WESTERN AGRARIAN REVOLT, THE C.C.F., AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

WESTERN AGRARIAN REVOLT, THE C.C.F., AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

by

JOHN ARTHUR SHAIN, B.A.

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AUTHOR: John Arthur Shain, B.A. (York University)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. William Coleman

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ABSTRACT

The religious movement known as the Christian social gospel arose in Canada in the early years of the twentieth century, and stemmed primarily from the Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican churches. Arguing that the word of Christ had to be applied to the economic and political environment, the social gospel strived to inject a secular meaning into christian teachings, and thereby do away with the traditional meaning of religion as strictly an individual, mysterious, and spititual phenomena. Such spokesmen as Salem Bland, William Ivens, William Irvine, and J.S. Woodsworth -- all part of what would later be known as the radical social gospel -- even went so far as to question the basis of the capitalist system, and in the process began their long and fruitful association with the farmers of Western Canada, and later the C.C.F. party.

Although the ideals of the social gospel influenced all aspects of reform in Canada, no where did it have a more profound effect than in the political protest of the western farmers' movement and the C.C.F. party. The social gospel lent a moral legitimacy to the economic and political demands of these groups and often placed their political protest in the light of a God-given duty, or moral crusade. This made it easier to arouse both the convictions and the passions of the rank and file membership, and in the process often served to deflect charges of being communists and "red agitators". In short, the social gospel stood at the forefront of both these political movements, influencing their ideology, parliamentary performance, and their overall view of both mankind and society.

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John Arthur Shain

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INTRODUCTION

The political life of Canada has been shaped by a number of different factors. Geography, language, and economics to name a few influences, have all left their imprint upon the political structure of the country. But no discussion of Canadian politics can be considered complete without a thorough analysis of the role that religion has played as well. The Churches, upheld by a spiritual authority which Machiavelli characterized as belonging to "higher causes, which the human mind cannot attain to"[1], have dominated the morals and spiritual development of the nation. Invariably, though, the exercise of this religious command has overlapped into the realms of commerce and politics. For instance, the historical development of Quebec owes a great deal to the influence exerted by the Catholic Church in that province. Likewise, the early political life of Ontario is one dominated by the Orange Lodges and other Protestant denominations that demanded a say in the spiritual guidance of its people.

At times, though, the influence of religion has been generated from sources outside the mainstream of the orthodox churches. The quasi-religious temperament of the Ku Klux Klan, for instance, together with its doctrines of racial purity and violence helped shape the politics of Saskatchewan in the 1920's. In a much different light, the religious fundamentalism of "Bible Bill" Aberhardt exerted a tremendous influence on a depression-ridden Alberta of the 1930's. Producing in its wake a convergence of messianic religion with the "funny money" doctrines of social credit, it spawned one of the most successful third parties in Canada's history. Whatever guise religion has taken,

it has been at the forefront of Canadian politics in one form or another. From the Manitoba School Question of the 1890's through to prohibition in the 1920's, it has both offered solutions and created problems that taxed the ingenuity of even the most capable politicians.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine one form of religious faith that is rarely given mention in the religious development of Canada. This is the Christian social gospel, as exemplified by such disciples as Salem Bland, J.S. Woodsworth, William Irvine, and a host of other ministers and reform minded lay people. It will be argued that these religious ideals strongly influenced not only the language of agrarian revolt, but the early doctrine, political action, and personalities of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. At no time will it ever be suggested that the social gospel was the sole influence, or even the most important factor behind the development of these western protests. Nevertheless, its role in the origin of both agrarian and socialist development is an important one, and deserves a greater deal of recognition than has usually been accorded to it.

Arising out of the Protestant Churches in the early part of the twentieth century, the social gospel was an attempt to bring the teachings of Christ to bear on the economic and political affairs of society. Seeking to instill a secular meaning into religion, it challenged the orthodox churches' emphasis on dogma, ritual, and creeds, arguing instead that Christ had meant his kingdom to be implemented on earth as well as in heaven.[2] Perhaps the most simplistic yet lucid description of the social gospel resides in a poem written by E.A. Partridge, the early prophet and mentor of the agrarian revolt

in Western Canada:

> What wonderous things would come to pass
> If Christians for a day,
> Should shape their conduct to their creed
> And practice as they pray,
> How low would current values fall
> Held now so highly priced,
> If men believed in God at all
> And really followed Christ. [3]

In essence, the social gospel was an attempt to reform society along Christian lines, and to apply the teachings of Christ to the realms of economics and politics. But as is usually the case with all social movements or political parties, the social gospel possessed a number of varying opinions on how reform should be implemented. Consequently it is extremely difficult to speak of the social gospel as one homogenous body of thought. The various wings of the movement all possessed subtle differences in their conceptions of society, and as such, held different ideas as to how far and how fast reform should proceed. The crystallization of these differing ideals into what has been termed the conservative, progressive, and radical wings of the social gospel would eventually break the movement apart.

In order to set the stage for how the social gospel influenced the political protest of the farmers' movements and the C.C.F., the first chapter will examine the social gospel as a set of religious ideals, and hopefully its broader implications for society will be brought to the fore. Because it will be treated specifically as a set of ideas, the personal rivalries and groups within the movement itself will largely be ignored. It is hoped that a clear delineation can be made between the various wings of social gospel thought, and that it can be shown how the "radical" sector in particular spread these

religious ideas throughout Canadian society.

The second stage of the thesis is to show in a rather general outline how the social gospel underlined many of the farmers' demands leading up to the development of the Progressive party in 1920. Mainly through the pages of the Grain Growers' Guide, it will be shown how these religious ideals took root in the soil of agrarian protest, and the role it played in contributing to the breakdown of the two-party system in Canada. Both the religious symbolism of the social gospel as well as many of its concrete ideas were used to complement the farmers' dislike of industrialization and the corresponding sanctity attached to rural life. As well, agrarian criticisms of the tariff, and the corruption and inefficiency of the old political parties were seen in the light of a social gospel critique. By attaching a religious significance to their economic and political demands, the farmers' demands were given a moral legitimacy that they would not have otherwise possessed. This appeal to morality and righteousness based on a divine authority coloured their grievances in the rigid language of good versus evil, and the moral fervour generated by this appealed to thousands of devout prairie farmers [4].

The third chapter deals with a concrete example of how the social gospel influenced the ideals behind western agrarian protest and in the process helped shape the political course of the United Farmers of Alberta (U.F.A.). The Alberta wing of the Progressive party, the U.F.A. was rigidly guided on its political course by the doctrine of group government. This theory, articulated by the leader of the U.F.A., Henry Wise Wood, and ably seconded by William Irvine,

greatly influenced the parliamentary life of the Progressive party. In the final analysis it was responsible for the demise of the Progressives as a political party. It will be shown how the ideas of the social gospel were interwoven with this theory of group government, greatly influencing its view of the economic, political, and social spheres, and how in turn this affected the political fortunes of the Progressive party.

Since these agrarian organizations were prominent in the development of the C.C.F. in 1932, it is only logical to conclude that the social gospel also found its way into the new party. Although this jump from the farm movements of the 1920's to the C.C.F. in the early thirties may be construed as a rather large and disjointed step, the reasons for this are twofold. First, many of the leading personalities, ideas, and grievances of the farmers were reintegrated into the socialist platform of the C.C.F. Secondly, it is the opinion of this author that to properly trace the evolution of social gospel thought, it is essential to portray these two avenues of protest. Not only were these religious ideals increasingly subjected to a more sophisticated analysis of society in the broader based protest of the C.C.F., but the social gospel became attached to different political objectives. This is not a deliberate attempt to ignore the role of the social gospel in other facets of the C.C.F.'s development, particularly that of the labour movement in Canada. Nor does the author subscribe to the view that the C.C.F. was simply the function of agrarian grass-roots politics. But the restrictions imposed by time and the scope of this paper necessitated the concentration on the agrarian roots of the C.C.F.

By examining such documents as the Regina Manifesto, party newspapers, and parliamentary debates, it is hoped that the influence of the social gospel can be brought to the fore in the C.C.F.'s early development. It will be argued that their view of socialism, their emphasis on education, and their rigid adherance to principles as opposed to political success all pointed to the influence of the social gospel. Furthermore, it will be shown how the League for Social Reconstruction, the "brain trust" of the C.C.F., was also influenced to some extent by these religious ideals.

There is little doubt in the mind of this author that the social gospel played an important role in both agrarian politics and the origins of Canada's most successful socialist party. The question remains, however, as to just how much influence it actually possessed.

FOOTNOTES

1 Nicolo Machiavelli, The Prince, ed. Lester G. Crocker, trans. Christian E. Detmold (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), p.47.

2 See Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform In Canada 1914-28. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p.4.

3 "Message From E.A. Partridge", Grain Growers' Guide, July 13, 1910, p.20.

4 See Paul Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt In Western Canada (Minneapolis: Octagon Books, 1948), pp.59-61.

CHAPTER I

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

The social gospel arose in the latter half of the nineteenth century in the context of an intellectual and theological awakening to the problems of industrial society. Stemming from the writings of Ritschlian theology in Germany, the "new theology" of R.J. Campbell in Britain, and such American spokesmen as Walter Rauschenbusch, the social gospel was an attempt to place both man and religion within a social context. [1] It sought to break down the Churches' traditional emphasis on dogma and ritual, by striving to bring the teachings of Jesus into everyday life and practice. Christianity was interpreted as a way of life, and the essence of man's existence was viewed "in seeking to realize the kingdom of God in the very fabric of society".[2]

The intellectual background out of which these religious ideas developed includes a broad spectrum of influences, many of which are still largely untouched by the historians' hand. Certain aspects of Puritanism, the influence of the Enlightenment,[3] and the evangelicalism dominant in the English-speaking world of the nineteenth century[4] all contributed to the formation and acceptance of the social gospel. Other avenues of its religious development included certain elements of Pietism, Rationalism, and Idealism; all three being "reactions to the Protestant scholasticism that had developed in the seventeenth century".[5] Equally important in shaping the thought of this social Christianity was the dialectic of ideas that arose in Europe through the writings of Comte, Darwin, and Marx.[6] The influence of their "positive, organic, and developmental forms of thought",[7] produced a host of humanitarians and political writers appalled by the social

ills of the new industrial age. From William Blake who cried "that the "Satanic mills" were despoiling England's green and pleasant land",[8] to Lloyd George's schemes for social reconstruction[9], society was alive to the need for reform. This provided a fertile environment in which the ideas of the social gospel would flourish.

In Canada, the development of the social gospel occurred between the years of 1890 and 1930, and was dominated primarily by the Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches.[10] The movement was not indigenous to Canada as it owed its intellectual heritage to the currents of reform sweeping the western world.[11] But in response to domestic and urban problems, it was given a uniquely Canadian flavour as it rose to the forefront of reform.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier had begun the twentieth century with his ringing declaration that this century belonged to Canada. As the influx of two million new immigrants contributed to a spectacular boom in the economy, it seemed that everyone would participate in both the optimism and wealth of the new era.[12] But underneath the prophetic statements issued by the politicians and leading citizens, stood the harsh reality of poverty, filth, and the empty dreams which characterized Canadian life. The rapid growth in urban centres and industry had created a host of social ills which the country seemed unprepared to handle.

Between 1901 and 1921 both Montreal and Toronto more than doubled their populations, while Vancouver and Winnipeg increased their size by fivefold, and Edmonton and Calgary ballooned to fifteen times their original size.[13] This brought with it the spread of poverty, crime, disease, overcrowding, and poor sanitation within the major centres.

Furthermore, the phenomenal increase in industry was characterized by low wages, poor working conditions, and the constant threat of unemployment. The growing militancy amongst the working class reflected its abominable living and working conditions.[14]

In response to this dismal poverty came a social awakening on the part of the churches and reform-minded citizens towards the plight of the working class. Publications such as Herbert Ames' The City Below the Hill, and J. S. Woodsworth's My Neighbour, brought the facts to bear on the conditions of city life, and represented urgent pleas to stamp out these "cancerous sores".[15] Accompanying this reform also came the campaign for prohibition,[16] women's suffrage, and the attempt to clean up the corruption on all levels of government. The spirit of reform became present in all aspects of Canadian life, and it was in this context that the social gospel took root and flourished. It provided the Protestant churches with a doctrine of reform which allowed them to be both progressive and outspoken, and yet remain within the folds of their traditional religion. By attaching the tone of a Christian ethics to all aspects of the reform movement, the social gospel provided it with a legitimacy and "authority it cound not otherwise command."[17] In short, the religious expression of the social gospel "represented the complex of ideas and hopes which lay at the heart of reform".[18]

The central aim of the social gospel was the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. To do this, religion was related to the social questions of life. Salvation was equated with the performance of good works, and it stressed the importance of love, brotherhood,

co-operation, equality, and justice within the material world. It was a view of society founded upon righteousness and fraternity, and reared in the love of both God and man. In the words of one commentator, "they wanted the religion of Jesus, not a religion about him".[19] It was argued that Jesus had cared for the poor, the crippled, and the lepers, and that this was the essence of true religion. This meant the involvement of Christianity in every activity and every relation of society. Clearly, it was "not reverence and homage He had asked for, but practical goodness".[20] This theme can be glimpsed from the often quoted biblical text used by the social gospel. "If anyone says, 'I love God' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen".[21]

In essence this was a set of religious ideals which called for the reconstruction of society based on democratic Christian principles. In one of his weekly articles in the Grain Growers' Guide, Salem Bland, the philosopher and mentor of the social gospel in Canada attempted to articulate this view.[22] He wrote that "for us Canadians the kingdom of God means ... every province and every municipality put in the hands of men incorruptible, able, courageous, and with the passion for the common good". Speaking of the industrial situation in the same article, he advocated "the extinction of the exploiter and profiteer", and the enrichment of business life by a devotion to human service.[23] In other words Christ had to be put into every facet of man's existence or he could not be given to men at all. For Bland, "co-operation in commerce and industry was the real Holy Communion".[24] Increasingly

this secular view of Christianity modified the traditional emphasis on individual salvation, and replaced it with saving the individual within his social context. As J.S. Woodsworth declared:

> At least in this world, souls are always incorporated into bodies, and to save a man, you must save him body, soul and spirit. To really save a man you must transform the community in which he lives.[25]

As these principles became popularized amongst the clergy and lay people of the Protestant Churches, their implications produced a number of changes. First, the social gospel's stress on man's material salvation called into question the traditional emphasis placed on ritual and doctrine. Also, such claims as original sin and God's mysterious transcendence were viewed with suspicion. It was felt that too often religious creeds were viewed as an end in themselves, and as a result contributed little towards meaningful reform. As the Rev. A.E. Smith stated, when there are "no jobs available and poverty threatens to overtake an individual ... orthodox christianity is an inadequate form of belief".[26]

Furthermore, it became obvious to many within the churches that Protestantism would have to rethink the tacit support it had always shown towards laissez-faire individualism. Under the strains of rapid urbanization and industrial growth, the old virtues of thrift, hard-work, and sobriety were no longer sufficient to guarantee the alleviation of poverty. Sermons admonishing the poor to "stop drinking, save their money, and all would be well" became increasingly ineffective.[27] The social gospel forced the Protestant Churches to recognize that excessive individualism only bred competition, poverty, corruption, and moral instability. They argued that Jesus had preached against the

effects of wealth, and the harm done in being indifferent to the plight of humanity. They also questioned whether this "unchecked piratical individualism" did not run counter to the golden rule of helping thy neighbour. Bland's exhortation that capitalism "hardens men ... dries up their natural kindness ... and compels them to resort to crooked methods"[28], was certainly not indicative of all social gospel thought, but it did point to the increased emphasis being given to subjecting the business practices of the day to the law of the gospel. And it forced the churches to take a greater interest in the industrial relations of society.

As the social gospel increasingly pushed the Protestant churches to equate Christianity with good works and temporal salvation, religion came to be used as a social critique. Not only the individual, but society as a whole came under the sphere of religious judgement. By imparting the notion of a personal God who was "intelligent, moral, and free"[29], the social gospel had engendered the belief in God's immanence in nature. This provided reform with a feeling of immediacy and unlimited optimism, and the knowledge that God the Father was watching over his flock with guidance and love.[30] Implicit in this idea was first, the notion that radical change was now possible, and second, that God "had created an orderly essentially moral universe, (where) reason could penetrate and reduce truth to general principles".[31]

The central tenet of this belief was that history was moving inevitably towards the coming of the reign of God in the material world. But joined with the traditional christian values "was a new belief in the ability of applied science to bring about the Millenium".[32]

This view is best described in A.E. Smith's words that "the duty of the hour is to discover to ourselves the fact that there is a science of social architecture".[33] It also parallelled such social gospel exhortations that the churches' "must cease to teach that which cannot unquestionably justify itself before the divinely constituted court of human intelligence".[34] The belief that God was shaping history lent these notions legitimacy, while the writings of the nineteenth century intellectuals had given it a scientific basis. August Comte's new sociology, for example, had attempted "to find scientific laws which explained the operations of society".[35] His reliance on the analogy of society as a biological organism, was taken by the social gospel to support the argument of an economic system based on co-operation. As one author of the social gospel has noted:

> For a biological organism to survive, it was necessary for the cells to work together, and for the social organism to survive, it was necessary for men to co-operate. As a result of this comparison, there was a scientific basis for applying Christ's ethic of brotherhood to society.[36]

This organic view of society ran throughout such early social gospel writings as J.S. Woodsworth's My Neighbour, and Salem Bland's regular articles in the Guide. Both were hopeful that mankind would eventually realize that the welfare of one was the concern of all, and that the emphasis would now be placed on a collective approach to reform. Herbert Spencer's notion that society was ruled by the Darwinian principle that life was a struggle for the survival of the fittest, was reinterpreted by the social gospel to mean that not individuals, but rather, society as a whole must struggle for survival.[37]

Consequently the effect of individual and piecemeal reform was increasingly viewed as being ineffective. The notion began to take hold that to change an individual, you first had to alter the existing society. As J.S. Woodsworth pointed out, "crime, disease, and immorality vary almost directly with the size of the lot, the breadth of the street, and the number of parks".[38] Implicit in this view was also the belief that human nature was essentially malleable, and that if nurtured in the proper environment, the finer aspects of man's nature could be brought to the fore.

The influence which these ideas had on the Protestant churches can clearly be seen in the Social Service Congress of 1914. This meeting attracted a number of clergy from all denominations, as well as reformers from all aspects of society. Grappling with the social and economic problems of the day, their list of resolutions clearly showed the churches' awareness to realistic and collective reform.[39] They had finally begun to realize that because God's grace and mercy were open to all men, everyone had a common humanity in being children of God. Part of this shift to implement a more just and humane society was the importance attached to understanding and attempting to change the conditions under which the labouring classes lived and worked. No doubt the exhortations of social gospellers such as Salem Bland prompted the Church to action. As he so succinctly put it:

> The Lord Jesus was Himself a working man and brought up in a working man's home: His chief friends and chosen apostles were mostly working men. How can He be fully understood except through a working man's consciousness.[40]

To this point several generalizations have been made regarding

the overall outline of the social gospel. It must be kept in mind, however, that the movement was never a totally homogenous body, and by 1920 its values and beliefs had dispersed in several directions.[41] Issues such as the war, the Winnepeg General Strike, and the strike within the churches' printing houses all caused considerable disagreement over the course of action to be followed. At issue was also the question of how far reform should be taken, and this difference in ideals crystallized into what may be termed the conservative, progressive, and radical wings of the social gospel.[42]

By the end of the war the radical sector of the social gospel had clearly moved outside the fold of organized religion. Characterized by such men as Salem Bland, William Ivens, William Irvine, A.E. Smith, and J.S. Woodsworth, they had developed their ideas in closer proximity to the various agrarian and labour groups. Viewing society in more organic terms than the rest of the movement, they saw evil as being "so endemic and pervasive in the social order that ... there could be no personal salvation without social salvation".[43] They understood with a greater clarity the implications which their reform would have, and knew that it could not be brought about without a bitter conflict with the owners of capital.

Having grown impatient with what they felt was a cautious approach on the part of the churches towards reform, they vehemently criticized its role in the community. In his letter of resignation from the Methodist Church, for example, J.S. Woodsworth expressed the sentiment that the church was too closely connected to the business community. He felt it was becoming commercialized, and that the

politics of the Church were being controlled by men of wealth. In his opinion this could only lead to the role of the minister as one of "financial agent rather than a moral and spiritual leader".[44] Salem Bland's The New Christianity, also chastized the churches in 1920 for their "bourgeois christianity", while from the pages of the Alberta Non Partisan, William Irvine wondered what the Churches were doing in "our hour of need". As he sarcastically pointed out, the churches of Christ had become state institutions, "plotting favours and status, and compromising truth for some temporary material wealth".[45] To the radicals the issue had become clear. The churches seemed incapable of any real action and were in the words of J.S. Woodsworth, becoming a "club of the well-to-do; who profited by the existing inequalities".[46]

Although these criticisms of the Church hierarchy were to some extent justified, they were nevertheless harsh and at times uncompromising in their analysis. Closely identified with what may be termed the conservative social gospel, the Protestant Churches showed a great deal of moral energy in campaigning for such issues as urban reform, prohibition, and even better working conditions. They tended, however, to be closer to traditional evangelicalism than the radicals, and still had a tendency to view the role of the church as one of spiritual guidance. Lacking any real notion of an organic and collective analysis of society, both sin and moral reform were closely associated with the individual.[47] As such, they tended to concentrate their energies more on doctrine and ritual rather than on a reconstruction of the social order. To the radicals who were very non-sectatian in their approach to religion, there was still far too much emphasis being placed on

creeds, ceremonies, and denominational loyalties. As J.S. Woodsworth stated:

> We urge the need of forming the 'New Brotherhood' in which Jew and Gentile, bond and free, Baptist and Presbyterian, Canadian and foreigner may enter upon a richer and fuller life.[48]

The conservatives' approach to the matters of industrial and economic reform also served to widen the gap between themselves and the radicals. Never having being closely allied with the protests of organized labour, the church presented a very confused and unsure opinion of the whole situation. There is little doubt that their intentions were noble as they advocated reforms such as profit sharing, cafeterias, and more sanitary working conditions. They were certainly aware of the poverty and precarious economic environment in which the bulk of the population laboured, but too often their ideals became an end in themselves. It became too easy to attribute "labour unrest to the pressure for material needs and neglect of spiritual values".[49] Advocating the application of the "golden rule" to industrial relations simply cound not stand the test of unions, and the advent of several violent strikes.

The radicals were impatient with these piecemeal reforms, which they felt did not cut through to the real issue of "the disappearance of the capitalist control of industry".[50] As far as they were concerned, the battle lines had been drawn between the forces of labour and capital, and the bitter struggle would not cease until industry was dominated and controlled by the workers themselves. Capitalism was accused of not only degrading the worker by forcing him to live and work under deplorable conditions, but of destroying the very fabric

of humanity itself. Breeding such evils as greed, selfishness, and crooked business practices, it stood as the complete antithesis of the kingdom on earth. For Woodsworth, the economic system atomized men and divided them "into mere segments of men; broken into small fragments and crumbs of life".[51] It not only increased the alienation of man from himself, but subjected him to the constant cycles of unemployment and uncertainty which the new industrial age brought. The radicals felt that industry should be organized for the purpose of supplying human needs, and to this end they advocated the abolition of "private ownership of land, as well as ... the socialization of all the instruments of production".[52]

They argued that a system "which metes out a bare existence to the thousands who produced the wealth"[53], was unjust and immoral. It only encouraged "soulless plundering" on the part of the few who controlled the wealth, and stood in stark contrast to the social gospel's call for brotherhood, co-operation, and love amongst individuals. In the words of William Irvine, capitalism was "governed by the laws of the jungle".[54]

While the radical and conservative wings of the social gospel rapidly moved apart of the ideas of reform, the middle wing of the movement attempted to hold "the tension between the two extremes".[55] Such individuals as the Rev. J.G. Shearer and Ralph O'Connor were characteristic of this progressive centre group in the social gospel. They abhorred the poverty and filth associated with the industrial centres, and realized that the wretched working conditions had to be changed in order to see their social gospel principles become reality.

They were too dependent on the monied interests for their campaign funds, and as a result "governmental machinery was viewed as the most farcial of institutions".[64]

This growing awareness on the part of the radical social gospel that political as well as economic change was needed further differentiated their views from the rest of the movement. To replace the "dangerous sort of apathy" connected with relying upon the market necessitated the revamping of the political sphere. This meant a political life based on the human well-being of society, and the elimination of corruption, scandal, and "the wasteful and maggot breeding patronage system".[65] But as the radicals grew to realize, the party system would first have to be dismantled. As J.S. Woodsworth noted in 1924, its "chief function is to legalize the practices of our exploiters".[66]

Dependent on the business interests to finance their party organizations, both the Liberal and Tory parties were viewed as corrupt, inefficient, and unaware of the peoples' needs. As Irvine stated in The Farmers in Politics, "partyism (is) an investment for big interests in Canada, dividends being paid in the shape of legislation and privileges to those in a position financially ... to make the investment".[67] Consequently any differences in principle and legislation between the two parties were seen as being minimal. To the radical social gospellers this was an intolerable situation and they vehemently advocated the complete destruction of the two-party system. It was time to free democracy from the hold of the "monied interests", and replace it with an efficient, honest, and business-like form of government. As one

adherent to this view pointed out:

> There is nothing more stupid than for the people of Canada to elect one group of people to parliament to do things for them, and then elect and pay another group ... the official opposition ... to stop the first group from doing these things.[68]

The synthesis of these ideas was given expression in both Henry Wise Wood's and William Irvine's writings on group government. By conducting political legislation through the forum of economic groups, they hoped to eliminate the corruption and inefficiency of the party system. In essence it was a desire to unite the masses and make them aware of their real interests, and in doing so enact economic and political justice. These views would be given practical expression in Alberta's agrarian protest of the 1920's.

In summary, the social gospel stood for the reconstruction of society on the basis of love, brotherhood, equality and justice. It sought to judge the political and economic spheres by the word of the gospel, and in doing so push orthodox religion to reinterpret its Christian ideals in a more secular light. But rarely did the social gospel ever represent a united set of ideals. The various groups within the movement disagreed over the extent of reform, and how fast it should be implemented. "It was in fact a movement that gloried in being unsystematic",[69] and when by 1926 it became dispersed and unorganized it became ever harder to pigeon-hole its mode of thought.

Neverthless, the hopes and aspirations engendered by these religious ideals had permeated throughout the whole of Canadian society, with no institution or practice escaping its influence. It had pushed the Protestant churches to see the need for reform, and had provided

a framework from which the many reform-minded citizens and humanitarians could work. More importantly, however, the radical wing of the social gospel, characterized by individuals such as J.S. Woodsworth, Salem Bland, and William Irvine transposed their beliefs into the practical world of labour and agrarian politics.

In Western Canada the radical social gospel's protest against the exploitation and poverty spawned by the excesses of private enterprise found a fertile environment in which to flourish. Furthermore, their condemnation of the weakness and corruption of the party system complemented that of the agrarian movements. Lending a moral legitimacy to the farmers' struggle for economic and political justice, the social gospel provided an alternative set of societal relationships based on the principles of the Christian faith. And when the poverty and destitution of the 1930's spawned the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the influence of the social gospel would also be present, affecting their view of socialism, democracy, education--in short, their vision of the new commonwealth.

FOOTNOTES

1 Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform In Canada 1914-28 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press (UTP), 1971), p.4.

2 Ibid.

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55 Allen, Social Passion, pp. 143-44.

56 M. Vipond, "Blessed are the Peacemakers: The Labour Question in Canadian Social Gospel Fiction", Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. X, No, 3 (1975), p. 32.

57 Allen, Social Passion, pp. 143-44.

58 See Ibid., pp. 140-41 for a brief discussion of one of Gordon's books, To Him That Hath. His pen name was Ralph Connor.

59 Vipond, "Social Gospel Fiction", p. 39.

60 Cited in Anthony Mardiros, William Irvine: The Life of a Prairie Radical (Toronto: James Lorimer and Co., 1979), p. 67. It should be pointed out, however, that Mardiros clearly does not understand the social gospel, and the many complexities that went into its make-up. On p. 33 he states that Irvine abandoned the social gospel for "socialist humanism". The radical social gospel was quite compatible with "social humanism", whatever that term might stand for!

61 Vipond, "Social Gospel Fiction", p. 42.

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63 William Irvine, "The Methodist Conference and the Social Revolution", Alberta Non Partisan, November 6, 1918, pp. 5-6.

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65 Salem Bland, "Palestine in the First Century and Canada in the Twentieth", Guide, December 1, 1915, p. 11.

66 J.S. Woodsworth, "The Week at Ottawa", The Progressive, March 6, 1924, p. 3.

67 Irvine, Farmers In Politics, p. 101.

68 "Irvine Predicts The Passing of the Party System", The Progressive, October 23, 1924, p. 1.

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CHAPTER II

WESTERN AGRARIAN REVOLT

The history of agrarian protest provides one of the most interesting and important chapters in the study of Canadian politics. In their struggle for economic and political equality the farmers' have spawned a number of pressure groups and third parties,[1] and have attracted much attention from scholars and party politicians alike. Nowhere, however, did this agrarian unrest approach a greater degree of determination and moral indignation than in the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. This region of prairie wheat land has, from its earliest settlement, nurtured the growth of a distinct agrarian consciousness, and produced in its wake a host of new ideas and political parties. The purpose of this chapter is to set the stage in which the farmers' revolt developed, and to show how the social gospel underlined their many demands.

With the closing of the American mid-west by the turn of the century, the Canadian prairies had become the "last best west", the final frontier in which to obtain free land. Furthering the attraction of this area was the introduction of new dry farming techniques, as well as the development of early maturing strains of wheat.[2] Between the years 1896 and 1913 close to a million people settled the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and it seemed that the aggressive policy of immigration which had been practiced by the Liberal party was beginning to pay off.[3] During these years the production of wheat came into its own as the major export staple of the prairies, and its production and sale provided "the central dynamic and unifying force" of the whole economy.[4] Attracting new immigrants

as well as sources of capital from abroad,[5] it helped to consolidate both the economic position of the CPR and the eastern manufacturers. Since the national policy contributed to an east-west flow of trade, the specialization of the wheat-producing areas provided a ready market for the industrial goods of eastern Canada.[6]

At the same time, the political situation in Canada had become consolidated by the emergence of the two-party system. Until 1896 the Conservative party of Sir John A. Macdonald had dominated the political life of the nation. But in that year the Liberals under Wilfrid Laurier had succeeded finally in achieving the reins of power. During the next fifteen years the Liberal party succeeded in perfecting its organization on a national scale, and as a consequence the national party system reached its fullest and most solid development.[7]

Despite the strengthening of the economy and the integration of the national parties, however, sectional discord was very much in evidence throughout this period. It was inevitable that the "brokerage politics" practiced by the Liberal and Conservative parties could not meet the every demand of a diverse and rapidly expanding economy. This would prove to be the case with Western Canada.

Although a great deal of optimism had been attached to the opening up of Western Canada, the settlement of the prairies was at best "an experiment in marginal agriculture".[8] The short growing season was characterized by limited precipitation and the constant threat of hail, frost, and rust were always present. Often the difference between success and financial ruin was determined by little more than an inch of rainfall, and this contributed significantly to

the boom and bust character of wheat production. The lack of any significant mixed farming spelled doom for the farmer in times of uncertain weather, and made the costs of wheat production high in both material and human sacrifice.

Added to these problems in the actual production of wheat were also the economic disadvantages attached to prairie agriculture. Because of the frontier nature of settlement in Saskatchewan and Alberta, both the provincial governments and the individual farmers' borrowed heavily in the early years of the wheat boom.[9] Credit was badly needed due to the costs associated with new machinery, additional land, and working capital, but often the banks charged high rates of interest and demanded excessive collateral.[10] Caught in this debtor economy the farmer found himself squeezed between fixed rates of interest, and a very uncertain and fluctuating income.

The decade after 1900 also witnessed a dramatic increase in the value of land. Many farmers blamed the speculative practices of the Canadian Pacific Railway and Hudson Bay Company for retarding the growth of immigration, but more so, dissatisfaction resulted from the fact that many farmers who had invested in this land boom suffered a serious financial loss.[11] Other grievances related to the vast stretches of land left unused for the purposes of speculation was the threat of prairie fires, and the inconvenience caused in situating rural schoolhouses.[12]

Without a doubt, however, the most serious problems facing the prairie farmer were those associated with the transportation and marketing of wheat. During the early years the Canadian Pacific Railway

was increasingly hard pressed to furnish an adequate supply of box cars to handle the transportation of grain.[13] This resulted in disastrous losses for many farmers, and became increasingly viewed as a deliberate attempt by the railway to depress the price of wheat.[14] Further grievances resulted from the often excessive rates charged for the transportation of goods, and the close connection that existed between the Canadian Pacific Railway and the elevator companies.

By 1900, out of the four-hundred and seventy-seven standard elevators in operation, two hundred and six were owned by three elevator companies, and seventy-five by two large milling companies.[15] This monopoly forced the farmer to dispose of his grain at a price arbitrarily fixed by the elevator companies, and increasingly encouraged a "take it or leave it" attitude on the part of these large companies. Any complaint by the individual farmer would bring the insolent reply of "take your damned grain home then".[16] This lack of competition amongst buyers also bred a number of unscrupulous practices. Often the farmer was charged excessive dockage rates, weight scales were inaccurate, and wheat was deliberately down-graded to be sold later for a higher price.[17] To the farmer who depended solely on the sale of wheat for his cash income, this became an intolerable situation.

To such problems as transportation, distribution, and credit, were also added the injustices associated with the national policy. Forced to sell his product on a competitive market which often fluctuated to the detriment of wheat prices, the farmer was forced to purchase the bulk of his goods at prices sheltered from competition. Invariably the price paid by the western consumer was considerably

higher than if it had been purchased from the United States or Britain. It is not surprising then, that these day to day problems confronting the farmer could produce a basis for collective action. The farmers' saw themselves as producing the greater part of the country's wealth, yet being burdened with the majority of the taxes.

It became obvious that they were being shackled by a few large monopolies that were "enslaving and plundering the producing classes".[18] In the words of the Grain Growers' Guide, the farmer did not wish "to be mollycoddled" but simple desired "plain justice".[19] The failure on the part of the Federal Government to alleviate this situation led first to an initial disgust with the party system and then to its total rejection.

The first attempts by the farmers at any concerted economic and political action occurred in the latter two decades of the 19th century. Although not the concern of this paper, this period is rich in the early beginnings of agrarian protest.[20] In 1901 agrarian demands were given expression in the Territorial Grain Growers' Association. The forerunner of the West's powerful farm organizations, it arose primarily out of the need to correct the injustices practiced by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the elevator companies at local shipping points. In 1903 the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association came into existence, followed in 1905 by the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. Alberta spawned two farm organizations in the first decade of the twentieth century, and not until 1909 were they merged to form the United Farmers of Alberta. As the ranks of these organizations swelled in numbers they began to challenge the powerful monopolies

that controlled the grain trade.

The primary aim of these agrarian organizations was to alleviate the farmers' economic plight. This meant an attempt to break the exploitive situation found in transportation, marketing, and credit, and to replace it with more competition within the market place. The destruction of free trade that had resulted from the action of such monopolies as the C.P.R. and the elevator combines, put the grain grower at a distinct disadvantage as both a producer and a consumer. In essence "he sold on a buyer's, and bought on a seller's market".[21] What the farmers desired was more competition within the market so that the law of supply and demand could function properly.[22] Closely approximating the position of classical liberalism, they saw protection as the antithesis to the march of progress. As J.A. Stevenson, a frequent contributor to the Guide remarked, freer trade would result in "what Adam Smith calls the stock of the community ... being raised".[23]

In order to effect these changes the farm organizations waged a vigorous campaign of education to instruct their members in the need for collective action. They sought to raise his agrarian consciousness, not for the purposes of class warfare, but rather on the belief that in numbers there was strength. They also sought to instruct the farmer in his legal and political rights, and give him a better appreciation of the dignity attached to such a noble enterprise as farming.[24] This campaign was carried out at the various local meetings, the annual conventions, and most importantly through the pages of the Grain Growers' Guide.

Founded in 1908, the Guide became the official organ for all three agrarian organizations in Western Canada, and its aim was to "work on organizing the farmers for their mutual protection and advantage".[25] It reflected the economic and political demands that the farmers viewed as essential for their survival, and in doing so poured forth a great deal of moral indignation. Often their protests were cloaked in the secular Christianity of the social gospel, as they constantly referred to biblical teachings in order to bolster the righteousness of their argument. Furthermore, numerous editorials, articles, and letters to the editor appeared in the Guide criticizing the Churches for their apathy in the face of economic and political injustices. This desire to implement Christian ideals into the everyday life and practices of society can be glimpsed from an editorial written on Christmas day, 1912:

> Well meaning religious and charitable organizations are appealing to the public for money which is to send food, clothing and Christmas cheer into the poverty stricken homes of these cities ... Yet most of these people need only a square deal and not charity. They are the victims of our system ... If the misguided philanthropists would devote their money to improving conditions these unfortunate would have Christmas cheer more than one day in the year and would not be humiliated by accepting as a gift that which the creator intended to be their right.[26]

Through its book department the Guide also promoted such social gospel literature as R.J. Campbell's The New Theology, and reprinted numerous articles by social gospel writers. Both Salem Bland and J.S. Woodsworth wrote regular articles for the Guide, in addition to the many ministers and American social gospellers such as Washington Gladden and Dr. L. Abbot who also contributed articles.

Furthermore, for many years the cover of the Guide displayed a short statement or poem on the subjects of justice, morality, democracy, protection, and the value of co-operation. Usually its theme was religious in nature. For instance, one quote by Henry George stated that, "Christianity teaches us that all men are brethren; that their true interests are harmonious, not antagonistic. It gives us the golden rule of life, that we should do to others as we would have others do to us."[27] But more importantly, however, through the pages of the Guide the social gospel underlined the fundamental grievances that were present in agrarian protest.

At the centre of the Guide's many editorials and articles were always the passionate beliefs in democracy, hatred of corporate wealth, and distrust of the party system. Implicit in this assumption that democracy could work for the benefit of all was "the conviction that the electorate was virtuous and had only to be able to make its will effective, without distortion or hindrance, for economic and social progress to follow."[29] The belief prevailed that political power rested in the hands of the people, and that proper education could nurture the growth of righteousness in the political sphere. As the Guide wrote in the summer of 1910, the ability to effect these changes "lay in the power of the home in training the children, the ability of the press to mould public opinion, and the pulpit in courageously proclaiming for righteousness."[28]

But as experience had so often taught the western electorate, the will of the people was often dominated by corporate wealth. This "new feudalism" was based on "an elective aristocracy which in turn was governed by an aristocracy of wealth."[29] It meant that

"rings and bosses, machines and lobbyists, corporations and monopolists, controlled the policies of government"[30], and to break this hold of the "new plutocracy" became the educational aim of the Guide.

The first step in this process began with the attempt to inject a new sense of dignity into the work of farming. Rural life was acclaimed to be "the occupation ordained by God"[31], and the view was prevelant that the entire economy depended on the farmer, while the bulk of the country's wealth resulted from his labours. In the words of the Guide, the farmer was "the blind Sampson that has been feeding them (the industrialists) , and keeping them in refinement and luxury".[32] What is more, farming was perceived as "the noblest work of God" because in no other work did one "labour in such close co-operation with the Almighty."[33] The harnessing of nature's forces required both intelligence and initiative, and as such, farming deserved to be thought of as a noble calling.[34]

Present in this view was also the idea that farming meant more than just a job. It was a way of life! Echoing the romantic vision of rural living as being pure, simple, and creative, it was seen as being more conducive to creating a just and civilized society -- where poetry and philosophy could flourish -- than the incessant cry for business found in the urban centres.[35] Industrialization was viewed as contributing only towards such evils as poverty, over-crowding, crime, and immorality. As the Farmers' Platform in 1910 made clear: "the greatest misfortune which can befall any country is to have its people huddled together in great centres of population."[36] Clearly rural life was seen as superior to that found in the cities, because

it offered a way of life that was closely akin to the workings of the Creator.

In order to foster this lifestyle, however, it was required that the farmer receive the full product of his labour. After all it was argued, was not a carpenter, a blacksmith, or a farmer as useful as a judge or a manufacturer? Were not their individual lives as important in the sight of God?[37] To this end the Guide sought to instill the need for co-operation amongst the grain growers', and constantly bombarded the myth of the individual yeoman.[38] It was argued that such big corporations as those controlling the railways and elevators had long demonstrated the efficiency of organization. As a result they were able to control government, and "levy tribute on producer and consumer alike". The Guide suggested it was now time that the real producers of wealth became organized and demanded their rightful inheritance.

A strong religious symbolism was also clearly evident in this campaign for collective action. As one editorial remarked, "when the Great Architect brought the universe into existence He planned it on a co-operative basis."[39] The insatiable greed and corrupt business practices of the "monied interests" were seen as a consequence of their individualistic principles. Judged as "low ambition", these principles were viewed as only producing a "cold, unsympathetic, and grasping person."[40] In numerous articles it was questioned how the "predatory and demoralized individualism ... present in the realms of commerce and industry"[41] could be seen as contributing towards a Christian society? After all Christ had not meant for an economic

system to "crush out the ambitions, the abilities, the health, and the hope and happiness" of its citizens.[42] Set against this background of poverty and exploitation inherent in competition, co-operation was viewed as "helping to bring in the kingdom of righteousness."[43] Promising a more just distribution of wealth, it was seen as being in accord with the golden rule of "helping thy neighbour". In short, co-operation was instilled with the virtues of brotherhood, kindness, and a good life for all. It was viewed as not only a means of preserving the farmers' way of life, but the only avenue in which to successfully implement a truly Christian society.

The Guide's criticism of the political order also contained a strong religious influence. Speaking of the selfishness and greed displayed by the manufacturing classes in their control of the government, it warned that: "what profiteth it a man if he gain the whole world and loses his soul."[44] Disgusted by the immoral practices of patronage and corruption inherent in the party system, it advocated the reform known as "direct legislation". This was seen as a means of implementing true democracy. It meant the use of the initiative, referendum, and recall. Initiative simply meant the introduction of legislation by the people, and the referendum was the means by which this would be accomplished. The power of the recall stood for the fact that the constituents of any area could remove or unseat their representative if he did not comply with their wishes. It was firmly believed that these measures would create political purity, and cleanse government of the "bribery, corruption ... party bosses and election frauds"[45] which were very much in evidence. The demands of the farmers called for " a clean

honest government by and for the people, with equal rights for all and special privileges to none."[46]

What also dominated the political discussions of the Guide, was distrust of the party system. The adherence to direct legislation was seen as one attempt to eradicate the evils of this system, while the formation of a third party, or farmers' party as the other alternative. The control of both the Liberal and Conservative parties by patronage and party bosses was equated with the actions of "rank atheists or men with no moral senses."[47] The political machine made it impossible for any good individual to institute reform measures as he was subservient to the demands of the party. Too often there was no difference between parties as they both operated on the principle of "to the victor belongs the spoils."[48] As an editorial stated in 1910, the farmers "have no more to expect from one political party than another."[49] Therefore, it was up to them to "secure men to represent them and who will stand out boldly in the interests of the farmers at all times."[50]

The Guide's criticism of the national tariff also possessed a strong religious bias to it. Protection was condemned as much for its unchristian principles as for its economic inefficiency. Reprinting an article by Henry George entitled "Christianity and Taxation", the tariff was seen as being immoral and unchristian in nature:

> Out of this system of taxing the products and processes of labor, and out of its effects on increasing the price of what some have to sell and others must buy has grown the theory of protection which denies the gospel, and which holds Christ ignorant of political economy and proclaims laws of national well being utterly at variance with his teaching.[51]

In 1919, A.S. Handicap in his two articles, "the Tariff and National

Morals", also attacked the principle of protection from a religious basis. Claiming that the tariff was indicative of the pagan principles of conquest and domination, he advocated a return to the ideal of the Hebrew Commonwealth. Only when society was governed by the authority of God, and material wealth was distributed equally could a truly Christian Commonwealth be implemented.[52]

That the social gospel should underline many of the agrarian demands is not surprising when it is realized the extent to which ex-ministers and social gospel adherants dominated the farmers' movement. E.A. Partridge, the first editor of the Guide, and exponent of many ideas adopted by the farmers "was motivated by a practical, ethical Christianity mixed with elements of Ruskinian socialism."[53] Henry Wise Wood, president of the U.F.A., 1916-31, possessed a strong religious training that was clearly evident in his adoption of "U.F.A. Sundays", and his theory of group government. William Irvine, Percival Baker, and later Norman Priestly were all ex-ministers who played a prominent role in the U.F.A.. R.C. Henders, president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association was a Presbyterian minister "who rationalized his activities in terms of an emphatic Christian socialism."[54] As well, G.W. Robertson, secretary of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool for a number of years, and R.L. Shautt, head of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool field staff were also ex-ministers.[55] In short, the social gospel possessed a firm base from which to influence agrarian reform.

But while the religious ideals propogated by the Guide and farm leaders would prepare the way for a growing political awareness on the part of farmers, they would not become a reality until the

events of 1921. The early growth of the S.G.G.A. and the Alberta farmers' party exemplified the rather pragmatic attempt to implement economic changes and act as a pressure group on government officials. Their efforts bore a considerable amount of success.

The western farmers had been successful in applying pressure for legislative reform as early as 1897 with the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement. In return for certain concessions the Canadian Pacific Railway had agreed to reduce their transportation rates. In 1900 the Manitoba Grain Act had required the railway to construct loading platforms, and the court action taken by the T.G.G.A. had made it easier to obtain loading cars for the farmers' grain. Rate reductions were also obtained by the Manitoba government in 1901 from the Canadian Northern Railway, and the federal government deemed it necessary to establish the Board of Railway Commissioners in 1905, with control over rates, tariffs, and services.[56]

The sale and marketing of wheat had also received close attention by the government throughout this period, primarily through the introduction of the Manitoba Grain Act in 1900. Designed to alleviate some of the more flagrant injustices of the grain trade, it was hoped that this act would quell agrarian unrest. It was followed in 1906 by a second Royal Commission to investigate complaints by the farmers, and in 1912 the federal government passed the Canada Grain Act. This consolidated previous legislation and authorized the government to construct terminal elevators at the head of the lakes.[57]

By far the most important achievement of agrarian protest was the action taken on the farm organizations' demand for government

owned and operated elevators at the local and terminal levels. Known as the "Partridge Plan" after the originator of the idea E.A. Partridge, it resulted from the growing recognition that such reforms as loading platforms and the allocation of box cars "contributed little towards the restoration of a competitive balance"[58] in the grain market. Increasingly the attention of western growers was shifted to the terminal market, and the activities carried on by the terminal elevators at the head of the lakes and the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. It was at this point in the transportation of wheat that the farmers felt their grain was being deliberately diluted to its minimum quality, thereby reducing its price on the international market.[59] Furthermore, it was also from this point that the Winnipeg Grain Exchange set the prices that would be paid for grain at all the local shipping points. The idea began to take hold of the farm organizations that they "had surrendered to a motley array of distributors work which they collectively might just as well do themselves."[60]

As a result of this growing concern with the larger scope of the grain trade, two important developments took place within agrarian activity. First, the rather bold implementation of the Grain Growers' Grain Company "provided an important protective service in the merchandizing of grain in the terminal market."[61] Securing a seat on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, it sought to eliminate the role of the middleman, and break the restriction of competition amongst buyers at local shipping points. The second important development concerned the enactment of provincial legislation regarding publicly-owned elevators. In 1911 the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company was incorporated

by a provincial statute, and 1913 witnessed the establishment of the Alberta Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company. Both companies were to be advanced eighty-five percent of the fixed capital requirements for the construction of country elevators.[62] While these companies became very successful in their business ventures, it is not the purpose of this paper to deal with their history.[63] Rather, it is of more importance to grasp the underlying assumptions behind their development.

This aspect of economic protest is crucial for understanding the situation of agrarian unrest. First and foremost this was not an attack upon the open market system, but rather on the abuses of it by the several monopolies involved.[64] The grain growers' recognized that without a substantial amount of government aid locally owned and managed farmers' elevators were no match for the powerful elevator trusts. They felt that by eliminating the hold of the elevator monopoly, they could alleviate the "economic servitude which was rapidly overtaking them."[65] If successful, it was hoped that the profits "now passing directly into the pockets of the beneficiaries of monopoly"[66] would accrue to the farmers themselves. Paradoxically however, what the farmers desired was a monopoly with themselves in the favoured position instead of the elevator trusts.

This stance exhibited the farmers' ambivalent view concerning the nature of capitalism. On the one hand, it was felt to be imperative that government ownership prevail in the operation of telegraphs, telephones, railways, stockyards, grain elevators, and cold storage warehouses, and approached what Lipset refers to as "socialism without doctrine."[67] On the other hand, however, the farmers'

criticism of capitalism always left intact the idea of private property, the market, and free trade, the rejection of which is essential for the establishment of a socialist economy. For the farmer to be against capitalism meant the elimination of monopoly exploitation, not the rejection of small scale private enterprise. It was simply an attempt to gain more control over the marketing of his wheat, and by doing so he hoped to increase the level of competition and eliminate the much hated middleman. Hence the farmer was both supportive and hostile to elements of capitalism.[68]

Likewise with the growth of the Grain Growers' Grain Company, the farmers' exhibited a great propensity to work within the folds of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. Their initial complaints centred around the misuse of its power, and the fact that the price of wheat was fixed through the manipulation of the market. Sarcastically referred to as "the house of the closed shutters"[69], its speculative practices were denounced as immoral and unjust. Commenting on these unfair practices the Guide noted that:

> ... The speculator does not blister his manicured hands or soil his tailor made clothes to produce the crop ... He is the lazy boned consumer. He dresses his wife in silks and satins--you dress yours in calico.[70]

But essentially these complaints regarded the misuse of that institution, rather than the institution itself. As Fowke remarks in his book National Policy and Wheat Economy, "these actions were not regarded as inherent in the operation of a grain exchange."[71] This is an important fact to note, because in 1920 the emphasis of the farmers demands would shift to encompass the abolition of the market

mechanism itself.[72] Having become respectable corporations under the premises of free-enterprise, the farmers' elevator companies themselves would be subject to this agrarian dissatisfaction.

Although the period from 1897 to 1913 witnessed a great deal of government legislation that was favourable to the farmers' interests, not all of their demands were met. As both C.B. Macpherson and V.C. Fowke have pointed out, the political power of the western provinces has always "varied in proportion to the contribution which agriculture could make ... to the cause of commerce, finance, and industry, rather than in proportion to farmers' numbers or their state of organization."[73] These early benefits accorded to the western farmer were seen, then, as being beneficial to the development of the national economy, and as a result were listened to with great concern. However, demands such as the reduction of the tariff, the Hudson Bay Railway, or amendments to the Bank Act were inconsistent with this goal, and fell on deaf ears at Ottawa.[74] The failure of the federal government to staisfy these demands eventually led the farmers' to question the validity of the party system.

Perhaps the first issue to really bring this fact to bear on Western Canada was the question of reciprocity in 1911. The protective tariff had always been a contentious point with the farmers of Canada, but especially with the prairie provinces. The fluctuating nature of the wheat economy made the success of agriculture a precarious operation subject to a host of variables, not least of which was the international market. It stood to reason then, why the grain growers viewed the preferential treatment given the industrial class as unreasonable.

Why should they receive all the benefits, while the farmer was forced to pay the costs?

Not only did protection clearly violate the principles of a laissez-faire economy which the Canadian Manufacturing Association stood so clearly in favour of, but it contributed to a number of mergers which produced a tremendous concentration of capital in a few hands. As the Guide agrued in 1910, "all protection is morally as well as economically bad."[75] It destroyed free trade, and left the small businessman and producer at the mercy of a few large corporations. Furthermore, the wealth which was unjustly gained from the tariff contributed to the stagnation and decay of the country's political life. The tariff was clearly class legislation in the favour of the "monied interests".

The defeat of the tariff question in 1911 "was a bitter and stunning blow to the organized farmers."[76] The Liberals lost 20 seats to the Nationalist candidates in Quebec, and only managed twelve of the eighty-six seats in Ontario. Realizing their impotence against the interests of central Canada, the Guide remarked that "the West must bow to Ontario, the most powerful province politically."[77] But the anger of the farm organizations went beyond a sectional unrest, it encompassed their uneasiness towards the party system as well.

Faith in the Liberal and Conservative parties reached a low ebb on the prairies, as they became viewed as one and the same in principle and practice. As one letter to the editor in the fall of 1910 had remarked, "in spite of evasive replies Sir Wilfrid gave to Grain Growers' delegations both parties stand for subsidizing railways and

other corporations."[78] Their platforms were seen as "never more than something to fool the people"[79], and many farmers became convinced that the traditional parties were not capable of representing the interests of Western Canada. As R.C. Henders president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association told the farmers, "the actual power experienced by the people consists chiefly in the periodic choice of another set of masters who make laws to suit themselves and enforce them until their term of office expires."[80] Many felt that the government in Ottawa was firmly in the grip of the railway barons, financiers, and industrial interests of Montreal and Toronto. They were the "invisible government" that blocked the real interests of the people from becoming law.

There is no doubt that the defeat of reciprocity caused the old parties to lose a great deal of legitimacy in the eyes of Western Canada. It convinced a number of luke-warm supporters of political action that the time was at hand for a third party. "What is needed in Canada is a radical party with the courage of its convictions" declared the editor of the Guide, and subsequent articles pointed out the ineffectiveness of both old parties.[81] The "curse of partyism" became a dominant theme within the agrarian organizations, and was reflected in the words of the Rev. S.G. Bland's statement to the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association:

> They would never get the right men into politics and never get the rascally men out, until we have a new political party.[82]

What caused a further weakening of the two-party system amongst grain growers was also the anti-American sentiment that was present

in the Conservative campaign against reciprocity.[83] Whether or not Borden and the rest of his party was firmly convinced "that reciprocity would lead to annexation" is a point that has been debated by historians.[84] But certainly it was a strong part of their campaign and cannot be overlooked. It affected the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta in so far that a quarter of a million American immigrants had made their homes in Canada between 1895 and 1914. It seems no coincidence that the loudest demands for reciprocity emanated from these areas. Certainly the anti-American sentiments expressed in the election did not contribute to assimilating these people within the folds of the party system. Referred to as "new Canadians" in a Canadian Manufacturers Association statement of 1910, the Americans were seen as being opposed to the aims of Canadian nationalism.[85]

Although the campaign for a farmers' party certainly grew in support after 1911, there was still a great amount of uncertainty attached to its formation. The farmers' organizations were unsure of how to organize a new party, and go about financing it in a proper fashion. The memories of the Grange's fate in politics also provided a further argument against the development of a third party. But no amount of argument against independent political action could stop the growing sentiment of distrust against the old parties. Their hold on the western farmer had been weakened considerably, and the events surrounding the Great War would further jeopardize their position.

The ourbreak of World War I momentarily halted the development of political unrest in western Canada. Issues such as the tariff were pushed to the background, as all eyes became focused on the struggle

in Europe. War hysteria swept the country, and even the Guide which had been clearly isolationist up to and including the outbreak of hostilities, proposed that Canada "must do her utmost in the struggle against the invading Hun."[86] Amongst the farmers the notion of a "patriotic acre" became popular as they also sought to do their part for the Allied cause.[87] What further quieted the grievances of the grain growers was the economic boom that followed in the wake of the war. The Allies demand for wheat entered the prairies into a period of forced growth and produced a tremendous increase in the production of grain.[88]

This is not to suggest, however, that the war years submerged all agrarian protest under the banner of patriotism or the high prices being paid for wheat. In many respects the issues that unfolded in Canada in response to the war provided the final basis for the farmers' political action of the 1920's. Perhaps one of the most important factors which led to the farmers involvement in politics was the formation of Union government in 1917. While the events which led up to this coalition of Liberal and Conservative members is not part of this narrative, it is important to note the effect it had on the prairie provinces.

First and foremost the election of 1917 saw the destruction of both parties' national organizations. The Liberal party had been seriously divided between Laurier's anti-conscriptionist faction and the wing of the party which favoured conscription. As the in-fighting mounted within the party, the group favouring conscription had sided with Borden's Union Government. In the confusion that followed,

W.L. Morton remarks that it destroyed the "alliance of Quebec and western liberalism, and of conservative "nationalism" and agrarian radicalism which had increasing characterized the Liberal party."[89] In short, it left the organization of the party in shambles. For the Conservative party, its use of the provincial Liberal organizations weakened its own organizing abilities in Saskatchewan and Alberta.[90] Also closely identified with the cancellation of rural exemptions from conscription, the Tories would bear the burden for the failures of Union Government.[91]

Not only did the effects of Borden's coalition seriously weaken the organizations of both parties, but it helped to blur the distinction between Liberal and Conservative. While the farm organizations would eventually tire of Union Government, their initial response was overwhelmingly in its support. As the Guide remarked in the fall of 1917, "impartial observers must agree that never since Confederation has there been a cabinet at Ottawa containing the brains, force, and executive ability represented in Union government."[92] Holding out the hope that this non-partisan form of government would eliminate the evils of patronage and corruption, it showed the farmers that old party loyalties could be submerged in a more efficient and business-like form of government.

Apart from the question of Union government, the war also served to break down the party system on the prairies in two rather fundamental ways. First, the inefficiency and corruption which had characterized the management of the war served to weaken the credibility of partisan politics. But more so, the war had necessitated a certain amount of

government interference in the market place and had made the farm organizations aware of the great potential involved. Particularly impressed by the introduction of the Wheat Board, they saw no reason why these measures could not be extended to include the railways and other vital services. This feeling was reflected most dramatically in the rapid rise of the Nonpartisan League in the summer of 1916.[93] Within a year and a half the organization had gathered five thousand members in Saskatchewan and three thousand in Alberta.[94] Advocating the nationalization of banking and credit systems, public utilities, and all industries "in which competition has virtually ceased to exist", it also stood for government control of coal mines, forests, and water power.[95] The League's early success reflected the farmers' disgust with the traditional parties, and the belief that efficient business-like government could solve the problems of the economy.

The other influence which the war had on western Canada was to firmly entrench the spirit of reform within the farm organizations. The tremendous sacrifices that had been made on the fields of Flanders had impressed upon society the need for social change, and nowhere was this more evident than in the pages of the Grain Growers' Guide. Salem Bland wrote in late 1917 that "the comradeship that now glorifies the shell-torn, blood drenched fields of France" was the strongest bond of humanity, and "no Church as yet ... knits its members together as the men from the trenches are knit."[96] The unity of purpose and unselfishness which had also been shown at the home front prompted him to conclude that "the war has shattered the old shallow thoughtless fashion of life."[97] For many the war in Europe was seen as the final

expression of man's inhumanity to man, and with the defeat of Kaiserism would come righteousness and peace. It was a struggle that had been waged for "those ideals of Liberty and Justice which are the common and sacred cause of the Allies, and for the freedom of the world."[98] The feeling prevailed that the soldiers' sacrifice could not go in vain, and this was reflected in a speech given at the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' convention of 1918:

> The first thing for us to do to hasten that day is to put our own house in order, so that He who has power to withhold or give will not hesitate to place in our hands the power to establish on earth the rule of equity and justice where right shall be might.[99]

In reading through the pages of the Guide or even William Irvine's Alberta Non Partisan, one cannot help but sense the tremendous feeling of optimism and hope that a new era was dawning in the life of both Canada and the world. It was thought that now all countries would enter upon an era of unprecedented revolutionary change, in which the old individualism, exclusive nationalism, and other-worldliness in religion would no longer be present.[100] Writing under such editorial headings as "First Steps in New Social Order", Irvine articulated the need for collective action on the part of all workers to bring about righteousness and justice in the industrial sphere.[101] Both newspapers saw Canadian society on the threshold of true democracy, economic equality, and social purity, and urged its readers to take up the struggle for the new order. As one speaker informed the farmers, "before the war the real spirit of the West had been smothered in materialism." But because of the common goal that has been exhibited "the big broad free spirit is beginning to emerge."[102]

This spirit of reform heightened the farmers' demand for economic and political change. By complementing their growing social awareness with a sense of immediacy, it imparted the belief that wholesale social change was possible. Furthermore, the strong feeling of moral righteousness which accompanied this notion of the "new millenium" focused a sharper light on the corruption and inefficiency of partisan politics. This appeal to conscience not only upset old party loyalties by pointing to their many deficiencies, but it provided the basis from which to transcend the party system. The idealistic fervour which was exuded stood in notable contrast to the "foul fights ... base faction machines and fat bosses"[103] which dominated the Liberal and Conservative parties. It became clear to many western farmers that these ideals could only find expression in a third party dominated by intelligent, honest, and God-fearing men.

This moral revolt inflamed by the passions of war would play a dominant role in the Progressives' success of 1921. But in essence the strong religious fervour of the social gospel had always been present in agrarian unrest. The Grain Growers' Guide, with a circulation of 55,000 newspapers in 1919, had constantly advocated the need of orthodox religion to apply its teachings to the social order. Furthermore, William Irvine's lively editorials in The Nutcracker, the Alberta Non Partisan, and the Western Independent,[104] also contributed to educating the prairie farmer to the principles of the social gospel. These religious ideals underlined the desire to preserve a rural way of life, and complemented agrarian protest against the party system, and the economic injustices associated with the tariff and the control of the grain trade by big business.

By contrasting the inequalities of wealth and opportunity in society with an ideal commonwealth based on the teachings of Christ, the social gospel not only articulated many of the farmers' demands, but provided them with a legitimacy based on divine authority. For instance, the Guide's advocacy of co-operation was, on its most basic level, a desire to organize the farmers' and thereby achieve better economic and political results. But when the virtues of co-operation were cloaked in the language of a moral law that would entail a superior Christian civilization, then it became much easier to arouse the farmers to organize amongst themselves. As the Guide reminded its readers in 1908, "look into the heavens some starlit night, and you will see there the vast system of worlds governed by a perfect and harmonious law--the law of co-operation."[105]

Furthermore, the influence of the social gospel also brought the question of socialism to bear on many of the farmers' demands. Seymour Martin Lipset has tended to view agrarian demands for the nationalization of railways, telephones, grain elevators and the like, as being socialist in nature. While there is little evidence that the farmers viewed themselves as being socialists, or even understood what the term meant, there was a growing awareness on their part that the harsher elements of capitalism had to be abolished. This usually took the form of a moral indignation, however, at the poverty, exploitation, and suffering spawned by an unfettered "piratical individualism." Arch Dale's editorial cartoons in the Guide usually depicted fat, bloated capitalists, with top hat and cigar, siphoning off excess profits from the hard working farmer. This was more indicative of the

unchristian and immoral attitudes attached to these practices, rather than an attempt to understand them by a purely economic analysis.

Occasionally there were editorials and letters to the editor which tended to laud the benefits of socialism, and equated co-operation amongst farmers as being socialist in nature. As one farmer wrote to the Guide in 1910:

> Now, I am only an ignorant person, who cannot see any difference in principle between socialsim and co-operation. Co-operation, which is the secret of big success, appears to me to be only an incipient voluntary socialism. [106]

Used sparingly in the literature of agrarian protest, the term socialist came to be identified with a morally superior way of life, and lost much of its harsh, doctrinaire teachings. Co-operation and socialism were equated as one and the same, and were viewed as bringing about the kingdom on earth. As William Irvine remarked, "the truth is, humanity has conceived a higher ideal of social service than self-aggrandizement, and is seeking to establish institutions which will be worthy reflections of man's moral development and the power of his social consciousness"[107]. Attaching a christian basis to the term socialism, the social gospel protected the farmers' demands from the label of bolshevik or "red". More importantly, though, this view of a christian socialism would prepare the western farmer for those ideas found in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in the 1930's.

In conclusion, the end of the war in the fall of 1918 brought the agrarian organizations to the final realization that a third, independent, farmers' party was needed. Years of economic and political protest, and the many disappointments such as the defeat of reciprocity,

and the events surrounding the war had laid the final basis for political action. In 1920, the question of an unsettled tariff, war costs, and mounting inflation would prove the final demise of the two party system in Canada. Accompanying this political action on the part of the farmers' would be the strong moral fervour of the social gospel.

FOOTNOTES

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2 W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 4.

3 Seymour M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), p. 40.

4 W.A. Mackintosh, The Economic Background of Dominion Provincial Relations, Carleton Library Series (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), p. 47.

5 W.T. Easterbrook and H.G. Aitken, Canadian Economic History (Toronto: MacMillan Co., Canada, 1958)

6 Mackintosh, Dominion Provincial Relations, p. 47.

7 See Escott M. Reid, "The Rise of National Parties in Canada, ed. Hugh Thorburn, Party Politics in Canada", (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 15-22.

8 Morton, Progressive Party, p. 6.

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10 Paul Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada (Minneapolis: Octagon Books, 1948), p. 31.

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13 Wood, History of Farmers' Movements, pp. 159-80.

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23 J.A. Stevenson, "Protection: The Curse of Canada", Guide, June 1, 1910, pp. 5, 9, 13.

24 I am indebted for these ideas to Morton Progressive Party, p. 11.

25 Guide, June 1908, p. 1.

26 "Misguided Benevolence", Guide, December 25, 1912, p. 5.

27 Henry George, "Christianity and Taxation", Guide, March 2, 1912, p. 1.

28 Morton, Progressive Party, p. 15.

29 Ibid.

30 Guide, July 6, 1910. p. 3.

31 "Political Purity", Guide, March 31, 1915, p. 5.

32 J.B. Baker, "The Farmer in Politics and Commerce", Guide, August 31, 1910, p. 10.

33 Ibid. Also see "Co-operating with the Almighty", Guide, April 30, 1913, p. 1.

34 Henry D. Thoreau, "The Ethics of Western Life", Guide, August, 1908, p. 40.

35 Ibid.

36 Cited in Sharp, Agrarian Revolt, p. 44, also see John MacDougall, Rural Life in Canada, new ed., with an introduction by R.C. Brown (Toronto: UTP, 1973)

37 "Message from E.A. Partridge", Guide, July 13, 1910, p. 20.

38 Guide, September 1908, p. 44.

39 "Co-operation", Guide, September 1908, p. 44.

40 "Ambition vs. Aspiration", Guide, October 1908.

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42 Ibid.

43 E.A. Partridge, "Letter to 9th Annual Meeting of S.G.G.A.", Guide, February 16, 1910, p. 21. For a brief insight into the career of this agrarian radical see Ralph Hedlin, "E.A. Partridge", Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, Series III, 15 (1960)

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45 "Direct Legislation--Canada's Greatest Need", Guide, June 1909, p. 24.

46 Ibid.

47 "Political Ethics", Guide, June 1908, p. 14.

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49 "For An Independent Party", Guide, August 10, 1910, p. 6.

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51 Guide, March 20, 1912, p. 1.

52 Guide, March 19, 1919.

53 Richard Allen, The Social Passion (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 201. Also see Richard Allen, "Salem Bland And The Social Gospel in Canada" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1960). In chapter VI entitled "The Social Gospel and The Ideology of Agrarian Revolt", Allen links the ideals of the social gospel with agrarian protest. He attributes its influence to the role played by Salem Bland in the farm movements.

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55 Allen, "Salem Bland", p. 141.

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59 Ibid., p. 124.

60 Wood, History of Farmers' Movements, p. 184.

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62 Ibid., pp. 139-49.

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79 Guide, February 1, 1911. Cited in Sharp, Agrarian Revolt, p. 50.

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82 Guide, March 18, 1924.

83 See W.M. Baker, "A Case of Anti-Americanism in English Speaking Canada: The Election Campaign of 1911", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 11, No. 3 (December, 1970)

84 Ibid., p. 432.

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88 Morton, Progressive Party, p. 40.

89 Ibid., p. 59. Also see Ramsey Cook, "Dafoe, Laurier, and the Formation of Union Government", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XLII, No. 3 (September 1961)

90 Morton, Progressive Party, p. 60.

91 For an analysis of how these events affected Ontario farmers see Brian Young, "Conscription, Rural Depopulation, and the Farmers of Ontario, 1917-19", Canadian Historical Review, LIII (September, 1972)

92 "The Union Gains Strength", Guide, October 31, 1917, p. 5.

93 The effect of this group will be discussed in the next chapter. See Sharp, Agrarian Revolt, pp. 77-105.

94 Ibid., p. 78.

95 Ibid. See "The Non Partisan Political League", Guide, September 5, 1917, p. 8.

96 Salem Bland, "The Deeper Life", Guide, December 19, 1917, p. 34.

97 Ibid.

98 J.H. Thompson, "The Beginning of Our Regeneration: The Great War and Western Canadian Reform Movements", ed. Clark, Grayson, Grayson, Prophecy and Protest (Toronto: Gage Publishers, 1975) p. 89.

99 Guide, February 20, 1918, p. 8.

100 William Irvine, "Signs of the New Social Order", Alberta Non Partisan, April 26, 1918, p. 13.

101 Alberta Non Partisan, August 12, 1918, p. 13.

102 Thompson, "Western Reform Movement", p. 89.

103 Guide, April 15, 1914, p. 9.

104 These three newspapers were all managed and edited by William Irvine. The Nutcracker ran from late 1916 through to fall of 1917. The Alberta Non Partisan was the official organ for the Non Partisan League and ran from approximately October 26, 1917 to the summer of 1919. The Western Independent ran from the fall of 1919 to sometime in the spring of 1920. It was the official organ of the U.F.A.'s political association. Irvine was extremely critical of capitalism, and advocated a socialist state based on Christian principles. He never missed a chance to criticize the Churches for their failure to apply their teachings to the social order.

105 Guide, September 1908, p. 44.

106 Guide, January 26, 1910, p. 24.

107 William Irvine, "The Future of Socialism", The Nutcracker, April 13, 1917, pp. 9-10.

CHAPTER III

THE U.F.A.

The rise of the Progressive party in 1921 represented a sectional revolt by the frontier, agrarian community of western Canada. Electing sixy-five members to the federal parliament in Ottawa, the Progressives represented the practical culmination to a decade of political indoctrination. In the first place, it was an economic protest spawned from the "monolithic wheat economy" of the prairies against the National Policy, and its system of fiscal protection.[1] This was given impetus by the additional problems of drought, low wheat prices, and a heavy burden of debt which characterized prairie agriculture in the years immediately following the end of the First War.[2] Secondly, it represented a political revolt against the corruption and inefficiency of the party system.[3] These two grievances were united in the belief that the old national parties were equally committed to maintaining a high tariff, as well as being indifferent to the influence exerted on them by the "monied interests".

Under its banner of political and economic reform the Progressive party mustered a host of doctrines and differing principles; "single tax, prohibition, co-operation, group government, socialism, pacifism, in short, secular evangelism in all its manifestations"[4]. In essence, this plethora of differing ideals represented the secular Christianity of the social gospel, as the Progressives sought to instill a moral goodness into the realms of economics and politics. Richard Allen has noted this close similarity in ideals between the social gospel and the Progressive party, remarking that the progressive movement embodied the "real religion, full of prophetic passion, true brotherhood, and an urgent sense of justice."[5] He feels that the moral fervour generated

by the social gospel was to a large degree responsible for the party's electoral success in 1921.

To examine the influence which the social gospel exerted on the Progressive party as a whole, however, is beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, the purpose of this chapter will be to show the close parallel that existed between social gospel ideals, and the concept of group government as advocated by the Alberta wing of the Progressives, the U.F.A. Originating from the social philosophy of Henry Wise Wood, the theory of group government rigidly determined the political course of the U.F.A. Holding to the conviction that the economic and political foundations of Canadian society were wrong, it stood for the construction of a new social order based on the laws of God, where co-operation, true democracy, and brotherhood would prevail. It will be argued that this theory of group government embodied the principles of the social gospel, and as such, these religious ideals greatly influenced the political doctrines of the U.F.A. In turn, it will be briefly shown how the social gospel ultimately determined not only the political course of the U.F.A., but contributed to the eventual disintegration of the Progressive party as well.

With the silencing of the guns on the Western Front in the fall of 1918, the farmers had immediately embarked upon a renewed demand for economic and political change. Only eighteen days after the signing of the armistice, the Canadian Council of Agriculture had issued the revised Farmers' Platform. Popularly known as the "New National Policy", it demanded significant tariff and tax reforms, proportional representation, changes in the Senate, and the nationalization of transportation and

communications.[6] If implemented it would have radically altered the face of the economy. Designed with the intention to make known and to press the farmers' demands on the old parties, it reflected the determination of western farmers to bring an end to the old order.[7] Although it had not been issued with the intention of creating a third, farmers' party[8], the indifference of the old parties towards the Farmers' Platform forced the farm organizations into direct political action.

To begin with, the decision to prolong the life of Union Government past the war's end met with a great deal of dissatisfaction in western Canada. The farmers were upset over the injustices which had been practiced in the War Time Election Act[9], the conscription of farmers' sons[10], and the failure to conscript wealth alongside manpower[11], and as a consequence felt that Borden's coalition had outlived its purpose. "There is no love for the Union Government ... and few tears will be shed for its passing", wrote the Guide in January, 1919.[12] While from the pages of the Alberta Non Partisan, William Irvine sarcastically urged "King Borden" to abdicate.[13] Its successor, Arthur Meighen's new aligned National-Liberal and Conservative Party--a fancy name for the old Tory guard--was similarly disliked. Tainted with the failures of Union Government, its adherence to the policy of protection made it the very antithesis of what the Farmers' Platform stood for. Furthermore, Meighen's portrayal of the western farm organizations as being dominated by immigrants, who possessed no vision of Canada and were in essence second class Canadians, did nothing to endear the Conservative party to the hearts of western voters.[14]

It seems the leaders of the farmers' movement , men such as T.A. Crerar, H.W. Wood, and George Langely had viewed the Liberals as the political vehicle through which the Farmers' Platform might be implemented.[15] The hopes of capturing the Liberal party, however, were soon dampened by the results of the Liberal Party Convention in the summer of 1919. Although the Liberals' programme did call for a reduction in the tariff and significant concessions to the western farmer, it did not endorse Reciprocity, nor did it reduce the tariff far enough to satisfy the farmers. Furthermore, the protectionist interests along with the Quebec delegates had captured control of the party. They were unsympathetic towards any significant reduction in the tariff, and the final rebuff occurred when the newly appointed leader, Mackenzie King, referred to the Farmers' Platform as merely a "chart" from which the Liberal party might or might not implement these agrarian reforms.[16] Not clearly understanding the political situation in Western Canada, King's failure to endorse the Farmers' Platform in even a luke-warm manner cost the Liberals the political support of the prairie farmer. It became clear to the rank and file of the farmers' organizations that the policy of protection had been fortified in the platform of both the old parties, and that the time was now at hand for the creation of a farmers' party. Perhaps this sense of anger and frustration on the part of the farmers was best captured in an editorial statement of The Western Independent:

> Liberalism, the white hope of modest reformers, has ... fallen amongst the thieves. The Canadian people have tried the Tories, they have tried the Grits, separately; then they combined them ... the last was worst than the first.[17]

The many years of debate, indoctrination, and political discussion surrounding the issue of a third party, were by 1920 ready to be put into practice. Both the Liberal and Conservative parties had done little to meet the farmers' demands, and thereby dispel the suspicion that "the manufacturers" were in the saddle and owned both Grit and Tory Governments".[18] The Liberal party had, from its rise to power in 1896, ignored its own programme of free trade. Except for the futile attempt to enact reciprocity in the election of 1911, the history of the Liberals was one of having fortified the hated policy of protection. And little if anything could be expected from the traditionally protectionist Conservative party. It seemed to the western farmer that the "combination of money, power, and big business" was firmly entrenched in the control of the political process.[19]

In the same light the farmers' desire for independent political action was given impetus by the corruption and inefficiency which had always surrounded both parties in their tenure in office. Not only was it felt that the "monied interests" dictated the policies of the old parties[20], but that the influence of the professional politicians stifled any real chance for democracy within the party system.[21] This was reinforced by the role of the cabinet in deciding party policy, and the rigid discipline practiced in the light of parliamentary procedure.[22] The corrupting influence of patronage which was essential to keep the political machines functioning smoothly also ensured the control of both parties by the vested interests. To the western farmer who had long been imbued with faith in the benefits of democracy, which meant simply a faith in the virtue of the common man to decide

his own political fate, these practices became increasingly intolerable. The "New National Policy" had embodied these democratic ideals, arguing as it did for the abolition of titles, direct legislation, proportional representation, reform of the Senate, and the removal of press censorship. But as the Guide bluntly warned its readers in 1919, only "graft, plunder, incapacity, pledge-breaking, and corruption" could be expected from the Liberal and Conservative parties.[23] What is more, in the wake of an agricultural depression the western farmer was prepared to listen to these charges against the old parties.

No doubt the fact that the price of wheat had plummetted from $2.78 a bushel in September, 1920, to a mere $1.15 the following year also provided the basis for political revolt.[24] Caught between the heavy burden of debt incurred through wartime expansion, fixed rates of interest, and the additional problem of drought, many farmers were faced with disaster.[25] To make matters worse, throughout the war years the farmers had constantly been subjected to charges of being "war drones", reaping huge unjust profits from the circumstances surrounding the war.[26] Certainly the war had produced a modicum of prosperity for the western farmer, as the Allies demand for wheat had both increased the price and production of wheat. But most of the profits had gone toward higher costs of land, machinery, and labour. Furthermore, in the scramble to cash in on the high price of wheat, many farmers had neglected the proper farming techniques essential for prairie agriculture.[27] This had resulted in lower crop yields in the latter years of the war, and produced an outbreak of stem-rust in 1918-19.

So, when the additional problems of drought and the low price of wheat hit the prairies in 1920, conditions were ripe for the successful entry of a farmers' party into the political arena. Union Government had weakened the ties to old party loyalties in western Canada, and the disruption of the two-party system that had resulted from this had created a political void which neither Mackenzie King nor Arthur Meighen seemed capable of filling. This allowed the adherants of a farmers' party to vigouously press for their cause, and finally bring their charges of political corruption, neglect of the tariff, and inefficiency of the old parties to full fruition within the confines of the Progressive party.

This groundswell of agrarian revolt was given direction when, in 1920, the Canadian Council of Agriculture recognized the National Progressive Party--a group of Union dissenters led by T.A. Crerar--as officially representing the farmers. Despite the misgivings which had been expressed by the farmers' leaders over the creation of a third party, the Progressives gathered support rapidly. The extent to which this agrarian unrest had permeated the prairie provinces can be easily seen from the results of the Federal election in 1921. Lacking a full-blown party organization and short on both funds and political experience,[28] the farmers' movement nevertheless routed the old parties from the continental West. No government candidates were elected in the prairie provinces, while only two Liberal members won seats in the urban centres. Electing sixty-five members to the federal parliament in Ottawa, the Progressives not only out-polled Arthur Meighen's Conservative Party, but denied the Liberal party its much sought after

majority. As the Grain Growers' Guide wrote in the aftermath of the election, "the political pot was boiling ... we must keep it boiling until we get justice".

Following this phenomenal success of the Progressive party on the federal level, were also the electoral victories recorded by the provincial sectors of the party. The provincial governments of Ontario, Alberta, and Manitoba all fell before the onslaught of the farmers' movements, while only the political intuition of the Liberal party in calling a quick election staved off political defeat in Saskatchewan.[29] Unfortunately, however, the political success of the agrarian organizations would be short lived, as the harsh realities of the political sphere would serve to undermine their cause. Only in Alberta would the farmers achieve something beyond a short run political gain.

Like the leaders of the other farm organizations, the executive of the U.F.A. had not been anxious to enter the political field in 1920. Under the leadership of the messianic, yet tough-minded Henry Wise Wood, the U.F.A. had consistently steered clear of the demands for a third party.[30] Wood remembered his own experience with the ill-fated farmers' party in Missouri, and argued that the creation of an independent political party would attract "all the descredited, broken-down politicians of both parties".[31] He viewed the farmers' lack of political experience as a serious drawback, and felt that a political party would undermine, rather than solve, the farmers' demands.[32] In spite of these warnings, however, the rank and file of the U.F.A. were as determined as their other provincial counterparts to take the plunge into politics. The particular circumstances which surrounded Alberta politics in the

post-war years further aided this drive for independent political action.

Since its inception as a province in 1905, provincial politics in Alberta had been dominated by the Liberal party. Always sensitive to the power wielded by the U.F.A. amongst the farming community, the Liberals paid close attention to the demands that generated from the annual convention of the U.F.A.[33] In 1913 they had passed a bill for direct legislation, and the adoption of both female suffrage and prohibition followed in 1916. The Alberta Farm Loan Board was also created in 1917 to assist the farmers in acquiring easier forms of credit.[34] But in the aftermath of the post-war recession and falling wheat prices, the Liberals became hard pressed to stave off the rank and files desire for direct political action. Further problems of drought, an unpopular railway policy, and the dissension present in the Liberal party itself served to undermine its claim as a farmers party.

It seems the Liberal party had never been able to shed the image of graft and corruption which had surrounded the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway scandal of 1910. Only the strong personality of A.L. Sifton, and the weakness of the provincial Conservatives had kept the Liberals in power for so long.[36] By 1920, however, distrust of the Liberal party left no viable alternative except the creation of a third, farmers party.

The other factor which precipitated the U.F.A.'s entry into provincial politics was the pressure exerted on it by the Non Partisan League.[37] The League had entered Alberta in 1916 following its success

in North Dakota, and within a year had grown to a membership of over three thousand. Advocating the nationalization of banking and credit systems, public utilities, and of all industries "in which competition had ceased to exist", the Non Partisan League reflected many of the farmers' basic grievances.[38] The antipathy felt towards the party system in Western Canada further explains the League's initial success. Calling for an end to the "hypocrisy, special privileges, rotten civil service, and narrow minded nationalism" inherent in the party system, the League's proposal for political action met with popular support amongst the farmers.[39] As the League's official organ, the Alberta Non Partisan exclaimed, it was "the direct expression of a spirit of revolt against injustice."[40]

Present in the League's many public statements was also the influence of the social gospel. William Irvine, editor of the Alberta Non Partisan never missed a chance to expound his social gospel sentiments, while J.S. Woodsworth was also involved in the League for a short time. An article written in the spring of 1918 entitled, "The Church in Politics", is perhaps the best example of the Non Partisan League's view of religion. Stressing the close similarity between the ideology of the League and that of the Churches, the article went on to state that "we offer to the Church the opportunity to do what she wants without making compromises with her enemies ... Here she can declare herself in sympathy with the great toiling masses without allying herself with ranting atheists".[41] Also present in the pages of the Alberta Non Partisan were a number of poems stressing the moral goodness of co-operation, brotherhood, and love amongst humanity. One such poem

entitled, "Life's Highest Ideal", clearly expressed these social gospel sentiments:

> I live for those who love me,
> For those who know me true,
> For the heaven that smiles above me
> and awaits my spirit too.
> For all human ties that bind me,
> For the task my God assigns me,
> For the bright hopes left behind me,
> And the good that I can do.[42]

No doubt the influence of these religious ideals helped to temper some of the more radical ideas found within the Non Partisan League. Even the damning charge of being labelled as socialists was deflected by this appeal to Christian principles. As William Irvine remarked in an article, "All Socialists Now":

> What do you think of all the fuss that is being made about the things we Socialists have always preached and prayed for like democracy, babies, decent homes, sufficient food, and a human instead of a brutal system of life.[43]

As well, this adherance to the ideals of the social gospel perhaps offers a further explanation for the initial popularity and success of the Non Partisan League. Yet, while for the most part the average farmer viewed the League in a favourable light, the leaders of the farm organizations quickly became openly antagonistic towards it.[44] The reasons for this are two-fold. First, the Non Partisan League was premised on the basis of political action, and as such, was openly critical of the agrarian organizations' fear of direct political action.[45] Second, the farm leaders in both Saskatchewan and Alberta viewed the League as a threat to the survival of their agrarian organizations. As a result, a bitter struggle ensued with the League taking its campaign for political action to the local level. In Saskatchewan the

S.G.G.A. was able to effectively stifle the popularity of the League, with the result that it vanished as quickly as it had risen. But in Alberta the popularity of the Non Partisan League was very strong, and as a consequence the U.F.A. was forced to amalgamate with it. Accordingly Henry Wise Wood was forced to accept much of the League's programme, including the need for political action.[46] One issue that both organizations agreed upon, however, was that the existing society was the very antithesis of the ideas inherent in Christianity. This view would be brought to life in the U.F.A.'s doctrine of group government.

Forced to enter the U.F.A. into the political sphere in 1920 under the banner of the Progressive revolt, Wood nevertheless showed an early dislike for the Progressive party. He viewed it with suspicion because to his mind, it still represented many of the evils inherent in the old political parties.[47] To begin with, Wood possessed a personal dislike for T.A. Crerar, national leader of the Progressive party.[48] Furthermore, Crerar's advocacy of a central organizing committee, the need for strict parliamentary discipline, and his close contact with Mackenzie King did nothing to lessen Wood's suspicion that the Progressives were just another political party. In addition, Crerar's attempt to appeal to a wide cross-section of Canadian society was viewed by Wood as necessarily weakening the ideals of the farmers movement.[49] Not only would this necessitate that the Progressives engage in the sordid affairs of day to day politics, but Wood felt that "power had a wonderful fascination...and once enjoyed by the farmers' party", he feared that it would be sought after to the exclusion of all else.[50]

Consequently he insisted that the U.F.A. enter politics as an economic organization, not as a political party. This was the nucleus of his theory of group government, and it would guide the U.F.A. on both the federal and provincial levels along an uncompromising and rigid political course.[51] In many respects it reglected the evangelical zeal and religious ideals which underlay the Christian social gospel. To clearly understand the religious significance of group government, however, we must turn first to a brief discussion of the U.F.A.'s early development.

The United Farmers of Alberta was formed in 1909 with the coalition of two rival farm organizations, the Alberta Farmers Association and the Canadian Society of Equity.[52] Its aim was "to promote the principles of co-operative action, improve the economic position of farmers, and obtain legislation to assist the ordinary member of the U.F.A."[53] Since Alberta had been the last province to be settled on the prairies, the problems associated with the production of wheat were not as acute in the years prior to the First World War, as they were in Saskatchewan. The economy was more diversified as both cattle ranching and mining supplemented the farming of wheat.[54] It would not be until the tremendous expansion in the grain trade necessitated by the war, that wheat would come to be the dominant factor in Alberta's economy.[55] Still, this largely agricultural economy was beset with problems of a high tariff, transportation costs, and the short supply of available credit, all of which sparked an early interest in the political affairs of the country.

From the outset, then, the U.F.A. showed a similarity of interests with the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association in pressing

for a reduction in the tariff, cheaper transportation costs, and a greater supply of available credit. The U.F.A. was also very active in making known its demands to the Liberal government in Alberta. In the years leading up to its entry into politics in 1920, the U.F.A. convention passed resolutions advocating direct legislation, compulsory hail insurance, women's suffrage, and prohibition.[56] It was also deeply concerned with the effect of partisan politics on the democratic structure of government. One group within the U.F.A., dominated by such prominent leaders as W.J. Tregillus, James Weir, and Rice Sheppard favoured the entry of the U.F.A. into politics.[57] They felt that "righteousness and justice in government" could only be implemented through the creation of a third party. This "would hasten the day when a truly christian co-operative society would exist".[58] Equally as adamant, though, in their desire to keep the farmers out of politics, were leaders such as James Bower and Henry Wise Wood. They favoured the position that farmers act as a pressure group, and at most suggested the U.F.A. attempt to win control of the Liberal organization.[59] But whatever the differences may have been within the executive of the U.F.A., they were all united in the belief that democracy would cure the evils of society.

The lines of authority and responsibility within the U.F.A. reflected this commitment to democratic ideals. Comprised of a network of local organizations which elected their own executives annually, each local was also responsible for sending delegates to the annual convention.[60] This was the governing body of the farmers' organization where all the important legislation was passed. Each local was

entitled to send one delegate for every ten members, and these in turn voted at the convention.[61] As C.B. Macpherson notes, this method of deciding issues and electing representatives "functioned well, and appeared entirely explicable in terms of the idea of delegate democracy".[62] The rapid increase in membership, however, rising from 1073 members in 1909 to 37,000 in 1921, caused serious problems for the smooth functioning of the annual convention.[63] Consequently the real power behind the U.F.A. began to reside in the provincial executive, which brought forth the major pieces of legislation and in general dominated the proceedings of the convention.[64] This was personified by the influence exerted by Henry Wise Wood, long time president of the U.F.A.

Wood was first elected to the presidency in 1916 and held that position for the next fifteen years. In conjunction with this he was also head of the Alberta Wheat Pool until his retirement in 1931. As his biographer, W.K. Rolph notes, the history of the U.F.A. reflects in many instances the life of its leader, H.W. Wood. During his years in power "his influence over both the political and economic aspects of the farmers' movement was unrivalled".[65] Exhibiting a "tremendous personal magnetism", the sincerity and determination behind his ideas won him the deep admiration and respect of the Alberta farmers. "His matter-of-fact style of oratory combined with a considerable gift for good-humoured repartee proved an ideal combination for handling the often unruly agrarian meeting".[66] Furthermore, his theory of co-operation based on group solidarity determined the economic and political politics of the U.F.A.

Born in Missouri in 1860, Wood did not settle in Alberta until 1905. Keenly interested in political affairs, especially whose which concerned the farming community, he also brought with him a profound distrust for the party system of government. This stemmed from his experience with the Farmers' Alliance in Missouri, a farmers party which had been destroyed by the ugly reality of practical politics.[67] From his American background Wood also brought a devout faith in the social aspect of Christianity. Reared in the Campbellite Church which had stressed fellowship and the importance of good works, Wood's religious emphasis revolved around temporal salvation. He believed in following the way of life advocated by Jesus and saw little benefit in the dogma and ritual of orthodox religion.[68] This social christianity deeply influenced Wood's social and political philosophy and would leave its lasting mark on the U.F.A. Because of the unique religious situation which prevailed in Alberta in the early years of settlement, the secular evangelism of group government would become the religion of agrarian reform.

Alberta was settled largely in the years 1900-14 and many settlers brought with them a strong religious heritage. This is reflected in the rapid growth of the Church in the small towns and large urban centres, where the development of Sunday schools, young people's societies, and women's organizations flourished.[69] Early historical records also reveal the determination and valiant efforts that were expended to establish church services in the rural areas. Two reasons, however, mitigated against the establishment of rural churches, so that by 1925 "scarcely a single person ever went to church in the

farming communities of rural Alberta".[70] First, the sparse population simply could not afford to support and keep-up with the costs involved in building a church. When churches were established they usually reflected a diversity of faiths, and engaged in non-denominational services.[71] Secondly, the distances involved in the early years of horse and buggy transportation further added to the problems of establishing a rural church.[72] This served in large part to break down the influence usually exerted by organized forms of religion, and left the way open for new forms of religious worship.[73]

In the years after 1925 this religious void was filled to some extent by the phenomenal growth of a religious fundamentalist movement in Alberta. In her book, Sect, Cult, and Church in Alberta, D.E. Mann states that there were thirty-five sects operating in Alberta by the start of the depression in 1930. Preaching a religious fundamentalism, they were characterized by "a tight ascetic code of morality and belief in the literal truth of the Bible; the existence of a fire and brimstone hell, and the necessity of a dramatic conversion experience".[74] The strength of the fundamentalist sects lay in the extent of their rural support, which by 1946 equalled about one-third of the support given to the traditional churches. It was from these forms of unorthodox religion that William Aberhardt would gather his support for the messianic crusade of the Social Credit in the 1930's.

There is no evidence, however, to suggest that these religious groups played a major role in Alberta society until the disillusionment of the depression years. Rather, the rapid rise and political success of the U.F.A. replaced the lack of religious organizations in these

years by contributing its own form of social christianity. Much like the religious awakening that would occur after 1930, the political awakening spawned by the U.F.A. created a new faith amongst the people by giving them something to believe in and fight for. Stirring the hope of a better world in which would be established a Christian brotherhood, the U.F.A. possessed a religious intensity which more than compensated for the lack of rural churches.[77] Dominated by men such as H.W. Wood, Percival Baker, and William Irvine who had all received an extensive religious training, the U.F.A.'s appeal for agrarian reform strongly reflected the influence of the social gospel.

This attempt to equate agrarian reform with the teachings of Christ can be glimpsed from a number of newspaper articles and speeches given by prominent U.F.A. members.[78] "The reformation of the existing political system would require a religious crusade", declared president Tregillus in 1913, "to elect men to our federal parliament ... who will enact laws that will square with the golden rule".[79] What we desire is the "creation of a Christian society where hatred, ignorance, and poverty will be eliminated".[80] According to Henry Wise Wood, true democracy was one and the same with the creation of the kingdom of God, because "the greatest democrat that ever lived -- Christ, had desired that men live in the harmony and brotherhood of a true democratic society".[81] What added to the prophetic character of these statements was the fact that the annual conventions were usually held in a church, with the speeches being given from a church pulpit.[82]

In the wave of agrarian unrest which characterized the years immediately following the end of the First War, a strong religious

symbolism was also present in the preparation for independent political action. One anonymous author writing in the U.F.A. section of the Guide in 1919, equated the U.F.A.'s entry into the political sphere with the work of God, and stated that "The Divine has been revealed as never before -- a new vision of the earth as a possible paradise".[83] In The Western Independent, the official organ for the U.F.A. political association, the members of the U.F.A. were equated with Christ's disciples, because both were humble working people trying to bring the gospel of righteousness to the world. In the same light the old political parties, "worshippers of creed and form", were seen as the Scribes and Pharissees that were attempting to destroy the kingdom on earth.[84]

Pointing out the immoral practices and deficiencies of the party system under such titles as "Sodom and Gomorrah", The Western Independent also went on to chastise the old parties for their preservation of the economic order. It was felt that mankind had made "idols out of dollars ... instead of Christ", and as a consequence was "starving the poor and over-feeding the rich".[85] As one farmer wrote to the editor, "we must do away with these false idols and work for the glory of God, the betterment of humanity, and the brotherhood of man".[86] Clearly the rapacious individualism and competition of the economic system was seen as threatening the very fabric of society, and only the farmers' movement offered a solution to "this vicious circle of negation".[87]

What further contributed to this spirit of religious reform were the numerous rallies, picnics, and economic organizations sponsored by the U.F.A. The most popular was the "U.F.A. Sunday", an annual

gathering held in the summer of each year. In the words of Henry Wise Wood, "it was an invitation to our membership to investigate Christ's social teachings ... and hold a religious rally day in which to measure up the aims and objectives of our organization by the standard of Christianity".[88] In addition, the various U.F.A. locals organized campaigns for prohibition, women's suffrage, material help for needy families, and other worthwhile ventures in the community[89], all of which contained the strong moral fervour of the social gospel. But in addition to fulfilling the spiritual needs of the rural community, these functions also served as a valuable social outlet. By offering a young people's club, a women's group, and numerous social events, the U.F.A. attracted the support of the whole rural community. It is not hard to understand, then, why the religious aspect of Henry Wise Wood's theory of group government was so readily accepted.

The theory of group government was developed within the larger context of Wood's social philosophy, and was worked out in the years leading up to, and including, the U.F.A.'s involvement in politics. Ably seconded by William Irvine in his book, The Farmers in Politics, this theory would dominate the political thinking of the U.F.A. until Wood's retirement in 1932.[90] Possessing a moral outlook on society that was strongly influenced by the social gospel, the uncompromising ideals inherent in group government would also provide the basis for the U.F.A.'s secession from the Progressive party. Furthermore, the moral fervour generated by this religious influence allowed the farmers' party in Alberta to survive politically, on both the federal and provincial levels, long after the other farm organizations had

ceased to exist in the political sphere.

In essence, the theory of group government revolved around the belief that the history of man's development had been shaped by two conflicting laws, the false law of competition and the true law of co-operation. To Wood's mind, the resulting dialectic between these two different modes of thought constituted a social law which could account for all historical change.[91] This had resulted in the economic order of the twentieth century being dominated by the clash of interests between the masses and the plutocratic classes. Wood viewed this as leading to a necessary, and indeed, inevitable final conflict in which the forces of plutocracy would be defeated.[92] Only then would the "soulless plundering" of the competitive industrial order be replaced by the harmony of a co-operative society. Mankind would at last be "brought under perfect obedience to the true laws of nature".[93]

Attaching moral values to the laws of competition and co-operation, Wood viewed competition as "little more than animal selfishness, autocracy, and the worship of Mammon; while co-operation was seen as social unselfishness, democracy, and representing the true ideals of God".[94] Tracing the history of man's social development from a larger evolutionary perspective, he began his analysis with man in the pre-civilized state of savagery. In this stage, mankind had been dominated by individualism, competition, and the greed of animal selfishness.[95] These principles of savagery had unfortunately been carried into the first stage of civilization, and consequently all existing societies reflected these false premises.[96] This had the result of producing "an animalistic form of civilization", where

autocracy rather than democracy prevailed. It was justified only by false teachings concerning the divinity of the state, and "the divinely appointed wardens" which watched over, and enforced these false laws.[97]

Because of the destructiveness inherent in the false law of competition, co-operation had been necessarily forced on society. While this had produced social progress, it had also created a more vicious and harmful form of competition. Germany, for instance, had proven that organized co-operation could mould a strong and powerful nation, but because of its adherance to the false law of competition the benefits of co-operation had been used to wage a terrible war.[98] Wood viewed competition as having reached the stage where it threatened to destroy society, and he hoped that this "would compel men, as rational and moral beings" to follow the true principle of co-operation.[99] Competition had also resulted in the stong establishing autocratic control over the mass of people. In the industrial society of the twentieth century the manufacturing class had been the first to realize the importance of co-operation, as its members eliminated competition amongst themselves, and began to compete against the rest of society. With the great mass of people too unorganized to effectively compete with these giants of industry, they were reduced to abject poverty.[100] And through the "agency of hired lobbyists ... newspaper propaganda, false appeals to patriotism, and bogus appeals on behalf of infant industries"[101], the industrial class had strengthened its control by effectively controlling the government.

Its power had developed into such "a deadly unit of competitive strength", however, that competition was no longer waged between groups

in society, but nations as well. Wood saw the cause of the First War as the violent competition between commercial units in Europe, which had finally turned to armed conflict to resolve their differences over markets.[102] Furthermore, the cruelty of the plutocratic class towards the mass of people had forced them to organize for their own protection.[103] It was Wood's hope that the organization of the masses would prove a check to the captains of industry, and eventually eliminate their power.

To rebuild society and put into operation the true laws of life, Wood looked towards the organization of society into homogenous groups based on their class interests. This spirit of co-operation was to be found in the laws of God, and was the avenue through which true democracy could be established.[104] It was, in the spiritual language of Wood, "the call to repentance ... to turn away from the dominion of the animal spirit that had led men into the bondage and darkness of barbarism".[105] Only society organized on the true basis of co-operation could nourish the ideals of "humanity" and "democracy", and establish "the true social spirit that would lead man into the light and liberty of true civilization -- the Kingdom".[106] That this was possible, and indeed inevitable, can be glimpsed from Wood's appeal to natural law:

> To say that democracy will fail will be to say that the design of nature in creating a social being and bringing him into obedience to social laws has failed. It will be to say that Nature has failed in her supreme effort: to say that ... error is stronger than truth, Mamon stronger that God. It will not fail ... because the Supreme Power ... will not let it fail.[107]

This would by no means be resolved in a violent revolution, however, but rather, would involve a "slow evolutionary development through years, decades, and perhaps centuries."[108] Furthermore,

it would entail the proper educational process in which to develop the "true spirit". People would have to be taught that human nature was not only selfish and competitive, but enjoyed the virtues of goodness, co-operation, and humanness as well.[109] Social progress meant the education and development of social intelligence with the true laws of God.[110]

By destroying the competitive social order and replacing it with a "producers co-operative society", Wood's social theory promised a harmonious and just society. Human rights would take precedence over that of profit and property, and no man would be exploited by another. "When the race will have been built into one co-operative unit in the interest of human welfare, there will be nothing left to exploit except the gifts of nature".[111] Although Wood fervently desired all classes in society to be organized, his primary concern was with the farmers. To his mind the agrarian community was "the basic class" which provided the most fundamental benefit to society, and which over the years had been exploited the worst.[112]

To this end, the new society required that all classes be well organized, and that conditions exist for the self determination of each. This by no means entailed a classless society, but rather, a host of classes existing together in rational co-operation. It would mean the direct application of group government to the political system.

Wood's proposal of group government entailed the replacement of the party system by the political organization of occupational groups. That is, each class in society, the farmers, labourers, manufacturers and the like, would nominate and elect their own representatives to the legislature. Inherent in this new system was the principle of

democracy, as each unit would be free from the control of the party machine to elect their own representatives.[113] Furthermore, this would effectively eliminate an artificial opposition, party discipline, and the exclusive control of government by one class. As C.B. Macpherson notes, "the party divided legislature would become an industrial organization", where issues would be decided on their validity to the various classes.[114] The cabinet would be made up of representatives of the various groups, and out-moded practices such as the defeat of the government over a particular issue would be discarded. This would provide not only an efficient system of checks and balances to curtail the power of one group in society, but would create an efficient business-like form of government.[115] Certainly there would be differences in opinion amongst the various groups, but they would be united on the basis of mutual co-operation, and the belief that they were all working towards the same goal, the establishment of a new social order.[116]

Implicit in this notion of group government were two fundamental premises. First, the existing party system was seen as being inherently corrupt and inefficient, and secondly, there was a need for a new type of democracy in the political system.

The attack on the party system arose out of the fact that the "monied interests", or invisible government as they were popularly referred to, controlled the machinery of government. It is for this reason that the agrarian movement had advanced beyond the stage of trying to influence the policies of the old parties. Even W.R. Motherwell, former leader of the Territorial Grain Growers' Association, and minister of Agriculture in the early years of Mackenzie King's government was

deeply mistrusted for his close association with the Liberal Party. As one farm editorial remarked:

> " Motherwell sits around the table with the overlords and squirms and twists and cajoles and coaxes and smirks and begs, and then does nothing!"[117]

For Wood, the political party was "a structure ideally adopted to plutocratic control", as it depended upon large amounts of money to keep it functioning smoothly. In addition, the fact that the party system stood only for the attainment of power, meant that it attracted professional politicians who were not above resorting to corrupt practices to maintain their positions.[118] Inherent in this view was also the belief that the brokerage politics practiced by the national parties was in itself both divisive and undemocratic. It led only to the atomization of the masses, and effectively checked their real strength which lay in organization:

> Truth is frequently not sought after, but systematically concealed in a mass of confusion. All of this is made possible because the individual unit of citizenship is so low ... They are like the sands of the desert, blown back and forth by the changing winds of false propoganda. The unit of citizenship strength must be raised to an infinitely higher level. This can never be done through the political party system. [119]

Various newspaper articles by farmer candidates on their experience in Parliament complemented these views of the party system. In particular, J.S. Woodsworth's weekly articles in The Progressive highlighted Wood's views, and lent credence to many of his assumptions. Often in a sarcastic tone Woodsworth pointed out the time and money spent on pomp and ceremony in Parliament, and noted how speeches were usually ineffective, and given to a half empty house.[120] He lamented the fact that every issue was decided on the basis of political gain, and never

tired of pointing out the small amount of worthwhile legislation passed by parliament.[121]

Secondly, group government contained the idea that democracy required the control and instruction of elected representatives by the electorate. This entailed such methods as popular referendums and the recall of elected candidates, in short, a significant input of popular control over the legislative system. To accomplish this it meant the group must finance itself and be responsible for its nominations and election campaigns. Only in this way could the control of the "monied interests" be effectively checked, and politics be raised to both a rational and moral level.[122] By ensuring that each person had the opportunity to take an active role in the democratic process, it was hoped that elections would now be conducted on more that just an appeal to prejudice and passion. For too long the old parties had ignored the facts or "purposely garbled them in an effort to create confusion and wrong impressions in the minds of the voters".[123]

In a more fundamental way, however, democracy also stood for a new social order based on the teachings of Christ. Wood equated the kingdom of Heaven and true democracy as being one and the same, where the exploitation of one class by another would be eliminated.[124] As C.B. Macpherson notes, "it is apparent that democracy in this sense was a moral concept."[125] It was felt that up to this point, "the history of Canada had been the rise, development, and supremacy of class rule."[126] But with the people organized into their effective groups, politics would become a co-operative effort. Under co-operation, brotherhood would be possible, and the ultimate worth of humanity could be

"raised above the cry of commercial greed".[127] In essence, then, group government entailed a co-operative spirit in both the political and economic realms, and transcended the purely selfish aim of the various groups in society. But it was more than just merely a matter of dollars and cents. It was as Irene Parlby, president of the U.F.W.A. stated, "the spirit of unselfishness. It was really an answer to that old question which has come down through the ages: Am I my brothers keeper?"[128]

The influence of the social gospel was also present in other aspects of Wood's theory of group government. First, religion was equated with the principles of love, co-operation, brotherhood, and justice. Wood clearly disliked a religion that was based on the "narrow concept which centred around creeds and churches", arguing instead that the religious spirit had to be brought into the material world in order to combat evil.[129] He elaborated on this notion of a secular religion when he stated that our prayers stood for more than just individual salvation. After all he argued, did not the prayer, "The Our Father" call for a kingdom on earth similar to that in heaven."

> This morning you all repeated the Lord's Prayer- "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven". This is the only prayer that Christ, the first Great Co-operator, taught his disciples. This is a prayer for a true civilization ... in other words the Kingdom of Heaven is the Scriptural term for civilization.[130]

To Wood, christianity stood for the social reconstruction of society, and this meant that each man had a duty to strive for a better social order, in which there would be more comfortable homes, prosperous families, and educated people. For too long man had exploited his brother, and adhered to the principles of greed, competition, and

individualism, which, "like a great octupus had sent its tentacles out through the fabric of society, sapping the strength and blood of the people".[131]

Similar to the views of such radical social gospellers as Salem Bland, William Irvine, and J.S. Woodsworth, Wood perceived the otherworldliness of orthodox religion as contributing little towards meaningful reform. As far as he was concerned the work of saving individual souls had been going on for nineteen centruies with little avail. "The time had now come ... for the second and final phase, which is actual social regeneration".[132] Furthermore, because society was perceived along biblical lines, "a human organism which included many parts; hands, feet, stomach, heart, eyes, ears, and brains", etc., individual and piecemeal reform were seen as being ineffective.[133] For Wood, this meant that reform must necessarily tackle the fundamental problems of the economic and political spheres. What endowed this view with a feeling of unlimited optimism was the notion that God the Father was watching over his flock, and was guiding man along an inevitable course to the kingdom on earth. As Wood wrote in one article in the U.F.A."

> It will not fail. It cannot fail, because the Supreme Power that flung the numerous hosts of worlds out into infinite space, set them whirling in their fixed courses, lit them with effulgent splendour and revealed them to the eye of man, has this work in hand, and will not let it fail.[134]

Consequently, the social gospel ideals underlying the philosophy of group government came to be used as a social critique, as it brought society as a whole under the sphere of religious judgement. The value

of co-operation amongst farmers, for instance, was equated by Wood with spiritual repentance, the first stage in achieving the kingdom on earth.[135] Attaching a scientific basis to co-operation, he perceived it as "a method, embracing order, system, law and spirit". In essence, co-operation was the natural law of the universe, and when put into practice in society, man would be governed by the true law of God.[136] In the same light, the competition and extreme individualism of the industrial order was criticized on the basis of its unchristian practices. Not only did the "cut-throat", "dog eat dog" methods of capitalism foster immoral business practices, but it invariably produced poverty, corruption, and moral instability within society. Echoing these sentiments, one concerned farmer wrote to The Western Independent: "whoever said competition is the life of trade did not finish the sentence, it is also the death of love, and the spark to war".[137] Several articles appearing in Alberta's farm newspaper, The U.F.A., pointed to this discrepancy between Christian principles and the economic order. One article in particular entitled, "The Aims of the UFA in Relation to Christian Teaching", clearly reflected the social gospel critique of society. Quoting the 17th Chapter of Matthew: "therfore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do yet even so to them", it went on to point out how capitalism was the very antithesis of the Golden Rule which stated, "love thy neighbour as thyself".[138]

Likewise, the farmers' demands for a reduction in the tariff, the abolition of political corruption, and other basic economic grievances were placed in the light of a higher spiritual authority, the laws of God. They took on a moral fervour that reflected the uncompromising

position of good versus evil. For instance, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association was equated with the same injustices that "the Pharisees had practiced against Christ".[139] In the same light, the privileged economic positions enjoyed by eastern financial interests were perceived as enslaving the farmer in the same manner of bondage and servitude which Isaiah's people had been subjected to in the Old Testament.[140] This juxtaposition of good and evil was enhanced by the goodness and wholesomeness attached to the life of farming. Farm work was seen as epitomizing a life of simplicity, in which the virtues of honesty, thrift, hard work, and a closeness to God were bred into the populace.[141] In this sense, it was seen as the very antithesis to the insatiable greed and corrupt business practices of the industrial interests. This conflict between agrarian virtues and commercial greed was seen as "the struggle between Mannonism and Humanity, with Christ unmistakably ... on the side of light; that of the farmers'.[142]

The notion of political change that the idea of group government possessed also clearly pointed to the influence of the social gospel. It was a gradualist theory of reform, and as such, it did not advocate "the dialectical progression of Karl Marx", but rather, "something of the rapt organic vision of revelation".[143] There would be no cataclysmic end to capitalism, no violent revolution, just the eventual withering away of the existing competitive order.[144] Wood's dislike of violence was rooted in his adherence to Christian principles, as he felt that revolutionary violence was the very antithesis of Christ's teachings. Citing the parable of the Sower, he pointed out how Christ had spoke of a grain field in which a large number of weeds were growing.

The servants of the house had wanted to go out and pull up the weeds, but they were dissuaded, "lest they root up the grain also". They were informed that at the harvest, the weeds would be separated from the grain. To Wood, this was proof that violent change was unnecessary, and that eventually, whether it be months, years, or centuries, the true law of co-operation would prevail.[145]

In The Farmers in Politics, William Irvine offers a further insight into the secular evangelism found in this notion of reform. He rejects Marxism because it is materialistic, and did not take into account man's spiritual welfare. To his mind "man did not live by bread alone".[146] In the same light, Irvine rejects the orthodox church because it had consistently ignored the problem of making a living, being too concerned with just spiritual matters. His proposal centred around combining the two philosophies, so that social change could be guided by the teachings of the gospel.[147]

In essence, Wood fervently believed that the implementation of group government would create a Christian Commonwealth, where exploitation, political corruption, and competition would be eliminated in society. Even his view of politics possessed the idea of a religious crusade, as he constantly reminded the U.F.A. membership to educate, develop, and keep alive within their souls the true social spirit. For Wood, politics was much more than just the winning of power, it was the means through which the intelligence of the people could be raised. Only in this way could just laws be implemented as well as be adhered to.[148] This view was clearly illustrated in one of Wood's first editorial comments in the U.F.A.:

> True social laws can never be enforced by police or courts. No truer words were ever spoken those of the old Israelite prophet when he said, "Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit". If we are going to make social progress we will have educate and develop the true social spirit just as diligently as we do social intelligence.[149]

This attempt to keep alive the spirit of reform in the minds of the rank and file membership was further complemented by other leaders of the U.F.A. For instance, Vice-President Scholefield equated political apathy with sin and temptation, and warned that "we cannot afford to rest, we must carry on eternally". To his mind it was only the vigilance of the U.F.A. that was going to preserve "the liberty and freedom that is ours, not just because we want it, but because it is the will of God".[150] At election time the executive of the U.F.A. also attempted to place the choice between their farmers' party and the old national parties in the light of good versus evil. The farmers were asked whether they desired "a harvest of golden principle, or a harvest of chaff", and were informed that to vote for any party other than the U.F.A. was to "dally with temptation". Worse still, "they would be trading their very souls for a mess of political pottage".[151]

Although it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the average member embraced Wood's theory of group government and its underlying religious philosophy, there is little doubt it rigidly determined the U.F.A.'s political course.[152] The moral fervour generated by an adherance to social gospel principles often transcended the need to be pragmatic, and placed political decisions in the light of good and evil. As a result, this produced a very uncompromising and moralistic view of the world and presented a grave problem to the unity of the

federal Progressive party.

At best, the U.F.A.'s short tenure within the folds of the Progressive party was characterized by an uneasy and at times stormy truce. The reasons for this are twofold. First, the personal antagonism that existed between Henry Wise Wood and T.A. Crerar did nothing to make the coalition an amiable one. Second, and most important, the doctrine of group government produced too much of an ideological difference for the U.F.A. members to co-exist peacefully with the main body of Progressives.[153]

The essence of group government was that it sought to abolish the party system. The old national parties would be replaced by occupational groups, and the cabinet would represent each economic class proportionally. Consequently the rules of parliament would be substantially altered, as governments defeated on a particular issue would not have to call an election, and the control of the legislature would no longer be in the hands of the cabinet or the prime-minister. It meant that each member of parliament would be solely responsible to his own constituency, and would vote according to their wishes.[154]

From the beginning, then, the U.F.A. was inherently anti-party, and as such, felt no compulsion to show any political favours to the old parties. They viewed with suspicion Crerar's attempts to strike up a bargain with Mackenzie King[155], and absolutely refused to go along with his attempt to establish a central political organization.[156] Furthermore, his efforts to establish strict party discipline, a cabinet, as well as appeal to a broad cross-section of the country brought him a sharp rebuke from the U.F.A.[157] To their mind Crerar was attempting

to resurrect "the old political flesh pots" -- meaning a political party -- that was utterly incapable of functioning in a democratic manner.[158] As The U.F.A. remarked in one editorial, the farmers of Alberta had no other choice but to absolutely oppose Crerar.[159] This would eventually take the form of secession from the main body of the Progressive party.

What further alienated the U.F.A. from the Progressives were their constant demands for changes in the banking laws, nationalization of credit, and a compulsory wheat pool.[160] Speaking for the Manitoba wing of the party, Crerar denounced the idea of a compulsory wheat pool as being Marxist in nature, and stated that banking and fiscal reforms of the U.F.A. were "crazy" and "raised doubts in the minds of many honest and sane people as to how the Progressives could be trusted."[161] In essence, Crerar's desire was "to recapture the historic Liberal party of rural democracy and low tariffs"[162], and this could only be accomplished by appealing to all sections of the country, rather than limiting the Progressive party to the parochial vision of group government.[163]

If the U.F.A. had been operating on the basis of a pragmatic approach to politics, then perhaps some sort of compromise may have been reached. But the underlying influence of the social gospel often placed their demands in the light of God-given dictates. Because it was felt that "the time had now come to establish the Kingdom"[164], the U.F.A. clung to their principles with a dogmatic insistence. As one parliamentary member, E.J. Garland told the Western Producer, "I would rather see the farmers of Alberta pack their wives and children into a large wagon hitched to a team of mad horses, then to see them abandon the principles

for which they stand."[165] On the other hand, the Progressives consistently showed a willingness to settle for the short run political gain, and increasingly ran afoul of what the U.F.A. considered their sacred crusade.

This is not to say, however, that the Progressive party was completely devoid of principle, or incapable of generating a moral fervour equal to that of the U.F.A. In both The Progressive and the Western Producer,[166] a great deal of moral indignation was spent castigating the corrupt practices of the existing economic and political order. One editorial in particular appearing in the Western Producer stated that "a Christian nation is a nation whose industrial, commercial, and social relations are built upon the idea of the brotherhood of man ... not the competitive, bestial, hoggish struggle for existence" that was presently going on in society.[167] While at a speech in Brandon in 1924, Robert Forke told the audience that the Progressives had a "moral basis", and had attempted "to lift the political life of Canada to a higher plane". He felt that they had "purified the public life, and had doubtless made parliament more efficient and more up to date".[168]

Regardless of these bold pronouncements, though, the greater part of the Progressive party were unable to accept the doctrine of group government, and the moral superiority which it stood for. They possessed neither the utter contempt for the party system, nor the U.F.A.'s desire for such measures as banking and fiscal reform. In short, the Progressive party lacked the moral intensity and religious fervour which characterized the U.F.A., and which allowed them to survive politically long after the Progressives' had ceased to exist.

In conclusion, the ideals of the social gospel clearly played a major role in the political life of the U.F.A. The idea that religion had to be made more secular, and be applied to the economic and political spheres had existed from an early date in Alberta's agrarian organization. This was complemented by the spiritual language of William Irvine's lively newspaper editorials, as well as the early influence of the Non Partisan League. But without a doubt, the secular christianity of Henry Wise Wood and his theory of group government had the most profound influence in shaping the U.F.A. to the ideals of the social gospel. From his dominating presence at the annual conventions, to his many articles in The U.F.A., Wood expounded on his christian view of the world, and sought to instil in the farmers an appreciation for religion as a way of life.

In a larger sense the presence of the social gospel also compensated for the lack of rural churches in Alberta. Politics was elevated to the level of a spiritual crusade, and combined with the numerous religious rallies and social events sponsored by the U.F.A., the social gospel truly became the religion of agrarian reform. It complemented the farmers' many demands by lending them a moral legitimacy, and helped to transcend their narrow vision of the world by pointing to the moral deficiencies in all parts of society.

Like all political organizations, though, the U.F.A. would eventually succumb to a conservatism spawned from its long tenure in power. The prosperous years of the late 1920's would also see the membership turn away from political issues, and concentrate more on the every-day business of farming. But with the coming of the depression

in 1930, the low price of wheat and the dust bowl conditions characterizing prairie agriculture would once again produce a political consciousness amongst the farmers. And once more the moral fervour of the social gospel would manifest itself in a programme for political action. This time it would be the socialist platform of the C.C.F.

FOOTNOTES

1 See W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party In Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press (UTP), 1950) for the clearest and most concise history of the Progressive Party.

2 Paul Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt In Western Canada (Minneapolis: Octagon Books, 1948), pp. 115-45.

3 W.L. Morton, "The Western Progressive Movement 1919-1921", Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, (1946), p. 41.

4 W.L. Morton, "Direct Legislation and the Origins of the Progressive Movement", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXV, No. 3 (1944), p. 279.

5 Richard Allen, The Social Passion (Toronto: UTP, 1971), p. 218.

6 Grain Growers' Guide, Dec. 4, 1918, p. 57. Hereafter cited as Guide. Also see the appendix in W.L. Morton's, The Progressive Party, in which he reprints the Farmers' Platforms from 1910, 1916, 1918 and 1921.

7 Morton, Progressive Party, p. 69.

8 Norman P. Lambert, "From Platform to Party", Guide, Dec. 10, 1919, p. 8.

9 The War Time Election Act", Guide, Dec. 4, 1918, p. 21. Also see J.A. Boudreau, "Western Canada's Enemy Aliens in World War One", Alberta History, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter, 1964)

10 "The Draft", Guide, May 22, 1918, p. 5. Also see Sharp, Agrarian Revolt, pp. 125-26.

11 William Irvine, "The Coalition", The Nutcracker, June 7, 1917, p. 8, "Reactionists At Home", Alberta Non Partisan, Oct. 26, 1917, p. 1.

12 "The Party Tom-Toms", Guide, Jan. 8, 1919, p. 5.

13 William Irvine, "Will the Union Government Abdicate", Alberta Non Partisan, November 20, 1918, p. 5.

14 "Meighen The Disruptionist", Guide, Oct. 26, 1921, p. 5.

15 Morton, Progressive Party, p. 66. See Foster J. Griezie, "The Honourable Thomas Alexander Crerar: The Political Career of a Western Liberal Progressive in the 1920's", ed. S.M. Trofimenkoff, The Twenties In Western Canada (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1972), p. 114.

16 Morton, Progressive Party, pp. 80-82.

17 "The Fall of Liberalism", The Western Independent, March 17, 1920, p. 6.

18 "Farmers Decide Upon Political Action", Guide, Jan. 29, 1919, p. 5.

19 "Protectionism Fortified", Guide, Jan. 15, 1919, p. 6.

20 William Irvine, "Signs of the New Social Order", Alberta Non Partisan, May 24, 1918, p. 13, "Farmers and Politics", Guide Nov. 2, 1918.

21 John Kennedy, "Farmer and Labour", Guide, Oct. 30, 1918.

22 See W.L. Morton, "The Western Progressive Movement and Cabinet Domination", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. XII (1946)

23 Guide, Jan. 8, 1919, p. 5.

24 V.C. Fowke, The National Policy and the Wheat Economy, (Toronto: UTP, 1957), p. 177.

25 Ibid., p. 78.

26 These charges were made by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and other eastern financial interests. For the Guide's reply see Ibid., Feb. 27, 1918, p. 5, Ibid., July 10, 1918, p. 5.

27 See John H. Thompson, "Permanently Wasteful but Immediately Profitable" Prairie Agriculture and the Great War", Canadian Historical Papers (1976)

28 Morton, Progressive Party, pp. 61-129.

29 Ibid., pp. 210-35.

30 See W.A. McIntosh, "The U.F.A. 1909-1919 (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Calgary, 1971).

31 H.W Wood, "The Organized Farmers and Politics", Guide, Sept. 19, 1917, p. 10.

32 Ibid.

33 L.H. Thomas, "The Liberal Party in Alberta", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4 (1947), p. 422.

34 For a fuller explanation of the Liberal party in Alberta see L.H. Thomas, The Liberal Party in Alberta (Toronto: UTP, 1959) pp. 157-67.

35 Ibid., pp. 181-95.

36 Thomas, "The Liberal Party", pp. 419-22.

37 The most extensive and scholarly account of the Non Partisan League can be found in Sharp, Agrarian Revolt, pp. 77-104.

38 "The Non Partisan Political League", Guide, Sept. 5, 1917, p. 8.

39 The Nutcracker, July 6, 1917.

40 William Irvine, "Non Partisan Politics", Alberta Non Partisan, Jan. 18, 1918, p. 8.

41 Will Holmes, "The Church in Politics", Alberta Non Partisan, April 12, 1918, p. 7.

42 "Life's Highest Ideal", Alberta Non Partisan, April 12, 1918.

43 William Irvine, "All Socialists Now", Alberta Non Partisan, November 14, 1917, p. 14.

44 Sharp, Agrarian Revolt, p. 90.

45 "The Melting Pot", Alberta Non Partisan, June 21, 1918, p. 5.

46 Sharp, Agrarian Revolt, pp. 98-104.

47 H.W. Wood, "Shall We Go Forward or Turn Back", The United Farmers of Alberta, Sept. 1, 1922, p. 1, also H.W. Wood "Third Party Opportunism", The United Farmers of Alberta, May 15, 1922, p. 11. Hereafter cited as The UFA.

48 H.W. Wood, "Wood Answers Crerar", Guide, Nov. 15, 1922, p. 2. W.L. Morton also brings out this point in his article, "The Social Philosophy of Henry Wise Wood, The Canadian Agrarian Leader", Agricultural History, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1948), p. 115.

49 H.W. Wood, "The Significance of Democratic Group Organization", The U.F.A., April 15, 1922, p. 5.

50 William Irvine, The Farmers in Politics, Carleton Library Series (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. 228. Irvine's views complemented those of Wood's on group government. In fact, they were clearest and most systematic explanation of group government.

51 See William Kirby Rolph, Henry Wise Wood of Alberta, (Toronto: UTP, 1950)

52 See David G. Embree, "The Rise of the United Farmers of Alberta", Alberta History, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1957)

53 Cited in McIntosh, "The U.F.A. 1909-1919", p. 36.

54 Rolph, Henry Wise Wood, p. 18.

55 W.A. Mackintosh, A.B. Clark, G.A. Elliot, and W.W. Swanson, Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1935), p. 7. In 1911 the acreage sown in wheat accounted for 48.5% of the total agricultural acreage in Alberta, while in Saskatchewan it was 57.5%. In 1916 Alberta was 47.3% while Saskatchewan was 64.6%. In 1921 Alberta was 57.3% and in 1926 it was 67.2%. In 1926 Saskatchewan had 69.3% of its acreage sown in wheat.

56 See J.P. Bate, "Prohibition and the UFA", Alberta History, Vol. 18, No. 4 (1970), and Paul Voisey, "The Votes for Women Movement", Alberta History, Vol. 23, No. 3 (1970)

57 Rice Sheppard, "Farmers and Politics", Guide, November 27, 1918.

58 McIntosh, "The UFA 1909-1919", p. 66.

59 Guide, Feb. 18, 1914, p. 14. Ibid., Jan. 20, 1915, p. 16.

60 C.B. Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta (Toronto: UTP, 1953), pp. 62-65.

61 H.W. Wood, "The U.F.A. Sub-Units and Their Relationship to the Organization as a Whole", The U.F.A., Aug. 15, 1924, p. 8.

62 Macpherson, Democracy In Alberta, p. 62.

63 Ibid., p. 64.

64 Although C.B. Macpherson feels the real power of the U.F.A. was its annual convention, both W.K. Rolph and W.A. McIntosh feel that the provincial executive and Henry Wise Wood dominated the U.F.A.

65 Rolph, Henry Wise Wood, p. 3.

66 Ibid., p. 91.

67 Ibid., p. 12.

68 Ibid., pp. 9-10. Also See W.L. Morton, "The Social Philosophy of H.W. Wood"

69 C.A. Dawson and E.R. Younge, Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces: The Social Side of the Settlement Process (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1940), pp. 214-24.

70 W.E. Mann, Sect, Cult, and Church in Alberta (Toronto: UTP, 1955), p. VIII

71 Dawson and Younge, Social Side of Settlement, pp. 214-24.

72 Ibid., p. 223.

73 Jean Burnet, Next-Year Country (Toronto: UTP, 1951), p. 124.

74 Mann, Sect and Cult, p. 52.

75 Ibid., p. 38.

76 Ibid., p. 31.

77 Burnett, Next-Year Country, pp. 124-5, Also see Barbara V. Cormack, Perennials and Politics (Alberta: Sherwood Park, 1968), p. 74-5.

78 The official organ of the U.F.A. political association was The Western Independent, which ran from approximately the fall of 1919 to the spring of 1920, until it was superseded by The U.F.A. which began in 1922.

79 U.F.A., Annual Reports for the Year, 1913, p. 7. Cited in McIntosh, "The U.F.A. 1909-1919", p. 70.

80 McIntosh, "The U.F.A. 1909-1919", p. 78.

81 H.W. Wood, "Organization for Democracy", Guide, Dec. 11, 1918, p. 39.

82 Rolph, Henry Wise Wood, p. 5.

83 "Divine Discontent", Guide, Nov. 19, 1919.

84 "The U.F.A. and Religion", The Western Independent, March 3, 1920, p. 14.

85 B.C. Lees, "Brotherhood Ethics in Commercialism", The Western Independent, March 10, 1920, p. 15.

86 Ibid.

87 William Irvine, "Negative Policy", The Western Independent, March 17, 1920, p. 6.

88 "Wood's Address at U.F.A. Convention", Guide, Jan. 31, 1917, p. 7.

89 William Irvine, "The Work of the U.F.A.", The Western Independent, March 31, 1920, p. 8. Other projects included planning for a resident doctor, better telephone service, and the acquisition of playground equipment for children.

90 See Rolph, Henry Wise Wood, p. 3.

91 For an excellent appraisal of Wood's theory of group government see Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, pp. 28-54.

92 H.W. Wood, "The Significance of Democratic Group Organization", The U.F.A., April 15, 1922, p. 5.

93 H.W. Wood, "Organization for Democracy", Guide, Dec. 4, 1918, pp. 39-40.

94 Ibid.

95 "Organization for Democracy", Guide, Dec. 11, 1918, p. 23 and "The Significance of Democratic Group Organization", The U.F.A. March 22, 1922, p. 5.

96 The U.F.A., March 15, 1922, p. 5.

97 The U.F.A., April 1, 1922, p. 5.

98 Guide, Dec. 4, 1918, p. 23.

99 Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, p. 30.

100 The U.F.A., April 1. 1922, p. 5.

101 Ibid.

102 The U.F.A., March 15, 1922, p. 5.

103 Ibid., April 1, 1922, p. 5.

104 H.W. Wood, "The Significance of U.F.A. Sunday", The U.F.A., May 15, 1923, p. 5.

105 Ibid.

106 "Irvine Addresses Hundreds of Farm People on U.F.A. Sunday", The U.F.A., July 2, 1929, p. 44.

107 Cited in Rolph, Henry Wise Wood, p. 65.

108 "H.W. Wood Delivers Stirring Annual Address", The Progressive, Jan. 27, 1924, p. 1.

109 "An Editorial by H.W. Wood", The U.F.A., March 1, 1922, p. 1.

110 H.W. Wood, "The Necessity For Co-operation", The U.F.A., June 15, 1928, p. 10.

111 "President Wood's 10th Annual Address", The U.F.A., Feb. 1, 1925.

112 H.W. Wood, "Should the Burden be Shifted", Guide, Nov. 6, 1917.

113 William Irvine, The Farmers in Politics, pp. 135-253.

114 Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, p. 45.

115 Irvine, The Farmers in Politics, pp. 173-92.

116 "President Wood's 10th Annual Address", The U.F.A., Feb. 1, 1925.

117 "The Progressive Tradition", The Progressive, November 15, 1923, p. 4.

118 H.W. Wood, "The Significance of Democratic Group Organization", The U.F.A., April 15, 1922, p. 5.

119 Ibid.

120 J.S. Woodsworth, "The Week At Ottawa", The Progressive, March 6, 1924, p. 3, Ibid., March 20, 1924, p. 1.

121 Ibid., April 3, 1924.

122 Irvine, The Farmers in Politics, p. 98.

123 H.W. Wood, "Some Necessary Steps in the Carrying On Of Democratic Political Activities", The U.F.A., May 15, 1926, p. 1.

124 H.W. Wood, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand", The U.F.A., May 15, 1923, p. 5.

125 Macpherson, Democracy In Alberta, p. 46.

126 Irvine, The Farmers in Politics, p. 198.

127 Ibid., p. 21.

128 Cormack, Perennials and Politics, p. 90.

129 Rolph, Henry Wise Wood, pp. 9-10.

130 H.W. Wood, "The Kingdom of Heaven", The U.F.A., June 15, 1928, p. 27. Also see "Religion Not Safety -- But Service", The U.F.A., January 15, 1927.

131 The U.F.A., March 15, 1922, p. 5.

132 H.W. Wood, "The Significance of U.F.A. Sunday", The U.F.A., May 15, 1923, p. 5.

133 Ibid.

134 The U.F.A., April 15, 1922, p. 5.

135 The U.F.A., May 15, 1923, p. 5.

136 H.W. Wood, "Is the U.F.A. Plan of Co-operation Constructive", The U.F.A., November 15, 1922, p. 1.

137 "Brotherhood Ethics in Commercialism", The Western Independent, March 10, 1920, p. 15.

138 Rev. Albert E. Larke, "The Aims of the U.F.A. in Relation to Christian Teaching", The U.F.A., June 1, 1927, p. 4.

139 "The U.F.A. and Religion", The Western Independent, March 31, 1920, p. 14.

140 Cited in McIntosh, "The U.F.A. 1909-1919", p. 78

141 J.R. Love, "U.F.A. Must Keep Bright the Torch of Idealism", The U.F.A., July 2, 1929, p. 44. See Cormack, Perennials and Politics, p. 68, also "What Do We Work For", The Western Producer, October 23, 1924, p. 3.

142 The U.F.A., May 15, 1923, p. 5.

143 W.L. Morton, "The Social Philosophy of H.W. Wood", p. 116.

144 Irvine, Farmers in Politics, p. 38.

145 The U.F.A., May 15, 1923, p. 5.

146 Irvine, Farmers in Politics, pp. 125-26.

147 Ibid.

148 "An editorial by H.W. Wood", The U.F.A., March 1. 1922, p. 1.

149 Ibid.

150 H.E. Scholefied, "A Call to the Membership For United Action", The U.F.A., Nov 1,1923, p. 1.

151 Bert Huffman, "A Harvest of Golden Principle, Or a Harvest of Chaff?", The U.F.A., October 24, 1925, p. 4. also Bert Huffman, "Humanity's Greatest Need To-day", The U.F.A., October 10, 1925, p. 8.

152 Although this was certainly the case on the federal level, the provincial government in Alberta did not always adhere to the doctrine of group government. This was for two reasons. First, the two U.F.A. premiers, Greesfield and Brownlee were pragmatic politicians, and demanded a certain amount of party discipline. Second, it was impossible to practice group government without the other economic classes in Alberta being organized. See Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, pp. 62-92.

153 Morton, Progressive Party, pp. 94-5, 107-9, 115, 146, 149, 159-64.

154 Irvine, Farmers in Politics, pp. 173-212.

155 Griezic, "T.A. Crerar", p. 124.

156 "Does This Mean Disintegration Is Already Beginning", The U.F.A., July 15, 1922, p. 3.

157 H.W. Wood, "Shall We Go Forward or Turn Back", The U.F.A., Sept. 1, 1922.

158 H.W. Wood, "The Group vs the Party", Guide, Sept. 6, 1922, p. 17.

159 The U.F.A., August 15, 1922, p. 3.

160 Griezic, "T.A. Crerar", pp. 125-8.

161 Ibid., p. 127.

162 Morton, Progressive Party, p. 149.

163 "Crerar Resigns Leadership", Guide, November 15, 1922.

164 The U.F.A., May 15, 1923, p. 15.

165 "Two Alberta Members Discuss Progressive Party Organization", Western Producer, Dec. 15, 1924, p. 1.

166 In 1923 the provincial Progressive party in Saskatchewan established The Progressive as their official newspaper. It ran for a year and was superseded by the Western Producer, which usually showed more of a concern for economic rather than political matters. Both papers also reflected the political thought of the Federal Progressives'; the Manitoba and Saskatchewan wings.

167 "Religion and Co-operation", Western Producer, Sept. 15, 1925, p. 4 editorial.

168 "Robert Forke Makes Stirring Address At Brandon Meeting", Western Producer, November 13, 1924, p. 1.

CHAPTER IV

THE C.C.F.

The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.) was born in August, 1932, amidst the poverty and destitution of the great depression. In the urban centres massive unemployment and soup kitchens had become the accepted norm as the collapse of the international markets had slowly ground the industrial life of Canada to a standstill.[1] Consequently thousands of young men rode the railways looking for work, or were forced to eke out a bare existence in one of the government sponsored work camps. On the prairies the economic situation was even more acute, as the combined effect of plummetting wheat prices and drought spelled foreclosure and in some cases starvation for many a prairie farmer.[2] It was to alleviate this hardship and suffering, and in a larger degree to abolish capitalism itself, that the C.C.F. sought to establish a Co-operative Commonwealth in Canada. As T.C. Douglas stated -- paraphrasing the works from William Blake's poem "Jerusalem", -- it was a desire to build "a new Jerusalem in this green and pleasant land"[3], where "the principle regulating production, distribution and exchange would be the supplying of human needs and not the making of profits."[4]

Under its banner of political action, the C.C.F. encompassed a host of groups and a wide range of ideals and personalities; farmers, labourers, Fabianesque intellectuals, and the parliamentary "ginger group" led by J.S. Woodsworth, all held together by the economic hardships of the depression. At best, though, this was an uneasy coalition, as the constitutional and monetary reforms advocated by the farm organizations clashed with the socialism of the labour delegates and

their desire to eradicate capitalism completely.[5] Both groups also mistrusted the League for Social Reconstruction and its position as the "brain trusts" of the C.C.F., since the intellectual training of this group often elevated them to a cultural level much different than that of the average member.[6] Consequently any attempt to trace the ideological roots of the C.C.F. must take into account this wide diversity in ideals and personalities, and show how the previous three decades of economic and political protest in Canada had helped shape the political views of these various groups. Furthermore, in any discussion of the C.C.F.'s underlying philosophy, the influence of the Christian social gospel must be taken into account. While the influence of these religious ideals has been noted by all the major works written on the C.C.F., its importance has usually been relegated to a minor role.[7] Little attention has been given to the fact that such prominent leaders as J.S. Woodsworth and William Irvine judged the evils of capitalism by the standard of Christian principles, or that the League for Social Reconstruction owed a considerable intellectual debt to social gospel teachings. What is more, the fact is usually overlooked that many of the C.C.F.'s political ideas and doctrines were cloaked with a religious symbolism, and that a considerable amount of time and effort was spent in both debating and attempting to ally the C.C.F. with the various Church doctrines condemning capitalism.

The purpose of this chapter will be to examine the ideological make-up of the C.C.F. from the vantage point of one very important factor, that being the Christian social gospel. It will be argued that this religious influence was present in the political thought of

the C.C.F. leadership as well as the L.S.R., and that it was instrumental in shaping many of their economic and political demands. Furthermore, it will be shown that the social gospel determined the early political course of the C.C.F. by attaching a religious significance to the party's view of democracy, education, and socialism. This had the effect of generating a moral fervour within the party which at times approached the intensity of a religious crusade, and tended to lift the C.C.F. above the day to day affairs of the political arena. Consequently political decisions were often decided in the light of good and evil, and this contributed significantly to what Walter Young has referred to as the party-movement dichotomy within the C.C.F. In essence, it is hoped that the very great influence exerted by the social gospel can be brought to the fore in the history of Canada's most successful socialist party.

To begin with, the C.C.F. always possessed a large number of ministers, or men with previous religious training that were prominent in the political affairs of the party. J.S. Woodsworth, the president of the national C.C.F., and Norman Priestly, the national secretary until 1934 were both ex-ministers. In addition, at one time or another the C.C.F. leaders in the four Western provinces were all ex-ministers; Robert Connell in British Columbia, William Irvine in Alberta, T.C. Douglas in Saskatchewan, and Lloyd Stinson in Manitoba.[8] The prevalance of this religious aspect can be seen most clearly in the federal election of 1935, in which no less than twenty-four ministers ran as C.C.F. candidates. As Ivan Anakumovic states in his study of the C.C.F.-N.D.P. parties in Socialism in Canada, the early religious

training received by many of the C.C.F.'s leaders not only equipped them to speak easily in front of large crowds, but endowed them with a socialist critique of society that was largely Christian in its origins.[9]

This religious heritage prominent in the C.C.F. was largely the product of the social gospel movement which had swept through the Protestant Churches in the first two decades of the twentieth century. As a consequence the emphasis was not on ritual and creeds, but rather, on applying the teachings of Christ to the economic and political spheres. Salvation was equated with establishing the kingdom of God here on earth, and true religion was judged in the light of good works and the establishment of love, brotherhood, and co-operation amongst men. In essence, the C.C.F. strived to implement a practical religion that would alleviate the poverty and suffering in society.[10] As J.S. Woodsworth pointed out, it was "not good enough to simply pray 'Thy Kingdom Come'", one had to engage in economic and political protest in order to bring about justice and righteousness.[11]

Other examples of this need for a secular religion to combat the poverty and suffering in society can be seen from a number of political pamphlets issued by the C.C.F. For instance, G.H. Williams, the leader of the Saskatchewan C.C.F. until 1939 wrote that, "we must look on religious idealism as a part of life ... and not be so prone to place religion within the stone walls of a Church". After all, "Christ said his disciples would be known by their deeds rather than by their creeds".[12] This same theme was also expressed by such pamphlets as William Irvine's, "Can a Christian Vote for Capitalism?", or M.J. Coldwell's article, "Am I my Brother's Keeper?". In essence, they sought to

dispel the belief that religion was only a spiritual matter, and attempted to bring Christ's teaching into all aspects of society. Furthermore, through such articles as "Christianity and the C.C.F.", the leadership of the C.C.F. tried to point out the Christian nature of their programme, and by doing so hoped to arouse the Churches to the need for economic and political action. In short, the C.C.F. viewed itself as the political arm of the Christian faith. This view was perhaps best exemplified by a letter written to J.S. Woodsworth by a Saskatchewan farmer in the winter of 1933:

> The C.C.F. is the only platform that recognizes a Divine Father and is trying to put these principles into practice, giving everyman the right to enjoy life and the blessing of this earth bestowed upon us by a loving God.13

Consequently the C.C.F. viewed itself as more than just a political party attempting to grab hold of the reins of power. It saw itself in the larger sense as a religious crusade, attempting to implement such Christian values as brotherhood, co-operation, love, and unselfishness into the workings of society. These views were clearly reflected in their conception of socialism, which often concerned itself more with pointing out the moral deficiencies inherent in capitalism, rather than preaching the doctrines of class warfare. It was felt that because the underlying motives of capitalism were greed and selfishness, it was impossible for any "capitalist to love God with all his heart, soul, or mind".[14] Socialism on the other hand was equated with helping one's fellow man, and thereby enacting the word of God. As G.H. Williams stated in his article, "Is Socialism Anti-Christian":

> Under socialism, the duty of mankind would be brotherhood and mutual help, not competition and self-seeking ... He who serves his brother serves his creator. He who faithfully serves the socialist cause would also serve his brother man.15

Consequently these social gospel sentiments expressed by the C.C.F. produced a form of socialism that was less doctrinaire, and certainly less imbued with the harsh statements of Karl Marx than was its American counterpart. Furthermore, it also lacked the radical pronouncements against capitalism that were present in both the British Labor party and Fabian society.[16] Nevertheless, the C.C.F.'s critique of the economic order through the teachings of the gospel still allowed them to advocate the complete eradication of capitalism.

That capitalism would collapse as an economic system was seen as an inevitability by the C.C.F. They had only to point to the poverty and destitution in the face of an abundant supply of labour, natural resources, and goods in order to back up their claim. Describing it as a "brutal form of feudalism"[17], they deplored the awful effects that poverty had on the psyche, culture, and spiritual growth of an individual. As one editorial remarked in the C.C.F. Research Review of 1935:

> Capitalism is greased with human blood and human intellect. Stomachs are empty. Backs are bare. Opportunity is lacking. Human emotions are dissipated in camps and relief kitchens.18

Arguing that the gospel had spoken against such evils as poverty, exploitation, and the never ending search for profit, the leaders of the C.C.F. attempted to bolster the righteousness of their argument by allying their cause with the many Church statements which

had condemned capitalism.[19] From the Canadian Methodist General Conference in 1918, through to the Papal Encyclical of 1931 and the United Church General Conference of 1932, all the Churches had expressed their disapproval with the inhumane workings of capitalism. Even the inherently conservative Roman Catholic Church could write in 1931 that "unbridled ambition for domination has succeeded the desire for gain, the whole economic life has become hard, cruel and relentless in a ghastly measure ... and has produced crying evils."[20] Time and time again C.C.F. members in parliament held up the statements as proof that their demands had a moral basis, and if nothing else attempted to shame the old parties into some form of action. They questioned how the Liberal and Conservative members -- all good Christians -- could stand by and watch the suffering and destitution spawned by capitalism, and do nothing about it. As T.C. Douglas solemnly warned the House of Commons in 1936, "the world had Christianity long before it had capitalists, and it will have Christianity long after some of the gentlemen opposite supporting capitalism have passed away."[21]

In essence, the C.C.F.'s criticism of capitalism was premised on the fact that it contravened the very tenets of Christianity. Pointing to such biblical statements as,"what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul," the C.C.F. condemned the greed and vulgar worship of material wealth inherent in capitalism.[22] Furthermore, since the dominant motives of this economic system were "profit and self", it was felt that capitalism necessarily implied unfair and unethical business practices. As F.R. Scott pointed out in an article written in The New Commonwealth:

> The corruption of capitalism is systematic, that is, part of its normal workings ... It continually confronts honest businessmen with the choice between bankruptcy or the chiselling of wages and other evil practices.23

Consequently capitalism was equated with the false God of Mammon, or the worshipping of a "golden calf", as it measured everything -- including religion -- by the standard of dollars and cents. As William Irvine sarcastically told the House of Commons in 1932, "capitalism sits in sack-cloth and ashes, offering her sacrifices to the dollar deity".[24]

Furthermore, capitalism was seen as destroying any semblance of culture and human dignity in society. The C.C.F. felt that it was "impossible to achieve high, altruistic motives of social harmony through the individualistic mechanism of capitalism", because its aim was "low and sordid", and contributed only to a "fetid atmosphere of competitive plundering."[25] The bank's refusal in Vancouver to advance any more credit for the dental care of children on relief, or the closing of several libraries because of their inability to pay the rent were held up as examples of capitalism's complete disregard for anything except the "almighty dollar".[26] In addition, numerous parliamentary speeches and articles published by the C.C.F. addressed themselves to the horrible accounts of suicide, starvation, and disease amongst the populace due to the effects of the depression. Displaying their underlying religious basis, the C.C.F. charged that in fact capitalism was contributing to the breakdown of the family structure, as well as the moral and spiritual development of the country. Speaking of the situation in Winnipeg's north-end in 1934, J.S. Woodsworth noted that

"many families are being huddled into a single room - men, women, and children indiscriminately. Social workers are meeting with cases of immorality with which they have to deal, and which have arisen through such housing conditions."[27] Concern was also expressed for the conditions that young men existed under in the numerous work camps. Not only was it felt that they were being treated as less than human beings, but that their ability to enjoy a normal healthy life, i.e., raise a family, was being jeopardized.[28]

To a large extent, then, the C.C.F. judged their horror and utter disdain of capitalism by the tenets of the Christian gospel. Private enterprise was viewed as invariably producing the undesirable qualities of a "fang and claw" mentality, and in the words of William Irvine, stood about as much chance of living according to Christ's way as "roses had of growing on an iceberg".[29] Furthermore, it was felt that this economic system only served to "starve the bodies, impoverish the minds, and break the hearts of those involved in this profit making scheme".[30] To the C.C.F it was a choice between good and evil. Since capitalism was based on greed and selfishness, and was utterly "devoid of social and economic justice", it was seen as being unchristian, and as far as the C.C.F. was concerned "the people in control of such a system did not merit the title of Christian".[31]

In its place the C.C.F desired a Christian socialism, which stood for co-operation, brotherhood, and unselfishness, in short, a devotion to the service of mankind in accordance with the word of the gospel. This meant that the abundance of food, clothing, and shelter available in Canada would no longer go to waste simply because

a few selfish individuals could not obtain their desired profit. Rather, the C.C.F. sought to change the dominant motive of production and exchange in society to one of providing for human needs.[32] This entailed the nationalization of vital industries, the socialization of the credit system, and the control of the market mechanism. These measures were justified on the basis that God had meant his natural gifts of nature to be enjoyed equally by all men, and as such all property should belong to the heritage of mankind.[33] As William Irvine pointed out:

> That machine was not made by any sinle individual or any single nation; that machine represents the cumulative creative genius of mankind. It is the heritage of man and therefore should not be for sale to the highest bidder.34

In their desire to implement socialism, however, the leaders of the C.C.F. never lost sight of the spiritual aspect of their programme. While realizing the necessity of raising the standard of living, they were always conscious of the fact that this was only the first prerequisite in the much "greater task of building the Kingdom of God in the hearts and minds of the people." Man was, after all, more than just an animal, "he was a spiritual being ever reaching out for the Divine".[35] For this reason the ethical side of socialism, meaning its close similarity with such Christian values as co-operation, brotherhood, and equality, was forever at the forefront of the C.C.F.'s economic demands.[36]

The result of this adherance to the ethical side of socialism, or more appropriately the ideals of the social gospel, was that it undermined some of the more radical ideas inherent in the C.C.F.

For instance, the Regina Manifesto lacks any mention of the role played by class struggle in bringing about a socialist state. Although people such as Woodsworth and Irvine had certainly read Marx, their religious training never allowed them to embrace his materialistic interpretation of history. Rather, they viewed socialism as simply the discovery of God given dictates, and equated its practical implementation with part of the Creator's larger plan for the universe.[37]

Furthermore, this religious influence also accounted in a large degree for the C.C.F.'s refusal to sanction the use of violence. Even when the St. Lawrence-St. George C.C.F. club passed a resolution calling for a general strike in the event of a war, J.S. Woodsworth strongly vetoed their decision.[38] Instead, politics for the C.C.F. was placed within the bounds of a moral crusade, eliciting a belief in the eventual triumph of their righteous cause. Salem Bland expressed this sentiment when he told the annual convention in 1936 that, "he believed the chief instrument of God in Canada to-day is the society the C.C.F. represents". Although he lamented the Church's failure to join the C.C.F.'s cause, he nevertheless concluded by saying that "there are moral forces not yet aroused, but they are being aroused and we are near the day when you will have mighty support".[39] Similar to St. Augustine's linear view of history leading to the gates of heaven, the C.C.F. was also imbued with a faith in the millenium that would eventually come. Armed with the bible in one hand and the socialist gospel in the other, there was little room for violence on the inevitable path to the new commonwealth.

Although the Regina Manifesto never once mentions the term religion, or even succumbs to the use of a religious symbolism in pointing out the veils inherent in capitalism, it clearly shows its social gospel roots on two occasions. First, the very term co-operative commonwealth is indicative of a religious utopia, and was often used interchangeably by C.C.F. members to denote the kingdom on earth. Furthermore, a religious significance had usually been attached to this term in many of the statements issued by the western agrarian movement in the 1920's. E.A. Partridge's, A War On Poverty, had in 1926 stated that, "it is manifestly the duty of Christians to seek to bring in the Kingdom in the form of a co-operative commonwealth".[40] Speaking of Woodsworth's choice of the term co-operative commonwealth, F.R. Scott remarked that it was "a clumsy term ... quite untranslatable into French, but nevertheless, quite accurate in denoting his egalitarian and christian principles".[41]

Second, some of the language used in the Manifesto closely approximates the principles underlying the social gospel. For instance, the capitalist system was to be eliminated because of "its inherent injustice and inhumanity", and it was hoped a new co-operative commonwealth could produce more leisure time, "and a much richer individual life for every citizen". As well, the criticism of Section 98 of the criminal code was premised on its inhumane aspect, and it was felt that "social justice" had to be "brought into accordance with a modern concept of human relationships". The overriding concern of the Manifesto seemed to be that "the welfare of the community must take supremacy over the claims of private property".[42] While these

statements do not conclusively prove a religious influence in the Manifesto, they do point to a concern for the abstract principles of justice and a humane social order so prevelant in social gospel literature.

The absence of any religious symbolism, or direct reference to the gospel in the Manifesto can be explained in a large part by the scholarly influence of the L.S.R. and their attempt to provide an intellectual influence on the socialism of the C.C.F. But even the L.S.R., contrary to the belief that it exhibited only a Fabian influence, contained a strong element of Christian idealism within its ranks. Eugene Forsey, J. King Gordon, and F.R. Scott all had fathers who were ministers, while a number of lesser influences in the L.S.R., such an J. McCurdy and G. Vlastas, also were sons of the manse.[43] Although only two pages within Social Planning For Canada are taken up directly with a discussion of religion, they tended "to treat social and economic problems as if they were at the same time evidence of grave moral deficiencies".[44] As Michiel Horn notes in his study of the L.S.R., "the attacks on the profit motive sound like Biblical injunctions against covetousness".[45]

The comments by F.R. Scott on his early religious training as well as the significance he attaches to a christian socialism in formulating the opinions of the L.S.R. clearly points to the influence of the social gospel in the League's many writings. Brought up in the Anglican Church where he used to go to church three times every Sunday, his father, who later became an Arch-deacon, instilled in him from an early age the belief that everyman "had a duty to work for the good of the people and humanity". Later in his studies at Oxford

the writings of Charles Kingsley, William Morris, and Tawney's Acquisitive Society, all helped to clarify his thinking concerning the industrial order. But in Scott's own words, "the most important influence on me which occurred at Oxford was the Report of the Anglican Archbishops in 1919", which condemned capitalism for its unchristian principles. All these thoughts remained dormant in him until the suffering spawned by the great depression called for an immediate plan to revamp the economic system. "Suddenly all I had been reading in the Acquisitive Society and the Archbishops' Report now had a very important place in forming my views in the L.S.R. ... I was not so much converted as reawakened".[46]

Furthermore, many of the other prominent members in the L.S.R. had read or were acquainted with such social gospel writers as Walter Rauschenbusch, Rainhold Niehuhr, John MacMurray, "and for that matter a wide range of religious writings".[47] In an article published in 1934 under the auspices of the L.S.R. entitled, "The Church and The Economic Order", Dr. Ernest Thomas, himself an ex-minister, pointed out the many official church statements condemning capitalism. The close connection between the L.S.R. and the Fellowship For a Christian Social Order (F.C.S.O.) also points to the influence of a religious secularism in the L.S.R. Until at least 1939, "the two groups had many interests in common; both memberships and directorates interlocked."[48] In essence, the F.C.S.O. sought a biblical basis for the construction of a new social order, and viewed capitalism as immoral and unchristian. In their published work, Towards The Christian Revolution, they dealt with a number of topics; "The Political Task"; "The New Society";

"The Church's Role"; and "A New Economic Order". On all these subjects they expressed the need for the implementation of Christian values in society, and tended to express their criticism of capitalism by constant reference to the bible. Although this religious influence within the L.S.R. was by no means the most influential strain of thought, it nevertheless was prominent, and deserves to be noted.

By basing their criticism of capitalism on the teachings of the gospel, the leaders of the C.C.F. derived a great deal of moral legitimacy for their socialist cause. Their many economic demands were often equated with the work of Christ, and this endowed them with the belief that the forces of goodness -- embodied in the C.C.F.'s programme -- would inevitably triumph over the evils of capitalism. Consequently they were quite unwilling to sacrifice their ideals for the short run political gain, preferring instead to keep alive the true spirit of reform. This had the effect of colouring their view of political power as not an end in itself, but rather as a means to implementing the Co-operative Commonwealth. As J.S. Woodsworth told the national convention in 1936, the primary aim of the C.C.F. is to be found in "making converts -- after all that is our job -- leading people to seek a new way of living, the co-operative way through which alone a true world brotherhood may be established."[49]

This concern for the political aspect as merely a means to implementing the ideals and values of a better society owed a great deal to the principles inherent in the social gospel. These religious ideals permeated the C.C.F.'s view of democracy and education, and generated a moral fervour which at times placed politics in the light

of a religious crusade. The political corruption, inefficiency, and patronage inherent in the old parties was attacked as being immoral, while the C.C.F. was often equated with embodying "the very heart of christian values."[50] Although it was felt by many within the C.C.F. that the distinction between the importance of one's principles and the winning of political power were quite compatible, it became clear all too soon that this was not necessarily the case. This dichotomy between values and political power is seen by Walter Young in The Anatomy Of A Party, as an important analytical tool in understanding the C.C.F. Viewing it in the terms of a party-movement split, he shows how both modes of thought simultaneously helped and hindered one another in the maturation of the C.C.F. In order to understand this dichotomy between the party and the movement, and in turn show how the social gospel's influence on the C.C.F.'s view of democracy and education contributed to this split, we must now turn to an analysis of this concept.

The party versus movement dichotomy is perhaps the most convenient term to use when attempting to distinguish between the many conflicting modes of thought within the C.C.F. It encompasses such terms as purist versus politician, radical and moderate, or just simply the distinction made between the "left" and the "right" within the ranks of the C.C.F. Invariably, though, the root of all these distinctions revolves aroung the question of "how far" and "how fast" reform of society should proceed. This necessarily entails the question as to which is more important to the success of the party, the winning of power or the education of the people in the ways of a

better style of life? As Walter Young notes, the characterization of a political party "must begin with one fundamental question: how successful was it in attracting popular support." In other words the chief concern of the party is to win the election. All else, including the preservance of one's ideals, must come secondary to this one overriding goal. But while success at the polls is the standard used to measure the success of a party, this does not hold true for a movement. Its objectives may be achieved by an external agency, i.e., another political party, simply because of the influence exerted on it by the movement.[51]

A movement may or may not use the political process as a means of attaining its goals; and while its organization is similar to that of the party, it is less clearly defined, and more open to being influenced at the grass roots level. It is in essence "a group venture extending beyond a local community or a single event and involving a systematic effort to inaugurate changes in thought, behaviour, and social relationships."[52] Two of the characteristics denoting a movement are first, the desire to seek major social change or reform. Secondly, this necessarily provides a "dogged determination with which it clings to its ideals."[53] Unlike the political party, the movement usually states its goals in a very clear and definitive manner, and sticks to these principles regardless of the political consequences. As Young notes:

> movements have a vitality and a tenacity which parties lack. They continue to exist in the face of setbacks which would reduce a party to a shadow. Where support given to a party may often shift to its opponents, members and supporters of movements are astonishingly faithful.

> It is the dedication to an extra-personal cause that accounts for this devotion.[54]

The C.C.F. was both a movement and a party, as it chose to implement its goal of a co-operative commonwealth within the bounds of the parliamentary system. This party-movement dichotomy had its advantages, such as "the relative permanence and stability of its electorate, the dedication and selflessness of its members, and the honest consistency of its goals provided it with certainties pure parties lack".[55] Unfortunately, however, its disadvantages weighed heavily upon the unity of the C.C.F., and the particular benefits derived from each separate mode of thought usually conflicted with one another. Often "the C.C.F. hung suspended between the realities of its doctrine and origin ... and the Canadian party system".[56] While some, such as Woodsworth and Irvine were content to engage in a long campaign of education, indoctrination, and the preaching of the socialist gospel in order to implement the "just society", others within the C.C.F. were often critical of having "sky pilots" in their midst.[57] As one member angrily wrote to Norman Priestly in 1934, "throw overboard all that idealistic socialism ... it is nonsensical and pious ... and only works to startle the ordinary voter into returning the old parties to power".[58] Following the electoral defeat in 1935, an editorial in The New Commonwealth put this feeling in a more Machiavellian light: "we must coldly, analytically, wisely consider precisely what appeal the C.C.F. must make to win power".[59] Leaders such as Coldwell and Lewis embodied this pragmatic approach to politics, arguing as they did for the need of a central organization, basing many of their politics decisions on whether or not it would

win votes. They were more willing to compromise with the other political parties in the hopes of achieving part of their programme, and their views were perhaps best summed up by G.H. William's statement to the national convention in 1936:

> Some say the only way to attain socialism is by being pure socialists and having no truck or trade with anyone who is not a pure socialist. Now as a matter of idealism that is fine, but as a matter of practically it may be politically futile.60

As long as people such as J.S. Woodsworth and William Irvine retained a firm control over the C.C.F., however, education, the purity of one's ideals, and the moral fervour generated as a result of this were deemed as more important than the winning of power. The electoral process was not seen as an end in itself, but rather, as a means to implementing social change. This can be glimpsed from a letter sent by J.S. Woodsworth to M.J. Coldwell following the disastrous results of the federal election in 1935:

> Well the big fight is over. The results are a bit disappointing and yet I cannot feel that the effort was wasted. The greatness of our task is clearly revealed -- as well as its urgencies -- and our educational work was all to the good.61

This is in sharp comparison to the sentiments expressed by Coldwell in the wake of their defeat in the Saskatchewan provincial election of the previous year.

> Myself and many others who have worked so hard ... (are) bitterly disappointed with the results of yesterday's election. They are astounding. I am feeling to-day both tired and sick.62

In essence, Woodsworth was terrified that the C.C.F. was going to become a political party. He envisioned the C.C.F. as a moral crusade, whereby people would be taught the true value of socialism, as well as be given the chance to participate fully in the democratic process of the C.C.F.[63] As M.J. Coldwell remarked some years later about J.S. Woodsworth, he was "essentially an idealist; he didn't believe in organization, he believed that when the time was right the people would flock to an idea rather than a party".[64] Woodsworth was even opposed to the idea of David Lewis becoming full time secretary of the party. He felt that once you did this "you would become a political party, and once you become a party you become partisan, and the spirit is reduced."[65]

Woodsworth had been described by all who knew him a a saintly man, who attempted to practice his christian faith every day of his life. As F.R. Scott remarked about him, "in a very real sense he had that divine spirit in him, which often transcended him above the daily routine of life."[66] Although this did not make him a good organizer, it allowed him to keep alive an ideal of christian socialism within the C.C.F. Furthermore, his many sacrifices to the socialist cause often contributed to the feeling that the C.C.F. was more than just another political party, it was a holy quest. This was exemplified by the fact that Woodsworth, always frail and usually in poor physical condition, would give close to two hundred lectures a year from coast to coast.[67]

But Woodsworth was not the only member of the C.C.F. to sacrifice his own personal safety and self-aggrandizement for the purpose of

securing a better standard of living for the people of Canada. All the leadership of the C.C.F. engaged in a heavy schedule of speaking tours and public appearances, and often worked for very nominal sums. More importantly, though, countless numbers of people, who will forever remain anonymous in the history of the C.C.F. gave freely of their time, energy, and sometimes money. This spirit of sacrifice which was evident in the C.C.F. is perhaps most evident in the case of William Irvine. After his defeat in the federal election of 1935, Irvine was without a job, and possessed very little money with which to support his family. Having been in parliament since 1921, he had built up a sizeable reputation as a public speaker, writer, and social analyst. As a result, Irvine could have taken a lucrative job outside of politics, but instead chose to stay and work within the C.C.F. For this he was given the paltry sum of one hundred dollars a month -- often at irregular intervals -- and in 1940 had to petition the C.C.F. to give him five-hundred dollars in order to build a house. Needless to say he considered his decision to have been the correct one.[68]

The influence of the social gospel was also present in the C.C.F.'s commitment to achieving control of the state through democratic means, i.e., the parliamentary system. Believing that the superiority of their doctrines compelled them morally to seek power, they nevertheless abhorred the Communists' desire to indulge in violent measures as a means to winning control of the state. The religious basis of the C.C.F. was also a major factor in the decision not to form an alliance with the Communist Party, as the Communists considered religion to be simply a manifestation of the bourgeois state. Furthermore, this

adherance to a religious idealism made the C.C.F. sensitive to any charge of being anti-religious.[69] Any C.C.F. member who denounced religion was severely reprimanded, and a great deal of time and effort was spent in refuting the Catholic Church's criticism of C.C.F. doctrines.[70] Consequently in an effort to counter the damaging propaganda of such conservative institutions as the Catholic Church and the newspapers owned by the old national parties, as well as remain consistent with their own religious basis, the C.C.F. did not indulge in the radical sentiments common to most socialist parties. From the beginning they made the distinction between two forms of property, personal and financial, and took great pains to inform the electorate that they had no intention of nationalizing small land holdings. As well, the C.C.F. convention in 1933 had voted down a proposal which advocated the expropriation of industries without compensation. In part, what this points to was the agrarian and British influence on forcing the C.C.F. to choose the parliamentary course. More importantly, though, the ideals of the social gospel ensured that politics would take the form of a religious crusade. Not only did this mean following the democratic process, but it also ruled out any philosophy of revenge in dealing with the captains of industry. There would be no bloody coups or murders after the C.C.F. took power, only the word of the gospel.

These ideals expressed concerning democracy owed a great deal to the C.C.F.'s application of such Christian principles as co-operation, brotherhood, and righteousness being applied to the political sphere. This was reflected in their disdain of party politics, as well as the

zeal involved in rooting out political corruption and patronage. At times, however, the anti-party sentiments expressed by the C.C.F. were interpreted by several conservative newspapers as conclusive evidence that the C.C.F. were in fact bolshevik dictators, and did little to win the party added political support. Nevertheless the C.C.F. persisted in its claim that the old parties were totally corrupt and inefficient, refusing to modify their principles for the sake of political strategy. As T.C. Douglas sarcastically wrote:

> Feeding, clothing, and caring for our people is of relatively little importance. Saving one's seat seems to be of paramount importance. So this is parliament? Pardon me, I thought it was a kindergarten.71

This belief in the total ineffiency of parliament was also expressed in an article in the C.C.F. Research Review of 1935. Commenting on the poverty stricken province of Saskatchewan and what the Liberal party was doing to alleviate this suffering, the article had this to say:

> He looks across at the Liberal cohorts -- two of them are asleep; two of them are reading the daily paper; and a number are shuffling papers on their desks or writing letters ... 72

Even a cursory glance through the House of Commons Debates gives many instances of J.S. Woodsworth castigating the Conservative and the Liberal parties for their "shamelessly arrogant" budgets and their unwillingness to face up to the problems of the depression.[73] He also poured scorn on the pomp and ceremony associated with the openings of parliament.[74] William Irvine even went so far as to question the wisdom of elections at all. Why hold an election he asked, "when the party which expects to take office holds tenaciously to the same

errors as the party relinquishing office holds?"[75]

Where these views differed from that of the farm movements a decade previous was in the belief that not the party system, but rather, capitalism itself was the chief cause for the impotence of parliament. As Angus MacInnis told the House of Commons, "the party system itself is not responsible for the depression, but rather, capitalism, as it was felt that both parties were controlled by the capitalist puppet masters. Destroy the feudalism of the economic order and allow people the chance to live in relative prosperity, and it was felt that a large step forward would be gained for a truly democratic society. Furthermore, J.S. Woodsworth in particular, saw little benefit in Henry Wise Wood's theory of group government.[77] Not only would this entail a preservance of capitalism with only moderate changes, but it would mean associating with economic groups such as the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and the like. In the early years at least, the C.C.F. stood for a complete change in the economic order, and this meant the complete dismantling of capitalism.

It was made quite clear by the C.C.F. leadership and press that the aim of the party was to usher in the new socialist state, and as a result, there was to be no comraderie or political favours shown to "the capitalist parties". It was felt that they were too firmly entrenched in the hold of big business, and as a consequence the old parties were seen as being incapable of any legislation which would merit the support of the C.C.F.[78] The Conservative party merely embodied the privileged classes, while in the words of The Canadian Forum, the Liberal's policy amounted to only "a few plaintive vegetarian

bleatings in the midst of a carnivorous jungle".[79] It was never doubted for a moment that capitalist interests controlled not only the old parties, but the Senate and judicial system as well.[80] As the authors for Social Planning In Canada wrote, "a general election is a flip of a coin which has two heads. Upon each side is engraved the image and superscription of St. James Street".[81]

Yet the belief persisted amongst the rank and file as well as the leadership of the C.C.F., that once capitalism was destroyed, true democracy was possible. This view was premised on several assumptions concerning the value of human life, and clearly showed its debt to the underlying philosophy of the social gospel. First, the C.C.F.'s view of democracy attached a great deal of importance to the dignity and worth of each individual. As both David Lewis and Frank Scott pointed out in, Make This Your Canada,

> Democracy must encompass the idea of the sacredness of personality, of the dignity of man, and in doing so shares with all the great religions. It cuts at the root of false teachings about superior and inferior races, and leads directly to the notion of the brotherhood of man. 82

Implicit in this idea of democracy was also the belief that society was one large collective family.[83] Using St. Paul's analogy of the body as a complete organism, the C.C.F. felt that democracy should stand for the unification of society into one large functioning unit, whereby there would "no longer be any distinctions of colour, class, or creed".[84] Similarily, because everyone was of equal importance in the eyes of God, the C.C.F. could see no reason why everyone should not be given a chance to participate equally in the workings of government. This necessitated, however, that poverty and exploitation be abolished,

as well as the many "conflicting and destructive groups" spawned by capitalism. This appeal to the importance of each individual life, and the necessary claim of an egalitarian society which resulted from this can be seen from the great deal of time the C.C.F. devoted to the question of civil liberties. Supporting Tim Buck and other communist members when they were imprisoned under Section 98 of the criminal code, the C.C.F. repeatedly voiced concern over the often indiscriminate use of dogs, guns, and other forms of police brutality in crushing strikes.[85]

Furthermore, this view of democracy incorporated the belief that the mass of people were capable of a rational approach to politics. It was felt that once the population had been afforded a higher standard of living, and the influence of the business community on the political machinery had been eliminated, then everyone would have both the opportunity as well as the desire to take an active interest in politics. No doubt the belief that God was watching over and guiding the implementation of this Christian socialism added a great deal of optimism to the C.C.F.'s cause. This rational approach to politics was clearly reflected in the C.C.F.'s parliamentary performance. As adept and skilled in the procedures of parliament as their Liberal and Conservative counterparts, the C.C.F. nevertheless strived to upgrade the quality of debate and the general efficiency of government. In proportion to their numbers they far outweighed the other parties in the volume of debates generated, and their speeches and comments were extremely well documented with quotes from reputable newspapers, economists, church councils, and bank presidents.[86] Rarely did they engage in the bantering and name

calling so common in Parliamentary procedure, and even the Financial Post paid tribute to their "debating strength and general ability" ..., which they felt exceeded any other party".[87]

The C.C.F. also took great pride in the fact that they raised their own election funds independently from big business and other corrupting influences, and that their political organization was controlled from the grass-roots up. Their agrarian influence left a lasting distrust of party bosses and a centralized hierarchy found in the other parties. As late as 1946 Grace MacInnis could still write with some justification that "the C.C.F. isn't just another political party where you join up, pay your dues, and attend the occasional meeting to cheer the party leader". To her, as well as the great body of C.C.F. members, it was a political organization where "the people themselves make policy, select candidates, run campaigns, pay for them, and keep themselves informed of the facts of public life".[88] Because of the wide range of different groups which had originally joined the C.C.F. in 1932-33, and their desire to retain their own autonomy, the political structure of the C.C.F. gave a great deal of leeway to the grass-root control of the party.[89] While the pull of political realities, the dissipation of the farm movements, and the eastern based intelligensia of the party would eventually necessitate a rather highly controlled and centralized party, the C.C.F. always retained a closer proximity between the leaders and the rank and file than the other parties. The reason for this was the ideal that democracy stood for much more than just electing someone to parliament once every four years. Similar to the tremendous faith which had been placed on democracy

following the end of the First War, the C.C.F. viewed democracy as a panacea for the ills of society. It stood for the freedom and liberty for each person to have an equal say in the running of society, and presupposed a very organic and collectivists view of the world. In essence, "true democracy was a community, not simply an aggregation of units".[90] Inherent in this view was also the belief that a truly Christian society stood for the "brotherhood of man, and the fellowship and family relationship of all the human race".[91] A true democracy would incorporate these ideals in the workings of society.

Complementing this view of democracy was also the importance which the C.C.F. attached to education as a means to achieving political success. Inherent in this view was the belief in the rationality of the people, but more importantly, a profound concern for a person's inner convictions. It was felt that the socialism of the new commonwealth could not be brought into actuality simply by legislative changes. Rather, its genesis had to originate with the people themselves. As David Lewis commented, "education is a supreme need for a democratic society; there can be no real freedom where the people are ignorant."[92] In a large part this notion stemmed from the belief that the ethical side of socialism had to be maintained if any change in society was to be successful. It was felt that education would create an interest in politics, and thereby keep alive a spirit of reform in society.

This concern with education had three important aspects. First, the C.C.F. invested a great deal of time, money and effort in debating and study groups within the party itself. Secondly, the importance attached to education had a profound effect upon the political

strategy used by the C.C.F. at election time. And third, the importance attached to education greatly influenced the party's view of the new commonwealth.

No other political party produced more newspapers, pamphlets, or books than the C.C.F. As Walter Young notes in his study of the party, "it was the only party that organized correspondence courses, provided lengthy and detailed reading lists, provided study guides for important socialist books, established study groups, and ran summer schools."[93] It was also the only party to have, at one time, six party newspapers in simultaneous publication. This concern with education was reflected in the great amount of time spent in debating various issues, at both the club and convention level.[94]

This affected the political strategy of the C.C.F. in a number of ways; how election campaigns were conducted, their view of parliament, and most importantly, their view of winning power. J.S. Woodsworth clearly defined his order of preferences when he stated in 1935:

> My experience in politics has shown me that at election time one has a splendid chance for carrying on educational propaganda. I believe that at this stage of the development this should be one of the main reasons for entering candidates. We must get away from the old idea of winning at any cost and by any method, and steadily build up a convinced and educated constituency. 95

Consequently, the political campaigns conducted by the C.C.F. relied less on expensive outlets such as radio broadcasts, fund raising dinners, paid party organizers, and the giving of patronage or the promise of it. Instead the party conducted a door to door campaign with largely volunteer help, held out-door rallies, and attempted to both educate and rationally appeal to the electorate. As the editorials

stressed in The New Commonwealth a few months prior to the 1935 Federal election, organizers were needed in every constituency to knock on doors. It was believed that "elections were not won at meetings", but rather, "they are won on doorsteps". Furthermore, "they were not won by strangers. They were won by neighbours."[96] In part, this approach was followed due to a severe shortage of money, but also because it was believed that the people had only to learn the truth about capitalism and the corruption of the old political parties in order to vote C.C.F.

In particular, the C.C.F. used parliament as a forum from which their views could be disseminated to the country at large. Certainly a great deal of concern was shown for the economic plight of the country in this period, but the party realized that little would be done as long as either the Liberal or Conservative party was in power. As such, they concentrated their efforts on embarrassing the old parties, and attempting to point out their ineffectiveness in dealing with the depression. One has to wonder at the validity of the countless debates and suggestions by C.C.F. members that were met with derisive remarks and catcalls from the government benches, or the numerous resolutions put forth by the C.C.F. that were met with a solid wall of Liberal and Conservative "nays". But when seen in the light of a public platform from which to educate the people, the C.C.F.'s parliamentary performance becomes easier to understand. That the C.C.F. viewed itself as a small but persistent socialist gadfly can be glimpsed from J.S. Woodsworth's view of parliament:

> whether the vote is favourable or unfavourable, we win. If it is favourable, we have made some definite advance. If it is unfavourable, the government has been put on the spot. 97

One cannot also help but be impressed with the substantial amount of correspondence between the various leaders of the C.C.F. pertaining to the publication and distribution of Hansard amongst the rank and file. Woodsworth, in particular, wanted the average member of the C.C.F. to be well informed about the "goings-on" of parliament, and desired to hold up the inefficiency and callousness of the old parties to the country at large.[98]

The importance attached to the educational aspect of the C.C.F. had several assumptions about human nature attached to it. First, the electorate was considered capable of making a rational political choice. This is self-evident from the great deal of time and effort devoted to education within the C.C.F. But more so, combined with this element of rationality was the ultimate belief in the goodness of mankind. Similar to the early social gospel writings which had rejected such claims as original sin, arguing instead that man was made in the image and likeness of God, the C.C.F. felt that human nature did not possess the greedy, competitive, and individualistic qualities usually associated with it. Instead they felt that the school system, as it was constituted under a capitalist framework, was the real culprit in teaching the animal instincts needed to survive in the world of business. As one C.C.F. member wrote in 1934, "the race for marks which for many pupils constitutes an education is transformed by easy stages into a race for dollars."[99] Not only this, but under the present economic system it was felt that the combined

powers of the capitalist owned press,[100] pulpit, and system of law necessitated that the vast majority of people were only "educated enough to understand orders in the factory."[101] In an editorial written by The New Commonwealth concerning the Canadian press, this view came to the fore:

> The people are doped with newspapers whose public function has often been lost in commercialism or prostituted in propaganda on behalf of the existing order. 102

Because human nature was considered to be essentially malleable, or in William Irvine's words as "soft and pliable" as putty,[103] it was believed that a change in the economic order, followed by a revamping of the educational system, would produce a better society. This would be accomplished by devoting more time and money to education, and by upgrading the calibre of teachers.[104] More importantly, however, a whole new system of values would be implemented by which people would live their lives, "for education was the psychological means for making the new type of citizen".[105] How this would be accomplished is best described in a pamphlet published by the C.C.F. First, the virtues of co-operation would be stressed, as opposed to the evils of competition. Next, all military and political heroes found in school texts would be eliminated, as for the most part these men were "really robbers in disguise". And lastly, a good deal of time and effort would be spent in critically examining the many institutions and practices of their country. As an example of this the article stated; "now we teach youngsters that it is wrong to steal pencils ... we should teach them that it is equally wrong to steal the nations resources, to steal the fruit of the farmer's toil,

to steal a man's life by sweatshop labour".[106] In short society was to be inculcated with the belief that the "dollar civilization" of capitalism was morally wrong, and led only to the false worshipping of Mammon.[107]

The importance attached to education can also be seen in the C.C.F.'s plan to implement the just socialist state. The emphasis placed on a planned socialized order under the management of a "small body of economists, engineers and statisticians assisted by the appropriate technical staff"[108], necessarily implied a rational approach to the problems associated with running a socialist economy. Furthermore, under the heading of "social justice" in the Regina Manifesto, it was made clear that the problems associated with crime and punishment would be dealt with by a board of psychiatrists, psychologists, socially minded jurists and social workers. Although this appeal to science and reason in solving the problems of mankind goes as far back as Greek civilization, this strain of thought was nevertheless consistent with the appeal to rationality found within social gospel literature. What is more, this religious influence can also be seen in the fine balance drawn in C.C.F. doctrine between reason on the one hand, and the inevitable triumph of their cause on the other hand. T.C. Douglas expressed this when he stated; "If your cause is just and right, sooner or later you will win. It must triumph because it is part of the warp and woof of the universe".[109] In essence, this appeal to education was blended with the belief that the C.C.F. was discovering the true path of civilization. Put in more dogmatic language, the several ex-ministers and adherants of the Christian way of life, felt that

their socialist cause was entirely consistent with putting God's word into action. After all, the creator was the centre of the universe.

In conclusion, the socialism of the C.C.F. as well as its view of democracy and education were clearly influenced by the principles underlying the social gospel. First, capitalism was not judged simply in an economic light, but rather, on the moral deficiencies that were present in it. Constantly citing biblical references in order to bolster their arguement, the C.C.F. charged that such practices as competition, selfishness, and an extreme individualism were unchristian in nature. Furthermore, since the standard of success inherent in capitalism was based solely on the attainment of wealth, it was felt that the concern for human life was often relegated to a minor consideration. This claim was lent credence by the continual poverty, exploitation, and unemployment which characterized the workings of capitalism. In addition, the constant striving for profit often ruined cities with the unchecked and ugly sprawl of industrial complexes, and polluted both the air and water surrounding it.[110] In short, the C.C.F. argued that capitalism embodied the very antithesis of christian values, and served only to create an inhuman existence for the mass of people, where crime, immorality, and neglect of spiritual values were rampant.

While this religious basis often lent a moral legitimacy or belief in the righteousness of the cause to C.C.F. demands, it also added an important contribution to the C.C.F.'s view of democracy and education. One of the underlying principles so dominant in social gospel thought was the notion of equality. This was reflected in the C.C.F.'s attempt to create a political structure wherein everyone would

have a vital role to play. There would be no party bosses, or control of the executive by the "monied interests". Furthermore, such social gospel beliefs as the inherent goodness of mankind, and the view that each man was capable of rational thought, contributed significantly to the great amount of time and effort spent in attempting to educate the electorate.

But perhaps most important of all, the social gospel produced a moral fervour which often transcended the C.C.F. above the normal workings of a political party, Imbued with the idea of the inevitable triumph of their cause, the C.C.F. often tended to place political decisions in the rigid light of goodness versus evil. Not only did this produce a willingness on the part of the C.C.F. membership to work long, hard hours, for little or no pay, but it meant that they clung to their ideals with a tenacity of a religious crusade. Believing that the implementation of the co-operative commonwealth would bring about the kingdom on earth, they stuck to their principles even in the face of political defeat. For instance, The New Commonwealth "scandalized public opinion" by holding to its opinion that the Soviet Union was a well run, organized, and prospering society. Its pacifist assertion that Canada must never again engage in a war "to save the British Empire", also was not well received by the public at large.[111] All this points to the fact that principles and ideas were more important for the early C.C.F., than just simply the winning of power. The belief in the superiority of their doctrines meant that education and indoctrination were more vital than engaging in the affairs of day to day politics. This produced a split in the C.C.F. between the adherants of a political

party and those of a political movement. In no small measure, the moral righteousness engendered by the social gospel was responsible for this split.

FOOTNOTES

1 See A.E. Safarian, The Canadian Economy In The Great Depression (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1970), pp. 72-108.

2 See W.A. Mackintosh, The Economic Background of Dominion-Provincial Relations (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1964), pp. 110-11, 113, 123, 134. For a vivid account of the conditions under which the people of the prairies, particularly Saskatchewan, existed, see Michiel Horn, ed., The Dirty Thirties (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 93-100, 232-44.

3 Cited in Walter Young, The Anatomy of a Party (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, (UTP), 1969), p. 69.

4 Minutes, "Constitution adopted by the C.C.F. at Regina at 1st annual convention, 1933". C.C.F. Minute Books, July 19-21, 1933, C.C.F. Papers, Public Archives of Canada. (Hereafter cited as P.A.C.-C.C.F.P.)

5 For a discussion of the ideological splits between the various farm and labour groups see Young, Anatomy of a Party, pp. 39-50, Ivan Avakumovic, Socialism in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1978), pp. 57-70; F.R. Scott, "The C.C.F. Convention", Canadian Forum, Vol. XIII, No. 156 (September, 1933), pp. 447-49; For a very lucid insight into the problems associated with the merging of the various groups see, Stephen Elyot, "The New Commonwealth", Canadian Forum, Vol. XIII, No. 146 (November, 1932), pp. 51-52.

6 This view came across very clearly in an interview with F.R. Scott, in which he explained his relationship with several of the leading figures in the C.C.F. Speaking about G.H. Williams in one instance, he pointed out how Williams always viewed him with suspicion, simply because he was not a farmer, and also the fact that he was an academic. By Scott's own account, he had also lived a sheltered life, and had not had a personal experience with the poverty and suffering in society. No doubt Scott's opinion of the L.S.R. as an elitist organization, which to his mind should exclude all but a small minority of C.C.F. members, also helped to create a feeling of antipathy amongst the various groups in the C.C.F.

7 See Young, Anatomy of a Party, pp. 45-59; Avakumovic, Socialism In Canada, pp. 29-30; Leo Zakuta, A Protest Movement Becalmed (Toronto: UTP, 1964), pp. 11-13, 36; S.M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950), pp. 168-73; Kenneth McNaught, A Prophet in Politics (Toronto: UTP, 1959), pp. 255-56; Sanford Silverstein, "The Rise, Ascendancy and Decline of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Party of Saskatchewan" (unpublished P.H.D. thesis, Washington University, 1968), pp. 98-100.

8 Avakumovic, Socialism in Canada, pp. 29-30.

9 Ibid.

10 "The C.C.F. and Religion", The New Commonwealth, July 20, 1935 (Hereafter cited as Commonwealth)

11 "Cited in newspaper clipping (no date or title) found in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 10.

12 G.H. Williams, What is this Socialism?, p. 7, File II 283, C.C.F. Papers, A.O.S., Cited in Friedrich Steininger, "George Williams: Agrarian Socialist" (M.A. thesis, University of Regina, 1976), p. 115.

13 A Letter by G.A. Clark to J.S. Woodsworth, Dec. 12, 1933 Found in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 107.

14 G.H. Williams, "Is Socialism Anti-Christian", in Social Democracy in Canada, P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol 539, p. 47.

15 Ibid.

16 Young, Anatomy of a Party, p. 54.

17 Cited in House of Commons Debates, Vol. I (1932), p. 729 (Hereafter cited as Hansard)

18 The C.C.F. Research Review, editorial, July, 1935, p. 1.

19 Hansard, Vol. IV (1932), p. 2594, Ibid., Vol. I (1935), pp. 702-3, Ibid., Vol. I (1936), p. 472.

20 The statements were constantly mentioned in The New Commonwealth, and were condensed in pamphlet form by the L.S.R. See Dr. E. Thomas, The Church and the Economic Order (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1934)

21 Hansard, Vol. I (1936), p. 472.

22 M.J. Coldwell, "Am I My Brother's Keeper", P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 297.

23 F.R. Scott, "The Inefficiency of Capitalism", Commonwealth (July 13, 1935), p. 5.

24 Hansard, Vol. III (1932), p. 2221.

25 William Irvine, Political Servants of Capitalism (Ottawa: Labour Publishing Co., 1933), p. 107. Found in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 538.

26 Hansard, Vol. II (1934), pp. 433-34.

27 Ibid., Vol. I (1934), p. 594.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., Vol. III (1932), p. 2223.

30 William Irvine, "Co-operation or Catastrophe", P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 536.

31 William Irvine, "Can a Christian Defend Capitalism?" in Is Socialism The Answer (Winnipeg: Contemporary Publishers, 1945), p. 87. Found in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 537.

32 L.S. Donaldson, "Christianity and the C.C.F.", Found in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 536. Also William Ivens, "Evolution vs Revolution", in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 537,

33 "The C.C.F. and Social Services", in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 536.

34 Hansard, Vol. II (1933), p. 1743.

35 T.C. Douglas, "Religion and the C.C.F.", Found in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 539.

36 "The C.C.F. and Religion", Commonwealth, July 20, 1935.

37 For the clearest explanation of this view see William Irvine, The Farmers in Politics, Carleton Library Series, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1976)

38 A letter by J.S. Woodsworth to Norman Priestly, April 23, 1934. Found in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 107.

39 "Minutes of C.C.F. Annual Convention, 1936", P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. I.

40 E.A. Partridge, A War On Poverty (Winnipeg: The Wallingford Press Ltd., 1926), p. 163.

41 Interview with F.R. Scott by John A. Shain, May 19, 1980 at McGill Law School in Montreal.

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61 A letter by J.S. Woodsworth to M.J. Coldwell, Oct. 16, 1935, Found in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 107.

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66 Ibid.

67 McNaught, Prophet, p. 257.

68 A letter by David Lewis to Elmer Roper, Sept. 27, 1940. Found in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 297.

69 This is evident from the great deal of space devoted to religious topics in The New Commonwealth.

70 In response to Cardinal Villeneuve's charge that the C.C.F. was going to take away everyone's home, the C.C.F. published an article entitled, "The C.C.F. and Private Property", in P.A.C.-C.C.F.P., Vol. 536, in which they pointed out the fact that not only were they very religious, but that they had no intention of nationalizing small land holdings.

71 Hansard, Vol. II (1937), pp. 1564-65.

72 "To the Left Mr. Speaker", C.C.F. Research Review, January, 1935, p. 9.

73 Hansard, Vol. I (1932), p. 75, 726-27, Ibid., Vol. I (1934), p. 147, Ibid., Vol. I (1935), pp. 86-9, 696.

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104 H,W, Noseworthy, "A Program For Education", in Planning For Freedom (Ontario C.C.F., 1944), pp. 125-138.

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106 Ibid.

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110 Commonwealth, June 28, 1934, p. 5.

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CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Originally this thesis began simply as an attempt to examine the influence which the social gospel may have had on the early development of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.) It soon became clear, however, that not only were the roots of the C.C.F. deeply embedded in the previous three decades of agrarian protest, but that many of the social gospel's ideals were also at the forefront of the farmers' demands. Consequently the aim of this thesis was modified to also include a discussion of how the social gospel influenced many of the farmers' economic and political demands, as well as to show how these religious ideals affected one particular farm organization, the United Farmers of Alberta (U.F.A.).

But while many of the leading personalities, ideas, and grievances associated with the farm movements of the 1920's found their way into the socialist programme of the C.C.F., it would be a mistake to view the C.C.F. as simply the political continuation of the West's agrarian revolt. Both political movements clearly diverged on a number of economic and political ideas, and as such, held different conceptions concerning their political goals. Furthermore, this affected their interpretation of the social gospel to some extent, as these religious ideals were often used to justify different economic and political demands. In concluding this thesis then, the task will be to point out some of the parallels as well as the differences that existed between the farmers' movement and the C.C.F., and in turn show the effect which this had on their view of the social gospel.

To begin with, there are many parallels that exist between the political revolt of the western farmers, and that of the C.C.F. Both political movements were spawned from the wheat belt that encompasses the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Although the C.C.F. strived to be a national party, including both farmers and labourers, its initial political success was largely the result of the rural vote in western Canada. This should come as no surprise, because for the previous thirty years the farmers had battled against the banks, the grain companies, the railways, and the high tariff. This had produced a high level of political awareness on the part of the prairie farmer, and the constant indoctrination by the farm organizations and such newspapers as the Grain Growers' Guide had moulded the farmers into a highly volatile and critical group of electors. Furthermore, the political success of such farm organizations as the Progressives and the U.F.A. had destroyed the dominance of the old national parties in western Canada, making it much easier for a third party such as the C.C.F. to gain a political foot-hold. And when the C.C.F. arose in the depression advocating such traditional demands as the elimination of corruption and inefficiency in politics, and a reduction in the power of the "monied interests", it was only natural that the farmers should give their support to the C.C.F.

More importantly, though, the experience gained by the farmers and their ventures into the political arena provided a valuable legacy to the early development of the C.C.F. The Progressives taught them the futility of compromising their political goals for the short run political gain, as well as the need for a clearly defined set of

economic and political goals. The parliamentary performance and the political organization of the C.C.F. also owed a great deal to the lessons which had been learned by the farmers in their many political campaigns. In addition, several of the C.C.F.'s leaders, men such as George Williams, William Irvine, Robert Gardiner, Norman Priestly, E.J. Garland and a host of lesser figures all learned the harsh realities of politics in the service of the farmers' movement.

But while several parallels exist between the political protest of the farmers and that of the C.C.F., it would be incorrect to view the C.C.F. as simply another farmers' party. For one thing the C.C.F. was socialist in its political outlook, and consequently some of its political programme was far more radical than anything the farmers had ever advocated. For instance, the C.C.F. desired the complete restructuring of capitalism. Not only would they control the distribution and exchange of goods within the economy if they achieved political power, but they would also nationalize all the major industries. Furthermore, they advocated the replacement of profit with service as the dominant motive in society. Whereas for the most part the farmers had been content with their demands to eliminate the tariff, increase the flow of credit, and control both large grain companies and the railways, the C.C.F.'s programme called for far reaching reforms of the economy. The Regina Manifesto also clearly distinguishes the C.C.F. from being simply a political continuation of agrarian revolt. It sought to appeal to every producing class in society, and advocated shorter hours of work, better working conditions, and a programme of benefits for the sick and unemployed. In short, the

C.C.F. desired to be a national party, with a programme that would appeal to everyone that was engaged in production. In the process it also hoped to increase the standard of living for everyone in society, not just the farmers.

In comparing the political programme of the U.F.A. with that of the C.C.F., one can clearly see the differences in ideology that existed between the two political groups. First, both the U.F.A. and the C.C.F. were anti-party, in that they viewed the old national parties as corrupt, inefficient, and in the complete control of the "monied interests". But whereas the U.F.A. considered this as the result of the party system, the C.C.F. viewed it as the corrupting effect of capitalism on the political life of the country. This divergence in views is important in understanding the political differences between the U.F.A.'s theory of group government, and the C.C.F.'s desire to eradicate capitalism. Group government was not an attempt to elimenate capitalism, but rather, to organize the various classes in society, specifically the farmers and labourers, into large efficient economic groups. Voting as a coherent group, it was hoped that not only would the producing classes achieve political control, but that having organized themselves economically, they would be able to control the large industrial class. Although both their parliamentary programme and desire for monetary reform distinguished the U.F.A. from the more conservative Progressive party, they were still not advocating the elimination of capitalism. Rather, the U.F.A. sought to smash the various monopolies which exerted control over the grain industry, and in effect return to a system of free trade. Such institutions

as private property, the market, and profit would be left intact.

The reason why J.S. Woodsworth rejected this programme was that it would have meant simply a modification of capitalism. The C.C.F. had no intention of leaving the control of industry in the hands of the "monied interests". It was essential to their plan of replacing profit as the dominant motive in society, that the state control the distribution, exchange, and production of goods. Furthermore, the C.C.F.'s desire for a classless society was impossible under the theory of group government. Henry Wise Wood's political programme was nothing less than the creation of a society broken down into various classes, all competing for their share of the wealth. It did not desire to implement service as the overriding concern of society, and had no wish to join all the producing classes in society into one coherent unit. More importantly, though, it stood for the continuation of such institutions as the market system, private property, and profit, all of which stood in contrast to the programme advocated by the C.C.F.

This difference in political and economic goals meant that the social gospel was used to justify different sets of values. For instance, one of the major concerns of the farmers' movement was the depopulation of the rural areas, and the ever increasing dominance of the industrial classes in society. Consequently the social gospel was used to exalt the virtues of agrarian life. Not only was farming equated with working in close co-operation with the Almighty, but it was viewed as leading to a superior lifestyle, where hard work, honesty, and co-operation prevailed in society. Although the C.C.F. was certainly

committed to ensuring the farmer a fair return on his product, they did not use a religious symbolism to justify a rural lifestyle. Rather, they realized that industrialization was a fact of life, and therefore concentrated their energies on improving the working conditions in the major cities. There is no evidence that the C.C.F. ever indulged in a "back to the land" movement.

Although both political movements showed certain similarities in their attacks on the old national parties, there are also important differences as well. The religious ideals inherent in the social gospel were used by both the farmers' and the C.C.F. in order to point out the practices of patronage and corruption, as well as the inefficiency of both the Liberal and Conservative parties. In essence, this was a moral revolt on the part of both political movements, as they sought to point out the unchristian nature of these practices. Furthermore, a religious idealism was also important in both movements for not only creating the atmosphere of a holy crusade, but in justifying the peoples' support of a third party. It was common to both the farmers' movement and the C.C.F. to point to the fact that they were raising the moral standard of Canadian politics by contributing solid, God-fearing citizens to the workings of parliament. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the farm organizations were only concerned with issues that directly affected the business of farming. They showed little concern for the plight of the working class in the industrial centres, and in the few instances that an alliance was formed between farmer and labourer, it did not last long. Whereas the C.C.F. used the ideals and language of the social gospel to criticize the political

inequality of all the producing classes in society, the farmers' movement only concentrated on its own particular situation. Furthermore, the C.C.F. used its religious values to criticize not just the party system as such, but to point how capitalism was ultimately responsible for destroying any semblance of democracy in society.

This point is important in also understanding how the two political movements differed in their conception of economic change. The social gospel was used by both in order to justify the benefits of co-operation, love, and brotherhood within society. Likewise both the farm organizations and the C.C.F. pointed out the damaging effects of adhering to such values as selfishness, competition, and extreme individualism. But whereas the C.C.F. equated co-operation and brotherhood with a socialist programme, the farmers took it to mean the destruction of monopolies, and a corresponding increase in the price of wheat. In short, many of the social gospel's principles were taken by the agrarian movement to justify a return to free trade, wherein the farmers would be on an equal footing to compete with such institutions as the banks, the railways, and the grain companies. Being capitalists in the smaller sense of the word, they never felt comfortable with the C.C.F.'s rejection of the market system, or its programme to implement the use-lease system of land holding -- whereby the farmers' land would be held by the state,

This is not to say, however, that there were not similarities in both the farmers, and C.C.F.'s use of the social gospel. For instance, both political movements were committed to achieving political control through the use of parliament, and abhorred the use of violence.

The influence of the social gospel was very much in evidence in this decision, as its religious ideals spoke out strongly against a violent revolution. The christian basis of the social gospel also meant that both political movements did not adhere to a materlistic interpretation of history, and as a consequence rejected the advances made by the Communists. This point is important in understanding why the Communist party was never able to gain a political foot-hold in Canada. Even in the depths of the depression, most of the left wing sentiment and political grievances with the old parties was encompassed under the christian socialism of the C.C.F. Its religious ideals were such that it appealed to both people within the folds of orthodox religion, as well as to more secular minded reformers. Consequently it was able to check the spread of communism.

Furthermore, both the farm organization and the C.C.F. held to the belief that christianity had to be put into practice in society if one was going to call oneself religious. They both criticized the Churches' failure to live up to their religious teachings, and sought to eliminate the strong emphasis which the Protestant Churches put on creeds, dogma, and ritual. In short, they strived to implement the kingdom of God here on earth.

In conclusion, the social gospel was clearly a powerful force that influenced both the western farm organizations as well as the C.C.F. Although in some instances their economic and political demands differed, the social gospel was still present in both, as it was used to justify their demands as well as to indoctrinate the rank and file membership. In short, these religious ideals lent a moral credence

to both political movements, and often created the atmoshphere not of a political party, but rather of a religious crusade.

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