognition by Stelco the members of Local 1005 had been able to rapidly increase their wages and improve working conditions. By 1952 the base rate for Canadian Steelworkers was the same as in the United States, \$1.43½ an hour.²⁰ Although wages sank below parity in the years following, monetary increases and the improvement in fringe benefits and working conditions made Stelco a pace setter of the entire Canadian economy.

The basic reasons for these improvements were the unprecedented prosperity of Canada in the post war era, and the company's dominant position in the steel industry. Stelco's near monopoly control of its market allowed them to pass any extra costs onto the consumer. In spite of this the company still struggled with the union, often complaining publically about increased labour costs. Hilton in his 1953 annual report, for example, said:

I suggest...to our leaders of organized labour that it would be in the long-term interests of those on behalf of whom they speak and of the country as a whole if they call a halt to the annual demands for substantial wage increases such as have been made for the past several years.²¹

This, of course, was out of the question. Workers' expectations were increasing, the economy was booming, profits were at an all time high,

wages everywhere were rising, and members of Local 1005 were simply following broader economic patterns.

With the approach of negotiations in 1958, however, economic conditions had radically changed. In the second and third quarter of 1957 there was a downturn in the economy and the demand for steel declined. By the end of the fourth quarter Stelco's ingot production had fallen to 78% of capacity, there was a decline in profits and a number of workers had been laid off.²² The Diefenbaker government reacted to the downturn of the economy by calling for a restraint in wage settlements. The union argued that this was not the time for restraint. What was needed was a "massive injection of buying power into the economy," and demanded a wage increase of approximately 33½¢ an hour.²³ They said they were prepared to modify their wage demands but only if the company would cut the price of steel.²⁴ The company replied by saying that "Stelco was prepared to negotiate some improvements in sickness and life insurance benefits, but asked the union to withdraw its money demands."²⁵

By spring of 1958 their positions had hardened. The contract was to terminate on March 31, but both sides asked for the services of a Conciliation Board hoping to avoid a strike. The workers continued at their jobs until August and then the board made its findings public. The majority report, representing the chairman and the company nominee, supported Stelco's position. They said in part: "It would not be justified in recommending any general wage increase or changes in the other monetary demands at this time."²⁶

The union reacted by recommending rejection of the report and a strike vote was arranged. Larry Sefton, who had been handling the negotiations for the union, said: "I am sorry that 12 years of peace in the steel industry has been wrecked by a foolish, selfish company policy," and then he went on to call for the members to vote in favour of a strike.²⁷ Not surprisingly the company supported the Conciliation Board. H.J. Clawson, Stelco's Director of Industrial Relations, said that he was gratified that the board's findings had upheld the company's position.²⁸ Last minute negotiations failed and on the 15th of August at 7:00 a.m. the workers set up a picket line around the plant.

The 86 days on the picket line in the 1958 strike were a marked contrast to the events of '46. When the workers struck they co-operated with management in the orderly shutdown of the plant. There was never any attempt to maintain production on the part of the company, or move material in or out of the plant. For both sides the strike was an economic and political calculation designed to force the other side to come to their terms. For the company, business was down, and the firms they supplied could afford to run the risk of shortages. This was a good opportunity to force the union to accept a lower wage increment. The union pointed to the high rate of company profits to show that the company could afford to pay higher wages. They may well have been trapped by their own rhetoric of militancy and the rising expectations of the membership,²⁹ but they believed that a strike could force the company to come to their position.

Whatever the causes, the outcome of the '58 strike shows

clearly that the company won the struggle. The final settlement, after almost three months on the picket line, was 5¢ an hour increase, and for the first time the union was forced to accept a three year agreement. It was a humiliating experience for leaders and members alike. Larry Sefton had led the workers out on strike saying: "The company policy was foolish and selfish," and it was time someone took them on.³⁰ After the union members had suffered months of idleness, and financial hardships he said they had to go back to work, and he would take on anyone who disagreed with him. In the meetings to discuss the company offer there were speeches about how the union had won a victory through their solidarity but most knew that they had been defeated and badly outmaneuvered by the company.

There were signs of dissatisfaction in the performance of the executive as a result of the strike, but one relatively minor incident stood out in the minds of many of the activists as an example of the inept leadership at the time. At the conclusion of the strike the entire membership met in the Hamilton Forum to decide whether to go back to work, but the executive was very badly prepared. On the important issue of whether to accept or reject the contract, they at first planned to have a standing vote, but in the midst of the meeting changed their minds. When the ballots were prepared they were simply passed out along the aisles. As a result some got no ballots at all and others got handfuls. For a lot of people this incident was a final indication that the executive was unable to direct the affairs of the union.

The Rise of the Left

With the crisis of the 1958 strike widespread dissatisfaction rose to the surface in 1965 and manifested itself in the political life of the union. The most common complaint of those outside the group who ran the union was with the style of leadership. One man said:

They were a fraternity of people who had been through the stress and strain of the '46 strike. They had done a tremendous job--never let anyone take that away from them, but through the fifties they tended to rest on their laurels. They forgot the fight never stops.³¹

Another commented:

I suppose the thing could be summed up by saying there was a complete abdication of responsibility by the rank and file. The leaders ran everything in those days and the rest of us didn't have a say at all.³²

Both of these statements are an exaggeration. Through the 1950's the group in power had the broad support across the plant of a large number of stewards and members, but to the outsider it appeared as if a small group of people, who rarely changed, monopolized all the power in the local and often acted in arbitrary ways.

Dissatisfaction with both the existing leadership of 1965 and the settlement of the 1958 strike were important reasons for the political change in the local, but there were also changes in the social composition of the Stelco work force which had an important impact on the union. After the war large numbers of workers from a variety of different immigrant groups were hired as the company rapidly expanded.³³ Among these were a large number of British immigrants, many of whom were tradesmen. The British group brought with them a different perspective on trade unions and working class politics. Many of them

had been involved in unions in Britain which required a high level of rank and file involvement and the reliance on the walkout to settle grievances. They felt that the Canadian trade union movement, with its legal condition promising not to strike for the duration of the agreement, had sold its most powerful weapon. Added to this many felt that the CCF (and later the NDP) was a very conservative political party that needed to be much more in tune with the needs of the industrial worker.

John Morgan was a person with a background such as this. He had arrived in Canada from Britain as a skilled worker in 1949, got a job at Stelco and almost immediately became involved in the political life of both 1005 and the CCF. Soon he was elected a delegate to the Hamilton and District Labour Council from 1005 and became attached to the Left Wing Group at the council which at that time was made up primarily of left wing members of the CCF.

The dispute between the Left and Right at Labour Council spilled over into other areas. One important clash took place in 1955 when Morgan won the CCF nomination for the provincial riding of Hamilton East over Reg Gisborn, the local's recording secretary and a prominent member of the CCF Group in 1005. Gisborn went on to be nominated in the Wentworth East riding and won the election while Morgan lost, but it was a contest long remembered by political activists in the local. Finally in 1959 there was another struggle for the Hamilton Centre provincial CCF nomination. This time Morgan was defeated for the nomination mainly through the efforts of the Steelworkers.

Those in control of the Steelworkers in the city and the leaders of Local 1005 viewed Morgan and people like him very suspiciously. In debates he was often called a Communist or a Trotskyite and those who associated with him were given the same labels. Morgan viewed himself as a radical, a person arguing for changes in the way things were done within the CCF and the local union, but not a Communist, and he, and others like him, grew angry at what they considered to be red-baiting smears designed to discredit them.

Finally another important structural feature about the Stelco work force that influenced political change in the local was the growth of dissatisfaction among the trades group. In an industrial union where a large percentage of the work force is unskilled and semi-skilled production workers, it is not uncommon that skilled tradesmen feel their needs are not adequately taken into account.

The Co-operative Wage Study plan introduced jointly by Stelco and Local 1005 in 1952 evaluated all the jobs in the plant and rated them into categories from 1 to 28. By 1956 this large task was completed and implemented. Almost from the beginning there were complaints from the tradesmen that they were not given a high enough rate. They complained that the three man union CWS committee was appointed by the executive rather than being elected, that there was only one skilled worker on the committee, and that they knew nothing of the problems of the tradesmen in the plant.

The issue finally came to a head in April 1960 when a group of electricians, led by their chief steward Ron Tipler, packed a member-

ship meeting and demanded that there be an election for the three positions on the CWS committee. After a stormy debate John Lisson, the President, allowed the matter to come to a vote and two of the three CWS members were defeated. A month later the chairman Charles Pollicott resigned.

The various factors, the crisis as a result of the 1958 strike, the feeling that the CCF group was no longer providing adequate leadership for the local, the arrival of the British trade unionists who held an alternate ideology on how trade unions and left wing political parties should operate, and the dissatisfaction of large numbers of tradesmen, all contributed to the formation of a new political group at 1005. It was in 1959 that the group, that later came to be called the Left Wing Slate, began to meet and talk about politics of the local union.

Members of the group had the feeling that if others knew they were caucusing they would think there was something wrong so they moved around to different places and were secretive. Sometimes they talked over a beer after a union meeting and at other times they met in people's houses. At first the group found unity in their similar origins: of the seven original members, all of them were British and in fact four were Scots, six out of the seven were tradesmen, and they viewed themselves as socialist activists. However, as their numbers grew to include workers of a broader background their focus came to be more anti-establishment rather than socialist or radical. One person, describing the group after it had been operating for two or three years, said: "Not many of the guys then were politically oriented. They

weren't radicals. They were people who knew something was wrong with the local and they were looking for change."³⁴ But the nucleus of the group were very politically motivated.

At first the development of the Left Wing Group was slow. They did not contest the positions of the executive in 1960. An opposition slate of sorts, led by Tom McClure, stood for election against the Right Wing, but it was badly defeated. The Left Wing Group began by organizing on a broad basis across the plant. They realized that if they were to be only made up of skilled workers they could not hope to win elections in a local representing workers of a company such as Stelco where over 80% of the work force were production workers. Because of this they made an effort to contact someone in each department across the plant. They encouraged their people to run for positions of stewards and chief stewards, and they tried to get their people on committees. Their tactic was to develop voting strength in the local, and they knew the only way to do this was by having supporters in every department across the plant who could make a direct appeal to their work mates.

The first test of the strength of this Left Wing Group came in 1961. There had been rumors for some time that John Lisson, still the president of the local, was looking for another job. In December 1960 he had been elected chairman of the negotiating committee,³⁵ but the rumors persisted. Finally on April 12th, 1961 Lisson wrote a letter saying, "He would not leave his office until negotiations were completed."³⁶ Then, unexpectedly, on June 22nd he resigned from both

the presidency and the negotiating committee, but rather than take a job with the Steelworkers as had been widely expected, he rejoined Stelco and took a management job as the head of the Welfare and Insurance branch of the Industrial Relations Department.³⁷

The union activists in 1905 of all political stripes were surprised and shocked at Lisson's announcement, but the Left Wing Group took this opportunity to attack the members of the Right Wing, as the CCF Group was now called. They circulated a petition concerning the resignation which implied that secret files had been kept by Lisson and that he had used the office for personal ambition. When over 280 members signed the petition a special meeting was called to air the issue. In the debate the Left accused members of the executive of opportunism while the Right replied by calling them Communists and irresponsible. At the conclusion the Left Wing Group had to admit that they were out of line with some of their charges, but they were angry at being "red-baited", and they still felt that Lisson had "defected to the company," as one of them put it.³⁸

The International constitution of the union called for the Vice-President of the local, in this case Reg Gisborn, to serve out the term of the retiring president and there would be a by-election for the position of Vice-President. A small group of the Left Wing Slate met on a Sunday morning in the beverage room of the old union hall on King William Street to talk about what they should do, and they soon agreed to run someone for the position. Two people said that they would be interested in standing for the election: John Morgan

and Bob Reilly. Their backgrounds were remarkably similar. Both were British trade unionists, skilled tradesmen, left wing socialists, and forceful leaders who had shown their ability on the floor of the membership meetings at Local 1005. After a discussion a vote was held, but it resulted in a tie. The others asked the two candidates to leave the room, a coin was tossed, and it came down for John Morgan.

When Morgan was elected to the position of Vice-President it was a shock to the members of the Right Wing Group at Local 1005. As one person pointed out:

I don't suppose they were so much disorganized in that election as complacent. They'd been in power so long that from their point of view it seemed inconceivable that a group of so-called Johnney-come-latelys could ever aspire to controlling Local 1005.³⁹

With the John Morgan victory the Left Wing Group had proven that with a strong grassroots organization, reaching into every department of the local, even the Right Wing Slate could be defeated.

The remainder of the term, with Gisborn the president and Morgan the vice-president, was a turbulent time in the life of 1005. The Left, feeling new confidence with Morgan's victory, came more and more to dominate the debate at the membership meetings. They spent time lining up support from stewards and making contact with other Left Wing trade unionists across the city and province. The Right reacted defensively. Gisborn now completely distrusted Morgan and even left orders with the secretaries that the new Vice-President was not to be allowed to use the office when he was not present.

One issue that polarized the membership more than any other

during this period was the attempts of the Steelworkers to raid the Mine Mill locals in Sudbury. The background of this dispute originates in the 1940's organizing drives in the north when Mine Mill, a CIO union, won contracts with both the International Nickel Company (INCO) and Falconbridge. After the war "Internal power struggles broke out pitting CCF loyalists against Communist Party members and sympathizers,"⁴⁰ but in time the CPC faction came to dominate the union. In 1949, along with the United Electrical Workers (U.E.), and other smaller unions, Mine Mill was expelled from the Canadian Congress of Labour. It was not long afterwards that the Steelworkers were given jurisdiction by the CCL to organize in the mines. The Steelworkers were a CCF union and the party had strong support in the Sudbury area. Soon steel was making inroads into the two big Mine Mill locals in the city.

The turning point in the struggle came in 1958. At the same time that Local 1005 struck Stelco, Mine Mill went on strike against INCO, and the results were equally disastrous. After three months on the picket line the workers returned with a three year contract and wage increases totalling only six percent.⁴¹ The dissatisfaction arising from the 1958 strike in Stelco helped to create a new type of political system. In Sudbury it led to the end of the Mine Mill union at INCO. After a massive campaign involving the Catholic Church, the RCMP, members of the Diefenbaker Cabinet, and even the Washington "Subversive Activities Control Board," The Steelworkers finally won a recertification vote by 7,182 to 6,951.⁴²

Both the Left and the Right Wing Groups at 1005 became deeply

involved in this struggle. To the British union activists of the Left Wing Slate the raiding of one union by another was viewed as one of the worst things a unionist could become involved in. The United Electrical Workers and other Left Wing union groups in Hamilton set up a support group for Mine Mill in the city. Many of the Left Wingers at 1005 became attached to this group, and several went to Sudbury to help the Mine Mill in their efforts to resist the Steelworkers.

The Steel staff and many members of the Right Wing Group at 1005 threw their support behind the Steelworkers. Just as the Left Wing believed in the justice of their cause, so the Right Wing, motivated by strongly anti-Communist views, were convinced that the Steelworkers were doing the right thing in their raids. A number of the leaders of Local 1005 went to Sudbury to help the organizing efforts of Steel, and Reg Gisborn, then both the president of the local and a CCF, MLA for Hamilton East, appeared on Sudbury radio and television in support of the Steelworker's cause.

From that time until the end of that executive's term in office, membership meetings at 1005 were turned into chaos. Hundreds of people would show up at meetings and the only thing they wanted to talk about was the Mine Mill situation. Accusations were leveled again that the Left Wingers were Communists out to destroy the union, and the Right in turn was accused of attacking fellow unionists. As Reg Gisborn remembers it: "When I was president they threw chairs up on the platform. They had guys from Mine Mill down in our meetings. I had to threaten to get the police to get them out. It was pretty near a riot--that's how nervy they were."⁴³

To the Steelworkers the Mine Mill issue was a vital one which they felt they had to win, but in the struggle they were even having difficulty maintaining control of Local 1005. To try and help Gisborn deal with the Left Wing Group, Stew Cooke, the Hamilton Area Director was assigned to take over responsibilities as the local union representative. Rather than help the situation this only aggravated it. Cooke was recognized by everyone as being a bright and competent organizer, but he was an aggressive, abbrasive person who made enemies easily. He was also a man of considerable power in trade union circles, in the Hamilton and District Labour Council, and the New Democratic Party. (It was 1961 that the founding convention of the NDP was held.) It was not long after he was appointed 1005 union staff person that he became the major figure in the local. As one person put it:

Cooke ran 1005. There is no doubt about that. He was the king pin. When Gisborn was president he was also in the legislature and he was working his fool head off. He really didn't have time to pay much attention to the local union business so he had to rely on Cooke. When you'd be at a meeting with them they'd sit together and when a question was asked, Gisborn would tilt his head a little to the left, Cooke would say something, and Gisborn would straighten up and answer the question. You didn't have to be a lip reader to figure out where the answer was coming from.⁴⁴

From the days of Larry Sefton, and even before, Steelworker officials had been involved in the internal political life of 1005, but the reason why Stew Cooke met with such resistance then and after was because now the Left Wing Slate was very highly organized. They came to see Cooke as more of an enemy than their opposition in the Right Wing. "What made it even worse," one Left Winger commented, "Was that

he was not elected and in a way that made him more powerful because there was no way we could get at him."⁴⁵

The most serious clash between the two slates came over the Mine Mill issue, but the negotiations for the 1961 contract also created dissent in the local. One of the initial issues was that the contract had run out in August 1961, but the Negotiating Committee was not able to bring in a settlement until January 1962. Many of the membership found the offer meager. There was a $4\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$ an hour increase the first year and altogether $13\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$ an hour over the three year life of the contract. In spite of the reported dissatisfaction, however, the members were in no mood to repeat the 1958 strike, and they voted 4,144 to 1,207 to accept the offer.⁴⁶

The 1962 Election

As the 1962 executive elections grew closer the political life of Local 1005 had polarized the union activists into two clearly defined slates. The Left Wing Group by now was very well organized with members placed in most departments. They were a large and growing group who had the one clear objective of defeating the incumbent establishment slate. It was in response to this threat that the Right Wing Group started to organize themselves. Two people, Jake Isbister and Ben DesRoches, spent a day phoning sixty to seventy people whom they thought supported the Right Wing Group and invited them to come to a caucus meeting.⁴⁷ Whether conscious or not, organizationally they modelled themselves after the pattern established by the Left by attempting to recruit someone from every department across the plant.

As the 1962 election approached the Right Wing Group was badly split over the issue of leadership. Some felt that Reg Gisborn was the most logical candidate for president because he had experience, prestige, and was the incumbent, but many members of the group thought that he was much too busy with his responsibilities in the legislature and his organizing efforts for the NDP in the city and across the province. Another unspoken issue may well have been that many may have felt that he could not control the Left since he had openly supported the Steelworkers in the Mine Mill issue.

A few weeks before the election about 100 supporters of the Right Wing met in the Leander Boat Club to decide on their slate for the election. It was a stormy meeting. Nominations were made from the floor and two names were put forward for president: Reg Gisborn, the incumbent, and George Martin, a long time union activist who had been vice-president in the '46 strike and had since held a variety of executive positions. It was a strange contest. Gisborn and Martin were old allies in trade union politics, they both worked in the same department, and many considered them to be best friends. In the balloting Gisborn won the election and then Martin walked out of the meeting taking his supporters with him. In spite of Martin's defection the Right Wing ran a full slate for every position on the executive.

By contrast the Left Wing Slate in 1962 was in a strong position. Morgan, who had been elected vice-president just the year before, moved up to contest the position of president, and the Left ran a full slate for every other position except financial secretary.

The two slates in the 1962 election make a particularly interesting contrast. Of the ten people running on the Left Wing Slate eight were British and of these eight a total of six were tradesmen. Of the eleven running on the Right Wing Slate eight were Canadian born and of the three British, one had no union experience before coming to this country. Even more striking, there were no tradesmen running on the entire Right Wing Slate.

The presidency was the position most strongly contested in the 1962 election. Altogether six people ran. Both Reg Gisborn and George Martin were the candidates appealing primarily to the Right Wing supporters who had been around since the '46 strike. Sandy McCallion, a Scot and a previous Treasurer of the local and Ted Hammond, a former Recording Secretary, ran as independents. Both had a checkered political career in the local but at that time neither had a broad base of support. Tom McClure, the last active member of the Old Left Wing also ran for president in 1962. He was close to retirement now but McClure kept an active interest in the political life of the local. Finally, John Morgan was the candidate for the Left Wing Slate.

That election is remembered as the first contest at 1005 when slates were operating in the local. Although the Right Wing was split in their support for president, and there were a number of independents running, the campaigns for the executive were conducted primarily along slate lines. For the first time leaflets were handed out at the plant gates, sometimes attacking individuals but more often attacking the policy and leadership ability of the opposition slate. The leaflets

would also give the policy of the favored group and conclude by urging the member to vote for the entire slate. "We virtually innundated the plant with leaflets," one person recalled. "We were knee high in the stuff."⁴⁸ The Left was particularly active. They put out a number of leaflets, many focusing on specialized groups in the plant. The campaign by the Right Wing Group had a touch of bitterness to it that can only be explained by the many years of distrust and even hatred of Morgan and the others on the Left. One person who was active on the Right during that election felt that some of the things that they did harmed themselves.

The Right to my way of thinking committed suicide in that election. The day prior to the vote we had people minding every gate at Stelco, stopping cars and handing out leaflets to everyone. The leaflet was an open letter to the member telling him that he would be very foolish if he elected the people on the Left to the executive because they were known Communists. Of course what happened was a backlash. People in the plant aren't stupid. They knew this was just red-baiting to keep the others out so they reacted by voting Left.⁴⁹

The results of the election showed a significant shift of support to the Left Wing Group. Morgan won the Presidency, Al Wagott, the Left Wing candidate, became Vice-President, and Tom Olds the Treasurer. Altogether the Left won five positions on the twelve man executive. This was a major accomplishment. With the exception of two people it was the first time any of these candidates had stood for election while many of the candidates on the Right had been well known political figures in the local for years. Their success is a reflection of the dissatisfaction felt by the rank and file members and the changes in the social composition of the work force, but it also shows the ability of a well organized slate to deliver the vote. The 1962 election

established a new type of political system at 1005. In the future, slates were to become the only viable political vehicle for winning elections in the local.

Left, Right and Autonomy

When the new executive took power in June 1962 much of the turmoil that the local had gone through came to an end. The vote replacing Mine Mill with the Steelworkers was announced the same month they took office,⁵⁰ and for the time being that divisive issue was resolved. The Right Wing Group still occasionally attacked Morgan and the Left for their Communist associations,⁵¹ but much of the animosity between the two slates subsided when the members of the Right began to realize that the Left was not planning any drastic action. What emerged not long after the 1962 election was the acceptance on both sides that there were two political slates contesting for power, and that this was a legitimate way of running the political affairs of the local union.

The most important accomplishment of Morgan's first term as president was the democratisation of the committees of the local. The constitution of the International Union allowed for the election or the appointment of the local's committees and with few exceptions the practice at 1005 up to that time was that they be appointed. One of the election promises of the Left was to make all of these positions elected by the membership. Using their new power on the executive, members of the Left Wing Slate were able to bring changes of the by-laws of 1005 stipulating that every position for the committees be elected from the floor of the membership meeting or at the plant gates.⁵² The by-law changes called

for the election of all delegates to conventions and labour council, as well.

The consequences of these changes were very important for the political life of the union. By 1963 and afterwards the minutes of the membership meetings are filled almost every month with the records of votes that were taken for one position or another. For example in 1963, eight out of the twelve monthly membership meetings involved one, and sometimes two, elections. In addition, there was a plant gate election for the negotiating committee during this period. In the political life of 1005 this is considered a light year because there was not an election for the executive.

An unintended consequence of these elections was that they gave support to the slate system that had already evolved in the local. Now rather than getting groups together once every two years in order to fight executive elections, the slates started to nominate their members for positions on the committees and as delegates to conventions. In order to decide who the group was to support, and how to publicise it, they had to caucus regularly. Soon it was apparent to those active in the political life of the local that the only way to get elected to any position was with the support of one of the slates.

The Left Wing members of the day considered the two year term from 1962 to 1964 a period when much was accomplished in the local, and because of this they were disappointed when their slate fared badly in the 1964 executive elections. In 1962 they had elected five people while in 1964 their numbers were reduced to two: John Morgan easily

defeated Reg Gisborn for president and Frank Badgley became the new grievance chairman.

It was the 1964 set of negotiations which led to the first real crisis of the Left Wing Group. The Left had two members on the Negotiating Committee, Morgan and Badgley, and it was understood that they would keep the slate informed of the progress of the negotiations. Morgan, however, refused, claiming that the business of the Negotiating Committee must be kept private if it is to act responsibly. Although the others complained, saying that the slate had helped put the two of them onto the committee, and they should report back, they reluctantly accepted Morgan's decision.

The contract was due to terminate at the end of July of that year and the negotiations had started in May, but nothing was accomplished for a number of months. Finally, on December 15, 1964 the union negotiators reported that the company had made its last offer and began a series of meetings to discuss it. That night, at a stewards' meeting, Morgan explained the company's offer and said that there was no possibility of an agreement. The Negotiating Committee would be recommending that they call a strike and they urged the stewards to get their members out to the meeting the following day to support the committee. One person explained the mood:

After Morgan's speech to the steward's body we all went home and phoned the guys in our departments, telling them: 'Look, there is a meeting in the Forum. Get down there and support the negotiating committee. They are going to call a strike. They are rejecting the contract.' And we were up for it. Everything was prearranged. Once the committee had given their report we had a guy planted on every mike who was going to call for a strike and then really give it to them.⁵³

However, between the time of the stewards' meeting and the mass membership meeting the next night, Bill Mahoney, the Steelworker's National Director, and Larry Sefton, the District Director, met with the company and were able to get the offer of one additional cent an hour. On the basis of this increase these two leaders recommended acceptance of the contract, and they persuaded everyone on the Negotiating Committee, except Morgan and Badgley, that this was as good an offer as they would receive.⁵⁴

The meeting to discuss the recommendations of the Negotiating Committee, held in the Hamilton Forum, was packed with 7,000 members of the local, all expecting their leaders to call for a strike. When John Morgan got to his feet he explained in detail the contract offer, and the fact that it had been increased by an additional one cent an hour. Then he said that as chairman of the six man Negotiating Committee he was recommending acceptance of the contract, but that he and Frank Badgley, intended to vote against it.

The speech brought confusion to almost everyone in the Forum. They had come expecting a strike and now the contract was being recommended with an additional increase of only one cent an hour. Morgan's position was particularly confusing. Many did not understand the distinction that he was making between his role as chairman of the committee and his personal rejection of the contract. The greatest resentment, however, was reserved for Mahoney and Sefton, and there were a number of questions from the floor as to why there was interference in the local by these top union officials.⁵⁵

The members of the Left Wing Group strongly urged rejection of the contract in both the membership meeting and in the plant, but despite all the dissention, when the issue was put to a vote the contract was accepted by a small majority: 4,251 in favor and 3,564 against.⁵⁶ One analyst provided two reasons why the contract was accepted:

That it was only two weeks prior to Christmas and therefore, the least opportune time of the year for the men to engage in a strike; and that the membership rationalized that if after more than five months of negotiation this was the best that the union could do, then time was not likely to improve their achievements.⁵⁷

The closeness of the vote, however, indicates that again a large number of members of the local were not happy at the outcome of the negotiations.

As Flood points out:

The general feeling in the plant following the 1964 negotiations was a combination of disappointment, some desire for revenge against the company at a future date, and sentiments of distrust of the union officers. Some activists attempted to gain adherents by spreading the message that 'next time there would be some real action.'⁵⁸

Some members of the Left Wing Group turned their feelings against John Morgan and the leadership he had provided during this set of negotiations. According to them the start of the strain between Morgan and the Left Wing began after the '64 negotiations while others remember it beginning almost immediately after he was elected president. Whatever the case by 1965 relations between the group and their leader were strained. The complaints focused on Morgan as an individual and his loyalty to the Left Wing Group. One person commented:

Morgan was a hard man to get to know. Some reporter from the Spectator dubbed him 'Silent John' and that was pretty accurate. After he became president he clammed up on us and we were never able to get any information out of him.⁵⁹

He came to the meetings of the Left Wing Slate but he did not take much part in the discussions. "He gave the impression these were courtesy calls rather than that he had an obligation to us."⁶⁰ Another Left Winger pointed out that they had fears that he was drifting to the other side.

He said that he wanted to amalgamate the slates because they were bad for the local. Then he wouldn't take sides on issues because he was afraid that he might lose some of the support he had built in the Right Wing Group.⁶¹

Another summed it up by saying:

We felt that Morgan had become so close mouthed that there was no communication with him any more, and for his part I guess he came to think we were really critical of him.⁶²

Morgan admits that during the term of his presidency he changed a great deal. He found that the old members of the Right Wing Slate, like Gisborn, were good unionists, and he worked well with Stew Cooke, the one person the Left felt was their chief enemy. Morgan was in a difficult position. Now he was distrusted by his own Left Wing Group, and the old animosity that the Right Wingers felt towards him was still alive. He was indebted to the Left for his election, but he was making new alliances with the Right. After the '64 contract he was essentially straddling both groups and that made his position very tenuous.

The dissension arising from the 1964 set of negotiations also contributed to the formation and rise of a new political slate at Local 1005: The Autonomy Group. For some years groups of activists had demanded that Steelworker staff officials keep out of the political life of the local union. In the settlement of the 1964 contract both Bill Mahoney and Larry Sefton had played an active role in convincing the local membership to accept the contract. Many of the members called this

interference and it strengthened the feeling that there should be more local autonomy.

There was another political issue related to this, that was having an important impact on trade unionists by the mid 1960's. From the beginning of the Canadian trade union movement there had been demands that unions be independent of American Internationals.⁶³ With the rise of the CIO unions in the late 1930's and '40's the call for independent unions was picked up mainly by employers and as a result it was usually rejected by union activists.⁶⁴ However, by the mid 1960's an independent and autonomous Canadian trade union movement was again a popular political issue for many members of International Unions in this country.⁶⁵ The Autonomy Group that emerged in Local 1005 called for independence of the local from the steel staff and their demands also included the call for the Canadian Steelworkers to break away from the International Union.

After the negotiations, in 1965 and '66, Ted Hammond, a member who had been a previous recording secretary of the local and had run for president in 1962, began to gather a group of stewards and union activists together to demand Canadian autonomy for Steelworkers. This group was essentially made up of Canadian born production workers at Stelco. Although at the time many gave nominal support to the NDP, at least two of their members were Liberals and later others were attracted to the Liberal Party. Some of the members had been attached to the Left Wing Group but in time had become disenchanted, while still others joined the Autonomy Slate because they saw it as a new election machine which could be used to gain political power within the local.

The New Militancy

The political conditions in 1965 leading up to the 1966 negotiations, therefore, were unstable. There was distrust of the leadership of the union both in the local and at the national and district levels, and there were three slates competing for political power. Even more important, economic conditions had created deep dissatisfaction among the membership. The period between 1957 and 1963 had been a time of economic stagnation in Canada. There were high rates of unemployment, wages had remained relatively stable, union growth had almost stopped, and at Stelco many workers were upset over the inadequacies of the three previous contracts. Then, in 1963-64, economic conditions suddenly changed. With the onset of the Vietnam War there was an upturn in the economy, unemployment fell so that by 1966 it was only 3%,⁶⁶ inflation began to rise and profits increased. A further factor that led to instability was that the labour force began to increase rapidly. From 1956 to 1964 it was relatively stable but between 1964 and 1968 the work force increased by half a million workers, most of whom were young and impatient with the previous pattern of industrial relations.⁶⁷ As they moved into the 1966 round of negotiations, Stelco workers, and workers across the country, were increasingly militant in their demands of improved conditions, better wages, and action from their leaders.

Footnotes

¹This pattern shows remarkable similarity in other recently unionized industries. Seymour Faber, "Rank and File Insurgency: the State and the Unions," Our Generation, Vol. 11, No. 4, Winter 1976, p. 39. A remarkable number of unionists interviewed commented on how the atmosphere of the plant changed after the '46 strike. It is not certain whether all of these changes can be attributed to the union. At about the same time new ideas of management were being adopted by Stelco and other companies which advocated a more humane and just system of dealing with the work force in industry, and some claim that this was the reason management changed its practices. A more likely explanation is that management learned that union militancy increased in part because of the autocratic behavior of supervision. In order to try and defuse these grievances the company forced their foremen to take a less authoritarian and more co-operative approach to the workers.

²William Kilbourn, The Elements Combined: A History of the Steel Company of Canada (Toronto: Clark, Irwin and Company Limited, 1960) p. 199.

³William B. Freeman, "Interviews with Local 1005 Activists, 1976," Vol. I (Unpublished Interview Material) p. 129.

⁴The Spectator, (Hamilton, Ontario: Southam Press) April 28, 1947.

⁵Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 130.

⁶H.C. Pentland, A Study of the Changing Social Economic and Political Background of the Canadian System of Industrial Relations, (Ottawa: Task Force on Labour Relations, 1968) pp. 336-337.

⁷Robert McDonald Adams, The Development of the United Steelworkers of America, 1936-1951, (Kingston, Ontario: M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, 1957) p. 28.

⁸Pentland, op. cit., p. 229.

⁹Ibid., p. 321.

¹⁰Minutes of Local 1005, July 12, 1950.

¹¹Freeman, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 128. One of the accusations leveled at the CPC faction was that they intended to use the trade union movement as a vehicle for the political aims of the Communist Party.

It is especially ironic that the CCF group would see something wrong with this identification between the trade union movement and politics. In Hamilton the CCF was so closely allied to the Steelworkers that for much of the 1950's the party was funded almost entirely by Local 1005 and many of their leaders came from the local.

¹²In spite of his Communist affiliation McClure was always a popular person in 1005. People interviewed frequently had words of praise for his ability, honesty and integrity. The most glowing testimony came from a person who was his long time political opponent in 1005 politics. "McClure was always well respected by the men in the plant. He was the only one when the sheet mill closed down, that went back to the bar mills with no seniority at all and fought his way back up to one of the highest paid jobs in the mill. He retired at the age of 68 still workin' with a pair of tongs--still sweatin' and burnin'." Coming from a Steelworker who had spent his adult life working in the mills this is a glowing compliment.

¹³The Spectator, May 2, 1950. This article says: "The union negotiators were C.H. Millard and District Representative Larry Sefton."

¹⁴Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I p. 128.

¹⁵Ibid., Vol. II, p. 268.

¹⁶Ibid., Vol. II. p. 276.

¹⁷Minutes of Local 1005, August 13, 1952.

¹⁸William B. Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 115. Many of the early unionists in Canada and the United States were motivated not only out of the desire for better material and working conditions, but they saw in unions a way of achieving religious and temperance aims as well. The most thorough study of the relationship between religion and social reform in Canada is: Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

¹⁹Freeman, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 187.

²⁰The Spectator, August 1, 1952.

²¹Ibid., April 27, 1953.

²²Ibid., March 28, 1958.

²³Ibid., July 2, 1958.

²⁴Ibid., February 3, 1958.

²⁵Ibid., April 14, 1958.

²⁶Ibid., August 2, 1958.

²⁷Ibid., August 2, 1958.

²⁸Ibid., August 2, 1958.

²⁹Kilbourn, op. cit., p. 204.

³⁰The Spectator, op. cit., August 2, 1958.

³¹Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 7.

³²Ibid., Vol. II, p. 40.

³³One informant claimed that an important reason for the rapid demise of the Old Left Wing after 1952 was the fact that Stelco hired many Eastern Europeans who had fled to the west after World War II. These people were strongly anti-communist and would not support the Old Left because of their communist affiliation.

³⁴Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 40.

³⁵Steel Shots, (Hamilton: Publication of Local 1005 of the United Steelworkers of America) December 1960.

³⁶Minutes of Local 1005, April 12, 1961.

³⁷Steel Shots, op. cit., June 1961.

³⁸Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 41.

³⁹Ibid., Vol. II, p. 42.

⁴⁰John Deverell et. al., Falconbridge: Portrait of a Canadian Mining Multinational (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, 1975) p. 100.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 102.

⁴²Ibid., p. 103.

⁴³Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 133.

⁴⁴Ibid., Vol. II, p. 194.

⁴⁵Ibid., Vol. II, p. 49.

⁴⁶The Spectator, op. cit., January 12, 1962.

⁴⁷Freeman, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 184.

⁴⁸Ibid., Vol. III, p. 151.

⁴⁹Ibid., Vol. I, p. 4.

⁵⁰Deverell, op. cit., p. 103.

⁵¹In Steel Shots, November 1962, Reg Gisborn wrote an article condemning the executive for not denouncing a leaflet that had gone into the plant supporting a "Commie" union. The next month Morgan replied, calling the article "sour grapes" and "narrow minded."

⁵²The rule is that the executive and negotiation committee are elected at the plant gates and all other committees are elected at a membership meeting in the union hall.

⁵³Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 11.

⁵⁴Flood writes in a footnote: "A part of the settlement which has never been publicly acknowledged was the agreement by the provincial government that if (the Directors) could swing the settlement the government would open the roads to the northern mining camps which the mining companies had previously held closed as private property, forbidding entrance to all union organizers. If this claim is correct, this would provide a plausible explanation of the behavior of the higher-level officers. Their long-range organizational objectives took precedence over short-term local objectives." This information was never made public at the time. Maxwell Flood, Task Force on Labour Relations Study No. 15, Wildcat Strike in Lake City, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970) p. 102.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 50.

⁵⁶The Spectator, December 31, 1964.

⁵⁷Flood, op. cit., p. 51.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 51.

⁵⁹Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 43.

⁶⁰Ibid., Vol. II, p. 44.

⁶¹Ibid., Vol. II, p. 85.

⁶²Ibid., Vol. III, p. 49.

⁶³This is a theme explored in many books on Canadian unions. One of the most interesting reviews is: Roger Howard and Jack Scott, "International Unions and the Ideology of Class Collaboration," in ed. Gary Teeple, Capitalism and the National Question in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

⁶⁴Premier Mitch Hepburn took this position in the Oshawa General Motors strike of 1936. H.G. Hilton also used this against the Steelworkers in 1939 when he wrote "This company declines to negotiate with any organization with communistic associations and supported by U.S. funds in any endeavour to secure control over its employers." Letter to T.W. McClure, November 30, 1939.

⁶⁵For a review of this issue see: Robert Laxer, Canada's Unions, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Publisher, 1976).

⁶⁶Pentland, op. cit., p. 359.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 360.

CHAPTER 6

MILITANCY AND APATHY: 1966 TO 1976

The 1966 Wildcat

Prior to the 1966 set of negotiations the slogan that circulated throughout the plant was "no contract no work." Out of all the problems of past negotiations the one factor that members focused on to explain why the previous contracts had been bad for 1005 was that in every case they had worked past the expiration date of the contract. The slogan, "no contract no work," was a threat that if a new contract was not signed before the other expired on July 31st the workers would walk out of the plant. At the same time it was an expression of the mood of militancy among the members; large numbers of the rank and file were determined that this time they would get a good contract no matter what the sacrifices.

The union activists were well aware that pressure was building in the plant for an early settlement and began meeting with the company earlier than they had in the past. From May 24th to June 20th already twelve negotiating sessions had been held between the union and the company.¹ Both sides then asked for government mediation and Judge William Little of Toronto was appointed. The pressure for an early settlement appeared to be recognized for on July 8th the company made its first offer. Although it was rejected the unionists felt the talks were going well. In the next few weeks the Negotiating Committee tried to

keep the support of the membership by issuing a series of leaflets and each time made an appeal for co-operation.

The slogan that they utilized at the bottom of all their leaflets constituted an appeal for the support and co-operation of the membership. Members were also advised in the leaflets not to listen to rumors but to await official reports of developments.²

In spite of attempts to conclude the negotiations by the July 31st expiration date of the contract, the talks overran the deadline. The union's Negotiating Committee had been in a hotel in Toronto, isolated from the membership. They knew the longer they overran the expiration date the more volatile the situation in the plant would become, and so they arranged to return to Hamilton on the evening of August 3rd to report developments to a meeting of the 300 stewards.

The forceful opinions expressed by the stewards at that meeting showed that they wanted an offer brought to the membership as soon as possible, but John Morgan, the local's President, and Chairman of the Negotiating Committee, made an appeal for their support. He reported that an agreement had been made with management either to conclude a new contract or to announce a deadlock by August 7th. This would clear the way for a legal strike within approximately two weeks time.³ Morgan asked for a vote of support from the stewards and all but one indicated that they were satisfied with the committee's progress. In spite of the meeting, sometime between 9:00 and 10:00 P.M. that evening a wildcat strike broke out at the plant.

The events that led up to the wildcat will never be entirely known. In his study Maxwell Flood listed in total fifteen different

"sources of strain," which included factors such as dissatisfaction with previous contracts, distrust of the Negotiating Committee, inflation, and the influence of other wildcats that had occurred that year.⁴ The interviews for this study confirmed Flood's conclusion that there was widespread dissatisfaction of the membership on a number of issues, and it merely took some precipitating incident to spark it off.

According to Flood the wildcat started in the Hot Strip Finishing Department of the plant. There had been discussions among the workers on the evening shift about the negotiations and the consensus was that they were not going well. A foreman apparently had taunted them by saying, "You guys haven't got the guts to walk out,"⁵ and in defiance a group of about 20 young men walked out to the gate and began forming pickets. Sometime around 10:00 the stewards in the meeting at the union hall learned that a wildcat had started and immediately a number of them went down to the plant gates.⁶

The view that the wildcat started spontaneously is not supported by other facts. One person said that there had been talk all week of a wildcat. Rumor had it that one department was going to go out and then another. Meetings were held by small groups of people trying to coordinate events and finally one group took the lead and they walked out.

The belief that there was planning behind the wildcat makes sense in relation to other events. In the stewards' meeting that night everyone endorsed the actions of the Negotiating Committee except one man, who at the time was a prominent member of the Autonomy Group. One person who was interviewed said that he knew for a fact that this man

had left the meeting to make a telephone call to the plant and this was the signal to start the wildcat. Whether the telephone call was made or not many agreed that this man along with other stewards left the union hall to go down to the plant gates. By the time they got there workers were already milling around the gates, the stewards joined in the demonstration, some took picket signs out of the trunks of their cars and handed them out to the wildcatters. The slogan on the signs said: "No contract, no work."⁷ All of this indicates that people were following pre-arranged plans.

Once the picket line was set up the events of the wildcat rapidly came to a climax. Only a small number of men initially had walked out of the plant, and they were joined by a handful of stewards, but as the men began coming off the afternoon shift between 10:30 and 11:00 p.m. many joined those at the gates, and a large number of the incoming night shift workers refused to cross the picket line. By 10:30 the men milling around the gates were so numerous that it was impossible to get through.⁸

Management's first concern once the wildcat had broken out was to shut down operations so that there would be minimum damage to plant and equipment. At first several members of management tried to get through the lines at 11:00 p.m. but the picketers would not let them cross. The company then started to arrange for boats and ferried most of their personnel into the plant by water. When the picketers learned what was happening: "Carloads of men from the main gates began cruising around the various docking sites harassing and preventing personnel from going aboard boats bound for the plant."⁹

That night the first violence broke out. A group of men went into one department where workers were still on their jobs, threatened the foreman, and tried to stop the production. Some damage was done to cars in the parking lot and in the docking areas.¹⁰ These actions again show that, at least to some extent, the wildcat had leadership and organization. Flood quotes an officer of the local as saying:

These young fellows were guided from behind the scenes by older, experienced men. They were doing things that only experienced men would know how to do. For example, groups were organized to go down to the subsidiary plants and get them to stay out of the jobs. Also they found out that some people, such as supervisors, were using boats to get into the plant--they tried to stop this--this showed organization.¹¹

By the morning of August 4th all of Stelco's operations were effectively shut down by the wildcatters. This included the main plant plus four other plants in the district.

By this time some 3,000 men were involved in the various picket lines. When the office workers arrived at the plant in the morning they were prohibited from entering the company property by the pickets. City police had been called to the scene and had attempted to open the picket lines but had failed.¹²

Both by Ontario legislation and the contract signed between Stelco and Local 1005, a wildcat is an illegal act. According to the labour legislation anyone engaged in an illegal strike such as this was subject to heavy fines and the union could be fined thousands of dollars for violating the collective agreement. One of Stelco's responses to this crisis was to inform the union that the wildcat was in violation of their agreement and demanded that the union send their members back to work immediately.

In spite of the fact that none of the union officials had any-

thing to do with starting or continuing the wildcat, they made every attempt to follow the law and get the men back to work. On the morning of August 4th John Morgan, the 1005 President, Stew Cooke, the Steelworker's Area Director, and two other executive members went down to the plant gates with sound equipment, to persuade the workers to open the picket lines and go back to work. Flood notes:

The content of the local President's plea was that the strike was illegal; that the union was not behind them; and that the men should open the lines and let the day shift in. He pointed out that if workers were not allowed in to close down the furnace there would be serious repercussions for all of the workers.¹³

The response from the wildcatters was hostile. They tried to stop the union leader from talking and threatened Morgan and Cooke with violence. One man who had gone down with Morgan said: "It was an ugly scene. I can tell you that. They were shouting at us like some of them had gone mad. We were lucky to get out of there alive."¹⁴ Flood reports that Morgan left the scene in tears.¹⁵

The efforts of the 1005 executive and the Steelworker's union for the duration of the wildcat was to get the men back to work. They tried a variety of tactics to achieve this. Stewards were sent down to the lines the night the wildcat broke out to tell the picketers that their actions were illegal. The next morning not only did Morgan, Cooke and others go to the plant gates to urge the men to return to work, but at the same time stewards distributed leaflets criticising the wildcat. Also, at the union's request, the police closed the hotels and taverns near the plant, Morgan and Cooke went on a local radio program, at the union's expense, to answer questions, Stew Cooke made statements to the

press saying the work stoppage was unauthorized and the National Director, Bill Mahoney, urged the workers to return to their jobs.¹⁶ However, none of these appeals made any impact on the workers.

The wildcat was clearly beyond the control of the union. On August 4th mass picketing continued to effectively keep anyone from crossing the lines, and again, as in 1946, it was the ethnic workers who were most solid in their support of the militant action. The police could not control the crowd, there were a number of angry incidents towards individual officers trying to intervene and towards newspaper photographers taking pictures of the violence. Some of the cars that foremen had left in the parking lots had their windows smashed and tires slashed, and as a result some arrests were made. On the night of August 4th and 5th a group of strikers overturned and burned two cars.

On August 5th the picket line remained solid in the face of two incidents promoted by the company in an effort to reimpose their control. The police used a number of uniformed men to clear a path through the line at the company's main gate to let supervisory and office staff enter the plant. Altogether 150 staff employees went into the plant this way. They were met by hostility from the picketers, and a number of arrests were made. The second incident was an attempt by the company to force a train of scrap metal through the pickets. The police lined the track, clearing the way for the train and the wildcatters faced them. Suddenly 200 of the workers charged the police lines, broke through them and stood on the tracks making a solid barrier with their bodies. The train paused and at an order from a company official, backed away.¹⁷ Later a company

spokesman admitted that they did not need the scrap. "They were only trying to 'prove the point' that there should be free access to the plant."¹⁸

On the night of August 5th the local's leadership tried a different strategy to regain control. They called for a meeting at the Steelworker's Hall and asked that picketers on the four gates send three representatives each to meet with the Negotiating Committee, but rather than twelve of the strikers showing up, between two and three hundred converged on the hall. The confusion got even worse when a contingent of police arrived, presumably called by the union officers.¹⁹ After they had left several of the workers who had been arrested earlier in the day, and released on bail, arrived and created a disturbance by demanding that the union see to it that their charges were dropped. The only constructive suggestion of the meeting was that a membership rally should be held to discuss the issues as soon as possible.

Disturbances on the picket line reached their highest point on August 5th. The following day the union announced that there would be a rally held on the 7th at the city's football stadium to discuss the next course of action. The day of the meeting the lines were almost deserted but 50 wives of the strikers manned the picket line while the men went to the stadium.

At the meeting the Negotiating Committee appealed to the men for support, urging them to return to work and promising that if the union and company could not agree on a contract then a legal strike would be called seven days after the conciliation board made its report.²⁰

The questions directed to the union officers about what the union was going to do for the strikers who had been arrested were avoided. At the end of the meeting a secret vote was held and the balloting resulted in a vote of 4,319 in favor of returning to work and 1,142 for continuing the strike. Once the results were announced the union officers let it be known that they would cross any picket line that was set up the next day.

On the morning of August 8th the union's area supervisor (Stew Cooke) along with officers of the local and members of the Negotiating Committee led the workers arriving for the morning shift into the plant without incident. There were no pickets at the gates; the wildcat strike was apparently over.²¹

In the early stages of disruptions at Stelco, when the wildcat was at its height, the Autonomy Slate in 1005 appeared to be the major group shaping events. The steward who opposed the Negotiating Committee's report, and later went down to the plant gates with picket signs in the trunk of his car, was a member of the Autonomy Group and others in this slate followed his lead. Flood pointed out that while most leaders of factions in the local were conspicuous by their absence "Members of the Autonomy Group...were actively and militantly involved in the picket line from the outset of the wildcat."²²

The objectives of the Autonomy Group were complicated. They shared the fears of many in the plant that they were not going to get a good contract, but they were also motivated by a desire to demonstrate to the membership the inadequacy of the entire Steelworker's Union. In part this was the reason so much anger was shown towards Cooke and Morgan when they went down to the picket line. The two officials were

the nearest representatives of the International, and they symbolized for the group everything that they believed was wrong with the Steel-worker's Union. This explains:

Not only the fact that the primary direction of hostility was against the union but also the fact that hostility towards the company was, for all practical purposes, non-existent.²³

Although the men went back to work on August 8th at 7:00 a.m., the accord between the workers, the company and the union did not last for long. That morning thirty-five employees were discharged and sixteen suspended for their actions during the wildcat. All of the people disciplined had been arrested by the police during the disturbances. For much of that morning it appeared as if the workers were going to wildcat again. Stewards in departments across the plant contacted the local and were told to try and hold the men in the plant so that negotiations could proceed. The union asked the men who had been disciplined to go down to the union hall and there they were interviewed by Stew Cooke. The outcome was that twenty-seven of the men signed a statement asking that their fellow workers stay on the job. This statement was reproduced, with the actual signatures of the men, and sent to the plant for distribution. Later, stewards stated that this leaflet helped them to prevent another walkout.²⁴

On August 9th, the day after the workers returned to their jobs, the negotiation-conciliation process was resumed in Toronto. Newspaper reports and leaflets sent into the plant assured the membership that the fate of the 51 discharged and disciplined men would become an issue in the talks. After some days of uneasy peace, on August 17th the

Negotiating Committee went before the membership to present details of an agreement that they had worked out with the company and recommended its acceptance. The agreement called for a three year contract, and substantial wage increases bringing wages one cent an hour higher than equivalent jobs in the United States.²⁵ On the sensitive issue of the wildcat and the disciplining of the 51 workers, the company agreed to drop all charges against the union and Judge Little, the conciliator, agreed to conduct a judicial review of all cases.²⁶

In the negotiating process the leaders of the union had been under tremendous pressure to get a settlement. The company had said that they were not prepared to discuss the issue of the disciplined workers before the economic issues were resolved. One of the members of the union's Negotiating Committee was opposed to this, arguing that once the contract was signed there would be no way the union could get the men's jobs back for them, but he was outvoted by the committee and eventually was persuaded to sign the contract.²⁷

On August 17th, during the membership meeting called to discuss the proposal, the local's leaders were prepared for opposition. When some fifteen to twenty members of the Autonomy Group went to the microphones to address the membership, John Morgan adjourned the meeting. Not surprisingly the Autonomy members were angry at the treatment and put out a leaflet on August 21st, the day before voting was to take place on the contract proposal, urging the members to reject the company's offer. The main thrust of the leaflet was that if the contract was accepted they would be depriving the fifty-one disciplined

workers of their livelihood.²⁸ In the voting on August 22nd the contract was turned down 4,494 to 3,937.²⁹

In spite of the rejection of the contract the local was not in a legal position to strike. Over the next few days the company and union negotiators met a number of times and finally Stelco made a new offer. They proposed an increase of three cents an hour in the first year of the contract, and agreed that the company would review all of the discipline cases not later than September 30th. The Negotiating Committee set up a new ballot on August 30th which not only asked for acceptance or rejection of the contract but also specifically stated that a rejection of this offer would be regarded as an authorization to call a strike on September 3rd.³⁰

Expulsions

When this offer was made it prompted another meeting which was to have important ramifications for the political life of the local. Members of the Left Wing Slate met in the union hall to discuss the offer shortly after it was made. In the meeting they accused Morgan and Cooke of using dictatorial methods and took the position that they did not want the offer put to the membership until the fifty-one members had been reinstated.³¹

Relations between Morgan and the Left Wing Group had been very strained since the 1964 set of negotiations, but as a result of the wildcat, relations got even worse. Many of the Left came to believe that Morgan had drifted even more into the Right Wing camp. As one expressed it: "He was entirely doing the bidding of Cooke during the

wildcat."³² In addition, many on the Left were concerned that the Autonomy Group had led the wildcat and were reaping the political rewards. Morgan felt equally, or perhaps more, suspicious of the Left. He did not know the role they had played in events and thought it was possible that they even had an active part in starting the wildcat.

Before the meeting of the Left Wing Group in the union hall had taken place Morgan had heard about it. He went to the projection booth overlooking the room where it was held and overheard everything that was going on. He was furious. As he saw it, here were members of his own group plotting to recommend rejection of the contract in spite of the fact that he and others on the Negotiating Committee were trying to get acceptance. Morgan, Cooke and the Negotiating Committee put out a leaflet countering the strategy of the Left and then he charged a number of the leaders of the Left Wing Group, who had been at this meeting, under the discipline procedures of the International Constitution.

The voting on the new contract was held on August 30, 1966, and the membership accepted it 5,702 to 3,242. However, the wildcat and subsequent disturbances were felt in the local union for many years to come. On the issue of the fifty-one disciplined workers all but nineteen were ultimately taken back by the company but even that, for many of the union militants, should not have happened. One person said:

I tell you we had an obligation to those men. A lot of those guys were innocent bystanders and they got caught up in the spirit of the crowd. We were the union and we should have demanded that they get their jobs back.³³

Another leader took exactly the opposite approach.

Look, Jesus Christ couldn't have got the jobs back of some of those guys. I know one. He was a good kid too. His father was a personal friend of mine. He'd only been working at Stelco for six months, but he got caught inside the plant cutting electrical cables and that sort of stuff. He didn't know what the hell the wildcat was all about. Now what are you gonna do about a case like that? The company said there was no way they were gonna take him back. What are you gonna do? We've got 11,000 other men to think of.³⁴

On the issue of the union leadership during the wildcat some union activists, many holding responsible positions in the local today, condemn Morgan and Cooke for their leadership before, during and after the wildcat. Others draw exactly the opposite conclusion. One said:

Morgan was thrust into a very responsible position in the wildcat. Probably 1966 was the most disastrous year that 1005 has ever had to face and Morgan pulled us through. You've got to give him credit for that no matter what you think of the man.³⁵

Of all the unpopular decisions that were taken in the events during and after the wildcat the most important for Morgan were the charges laid against the Left Wing Group. Following the Constitution of the union, a trial committee was set up to hear the charges. The three men appointed by the executive to hear them were all members of the Right Wing Group in the local but even they could not bring themselves to discipline the members. As one of them said later:

I suppose the charges were valid but there was something about it that sounded very bad. Here was Morgan, the president of the local, saying that he crept up to the projection booth to spy on a group of dedicated union activists having a meeting. It was impossible. In my opinion if we had found those guys guilty of the charge it would have destroyed Local 1005.³⁶

As a result Morgan's charges against the Left Wing were dismissed by the trial committee. However, this had broader implications. The

charges represent the final and irrevokable parting of the ways between John Morgan and the Left Wing Group.

The rising popularity of the Autonomy Group was much more threatening to the leaders of the International Union. By this time a number of rumors circulated that were particularly ominous. The most important was the one that claimed that the Autonomy Group had links to John Munro, the federal Liberal member of parliament from Hamilton East who was attempting to put together a Liberal-Labour group in the city to break the power of the New Democratic Party controlled trade union movement. The group also seemed to have connections to the CNTU who were trying to organize nationalist unions in Ontario. It was widely believed at the time that there was a danger that the Autonomy Group could capitalize on their popularity and gain power in the local. If that happened there would be little doubt that they would try to pull 1005 out of the International and with support from Munro and the CNTU there was fear that they could achieve it. That possibility was a threat to the entire Steelworker's organization in Canada.

The first test of the political appeal of the Autonomy Group came in August when, at a regular membership meeting in an election for the Canadian Labour Congress Convention, they were able to win 14 of the 21 places. Now it was clear to the officers of the union. The wildcat had created the political situation where the Autonomy Group could take over the executive of the local.

The next test of strength was at a plant gate election on September 7th for delegates to the Steelworkers International Convention

in Atlantic City.³⁷ The Autonomy Group wanted particularly to go to this convention to put forward their position on Canadian independence. They printed and distributed a leaflet and subsequently won 13 of the 21 positions.³⁸ Part of the leaflet that they distributed read: "A Canadian strike fund is desirable but in the past strike funds have been used as a means to increase the salaries of International officers."³⁹ Stew Cooke, the Steelworker Area Supervisor, seized on this as an opportunity to attack the Autonomy Group by laying charges against the 21 men whose names appeared at the bottom of the leaflet.

To the Autonomy Group Cooke's motivation appeared clear. One man who was charged said:

Stew Cooke, I believe, saw a very great threat in the popularity and success that the Autonomy Group was enjoying at the time. There was an executive election coming up and in my belief, and in the belief of many others, Cooke used the flimsiest of excuses and brought a charge that effectively put us out of commission.⁴⁰

Flood seemed to agree. He wrote:

This (Cooke's charges) appears to have been an unusually harsh action, particularly in view of the fact that the "out" faction of this local have had a long history of virulent pamphleteering. However, it is explicable in view of the fact that the Autonomy Group were posing a new threat to the organization as a whole.⁴¹

The first stage of the prosecution against the 21 members was a trial before a three man committee of the local union, all of whom were members of the Right Wing Slate. In the evidence presented Cooke argued that the statement made in the leaflet was false in that: 1. The United Steelworkers of America do not have a strike fund, and 2. The salaries of the International Officers are expressly dealt with under another article of the constitution.⁴² The members of the Autonomy defended

themselves with a number of arguments the chief of which read: "The one-sentence statement was a trivial and innocuous expression of opinion by responsible trade unionists...stated without any malicious intent."⁴³ The trial committee found nineteen of the members guilty as charged and imposed on them a four year suspension of membership.

These charges and the trial kept the local union in an uproar for months. Meetings were disrupted and demands for the resignation of the executive were made. The Autonomy and Left Wing Groups did not view themselves as allies, but on this issue they joined together to oppose Morgan, Cooke and the Right Wing Group. On November 9th a membership meeting was held to discuss the issue and after a loud and extended debate the Left and Autonomy voted together to defeat the recommendation of the trial committee and dismiss the charges.

This was not the end of the matter. On November 17th Stew Cooke filed a notice of appeal with the International Secretary-Treasurer to reverse the decision of the Local 1005 membership. A new trial committee was set up with two senior Steelworker officials and again all the evidence was heard. In their decision the 19 members were again convicted, but their sentence was reduced to one year effective September 7, 1966.⁴⁴

In spite of the reduction of the sentence the members of the Autonomy Group still felt they had been wronged and looked elsewhere for help. The first place they turned was the New Democratic Party but Tommy Douglas, the federal leader, refused to get involved. After that John Munro, the federal Liberal member of parliament offered his help. Altogether there were two meetings between Munro and the members of the

Autonomy Group. The people who attended agree that all Munro gave was legal advice and said that a junior in his law firm would undertake the work free of charge, but the politics of the union were discussed and at one of the meetings Jean Marchand, then a federal cabinet minister and formerly the president of the CNTU, was present.

Once the rumors of this got out a number of 1005 members became very suspicious. Even to the politically inexperienced this seemed like the opening moves of the CNTU, allied to the Liberal government, to wrest Local 1005 away from the Steelworkers and the New Democratic Party. People who insisted that they had gone to the meetings innocently, came to be convinced that they were being used for broader political purposes. One of them said in an interview: "Regardless of what the union did to me, if this was the game the Liberals were playing I didn't want any part of it."⁴⁵ After that he and most of the others refused to have anything more to do with Munro.

In March of 1967 some of the disciplined men from the Autonomy Group went down to Pittsburgh for one final appeal of their case before the International Executive Board of the Steelworkers. This is how one of them described it:

The guys in the plant collected some money and we took a day off work and a few of us drove down to Pittsburgh on our own time. They were all there the next morning--Mahoney, Sefton, Cooke and Morgan--I bet they didn't lose any pay. Anyway, Stew Cooke gave his explanation and we gave ours. Then Able (the International President) said to me: 'What do you Canadians know about Autonomy?' And I said we want to be free and independent and have our own union. I suppose that didn't help us, but I felt I had to say it.⁴⁶

The irony of the situation was not lost on the group. The Autonomy was

dedicated to Canadian independence, and yet they had to go to Pittsburgh to appeal their cases. None of them were surprised when they lost.

The most prominent leader of the Autonomy Group at 1005 through this period was Ted Hammond, a Metallurgical Inspector in the plant. Hammond had been a CCF/NDP member and had run municipally on the CCF Slate in 1952. Again in 1957 he had run provincially in the riding of Wentworth for the party. In the fall of 1967 most of the active members of 1005, and even some of the members of the Autonomy Group were shocked to find him running as a Liberal in the provincial election against Reg Gisborn, the incumbent NDP member who was still actively involved in Local 1005. In the eyes of the leadership of the union and even in the minds of many of the rank and file members of 1005, this clearly identified the members of the Autonomy Slate with the Liberal Party. There can be little doubt that this harmed the group in union politics. As one person who was an Autonomist at the time said:

Hammond going with the Liberals was a hell of a thing for us-- one of the greatest setbacks for Autonomy suffered in Hamilton, and because we are a large local it affected the Autonomy movement in Canada as a whole.⁴⁷

This may be something of an exaggeration, but there can be little doubt that this identification between the Liberals and the Autonomy at Local 1005 badly hurt the credibility of the group and from that point on their fortunes sagged.

The Left Comes to Power

As a result of the 1966 wildcat there was a great deal of change and realignment of leaders among the slates at Local 1005. The most important was John Morgan's switch to the Right Wing Group. This was

not easily accomplished. Morgan had risen to the position of president in 1961 and '62 on the Left Wing Slate after one of the most partisan campaigns the local had seen. Not only was he hated because of this but many on the Right Wing believed he was still a dangerous radical. Events since 1964 and particularly after the wildcat changed much of this. Now Morgan was acting in concert with the Right Wing Group, and the only natural development was that he became a member of their slate. However, there were many on the Right who opposed the switch to the end. This description shows the bitterness some of the people felt:

There was going to be an election for delegates to the International Convention and I was out of town for the slate meeting. I no sooner had got back and sat down at home when the telephone rang. It was a guy on our slate and he was angry as hell. 'Look,' he said, 'You can hang up any time you want but I'm gonna say something to you.' I said 'I won't hang up. You go ahead.' Well, he called me every name in the book, and all the rest of it, and I said, 'What's that for?' And he said, 'For allowing your name to be on the same slate as John Morgan.' It seems like when I was away they had made this deal to accept Morgan and I didn't know anything about it.⁴⁸

On this issue the Right Wing almost split apart. Reg Gisborn, the MLA and the man Morgan had defeated for president in 1962, was still a powerful member of the Right Wing Slate. He had to be convinced to take Morgan into the group. Jake Isbister, at the time the local's Recording Secretary, finally arranged the reconciliation between the two men. This is how he tells the story:

I don't know how I did it but I finally got them to bury the hatchet. I had Gisborn parked in his car across the street from the union hall, and Morgan was in the parking lot. Well, Gisborn wouldn't come across the street to meet Morgan, and Morgan wouldn't cross the street to meet Gisborn. I went back and forth between the two of them, but they were both stubborn men. It took me about an hour and a half, going back and forth across the street, but I did it. I just wore Morgan down and finally he walked across the street and that was the end of it.⁴⁹

arrive they even telephoned to find out if he was coming. Finally they gave up and went ahead to nominate candidates.

At the meeting two names were put forward for the position of president. One was Bob Reilly, a long time activist of the Left Wing Slate, who had lost the coin toss to Morgan back in 1961. Reilly was a Scottish machinist, consistently left wing in his politics, and one of the most dedicated workers on the slate. The second was Ron Tipler, the chief steward from the electrical department, who in 1960 had organized the takeover of the CWS committee by the tradesmen. Tipler had not been identified with the Left Wing Slate as long as Reilly, and he was dis-trusted by some of the British trade unionists because they thought he was an opportunist. However, he had certain advantages. He was a popular and well known figure in the local, but, as one person mentioned, "He hadn't been involved in any of the disputes that would have made anyone angry at him,"⁵¹ and he had strong support from Harry Greenwood, perhaps the most important organizer of the Left Wing Slate at the time. One further advantage needs to be noted. Tipler was Canadian born, and for the last five years the local had been led by a British trade unionist. When the vote at the meeting came Tipler won the election by a small margin.

The campaign was a vigorous one. Morgan and the Right Wing emphasized the accomplishments of the last contract negotiations and made a plea for the continuation of good government.⁵² Tipler and the Left ran on the promise that they would bring control of the local back to the membership, and indirectly blamed the problems of negotiations and the subsequent wildcat onto Morgan and the Right Wing Slate. The Left was in

a very strong position in 1967, but the one factor that decisively tipped the balance in their favor was the support of the Autonomy Group. They were ineligible to run during this election but because of their anger at Cooke, Morgan, and the Right they actively worked for the Left Wing Slate in the plant. On voting day the Left swept every position on the executive except two relatively minor posts, and Tipler defeated Morgan by a vote of 3,123 to 1,026. This was the most decisive victory for any group since the political system of slates had emerged at 1005 in 1962.

Ron Tipler, the new president of 1005 in 1967 was more conservative politically than John Morgan, when he had first assumed the presidency in 1962, and yet from 1967 to 1970 the Left Wing Group was able to accomplish far more of their program and bring about many more sweeping changes in the local than any group had done in the past. Some of the union activists accounted for this on the basis of the differing personalities, but the real reasons relate to organizational changes within the local.

The most important of these changes was the strength of the Left Wing Group both in the executive and within the local generally. In Morgan's day the Left had been a small group usually reacting defensively to initiatives taken by Cooke and others. In the period between 1967 and '70 the Left was the largest and best organized group in the local and was able to dominate the political debate at all stages. By now the members of the Left were experienced and able trade unionists with a clear set of objectives. By comparison the Right Wing Group at the time was badly demoralized and lacked leadership. As well, for this period the Autonomy Group essentially did not function. Their leadership had

been suspended from union activities for one year, until September 1967, but because of the Steelworker's constitution on eligibility they were unable to run for any office until 1970.⁵³ The Left, therefore, was able to be successful during this period in part because of the weakness of the other two groups.

Slates are Recognized

The other important organizational change in the local resulted from the assignment of a new Steelworker's representative to the local. From 1961 to 1966 Stew Cooke, the Hamilton Area Director, had the responsibility to service 1005. He followed a policy of open involvement in the political life of the local and consistent support of the Right Wing Group. Although this had been the Steelworker's policy at 1005 since Sefton's day, and steel staff often are involved in the politics of other local unions, by 1966 Cooke's involvement in 1005 was resented to such a degree by both the Left Wing and Autonomy Groups that it became one of the major political issues in the local. When the Left Wing Slate in the 1967 campaign demanded more autonomy for the local, essentially what they were saying was that they wanted Cooke to stay out of the affairs of the local union.

After the 1966 wildcat the steel staff recognized that Cooke would have to be moved out of his responsibilities for 1005, and Bill Elliott, a steel representative working in Edmonton at the time, was brought in to replace him.⁵⁴ It soon became apparent that Elliott's approach to the political activists in the local was totally different than Cooke's. Rather than taking the side of one slate or the other,

Elliott was strictly neutral. Essentially what he did was redefine the role of the Steelworkers' representative to be an advisor to the local on relations to the company and the union, but he did not become actively involved in the political life itself.

It took some time for Elliott to gain the trust of the Left Wing Slate, but one particular incident was mentioned by many people as an important step in his winning their confidence. After the election of 1967 the focus of political life of the union went back to its normal monthly membership meetings when the slates competed for positions on committees or as delegates to conventions. Each of the two slates active at the time ran their election material off on printing presses outside the union hall. Elliott went to the leaders of both sides and offered to let them use the printing equipment in the Steel Hall. At first the Left Wing was suspicious but both sides ultimately accepted the offer and since that time the pattern exists that, except for executive elections, any group can print their material on the Steelworker's equipment. This act symbolized the fact that, with Elliott as their new staff representative, slates would be accepted as a legitimate form of political expression at 1005.

The acceptance of the legitimacy of slates was an important step in the development of the political life of the local, but it was more than simply an attempt to remove a source of conflict. Essentially it was the recognition by the top Steelworkers that slates at 1005, as they existed after 1966 and the suspension of the Autonomy Group, were no longer a threat to the union. Back in 1961-62, when the Left Wing Group

first emerged there was a real fear by the political group who controlled the Canadian Steelworkers such as Larry Sefton, Stew Cooke, Reg Gisborn and others, that the Left intended to create a Communist or at least radical Left Wing local and use this as a base of support to take over the Steelworkers in the country. The Autonomy Group from 1964 to 1966 represented another, and in some ways a more serious threat to that political group because they openly advocated a break away from the International. Cooke's active alignment with the Right Wing through this period was his attempt to head off these potential threats. By 1966-67 the political life of the local had changed to the extent that it was now recognized that the Left Wing Slate at 1005 no longer represented a serious threat. It was obvious that they were not a Communist faction and although they may have sometimes advocated radical causes they were still supporters of the International Union. Cooke's attack on the Autonomy Slate was so successful that they were virtually eliminated from having any meaningful role in the local until 1970. It was only because of these changes that it was possible for the Steelworkers to move a person such as Bill Elliott into 1005 who would play a more neutral political role.

It is also significant that the one political issue that Elliott does become involved in at 1005 is the defence of the International Union. In an interview he said that the reason he does this is because he believes the International brings real benefits to Canadian Steelworkers, but although this may be his belief, attacks on the International are also attacks on the organization as a whole and this remains a threat to the political group who control the Canadian Steelworkers. If another slate

at 1005 again appeared to be making a serious challenge to the leadership and were advocating policies that were a threat to the political control of the people at the top, then it is likely that the staff would revert to a policy, much like Cooke followed, of the promotion of a particular political slate in the local.

It was because of these two changes that occurred in 1967, the almost clean sweep of the executive by the Left Wing Slate, and Bill Elliott's appointment as the Steelworker's representative at 1005, that the new executive headed by Tipler was able to bring fundamental change to the local. Of all those changes the most important was the issue of local autonomy. By this the activists of the Left Wing Slate did not mean independence from the International Union, they meant simply that the decisions affecting the local had to be made by the members and not by Steelworker staff. The consensus among the active unionists was that in 1967 they were able to achieve this very rapidly. One person involved on the Left Wing Slate at the time said:

Tipler and the slate he ran with promised that the main thing they would do was bring back control of the local to the membership, and I believe they succeeded in doing just that. We can now make the proud boast that as much as possible, the membership runs this local.⁵⁵

The new executive of 1005 aggressively set out to make their own policies. For example, at the 23 August 1967 membership meeting, only one month after being elected, a statement on the autonomy of International Unions in Canada which was drafted by Stew Cooke was read out to the meeting. Afterwards a resolution was passed which stated in its preamble:

The executive of the local do not feel that this document is either a comprehensive statement on autonomy or one that stays

within the issue. We recognize the right of Brother Cooke to his opinions and feel sure that Brother Cooke recognizes the right we have to ours...⁵⁶

On many issues the local under Tipler's leadership took Left Wing stands. Alliances were made with the United Electrical Workers, the Rubber-workers and Teamsters, all of whom were Left Wing unions in Hamilton. One activist commented with some irony that:

After Tipler's election it was no longer a sin to be seen in the United Electrical Worker's Hall. Previously if you were seen anywhere near the place you would be tagged a Communist, or others would think some devious plot was underway.⁵⁷

The local joined with these unions in a number of important issues. Perhaps the most important was the demonstrations in Hamilton against the Rand Commission Report on labour legislation organized in 1969. The local also took militant stands against the war in Vietnam, apartheid in South Africa, the fascist regime in Spain, and became involved in controversial community issues. Finally, in bodies such as the Canadian Labour Congress and Ontario Federation of Labour, Ron Tipler and others on the executive spoke consistently in favor of readmitting unions dominated by the Communist Faction such as the United Electrical Workers and the Fishermen. What impact the forceful, and sometimes eloquent, speeches of the leaders of 1005 had on these issues is difficult to say, but what it does show is that the union activists at 1005 were steering an autonomous course in their local union, independent of the influence of steel staff.

However, there was one area that the Left Wing Group had no success in reforming. The group who gained power in 1967 were militants who advocated that there must be fundamental changes in the industrial

relations system. They believed that the grievance system was far too bureaucratized and wanted to use the walkout as a tactic to bring power back to the department level, but they failed to bring about any of these changes. What they found was that the collective bargaining system was too legalized to be changed, and Stelco management was too conservative to even discuss a new type of industrial relations system. Consequently on one of their most fundamental issues the Left Wing Group failed to bring about any substantial changes.

The 1969 Strike

The new sense of autonomy that the Left Wing Group brought to Local 1005 had an important impact on the 1969 set of negotiations. Talks with the company in the past had been directed primarily by the steel staff. There was always a 1005 Negotiating Committee that was actively involved in this process, but their chief job was to advise the negotiators and particularly to sell the contract to the members. The Left Wing Slate intended to change this. They would do their own negotiations, they said, and they were determined that this time they would make a big breakthrough in monetary and fringe benefits.

In March 1968, over a year before the contract was to expire, the seven-man Negotiating Committee was elected. Every one of them was from the Left Wing Slate. Almost immediately they began making preparations. In August of that year they began a series of meetings with every department of the plant to gather information. They met with stewards and chief stewards and received briefs from every committee in the local. Members of the Negotiating Committee were assigned special responsibilities

and were given an adequate budget to collect any information that they needed.

By February of 1969, still several months before the expiration of the contract, the Negotiating Committee had drawn up its set of demands and held two large meetings of the membership to ratify them. Altogether a wage increase of \$3,000 was demanded over the following two years. In the first year they asked for a 74¢ an hour increase and in the second a 66¢ increase for a total of \$1.40 an hour.⁵⁸ A Spectator article of the day commented that Union officials, "Left no doubt in their members' minds that Steelworkers were going after 'the big buck' in this contract."⁵⁹

One other precaution that the 1005 Negotiating Committee took was to leave themselves free to legally strike the plant on July 31, the expiration date of the contract. They did not want a repeat of the '66 wildcat when the workers responded to the slogan "no contract no work" by walking out of the plant on an illegal work stoppage before the negotiations were finished.⁶⁰

Once they were in the negotiations the seven man committee found that they were not nearly as autonomous as they thought they could be. Bill Elliott stayed with them for the entire period and won respect for his ability and patience. Larry Sefton and Stew Cooke played important roles in meeting privately with the company in an attempt to smooth things over. But in spite of this the '69 Negotiating Committee was much more independent than any of their predecessors and when it came down to the final decision it was their voices that mattered.

Provisions in the previous contract had called for formal

negotiations to begin 60 days before the expiration date, but that year they began on April 7th. Both Stelco officials and the 1005 Negotiating Committee were anxious to start because they had a large number of issues to be settled. It was not long before most of the administrative issues were resolved leaving the way clear to discuss money. As early as May 9th the union had warned that there may be a danger of a strike and asked management to submit their final offer at least ten days prior to July 31st,⁶¹ but in spite of the warnings the negotiations went to the final day. It was on July 31st at 10:00 p.m., only two hours before the plant was to close, that the company made the final offer of a \$1.22 an hour increase over three years, but this was too late to prevent a shutdown. Already preparation were well under way to close the plant: the blast furnaces were being banked, the open hearth and coke ovens were cooling down, and the rest of the plant was shutting operations. At midnight on July 31st, precisely the time of the expiration of the contract, all the members of Local 1005 were out of the plant.

Through the months of meetings the union Negotiating Committee had problems keeping unity and when the final offer was made they split: three in favor of accepting the contract, and three against. Tipler broke the tie by voting to accept. Since this executive had been elected in 1967 the local had been fairly open, allowing for the expression of differences of opinion, and in these contract negotiations they followed the same pattern. Rather than trying to sell the contract what they did was simply present it and allow the members to make up their own minds.

It was a hot day on the evening of August 5th when 7,500 members

of Local 1005 met in Civic Stadium to listen to their leaders present and discuss the contract proposal.⁶² Already the membership had been out on strike since the beginning of the month, and they were feeling militant and aggressive. When Tipler got to his feet he was booed and jeered while the three members who rejected the contract were cheered. The arguments presented by both sides were fairly clear. Tipler expressed the feelings of those supporting the contract when he said:

Your Negotiating Committee believes that to subject you to a long strike for the purpose of gaining another 3.4¢ or even 5¢ an hour is just not economically sound.⁶³

Those opposed made pleas on the basis that the company could afford more money and only a strike could get it for them. The results of the vote the following day showed a clear rejection of the contract by a 2 to 1 margin.⁶⁴

There were a number of different causes for the strike. Some people felt that the democratic process that the Negotiating Committee had gone through in arriving at the demands increased the worker's expectations. Once it was fixed in the member's minds that the objective was \$1.40 an hour over two years it was hard to back down. Others said that vacations were a major factor because young workers were not able to get holidays during the summer until they had five years seniority.⁶⁵ Other factors include the large increase in wages won by U.S. Steelworkers in 1968,⁶⁶ the fact that Stelco workers had dropped from being the third highest paid company in Hamilton to eighteenth since 1966,⁶⁷ and that INCO workers in Sudbury had been on strike since July 15th. However, the most important factor contributing to the strike was the years of

frustration and distrust around negotiations that the Stelco workers had experienced since 1958.

The conduct of the 85 day strike was so peaceful that, by contrast to the 1946 strike or the 1966 wildcat, it was almost uneventful. The union co-operated in an orderly shutdown of operations. At first it was decided that there would be mass picketing, but before the strike even began this was reversed and only two or three members manned every gate. Stelco made no attempt to maintain production or move material across the lines and even co-operated with the union to avoid incidents on the picket line. In stark contrast to the past, the most serious problems facing the local during the strike was the handling of medical and life insurance benefits of the members and administering strike fund welfare payments.

It was not until September 22nd that negotiations were resumed, and it took until October 19th before both sides were able to agree on a settlement.

From the outset (of resumption of negotiations) both the company and union negotiators recognized that coming to a satisfactory settlement would be a formidable task. Tipler (and the Union Negotiation Committee) knew that the company had little if any additional money to offer. Meanwhile the company negotiators knew that they would have to come through with something so that Tipler could save face before his membership. Tipler did not push hard during these talks, fully aware of his position. The company negotiators saw the solution as being a rearrangement of the package so as to release some money for distribution in other areas.⁶⁸

When the settlement was reached the entire union Negotiating Committee recommended its acceptance to the membership, and finally on October 19th, 63% of the members who cast a ballot voted in favor of accepting the offer.⁶⁹ The contract cost the company \$1.22 an hour over three years,⁷⁰

almost the identical agreement that had been rejected on August 6th, but the benefits had been juggled to allow for a 10¢ an hour wage increase for the three year life of the agreement.

The accomplishments of the 1969 set of negotiations were considerable. As a result the wages of Canadian Steelworkers moved substantially ahead of their American counterparts and gave them the highest hourly wage rates on the continent.⁷¹ Another important advance for the 1005 activists was that this set of negotiations brought even more independence and autonomy to the local. Larry Sefton was quoted at the time as saying:

In the past national officers had played an important role in contract negotiations. Not so this time. Rather, Tipler took over and gave local company negotiators reason to believe that key decisions in these negotiations were made exclusively by Local 1005 officers.⁷²

The period from 1966 to 1969 was a time of militancy at Local 1005, which was matched in its history only during the 1946 strike. This was a consequence of both societal and internal factors. The Vietnam War, which was at its height during this time, created high rates of productivity and profits and low rates of unemployment, but increased inflation eroded the living standards of workers. Added to this there was an increase in young workers hired after 1963, many of whom were dissatisfied with the authority structure they found in blue collar work. Finally, the period of the late 1960's was a time of protest across North America and, although it is difficult to estimate whether this had an impact on levels of militancy of Canadian workers it could well have had an important effect.⁷³

These societal factors were matched by particular influences at

Stelco which increased militancy. Many workers felt dissatisfied with the results of the three sets of negotiations prior to 1966, and they blamed the union leadership for this as much as the company. The economic situation, therefore, put Stelco workers in a very strong negotiating position and a wide variety of factors made them dissatisfied and determined to win their goals no matter what the costs. This resulted in the uncontrolled outburst of the 1966 wildcat and the 1969 strike which was supported against the recommendation of the leadership.

Yellow and Green Slates

The 1969 strike represents the pinnacle of the prestige and power of the Left Wing Slate, and after that time their influence began to wane. In part this was because this slate advocated more militant action and after 1969 Stelco workers moved from these demands, but it also was because the strike created internal disputes with the group that were never resolved. The most serious and long lasting of those divisions was the split in the Negotiating Committee. The prestige of the four people who had recommended acceptance of the contract in August was enhanced, and Tipler particularly emerged as a person who could provide leadership and make tough decisions, but many members of the slate blamed the strike on the three members who had voted against the contract in August and this caused considerable hard feelings. It is interesting that not one of the three men who recommended the rejection have been able to get re-elected to an executive position in the local since that time. Some people felt the reason for this was that the membership scapegoated the three of them for the hardships experienced during the strike.

There may be some truth in this, but it is also worth noting that people who were on the Left Wing Slate at that time still expressed distrust of these men almost eight years after the event. This would suggest that a major reason why they could not get re-elected was because they could not get the full support from members of their own group.

Because of these factors, in the 1970 elections held only nine months after the end of the strike, the Left Wing Slate was no longer the unified group they were in 1967. Now they were the incumbent slate forced to defend their record and their conduct during the strike. The Right Wing Group, on the other hand, was organizationally in a much stronger position in 1970. In the previous election they had been badly split, but now John Morgan had left the local to take a Steelworker's staff position, and their major leader was Jim Coffey, a likeable Scot with the ability to make people work together. In the 1970 elections the Right did not field a candidate for president because they felt they could not defeat Tipler. They advocated a program, different from the Left Wing in that they gave strong support to the International, but accepted the principle of strong local autonomy.

The one major change in the 1970 election was that this was the first contest when the Autonomy Group ran a slate of candidates. They called themselves the Stewards' Slate and took as their major plank the autonomy of the local, but no longer were they the aggressive militant group advocating a break away from the International. Led by Harold Hambleton, who ran as president, the group included many of the people who had been suspended in 1966. This was to be the first electoral test

of the Autonomy, and union activists at the time realized that if they did well it could totally change the political life at 1005 and possibly the entire Canadian Steelworkers.

The outcome of the election was unequivocal. The Stewards' Slate won only one position on the executive and that was for a relatively minor post. Leaders in the Steelworkers felt this was a rejection of the nationalist plank, but the reason why the group did so badly was not so much a rejection of the demand for independence as it was a lack of organizational support across the plant, and the disunity of the group. For three years the leaders of the Autonomy Group had been inactive, first because of their suspension and second because it took another two years to get back their eligibility to run for office. During this time they were not running for conventions and committees of the local, and gradually that broad base of support necessary to get elected in Local 1005 dried up.

An even more important factor that contributed to their defeat was internal dissensions. When Hammond ran for the Liberals in the provincial election many of the group's supporters became disillusioned, and after his defeat he took no more part in the political life of the local. In 1967, another important member of the group, Pete Curtis, quit his job at Stelco and began work with the CNTU. His primary objective was to raid Local 1005. For a time in 1967-68 there was an active campaign by the CNTU to sign up members, and there can be little doubt that some members of the Autonomy Group, disgruntled with their treatment by the Steelworkers, helped him. Most of the group, however, opposed any

form of raiding, and they worked as actively against Curtis and the CNTU as any member of the Left or Right Wing Slates. The most important split in the Autonomy Group was between those who supported the Liberal Party and those who were supporters of the then prominent Waffle Faction of the New Democratic Party. By 1970 the Liberals within the group wanted to deemphasize the autonomy issue, while the Wafflers wanted to emphasize the twin issues of independence and building a socialist trade union movement. All of these organizational problems and ideological differences within the group were the reasons for their defeat in the 1970 rather than the rejection of the platform of Autonomy by the 1005 membership.

The real winners of the election were the Right Wing. They captured altogether six positions on the twelve man executive, The Autonomy, or Steward's Slate, elected one, and the Left Wing won five. The Left, however, held the top positions of President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary and Grievance Chairman. Jim Coffer, the leader of the Right, was elected to the Vice-Presidency, but almost all of the lower positions were controlled by the Right.

The next three years, between 1970 and 1973, a confusing series of political shifts went on in the local. Not long after the election, Ron Tipler began approaching people in the Left Wing Group with the proposition that they should merge with the Right and make one strong political slate. He argued that slates were not good for the local because they promoted dissention and there was not that much difference between the two groups. Key people in the Left Wing such as Harry Greenwood, Ted Powell and Bob McSevney refused this offer but many others accepted and

slowly the Left began to disintegrate as many of their members followed Tipler into the Right Wing. A further blow to the Left came in December 1972 when Tipler announced his resignation to take an executive position with Stelco. Jim Coffey, the Vice-President and leader of the Right, automatically became President and in the by-election the Right Wing candidate became the new Vice-President.

By the 1973 election the most powerful group was the Right Wing Slate. They were unified behind Jim Coffey, a popular presidential candidate, and they now had in their slate a number of the people in the Left. The Autonomy Group was still alive in spite of their defeat in 1970, but they were weak organizationally and still badly split between the militant unionists led by Cec Taylor, who advocated autonomy from the International and those who wanted primarily an election machine. There was also a small remnant of the Left Wing Group who had considerable political experience but were now almost isolated. Finally, just before the election, there was a merger of the Autonomy with the remnants of the Left Wing. This was the way one of the Left Wingers described how it came about:

The Autonomy were drawing up a slate and those of us in the Left started organizing a group as well. So this just didn't make any sense. We had a meeting with them and at that meeting we decided that those of us remaining on the Left and those remaining from the Autonomy would make one slate. Since the Left was always a group that believed in Canadian autonomy anyway, that was the common denominator that we could all support.⁷⁴

In reality the issue of autonomy was not that important to that group and in fact that election marks the end, at least for the time being, of ideological politics at 1005. It is significant that it was at this

time that the groups stopped calling themselves Right, Left and Autonomy and took on neutral names.

When we used to put out slates for elections at the plant gates or in membership meetings we always used the same coloured paper. The Right Wing always used green, the Left used white and the Autonomy used yellow. Well with the break up of the Left and their merger with the Autonomy, the first leaflet that was put out the group used yellow paper, and that's been used ever since. White is still used for independents. So today we use the names 'Green Slate' and the 'Yellow Slate.'⁷⁵

The change in terminology represents a change in the way the union activists saw the slates. It was a tacit recognition that ideology did not form the basis of difference between the two slates any longer and to use the terms such as "Left," "Right," or "Autonomy" was a misnomer.

The reasons for this lack of ideology in this period again relate to broad economic and political factors. The era of the 1970's has been a time of rapid inflation but also a period of high rates of unemployment. Stelco workers, because they have been able to win a cost of living clause in 1969 and the success of their subsequent contract negotiations, have been able to keep abreast of inflation and continue to improve their standard of living. Rates of unemployment, on the other hand, weakened labour's negotiating position. These economic conditions tended to reduce the militancy of the rank and file and is reflected in the lessening of polarization within the local.

There were other political reasons why the ideological differences between the slates began to break down. By 1973 there was little difference of opinion on how the local should be run. Almost all the people who had been in the Right, Left, and Autonomy Slates now generally accepted the position that there should be no interference in the internal affairs

of the local union by the International, and, for that matter, the policy of the International was one of non-interference in the local. The other big difference on policy had been around the direction the International Union should take, but because of political changes external to the local, differences between the slates in 1005 modified. The Left Wing Slate had traditionally taken a position that supported the policies of Left Wing Unions in Canada. By 1973 much of the hostility between the NDP and Communists began to lessen and as a result unions such as the United Electrical Workers and the Fishermen were readmitted to the CLC and other labour bodies. The issue of Canadian autonomy for International Unions also lost support by unionists when the Waffle Faction was ordered to disband by the NDP and later collapsed. Because of these factors political slates at 1005 no longer represented important ideological differences. They were election machines to get one group of unionists or another into positions of power in the local.

The results of the 1973 election showed an almost clean sweep for the Green, or old Right Wing Slate. They elected ten members of the twelve man executive. The Yellow Slate elected one to a relatively minor post, and Cec Taylor, who had long been a member of the Autonomy Group but this time ran as an independent, was elected Grievance Committee Chairman. Jim Coffey, won the position of President handily over Harry Greenwood, the one time chief organizer of the Left Wing Slate, and now the leader of the Yellow Group.

The next three years were successful ones for the Green Slate, but the Yellow Group continued to have serious organizational difficulties.

Their most persistent problem came from Cec Taylor. In the 1973 election he had run and was elected as an independent, but afterwards he rejoined the Yellow Group and played a leadership role with them. His experience in the local went back prior to the 1966 wildcat, and he had held the position of Grievance Committee Chairman since 1971. Although there were complaints that he was unpredictable, Taylor was a forceful speaker, a recognized expert on grievances and an able organizer with extensive contacts across the plant. He would be an asset to any of the slates.

The one major difference between Taylor and the other members of the group was that he was a radical Canadian autonomist. In the late 1960's and early 70's he had played an active role in the Waffle Wing of the NDP. Through these contacts he had become a deeply committed socialist and his belief in autonomy for Canadian Steelworkers was based on a left wing nationalist critique of unions. Taylor's involvement with the Waffle was a deep and consistent one. For years he was in contact with the top leadership of the group, regularly attended their meetings and when the Waffle finally disintegrated he kept contact with many of its former members.

After the 1973 election Taylor rejoined the Yellow Slate, but it was never a comfortable union. The Yellow Group was now primarily a pragmatic political slate made up of New Democrats and Liberals who got together primarily out of a desire to get elected rather than any attempt to achieve a political program or ideology. When Taylor rejoined the group tension soon arose. The others saw him as "Pushing his socialist--Waffle views." Another thing that others deeply resented was that Taylor

brought Anne Forrest, a woman he had met in the Waffle, to the slate meetings and insisted that she be allowed to speak on the issues. Finally the split came. As one person put it:

It's a question of whether Taylor was kicked out of the group or resigned. The point is that he had an argument with the group and he left.⁷⁶

According to Taylor the problem was around ideology:

I was fed up with the type of people I was running with because they were no different than the type of people I was trying to replace.⁷⁷

When Taylor left the Yellow Slate he decided what he would do is organize a new political group in the local that would be both nationalistic and socialistic. He began by running a series of classes, along with Anne Forrest, directed at young union activists, to teach them about issues such as contracts, negotiations, grievances, the steel industry, the trade union movement, and so on. In spite of being accused by some of the established political figures at 1005 of being a "school for the Waffle," the classes were fairly successful in attracting a small group of young people anxious to be union activists. In the spring of 1975 Taylor had to discontinue the classes because of the start of negotiations.

Negotiations and Elections

The 1975 Union Negotiating Committee had members from the Yellow and Green Slates on it as well as Taylor. It was not a difficult set of negotiations. Various members of the committee and the Steelworker's Staff agreed that the feelings from the beginning was that they would be able to get an agreement, but throughout the negotiations Taylor was a constant source of trouble to the others. The interviews for this study

were completed only a year after the negotiations, and the feelings members of both the Yellow and Green Slate expressed towards Taylor were surprisingly bitter. He was accused of bringing in outside people from the Waffle to help him and of being uncooperative. At one point the company wanted to have him removed from a committee, and ultimately he was replaced by Stew Cooke.

The negotiations went on to July 29th, only two days before the contract was to expire, and when it came to its acceptance the union's committee was split. Six of the members voted in favor of accepting the offer and one, Cec Taylor, was opposed. When they returned to Hamilton the committee met with the steward's body who turned the offer down by a large majority. For a time it seemed like the contract would be rejected by the membership. Taylor and his supporters put out a leaflet urging rejection, and at a large membership meeting to discuss the contract he made the statement that he believed they should go on strike even though it might take six months to settle. However, the contract was accepted by a narrow margin of 4,529 in favor and 4,115 against.⁷⁸

In the contract negotiations Taylor's stand appeared to improve his political stature in the local. He had been decisive and forceful and he maintained an image of militancy. However, two things reflected badly on his leadership. The first was when he told the membership meeting that if necessary he would take them out on strike for six months. Many workers at Stelco have experienced long strikes and they know that six months on the picket line would be disastrous to themselves and their families. A number of union activists were convinced that this

statement alone lost Taylor the vote. The second factor was completely beyond the control of anyone in the local. On October 15th of that year the Federal Government imposed Wage and Price Controls. The 1005 contract was settled only two and a half months before and by contrast to what other unions were forced to accept by the government, this agreement now appeared to be one of the best contracts in the country.

All of the slates could claim certain credits from the 1975 contract negotiations. The Green and Yellow Slates could say that through their efforts the local got one of the best contracts in the country, and, although some of Taylor's actions reflected badly on his leadership ability, the image of militancy that he emerged with fitted well with the new group that he was attempting to build oriented around the twin issues of Canadian independence for Steelworkers and a socialist trade union movement.

By early 1976 it was clear that the executive elections would be a three-way contest. The Green Slate again was in a very strong position. Jim Coffey had retired for health reasons in February 1975,⁷⁹ and now the president of 1005 and the leader of the Green Group was Walter Valchuck, a person with a large following among ethnic production workers in the plant. In the by-election for Vice-President, caused by Coffey's retirement, Harry Greenwood had been elected, and with the approach of the executive elections he was the natural candidate for president of the Yellow Slate.

Taylor had made it known that he intended to run for president in 1976 and after the negotiations were over he began gathering together

a set of people to run on his slate. This was difficult because his radical socialist and nationalist ideology did not have a wide appeal among rank and file members and also because he tended to centralize power into his own hands. When the election came in June, while both the Green and Yellow Slates ran people for every position, the Taylor Slate ran only seven people for the twelve man executive.⁸⁰

All three slates waged active campaigns in the election. Each of them put out several pieces of literature and campaigned across the plant. The results showed that the Green Slate dominated by electing five of their members onto the executive; four of them to top positions. The Yellow Slate won four positions, but, with the exception of the Grievance Committee Chairman, they were all minor posts. The Taylor Group won two minor positions and one independent was elected. In the election for President Walter Valchuck took the highest number of votes, Cec Taylor came second, and Harry Greenwood ran several hundred votes behind.⁸¹

Most of the empirical work for this study was undertaken in the summer of 1976, and the elections that spring are a convenient place to break off this historical analysis. The political situation in the local as of that summer was that the Green Slate was in a strong position because they controlled the top executive positions, they were well organized, and, although they may have had problems with their top leaders, they had a reserve of talented, ambitious members. The way they perceived themselves and were perceived by others is that they were an established group of unionists who had been tested under fire.

Members of the Yellow Group that summer were feeling more confident

than they had since coming together in 1973. Although their top leaders were virtually all defeated in the election they had elected a number of young aggressive men to lower positions on the executive and the Grievance Committee who prided themselves on a practical type of militancy designed to appeal to the membership. This group appeared to be on the rise in popularity, and if they could solve their chronic problem of leadership they could possibly move into a position of power in the next election.

The Taylor Group was much weaker than either of the other two and suffered major internal divisions. Their one asset was their leader Cec Taylor who remained a major political figure in the local, but there were very few of them, at most eight people, and they were young, had little union experience, and were far from agreement on the principles of socialism and autonomy.

The only prediction that can be made about the politics of Local 1005 with any confidence is that the political life is bound to continue to be a rich, complex phenomenon, sensitive to both internal and external economic and political influences.

Footnotes

¹Maxwell Flood, Task Force on Labour Relations Study No. 15, Wildcat Strike in Lake City, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970) p. 5. I am indebted to Flood's treatment of the wildcat for many of the facts in this analysis.

²Ibid., p. 7.

³Ibid., p. 8.

⁴Ibid., p. 84.

⁵Ibid., p. 9.

⁶Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁷Ibid., p. 10.

⁸Ibid., p. 10.

⁹Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 11.

¹¹Ibid., p. 91.

¹²Ibid., p. 12.

¹³Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁴William B. Freeman, "Interviews with Local 1005 Activists, 1976" (unpublished Interview Material) Vol. III, p. 156.

¹⁵Maxwell Flood, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 16-19.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 24.

²⁰Ibid., p. 28.

²¹Ibid., p. 29.

²²Ibid., p. 92.

²³Ibid., p. 88.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 31-34.

²⁵Ibid., p. 37.

²⁶Ibid., p. 40.

²⁷Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 33.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 40-41.

²⁹Ibid., p. 39.

³⁰Ibid., p. 42.

³¹Ibid., p. 43.

³²Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 45.

³³Ibid., Vol. II, p. 46.

³⁴Ibid., Vol. III, p. 156.

³⁵Ibid., Vol. III, p. 155.

³⁶Ibid., Vol. I, p. 8.

³⁷It was quite unusual that the election for delegates for this convention was at the plant gates rather than at the union hall. Inform-

ants who were in the Autonomy Group at the time claimed that the reason for this was that the Right Wing, who controlled the executive, felt they could defeat the Autonomy at the plant gates. When they failed Cooke became particularly worried and laid his charges.

³⁸James P. Griffin, Chairman, Director District 26, & Jean Gerin-Lajoie, Secretary, Director District 5, "Report of Commission of the International Executive Board on the Appeal of F. Stewart Cooke, Local Union 2853 v. (19) Members of Local 1005, District 6," (United Steelworkers of America, 20 March 1967) p. 2.

³⁹Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁰Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 82.

⁴¹Flood, op. cit., p. 97.

⁴²Griffin and Gerin-Lajoie, op. cit., p. 3.

⁴³Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 12.

⁴⁵Freeman, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 31.

⁴⁶Ibid., Vol. III, p. 32.

⁴⁷Ibid., Vol. I, p. 80.

⁴⁸Ibid., Vol. I, p. 8.

⁴⁹Ibid., Vol. III, p. 151.

⁵⁰Ibid., Vol. III, p. 50.

⁵¹Ibid., Vol. I, p. 9.

⁵²Flood, op. cit., p. 98.

⁵³The Steelworkers Constitution on eligibility for any office in the union reads: "The member shall have been in continuous good standing for a period of twenty four months immediately preceding the election."

The one year suspension, therefore, automatically meant a three year ineligibility for the Autonomy Group.

⁵⁴Cooke remained the Hamilton Area Director of the Steelworkers until March 1971 when he moved to Toronto to be the assistant of Lynn Williams the Director of District 6. In February 1977 he was elected, on the establishment slate, as the Director of District 6. In that election Local 1005 voted by a small margin for his opponent. This can only be accounted for by the unpopularity that he generated when he was the staff representative at 1005, but, by a curious twist of political fortunes, some of the people who had bitterly opposed Cooke from 1961 to 1966 at 1005 supported him during this election.

⁵⁵Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 49.

⁵⁶Local 1005 minutes, August 23, 1967.

⁵⁷Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 50.

⁵⁸The demand called for a 49¢ an hour increase in wages for the first year and 25¢ an hour the second. The difference between this 74¢ demand and the \$1.40 was in fringe benefits.

⁵⁹The Spectator, (Hamilton, Ontario: Southam Press) February 20, 1969.

⁶⁰In his paper on the 1969 Stelco Strike R. Malanchuk quotes a Financial Post article which said the conciliation report on the Stelco negotiations was issued by the Ministry of Labour in time to allow the workers to strike on July 31, 1969. The reason given was: "Labour has increasingly attacked the conciliation process for dragging out bargaining months after the expiry date...the speed with which the conciliation reports were published at INCO and Stelco indicated that the Ontario Labour Department thinks labour has a point." However, Malanchuk and the Financial Post article miss the point altogether. Everyone involved knew that if the Stelco workers were not allowed to strike legally on the 31st of July there was a good chance they would wildcat again. No one in the government, company or union wanted that to happen. To them all it was much preferable to have a legal strike than an illegal walkout. R. Malanchuk, "Stelco Strike 1969," (unpublished paper, University of Western Ontario School of Business Administration, 1971) p. 21.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 14.

⁶²Ibid., p. 1.

⁶³Ibid., p. 26.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 1.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 25.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 6.

⁶⁷The Spectator, op. cit., February 20, 1969.

⁶⁸Malanchuk, op. cit., p. 28. Malanchuk seems to take the view that Tipler was the sole person making these decisions on the side of the union. This was far from the case. The important people on the union side of this set of negotiations were: Tipler, Harry Greenwood, Bob Reilly, Harry Hynd, and Ted Powell, but there were many other people that had an effect on the evolving union position.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 29.

⁷⁰The Globe and Mail, October 18, 1969.

⁷¹Malanchuk, op. cit., p. 29.

⁷²Ibid., p. 29.

⁷³Pentland details some of the reasons for this rising militancy. H.C. Pentland, A Study of the Changing Social, Economic and Political Background of the System of Industrial Relations, (Ottawa: Task Force on Labour Relations, 1968).

⁷⁴Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 98.

⁷⁵Ibid., Vol. II, p. 96.

⁷⁶Ibid., Vol. II, p. 99.

⁷⁷Ibid., Vol. III, p. 35.

⁷⁸The Spectator, August 1, 1975.

⁷⁹Steel Shots, (Hamilton: Publication of Local 1005 of the United Steelworkers of America) February 1975.

⁸⁰It is significant that the term "Taylor Slate" was the name usually applied by the activists to this group. This reflects the fact that Taylor was such a central person to the slate. Although the other two groups had very important leaders none of them were as indispensable as Taylor was to this group.

⁸¹The Spectator, op. cit., May 1, 1976.

CHAPTER 7

HISTORY AND THE POLITICS OF LOCAL 1005

The way most sociologists have studied the political life of organizations is to focus on immediate internal features and ignore historical development and change. This "snapshot view" of organizations has led to serious distortions. If we had taken this approach to the study of Local 1005 we would have dismissed as irrelevant the fact that the political system of the local has changed and adapted to a wide variety of societal influences. But this dynamic relationship between the society and the organization is one of the most important aspects of the political life of any group, and if we can understand these influences we have gone a considerable distance towards appreciating the forces which shape political life. This chapter focuses on this relationship by first examining how economic and political forces have shaped the trade union movement and Local 1005, and secondly by showing how in different stages in its historical development the internal political life of 1005 has adapted to broad societal influences.

Economic Influences

The history of Local 1005 illustrates that economic factors have always had an overwhelming effect on the trade union movement in general and 1005 in particular. The most fundamental influence was the rise of industrialization in Canada and the rapid transformation of the economy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries from a system characterized

predominantly by independent ownership and production to the factory system. The Steel Company of Canada was part of this industrial movement. Stelco emerged as a consequence of the country's need for steel and it grew tremendously because the industry was protected by the tariffs of John A. Macdonald's National Policy. The company's location in Hamilton and its phenomenal growth from the merger in 1910 to the present day are also a reflection of broad economic factors. All of these influences are pre-conditions for the establishment of the union and fundamental forces in its growth and development.

Working conditions at companies like Stelco in its early years were also a major contributing cause to the emergence of the union. Across the world the growth of industrialization has caused serious dislocations in the lives of workers and their families as they flooded into cities to find work and faced radical changes in the type of work they had to perform. E.P. Thompson, writing mainly about the British experience notes:

The transition to mature industrial society entailed a severe restructuring of working habits--new disciplines, new incentives, and a new human nature upon which these incentives could bite effectively.¹

Details of the difficult working conditions in early Canadian factories come to us from many sources but the most thorough study of the effects of industrialization is contained in the federal Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital carried out in the 1880's. The testimony of this commission reveal the widespread use of child labour, long hours, authoritarian discipline, appalling working conditions and low wages.² The factory system and the dependence of

workers on wage labour as the sole means of support forced the working class into a precarious economic position in which they were ruthlessly exploited.

The sketchy details that survive of work conditions at the Hamilton Blast Furnace Company, and after 1910, the Steel Company of Canada, indicate that better wages were paid in this industry than others but working conditions were as bad or worse. Twelve hour shifts seven days a week existed throughout the company's mills until the mid 1920's, safety conditions were so bad that every year several workers were killed or seriously injured, and foremen imposed harsh discipline. Photographs taken prior to World War I show dingy smoke filled mills that are cluttered with a confused jumble of equipment. Accounts indicate that heavy labour was the rule and anyone not able to keep up with the pace was soon removed.

It was these types of economic conditions which played a fundamental role in creating the demands for a union by Stelco workers. Around the world workers employed under conditions of industrial capitalism soon found they were powerless if they acted alone. It was only by collective action based on their power to stop or disrupt production that they could begin to counter-act the overwhelming power of the owners and managers. At the Steel Company of Canada the workers responded to these conditions by spontaneously organizing different forms of collective action to gain bargaining power with the company.

This brief outline serves to illustrate that the growth of unions, including Local 1005, was as a result of the development of industrial

capitalism. As part of these changes the mode of production was transformed, the wage labour system was instituted, work was specialized and degraded,³ and a class system emerged which pitted the propertyless worker against the tremendous economic and political power of those who owned the means of production. To meet these great dislocations workers developed unions to help them maintain and improve their economic conditions and develop some degree of political power.

Broad economic influences have also had a real impact on the growth and militancy of trade unions. Two examples drawn from the early history of union activity at the Steel Company will suffice. It is no accident that the first major organizing effort at Stelco happened in 1919. In the last years of the First World War rapid inflation seriously eroded the living standards of the working class across Canada. This along with widespread suspicion of wartime profiteering and rising unemployment at the end of the war led to labour unrest and working class militancy on an unprecedented scale in this country. At Stelco these economic conditions made a major contribution to the establishment and growth of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin workers.

By contrast, the 1920's was a period of union stagnation in Canada and at the same time the AA lodge at Stelco shrank and finally at the depth of the depression in the early 1930's it disappeared. The economic reasons for this are complicated. Much of the 1920's was a period of business expansion and under conditions such as this unions normally grow in size.⁴ Despite the prosperity, however, unemployment remained relatively high in the 1920's.⁵ Wages gradually improved while the cost of

living remained stable. These economic factors "tended to generate complacency among large groups of workers who in other circumstances would have been amenable to unionization."⁶

This relationship between the level of militancy and economic conditions have long been recognized. Marx believed that revolution would come only in the midst of a severe economic depression.⁷ The American historian John R. Commons took a similar position. He wrote:

In...periods of rising prices, when the cost of living was out-leaping the rise of wages, when business was prosperous and labor in demand, then aggressive strikes, trade unionism, class struggle, suddenly spread over the industrial sections of the country. At the other extreme, in the periods of falling prices, with their depression of business and distress by unemployment, labor, in its helplessness and failure of defensive strikes has turned to politics, panaceas or schemes of universal reform.⁸

This point is an important one in trying to understand the activities of trade unionists as well as the internal political life of unions such as Local 1005. In times when rank and file members feel secure but believe that they are being unjustly treated they will militantly demand redress of their grievances and expect their leaders to achieve it for them. Under more favorable economic conditions for the working class when union members feel satisfied, or when conditions are so bad that they dare not make demands, the membership will view their leaders and their unions as adequately representing them. The response of the membership to economic conditions, therefore, determines the level of militancy and this in turn profoundly influences the political life of unions.

Economic factors, therefore, play a major role in shaping the political life of unions. Not only does the economic structure of society provide the reasons for the existence of unions but specific economic

factors provide the framework within which the union operates and the types of demands the political system must try to satisfy. Economic conditions, in other words, provide the foundation or substructure for the union and its political life.

Political Influences

There are another set of societal factors, that can generally be termed political influences, which play an important role in shaping organizations. Many groups are influenced by such factors as legislation, political ideology, and various social movements. Local 1005 provides many examples of how these broad political influences shape its internal activities.

The very idea of trade unions as a vehicle for the protection of workers did not come from Stelco workers themselves but was part of liberal and socialist struggles of the 19th and 20th centuries whose intent was the emancipation of workers. As well the notion of participatory democracy, which has had such a profound effect on the internal life of 1005, in a similar way, stems from ideas at least as old as the Greek city states and has been modified by centuries of political theory and practice.

Local 1005 has been shaped by many political influences that originate in the Canadian and American trade union movement. The founding of the Amalgamated Association in 1919 at Stelco was fundamentally the consequence of the worker's economic grievances, but it was also influenced by such political activities as the Winnipeg General Strike, the rapid growth of trade unions, and most important the steel strike that

affected the entire industry in the United States during the fall of that year.

Similarly in the 1920's the stagnation of the AA lodge at Stelco was in part a result of the economic conditions of the decade but there also were political causes. Capitalists mounted an effective campaign against unions. Jamieson points out:

The social climate and prevailing ideology of the times with the idealization of 'free enterprise' and competitive individualism, were favourable to employers and hostile to unions. Employers in many industries were able to take advantage of the situation to launch a wide spread attack on unionism. A nation-wide campaign for the 'open shop' was given the appealing title of the 'American Plan.'⁹

Finally the trade union movement of the 1920's was obsolete and ineffective. The dominant mode of organization was along craft lines and the Trades and Labour Congress (The Canadian affiliate of the American Federation of Labor) was hostile to an industrial style of organizing. Changes in the Canadian economy were drawing increasing numbers of workers into industrial firms like Stelco with a large unskilled and semi-skilled workforce. Craft unions had little interest in organizing workers of this type and there was no other group willing to take on the task. Not surprisingly, with this combination of factors unions languished in the 1920's.

The growth of the Steelworkers in the 1930's and 40's is an even more striking example of the influence of political movements on Stelco workers. The early success of the CIO and the Steelworkers in the United States was the primary reason why the small union group, centered in the Sheet Mill, gave up on the task of organizing along craft lines and dedicated themselves to the job of establishing an industrial union across

the entire plant. As well as this the organizational help and financial resources that the Steelworkers Union were able to give the small band of unionists at Stelco helped immeasurably in the creation of the local. Had there not been a United Steelworkers of America there could still have been an industrial union representing the workers of Stelco, but it would have been much different than the organization we know today.

These few examples drawn from the early historical development of Local 1005 show clearly the important effect of broad political influences on organizations. Another factor that has been important for the development of unions in a society such as our own has been legislation. Under Canadian federal laws in effect from 1907 to 1944 trade union activists were given the right to organize unions but were afforded little protection. Because of this the Steelworkers at Stelco in the late 1930's were forced to operate as small clandestine groups constantly concerned about their own security. Partly as a result of this only the politically committed dared to play an active role in the local. After PC 1003 was made law in 1944 unionists could operate with little fear of retaliation and many more people became involved in the organization.

Finally, political parties and other social movements have had a great effect on the political life of unions. At Local 1005, for example, Communists, Liberals, and CCF/NDP members have openly competed for power. In each case the ideology of the political party has shaped the objectives of the unionists. There have also been a number of social movements such as religion, temperance, and nationalism which have influenced the local.

This host of political influences originating in the society, therefore, have had a real impact on the political life of the organization. They both restrict the actions of union members and provide models or influences which shapes behavior. As a result, much like economic factors, political influences play a fundamental role in shaping organizations.

Local 1005 as Part of a Social Movement

It has been clearly demonstrated that organizations such as local unions have been shaped by broad economic and political factors. As one final piece of evidence of the influence of these broad societal factors it is useful to see the way Local 1005 has been part of a broad social movement which affected the entire Canadian working class.

Table 7:1 illustrates that from 1936 to 1946, the decade when the Steelworkers first started organizing to the time when the work force was totally organized, was the most rapid period of union growth in Canada. In these ten years the percentage of the non-agricultural paid workers jumped over 11% from 16.2% of the work force to 27.9%. After this time the rate of unionization slowed considerably.

In the Hamilton area the unionization of the work force of the decade 1941 (the first year figures are available) to 1951 show a four fold increase. Conditions of the late depression, the war years and the immediate post war periods brought a dramatic growth in the trade union movement across Canada and particularly to the manufacturing centre of Hamilton. There can be little doubt that Stelco workers were influenced by these changes and this contributed directly to the growth and establishment of their union.

TABLE 7:1 Union Membership in Canada as a Percentage of Non-Agricultural Paid Workers 1921-1976.¹⁰

1921*	16.0%
1926	12.3
1931	15.3
1936	16.2
1941	18.0
1946	27.9
1951	28.4
1956	33.3
1961	31.6
1966	30.7
1971	33.6
1976	37.3

TABLE 7:2 Union Membership in the Hamilton Area and Indices of Growth 1941-1951¹¹

Year	Membership	Index
1941	6,426	100.0
1943	11,848	184.4
1945	10,276	159.9
1947	19,330	300.8
1949	21,550	335.4
1951	26,650	414.7

Political Economy and the Political Life of Local 1005

We have demonstrated that Local 1005 has been shaped in very fundamental ways by economic and political factors. These same factors have been a primary influence on the political life of the local. At every historical period in the development of 1005 the union's political life has been influenced by a complex set of societal factors which has given a shape and direction to political behavior in the local that has made it uniquely different from other periods. Here we analyse and high-

* First year the figures are available.

light these factors and show how the political life of 1005 has adapted to these influences.

Essentially there has been four stages in the political life of 1005. The first, stretching from the founding of the local in 1936 to the 1946 strike, was characterized by the struggle between the left and right factions; the second period, from 1946 to 1958 was a time of oligarchical control by the CCF Group; the third was a time of polarized politics which stretched from 1958 to 1970; and the final period, from 1970 to the present has been a period of institutionalized slates. Each of these eras will be analysed to show the way economic and political influences originating in the society shaped the local's internal political life.

(i) Left and Right Factions 1936-1946:

The political life of 1005 during this early period was one of open competition between the Communist and CCF groups within the local. This struggle to dominate the union began as only an undercurrent in the late 1930's but by 1945 the conflict between the factions was very intense. Finally the CCF Group clearly emerged as the victor after the 1946 strike.

The economic factors that supported this political system are complex. The late 1930's with depressed economic conditions and high unemployment was not a time favorable to union growth but the grievances of the workers were so considerable that they turned to unions in both Canada and the United States. However, because the Canadian legislation of the day allowed employers to fire anyone at will, and this could mean years of unemployment in the midst of the depression, only the politically

motivated became actively involved in the political life of the local. It was radicals like Tom McClure and CCF members such as Milt Montgomery who played a prominent part in the early days of the local and their debates led to a polarization between the Left and Right factions.

The Second World War and the economic and political changes that it brought radically transformed the local. The need to sustain the war effort forced the government to abandon their policy of laissez faire and begin to manage the economy. They directed investment and consumption; full employment was maintained; and wages, prices and savings were controlled. As a result, shortly after the war began in 1939 the depression was ended and boom conditions prevailed.

With this improved economic security many Canadian workers began in earnest their struggle to gain union recognition and improved conditions, but this was not easily attained. Employers stubbornly resisted these demands. Pentland aptly describes the developing conflict:

Throughout most of the war an immovable object--the intransigence of employers--was poised against an irresistible force--the determination of Canadian workers to bargain collectively through unions.¹²

The 1943 wave of strikes, which seriously disrupted wartime production, forced a reluctant government to intervene in fear that the whole economy might dissolve in conflict. PC 1003 protecting the rights of workers to organize was passed but:

It was instituted grudgingly, by a reactionary government driven into a corner but still determined to preserve the unilateral authority of employers and regulate labour to a subservient position as much as possible.¹³

The union at Stelco was influenced by these economic changes, but

other political factors shaped the local as well. The contest between the CCF and Communist factions grew intense during this wartime period. Tom McClure, the 1005 president for most of the war years, fought consistently to have the local union follow the Communist Party policies. After Russia entered the war in 1941 McClure advocated that the first principle of the union should be to ensure high productivity for the war effort, and his influence was such that he kept Stelco workers from joining the strikes that affected much of Canadian industry in 1943. In the long run, however, these policies seriously damaged the Left Wing Group in the local. Economic conditions were such that workers were encouraged to act militantly during the war and when the Communists refused to go in that direction they turned to the CCF group for leadership.

The 1946 strike was influenced by a complex network of economic and political factors. At the conclusion of the war, after years of experiencing the security of high employment but controlled wages, many Stelco workers were determined to win a better income and major concessions for their union. But while economic conditions led to militancy on the part of workers, fears that the depression would resume and a deep seated conservatism led employers to aggressively resist the unions in return. This clash of wills between unionists and employers resulted in a series of strikes and the struggle at Stelco was one of the most important. The union victory in this strike, led by members of the CCF Group, marks the end of the influence of the old Left Wing that had played such a major role in the early days of the local.

Through this entire period, therefore, economic and political

conditions of the society played a very important role in shaping the activities of the local and its internal political life. Similar patterns can be found in all the other stages in the history of Local 1005.

(ii) Oligarchical Control 1946-1958:

The political life of Local 1005 in the period stretching from 1946 to 1958 was characterized by the oligarchical control of the local by the CCF group. The policies of these people was loyalty to the officers and practices of the International Union, promotion of the CCF party, and support for the industrial relations agreements worked out with the company and enforced by law. This caucus, or clique, was challenged by the small Left Wing Group until 1952 and at different times individual members contested elections against them, but effective control of the local was always maintained by this group of people.

There were a number of economic and political reasons unique to the period that sustained this oligarchical system. After the war there was continued prosperity in Canada. With the conversion over to the peace time economy and the boom induced by the Korean War, productivity increased by about 3% a year, demand remained strong and unemployment was low.¹⁴ It was also a time of rapid technological change, particularly in industries such as steel, where productivity increased without a significant increase in the work force. All of these factors put the educated, skilled and unionized workers in a strong negotiating position and income differentials widened between them and the unskilled and unorganized. This led to complacency on the part of unionists and the militancy, so much in evidence among workers just after the war, sagged.

There were other factors for this lack of militancy. After the round of strikes at the conclusion of the war employers learned that it was in their best interests to establish and maintain good relations with the unions representing their workers.¹⁵ Many during this time instituted industrial relations departments and the arbitrary power of foremen was reduced. This tended to reduce the amount of conflict between unions and their employers and played a major role in institutionalizing the industrial relations system we know in which neither side fundamentally challenged the rights and powers of the other.

Of the political influences during this period the Cold War was by far the most important. In the late 1940's and 1950's anti-Communism reached the point of hysteria. In 1949 unions dominated by the Communist faction were expelled from the Canadian Congress of Labour; some of them were taken over by non-Communist groups after vicious internal struggles; and the Steelworkers began a struggle that lasted almost a decade to displace the Communist led Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union.¹⁶ These rivalries and raids were of such intensity and bitterness that the influence of all unions were bound to decline.

The attacks on Communists had a very real impact on the political life of Local 1005. The small Left Wing Group had already been seriously damaged by their activities during the Second World War but the sustained attacks on them during the Cold War saw this group lose what vestiges of support they had. The group continued to caucus and try to have influence in the meetings of the local but by 1952 their support had disappeared and they ceased to exist. The CCF oligarchy was now unchallenged.

(iii) Ideological Politics 1958-1970:

In contrast to the previous era the politics of the local from 1958 to 1970 was a time of intense competition polarized along ideological grounds. This new political system emerged out of the 1958 strike, but it was not until 1961 that it was fully formed. From then until the end of the decade there were two and sometimes three slates openly competing for political power and each appealed to the membership on the basis that they had different and better policies than the others. It was, therefore, a time of ideological politics at 1005.

Again the underlying factors that sustained this system were both economic and political. Beginning in 1957 and '58 a serious recession struck Canada. Unemployment increased, demand was diminished and profits were down. Many employers saw this as an opportunity to reduce wages and there was even an attempt by some to call into question the very principle of unions.¹⁷ A number of big employers including Stelco and Inco in Sudbury, refused wage increases and consequently promoted strikes in 1958 and during the negotiations up to 1964 they kept wage increases to a minimum.

It was these economic grievances of the late 1950's and early 1960's that provided the basis for the growth of politics polarized along ideological lines at Stelco. The CCF groups, or Right Wing Slate as they came to be called in this era, that dominated the politics of the local during the 1958 strike were held responsible for the union's failures. Two alternatives emerged to their leadership. The Left Wing Slate attributed the problems of the local to a lack of militancy and the

conservatism of the Right Wing leaders, while the Autonomy Group claimed the problem resulted from the domination of the local by the International Union. The economic conditions, therefore, had resulted in the new political system of the local.

The changes in the economic conditions in the mid and late 1960's again had a dramatic effect on the internal political life of 1005. The Vietnam War created a sustained boom, unemployment decreased and productivity remained high, putting workers in a strong negotiating position. Added to this there was a significant increase in the labour force as half a million workers were absorbed between 1964 and '68.¹⁸ These new workers, many just out of school with no knowledge of the hard times of depression and unaccustomed to the discipline of the factory system, added to the note of militancy. The result of these changes were the wildcat of 1966 and the 1969 strike.

These economic conditions provided the basis for the political system from 1958 to 1970 but there were also a number of political influences that were very important. The immigration to this country after the Second World War had brought a number of British workers to Stelco. Although this group was relatively small they brought with them a much different set of beliefs about how unions should operate than were prevalent in Canada at the time. Many of them had a close identification with the trade union movement and saw it as the primary organization in the struggles of the working class. They believed that unions must be militant and politically active to achieve their goals and were very critical of the Canadian industrial relations system. It was these

British workers that were the core of the Left Wing and their ideas of how unions should operate became the dominant ideology of the group.

The political influences on the Autonomy Group who were prominent in the local around the 1966 wildcat came from a number of different sources. Canadian nationalism and particularly the notion that the United States has too great an influence over our economic and cultural affairs has had an effect on the entire political spectrum in this country. The Conservative John Diefenbaker made nationalistic appeals in the campaigns of 1957 and '58. Walter Gordon, the Liberal finance minister in Lester Pearson's first government, made an important attack on the Americanization of Canadian life in the mid-1960's. The most vocal nationalist movement in English Canada towards the end of the 1960's and early 1970's was the Waffle caucus of the NDP. The Autonomy Slate at 1005 was a reflection of this broad movement. Several of the most prominent leaders of the group were, or became, Liberals and another faction became identified with the Waffle.

The economic conditions during this period clearly provided the context for the political struggle at 1005 during this era of ideological politics, and the various groups who competed for power in the local related to political movements in the society. It should also be mentioned that the period of militancy in the local from 1965 through to 1970 coincided with the rising politicisation in both Canada and the United States in opposition to the Vietnam War. It is difficult to estimate what effect these events had on the members of the local but in retrospect it seems that the intensity of political action in both the local and the

society are too striking to be coincidental. In many different ways, therefore, the pattern of political behavior in 1005 was fundamentally influenced by the broader society.

(iv) Institutionalized Slates 1970 to 1976:

After the 1969 strike and the 1970 elections the political system of polarization on ideological grounds came to an end at 1005. It was the Left Wing and Autonomy Groups that collapsed and many of the leaders either went into the Right Wing, or Green Slate as it came to be called, and others formed the Yellow Slate. What had emerged was a new political system in the local where the slates did not represent different ideologies but were election machines.

The economic factors which sustained this system have been quite different from the previous decade. The expansion in the late 1960's was maintained into the early '1970's but with the winding down of the Vietnam War the economy began to level off. Unemployment rose and has stayed at high levels through the mid 1970's. Despite this Stelco workers have been able to negotiate increases so that their wages have kept ahead of inflation. As a result, as in the 1950's, the income of these unionists has been rising relative to other unorganized members of the working class. This in turn has tended to lessen the militancy of Stelco workers.

The economic and political consequences of the 1969 strike also played a major role in changing the political system of 1005. Members of the Left Wing Slate claim this strike was their greatest victory, but they were badly divided in this struggle, and the strike was more the consequence of the militancy of the late 1960's rather than any of the

stands of the leaders. The strike did have a major impact on the local, however, because it created irreparable divisions in the groups and it also showed that there was as much ideological differences within the groups as there was between them. Because of these factors the old system of ideological politics at 1005 collapsed and the activists regrouped into slates for the convenience of elections.

Other factors within the political life of the country have lessened the degree of polarization within the trade union movement. Gradually the NDP leadership of the English speaking branches of Canadian unions has become more extensive and most of the leaders have come to accept the party's conservative brand of social democracy rather than more militant socialist alternatives. In 1972 Communist led unions were re-admitted into the Canadian Labour Congress. Some felt that this would increase the conflict within the movement, and on some levels such as the Hamilton and District Labour Council this has happened, but in local unions such as 1005 it seems to have decreased the conflict because Communism is now accepted as a legitimate political expression.

During this period the relative complacency of the rank and file members and the gradual extension of the hegemony of the New Democratic Party among the leadership of the trade union movement has lessened the division among the unionists. This has not meant the return of an oligarchical group to power. Political slates continue to operate at 1005 but they are election machines used by the activists as a means of gaining enough supporters to win some coveted positions within the

local, rather than expressions of ideological differences.*

Crisis and Politics

This historical study of the political life of Local 1005 illustrates how on several occasions the politics of the local was transformed into new and different forms. Political life is sustained by different economic and political conditions in each period, but the historical data also points out that a major crisis faced by the organization plays an important role in transforming politics from one form to another.

In Local 1005 strikes were the major precipitating events which changed political life from one organizational form to another. This is no accident. Normally the politics of the union affects only a small proportion of the membership, but a strike affects everyone in the local. For this reason alone each strike has had major repercussions on its political life.

The 1946 strike marks the beginning of the long period of oligarchical control of the local by the CCF Group. Before this time the Communist faction was losing power and prestige rapidly, and the onset of the Cold War in the late 1940's made it virtually impossible for them to recover. However, the strike accelerated their demise because it was run and directed almost exclusively by the CCF Group. To them went the prestige and spoils of the victory, and they were able to establish an oligarchical political system that ruled the local for many years.

* See Appendix B for a pictorial representation of the developments of the slates in 1005 from 1936 to 1976.

The strike of 1958 shows even more dramatically how a crisis of this proportion can change the political life of the local. Coming out of that strike was a feeling of dissatisfaction with both the meager gains of the struggle and with the way the strike was conducted. It took the new Left Wing Group until 1962 to build an organization which could challenge the CCF oligarchy that held power, but the reasons why they ultimately were able to gain wide support across the plant to a large extent was the result of the dissatisfaction arising out of the strike.

The series of events around the 1966 wildcat and the 1969 strike also played a major role in changing the politics of the local in a fundamental way. The wildcat was the chief event which brought the Left Wing Group to power in the local because it led to the suspension of the leadership of the Autonomy Group and the temporary collapse of the Right Wing Slate. By the 1969 strike the Left controlled almost all aspects of the political life of the local. The activists continue to claim that the strike was a great success but by the time it was over the Left Wing Slate was very badly split. In the 1970 election the divisions of the group were papered over but after their poor showing the group simply dissolved as some of the members joined the Green Slate and others joined with the remnant of the Autonomy Group to form the Yellow Slate.

These strikes in themselves are not the only reason for the radical changes in the political life of the local. The old Left Wing Group, for example, was losing support long before the 1946 strike, and it is likely they would have collapsed with the virulent "red baiting" that was characteristic of the trade union movement in the late 1940's

and 1950's, but the strike accentuated the weakness of the group and accelerated the change. In a similar way the 1958 strike was certainly not the only factor in the rise of slates. Organizational conditions in the local were such that this was always a possible development, as we will show in Chapter 10, but the strike helped create the dissatisfaction with the existing leadership that speeded the change. In unions strikes are bound to have a major impact on the life of the organization because they are one event that involves virtually the entire membership. By their very nature they are a crisis that profoundly effects the organization.

Conclusions

It is now possible to give a partial answer to the question: What are the social forces which shape the political life of a democratically structured organization? Our answer, in part, is that economic and political influences originating in the society play a very important role in determining the internal political life. Not only do political groups at Local 1005 frequently take their orientation from other groups in the society, but the level and type of demands, and involvement of the membership is largely determined by economic factors external to the local. There can be little doubt that these societal influences have a very fundamental impact on the political life of democratically structured organizations.

Another important conclusion is that it is quite wrong to assume that there is only one type of political system in the political life of an organization. The historical approach used by this study amply

demonstrates that at Local 1005 there has been a series of different political systems each shaped by unique economic and political influences. Events in the local also suggest that the crisis faced by an organization creates internal strain which speeds the transformation from one political form to another.

To conclude that the environment has had a fundamental effect on shaping the political life of Local 1005 will be hardly surprising to those familiar with unions and their leaders. Many union politicians are involved in a variety of organizations and even the briefest of conversations with them can show that they are sensitive to a wide variety of political influences. The life of the local is in part a reflection of the breadth of their experience. But despite the logic of these conclusions this approach is still quite different than that of most studies of the politics of democratically structured organizations.

There are, however, factors which influence the political life of a local union other than its environment. The industrial relations system that has been established between 1005 and Stelco has a very important influence on the political life of the local. The next two chapters study this issue. Finally internal organizational features are a very important factor in sustaining the political system at 1005.

Footnotes

¹E.P. Thompson, "Time and Leisure in Pre-Industrial Society," Past and Present, December 1964, p. 57.

²Greg Kealey (ed.) Canada Investigates Industrialism, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

³The "Degradation of Work" is a term used by Harry Braverman to indicate that as work changed in capitalist society it increasingly became meaningless and trivialized. Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital, The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).

⁴John R. Commons (and others) History of Labor in the United States, (New York: A.M. Kelley, 1966) p. 11.

⁵Stuart Marshall Jamieson, Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-66, (Ottawa: Task Force on Labour Relations, Study No. 22, 1968) p. 195.

⁶Ibid., p. 195.

⁷Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1952).

⁸Commons, op. cit., p. 11.

⁹Jamieson, op. cit., p. 194.

¹⁰Statistics Canada, Union Growth in Canada, 1921-1967, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970) p. 78. Years 1971, 1976 taken from Labour Organizations in Canada 1978, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1978) p. 10.

¹¹Statistics Canada, op. cit., p. 70.

¹²H.C. Pentland, A Study of the Changing Social, Economic and Political Background of the Canadian System of Industrial Relations, Draft Study prepared for Task Force on Labour Relations, February 1968, p. 199.

¹³Ibid., p. 215.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 229.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 336-337.

¹⁶The most comprehensive description of these events is found in: Irving Abella, Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

¹⁷Pentland, op. cit., p. 323.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 360.

PART III: THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM

CHAPTER 8

STELCO AND THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM

In the host of meetings that go on every month in the local the debates of the union activists occasionally deal with issues that are external to the organizations such as political ideology, or the policies of the Steelworkers, but by far the most important relate to problems facing rank and file members in their dealings with grievances, job classifications or the negotiations with the company. The reason for this is not because unionists are interested in their own problems to the exclusion of all others. The main reason is that the chief function of the union is to defend the interests of the members and there are great differences among the union activists as to how this is best done.

These different solutions to the problems presented by the industrial relations system have been among the most important underlying differences between the slates and as such have played a central role in shaping the political life at Local 1005. However, this is a complicated issue and in order to understand it thoroughly we must first appreciate how the industrial relations system works on the sides of both the company and the union. Only then is it possible to understand the political positions that unionists take on these issues and how these differences sustain the system of slates within the local. The next two chapters focus on the industrial relations system at Stelco by first studying the

company, and second by analysing the role the union plays in the system. Finally the way the political life at 1005 has been shaped by these factors is examined by showing historically how these differences have always been a fundamental factor that has divided the slates.

Three Stages in the Industrial Relations System

The relationship between Stelco and its employees has been changing constantly since the firm was founded. Union activists and company officials from the industrial relations department can talk in detail about a host of different agreements that have existed and the reasons why they emerged. In fact it is impressive to see the degree to which they understand the subtle influences that shape their relationship. But, although the system has never been static, there have been three distinct historical stages in the evolution of industrial relations at Stelco.

From 1910, when the company was founded, until 1935 Stelco management essentially ignored union activities in the plant. After 1919 when the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers gained a number of members, the company allowed the unionists in the sheet mill to post notices of their meetings in the change house, dues were openly collected, and a delegate was sent to the A.A. convention every year. The company paid the union scale to the sheet mill workers, giving tacit admission that the union gave the workers collective strength, but carefully avoided giving formal recognition to their organization.

This seems to have been a satisfactory arrangement for both the company and the unionists. The sheet mill men had higher wages and better working conditions than the other workers in the plant but they

did not try to extend their organization or seek recognition because economic and political conditions made it unlikely they would have succeeded. On the company's side toleration of the union in the sheet mill avoided an outright confrontation with the unionists, and it was still no threat to their control of the workplace.

The second stage of the industrial relations system began with the sheet mill worker's strike in 1935 and lasted to the 1946 strike. During this time Stelco's industrial relations policy was actively anti-union. The work's council was an obvious attempt to head off union activity by providing the workers across the plant with a forum to air their grievances, but the structure of the council was designed to leave power in the hands of management. There were other anti-union moves by the company. A number of unionists were fired and all union activity was driven underground. It is clear that during this stage the company viewed the union as a real threat to their ability to manage the plant and resisted it as strongly as they could.

The reason why management resisted the union so strongly was because they feared that the union ultimately would destroy their ability to manage the work force. The chief tactic used by the unionists in both stages one and two was the walkout. McClure gave a good explanation of how this worked. Whenever an issue arose:

Tongs were banged, the whistle blown, the mill stopped rolling, the men marched into the office, and as a general rule the appropriate changes were made.¹

During the Second World War when it became very important to maintain high levels of productivity, this tactic was even more successful. One

man active during this period told a story of how a steward lost his "black book" with the names of all the unionists in his department and the record of their dues payments. The book turned up in the superintendent's office. The fear was that the company would use the list as a basis of reprisals so immediately the steward had his men lay down their tools and the book was promptly returned.²

Essentially what the tactic of the walkout did was give the workers, and the union, power at the plant floor level. They were still very weak in dealing with issues such as wages but as long as the demand for steel was high and there was pressure to keep up productivity the workers could use these disruptions and the threat of disruptions to win concessions from the company.

It is clear that Stelco management feared the power of the walkout and saw that this was a major limitation to their power to direct the work force. One of the chief reasons Hilton opposed the union so vehemently at this time was that he feared that if it gained recognition, rather than disruptions being located only in the mills where the union had strong representation they would mushroom across the plant threatening management's ability to direct the work force, introduce technological innovation and expand productivity. It was because of these fears that the union was so strongly opposed by Stelco and it led directly to the bitter struggle of the 1946 strike.

The strike and the clear union victory that emerged from it, marks the beginning of the third stage of industrial relations at Stelco that continues to this day. What happened as a consequence of this strike

is that the union was granted full recognition as the legitimate agent representing the interests of the workers. Today the union and the company meet almost continuously to talk about wages, grievances, job classification, work stoppages, and virtually any issue that is of concern to both parties. The victory of the union in 1946 was real and the company was forced to come to a new type of accommodation with the union which fundamentally altered the industrial relations system at Stelco.

However, in order to win this concession of union recognition from Stelco the Steelworkers union had to make two major concessions which has left them seriously hampered in their efforts to gain their objectives. Both of these concessions follow the pattern set across North America, but it is important to highlight them to show the degree to which the industrial relations system changed after recognition and the amount of power that unions were forced to give up. Firstly the union was forced to give up all efforts to control or direct the work force. This has become known as "management's rights." In the 1975 Basic Agreement signed between Stelco and Local 1005 it reads:

The management of the plant and the direction of the working forces including the right to direct, plan and control operations and to schedule working hours, and the right to hire, promote, demote, release employees because of lack of work or other legitimate reasons, or the right to introduce men and improved methods or facilities and to manage the plant in the traditional manner is vested exclusively in the company, subject to the express provisions of this agreement.³

What this clause does is give the company the right to direct the work force in any way it sees fit, and the union has agreed that they will not challenge this right. If some worker disagrees with a decision that is made by management they can file a grievance through the union but it is

won only if it contravenes some other section of the collective agreement or in some way is unjust to the worker or workers involved. With these minor limitations the company can direct the work force in any way they want with no interference from the union.

The second power that the union gave up was the right to use the tactic of the work stoppage. The collective agreement states very clearly that there will be no work stoppages during the life of the contract.

The 1975 agreement reads:

There shall be no lockout by the company and no interruption, work stoppage, strike, sitdown, slowdown or any other interference with production by any employee or employees during the term of this agreement. Any employee who participates in any interruption, work stoppage, strike, sitdown, slowdown, or any other interference with production may be disciplined or discharged by the company.⁴

The intent of this section could not be clearer. The union had agreed that they would not promote work stoppages at any time other than at the end of the contract.

The 1946 strike had gained recognition but at a very dear price. The union had agreed to work within a limited framework. They would not challenge the company's right to direct the work force other than through the highly legalistic and bureaucratized grievance procedure, and they promised not to use their power to disrupt production other than at the end of the contract. On the one hand the agreement gave security to the union but in return they gave up much of their power.

For the company the agreement proved to be a major advantage. With the granting of the concession of recognition they had eliminated the one thing the union could do that was most disruptive to their plans--

the work stoppage. Not long after the 1946 strike the co-operation between the union and the company developed so rapidly that it was a surprise even to many of the unionists who were involved at the time. Some accounted for it because of a change of heart of the executives. "I guess they mellowed when they saw we were serious," one of them commented,⁵ but this hardly seems to be an adequate reason. The company had come to recognize that the new industrial relations system was of little threat to them and many aspects of it were very much to their advantage.

Stelco's Monopoly Position

This new system that had emerged in the Steel Company may well have been enough for Stelco to accept Local 1005 but other economic changes were going on which insulated the company against the effects of a strong union. A process that has been going on in all capitalist countries is the gradual monopolization of large sectors of the economy. Essentially what has been happening is that in those industries demanding a high level of capital investment the number of firms have decreased and their control of market conditions have increased to the point where little competition now exists.

From its inception the steel industry in Canada has been monopolized. Today there are twelve steel companies in this country which include three large integrated producers: Stelco, Dominion Foundries and Steel Limited (Dofasco), and Algoma Steel Corporation. There are two smaller partially integrated companies, Sydney Steel Corporation, and Sidbec Dosco Limited, and seven companies that produce steel from scrap in electric furnaces.⁶

As Table 8:1 indicates for many years Stelco has dominated this market by producing approximately 40% of the entire steel needs of the country.

TABLE 8:1 Steel Ingot Production
Net Tons in Thousands.⁷

Year	Canadian Production	Three Largest Companies	Steel Percent of Market
1965	9,866	82.3	39.0
1967	9,551	81.9	41.5
1969*	10,139	75.7	36.2
1971	11,964	79.4	39.0
1973	14,549	78.4	39.3
1974	14,795	76.8	37.5

The Steel Company of Canada is a huge concern. In 1976 its total assets were over 1.8 billion dollars, employed approximately 24,000 people and the company's net profits were \$90,605,000 (see Appendix C). It is a fully integrated steel producer manufacturing a great range of steel products of flat rolled and coated coils, sheet steel, bars, rods, wire and wire products, pipes and tubes, fasteners and forgings.⁸

Stelco not only holds a dominant position in the Canadian steel industry, but it also has ownership in virtually all companies that supply its raw materials. Altogether the company has substantial investments in eight coal mines in Kentucky, West Virginia and Pennsylvania and owns three of these firms outright. All of its limestone requirements are provided by a Stelco subsidiary called Chemical Lime Limited which mines a holding at Beachville, Ontario. The Steel Company

* Stelco production interrupted by strike in this year.

owns large interests in three iron ore properties in Minnesota and another in Upper Michigan. It has iron mines in the Ottawa-Hull area and large deposits in Northwestern Ontario. Today most of Stelco's iron ore comes from the Wabush Mines in Labrador and the company owns 25.6% interest in these assets. The deposits of ore are located 200 miles inland from the north shore of the St. Lawrence River. The ore is brought by rail to Sept Iles Quebec where it is smelted into high grade pellets, loaded aboard vessels and shipped up the Seaway to Stelco's Hamilton docks.

The Steel Company's principle plant remains its Hamilton operation now called the Hilton Works. It occupies 1084 acres of land. On this site the company operates four blast furnaces, three basic oxygen furnaces, five basic open hearth furnaces, five batteries of coke ovens, and a variety of sintering plants, billet, bloom, slabbing and bar mills.

Added to these considerable holdings Stelco owns four other plants at Hamilton and installations in Burlington, Brantford, Toronto, Gananoque, Welland, Edmonton Alberta, Regina Saskatchewan and Montreal and Contrecoeur, Quebec. In mid 1968 Stelco acquired 6,600 acres of land near Nanticoke on Lake Erie for a major expansion of their steel making facilities. The ultimate goal of the company is to build a fully integrated plant on this site capable of producing and processing 5,400,000 tons of raw steel a year.⁹

With its size and the proportion of the market that it controls Stelco dominates the Canadian steel industry. In a report submitted by the company to the Royal Commission on Corporate Concentration they summarized their position by saying:

There is no doubt...that

- a. The steel industry in Canada is highly concentrated;
- b. Stelco is the dominant company in the Canadian steel industry and
- c. Stelco is of significant size in the Canadian economy in terms of sales, capital employed and number of employees.¹⁰

In spite of the admission that they are the "dominant company in a concentrated industry,"¹¹ Stelco claims that they do not control or monopolize the Canadian steel industry because they are unable to insulate themselves from the market forces of competition from other companies and the threat of imports. Not surprisingly the public and the government has remained sceptical. As early as 1940 an analysis of the steel industry in this country pointed out that "the situation appears to be one of price agreement among the three large producers with a certain amount of competition for large orders."¹² In recent years the pricing policy of the steel industry has been the subject of four federal enquiries: first by the Prices and Incomes Commission in 1970 and 1971, then the Steel Profits Inquiry in 1974 and the Royal Commission on Corporate Concentration in 1975.

The evidence from these reports and from the financial statements of Stelco show that since the conclusion of the Second World War the price of steel has risen steadily, the value of Stelco stocks have gradually increased, profits have grown, and, in spite of a sizable proportion of earnings being retained for investment, large dividends have been paid to shareholders. The major cost of production for Stelco is the price of labour and the pattern of pricing that has existed since the company was unionized is that Stelco would announce price increases almost immediately after a new contract was signed. One of the three basic

steel companies would take the lead in making the announcement and the other two would quickly follow. There seems to be little evidence to support the claim that market forces have kept down the price of steel. This does not mean to say that exorbitant profits are being taken by the companies, but competition has little influence in the industry. Steel prices are simply set at a rate so that all the companies can make a comfortable rate of return on investments.

The importance of the "dominant" or "monopoly"¹³ control of the Canadian steel industry is fundamental to an understanding of the industrial relations system that exists between Local 1005 and the Steel Company of Canada. In industries where there is a fear that the unionization of employees would drive up prices and reduce the competitiveness of the firms, unions are strongly resisted. This is not the case in the Canadian steel industry. Stelco and the other firms are able to control their market to such an extent that as soon as there are wage increases the companies are able to pass on the costs to the consumers. The unions, therefore, are not a threat to the continued existence of the companies and their economic demands can be easily accommodated.

This is particularly true in light of the fact that virtually the entire Canadian steel industry is unionized and wages are almost identical in every firm. The one notable exception to this rule is Dominion Foundries and Steel (Dofasco) located next door to Stelco's Hamilton plant. This company has never had a union, but they pay union rates to their workers as part of their effort to keep the union out of their plant, and as a result derive no economic advantage from staying unorgan-

ized. (The one advantage Dofasco still holds is that they never face the threat that their workers will interrupt production). A Stelco industrial relations official admitted that when Local 1005 strikes they lose a certain amount of business to Dofasco and this is an added pressure on them to settle.)

Another major economic factor which has contributed to the stability of the relationship between the union and the company in the post war era has been rising prosperity. One of the reasons for the resistance of companies to the unionization drives of the 1940's was a fear that there would be a return to the depression that marked the years between the wars. For a number of reasons this has not occurred. Productivity for Stelco increased from 1,101,000 tons of steel in 1945 to 5,724,000 tons in 1976, an increase of over 500%. Workers' incomes in the steel industry have increased dramatically and even when inflation is held constant there has been a real increase in workers' standard of living.

This is an important fact in understanding the trade union movement in the post war era. It has often been pointed out by socialist theorists that unions in developed capitalist countries have become much more co-opted and docile.¹⁴ The major reason for this is not, as some would argue, that the union leaders "sell their members out,"¹⁵ but because as living standards have improved and jobs are more secure workers have come to feel that the economic system can provide them with their needs.

As a consequence of all of these factors the acceptance of the union has been only a minor threat to the power of management. Stelco's

dominant control of the steel industry, and the extension of union benefits to all workers across the industry, has meant that unionization has not been an economic threat to the company. Moreover the type of industrial relations system in this country has been very careful to leave control of the work force in the hands of the company. These were the reasons why Stelco's management came to accept the union so readily after the 1946 strike. They soon learned that the union did not threaten their position.

Advocacy and Co-operation

The major change in Stelco's operation as a consequence of unionization was in the company's personnel policies. Before the 1946 strike the foremen and low level management treated the work force in an autocratic and authoritarian way. Each worker was dealt with individually and there is evidence of prejudice, and victimization of workers. Altogether there were something like 150 wage rates across the plant, no one knew what anyone else was making, and promotion was often on the basis of favoritism. The company's personnel policy, therefore, was a paternalistic one with little to do with merit or even fair play. Once the union was established much of this was changed. They insisted that the company alter its policy and threatened that if every worker was not treated equally they would flood the grievance system. Stelco quickly complied with the union demands and a few years later even went so far as to accept the co-operative wage study program (CWS) which paid workers on the basis of the job performed rather than any other criteria.

One of the important consequences of unionization at Stelco, therefore, was that a new set of personnel policies emerged at the company

based on the principle that all workers should be treated equitably. The major role of the union became to negotiate on the worker's behalf, to ensure that their rights were defended, and that everyone was treated equitably by the company. Essentially what had happened was that an advocacy system had emerged at Stelco. Management was to defend the interests of the company and the union was to defend the interests of the workers. This meant that there was now a practical way of stopping the abuses of the workers by the lower management and of instituting a comprehensive policy of fair treatment to everyone. Unionization restricted the power of management, but with fair play and equity to all employees as the basis of their personnel policy, and with a strong union to see that it worked, the morale of the work force has gradually improved from the days of the 1946 strike. This is of obvious benefit to the company.

There are other subtle ways that the existence of the union has benefited the company. One of the most important is that the union plays a major role in informing the Stelco work force about a host of issues. The workers tend to be suspicious about information given out by management, and in the context of the capitalist system as we know it where the role of management is to defend the interests of the company, this suspicion is justified. Information coming from the union is not always believed either. The workers know that unionists are often "scoring political points" as they put it, but the union is the worker's organization, and it has wide support.

In the everyday operations of the plant the company often turns

to the leaders of the union for information and even suggestions about dealing with the work force. One of the chief stewards made this comment in an interview:

I often get calls from the superintendent to ask me to talk to one of the guys in my department who's having problems. Usually it's about some personal thing. The guy's drinking too much or he's got family problems and it comes out in his work. The superintendent thinks that maybe it would help if I'd talk to him 'cause I'm part of the union and the men trust us. Now I don't have to do it. This isn't the union's problem, but I usually will talk to the guy. I figure why not? Maybe I can help him.¹⁶

These informal contacts between company and union officials go on at all levels. Numbers of stewards mentioned that they meet with foremen and mill superintendents to try and resolve issues before they develop into major problems. Often these contacts were simply an exchange of information but frequently the company seemed to be looking to the unionists as leaders of the men to ask how the workers will react to changes that they plan. At the top level of the leadership of the local there is regular contact with Stelco's industrial relations department to iron out problems. In recent years this has become formalized into what is now called the "102 committee". This committee is specially designed as a place where informal talks can be held about issues of mutual concern. Both union and management claim that these meetings are useful in heading off problems before they develop. Finally, Local 1005's international representative and even officers of District 6 of the Steelworkers occasionally talk to top executives of Stelco.

The extent of these various union-management contacts suggests that they are a very important element in the operation of the plant,

but it is clear that by doing this the company is not sharing their power with the union. They are simply getting or giving information. All decisions about the direction of the work force Stelco management holds for itself. The unionists themselves are divided in their reaction to contacts of this type. Some were opposed to anything that smacked of "backroom deals" while others believed that these informal contacts were attempts by the company to consider the workers and benefit everyone. From the point of view of the company the contacts are an obvious advantage. Anything that smoothes over problems with the labour force will make it easier for them to manage the plant and result in higher productivity.

In other subtle ways the existence of the union helps the management run the plant. Unions, particularly ones with an active political life such as Local 1005, play an important role in defusing discontent. Those individuals and groups with complaints of one type or another can go to the union for support or find in the union political life a forum for their views. If the union did not exist many of these people could well become disruptive in their departments.

There can be little doubt that the industrial relations system as it has emerged in this country has been of great advantage to companies such as Stelco, and it is reflected in its policy towards the union. Today, when Hilton's treatment of the union in 1946 is mentioned, company officials smile benignly. They are obviously not about to criticise a revered former president of the company, but they make it clear that Stelco has no intention of challenging the existence of the

union now or in the future. They are well aware of the advantages that unionization gives to them and even have grudging respect for the unionists and the efforts they make on behalf of the workers.

Conclusions

It is not surprising that this is the approach of management. Industrial relations in the post Second World War era in North America is a conflict along class lines, unions represent the interests of workers and management represent the interests of owners, but it is not class conflict in the sense that socialists understand it. In no way do unions challenge capitalism. They are simply the legal representatives of a vested interest group. Lenin saw this clearly when he made the distinction between trade union consciousness and class consciousness. Trade union consciousness sees the goals of workers' struggles as attempting to gain better wages and working conditions. Class consciousness occurs when workers see the need to overthrow capitalism to gain their objectives.¹⁷ Industrial relations as it is practiced at Stelco, and other unionized organizations is an adaptation of liberalism to the work place. Society, from this perspective, is a collection of competing vested interest groups. Unions are not struggling for equality or justice, they simply represent the interests of their members. With an ideology such as this unions can be easily accommodated because there is nothing radical or socialistic about that approach.¹⁸

It is ironic how the industrial relations system has altered the views of both the company and union leaders since the 1946 strike. Hilton believed that the establishment of the union in the plant would

lead to the loss of power of management and a weakening of the company. Socialists such as Tom McClure, who were a powerful political force in the early days of the local, believed that unionization would be a major step in bringing about a fundamental change in the economic system and the power of the capitalists. Both of these predictions proved to be totally wrong. The unintended consequence of unionization was to improve the relations between the company and its workers and make it easier to manage the plant. Capitalism has benefited tremendously from the unionization of the work force and today is much stronger and more entrenched than at any time in this century.

Footnotes

¹Tom McClure's notes, pp. 2-3.

²William B. Freeman, "Interviews with Local 1005 Activists, 1976" (Unpublished Interview Material) Vol. III p. 6.

³Basic Agreement between Hilton Works, The Steel Company of Canada Limited and Local Union No. 1005, United Steelworkers of America, dated 25 August 1975, Section 4:01.

⁴Ibid., Section 10.

⁵Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 130.

⁶Submission of the Steel Company of Canada, Limited to the Royal Commission on Corporate Concentration, November 1975, p. 5.

⁷Ibid., p. 6.

⁸The Financial Post Corporation Service, The Steel Company of Canada, Toronto, 1975, p. 2.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Submission of the Steel Company of Canada, op. cit., p. 7.

¹¹Ibid., p. 2.

¹²L.G. Reynolds, The Control of Competition in Canada, (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940) pp. 9-10.

¹³Different terms seem to be applied to industries such as steel where there is very little competition. Stelco has used the term "dominant" in their report because they want to avoid the negative connotation that the usual term "monopoly" gives. Perhaps a more accurate term would be "oligopoly" which would imply that a small group of companies control the industry.

¹⁴This is the major thrust of such theorists as Frank Parkin, Stanley Aronowitz and Andre Gorz.

¹⁵ This argument is used by left wing political activists (particularly Trotskyites). Ironically it blatantly disregards Marxists theory. Marx related rising militancy of the working class to the objective deterioration of their living standards. He believed that revolution would come only when the working class became so impoverished they had no alternative than to revolt. The problem of radical action in an affluent society remains a major theoretical problem for modern Marxists, but to blame trade union leaders for the conservative politics of unions is simplistic in the extreme.

¹⁶ Freeman, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 98.

¹⁷ V.I. Lenin, "What is to be Done?" Collected Works, Vol. 1 Part 1, Moscow 1950.

¹⁸ Since the beginning of the union two 1005 presidents have left their jobs and accepted management positions with the company. In both cases their fellow unionists and many workers felt they had been betrayed, but under an ideology of liberalism their actions can be easily justified. These two leaders were acting like any other advocate who represents any organization paying their salary.

CHAPTER 9

LOCAL 1005 AND THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM

On a few occasions in the past the company has been challenged by the union, but as a result of legislation and the form of collective agreements it has never lost control of the industrial relations system. The union, however, has always had an important role to play within this system and activists often have very different views on how this role should be carried out. This chapter is devoted to an analysis of the industrial relations system and the role the union plays within it and concludes with an examination of the effect of the industrial relations system on the political life of the local.

Two Concessions that Helped Establish the Union

In the agreement that emerged between the company and the union after the 1946 strike the members of Local 1005 accepted a very restricted role for themselves. No longer could they challenge management's direction of the work force or promote work stoppages. They had accepted a relationship in which management was the dominant force in the work place. However, the company made two major concessions to the union that should not be underestimated.

Firstly, the union was accepted as the legitimate bargaining agent of the workers by the company. From the time that the men went back to work after the 1946 strike the union has operated openly across the plant. Today members of Local 1005, acting in the capacity of union officials,

move freely in the company representing workers in many different roles. Over three hundred stewards, assistant chief stewards, and chief stewards are elected across the plant. There are union committees dealing with safety, health, grievances, negotiations and the co-operative wage study program, and every three years the union elects its executive. Since 1946 the local has been an open organization which in no way is challenged by the company.

Secondly, the union was given financial security when it was granted dues check-off. Prior to this union stewards had to approach the workers individually every month for their dues. This was often a frustrating and time consuming business. Workers would have to be persuaded to join the union and then repersuaded over and over again to pay their dues. With check-off the union no longer had to worry about money and the hours of collecting dues came to an end. To this day there are critics of the trade union movement who claim that much has been lost in quality of union life since dues check-off was granted by companies.¹ Before check-off union action had to be justified to workers on the plant floor and this gave the rank and file control over their organization. However true this may be it is unrealistic to think that a union could operate effectively if it was weak financially.

These two concessions established the local on a firm footing after 1946. However, to understand the role the union plays in the industrial relations system it is necessary to look at the important tasks they carry out. In recent years Local 1005 has had three major areas of concern: negotiations, the co-operative wage study program, and grievances.

These areas show the major functions of the union and provide a background to the debates which have polarized the union's political life.

Negotiations

The relationship between the Steel Company of Canada and Local 1005 of the Steelworkers is shaped by the collective agreement, or contract as it is usually called, that is signed by the two parties. This agreement is a legally binding document that spells out in detail the procedures of dealing with issues such as the management of the work force, grievances, wages, hours of work, union security and any other matter that is of concern to the two parties. Essentially then, the collective agreement sets both the terms and conditions of employment for the individual workers it covers, and provides guidelines for the operations of both the union and the company.²

The contract negotiated between Stelco and Local 1005 is very complex. The August 1975 Basic Agreement, for example, runs to 103 pages. This document, adapted from a whole series of contracts going back to 1945, influenced by labour legislation, and hammered out after hours of meetings, is the basis of the relationship between Stelco and its employees.

The importance of this agreement goes much beyond the 12,000 wage earners at the Steel Company of Canada. For several years the contracts of Algoma Steel in Sault St Marie, International Nickel (INCO) in Sudbury, and Stelco have fallen due every three years within fifteen days of each other. These are the three largest Steelworker locals in Ontario and the negotiations directly involve approximately 35,000 workers. Although each contract is negotiated separately there is a good deal of co-ordination

of union demands and the companies share information. As a consequence the three agreements have provided virtually the same wages in all three contracts for many years.

These contracts are very important in setting wages across the country. The Steelworkers union use the agreements in setting patterns of wages and working conditions in literally hundreds of collective agreements in smaller locals. Many companies and local unions, in fact, simply wait for these three contracts to be completed and then follow them almost to the letter. It is no exaggeration to say that these negotiations influence wages in the manufacturing and mining industries and ultimately have an affect on the entire economy of Canada.

Historically there have been many different ways that negotiations have been conducted at Local 1005. The 1946 agreement was negotiated almost entirely by Millard and Hilton through a set of intermediaries.³ In the late 1940's and much of the 1950's the talks for the union were undertaken primarily by top Steelworker officials such as Charles Millard and Larry Sefton. There was always a local negotiating committee but their role seems to have been mainly an advisory one and they were expected to use their influence in getting contracts accepted by the membership.

The 1958 strike brought the first demands for change in this style of negotiation. In that year Larry Sefton, then the Director of District 6, which includes Ontario, took a prominent role in leading the local into a disastrous strike. The dissatisfaction caused by the strike was turned, by many, against the leadership of the international and for the first time in 1005 a powerful movement for local autonomy began.

Demands for autonomy became even more of an issue in the 1962 negotiations when both Larry Sefton and Bill Mahoney, the Canadian Director, once again became involved by recommending acceptance of a contract after gaining only a slight increase in wages from the company.

It was the crisis of the 1966 wildcat, however, that brought the demands of autonomy to fruition. As a consequence the 1967 election saw the coming to power of the Left Wing Slate determined to bring about further independence of the local. The 1969 set of negotiations, undertaken by the Left Wing, were different than any that had come before. It was the local's own negotiators who made the key decisions at all stages of these talks. Since 1969 the independence of the 1005 negotiating committee has continued to be an important principle in the local union.⁴

In spite of the jealously guarded independence of the Local's negotiators, the actual process of arriving at an agreement on the contract remains something of a mystery.⁵ There can be little doubt that there are extensive contacts between these three large companies, Algoma, Inco and Stelco, and the negotiating committees of the unions are in constant touch with each other. Top steelworker officials keep in contact with company executives throughout the talks, and it seems that it is at this level that most of the hard bargaining goes on. Once an outline for the agreement is made the company presents it to the local committee to get their approval. This does not mean to say that the Local 1005 committee is not important. Their judgment as to what is acceptable to the membership is tremendously important in deciding the final package. They are the ones who must decide what to recommend to the members and they must

take the political responsibility for the contract.

The process of negotiations has become very complex and the tendency for local autonomy at 1005 has accentuated this tendency. In 1969 the negotiating committee, made up entirely of members of the Left Wing Slate, decided they wanted to democratize negotiations by involving the membership as much as possible in determining the union's demands. As a result they held meetings with every department of the plant, the entire steward's body, and received briefs from every committee of the local. With minor differences this has been the pattern of preparing for negotiations ever since. When the union negotiating committee first meets with the company, therefore, they have a large number of demands not only dealing with monetary issues, but also grievances, and working conditions in virtually every part of the plant.

The way the negotiation process is practiced at Local 1005 is very political in every aspect. Here is how one person who has been on many of the committees described what goes on.

Negotiation is like a pressure cooker. At the beginning of the bargaining you have everything but the kitchen sink wrapped up in a package that you demand the company accept, but once you start negotiating the clock is moving all the time. Suddenly as the times gets on you realize that you have to separate the wheat from the chaff and there is a hell of a lot of chaff in there. It should never have got there in the first place but because of political pressure it got included. You know what I mean. The guy from transportation has some issue that his men think is important and the steward from locomotives wants to keep his guys happy. But now the moment of truth has come and you know that you have to start getting rid of that stuff. Once you start doing some of that the company starts with more serious proposals. At first you laugh them off and say you'll have to come a long way before you'll accept that, but the fact that they have made the proposal means that you'll have to modify your position some more and on it goes. But the pressure is on because the time

is running out and you know you have to get back to that plant by July 31st or it is going to be shut down. The name of the game is to negotiate a contract not negotiate a strike.⁶

The pressure on the negotiators is considerable and this is increased by the democratic nature of the union. Certain people on the committee concentrate on special areas such as pensions or the cost of living increases, and they insist that the company give concessions in these areas or they will not support the contract when it is taken back to the membership. Within the committee itself there is constant discussion about what is acceptable to themselves and what they think will satisfy the members. Often there are serious disagreements that are difficult to resolve. One person commenting on the political restraints of the union and the company said:

If I were to be offered the senior position on either side of the negotiating table I would certainly take the company's side. There are tremendous political pressures on the unionists, pressures from within the committee and pressures from the membership. This is the toughest thing in the world. When I negotiated I had more problems with my own people--and this is to their credit you know--than I ever had with the company representatives.⁷

Following the 1966 wildcat it has been essential for the union negotiators to get a contract to take back to the membership before the July 31st expiration date of the contract. Before '66 the union would tell the men to stay on the job until a contract could be recommended, but after the wildcat it is known that the members will not work past the expiration date and this is added pressure to get the contract settled on time.

Once the negotiating committee decides to take back the contract to the membership a series of meetings are begun. The first group they

meet with is the steward's body, and in the past this group has often been opposed and even hostile to new agreements. The contract is then taken before the entire membership to be discussed. In the past these meetings have been enormous with thousands of members jamming into halls, ice rinks or football stadiums to hear their leaders explain the new agreement and listen to the critics. One person who has been through a number of these meetings described them like this:

It's like the Christians sitting in the field waiting for the lions to come in. Looking out in front, a few yards away, is a mass of colours, fists waving, people cheering and others booing. So the committee gives their recommendation and explains their position and then it starts. One guy will take the mike and praise the negotiating committee for the job they have done and then blast them for this, this and this. Then another says that once again we have been sold down the river. I've been saying this for years, fellows, and now it's happened again. Another will get up and say this is a big disappointment to me as a veteran of the Canadian armed forces. And on and on it goes. Occasionally there will be a good speech. Like this one guy says that all he wants is a leave of absence so he can visit his family back in Italy, but it gets turned down by the company and even the union won't do anything for him. Now I've got sympathy for a guy like that. I'd like to be able to go to him and say here's your leave of absence, and I'd like to be able to go to the guys in the locomotive department and say that we've settled their beef and all the others, but the truth is that we can't. There is no way that you can get these sort of things and win on the important issues like wages and pensions. The company won't stand for it and neither will the majority of the men. They want the money. That's where their priorities are.⁸

The last month or more of negotiations are held in the Royal York Hotel in Toronto and when they are completed and brought back to the local union to be voted on by the membership there are some leaders who consistently take a militant stand. However, the history of 1005 has shown that this is far from popular. The best example of this was in 1969. In that year the seven man negotiating committee, made up entirely of the Left

Wing Slate, were badly split. Four recommended acceptance of the contract and three were against. The members of the local voted by a 2 to 1 margin to strike, but in spite of the fact that most claimed that the 75 day strike was a success, the three who recommended rejection of the contract have never been elected to another post in the local. In the 1975 negotiations a similar thing happened. Cec Taylor, the leader of the White or Autonomy Slate, split from the other members of the negotiating committee by recommending rejection of the contract. He claimed in his speech to the membership that they should strike even if it took six months to get a good settlement, but the local voted, by a narrow margin, to accept the contract. The following year Taylor ran for president of the local and many of the activists claimed that the major reason for his defeat was his militant stand in the previous negotiations. All of this does not mean to say that members of Local 1005 are overly cautious. A number of times in the past they have demonstrated their militancy, but they are well aware that strikes create hardship and under this system of industrial relations the gains are marginal. At 1005 leaders are judged on the basis of their performance particularly around negotiations because this is the time when they are most prominent.

All of the evidence indicates that the influences on negotiations are very complex. Societal factors are obviously very important. The 1969 strike, for example, was in part a result of the high level of militancy as a consequence of economic pressures on the Canadian working class, but the union activists who were interviewed mentioned a variety of other factors.⁹ Some thought the reason for the strike was the strong

recommendation by the three dissident members of the committee. Others believed it was the consequence of the anger and resentment against both the company and the union around the 1966 wildcat. Two or three other leaders claimed that a significant cause of the strike was the new system of soliciting the opinions of the membership that had evolved in that round of negotiations. They felt that the public pronouncement that the local demanded \$1.40 an hour increase raised expectations and made it difficult for the negotiators to back down from that goal. Still others pointed out that 1969 was a very hot summer and a lot of members looked at the strike as an opportunity to get out of the city with their families. A more thorough study focusing on this issue would no doubt turn up more reasons for the strike, and it needs to be emphasized that in political decisions such as this, where large numbers of people cast their vote, the reasons for their decisions are complex.

The strike is the ultimate weapon of any union and it is associated in the minds of the public as a time when workers demonstrate their real strength. At Stelco, however, all the evidence indicates that, except for 1946, even during strikes, the company is firmly in control and the union has had only marginal ability to force management to accept their demands. In the 1958 strike, after 83 days on the picket line, the union was humiliated by being forced to accept a contract that increased wages by merely 5¢ an hour and extended the term of the agreement to three years. The 1969 strike was hailed as a great victory by the unionists but the facts hardly support this contention. On July 31st, the day of the expiration of the contract, the company offered a package to the

local which amounted to a total increase of \$1.22 an hour. The union members voted to reject the contract and the company responded by letting them go on strike. Malanchuk wrote:

At the time Stelco officials did not express any intent to resume negotiations. In their opinion, there had been a settlement on what had been a final offer and that offer could not be 'sweetened.' They had no alternative but to let the men stay out for awhile until shrinking bank balances made them more receptive.¹⁰

This is exactly what happened. After a 75 day strike Local 1005 members voted to accept an offer that amounted to an increase of \$1.22 to the base rate. Figures had been juggled a little to take money out of the pensions and make the wage package bigger but essentially the strike brought no monetary advantage to the workers over the offer that had been made just before they went out.

The industrial relations system gives the company such power that even in times of strikes they are able to dominate and control the situation. Because the contract is for a fixed period Stelco knows the date when the union will shut down the plant if a new agreement cannot be negotiated. The company warns their customers that there is a possibility of a strike, productivity is increased and the consumers of steel build up their stockpiles. There is pressure to negotiate an agreement before the expiration date of the contract but if the members reject the final offer the union goes on strike and the company simply waits them out. As Malanchuk pointed out they waited "until shrinking bank balances made them (the workers) more receptive." In fact in 1969, some of the unionists claimed the company industrial relations officers went on holidays as soon as the strike started and it was some weeks before negotiations

started again. The company suffered little. Productivity and profits were down for that year, but when increased productivity is calculated before and after the strike little was actually lost. In the strike the company had won their objective of holding the line at what was their final offer. The union claimed victory but the strike gained them little.

The effect of the negotiation process is that since 1946 there has been a shift in the interest of the union away from issues that affect people at the department level, to plant-wide concerns such as money and pensions. This has had the support of the membership but it has also worked to the favor of the company. Because of the monopoly position of the Canadian steel industry Stelco can accommodate increased wages but they do not want to give up any of their power to control the work force and introduce technological improvements. The negotiation process is such that at all times the Steel Company is in control over their work force.

The Co-operative Wage Study Program

One of the problems facing the steel industry has been to develop a wage policy that is equitable to the entire work force. Because of the nature of the production process in steel mills there is a detailed division of labour. Most work is unskilled but a sizable proportion of the work force has been trained on the job to take on specialized tasks. With the complexity of different tasks it has been very difficult to establish a wage policy that is fair in all its aspects.

In the pre-union days of Stelco this created few problems for management. The company developed a complex policy of individual and group incentives as well as tonnage bonuses.¹¹ Altogether there were something

in the neighborhood of 150 job categories across the plant that were determined by such things as skill level, length of service to the company, and favoritism. All wages were secret, and the company went out of its way to maintain this secrecy. If workers did not know what others were earning they would hardly demand just treatment.

In spite of the secrecy one of the major causes of unionization at Stelco was the demand for equity in wages, and after 1946, when the Steelworkers were recognized, the company accepted this principle. However, this was difficult to achieve. After 1946 the Steelworkers made constant demands during negotiations for a joint union-management job evaluation plan, and despite Stelco's traditional reluctance to give up any of their powers, this plan was tempting. Now that unionization had come wage rates across the plant were public knowledge and the management soon learned that their own rates were unpopular with the workers. But how could they introduce a new plan that was more acceptable? The only way that this was possible was by involving the union in the evaluation itself. It was because the company faced all of these problems that in 1952 they accepted the union's demands to introduce the Co-operative Wage Study Program.

The job evaluation plan introduced into Stelco was adapted from the one in use in American steel mills. It called for the classification of all jobs in the plant into 28 different job classes depending on 12 factors such as skill level, working conditions and the physical labour demanded by the job. The procedure to be used in arriving at the job rate was that the company would describe and classify a job according to the

12 factors, and submit it to the union three-man CWS committee. They in turn would study the job and the category it was given. If they disagreed with the company decision they could challenge it, providing their own reasons, and ultimately refer it to two independent representatives. One of the unique features of the CWS program is that the decisions of the committee could not be taken to grievance. The final decision was binding on all parties. The program, in other words, required considerable effort by both the management and the union local to equitably evaluate all jobs in the plant.

It was 1952 when the company accepted the CWS program. Immediately the union executive appointed a three man committee, and the difficult and complicated task of evaluating jobs across the plant was begun. From the beginning there were political repercussions on the life of the local. While the process of evaluation went on workers were paid at their old rates, but the agreement that had been signed promised that once the evaluation was completed workers would be given retroactive pay to 1952 if their job categories were increased. Soon it was widely known that many people, particularly the tradesmen, would be getting a sizable amount of money in retroactive pay, and there was pressure on the union CWS committee to complete their work as quickly as possible. In spite of the pressure it took until 1956, four full years, to finish the task.

Only then did the real problems for the 1005 politicians begin. A large proportion of the work force was satisfied by the job evaluation but many felt that they had been given a rate that was too low and, in their opinion, unjust. They protested in many different ways. This is

how a former union president described one such incident:

We had the situation where there were two crafts situated in two shops side by side: an armature winder and a roll turner. Now traditionally, before CWS, the roll turner had been paid 5¢ an hour more than the armature winder. The CWS program reversed that. The armature winder was given one job class higher than the roll turner and he earned more. So all the roll turners paraded into my office demanding that this be rectified, and when I refused to do anything about it, they left in a rage. Well you can be sure that I didn't get any votes from the roll turners in the following election.¹²

This happened in many different departments across the plant. As a one-time member of the CWS committee explained the dissatisfaction with the program went very deep and the political consequences were serious for the local. This is how he explained it:

Look, problems with CWS are bound to happen. What you are attempting to do is evaluate every employee--every job in the plant. You can easily politicise that. I can walk into any department and say you guys are underpaid because your CWS rate is too low, and you'd have a riot on your hands.¹³

Of all the groups that were dissatisfied with the CWS program it was the tradesmen who were the most vocal. They pointed out that the union committee, appointed by the executive in 1952, was dominated by production workers who did not appreciate the problems of the skilled trades and undervalued them in the job classifications. It was the electricians who led this fight. Technological change was very rapid in their trade as new electronic innovations were being adapted in the steel industry. They claimed that the CWS program did not take this into account and that they were underpaid in relation to the skills demanded of them.¹⁴

For some time the union meetings were taken up with criticism and defence of the program. Finally, in March 1960, Ron Tipler, then the

chief steward of the electrical department, packed a membership meeting with people from his department. This group again demanded revisions in the program and when they were told that this was impossible, they demanded that an election be held for the positions on the CWS committee. John Lisson, the president at the time, allowed the election and two of the three positions were taken over by this dissident group. The following month the chairman, Charles Pollicott, resigned and the committee was entirely taken over by the trades. Tipler, the new CWS chairman, realized at the time that this had been a mistake. They had wanted at least one member of the old committee to remain to give some continuity, but the politics of the local made that impossible.

This fight to a large extent was influenced by the Left Wing Group who at this time was gathering power. In 1960, when this election for the CWS committee was held, the executive of 1005 had been controlled for many years by "the old guard," who were mainly production workers. The Left Wing Slate, that had begun to form after the 1958 strike, was made up primarily of skilled workers and they backed this movement to take over of the CWS committee. Ron Tipler, who clearly was the leader of the group who took over the committee, later went on to win the presidency of 1005 in the 1967 election as the leader of the Left Wing Slate.

The objectives of the new committee was to have all the jobs in the trades re-evaluated and moved upwards in job class. It took Tipler and the others eighteen months to realize that this was an impossibility. The company would not change the program just to satisfy the trades group, and even the officials of the Steelworkers gave them no support. As one

person commented: "What they wanted to do was bastardize the whole program, and we couldn't let them do that."¹⁵ In the end the efforts of the trades group amounted to little. With a few minor exceptions the CWS program remains essentially the same as that announced in 1956.

Today the CWS program is more widely accepted by Stelco workers than ever before, but it remains a controversial program. Since 1960 the three positions on the committee have been elected at membership meetings. The term is for three years and one person is elected every year. The chairman of the committee is out of the plant full time to work on CWS business, and the other two members are out three days a week. At various levels of the union there are constant discussions on how the program should be modernized, and recently the Ontario Steelworkers struck a committee to study proposals for change, but as yet there has not been a clear alternative that would be acceptable to everyone.

The CWS program is unique at Stelco because this is the only instance that the company actually shares its decision making powers with the union. They did this not out of any great trust of the union but because they had very little to lose in terms of their ability to manage the work force and a great deal to gain in shifting the political responsibility of job evaluation onto the union. For the company it was a good solution to a very difficult problem. They got as equitable a job evaluation program as was possible, and at the same time were able to put much of the inevitable political repercussions onto the shoulders of the union.

Grievances

Of all the complaints of the union activists at Local 1005 the one mentioned more often than any other was that the grievance system was not protecting the workers. In interview after interview with members of all slates in the local and varieties of different political points of view the criticism would come back over and over again that the grievance system was not working. This is even more remarkable when it is remembered that virtually all of these people have been active stewards for years dealing almost daily with grievances and a number were or had been members of the local's grievance committee. For dissatisfaction to be this widespread among the unionists there has to be something seriously wrong with the procedures of resolving disputes at Stelco.

The grievance system at the Steel Company dates back to the first collective agreement in 1944, but it was not until after the 1946 strike that it was put into full operation. From that time until the present the union and company have dealt with virtually thousands of different cases. Through this entire period the grievance system has been the primary method of resolving disputes in the plant, and as a result its importance to the workers, union and company could hardly be minimized.

Altogether there are four steps to the grievance procedure spelled out in the collective agreement. Step 1 reads in part:

Any employee who believes that he has a justifiable grievance or dispute may discuss and attempt to settle it with his foreman, with or without a department Chief Steward or Steward being present as the employee may elect.¹⁶

As a dispute goes through the different stages of the grievance procedure it becomes more complex. In Step 2 there is notice of an appeal of the

foreman's decision that must be made in writing and then a meeting is scheduled between the Steward and the department superintendent to resolve the dispute. Step 3 involves the company's industrial relations department and the union's six-man grievance committee. This committee is made up of a chairman and secretary elected by the membership at large and one person elected from each of the four divisions of the company across the plant. The grievance committee chairman is out of the plant full time on union business and the others are out three days a week. These six people are the union's experts. They must try to resolve the issues with the industrial relations department and failing that must select which cases they are going to take to arbitration--the fourth stage of grievance. (Any case that is turned down for arbitration by the grievance committee can be appealed by the steward or the grievor to the steward's body and failing this can even be taken to the membership meeting.) Arbitration is an extremely complex and expensive process. A three man arbitration board must be set up with one person from the union, one from the company and an independent chairman acceptable to both sides. They listen to the evidence in the case, much like in a court of law, and the decision of the majority on the board is binding on all parties. There is no appeal beyond this stage.

This description of the grievance system remains only a basic outline. The collective agreement detailing the procedures around the resolution of disputes devotes six pages to the grievance procedure. It stipulates time periods within which the different stages must be completed, whether reports can be verbal or written, who is to be present

at meetings, what is the exact power of different bodies and other criteria. The system is extremely legalistic and as a grievance proceeds through the different steps it becomes more and more complex. To have an issue resolved in this way from the beginning to the time that a decision is announced by the arbitrators takes two and sometimes three years. It is expensive and time consuming for both the union and the company, and it still does not work effectively. Both sides prefer to see issues resolved at the lower levels before they get involved in the grievance system, but for a variety of reasons this is difficult, and every year hundreds of cases are referred to the union's grievance committee.

On the union's side there is often very strong political influence in the decisions around grievances. Stewards, the grievance committee, and in fact all people operating in the political life of the union, must be re-elected. Many admit openly that grievances are frequently processed not because the individual has a valid case but for political reasons. Often it is easier for a steward to refer a case to the local's grievance committee rather than tell the individual that he should drop the matter. Then he can blame the committee rather than himself when the issue is turned down. In the same way the grievance committee will frequently take a case to arbitration knowing full well that it will be lost, simply because the political ramifications of turning it down are too great. Many union activists admit that this politicizing of the grievance procedure is a major failing but they feel trapped and can find no alternative.

A legitimate grievance occurs under only two types of circumstances. Firstly, when the company violates the contract. This is clearly a grievable

issue and the union is in a strong position to win the case. Workers can also grieve when they feel that they have been unfairly treated by the company.¹⁷ This second type of grievance is much more difficult to win. The union has to be able to show clearly how the company was unfair and went beyond what is normal management prerogatives. The local's activists admit that this is very hard to prove and they are not often successful on this type of grievance.

But this lack of success in the grievance process is only a small part of the complaints of unionists about the system. The most common thing heard in the interviews was that the grievance system defuses collective action around issues. One person summed it up by saying "You have to always work through procedures. We have become no more than legal beagles."¹⁸ Whenever a dispute with the company arises the reaction of the unionists is not how to win the issue. They turn to the collective agreement to see if the company has violated some part of it. As the issue goes through the grievance procedure the workers get more and more removed from the process and in fact in the later stages often the union itself is removed as the lawyers take over. Months go by as the union grievance experts study the case and then literally years can go by before the arbitrators make their decision. Meanwhile, because of management prerogatives, the workers are forced to follow the directions of the foreman until their decision is overturned. The grievance, and the issue that sparked the whole process off, become almost forgotten in the whole legal fight, and as a consequence the workers often turn their frustration against the union itself for not producing action to resolve the problem. This is

an understandable reaction. The grievance procedure has become a legal system for interpreting the contract rather than a means of resolving disputes.

The contrast with the way disputes were resolved before the 1946 strike, or the system that continues to be used in Britain could not be stronger. In both of these instances the tactic of the union in resolving disputes is the work stoppage; the workers down their tools and refuse to continue production until the issue under dispute is resolved to their satisfaction. The work stoppage is a tactic of direct action used by the workers on the shop floor who are most affected by the issue and it demands an immediate response by management. This type of system is unbureaucratized and immediate while the grievance system practiced at Stelco and across North America has become a frustrating process where the workers must stand by the sidelines and watch powerlessly as issues they feel are important are removed further and further from their control. Not surprisingly it leads to dissatisfactions on the part of the activists and rank-and-file alike.

Despite all of these problems many unionists feel that the grievance system works reasonably well for issues around the disciplining of individual workers, and the majority of cases deal with incidents of this nature. But its chief failure is in dealing with disputes that affect groups of workers and their working conditions. Disputes of this type supposedly are to be dealt with by the negotiation process, but they are usually ignored in contract talks because of the priorities of plant-wide issues such as money. Consequently the workers often turn to the grievance

system to look for ways of resolving these disputes, but usually they find little success.

The company's policy on issues affecting working conditions is to leave the matter up to the superintendents in different departments. Consequently there is a great deal of difference in the way issues are resolved from department to department. One chief steward explained, for example, that he had few problems around working conditions in his department because his superintendent worked hard to resolve differences before they became problems. Once a month the superintendent and the shift bosses meet with the chief steward and assistant chiefs to work out any issue that might concern any of them. This works very well for this department but it is an unusual procedure.

In most departments there is constant friction between the men and management around a variety of issues. As an example, in 1974 the men in one of the large mills were annoyed with the way a new bonus plan was introduced into the plant because they ended with very little of the extra incentives. Because the plan had been negotiated by the union there was no possibility of a grievance and as a result a group of young workers organized a slow down by following the safety rules. The company was losing a lot of production and they tried a number of ways to speed up the work but the men stubbornly continued their slow down. One evening on the afternoon shift one of the foremen began annoying an assistant chief steward by continually calling him into his office and threatening that he was going to hand out a stack of discipline reports if production was not increased. Tempers got frayed until the steward telephoned the

superintendent and got into an argument with him. In a fit of anger the steward stormed out of the mill saying he was going to quit. Later that evening the company claimed that this man was in the company parking lot urging people to go on a wildcat, and they fired him. In fact no wildcat occurred and the steward claimed the only reason he was there was to get his own personal gear.

This issue had wide ramifications for this particular mill. The union launched a grievance on the steward's behalf, which was ultimately lost, but the slowdown in the department collapsed as soon as the firing happened. It is claimed that there is still a great deal of dissatisfaction among the workers in this particular mill and to this day they have a record of radicalism. They voted heavily against the 1975 contract, and they were a major source of strength for the Autonomy Slate in the 1976 elections. But the company was able to realize their objectives. Productivity was brought back to normal.

In its industrial relations policy Stelco allows its superintendents flexibility in resolving disputes as long as they can be localized in departments, but whenever an issue reaches the point of seriously disrupting the work process the company reverts to a formal legalistic position of demanding that the terms of the collective agreement be followed to the letter. Their policies around wildcats reflects this approach. The 1966 wildcat is an example of the way the company deals with serious work disruptions but a more recent case happened with the coke oven workers. On January 3, 1975 at 10:30 a.m. about 50 workers in Stelco's coke oven department walked out to protest the firing of three men who

were dismissed for drinking on the job. By the afternoon shift about 800 men were milling about at the Wilcox Street Gate refusing to cross the picket line that the coke oven workers had put up. That night production in the ovens was down, two blast furnaces had to be banked because not enough men showed up for work and two others had to be cut back.¹⁹

The reaction of the company was swift. They gathered their supervisory staff together to handle the mills where there were disruptions, then sent telegrams to the executive members of 1005 demanding that they get their members back to work in accordance with the collective agreement, reminding them that the contract prohibited work stoppages of any kind. Then they applied to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for permission to prosecute the workers.²⁰ The union responded by sending executive members down to the lines to urge the men to go back to work and promising that they would file grievances for the three fired men. Finally the wildcat collapsed. Ten days later the Steel Company announced that they had disciplined 114 employees: 14 were fired, 40 suspended for one or two days and 60 more had disciplinary reports put in their files.²¹

In a wildcat at Stelco the position of the union is a difficult one. Before the disruption at the coke ovens the unionists knew nothing about the issue, but the company demanded the union get the workers back on their jobs in accordance with the collective agreement which bans work stoppages, or be subject to court action.²² In other words the legislation and the collective agreement required that the union act against their own members by demanding that they return to work. In the end the issue was transformed from one of three men fired for drinking on the job

into trying to deal with 114 disciplines. The company faced a loss of production but the union was forced into an impossibly compromised position with its own members.

It is not surprising that union activists view the whole system of resolving disputes at Stelco with such scepticism. The problem is more than the fact that the union does not win many grievances or that the whole procedure is cumbersome. The real problem is that the system that has developed at Stelco, and other unionized companies, for resolving disputes has shifted power away from the workers into a bureaucratized process where decisions are made on the basis of legalisms. Legislation and the union contract has forced the workers to give up their one clear weapon that gives them the power to influence the company's decisions on the shop floor--the work stoppage. This is the tactic that management fears most of all because in time it could lead to a loss of their right to direct the work force, a fall in productivity, and ultimately a decrease in profits.

Because of all of these factors as a general rule collective action at the department level is not very successful at Stelco, but some stewards have been able to use the solidarity of the work group to gain concessions from management. One steward of the truck drivers claimed that they had no problem winning local issues in his department. The drivers want little to do with the union but most of them at one time had been Teamsters, and they feel a strong loyalty to each other. They would never cross a picket line and give solid backing to anyone who has a problem with management. The steward claimed that because management

realizes they have this support of the drivers and are anxious to resolve disputes before they get out of hand, the stewards have been able to win a number of concessions, and the department has had few grievances.

As another example a chief steward of one of the production mills told a story of how he was able to resolve a set of issues by using the militancy of the members in his department and avoid the grievance procedure. A group of men he was responsible for complained about a new vacation schedule that management had imposed on them. They took up a petition and even worked out another schedule they liked better but still the superintendent refused to give in to their requests. A grievance was launched but ultimately after well over a year it was lost. Still the men were angry and frustrated, production was down and the workers were beginning to refuse overtime as a protest. Finally an incident happened that had nothing to do with any of this but resolved the issue. A job became vacant and the superintendent promoted someone the workers believed was his favorite. They were so angered because of this and all the other things that had happened to them that they were ready to lay down their tools. In desperation the company called in the chief steward of the department to help avoid a walkout. As it happened he was aware of all of these disputes. The first thing he did was demand that the job be posted and go to the man with the greatest seniority. This the company agreed to on the spot. Then he said that the men wanted something done about vacations right away. The superintendent promised to look into it and the next day he granted the schedule the men had worked out themselves. The chief steward claimed that as a consequence morale improved with the men and production increased.

These two cases are particularly interesting because in both instances concessions were given by management only when the solidarity of the workers made it possible to by-pass the normal procedures for settling disputes. They set in relief how the grievance system fails for the workers of Stelco. But although the workers are placed in a weak position because of this system, the unionists are in the worst position of all, and it is not surprising that they voice such criticisms of the grievance system. Most of them know how weak the workers are in resolving disputes at Stelco and yet they are forced by legislation and an uncompromising management to try to make the system work. At the same time they have to defend it to the members or some militant action like a wild-cat may start which leaves the union and the workers in even a weaker position. In the end it is a tragic failure. The workers turn their anger against the union for what is essentially an inadequacy of the grievance system, and the union leaders defend a system they do not believe in. The only winner is the company for the system of resolving disputes leaves them with great flexibility to deal with their employees.

Business Unionism at Stelco

The watershed of industrial relations at Stelco remains the 1946 strike. This one event transformed the small group of struggling unionists into the large, powerful organization that we know today, but that event is also important in the transformation that it brought to the relations between the union and the company. This new relationship remains a mixed blessing for the union. When both the structure and the day-to-day operations of the industrial relations system are examined it shows that the

agreement established the local in an invulnerable position, but it also forced the union to make concessions to the company which have vitally compromised their power.

As a result of the strike the company gave meaningful recognition to the union by allowing them to operate unhampered across the plant. In return, however, the union agreed to work within the institutional framework designed for management, and supported by government legislation, which left the company with tremendous power. The two key elements the union agreed to were, firstly, management prerogatives, which gave the company virtually total control over the work force, and secondly, the union promised to give up their most effective tactic to influence working conditions, the work stoppage.

The consequence of this agreement, and others like it that were made across the country in the post war period, has left the trade union movement profoundly weakened. The agreement essentially was a promise on the part of the union that they would limit themselves to playing an advocacy role. Any attempts to try to improve working conditions or to have control over the work process is judged illegal at any time other than at the end of the contract, but experience shows that negotiations focus on monetary, rather than work control issues, and the grievance system is hopelessly inadequate in helping workers deal with disputes. It is significant that the only area in which the union has been given some power has been over the Co-operative Wage Study program, but this was done simply because the company could not introduce a job evaluation plan without the co-operation of the union. Industrial democracy, in

which workers share control over issues that affect them, does not exist at Stelco because the company has been given all significant power and the union has agreed not to struggle for a greater share.

The present industrial relations system has resulted in a shift of focus for the union. Prior to 1946 the power of the local lay at the department level. Through the worker's ability to disrupt production by the work stoppage they could resolve grievances in their favor quickly and effectively. Under the new industrial relations system, however, the union agreed to give up the work stoppage and accept a system of negotiations which gave priority to plant-wide issues such as wages and pensions. This focus of interest on monetary issues has been supported by most of the workers but it has left the union very much weakened on issues of job control. This has been to the company's advantage. It gives them a free hand to deal with the work force in almost any way they see fit and allows them to introduce new technological innovations without restrictions. The union, however, has lost a tremendous amount of power, and not surprisingly the workers often have turned against their own organization.

As a consequence of these changes the industrial relations system has left the union in the role of policing their own members. When workers perceive some injustice more often than not it is the union steward who has to tell them nothing can be done to change it because management's decision has not violated the contract, and at the time of disruptions such as wildcats it is the union leaders who must tell the workers that they must give up their struggle and submit to the demands of the company. The industrial relations system forces unions

to regulate their own members so that they conform to the demands of the collective agreement and as a result it seriously compromises their role as the organization which seeks to lead the workers.

It is for these reasons that left wing social theorists point out that unions in the western world have become seriously compromised.

André Gorz writes:

The big national unions everywhere have become institutions who see that their task is not to overthrow nor even question the capitalist system but to defend the interests of the working class within the system's framework.²³

Frank Parkin in a similar vein writes:

Collective bargaining does not call into question the values underlying the existing reward structure nor does it pose any threat to institutions which support this structure. Trade unionism could in fact be said to stabilize the modern capitalist order by legitimizing further the rules and procedures which govern the allocation of resources...the strategies of collective bargaining do not cause serious inroads to be made into the privileges of the dominant class.²⁴

Finally Michael Mann says:

What we call the institutionalization of industrial conflict is nothing more nor less than the narrowing down of conflict to aggressive economism and defensive control. This has been taken to its furthest point by contemporary American trade unions but it is the dominant strategy of all long-surviving unions.²⁵

Despite all of Hilton's fears in 1946 Stelco has gained tremendously by accepting the United Steelworkers of America as the official bargaining agent of its workers. Under conditions of monopoly capitalism wage demands can be easily accommodated. Work disruptions have not stopped, that would be impossible in an industrial relations system where workers have virtually no other means to express their sense of powerlessness, but the company has gained the co-operation of the union in trying to bring them under control. The union has become the ally of the

company in trying to make the workers comply with the collective agreement.

Business Unionism and Political Life at 1005

It is only by understanding the industrial relations system that has developed between 1005 and the Steel Company of Canada that we can appreciate the reasons for the existence of different political slates in the local. The most fundamental factor that has divided slates over the years has been around the acceptance or rejection of the industrial relations system by the union activists. That is why there is so much debate around these issues by the unionists. Militant groups have always advocated changes, and often radical change, to the system while more conservative groups have accepted the status quo. The way these forces shape the political life of Local 1005 can again be best understood by historical analysis.

In the late 1930's the Communist and CCF Groups that existed at 1005 were both militant in that they advocated major changes in the industrial relations system at Stelco, but it was the Communists who were the more radical of the two. The war changed all of this. After 1941 the Communist's desire to maintain high production for the war effort cast them in the role of conservatives within the local while the CCF Group militantly advocated change.

After the 1946 strike the CCF Group, who now dominated the political life of the local, changed to become far more conservative. In their view the strike was fought to bring about a new industrial relations system, and now that it was instituted they felt that they must support the system. This does not mean that they passively

accepted the decisions of management, but they accepted the advocacy role that had been given them and did not believe the union should go beyond it. As a result they complied with the grievance system, the CWS program, and advocated to the rank and file that all demands must be channeled through negotiations.

The Left Wing Slate, that emerged after the 1958 strike and was prominent in the union to 1970, was organized principally as a militant alternative to the CCF or Right Wing Group. In their view the local was much too conservative and they advocated the use of the work stoppage to deal with grievances, a change in the CWS program, and a much more aggressive stance in negotiations. The Left differed from those who controlled the local on other issues such as the type of trade union movement they would like to see, and Steelworker's raids on other unions, but the reason for the emergence of the group was primarily because they believed that the union should take a much more militant stand in the relationship with the company.

The Autonomy Group who emerged in 1964 were unified around the objective of independence from the International Union, but they were badly divided over how to deal with the industrial relations system. Some of the members were as radical as those on the Left while others accepted a conservative role for unions. Evidence indicates that it was because the Autonomy Group could not agree on this fundamental issue that it ultimately collapsed.

The role of the International Union in this period of polarized politics during the 1960's was to actively support the Right Wing Group. The reason for this is clear. The International has always been a strong

defender of the industrial relations system, and the policies and actions of both the Left and Autonomy Group threatened to radically change that system. As a result Stewart Cooke, the most important Steelworker official in the city allied himself and the power of the International Union with the Right Wing in order to deny political power to the other groups and to maintain the status quo with the company.

Once the Left Wing Group did come to power in 1967, however, they were able to make few changes in the industrial relations system. What they found was that the system, supported by legislation, a tradition of collective agreements that carefully prescribed the relationship between the union and the company, and backed by a very conservative management group in power at Stelco, would not yield to change. By the end of their period in office in 1970 the Left Wing Group had made major advances in negotiation, and the local was much more involved in trade union and community affairs, but they had not even begun to challenge the industrial relations system.

This was one of the major reasons why the system of polarized politics collapsed at 1005. After the Left Wing Group had been in power it was clear even to the militants that the industrial relations system would not be easily changed. By 1970 there was little difference between the activists of the Right and Left on this crucial issue. Gradually the Left and Autonomy collapsed and there has been a reordering of the political system of the local into the Green and Yellow Slates which differ little on policy.

The way the slates have related to the industrial relations system, therefore, has had a very important effect on the political life

of the local. To spell out this relationship clearly: First, the policies of the slates on how they would deal with the industrial relations system play an important role in grouping the activists into slates; second, the slates appeal to the membership for support on the basis of their policies; and third, the rank and file, whose political opinion has been shaped by broad economic and political influences, support the group that best reflects their political beliefs. In this way Local 1005 is influenced fundamentally by the industrial relations system.

Conclusion

Although the dominant political expression of the local in 1976 when this research was done was one of institutionalized slates that were not polarized on ideological grounds it is unlikely that this system can last indefinitely. For the workers there are serious frustrations built into the industrial relations system which cannot be resolved under capitalism. The powerlessness of the workers leads to a profound dissatisfaction with the performance of their union. Ambitious leaders and groups will be able to capitalize on this dissatisfaction to appeal for support, but the industrial relations system is too inflexible under present conditions to change. In time the continuing frustrations will lead to new leaders who propose new solutions and political change is perpetuated. The industrial relations system, therefore, plays a major role in shaping the political life of Local 1005.

Footnotes

¹Stanley Aronowitz, False Promises, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973) pp. 217-218.

²Edwin F. Beal and Edward D. Wickersham, The Practice of Collective Bargaining, (Homewood Ill.: Richard D. Irwin Inc., 1967) p. 205.

³The Globe and Mail, August 7, 1971.

⁴R. Malanchuk, "Stelco Strike 1969," (unpublished paper, University of Western Ontario School of Business Administration, 1971) p. 29.

⁵The term "mystery" is used here because in spite of a number of interviews which focused around the subject of negotiations it still remains unclear how issues are resolved. The thing that is most difficult to assess is the contacts between the top level of the Steelworker's staff and the top Stelco executives. Neither side appears to want to talk about these contacts and there are possibly two reasons for this. Firstly if it became widely known how extensive the contacts were it could well lessen the flexibility of both sides, and secondly for political reasons union officials now believe that it is important that the 1005 negotiating committee take full credit for the agreement. However, despite all of these "backroom" contacts the 1005 committee is vital in arriving at the agreement and interpreting it to the membership. The subject of negotiations is a topic deserving greater study.

⁶William B. Freeman, "Interviews with Local 1005 Activists, 1976" (Unpublished Interview Material) Vol. I, p. 18.

⁷Ibid., Vol. II, p. 278.

⁸Ibid., Vol. I, p. 28.

⁹For a fuller analysis of the societal causes of the 1969 strike see Chapter 7. It is interesting that none of those interviewed saw the causes of the strike in its societal context. Perhaps one of the prices of being an activist is that it is difficult to see beyond the most immediate explanations.

¹⁰R. Malanchuk, op. cit.

¹¹Robert McDonald Adams, The Development of the United Steelworkers of America, 1936-1951, (Kingston, Ontario: M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, 1957) p. 28.

¹²Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 285.

¹³Ibid., Vol. II, p. 71.

¹⁴One hypothesis to explain the dissatisfaction of the trades with the CWS program that was developed in the course of this study was that production workers had job mobility in their careers. They started in the lower job classes but with experience and seniority they had the opportunity to do jobs with the higher classifications, while the skilled workers were fixed in their job class from the time they got their tradesmen's papers to retirement. The production workers see the classification system, therefore, as a way that they can gain mobility, while the skilled workers see it as a means of keeping them within a single job class. However, because of lack of evidence this remains only a fascinating hypothesis.

¹⁵Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 135.

¹⁶Basic Agreement between Hilton Works, the Steel Company of Canada Limited and Local Union No. 1005 United Steelworkers of America, dated 25 August 1975, Section 9:07, p. 51.

¹⁷Beal and Wickersham, op. cit., p. 218.

¹⁸Private conversation with Chief Steward July 1976.

¹⁹The Spectator, January 4, 1975.

²⁰Ibid., January 16, 1975.

²¹Ibid., January 16, 1975.

²²Under the Ontario Labour Relations Act workers who participate in an illegal strike can be fined up to \$1,000 a day and if it can be shown that the union also participated, the union is liable to fines up to \$10,000 a day.

²³André Gorz, "Worker's Control is More than Just That" Canadian Dimension Kit No. 7: Canadian Labour p. 24.

²⁴Frank Parkin, Class Inequality and Political Order (St. Albans: Paladin, 1972) p. 91.

²⁵Michael Mann, Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class, (London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1973) p. 21.

PART IV: INTERNAL FACTORS SUSTAINING POLITICAL LIFE

CHAPTER 10

POLITICS AND THE ORGANIZATION

There can be little doubt that such societal factors as the economy, and political ideology have played a major role in shaping the political life of Local 1005. Another very important influence on the local's politics has been the industrial relations system that has been established between the company and the union. However, the internal organizational features of the local have also had a real impact on its political life. This chapter focuses on these organizational features while the next chapter analyses the social characteristics of the leadership.

Local 1005 and the Theory of Oligarchy

In the literature on the political life of voluntary organizations a number of factors have been given which are said to increase oligarchic or democratic tendencies. The one factor that is cited most frequently is size. As the authors of Union Democracy state: "large scale organizations give union officials a near monopoly of power,"¹ because of their bureaucratic structure, the control the leaders have over the communication systems within the union, and because the rank and file are not able to develop the political skills necessary for leadership. The larger the organization, the theory holds, the more likely there will be an oligarchy.²

In the Ontario wing of the United Steelworkers of America, the

size of the political unit and its organizational base determined much of the nature of political life, but it does not follow the simple formula that the larger the group the more oligarchical its political system. At the District Six administrative level of the International Union, responsible for all of Ontario, a strong group has held power since the early 1940's. They are a self-perpetuating oligarchy which names its own successors and rules virtually without opposition. However, all the big locals within the Ontario branch of the Steelworkers have a political system of slates or political parties. The union at the Algoma Steel Plant in Sault St. Marie has two slates running in most elections; at the huge International Nickel plant in Sudbury, two and sometimes three slates compete for political power; and Stelco has had a similar system for years. The small locals, however, in spite of the theory of oligarchy, rarely have slates. This suggests that there are a set of features common to these different groups of locals which account for the political systems.

One of the leaders of 1005 gave a description of the political life of a small local which provides some interesting comparative insights:

There's one local that I know that gets a pretty good turn out at their meetings but they're really not very political. They have their membership meetings at 6:00, right after work, and they take over the auditorium in the Steelworker's Hall. They get a banquet permit, and run a bar, they have guys playing cards and they raffle off a couple of bottles and give out sandwiches. Now they get meetings of 150 guys and that's out of a membership of 300. But you know it's really humorous. Everybody's interested in getting into the social action. They say, like, we'll dispense with the reading of the minutes because we know you fellows are anxious to get to the bar, and here is the treasurer's report. Are there any questions? Don't forget if there are questions you are losing valuable drinking time. I mean it's hilarious. You'd never get away with that in 1005. They check every last thing, and they want answers, and if they don't get them there's hell to pay. Those are the guys who run the union. So what is apathy anyway? Maybe we don't have big meetings but dammit the guys that take an interest at 1005--they run the show.³

This example suggests that the quality of the meetings of the two locals is quite different. At Local 1005 the unionists deal with the real business facing the organization while the meeting of the small local is a social affair. Size in other words is a complex issue. A local can have a high percentage of their membership turn up for meetings, but it does not mean that the rank and file have taken control of their union. Size is obviously an important factor in the government of voluntary organizations, but it is quite incorrect to hold that the smaller the group the more it will be controlled by the rank and file.

Another reason for the development of oligarchy, the authors of Union Democracy claim, is that the leaders want to remain in office because of the income, prestige and power of the position.⁴ In 1005 this tendency is also present. Many of the leaders would like to stay in power indefinitely and their actions are frequently designed to maintain support of the membership and get themselves re-elected. This factor is rather puzzling. Although the high prestige of elected positions must motivate leaders to try to hold on to power, on the other hand it also would encourage others to seek the position. Rather than promoting oligarchy, therefore, the high prestige of leadership positions in voluntary organizations should contribute to competition.

Robert Michels provides another reason for the development of oligarchy. Because of the level of apathy and lack of participation of the membership the leaders are able to continue their control essentially because the rank and file are not interested enough to challenge them. This tendency is also present in Local 1005. In spite of the highly competitive nature of the political life of the local there is tremendous

apathy. At times when new collective agreements are being discussed literally thousands of workers will show up to hear their leaders but an ordinary membership meeting will have something less than 100 in attendance. This is less than 1% of the membership. As another indication of the low level of participation in the local the by-laws of 1005 require that a nominee for election to the executive, committees, and most conventions must be a member in good standing for twenty-four months, and "shall have attended at least one-half of the regular meetings of his/her local union during the twenty-four months preceding the election, unless his/her union activities or working hours have prevented such attendance."⁵ Because of this constitutional requirement something less than 80 members of the entire 12,000 member local are eligible to hold office or attend various union functions as official delegates. This is hardly an indication of an active membership.⁶

Other theorists have examined factors which they claim contribute to the "democracy" of an organization, but these also do not appear to apply to Local 1005. A large body of literature, going back as far as Aristotle, suggests that democracy, or government by the people, can exist only in a society which is predominantly middle class.⁷ Only when there is roughly an equal distribution of income could one get the situation where the population can participate meaningfully and avoid the appeals of demagogues bent on oligarchical or dictatorial control. This theory, therefore, claims that democracy will be more likely in a relatively homogenous organization.

It would be difficult to find a local union which contradicts this rule more completely than 1005. The work force at Stelco is extremely

heterogenous. One of the most important divisions in the local has been between production workers and tradesmen. Even this is a simplification because there are a tremendous variety of skills needed to run a steel mill and often there have been alliances between production workers of high job classification and skilled workers. At one point in the union's history the tradesmen felt they were virtually ignored by a leadership dominated by production workers and the interviews in 1976 found a few of the leaders who voiced dissatisfaction with what they perceived to be the current domination of the local by tradesmen.

Ethnic differences create perhaps even a greater division in the local. A high proportion of the work force are immigrants whose second language is English, and are concentrated in the unskilled job categories. In spite of the fact that they are solid unionists the ethnic workers, with very few exceptions, play little political role in the life of the union. Not only does this create real divisions in the work force but on some occasions leaders have been able to mobilize these workers into a voting block. All of this supports tendencies towards oligarchy.

Robert Michels believed that organizational features in democratically structured groups made a division between the leadership and the membership which increased the tendency towards oligarchy. At Local 1005 this tendency is very evident. The industrial relations system has created a real split between the leadership and the membership. As one example of this the leaders of the local frequently are placed in the position where they must subvert the spontaneous action of its members in work stoppages and in effect police the union's own members to conform to the contract.

The political life itself makes a division between the leadership and the rank and file by making it difficult for the ordinary member to participate. Membership meetings are run by Robert's Rules of Order and a person has to know the procedures or he may find himself in an embarrassing position. As one person commented:

You've got to know what you're doing on the floor (of a membership meeting) or somebody will pin your ears back for you but good.⁸

Finally there are divisions in 1005 simply because of the nature of the tasks that union leaders must perform. To many workers the meetings seem interminable and the issues and discussions of very little interest. The industrial relations system has forced the leadership to become legalistic and bureaucratic. Many of the chores are tedious, repetitive and uninspiring, especially to workers who must spend their days labouring in steel mills. All of this is hardly conducive to participation and builds a real barrier between the leadership and the rank and file.

There is one aspect of the "theory of democracy" as Lipset, Trow and Coleman call it, that conforms to conditions at local 1005. They claim that opposition

is most likely to become institutionalized in organizations whose members form organized or structured subgroups which while maintaining a basic loyalty to the larger organization constitute relatively independent and autonomous centers of power within the organization.⁹

The Union Democracy study found that various voluntary organizations in the ITU such as social clubs, lodges, sports clubs, veteran's groups and many others,¹⁰ played a role of providing organizational subgroups where opposition could develop. Voluntary groups exist in Local 1005, but they

are relatively unimportant politically. The subgroups that are important in sustaining political life in this big local are the different departments within the plant.

Despite the importance of subgroups in sustaining opposition, conditions at Local 1005 seem to contradict all of the organizational features which theorists believe contribute to oligarchy and sustain the institutionalization of opposition. The local is very large, rather than small, there are many leaders who want to maintain power, and there is a high level of membership apathy. Finally there are deep divisions in the organization between the leadership and the rank and file and within different sections of the work force. If the theory was valid Local 1005 should have a strong oligarchy that controls political life but just the opposite is the case. For over fifteen years a system of institutionalized opposition has existed where different slates or parties have competed openly for power. Either 1005 is a highly unusual voluntary organization or the theory of oligarchy has some serious problems.

Historical Development of the Institutionalization of Opposition

There is considerable evidence arising not only from this study of Local 1005 but also from evidence collected about the political systems of other union locals¹¹ to show that this theory of oligarchy has to be thoroughly revised. There are a number of internal organizational factors which sustain the system of institutionalized opposition, but the theoretical formulations that have been made are quite inadequate to explain the political life of 1005. The best way to begin to understand these forces is to examine the historical process of how slates became institutionalized. Then it may be possible to extrapolate the internal

factors which have sustained the political life of the local.

The political system of institutionalized opposition that exists at 1005 began to emerge after the 1958 strike. This is how one of the people involved described events:

There was a hell of a lot of dissension in the local at the time. Flowing from that overtures were made by certain people and a group of us were brought together. As I recall, it was in the back room of the Avon Hotel. To the best of my knowledge that was the embryo movement that was to become the Left Wing.¹²

Ideology, ethnic group, and skill level all played an important role in bringing these people together. Almost every man involved was a British skilled tradesman who believed in militant unionism and had trade union experience in his native country. The group had a great deal of political skill, they were loyal to each other and completely dedicated in the task they set themselves of bringing change to the local. One member of the group commented:

All the people in the Left Wing Group were experienced in the politics of the old country and vastly superior to the home-brewed Canadian at the time. We were all good speakers; we could think on our feet; we knew what we wanted; and we held to stringent discipline.¹³

The objectives of the Left Wing Group were to change the industrial relations system. "We were fed up with the nickel and dime contracts we were getting,"¹⁴ one person said. Another commented: "To us and the men in the plant the issue was the lousy contracts and the grievance system was all fouled up."¹⁵ Still another said: "There's no doubt in my mind that the Establishment back then was too cozy with the bosses."¹⁶ A number of them wanted to encourage work stoppages in spite of the fact that this was a contravention of the collective agreement. Still others joined with the electricians to try to overhaul the Co-operative Wage

Study plan. The group took on many different issues but the major thrust of their complaints was focused around frustrations in the industrial relations system. To them the union was getting a bad deal and they blamed the Right Wing Group for this happening. This was the one major factor which sparked the beginning of opposition.

The clandestine meetings of the Left Wing Group were devoted to talking over issues and organizational tactics. In their own minds their objectives were very clear, and they knew how to achieve them. At first they moved cautiously.

We knew that we had to attract people from all over the plant to develop the kind of voting strength that we needed to gain office. You can't just jump into politics. You have to do a hell of a lot of ground work.¹⁷

Another said:

You see we didn't run in and say we were going to take over the executive. First of all we took jobs on all the committees. We took all the chief stewards and so on. That way we had influence with the people.¹⁸

Finally another member of that Left Wing Group commented:

By 1961 we had contacts all around the plant. We had at least one person in each department and we were grooming people.¹⁹

The Establishment Group could not or did not want to see the changes that were going on in the local union.

They laughed at us, you know. They thought they had the local sewed up and didn't realize they were so vulnerable.²⁰

By 1961 the Left appeared on the scene fully grown with a powerful organization that stretched into every department. They were caucusing regularly and making their voices heard on issues such as the Mine-Mill raids and demands that the union committees be elected rather than appointed. In that year the Establishment Group was stunned when John

Morgan won the position of vice-president in the by-election. In response they rallied their own forces by calling their supporters in the different departments together into caucus meetings and creating their own organization dedicated to the support of the International and the members of the oligarchy who had functioned for so long as the ruling group in the local. By the 1962 executive election there were two fully developed slates in open competition called the Right and Left Wings to indicate something of their differing ideology. Both ran a slate of candidates, and campaigned as organized parties across the plant. From that election a political system of competing slates became institutionalized in the local which continues to this day.

The historical process by which slates were accepted at 1005 is important in trying to understand the way the political system works at the local. The Left Wing Group did not emerge because its members were demanding more democracy. Their primary objective was to change the industrial relations system by making the union more powerful and trying to get a better economic deal for the members. It was clearly a consequence of the frustrations originating in the industrial relations system.

The way they went about doing this was to try and take political power at the local by using the democratic procedures written into the constitution. The political takeover of the local, therefore, was the means by which they tried to take power, not the final objective. The increased participation and competition in the political life of the local was not an unintended consequence, clearly this was one of their objectives from the beginning, but it was secondary to their aim of trying to reform the industrial relations system. In order to try to

achieve their objectives the Left Wing Group consciously went out to organize support across the plant to challenge the power of the Establishment. The Right Wing then followed suit by organizing in virtually the same way. Once this was done the system of political slates had been institutionalized in the local.

The process in the institutionalization of opposition at 1005 is clear. First there were demands by the membership for changes of the industrial relations system; second, a political group met who were determined to achieve these demands; third, by using the constitutional guarantees of the union, they organized to take political power in the local, and fourth the Establishment Group organized themselves into a slate to try to hold onto power. It is only with the fourth stage that a political system of institutionalized opposition had finally emerged at Local 1005.

The Activists as Political Delegates

There are a number of different organizational features about 1005 which sustain the system of slates but clearly the most important is the way the work force is organized. Stelco's 12,000 unionized employees work in 30 different departments. These range from various steel-making mills such as the blast furnaces, to finishing mills like the Plate and Strip, and departments dealing with the maintenance of the plant. Because of the high level of apathy the ordinary worker knows few people outside his own department and little about what goes on in the local's political life. Although not strongly identified with the union most workers want to vote in elections, but there is little way that any of them can get independent information about the union's

political life. The political problem in a situation such as this is a serious one. How can anyone get elected in a local the size of 1005 when the membership is so apathetic? The answer to this is the key to understanding the local's political life.

At 1005 a type of political delegate system has emerged. The first level of participation in the union is the steward's body. At Local 1005 there are over 300 stewards across the plant, approximately one for every 40 workers; there are 44 assistant chief stewards, mostly in the large departments; and 30 chief stewards, one for every department.²¹ Every year there are a number of stewards positions that go unfilled because of lack of interest, but there are always people who want to fill the position of assistant chief and particularly chief stewards. In order to get elected to these top positions within the departments, especially in the big departments of over 1,000 workers, the candidate needs support from a whole range of people in his department.

The chief stewards, virtually without exception, are involved in the political life of the local. Most are ambitious to sit on the executive, they fill the committees, go to the conventions, and they are the most important members of the different slates. In interviews with thirty of the top leaders of both the Green and Yellow Slates, 23 had been chief or assistant chief stewards in their union careers, most of them are still holding onto those positions, and without exception all had been stewards for a number of years.²²

The position of chief steward is a fundamental one in the politics of the local. Most of these individuals are members of the slates and at election time they are dedicated to trying to get the candidates of

their group elected. Because of the broad support they hold in their departments and the apathy of the rank and file they have tremendous influence with the workers and often can swing a large number of votes to the slate they support. Coalitions of chief stewards and other people with influence in the departments, therefore, can deliver the vote across the plant. These coalitions of union activists are the slates.

In a plant as large and as diversified as that of Stelco's Hilton Works, where there is such a high level of apathy in the membership, there can be only two practical political systems that can successfully function. Either there is an oligarchical system, which means in effect that there is no opposition to the ruling group, or there is a system of competing coalitions of activists who have support in the departments and can deliver the vote across the plant. Both of these systems have worked at 1005. The CCF oligarchical group was continually re-elected between 1946 and '58 because they had broad support across the plant and no individual could generate the voting strength to challenge them. When the Left Wing Group began to emerge after the 1958 strike they did not need a Sociologist to tell them that the way to gain voting strength in the local was by getting their own people into positions of influence in the departments. Once they had done this they had created an election machine that could generate enough votes to make a bid for power.

The political power brokers in this system are the ones that can deliver the vote in the departments and they are particularly the chief stewards of the big departments. It is very important to a slate to attract as many of these people as possible. The way this is done in part is by having a certain ideological perspective that attracts the department

leaders. The other way is by giving them different types of concessions. For example, some leaders are able to use their power on a slate to get priorities to issues in negotiations that the members of their department think are important, while others demand that certain grievances be processed. Other concessions relate to the leaders themselves such as giving them a position to run on the executive or as candidates for a committee or convention.

The political system of 1005 is a complex one of mutual obligations. The slates are coalitions of people with influence in departments who together can deliver the vote across the plant. The membership in the departments give their own leaders power through their votes but in return they expect action on issues that concern them. The political leaders of the departments barter this voting strength with the members of the slate and in return receive concessions for the people in their departments and themselves. The system is far from ideal, but it is responsive to the membership. Demands flow from the members, via the department leaders, and slates to the decision-making bodies of the local. The top leaders of the local respond because they need to maintain the strength of the slate and voting power of the department.

Today much of the ideological nature of the slates is gone but still this system of institutionalized opposition remains. The reason is simply that the organizational features of the local makes slates the only route to power for those who are ambitious. In the interviews several people mentioned that they did not like slates but they could not escape them. This is what one person said:

When I started I tried my damndest to stay clear of slates, but I found in no short time that if I wanted to be actively

involved in the committees and things like that I just had to associate myself with slates or I would never have been elected to anything.²³

Another commented:

I was a steward and I wanted to get more active in the local. I ran as an independent a couple of times for positions on committees and delegates to conventions, but I couldn't nearly get enough votes so I had to face facts. Either I give up trying or I join one of the groups. Once I made that decision and joined up with this slate I've been elected to all sorts of things.²⁴

Committee and Convention Elections

There is one other important organizational feature of 1005 that tends to sustain the political system of slates. In the period of oligarchical control in the 1950's most committee positions and delegates to conventions were appointed by the executive. With the rise of the Left Wing Slate after 1958 one of their demands was that all of these positions be elected, and by 1962 this had become the policy of the local union. The by-laws of the local were rewritten not only making every position elected but they were also staggered so that these positions would be elected at different times in the year.

The effect of these changes is that almost every general membership meeting has an election of one sort or another. From the time that the political groups evolved in the early 1960's they have run slates of candidates for these positions. This has forced the groups to be active organizations. If they were to meet only when there is a plant-wide vote then soon the coalitions would fall apart, but because of the constant elections at membership meetings they have to meet at least once a month to pick their candidates. This helps to keep the slates active and involved.

The elections in membership meetings are quite different than those held plant-wide but they still depend on slate organization. In 1976 to give an example of how this works, the local decided to send a full complement of 23 delegates to the International convention of Steelworkers in Las Vegas. Altogether there were 54 eligible nominations from the three different slates then operating in the local and a small number of independents. Once nominated a candidate usually will go around to friends in his department and get them to come up to the union hall to vote for him on the night of the election. The understanding is that the candidate will try to get the friends to vote not only for himself but for everyone on his slate but that is often difficult. This is how one of the top leaders of the local described what happens:

When you take a guy to the union hall you approach him to vote for everyone on your slate. Now you've got to be careful. You can't go up to a guy and say to him to vote for everyone on this list because they'll tell you 'no way.' Most people you bring to a meeting will vote for some on the Green Slate and some on the Yellow. The tellers can see it when they count the votes. I benefit from this because I've been around for a long time. The guys will give me a vote because they know me and they know I haven't given up the struggle.²⁵

This is an issue that can cause hard feelings among the members in the slates, and it is the only thing that has sparked discipline, or at least censure of certain members of the groups. One leader gave this account:

The thing I hate is the guy who tries to take advantage of the slates. The tellers can see what happened in an election when they count the ballots. You'll get some guy on your slate who brings his friends up to the hall and tells them only to vote for himself. He'll claim afterwards that he told his guys to vote for everyone on the slate but there are too many ballots with just his name marked off and you know he's lying. I hate that. Here the guy is getting the advantage of being on the slate because he gets the votes from everyone else, but he doesn't

contribute his votes to the others. We've had some big fights over this issue.²⁶

The consequence of these continual elections at membership meetings is most important in sustaining the system of slates at 1005. Because of these elections the political groups in the local must be constantly in a state of mobilization to meet the challenge of the next election. Essentially what has been provided is an unending list of pressing business that slates must deal with in order that their members have the opportunity to get chosen for these highly coveted positions. Initially this reform to allow for the election of all of these positions was brought in to democratize the union but what it did was strengthen the system of slates.

How the Slates are Governed

In the fifteen-year history of the slates they have governed themselves in different ways. At one time the Left Wing Slate had their own written constitution but today the groups tend to be much less formal. The Green Slate meets at the union hall at the call of the chairman, and usually letters are sent out to the members of the group. They have three "table officers" and unless there is some contentious issue they will deal with the problem of making up their slate of candidates and then adjourn. Rarely does the Green Slate talk about problems of the local or debate policy among themselves. The Yellow Group has similar procedures. They have table officers responsible for the administration of the slate and spend most of their time deciding who is going to run for different positions. However, the Yellow Group often spends time debating issues among themselves and frequently organize themselves into a speaker's list

to deal with upcoming issues at membership meetings. The White, or Autonomy Slate, is much smaller than the others. They meet in people's houses and operate usually on the basis of consensus. One thing that is unique about this group is that the wives and girlfriends of the members often participate in their meetings.

It is remarkable the degree to which the slates model their procedures on political parties and particularly the procedures of the New Democratic Party. In both the Green and Yellow Slates, whenever there is a position open for a candidate, the chairman of the group calls for nominations from the floor, they are usually written down on a blackboard and then there is voting by secret ballot by all those members in attendance. Once the people on the slate make up their minds to support a particular candidate everyone is expected to follow the group decision. On a few occasions some individuals have found this impossible to do and they have dropped out either to become independent or join another group. One person said:

It's a gentleman's agreement. We make it plain from the beginning that if the person doesn't want to support the slate then there's the door. We won't feel bad about it, but if you can't support the whole slate then you'd best get out now.²⁷

Essentially this is the procedure used in the NDP. Whenever an election is in the offing a meeting is held, nominations are received from the floor, an election takes place, and then afterwards, no matter what the feelings different members have of the outcome, they are expected to close ranks behind the candidate and support him to the full in the election.

In spite of this open set of procedures power within the slates is a complex social process. Power brokers exist in each of the slates

who have influence over other members. For example more than one person mentioned in the interviews that Harry Greenwood was the most influential member of the Left Wing Slate in the latter part of the 1960's. He promoted Ron Tipler to run for the position of president in 1967 and without that promotion it is said Tipler would never have received the nomination of the Left Wing. Elected position is not necessarily a guarantee that the individual will be a dominant force in the slate. One individual who held the position of president of the local for many years clearly had little influence within his slate, but he was supported in his position because he drew a strong vote from the plant. It is clear that, although the slates are open organizations where there is meaningful participation by the members, there are individuals and small groups or cliques within the slates who have far greater power than others.

Recruiting is a constant occupation for all those involved in the slates. The key members are the chief stewards but leaders always look for new talent.

In a meeting you always keep an eye out for new people and you listen to what they have to say. You can usually spot some guy who seems promising. So after a meeting we all go down to the beverage room for a couple of beers--that's where we seem to hatch all our plots--and what you do is go over to a new guy. You sit down with him and make yourself known and try to feel him out. I've done it lots of times. You tell him what our slate's doing and try to win him over to our side.²⁸

Executive Elections

The politics of Local 1005 is an ongoing process that does not stop, but it is the elections for executive, held every three years, that is the climax of political life. This is the real test of the effectiveness of the leaders and the election machines, and it is a test of the mood of the membership. These are plant-wide elections with voting

at the gates as the workers enter to go to work. In 1976 each of the three slates recruited large numbers of members outside the slates to help them campaign by giving out leaflets and other chores. The two establishment slates in 1976 spent something over \$1,000 each on their literature while the Autonomy Slate spent somewhat less.²⁹ The politicians spent hours talking to the members at the plant gates, and they went to so many stags that one claimed jokingly that he hoped he would never have to play another game of cards. Elections had become sophisticated political campaigns, plotted for months with a seriousness and dedication that would surprise many a professional. One person reflecting on the changes in the campaigns said:

Elections at 1005 are big things now. Each of the slates go to a print shop to get their leaflets done. They have pictures of the candidates and all the rest of it. I can tell you we have come a long way from the time when we used to run off material on a Gestetner machine in someone's basement.³⁰

Political life has changed tremendously since the local was founded back in the 1930's. In fact one of the most important conclusions that must be drawn is that politics of this kind are never static. Local 1005 has changed and adapted to meet new conditions, and it has been influenced by a tremendously complex set of social relationships ranging from the ideologies of the society to the structure of departments in the plant.

Conclusions

The evidence collected from this study contradicts much of the theory of oligarchy that has come to be accepted by social scientists. Not only is the Iron Law of Oligarchy invalid when judged by the evidence from 1005, but the system of institutionalized opposition, which the

authors of Union Democracy claim to be such a rarity,³¹ is much more widespread in voluntary organizations than was previously thought. An even more striking conclusion is that in Local 1005, some of the organizational features that theorists had assumed sustained oligarchy, in fact appear to sustain the political system of institutionalized opposition. The large size of the local, and the widespread apathy and lack of involvement of the membership, are the chief factors which have led to a type of delegate system where the rank and file depend for their information about the local on the few members in their department who are politically active. This in turn strengthens the system of slates. Ironically, therefore, among the most important organizational features of the local which sustains institutionalized opposition in 1005 are those very features which theorists believed helped promote oligarchy.

The one aspect of the theory which is borne out in the evidence collected at 1005 is that the system of institutionalized opposition is strengthened by the fact that the membership of the local relates to the organization through sub-groups. As the theory states: opposition

is most likely to become institutionalized in organizations whose members form organized or structured sub-groups which while maintaining a basic loyalty to the larger organization constitute relatively independent and autonomous centers of power within the organization.³²

This is the case at Local 1005. Individual members relate primarily to the members of their department. Power brokers who are able to gain the support of these members are able to make alliances with others like themselves to gain political power. This clearly is an important organizational factor in the development of slates.

Finally, the other important internal organizational feature at

Local 1005 which has sustained the system of political slates is the monthly election of committee members and delegates to conventions. These elections, held on the floor of the membership meetings, make it necessary for the slates to meet regularly to decide what candidates they are going to run. As a result they keep active between elections.

Michels and his followers would have us believe that oligarchy in democratically structured groups is an inevitability, but the evidence from Local 1005 clearly contradicts this theory. It is no accident that out of the forty years of the life of the local which we studied some form of institutionalized opposition existed during twenty-five of those years while an oligarchy controlled the local for only fifteen.³³ In fact the period of oligarchical control of 1005 was a consequence of unique circumstances. The 1946 strike gave the CCF group very high prestige in the local and the cold war effectively destroyed the opposition. As a result of these historical factors it became virtually impossible for anyone to challenge the CCF group's control of the local. As circumstances changed after the 1958 strike other organizational features began to have an effect on the life of 1005 and the system of institutionalized opposition re-emerged. Rather than oligarchy being inevitable, as Michels and others believe, it appears that in large union locals a political system of institutionalized opposition is, if not an inevitability, always a strong possibility.

Footnotes

¹S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow and J.S. Coleman, Union Democracy, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956) p. 8.

²Ibid., pp. 8-9. Curiously the Union Democracy study found that larger locals tend to be more democratic than the small ones, but for some reason they do not highlight the fact that these findings contradict the theory of oligarchy.

³William B. Freeman, "Interviews with Local 1005 Activists, 1976" (Unpublished Interview Material) Vol. I, p. 26.

⁴Lipset, op. cit., p. 9.

⁵By-Laws for Local Union 1005 United Steelworkers of America, May 1973, p. 17.

⁶This story, told by one of the 1005 leaders, illustrates very clearly the deep seated nature of apathy in unions. "When Ron Tipler was president we really tried to get people involved in the union but it was just impossible. Tipler took \$1,000 and put on a dance for the young people of the local in the Steel Hall. Some of them wanted to dance and they came out but when they found there were guys like Tipler and Stew Cooke and myself there who wanted to talk about unions to them they never came back. Another time Tipler put on a new members night. They promoted it in the plant and in Steel Shots--cartoons for the kids, free coffee and donuts--we put on a big campaign. So the night it was to happen Tipler ordered the whole executive and everybody else to be there and we all showed up with our wives--this was to be a big affair. Well one member showed up with his wife--one member out of 12,000 men! So there we were 12 members of the executive, five members of the grievance committee, other committee members and all our wives, and there we were sitting around watching Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse. Well that was the end of trying to get people involved for me." Apathy and lack of participation are deep seated problems in unions and they are not about to change unless there is a fundamental re-ordering of the economy and the industrial relations system. Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 26.

⁷Aristotle: Politics, IV, II.

⁸Private conversation with Chief Steward, July 1976.

⁹Lipset, et al., op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 77.

¹¹William A. Faunce, "Size of Locals and Union Democracy," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 68, No. 3, Nov. 1962, pp. 291-298.

¹²Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 41.

¹³Ibid., Vol. II, p. 7.

¹⁴Ibid., Vol. II, p. 55.

¹⁵Private conversation with chief steward, July 1976.

¹⁶Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 7.

¹⁷Ibid., Vol. III, p. 44.

¹⁸Ibid., Vol. II, p. 8.

¹⁹Ibid., Vol. III, p. 45.

²⁰Ibid., Vol. II, p. 7.

²¹The Basic Agreement between Hilton Works the Steel Company of Canada Limited and Local Union 1005 the United Steelworkers of America, dated 25 August 1975, pp. 71-72.

²²The Autonomy Slate is made up of much less experienced unionists. Only one of the seven interviewed had been a Chief Steward.

²³Freeman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 1.

²⁴Interview with member of the grievance committee, August 1976.

²⁵Freeman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 94.

²⁶Ibid., Vol. III, p. 178.

²⁷Ibid., Vol. III, p. 168.

²⁸Ibid., Vol. III, p. 178.

²⁹ One of the most interesting things that happened in the 1976 executive elections was that an independent candidate won one of the top positions. This was the first time that this had happened in years and even the activists were astounded. One factor accounted for this person's victory. The candidate is a woman. She is the only female that has ever taken part in the 1005 political life and one of only about 20 women in the bargaining unit. By virtue of her sex she was well known in the local, and after an expensive campaign she got elected.

³⁰ Freeman, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 184.

³¹ Lipset, op. cit., p. 2.

³² Ibid., p. 15.

³³ We have assumed a political system of institutionalized opposition existed in the years 1936-1946 and 1961-1976, while the years of oligarchy are from 1946 to 1961.

CHAPTER 11

THE LEADERS

The political system of Local 1005 is supported by both environmental factors and organizational features unique to the company and the union, but it is also similar to the system of political parties in the wider society. Just as parties gear their appeal to the entire voting public but design their policies and concentrate their organizational strength to appeal to certain segments of the population, so political slates in 1005 appeal to the entire membership in election campaigns but draw their organizational support and votes from certain segments of the membership.

To demonstrate thoroughly this relationship between the leadership the membership at 1005 and the slates it would be necessary to do a large scale survey of the membership relating voting patterns to the social characteristics of individuals. This is much beyond the scope of this research project, but it is possible to get some insight into the political life of the local by studying the social characteristics of the leaders of the slates. This will give insight into the nature of the slates, the type of political appeal they make to the membership, and the base of their support in the rank and file. From this something of the nature of their voting strength can be extrapolated. This is the task of this Chapter.

The Leaders from 1962 to 1976

It has now been well established that the political life of the local has varied tremendously in different historical periods and these differences are reflected in the social characteristics of the leaders of the different slates. Prior to 1946 there was open competition between the Communist and CCF slates; from 1946 to 1961 there was domination by the CCF oligarchy; 1961 to 1970 was a period of deep ideological differences in the slates and from 1970 to the present the two major slates have been similar in ideology. At this late stage it is impossible to reconstruct the slates in the early life of the local, but it is possible to look at the candidates for election from 1962 to the present and try to determine if the slates were significantly different from each other. If the conclusions drawn from the interview material are true, that from 1962 to 1970 there were major differences between the slates and from 1970 to the present these have lessened, then this should be reflected in the social characteristics of those who stood for election.

The two social characteristics focused on to determine if there were differences were ethnic origin and skill level. It is impossible to justify entirely why these two factors were chosen and the rest ignored. One reason is that it is simply too difficult to collect some information. For example, perhaps the best factor to use would have been some indicator of militancy, but that would be impossible to reconstruct accurately. The reason that these two factors were used was simply that in the interviews leaders mentioned again and again that these were the important factors that differentiated the slates in the 1960's. If their perceptions

were correct then it should be borne out by an examination of those running on the slates.

In spite of the great variety of skills needed in a steel mill most steelworkers make a simple distinction between skilled workers, or tradesmen, and production workers, or all occupations other than the trades. This appeared to be a useful distinction and was followed here. By ethnic origin is meant simply a distinction between Canadian born workers and British immigrants. With the exception of the 1976 election there were no other people other than these two groups who ran on the slates. The distinctions between these two factors, skill level and ethnicity, are extremely simple because the information on many individuals had to be collected from informed observers, but they still give an interesting insight into the make-up of the slates at different times.

TABLE 11:1 Candidates for the 1962 Election by
Skill Level and Ethnicity

	Right Wing	Left Wing	Total
Canadian Production Workers	8*	2	10
Canadian Skilled Workers	--	--	
British Production Workers	3	2	5
British Skilled Workers	--	6	6
Total	11**	10	21

* All of the figures in this study have been left as crude numbers. To convert them into percentages would give a false sense of their accuracy. It is important to remember that although these are very small numbers they represent the people running for the executive from the different slates, and therefore, have been selected by other slate members as their most important leaders at the time.

** The Steelworkers' Constitution calls for a 12 man executive of a local union, but for a variety of reasons groups occasionally do not run full slates.

TABLE 11:2 Candidates for the 1964 Election by Skill Level and Ethnicity

	Right Wing	Left Wing	Total
Canadian Production Workers	9	4	13
Canadian Skilled Workers	--	--	--
British Production Workers	2	1	3
British Skilled Workers	1	7	8
Total	12	12	24

TABLE 11:3 Candidates for the 1967 Election by Skill Level and Ethnicity*

	Right Wing	Left Wing	Total
Canadian Production Workers	4	2	6
Canadian Skilled Workers	--	1	1
British Production Workers	3	1	4
British Skilled Workers	5	8	13
Total	12	12	24

The figures on these three elections, 1962, 1964, and 1967 show very clearly that the Left Wing Slate at this time was made up primarily of British skilled workers. This substantiates the interview material that claimed that the base of the electoral support of the Left Wing Group at the time was among skilled workers. They were also a militant slate and attracted a large vote from those who felt the union did badly in negotiations with the company. The Right Wing Slate, on the other hand, in both the 1962 and 1964 elections continued in the pattern of the old CCF oligarchy by being a slate of production workers. However, by 1967 the character of the Right had changed considerably. In that election they had eight British workers running on their slate, five of whom, were

*The constitution of the Steelworkers changed at this time making the executive elections for union locals once every three years.

skilled workers. This change is largely accounted for by the fact that John Morgan and a small group of followers switched from the Left to the Right Wing in that year.

The election of 1967 marks the height of the influence of British unionists. This represents a striking change in the politics of the local. In less than 10 years the British group had gone from having little influence in the local to providing 17 of the 24 candidates for the two slates. The British unionists and particularly the British tradesmen, were providing the leadership for the union, had a great impact on the industrial relations system and were important in the trade union movement both locally and nationally. The reasons for the ascendancy of this group were primarily the result of two factors: the dissatisfaction of the rank and file with the union leadership as a result of the 1958 strike and the strength of the Left Wing support within the trades.

The other faction that had a major impact on the political life of the local in the 1960's was the Autonomy Group. They were formed after the 1964 election, but were suspended in 1966 and ineligible to run in the 1967 election. By 1970 they had regained their eligibility and ran a group of candidates under the name of the Steward's Slate. The social characteristics of the candidates in the 1970 election show interesting patterns.

As these figures indicate the Steward's Slate was made up primarily of production workers. This corroborates interview material that maintained that the Autonomy movement was primarily located among production workers and they organized around the hostility towards the International Union. The pattern of the Left and Right Wing Slates

followed the patterns set in previous elections. Six of the candidates of the Left Wing were skilled workers while the Right Wing remained a slate primarily of production workers.

TABLE 11:4 Candidates for the 1970 Election by Skill Level and Ethnicity

	Right Wing	Left Wing	Steward's Slate	Total
Canadian Production Workers	3	4	5	12
Canadian Skilled Workers	--	1	--	1
British Production Workers	6	2	3	11
British Skilled Workers	1	5	1	7
Total	10	12	9	31

After 1970 the ideological nature of the two dominant slates became much less important and this is reflected in the social characteristics of the leaders of the 1973 and 1976 elections.

TABLE 11:5 Candidates for the 1973 Election by Skill Level and Ethnicity

	Green Slate	Yellow Slate	Total
Canadian Production Workers	5	6	11
Canadian Skilled Workers	--	--	--
British Production Workers	5	3	8
British Skilled Workers	2	2	4
Total	12	11	23

TABLE 11:6 Candidates for the 1976 Election by Skill Level and Ethnicity

	Green Slate	Yellow Slate	Autonomy	Total
Canadian Production Workers	7	5	5	17
Canadian Skilled Workers	--	1	--	1
British Production Workers	3	2	2	7
British Skilled Workers	2	4	--	6
Total	12	12	7	31

These two tables reflect the fact that there is little difference between the two dominant slates on these two factors that had been so important in the 1960's: ethnic origin and level of skill. The Yellow Slate in 1976 probably received a stronger vote from the skilled workers than the Green because three of their leaders were very prominent in the big Mechanical and Electrical departments. However, both slates drew strongly across the plant. The Autonomy Slate was a very small group of production workers in 1976. Clearly they benefited from their strongly militant position. This made them quite distinct from the other two groups and gave them the chance to pick up the votes of those dissatisfied with the current state of industrial relations and the political direction of the local. The Plate and Strip Mill, for example, was a place of great dissatisfaction prior to the 1976 election, and they voted heavily for the Autonomy Group according to informants.

Social Characteristics of the 1976 Leaders

In the interviews done for this study in 1976 the information on the two dominant slates substantiates the position that these slates had become fairly homogenous. Out of the 15 people interviewed in the two slates, 7 were of British and 8 were of Canadian origin in both the Green and Yellow Groups. On skill level the two slates were also virtually the same. The Green Group had 11 production and 4 skilled workers while the Yellow Group had 10 production and 5 skilled workers.

After the 1970 election the old ideological nature of slates disintegrated and the union activists regrouped themselves into slates that were essentially election machines. However, the members of the slates did not go at random into different groups. The Green Slate

TABLE 11:7 Ethnic Origins of 1976 Slate Leaders

	Canadian	British	Others	Total
Green	8	7	--	15
Yellow	8	7	--	15
Autonomy	2	3	2	7
Independents	2	3	--	5
Total	20	20	2	42

TABLE 11:8 Skill Level of 1976 Slate Leaders

	Production	Skilled	Total
Green	11	4	15
Yellow	10	5	15
Autonomy	7	--	7
Independent	2	3	5
Total	30	12	42

continues the traditions of the old Right Wing Group by supporting the International and giving strong support to the New Democratic Party. The Yellow Slate has neither the tradition of militancy of the Left Wing or the policy of breaking away from the International of the Autonomy Group, but they do tend to be more militant than the Green Slate. Table 11:9 looks at the 42 activists who were interviewed in 1976 and traces the slates they were attached to in the 1960's. It shows an interesting pattern. The Green Slate attracted virtually all of the old Right Wing Group and a sizable proportion of the Left and even Autonomy members. The Yellow Slate is made up of what one person called the "remnants of the Left," most of the old Autonomy Group and recruited a number of new members. The new Autonomy Group is made up of people who first became involved in the Autonomy back in the 1960's and new recruits.

TABLE 11:9 The 1962-70 Slate Origins of the 1976 Leaders

	Right	Left	Old Autonomy	New Recruits	Total
Green	6	6	2	1	15
Yellow	--	4	6	5	15
New Autonomy	--	--	4	3	7
Independents	3	2	--	--	5
Total	9	12	12	9	42

On other social characteristics the two dominant groups are very similar. The social origins of all the union activists are almost exclusively working class and a sizable proportion of them come from families of trade unionists as tables 11:10 and 11:11 indicate. Information was collected from the 42 leaders on their education but because of the basic difference in the British and Canadian educational systems it is not presented in table form. Almost without exception the British workers had left school at the age of 14 or 15 and had received some trade training. The Canadians all had some high school with the exception of two people who had gone to post secondary institutions for short periods.

TABLE 11:10 Social Origins of 1976 Leaders
Judged by Father's Occupation

	Blue Collar	White Collar/ Business	Professional	Total
Green	15	--	--	15
Yellow	11	2	2	15
Autonomy	4	2	1	7
Independents	4	1	--	5
Total	34	5	3	42

TABLE 11:11 Trade Union Activity of Other Family Members of the Leaders

	Trade Union Experience	No Trade Union Experience	Total
Green	9	6	15
Yellow	12	3	15
Autonomy	3	4	7
Independents	4	1	5
Total	28	14	42

Religion seems to make some difference in the slates. As Table 11:12 shows the Green Slate has a large number of Roman Catholics as compared to the Yellow Slate. It is difficult to estimate the importance of this factor. One person in the interview mentioned that religion played a part in the political life of the local because some politicians use their common religion to appeal for votes. One other informant in explaining why he thought a particular individual joined one slate rather than another said that the person was a catholic and so were many of the other leaders on the slate he joined. Certainly religion is an important element in our society and could well be one of the factors which attracts an individual to a particular slate, but on the basis of the interview material there is not a great deal of evidence to indicate that it plays much of a role in the local's political life.

TABLE 11:12 Religion of the 1976 Leaders

	Roman Catholic	Protestant	None	Total
Green	8	6	1	15
Yellow	3	5	7	15
Autonomy	--	2	5	7
Independent	3	1	1	5
Total	14	14	14	42

Politics is clearly an important issue to 1005 activists and it continues to play an important role in the local today. The majority of the leaders are New Democrats. The Green Slate carries on the tradition of supporting the International Union and the NDP, but, as an indication of how ideology has become less important in the slates of the 1970's, even they accepted a prominent Liberal into their ranks not long before the 1976 election. The Yellow Group was formed out of the old Left Wing and the Autonomy Slates and for some years there were bitter debates in the group along political lines. The three factions within the Yellow Group were NDP, Liberals, and those who were influenced by the Socialist-Waffle ideas for independent trade unions. This was finally resolved when Cec Taylor, the leader of the Waffle faction, left the Yellow Group to form the New Autonomy Slate. Since then the Yellow Group has been much more harmonious and unified but even now they have the unwritten rule of avoiding political debate within the slate in order to minimize differences. The Autonomy Slate are also very badly divided on political lines. Three of the leaders expressed strong support of the Waffle when they were interviewed, in spite of the fact that the Waffle does not exist any longer, one is a Liberal and three claimed to support the NDP. In the interviews it was clear that political differences were causing major problems of unity in the group.

TABLE 11:13 Political Affiliations of the 1976 Leaders

	NDP	Liberal	Other	Total
Green	14	1	--	15
Yellow	12	2	1	15
Autonomy	3	1	3	7
Independents	5	--	--	5
Total	34	4	4	42

The one factor more than any other which reflected differences in the slates was age. As Table 11:14 shows the Green Group is made up of older and more experienced unionists while the Yellow and Autonomy Slates are much younger. There is also some evidence to indicate that there is a difference in the voting patterns of the membership on the basis of age. The Green Group carries on the tradition of the Right Wing Slate which reached its height of influence in the 1950's. Many older members who worked in the plant at that time would have ties and alliances with this group. The Autonomy Group in the 1976 election clearly made an appeal to the rank and file on the basis of being a militant aggressive slate. They had three young militants running for election and they got a strong vote from mills such as the Plate and Strip which has a high percentage of young workers.

TABLE 11:14 Age of the 1976 Leaders

	Average Age	Median Age	
Green	48.3	50	n=15
Yellow	40.5	41	n=15
Autonomy	35.8	37	n= 7
Independent	49.2	50	n= 5

As these figures indicate there is a great deal of similarity between the two dominant slates: the Green and Yellow Groups. The Autonomy Slate, however, is quite different from the other two. In 1976 they were very weak and only able to run seven people for the executive election. They are a young and militant group of union activists drawn exclusively from the production departments, but they are badly divided politically. The leaders, Cec Taylor and George Gilks, are experienced unionists who share the ideal of an independent socialist Canada, but this

ideal has little support from the other members. One of them is a conservative Liberal while another two can only be described as radical shop floor militants with little political sophistication. It remains to be seen whether these differences can be resolved and the group can become a unified, viable political slate with a coherent set of political objectives that can challenge the two establishment slates.

In spite of the lessening of ideological differences of the groups it is still possible to see where the different slates draw their organizational and voting strength in the membership. The Green Slate tends to get support from older production workers. In 1976, because their presidential candidate was Walter Valchuck, a person well known as a leader among the ethnic workers, it is likely that they drew heavily from this source. The Yellow Group in 1976 tended to get strong support from the tradesmen in the plant. Their stance of militancy and the experience of many of their candidates was popular across the plant but the radicalism of the Autonomy Group cut badly into their strength. The Autonomy Group received strong support from young production workers, but they were badly hampered by their lack of experience and weak organizational base in the plant. As a result their voting strength was limited to a few departments. This type of study of leaders is no substitute for a research design which surveyed the membership but it does give some indication of the nature of slates and their voting strength.

British and Canadian Unionists

Of all the groups that have had an impact on 1005 political life the most interesting in recent years has been the British immigrants. As a group they began to rise to prominence in the local union through the

Left Wing Slate in 1962, but fourteen years later out of the 42 leaders in the local that were interviewed 19 of them, or just under 50%, were British immigrants. This group provides an interesting contrast to their Canadian counterparts.

Although the British group today are equally scattered through the two dominant slates, originally most of them had strong links to the Left Wing Slate. Of the 19 who were still active in the local, 9 began their political involvement with the Left in 1960-62, 4 began in the Right and 6 have subsequently become involved with the local. The Left Wing was always identified as a tradesman's slate and this is strongly reflected in the skill level of the British union activists to this day. Table 11:15 shows that by comparison the British group were much more highly skilled than their Canadian counterparts in 1976. What is more, of the 8 British production workers, two of the men had lost their trade because of technological change or as a result of their move to Canada.

TABLE 11:15 British and Canadian Unionists by Skill Level

	Production	Skilled	Total
Canadian	22	1	23
British	8	11	19
Total	30	12	42

In 1962 the British-dominated Left Wing Slate viewed themselves as a young group trying to wrestle political control of the local away from the aging CCF oligarchy. Today the unionists of British origin still involved are considerably older than the Canadians who are active in the local.

TABLE 11:16 Average and Median Ages of British and Canadian Unionists

	Average	Median	
Canadian	40.6	42	n=23
British	47.2	50	n=19

It is the data on the political beliefs and family backgrounds of the British unionists that gives some hint of the reason for the involvement of the group. The British unionists came to this country firmly committed to the idea that unions should be allied to worker's political parties. In Canada, or at least in Ontario, that political commitment was translated into strong support for the New Democratic Party.¹ To the staff officers of the International Union this was the one saving feature of the British unionists. The Steelworkers strongly supported the NDP and on political issues they allied themselves with the British group against the apathetic membership and the Autonomy Slate who in the 1960's were influenced by Liberals. To this day the political beliefs of the British unionists reflect their strong support of the NDP.

TABLE 11:17 Political Affiliation of Leaders by the Origins

	NDP	Liberal	Other	Total
Canadian	15	5	3	23
British	17	--	2	19
Total	32	5	5	42

The best indication of the commitment of the British group to the trade union movement can be seen in the involvement of their families with unions. Without exception the British unionists had close ties with unions while this was true of only a minority of the Canadians.

TABLE 11:18 Family Involvement with Unions
by the British and Canadian Groups

	Union Experience	No Union Experience	Total
Canadian	9	14	23
British	19	--	19
Total	28	14	42

British unionists have long played an important role in the Canadian trade union movement and the data from this study confirms that they continue to have a crucial influence to this day. Many British immigrants arriving in this country come with a working class culture which gives strong alliance to trade unions and a deep commitment to political action through Social Democratic political parties. By contrast most Canadians lack this type of working class heritage. The interviews were marked by this difference. If given the opportunity, many of the British union activists at 1005 would reminisce for hours about working class leaders they had known as children, and the struggles their families and friends had waged to gain a better life for themselves. The traditions and history of the working class were a real force to many of the British group which gave shape to their lives and meaning to the union work that they are engaged in. By contrast the Canadians tended to approach their union in a pragmatic way. To many, trade unions were simply organizations designed to help workers achieve economic goals rather than part of a political and social movement for the emancipation of the working class.

This pattern has been noted by others. Henry Jacek and Robert Cunningham writing about Hamilton political life comment:

The British working class leaders find themselves leading two Hamilton institutions, the labour unions, especially the big

industrial ones, and the New Democratic Party. While neither institution is explicitly organized along ethnic lines, the heavy participation of the British working class immigrants give these institutions a distinctive British atmosphere.²

Hamilton is an industrial centre with a history of union struggles matching almost any British city its size, and yet by comparison to the British group the Canadian union leaders in this study lack identification with the working class and their union. The only way this difference can be accounted for is in the cultural traditions of the working class in the two countries.

The Leadership and the Membership

The differences in the social characteristics of the members of the slates, and groups such as the British and Canadian unionists, give some insight into the functioning of 1005 political life. It is also important to recognize that there are very real differences of social characteristics between the leaders and the rank and file.³ Because of the limitations of this research it is impossible to show with any accuracy these differences between the membership and the union activists, but it is possible to take some educated guesses about these differences.

The unionists tend to be older than the membership. The average age of all 42 leaders who were interviewed was 43.6 years and their median age 45. It is difficult to get an accurate estimation of the average age of the men in the plant, but it is likely to be in the early or mid 30's. Since the Second World War the company has expanded rapidly and the majority of the new workers have been young.

In the interviews various people mentioned that it was rare for young workers to become involved in unions. This was borne out by the data that was collected. Of the 42 only three were in their twenties.

The reason for this is that union involvement for most workers is an indication of identification with the work and an acceptance that the individual is likely to be doing this or similar work for the rest of his or her life. Most people are at least in their early 30's before they make this type of identification.⁴

One of the most important differences between the membership and the leadership is in their ethnic origins. It has already been emphasized that the British unionists greatly overrepresent their numbers in the plant. An even more important difference is the virtual total lack of involvement of any ethnic group other than the British and Canadian born workers. It is estimated that approximately 30% of the membership of the local are European immigrants. The largest group is the Italians followed by the East Europeans. These workers have always been solid supporters of their union, some of those interviewed claimed that they were the strongest group of unionists in the plant, but they have played almost no part in the leadership of the union from its inception in the 1930's to the present. The records of the local almost without exception, show Anglo Saxon names. This study found only two European born leaders and they were both involved with the small Autonomy Group.

It is also striking that at Local 1005 there are virtually no second generation ethnic union leaders. The non-English speaking immigrant is obviously excluded from playing a leadership role in the union because of language problems, but that is not true of second and third generation Canadians. Despite this it is rare for this group to become involved in the local. The one major exception to this rule is Walter Valchuck, the president of the local when the study was carried out.

Valchuck, the son of Polish immigrants, has been able to make a major contribution to 1005 because he spoke a number of Eastern European languages as well as English and could effectively represent these workers before the company and the union. As a result of his popularity with this sizable group of workers he has been an asset to any slate he was involved with and finally he became the leader of the Green Group. Valchuck's electoral success may well indicate a new type of leadership by second generation ethnic leaders, but as yet there is little indication that this group is playing leadership roles in the local.

The union leaders are also much more highly skilled than the rank and file. Something under 10% of Stelco's unionized employees are tradesmen but of the 42 leaders 12, or over 25% were skilled workers. This is the result almost entirely of the British group but the predominance of the skilled workers in union affairs has been noted in other studies and seems to be part of a pattern where "the higher the status of union members the greater is their participation."⁵

Union members in Canada strongly support the New Democratic Party. Henry Jacek summarizing findings of a study on Hamilton voters wrote:

When the head of the household is a member of organized labour, the predisposition of the family member is more likely to be NDP irrespective of the respondent's occupation.⁶

But while organized workers in the city give strong support to the party the vast majority are passive voters rather than party members and activists. The leaders of 1005, however, are very committed politically. Most of them, 33 out of the 42, were supporters of the NDP and the majority of these were party members and worked actively for candidates

during elections. Even the Liberals and supporters of other groups such as the Waffle were dedicated party workers who in the past had worked for candidates and causes they supported. Politics is obviously an important motivation for virtually all of the union activists and this clearly distinguishes them from the rank and file.⁷

The background of the unionists show that a fairly high proportion of their families had been involved in trade unions. Of the families of the leaders 28 out of 42 had some history of union involvement and this was particularly strong in the British group. Although it is hard to give an accurate estimation, it is likely that this proportion is much higher than in the membership. As recently as 1941 only 18% of the non-agricultural workers of Canada were unionized.⁸ In an industrial center such as Hamilton the proportion of unionized workers would be higher but still considerably lower than the group of union leaders whose families were involved in unions.

Information was collected on other social characteristics of the leaders, but it is difficult to estimate whether, on these factors, they are significantly different than the membership. The occupation of the father shows the leaders come from strongly working class origins. Among the rank and file it is likely there would be a higher proportion coming from agricultural backgrounds but generally the social status of the families of both leaders and members appear to be similar. In education and religion there seems to be no obvious difference between the leaders and the rank and file.

Conclusions

Of the significant social factors of the leaders influencing the political life of Local 1005 two are most important: politics and ethnic origin. Union leaders in the local almost without exception are highly political people, and they become involved in union politics because they see this as a way of attempting to achieve their political goals. This is true not only today but it has always been true in the local. From the beginning slates have been groupings of people with similar political points of view. Political beliefs motivate people in the first place to become active in the local and they are a fundamental factor around which the slates are organized.

Ethnic origin is also clearly an important factor in the life of the local. The British leaders are the most obvious example of this factor. They arrived in this country with a set of beliefs about unions that were quite different than the Canadians who had dominated the local up until that time. Not only did their beliefs motivate them to become involved in the union but the British group tried to radically change the industrial relations system into a form that they found more meaningful. In this they largely failed but there can be no doubt that they had a great impact on the political life of 1005. The importance of cultural factors are more obvious with the British group but it must also be used to explain why there is lower participation among Canadian and both first and second generation ethnic workers.

Cultural factors have played an important part in shaping the union political life and will continue to do so. In the future ethnic groups could well become involved in the local and create an important

impact on the political direction of the local, or a much more ideological trade union movement may emerge as a new set of leaders take over the local who received their first political education in the radical 1960's. Whatever the course the local takes, its future political life will be the result of a complex set of factors of broad social or environmental influences, organizational features of both the company and the union, and the cultural backgrounds of the union leaders.

Footnotes

¹Gad Horowitz, in his book Canadian Labour in Politics, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), applies the Hartzian thesis to Canada and the trade union movement. This thesis holds that "the key to the understanding of ideological development in a new society (founded by Europeans) is its 'point of departure' from Europe." (page 4) Horowitz sees the development of socialist trade unions and the CCF/NDP as a consequence of Toryism which was the major ideological element in the founding of English Canada. Whether this thesis is true or not there can be little doubt that many British workers immigrating to this country brought with them an ideology favouring strong support of both trade unions and working class political parties. In Ontario and the West this was translated into support for unions and the New Democratic Party. The British unionists at 1005 are part of this movement.

²Henry Jacek and Robert Cunningham, "Ethnic Conflict and Political Action: Political Parties and Voters in Urban Canada," International Review of Modern Sociology, Vol. 5 No. 2, Autumn, 1975, p. 151.

³One important issue of comparison between the leadership and the membership that we were unable to adequately research is around the issue of job satisfaction. The public image of union activists is one of disgruntled employees who are looking for some easy way of avoiding work through their union. But of the 1005 activists that we interviewed most said that they found their jobs in the plant very satisfying. On this issue Blau and Scott wrote: "Surprisingly enough, studies find that workers who report high job satisfaction are more likely than dissatisfied workers to be active union members." Peter Blau and Richard Scott, Formal Organizations, (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1962) p. 48.

⁴This information on low participation rates of the young at Local 1005 conforms to data on participation in the political institutions of the broader society. In Political Man Seymour Lipset sums this up by noting: "Everywhere the young have the lowest electoral turn out." (p. 219). To explain this Lipset put forward a theory of "cross pressures." "Youth will vote when the decision is made for it by a homogenous environment and will postpone voting when exposed to conflicting stimuli." (p. 220). The young trade unionist is influenced by the conflicting influences of desire for upward mobility on the one hand, social activities, and union activities, and as a consequence do not become politically involved in their unions. Seymour Lipset, Political Man, (New York: Anchor Books, 1963).

⁵Peter Blau and Richard Scott, op. cit., p. 47. Other studies of unions have shown that workers of higher skill participate more actively. See particularly: Ely Chinoy, Local Union Leadership, in A.W. Gouldner

(ed.) Studies in Leadership, (New York: Harper and Bros., 1950). This data on union participation and level of skill follows a pattern of political participation in the society. Studies have shown that the higher the status, income, or occupational prestige the greater the likelihood of participation in all political activities. See: Seymour Lipset, Political Man, op. cit., pp. 187-189.

⁶Private communication from Dr. Henry J. Jacek, "Chapter Six-- Social Classes," dated November 13, 1973, p. 17.

⁷There is considerable evidence that the Canadian and Hamilton working class strongly support the New Democratic Party. As an example, John Meisel shows that voting in the 1972 federal election indicates that groups of people usually associated as the working class (skilled workers, people with education from grade 9 to 13 and those that respond to surveys that they are "lower class") vote heavily for the NDP.

Proportion of Party's Vote Provided by Various Group. (Vertical Percentages)

	Canada					Ontario			
	Total	Lib	PC	NDP	SC	Total	Lib	PC	NDP
<u>Occupation</u>									
Professional	19	22	18	13	7	19	19	23	12
Sales Clerical	16	19	14	12	9	20	22	20	13
Skilled Lab.	35	35	29	45	45	35	33	28	53
Unskilled Lab.	13	12	14	14	16	12	12	10	14
Farmer	9	6	15	7	17	6	6	9	2
Pensioner	8	7	10	9	6	8	7	10	6
<u>Class</u>									
Upper	8	10	7	4	4	8	10	8	2
Middle	48	51	48	34	46	48	50	53	33
Lower	44	39	45	62	51	44	40	39	65
<u>Education</u>									
0 - 8 yrs	32	30	34	32	56	25	25	25	25
9 - 13 yrs	54	54	55	55	39	60	58	59	66
14 yrs or more	14	16	11	13	5	15	17	16	9

John Meisel, Working Papers on Canadian Politics, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973) appendix Table 1.

A study carried out in Hamilton during the 1972 federal election by Jacek using the class indicators of occupation, total family income and education show a similar pattern.

1972 Intended Vote by Occupation

Party	Professional	Manager	Clerical	Skilled	Unskilled
Liberal	30%	52%	24%	45%	45%
Conservative	44	39	52	24	36
NDP	26	9	24	31	19

Lambda (Asymmetric) = .07

1972 Intended Vote by Total Family Income

	0-4000	4000-7000	7000-10000	10000-15000	15000 +	Total
Liberal	49%	47%	38%	38%	43%	42%
Conservative	40	35	34	40	49	38
NDP	11	18	28	22	9	20

Lambda (Asymmetric) = .02

1972 Intended Vote by Formal Education of the Respondent

	Less than Grade 8	Grades 8-12	Grade 13	Some University	University Degree	Total
Liberal	61%	39%	38%	41%	26%	41%
Conservative	23	39	51	33	55	39
NDP	16	22	11	26	19	20

Lambda (Asymmetric) = .06

Private communication from Dr. Henry J. Jacek, "Chapter Six--Social Classes," dated November 13, 1973, pp. 4-8.

Richard U. Miller summarized the historical relationship between the CCF/NDP and the unions in his paper: "Organized Labour and Politics in Canada," in Richard U. Miller & Fraser Isbester (ed.) Canadian Labour in Transition (Scarborough: Prentice Hall of Canada, 1971). He describes how the unions and particularly the CIO unions such as the Steelworkers, have consistently supported the social democratic political movement. Not only has considerable amounts of money flowed from the trade union movement to the party but the unions have often helped the NDP organizationally.

Local 1005 is affiliated to the NDP and the vast majority of its members donate 10¢ a month to the party and give donations at the time of elections. Many of the local's members have been candidates of the party over the years, and one, Reg Gisborn, was a sitting MLA for almost twenty years.

Perhaps the strongest indication that the Hamilton working class vote strongly for the NDP is the fact that the provincial seats held by

the party over the years are all located in the working class residential areas of the district.

⁸Statistics Canada, Union Growth in Canada 1921-1967, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970) p. 78.

PART V: CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 12

THE SOCIAL FORCES SUSTAINING THE POLITICS OF LOCAL 1005

Since Robert Michels published Political Parties in 1911 the study of the political life of democratically structured organizations has become an important subject of research for social scientists. Why then, after all the attention it has received, was it deemed worthwhile to undertake yet another study? The answer to this question lies not in the uniqueness of Local 1005 of the Steelworkers, but in the inadequacies of the theoretical formulations that account for oligarchy.

Virtually all of the literature on the subject of the politics of voluntary organizations has taken three general approaches. First, the oligarchical control of organizations is said to be widespread. Michels believed that it was inevitable and gave the name of the "iron law of oligarchy" to his theory.¹ Others have believed that democratic practices are much more widespread, but all agree that oligarchy remains a persistent problem for voluntary organizations.² Second, with the exception of Edelstein and Warner,³ all of the writers on this subject implicitly use a definition of democracy as the existence of organized opposition to those in power or to use the term of the authors of Union Democracy, "institutionalized opposition." Third, in the study of the factors which account for oligarchy without exception these social scientists looked at factors internal to the organization, and they focused on one limited point in time.

After an examination of the literature it seemed to us that these three approaches to the question of oligarchy were all problematic. We were aware that many of the large union locals in Ontario have political systems of slates and that at many levels in the United Steelworkers of America there is considerable political debate. This does not mean oligarchy does not exist in these organizations, but opposition is much more widespread than theorists recognized. Second, these social scientists measured democracy by the existence of organized opposition and contested elections but virtually ignored the element of participation of the membership. The one issue, however, that became our point of departure from the theory of oligarchy was the social factors which shaped political life. To focus entirely on factors internal to the organization and ignore both environmental influences and the dynamics of change seemed a major error that could not help but lead to distortions in the way political life was perceived.

To us the theory about the political life of voluntary organizations that had come to be accepted by social scientists seemed very inadequate. It was time, we felt, to re-examine the theory and begin a new study using new approaches and a different theoretical orientation.

Societal Factors

For some time sociologists have recognized that the study of organizations has been seriously flawed because environmental factors have tended to be ignored.⁴ To deal with these difficulties we adopted a political economy method. This approach assumes that the only way to understand social life is to see it in its totality by relating the particular phenomena under study to broad social influences. The way

political economists have usually done this is by historical analysis and consequently much of our study of Local 1005 focuses on how the political life of the local union changed and adapted over time to broad economic and political influences.

One of the assumptions of the political economy approach is that the economic substructure of society such as the trade cycle, consumption patterns, and the ownership of private property have an overwhelming influence on social life. The historical analysis of 1005 clearly illustrates that this is the case. Industrial production, wage labour, and the development of a market economy were preconditions to the existence of both the Steel Company of Canada and the union which was ultimately organized among the company's workers. Economic conditions profoundly influenced the employees of Stelco and the activities of the union from its very beginning. The year 1919 was the first time when there was mass organization of workers in the plant and this coincided with the rapid inflation and deterioration of the living standards of the Canadian working class. Other major developments of the union were related to economic conditions. The Steelworkers union was founded in 1936 as a consequence of the crisis of the depression and the struggle for union recognition was won largely as a result of the relative prosperity and job security of the war and immediate post war. Finally the one factor that led to stable relations between the company and the union since 1946 has been the years of economic growth and expansion.

Since the 1946 strike broad economic conditions have continued to influence the political life of Local 1005. Two examples provide sufficient illustration. In the post war era up to the mid 1950's economic

expansion created increasing prosperity for Stelco workers which tended to make them complacent and satisfied with the CCF oligarchical group that controlled the local. The recession at the end of the 1950's led Stelco management to adopt a much tougher policy in negotiations. The 1958 strike was disastrous for the union and the series of contracts in the early 1960's, that were considered very bad by many of the unionists, led to an undercurrent of dissatisfaction among the rank and file members of the local. This dissatisfaction and the increased militancy of the membership that went with it were the major causes for the rule of the Left Wing and Autonomy Groups that transformed the union's political life. Therefore, economic influences indirectly have a tremendous effect on the political life of the organization.

The industrial relations system established between the company and the union is also part of the substructure of Local 1005 and has had a real influence on the union's political life. Out of the struggle of the 1946 strike and as a consequence of the economic prosperity of the company, a new industrial relations system emerged at Stelco. The company was left in a very strong position to direct the work force and control various work disruptions while the union was forced to accept a limited role as the worker's advocate. The union represents the workers at times of negotiations, in the job evaluation plan, and the grievance system, but management has been left with almost unlimited power to direct the work force and introduce technological change. A system of industrial relations had emerged that forced the union to ally with the company in trying to force the workers to comply with the collective agreement.

The consequence of these substructural factors has been very

profound for the union and its political life. The Steelworkers at Stelco have been unthreatened since the 1946 strike, but the union's inability to deal with substantial issues that affect the workers in the plant has left a degree of dissatisfaction and frustration among the members that has resulted in a whole complex set of behavior from apathy and uninvolvedness in the union to disruptive wildcats. The political life of 1005 is always affected because these frustrations, built into the system have led to political instability as members constantly search for solutions to problems that are virtually insoluble within the industrial relations system. Therefore, in several different ways substructural factors play a major role in shaping the political life of the local.

Other societal factors such as politics, law, religion and morality also have had a major effect on the political life of 1005. Members of the local have been influenced by such broad social movements as liberal democracy and socialism. The growth of the trade union movement in Canada, the United States and Europe have also been a major factor in the development of the local. For example, the most immediate contributing cause of the founding of the local by Stelco workers in 1936 was the establishment of the Steelworkers union in the United States and there can be little doubt that the rapid development of the CIO unions played a major part in encouraging the growth of Local 1005. Finally, the union's acceptance by Stelco in 1946 was influenced by legislation, and the industrial relations system followed patterns already established in the monopolized industries across North America.

The influence of these factors on 1005 is even more striking when it is seen how the internal political life of the local has been profoundly

shaped by political developments in the broader community. The Communist slate was active in the local at the same time as the party was an effective group in Canadian political life. Once the Cold War began in the late 1940's and early 1950's this group quickly collapsed. The CCF slate of the 1940's, which became the Establishment Group in the 1950's, the Right Wing Slate of the 1960's and the Green Group after 1970 has always been influenced by the mainstream of social democratic thought coming from the CCF/NDP. In a similar way we can trace the political influences in the community to other groups that have operated at 1005 such as the Left Wing Slate and the Autonomy Group. It is very clear that political ideology originating in the broader society has had a great impact on the political life of the local.

One conclusion we must come to, therefore, is that the literature on organizations has distorted our view of the social forces shaping political life by ignoring these broad economic and political factors. Organizations are influenced by a wide variety of factors and political life is constantly being shaped in very fundamental ways by influences from society.

Internal Organizational Factors

The literature on the political life of organizations has almost completely ignored societal factors and focused on internal organizational features which shape political life. Although this study emphasized the environment, we also studied Local 1005 to see how the internal features of the organization sustained the system of slates. However, the analysis of the data from the local led us to a much different set of conclusions than other studies.

Virtually all of the theorists felt that size of the organization was very important in determining political life. The accepted generalization is that the larger the organization the more likely it is that there will be an oligarchy.⁵ Although we did not comparatively study the political life of different sizes of voluntary organizations to test this hypothesis the information from 1005 and elsewhere showed that this could hardly be correct. The local is enormous and yet a system of competing political slates has operated for years. We were also aware that large locals in Ontario and parts of the United States⁶ seemed to have systems of institutionalized opposition; that small locals were either controlled by cliques or union staff representatives; while the top tanks of unions with few exceptions were under the control of small oligarchical groups. This suggests that there is a clear relationship between size and political structure, but the assumption that the larger the organization the more likely there would be control by an oligarchy, clearly seems to be false.

We also found that other aspects of the life of 1005 contradicted the theory. It has been postulated that democracy can only exist in organizations where there is high levels of participation of the members.⁷ Again, the members of Local 1005 are divided along skill lines, and even more seriously divided by language and ethnic group differences. The accepted theory explaining oligarchy and democracy of organizations simply did not appear to apply to Local 1005.

The one major factor in our study of Local 1005 that conformed to the findings of the authors of Union Democracy is the contribution that

subgroups of the larger organization make in sustaining institutionalized opposition. As Lipset and the others put it: opposition

is most likely to become institutionalized in organizations whose members form organized or structured subgroups which while maintaining a basic loyalty to the larger organization constitute relatively independent and autonomous centers of power within the organization.⁸

In the ITU, Lipset, Trow and Coleman found that these subgroups were various voluntary organizations such as clubs, lodges, or veterans groups. At Local 1005 the organizational feature comparable to these voluntary groups is the departments.

In an organization such as 1005 there are real barriers to the participation of rank and file members in political life. Many are apathetic because they feel the union is unwilling or unable to help them, others simply have no interest, while a great many cannot participate because of language barriers or lack of verbal and social skills. As a consequence of the lack of participation and the size of the work force at Stelco the individual union member usually knows virtually nothing about the local's political life. If they are to vote in union elections then they are dependent on others in their department for information.

It is the stewards and particularly the chief and assistant chief stewards of the departments who are the people with influence with the rank and file members and these same people are the activists who are involved in the slates. For a variety of reasons ranging from personal ambition to ideological commitment these people are interested in shaping the politics of the local and holding elected positions. In order to achieve this they come together into coalitions of slates to pool their collective votes. In this way they can generate the voting strength

across the plant that is absolutely necessary for any candidate to get elected.

The political life of institutionalized opposition at 1005, therefore, is sustained by the large size of the work force and its division into departments which allows for individual leaders to have influence with their workmates. The size of the work force at 1005 is also important for it provides a number of people anxious to compete over policy and elected positions. Finally, the system is dependent on the widespread apathy, and lack of participation in the membership. All of these factors clearly contradict previous theory that has been given to explain the political life of voluntary organizations.

There are other internal features of 1005 which sustain the system of slates. One of the most important is the constant elections of delegates to conventions and committee members that happens on the floor of the monthly membership meetings. From the time that political groups emerged in the early 1960's they have run candidates for these positions. An unintended consequence of this is that the constant elections strengthen the slate system because political groups must meet constantly to select their candidates and organize how to support them. This keeps the slates active and involved between executive elections.

Finally, a factor that has helped to shape the political life of Local 1005 is the social characteristics of the leaders. It is no accident that slates at different times are made up of individuals with similar backgrounds. The Left Wing Slate in the 1960's, for example, was made up of many British tradesmen. The major reason this group came together in an effort to capture political power in the local was because

their background in the British trade union movement had given them a similar political orientation and they were dedicated to similar goals. There are other examples of this. The Autonomy Group in the 1960's was made up primarily of Canadian born production workers with a strong belief in nationalism. Social characteristics of union activists, therefore, play an important role in recruiting members into slates and shaping political life.

This study found a number of internal organizational features which shape the political life of a democratically structured organization. However, rather than confirming existing theory our findings have shown that the system of institutionalized opposition is shaped by such features as the large size of the organization, the apathy and lack of participation of the membership, and the division of the organization into subgroups. Further research will be necessary before it is possible to develop a new theory of the internal organizational features supporting a system of opposition in voluntary groups but these findings are a serious challenge to previous generalizations.

Historical Growth and Development

The political economy approach used in this study emphasises the importance of both societal and organizational factors, but it also focuses on the change of social phenomena. Our historical analysis of Local 1005 shows clearly that it is quite incorrect to believe that there is one political system that is "natural" to voluntary organizations as Michels thought. Political life constantly adapts to meet new conditions and one particular organization can have different political forms in different periods.

Local 1005 has had four different political systems. From the founding of the local in 1936 to the 1946 strike there was open competition for power between the Communist and the CCF groups. From 1946 to 1961 the Establishment Group held oligarchical control and ran the local virtually without challenge. Beginning in 1961 and stretching until 1970 Local 1005 had a system of slates with strong ideological orientation dividing them. Since 1970 the slates have continued but there has been little ideological difference between them and they have the character of election machines. We must conclude, therefore, that an organization such as Local 1005 can sustain different types of political life and in order to understand why one particular system exists at one particular time we must analyse in detail the economic, political and organizational conditions that shape the organization in each historical period.

We also found in our study of Local 1005 that not only were there different political systems at different times but that crisis played a major part in inducing rapid social change of the political structure. At Local 1005 this transformation came as a result of struggles in the industrial relations system. Strikes by their very nature involve virtually everyone in the local and no matter what their outcome they appear to create stress which results in political change. Crisis, therefore, creates the conditions which lead to the transformation from one political form to another.

This study has illustrated that there is no political form that inevitably exists in all voluntary organizations. Environmental and internal organizational factors in a union local such as 1005 will sustain a number of different types of political systems and the evidence of this

study indicates that an oligarchical system if anything is less likely to exist in these circumstances than a system of institutionalized opposition. The only way to understand the social forces which sustain political life, therefore, is dynamic analysis that recognizes that there are periods of relative stability in the politics of an organization, and then, as a result of crisis, a political system can be suddenly transformed.

The Political Economy Approach

In the introduction to this thesis we said this study "provides... a chance to see if the political economy approach can lead to fresh insights in the study of the social forces which shape the political life of a democratically structured organization." We must conclude that indeed this has been borne out.

Previous studies have focused almost exclusively on "snapshot" views of the political life of organizations in the present.⁹ This has led them to emphasize the internal organizational features which sustain political life and ignore virtually all other factors. Our analysis is quite different. The political economy approach is essentially historical and advocates that social phenomena must be understood in the way it relates to broad economic and political influences. As a result we were able to show how societal factors had a fundamental influence on the political life of 1005. This approach also was able to take the traditional literature on the politics of voluntary organizations into account, and, although we developed a new explanation of these factors, previous research was helpful in developing our ideas. Finally the political economy approach focuses on change and the dynamics of change, and we were

able to develop this into a dynamic understanding of how the local's political life has changed to meet new conditions.

The political economy approach, therefore, considerably broadens and deepens our understanding of the social forces which shape the political life of a voluntary organization. Further application of the method to research problems is necessary before we can show definitively the advantages of this approach, but the insights gained in this study indicate that it shows great promise.

Democracy or Oligarchy?

The definition of democracy used to guide this study was developed in Chapter 1. It states:

Democracy in a large organization or society occurs when, first, opposition to those in power is tolerated and where there are frequent contests for election, and, second, when there is a high level of participation among the rank and file members and where these members have a meaningful input into the making of the policy of the organization.

The question remains to be answered whether Local 1005, according to this definition, is democratic or not?

The political system in effect at 1005 between 1946 and 1961 was clearly oligarchic, but if we examine the politics of the local since that time there are strong democratic elements to it. Opposition has been highly vocal and effective, and frequent changes in the composition of the executive, committees, and delegates to conventions shows that no single group has been able to monopolize power in the local. According to the first part of the definition, that democracy exists when, "opposition to those in power is tolerated and where there are frequent contests for election," we must judge Local 1005 as an extremely democratic organization.

However, the second part of the definition is not so easily attained. It states democracy exists when: "there is a high level of participation among the rank and file members and where these members have a meaningful input into the making of the policy of the organization." The evidence clearly shows that in Local 1005 there is a very high level of apathy among the rank and file and participation in the political life of the local is limited. According to this part of the definition therefore 1005 is far from democratic.

The findings of the study, therefore, are contradictory. There are both democratic and undemocratic elements in the political life of Local 1005. With all the brilliance of its working class leaders and the open competition of its political slates, the local is still run by a handful of people. It remains a far cry from the democratic ideal of "government by the people."

Even more important than this is the fact that the evidence from this study of 1005 indicates that these two aspects of democracy, opposition and participation, are contradictory rather than complementary. In the local the system of institutionalized opposition depends on the apathy and lack of involvement of the membership. If there were high levels of participation it is likely that the slates would disappear and some other political form would emerge. The question still remains for political theorists and researchers, whether it is possible to have voluntary organizations, or for that matter the political system of a society, which will fulfill the democratic ideal of both effective opposition and substantial participation of the membership.

Possibilities for Future Research

From the beginning this research into the political life of Local 1005 has been a case study that is exploratory in nature. Because of this there are limitations on the conclusions that can be drawn and considerable work remains to be done before we can say with any degree of confidence that our generalizations hold true for the political life of other voluntary organizations, but the investigation into 1005 provides a rich source of ideas for further study. This concluding section of the thesis suggests other possibilities for research.

One obvious area of further research is to carry out a series of case studies on the political life of other trade union locals. If we are able to demonstrate that environmental and organizational factors shape political life in these locals in a similar way as 1005 then we will have more confidence in developing an alternative theory of the social forces which sustain the political life of a democratically structured organization.

Perhaps the most fruitful avenue of research at this stage in our development would be to study the relationship between size of the organization and its political structure. The evidence from this study and the implication of the work of a host of researchers such as the authors of Union Democracy,¹⁰ William Faunce,¹¹ Sayles and Strauss,¹² and Alice Cook,¹³ indicate that this may well be the most important determinant of political life of voluntary organizations.

A further area of research that could well deepen our understanding of political life is to compare the political systems of different types of democratically structured organizations. Information on such

7

organizations as co-operatives, citizens groups, political parties and private clubs may show that such factors as the socio-economic status of the members, resident patterns and the different tasks the organization must perform, shape political life in various ways.

More extensive in depth analysis of local unions with political systems of slates such as 1005 would also be fruitful. It would be fascinating to extend this study to an examination of union activity of different departments within Stelco to look at such questions as what is the consequence of political life when there are varying levels of participation? Why are some departments more active than others? How does different levels of apathy affect the union activists? If we had answers to these questions the relationship between the rank and file and the activists would be clarified.

In a similar way a survey of the members of a union like Local 1005 which contrasted the social characteristics, beliefs and attitudes of the leadership and the membership would deepen our understanding of the local. Information of this type would add to our knowledge of why individuals became politically active, why there is such widespread apathy of the membership, and what do the rank and file think of their union and its politics?

In this study we focused a great deal on the industrial relations system and demonstrated historically how it has influenced the local's political life. This is a rich subject of research. The industrial relations system has a profound influence on the workers and the political life of the union, but as yet little work has been done on the way the frustrations of the system contribute to the apathy of the workers and

periodic outbursts against the union and the company. An investigation of this type would deepen our understanding of political life and show how this system of industrial relations influences the workers and their power in the work place.

Finally, from a theoretical perspective the most interesting finding to emerge from this study is the contradictory nature of opposition and participation. Out of this study arises the pessimistic hypothesis that the higher the level of participation in democratically structured groups the less effective the opposition. It would be possible to test this hypothesis by developing indicators of both variables and studying the political life of a variety of organizations. The answers arising from a study of this type may well reveal much more about the social forces which shape the political life of organizations than any work that has been done to date.

Footnotes

¹Robert Michels, Political Parties, (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1959) p. 377.

²See Chapter 1 for a review of this literature.

³J. David Edelstein and Malcolm Warner, Comparative Union Democracy, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976). These authors build into their definition the concept of participation but unfortunately tend to ignore it in their study.

⁴Richard Hall (ed.) The Formal Organization, (New York: Basic Books Inc., Publishers, 1972) p. 49.

⁵S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow, & J.S. Coleman, Union Democracy, (Glencoe Ill.: The Free Press, 1956) p. 8.

⁶William A. Faunce, "Size of Locals and Union Democracy," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 68, No. 3, Nov. 1962, pp. 291-298.

⁷Robert Michels, op. cit.

⁸Lipset, et. al., op. cit., p. 15.

⁹This is not to deny that some studies like Union Democracy provide a historical review of the ITU, but this is not historical analysis where the major emphasis of the study is to examine historically the political forms of the organization and the social forces which sustain, shape and change it.

¹⁰Lipset, et. al., op. cit.

¹¹Faunce, op. cit.

¹²Lenard R. Sayles & George Strauss, The Local Union: Its Place in the Industrial Plant (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953).

¹³Alice H. Cook, Union Democracy: Practice and Ideal (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1963).

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE 1005 LEADERSHIP STUDY

NAME _____

Career

1. What jobs did you have before you came to Stelco?
2. Were you ever a member of a Union in another place you worked?
3. What year did you start working at Stelco?
4. When did you start taking an active interest in the union?
5. What was the first thing that got you involved?
6. Did you start by attending department meetings?
7. What was the first elected position that you held in the local?
8. Why did you decide to run?
9. What other elected posts have you held?

Political Behavior within the Local

1. Are you a member of a political slate at 1005?
2. Why did you join this particular slate?
3. Have you ever been a member of any other slate?
4. Why do you think 1005 has political slates?
5. Could you describe what each of the three slates stand for?
6. How do you think a person gets to be a leader of 1005?
7. Who are the people with the most influence in your slate?
8. Who do you think has the most influence in the local at the moment?
9. Is it necessary to have an elected position to have a lot of influence at 1005?

Recruiting and Motivation

1. Why do you think most people become involved in the political life of the local?
2. If you met a young person who you thought had some political ability what would you do to get them involved in the life of the local?
3. Do you think that some people get active in union politics because it is a chance to get out of the plant and go away on conventions?

Stewards and the Slates

1. Are most of the stewards allied to a political slate in the local?
2. Do they work on the shop floor to get political slates elected?

Political Beliefs within the Union

1. What stand did you take on the last union negotiations when it was put to the membership? Why?
2. In the last election for executive officers did you campaign for everyone running on your slate or just for certain members?
3. Do you think local 1005 should take more direction from the leaders of District 6, less direction, or should it remain about the same?
4. What about the union reps? Do you think they should have more say in the running of the local, less say, or should their influence remain about the same?
5. Do you think that the Canadian Steelworkers should get out of the International union? Should the ties be loosened, strengthened or stay about the same?
6. Do you agree with the affiliation of the local with the N.D.P.?
7. Do you think there is enough effort to promote the N.D.P. with the rank and file members of the union?
8. The collective bargaining process in Canada is modeled on the adversary system. Do you think this is the best system for the workers or do you think there should be more co-operation between union and management?
9. The system of collective bargaining forces unionists to uphold the collective agreement at all times. This means in effect that union leaders must oppose all strikes and wildcats except at the end of the contract. As one of the leaders of 1005 how do you feel about this role?

10. If you could have your way what should be the next big step or goal of 1005?

General Political Opinions

1. Are you satisfied that the trade union movement's affiliation to the N.D.P. in Canada is giving it an adequate political voice?
2. Do you think that the trade union movement should be more aggressive in opposing the Anti-inflation Board legislation or do you think the C.L.C. approach has been the best road for labour?
3. Do you think wages and salaries would be fairer, jobs more steady and that we would have fewer people out of work if the government took over and ran the major industries, or do you think things are better under private ownership?

Political Behavior

1. Which political party do you generally support?
2. Are you a party member?
3. Do you attend their meetings and conventions?
4. Have you ever held office with the party at any level?
5. Generally why would you say you are a member of this particular party?

Job--Job Satisfaction--Working Class Consciousness

1. What is your job category?
2. What is the position called?
3. Do you find your job interesting?
4. If it was offered would you accept a management position with the company?
5. Would you describe yourself as lower class, working class, middle class, or upper class?

Voluntary Groups

1. Are you a member of any community groups such as veterans league, men's club or lodge, or rate payer's association?
2. Do you attend their meetings?

3. Have you ever been an officer of these groups?
4. Are you a member of any group at work such as the Stelco War Vets or a bowling league?

Social Life

1. When you go out socially is it usually with friends at work, old school friends, your wife's friends or some other group?
2. Do you go to stags and parties held by people in your shop?
3. Do you often go to union social affairs?
4. Are most of your friends active in the local?
5. Does your wife enjoy union social activities?

Family Background

1. Could you tell me how far your father went in school?
2. What was his occupation?
3. Was he ever a member of a union?
4. What was your father's political preference?
5. Are you married?
6. What was your wife's father's occupation?
7. Was he a member of a trade union?
8. What was your wife's father's political preference?

Family

1. Does your wife work?
2. What is her occupation?
3. Do you have any children?
4. If you had a son how far would you hope he went in school?
5. What about a daughter?
6. Would you want a child of yours to do the type of work you are doing?
7. Would you want them to be involved in the trade union movement?

Religion

1. What is your religious preference?
2. Are you a member of a church?
3. Roughly how often do you attend?
4. Do you think that religion is a factor in the election of certain candidates at 1005?

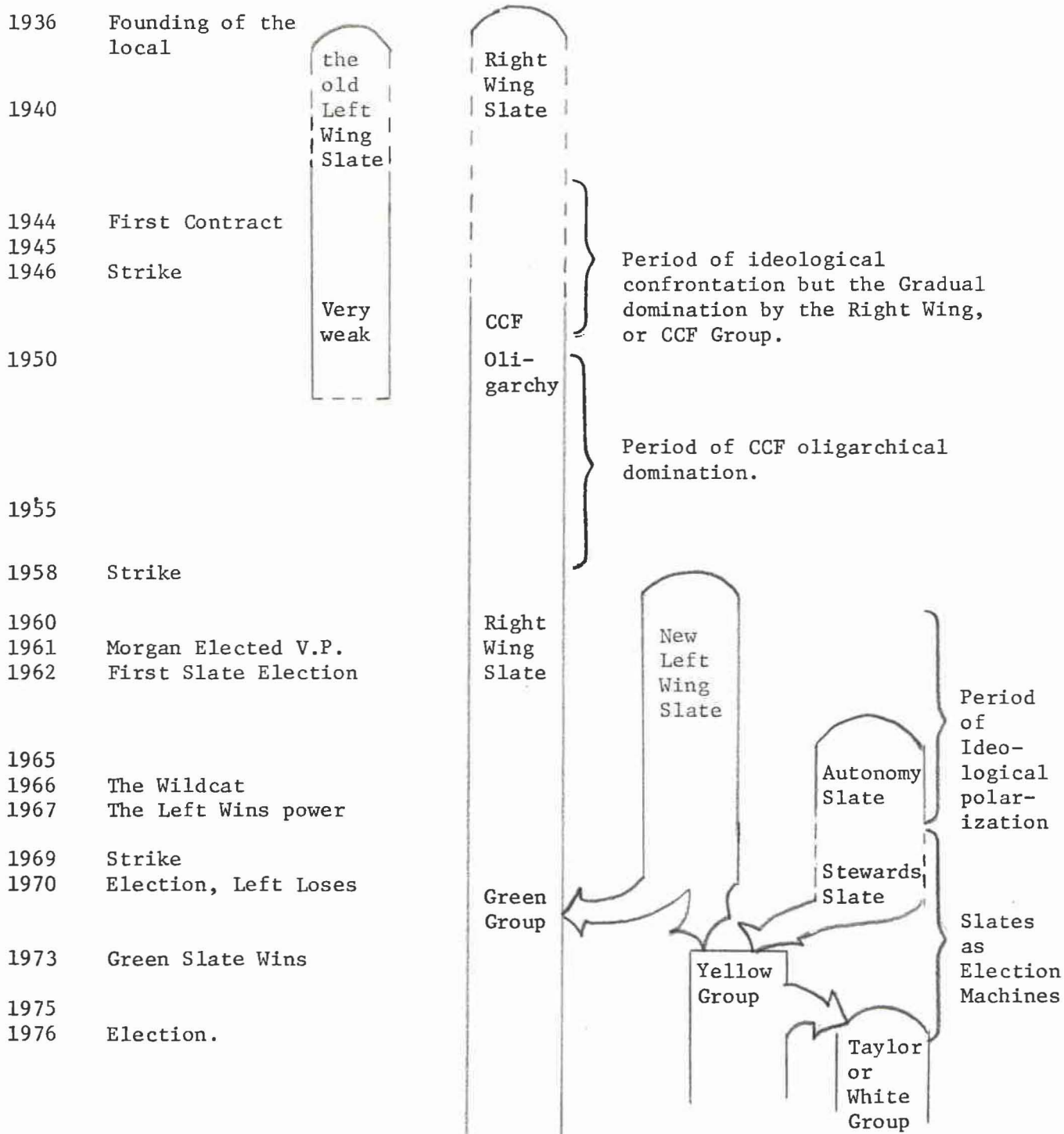
Ethnic Background

1. What is your national group on your father's side?
2. What was your father's birthplace?
3. Your grandparent's birthplace?
4. Where were you born?
5. Have you ever spoken a language other than English?
6. Do you think that national origin is a factor in the election of certain candidates at 1005?

Age, Education and Income

1. What was your date of birth?
2. What was your last grade in school?
3. Please estimate your total family income for 1976.

APPENDIX B: PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION OF THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SLATES



All of these terms are used by the activists of 1005 to describe their slates. The terms "Old Left" and "New Left" are names that I have used to distinguish these two slates because they were made up of quite different people with different objectives. In both periods these slates were simply known as the Left Wing Group.

APPENDIX C

STATISTICS ON THE STEEL COMPANY OF CANADA

Year	Total Assets (000)	Sales (000)	Net Profit (000)	Retained Earnings (000)	Ingot Production (Tons) (000)
1910*	\$28,894	\$ 7,481	\$ 473	\$ 245	41
1915	34,644	18,073	2,210	3,015	195
1920	50,200	33,235	1,855	8,741	301
1925	50,194	21,147	1,818	9,294	282
1930	58,902	23,249	1,741	14,502	360
1935	64,809	21,490	2,185	13,054	374
1940	79,850	46,591	3,964	20,874	766
1945	113,012	69,868	4,159	33,096	1,101
1950	127,424	150,984	13,084	61,043	1,247
1955	207,477	227,055	21,819	113,982	2,060
1960	299,449	281,967	21,356	189,415	2,152
1965	657,772	516,406	43,454	282,404	3,846
1970	921,214	663,202	55,976	403,129	4,801
1971	965,910	730,247	66,645	448,317	4,673
1972	1,032,586	775,931	67,089	484,643	5,031
1973	1,143,287	937,662	87,684	540,303	5,723
1974	1,340,336	1,133,163	110,861	612,955	5,542
1975	1,678,261	1,201,756	88,774	659,769	5,396
1976	1,840,843	1,359,755	90,605	708,383	5,724

* For six months operations ending Dec. 31, 1910.

Source: The Financial Post Corporation Service CUSIP Number 858076,
481 University Ave., Toronto.

