

Divided We Stand



# DIVIDED WE STAND

A Study of the Development of the Conflict  
Between the International Union of Mine, Mill  
and Smelter Workers and the United Steelworkers  
of America in Sudbury, Ontario (1942-1969)

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JASON A. MILLER, B.A.

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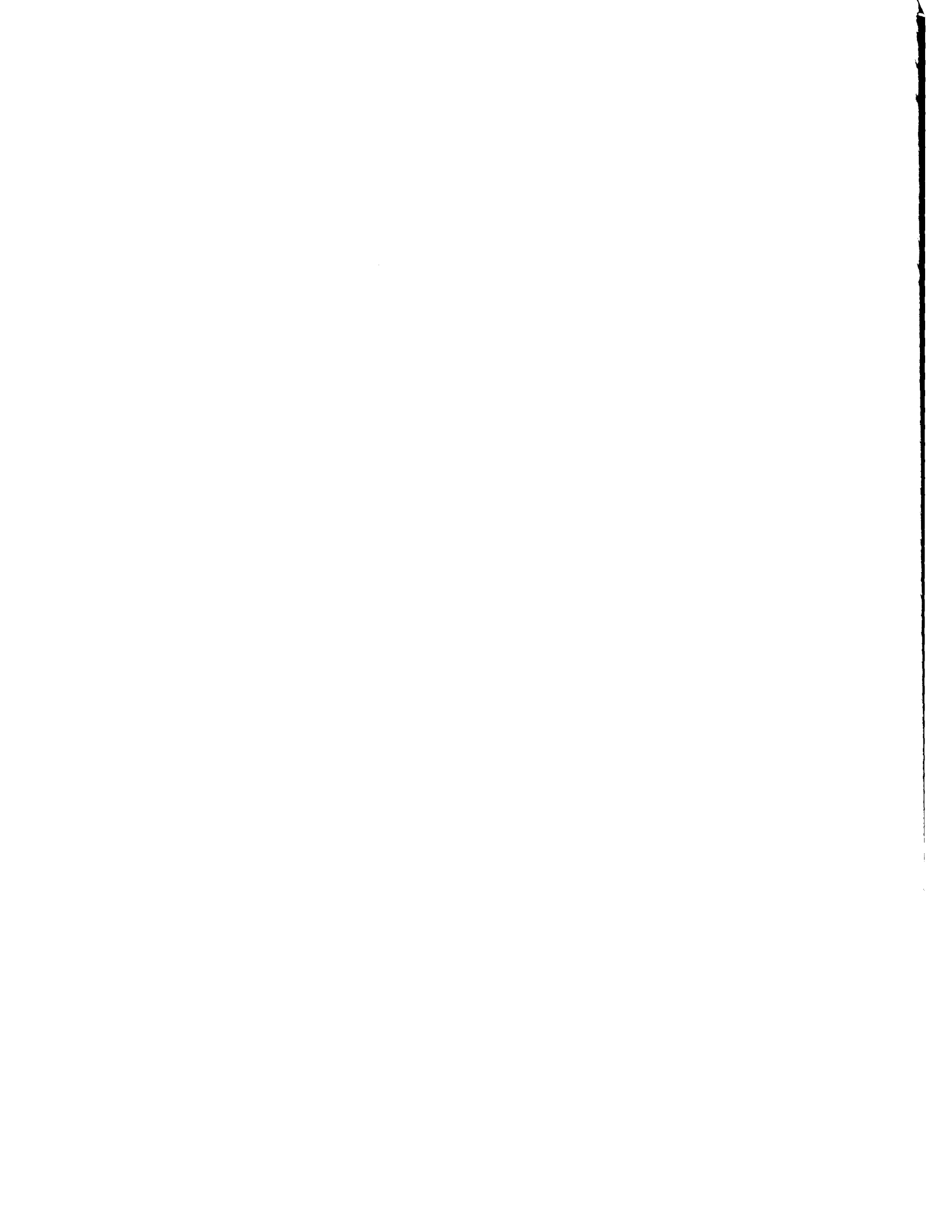
AUTHOR:                  Jason A. Miller, B.A. (Wilfrid Laurier University)

SUPERVISOR:          Dr. Ruth A. Frager

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### Abstract

During the height of the Cold War, a new form of conflict among Canadian workers emerged along political lines. In some cases, the major source of conflict shifted from that of union versus management to left-wing union versus right-wing union. This thesis focusses on such an inter-union battle between the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers and the United Steelworkers of America in Sudbury, Ontario from 1942 to 1969. In this analysis, which attempts to incorporate the perspectives of the unions, the mine operators, and the Catholic Church and its affiliate organizations, it will be shown that despite the profound influence of the union executives, the media, the Church, and other prominent figures, the final decision regarding which union to join was ultimately made by the rank-and-file members at Inco and Falconbridge (with the miners at Inco choosing the Steelworkers as their bargaining agent while the miners at Falconbridge chose to remain with Mine-Mill).



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## *Preface*

When one examines the nature of conflict in a workplace, it is often examined within the relatively simple framework of union versus management. This is quite understandable when one considers that a substantial facet of labour history is devoted to the struggle of the working class to obtain its fair share of wages, safety standards, benefits, and respect from its respective employers. However, the development of organized labour during the height of the Cold War had contributed to the intensification of another form of conflict with a long history — that of union versus union. With the intense focus on communism which arose from the Cold War, rival unions became bitterly divided over political lines. This bitter division between rival unions in Canada was most evident in the City of Sudbury from the 1940's to the 1960's. During this period, the United Steelworkers of America were actively engaged in a campaign to wrest the representation of the miners at Inco and Falconbridge from Local 598 of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. Throughout this campaign, the democratic principles of unionism were sacrificed in an attempt to control the political climate of Canadian unionism. In this battle of political principle, workers became bitterly divided, and their employers were able to capitalize on this division. However, throughout these bitter inter-union conflicts, the most fundamental principle of unionism remained intact, which is that regardless of the influence of a union's executive, the rank-and-file membership ultimately makes the final decision. Among the



miners at Inco, the final decision was to join the Steelworkers, while at Falconbridge, the miners chose to remain with Mine-Mill Local 598.

Before the objectives of this thesis are clearly described, one must be aware of what this thesis is not. Simply put, this thesis is not a modern version of John B. Lang's MA thesis entitled *A Lion in a Den of Daniels* (University of Guelph, 1970). In other words, this thesis does not seek to analyse the development of Mine-Mill in Canada from its beginnings to 1967 with a focus on Inco's<sup>1</sup> and Falconbridge's operations in Sudbury, Port Colborne, and Thompson. This task was best left to Lang, whose pioneering work on the history of unionism at the mines in Sudbury is acknowledged throughout this thesis. Moreover, this thesis is not a personal account of the events which occurred in Sudbury during this period. This would not be possible for the author to do, since most of these events occurred at least ten years before he was born. However, in this analysis, the detailed personal accounts of Mike Solski and John Smaller,<sup>1</sup> Gilbert H. "Gib" Gilchrist,<sup>2</sup> and Frank Southern<sup>3</sup> are acknowledged throughout this thesis.

With the analysis of what this thesis is not now complete, one must now analyse what this thesis is. In short, this thesis is an analysis of the development of the climate which facilitated the Steelworkers' raids in the Sudbury region and the execution of those raids at Inco and Falconbridge. Moreover, this thesis will also attempt to integrate fully the perspectives of business, union, and the Catholic Church in this analysis. Due to length restrictions, the Steel raids in Port Colborne and

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<sup>1</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984).

<sup>2</sup>Gilbert H. "Gib" Gilchrist, As Strong as Steel (Sudbury: Journal Printing, 1999).

<sup>3</sup>Frank Southern, The Sudbury Incident (Toronto: York Publishing & Printing Co., 1978).



Thompson are not analysed here, thus shifting the focus entirely to the situation in Sudbury. This analysis is subdivided into two parts. The first part, entitled “The Development of Division,” contains three chapters which focus on the events that created the divisiveness among the miners in Sudbury that ultimately contributed to the execution of the Steel raids. This is followed by the two chapters which comprise the second part of the thesis, entitled “The Cementing of Division.” In these chapters, the execution of the Steel raids at Inco and Falconbridge are analysed respectively. Through this analysis, one will develop an understanding of why the Steelworkers were successful at Inco but not at Falconbridge.

The first chapter in part one, entitled “Genesis of an Exodus,” focusses primarily on Bob Carlin's vain attempt to be loyal to the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation and Mine-Mill in the 1940's. In particular, Carlin's work with International Mine-Mill President Reid Robinson (a known Communist) will be analysed within the context of branding Mine-Mill as a Communist union. Moreover, Carlin's work within the CCF and his subsequent expulsion from the party will also be analysed. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the events that led to the transfer of the mining jurisdiction within the Canadian Congress of Labour from Mine-Mill to the Steelworkers, which would later become a key component of the Don Gillis presidency in Local 598. While this chapter does not specifically deal with the time frame of the raids in Sudbury, this chapter will illustrate the underlying sources of conflict during the Steel raids themselves and the fact that one could not take a neutral stance on this matter.

The second chapter, entitled “Something Hits the Fan,” focusses on the event that escalated the conflict among the miners in Sudbury, which was the 1958 Inco Strike. Previous analyses of this

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event have been focussed entirely on one question – did the Local 598 executive make the right decision when they decided to go on strike? This thesis will illustrate that in addition to the above question, a second question needs to be posed: “Was the executive of Local 598 adequately prepared for a strike when they decided to set up the picket line?” These questions will be answered through an analysis of the issues which led to the strike, the devastating nature of the strike on the City of Sudbury, the back to work campaigns that were sponsored by the Catholic Church, and the strike’s immediate fallout. Through this analysis, it will be illustrated that Local 598 President Mike Solski, like Bob Carlin before him, tried to take a stance that would appease both factions within his union and encountered similar consequences for adopting this neutral stance.

The final chapter of part one entitled “Onward Christian Soldiers,” will examine the role of the University of Sudbury and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie in the Steel raids. Particular attention will be paid to the role of Professor Alexandre J. Boudreau, former Director of Extensions at the University of Sudbury, and his programme of adult education for miners. More specifically, this chapter will analyse Boudreau’s collaboration with the Steelworkers in the development of the curricula for his courses, and the nature of the curricula which was reflective of the Catholic Church’s staunch anticommunist stance. The actions of his students who formed the executive of Local 598 following the strike in 1958 are reflective of what Boudreau taught in his courses, and thus, a detailed analysis of these courses is necessary here.

Part two of this thesis begins with chapter four, entitled “Democracy is Coming . . .” In this chapter, the rise of Boudreau’s students to power within Local 598 will be analysed. The Don Gillis

administration will be analysed in great detail, with specific focus on the audit by Alistair Stewart, Gillis' discussions with members of Steel and the Canadian Labour Congress, the meetings at the Sudbury Arena, and the many other actions which were taken in a deliberate attempt to further the cause of the alliance formed by the Gillis executive, Professor Boudreau, the CLC and the Steelworkers. Moreover, the attitudes of those within the CLC regarding the election of the Gillis slate in 1959 will also be analysed. In short, this is the chapter in which the successful Steel raid at Inco is carefully analysed.

The final chapter, entitled "When the Stick Fails . . . ," will address one of the biggest holes in scholarship on this topic to date, which is a lack of substantial scholarly analysis of the unique situation of Mine-Mill at Falconbridge. This situation is unique because the continued survival of Mine-Mill hinged entirely on the actions of the miners at Falconbridge. Thus, the continuous desire for autonomy within Local 598 among the miners will receive special attention. Moreover, this chapter will also analyse the circumstances which led to the merger between Mine-Mill and the Steelworkers in 1967, and the events which led to the secession of Local 598 from this merger. Through this analysis, it will be illustrated that despite the challenges they faced, the miners at Falconbridge would refuse to settle for anything less than what they always wanted – a truly autonomous Mine-Mill Union.

This thesis will conclude with an assessment of the current state of cooperation between the two unions by briefly describing a recent legal action against Falconbridge by Mine-Mill and the Steelworkers which ended in favour of the two unions. Moreover, significant recent developments within these organizations will also be addressed. Finally, the conclusions which have been drawn throughout this thesis will be analysed in further detail.



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# The Development of Division

# 1

## *Genesis of an Exodus*

The 1940's, Bob Carlin, and Expulsion from the CCL

*... and remember you can't be neutral.*<sup>1</sup>

The above line, which appeared in many newspaper advertisements for the United Steelworkers of America during their organizing drive at Inco's Sudbury operations in 1962, was meant to inform the miners that during the certification vote on February 27, 28 and March 1 of that year, any member who did not vote for the Steelworkers would automatically be deemed a supporter of the International Union of Mine Mill and Smelter Workers, regardless of whether or not he cast a ballot.<sup>2</sup> However, the true significance of the above line would become quite evident in the two decades which preceded this certification vote. In North America, the fear of the spread of communism forced many people to take a definitive stand on whether they opposed communism or were willing to accept it. Neutrality was not an acceptable stance for one to take during this period, and those people and organizations who attempted to take a neutral stance faced serious consequences for their alleged support of the spread of communism.

One group which faced considerable scrutiny during this period was the labour movement due

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<sup>1</sup>United Steelworkers of America, "The Objectors Have Failed," The Sudbury Sun, January 27, 1962, 2.

<sup>2</sup>*ibid.*

to the fact that it was often perceived as a vehicle by which the Communist Party could come into political power. In particular, Mine-Mill was one of the unions which aroused suspicion from anticommunists due to the fact that it held firm to a fundamental tenet which stated that it would accept anybody into the union, regardless of his political affiliation, so long as he was willing to be a "good union member." As a result, when Mike Solski, former President of Mine-Mill Local 598 and District Two, wrote his history of the union with John Smaller in 1984, he noted that among the union's 30000 members, "some were Conservatives, others Liberals, CCFers, Communists, and still others were neither members nor adherents of any political party."<sup>3</sup> But the important thing to note here is that there were Communists in the union, and the questions surrounding their role in the union would serve as the basis of the bitter conflict which would lead to the union's expulsion from the Canadian Congress of Labour in 1949 and the rise of the United Steelworkers of America in the mining industry.

To illustrate how this conflict developed, the role of Bob Carlin in this union will be analysed. In particular, a focus will be placed on Carlin's rise to power within the union with the help of Reid Robinson, a known Communist, and Carlin's role within the CCF which included a position as a Member of Provincial Parliament in Sudbury. Through this analysis, it will be shown that the neutral stance that Carlin attempted to take regarding the role of communists in the union led to his dismissal from the CCF and his exile from Sudbury when his views were rejected by fervent anticommunists within Local 598. Moreover, within this chapter, the expulsion of Mine Mill from the Canadian Congress of Labour in 1949

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<sup>3</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), xi.

and the subsequent transfer of the metal-mining jurisdiction to Steel within the CCL will also be analysed to illustrate how neutrality was simply not a viable stance to take for anyone within the Canadian labour movement during this period.

The events which provided the foundation for the conflict that Bob Carlin would face within his union and within politics began with his entry into Sudbury in 1942 to assist with the certification drive of Mine-Mill Local 598 at Inco. Carlin's resume had suggested that he was most suited for this task. His association with mining unions began with his entry into the Western Federation of Miners in 1916 at the Dominion Reduction Mine in Cobalt, Ontario, which was followed by membership in the One Big Union in 1919, where he worked to organize the mining camps in Gowganda, Ontario.<sup>4</sup> In 1936, Carlin returned to the Federation, which was now Mine-Mill, to work as a charter member of Local 240 in Kirkland Lake. His involvement within the local would include a position on the executive board from 1937 to 1942, during which time he became recognized as a strong union leader during the strike in Kirkland Lake in 1941, even though the strike was unsuccessful. As a result, Carlin was appointed to a position of International Representative of Mine-Mill.<sup>5</sup>

When Carlin entered Sudbury, he was faced with the challenge of organizing Mine-Mill in a city where Inco had maintained firm control of organizing drives. The threat of Mine-Mill Local 239<sup>6</sup> in

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<sup>4</sup>Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing and Printing Co., 1978), 16.

<sup>5</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 40.

<sup>6</sup>Mine-Mill Local 239 received its charter to represent the miners in Sudbury in 1936 following the failed attempt by the Mine Workers Union of Canada to organize the region in 1933-34. In 1936, the MWUC merged with Mine-Mill, thus capitalizing on the rebirth of this organization, which sought to capitalize on this rebirth by chartering Locals 239, 240 (Kirkland Lake), and 241 (Timmins) in an attempt to certify all of the mines in the province. (Source: John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 30 - 31.)

Sudbury (which received its charter in 1936) in addition to the contract signed at Inco's operations in Huntington, West Virginia with the United Steelworkers of America on April 20, 1937, prompted the company to offer its miners in Sudbury an immediate 10% increase in wages and a plan to form a company union.<sup>7</sup> This formal title of this company union was the United Copper-Nickel Workers, but the miners preferred to refer to this company union as the "Nickel Rash." Support for this "union" was obtained by Inco's financial support which reached a total of \$68,000 in 1942, and through the offer of promotions to the miners as a reward for their allegiance.<sup>8</sup> As a result of the influence of this company union, Local 239 was weakened to the point where its membership was reduced to less than ten members who had no financial support from the National Office. Thus, dissolving the local was the only option. Meanwhile, attempts to organize the miners at Falconbridge in 1937 under Mine-Mill Local 278 also led to the same dismal result.

In addition to these subtle methods of keeping Mine-Mill out of its mines, Inco had also sent its employees to raid the Mine-Mill office in Sudbury on February 24, 1942, where they attacked Jack Whelehan and Forest Emerson while demanding to see Bob Carlin, who was in possession of the membership cards.<sup>9</sup> Incidentally, Frank Southern, author of *The Sudbury Incident*, also noted that the police officers who were on duty during the attack were all reassigned to other parts of the city, and that *The Sudbury Star* reported the incident as an event that was staged by the union to support its cause.<sup>10</sup> However, the organizers for Local 598, led by Bob Carlin, resolved to continue their drive to organize

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<sup>7</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 31.

<sup>8</sup>Jamie Swift, *The Big Nickel: Inco at Home and Abroad* (Kitchener: Between the Lines, 1977), 41.

<sup>9</sup>Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing and Printing Co., 1978), 21.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 21 - 22.

the miners at Inco, albeit through more subtle, secretive means.

In response to the attack on the union hall, Carlin produced a leaflet entitled "MURDER WILL OUT!", of which ten thousand copies were distributed door-to-door at night, so as not to be caught by the police who were clearly working for Inco at this time.<sup>11</sup> This handbill described the actions of seven of the twelve "Frood scum" who conducted the raid on the office under the supervision of Harry Smith, superintendent of Inco's Frood Mine. The leaflet also stated that the raiders were told not to worry about hospital bills, lost wages, negative publicity from the *Sudbury Star*, or criminal charges since they had the support of the company, the police, and the local press.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, this leaflet decried the actions of the raiders as undemocratic, and stated that the union's fight was not merely for better wages, hours, working conditions, and other issues that were considered to be standard union business, but also "for decency and democracy in Canada."<sup>13</sup> In addition to this handbill, the production of the *Sudbury Beacon* at the Vapaus Publishing Company began in January 1943 as a means of providing an alternative to the *Sudbury Star*, which was now more commonly known as the "Inco Star." Buoyed by the success of these relatively quiet campaign tactics, the organizing committee now had the impetus to return to using more open tactics.

In 1943, the Local 598 headquarters was relocated to a location on Sudbury's Lisgar Street that contained offices and a meeting hall that would house their union meetings until the construction

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<sup>11</sup>Frank Southern, *The Sudbury incident* (Toronto: York Publishing and Printing Co., 1978), 22, and Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 104.

<sup>12</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 104.

<sup>13</sup>*ibid.*

of the current hall on Regent Street in 1949. This hall would provide a stage for many membership meetings and rallies as a part of the union's certification drive.<sup>14</sup> One rally that garnered a great deal of attention was held outside the hall on May 1, 1943, due to the fact that the keynote speaker was Reid Robinson, the President of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. This meeting was also perceived to have sent a message to the city that the organization drive was now officially "out in the open."<sup>15</sup>

In his book *The Sudbury Incident*, Frank Southern also took note of another series of meetings which would prove to be quite effective in their campaign. In June 1943, Local 598 did not have enough signed membership cards to present an application for certification to the Ontario Labour Court. Thus, at a meeting of the executive of Local 598, Bob Carlin proposed that for the month of July only, the initiation fee would be reduced from three dollars to one dollar, and that in August, the fee would be raised to five dollars. This proposal would be coupled with an intense organizing drive to obtain enough members to present an application to the Court. This motion was approved by the executive and subsequently approved at a membership meeting on June 30, 1943.<sup>16</sup> This proved to be a most successful tactic, with 3,875 miners signing membership cards in the month of July alone.<sup>17</sup>

In August 1943, Local 598 was able to make a formal application for certification to the Ontario Labour Court. This application was followed by a certification vote in December of that year, which resulted in an impressive victory for the Sudbury Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union Local 598. At

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<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>16</sup>Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing and Printing Co., 1978), 24.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 25.

Inco, 8184 out of 10050 miners cast a ballot, of whom “6913 voted for Mine-Mill, 1187 voted for the UCNW, and 675 voted for no union.”<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, at Falconbridge, the union’s victory was even more impressive with 769 of the 959 miners who voted casting a ballot for Mine-Mill in an election that had a turnout of 88%.<sup>19</sup> The Ontario Labour Court could not ignore the overwhelming support for Local 598 in Sudbury, and on February 4, 1944, Local 598 was certified as the bargaining agent for the miners at Inco, which was followed by Local 598's certification as the bargaining agent for the miners at Falconbridge on March 8 of that year.<sup>20</sup> In addition to his success with Mine-Mill, Bob Carlin was also victorious in the provincial election held on August 4, 1943, when he easily won his Sudbury riding as a CCF candidate and became a member of the official opposition in the Ontario Legislature.<sup>21</sup> Simply put, 1943 was a great year for Bob Carlin.

Bob Carlin’s success in organizing the miners in Sudbury and his work in Kirkland Lake did not go unnoticed by International President Reid Robinson. At the 1942 Mine Mill Convention held in Denver, Colorado, Carlin was selected as the Executive Board Member for District 8. This was followed by appointments as the Director of Organization in Canada, and later as a member of the Executive Council of the CCL.<sup>22</sup> Throughout the decade of the 1940's, Carlin would always be mindful of the support that Robinson had given him through these appointments. As a result, he would tend to vote with the decidedly left-wing Robinson faction of Mine Mill in councils while attempting to remain loyal to

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<sup>18</sup>Mike Soiski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 104.

<sup>19</sup>ibid.

<sup>20</sup>ibid.

<sup>21</sup>ibid.

<sup>22</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 40.

both the CCF and the CCL.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, this attempt to remain loyal to all sides would prove to be a failure for Carlin, who would face insurmountable opposition from the more leftist supporters of Robinson, while facing similar opposition from the more conservative elements of the CCF and the CCL. To illustrate this point, Carlin's failure within Mine-Mill will be analysed first, followed by an analysis of his political downfall.

It has been argued that Carlin's motive within the union was to transform the Canadian district of Mine-Mill into an autonomous body within the union, in which he would be most influential. Jamie Swift, in his book *The Big Nickel: Inco at Home and Abroad*, argues that by supporting the Robinson faction despite his membership with the CCF, Carlin was trying to follow the successful example of George Burt, who was then the Canadian director of the United Auto Workers, and had used similar tactics to obtain autonomy for the Canadian district within his union.<sup>24</sup> Swift's argument tends to reinforce the argument presented by Irving Abella in his book, *Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour*. Abella argues that Carlin was only able to maintain a measure of Canadian autonomy by supporting the Robinson group and that at executive board meetings, with conservative and leftist factions evenly divided within the executive, it would be Carlin's vote that would preserve the presidency of Robinson and ensure that his leftist faction was in control of Mine-Mill.<sup>25</sup> In return, Carlin expected that the International would increase its contributions to the organizing campaigns in Canada, and that he would be in a more powerful position within the union. Unfortunately for Carlin, this strategy would fail.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Jamie Swift, *The Big Nickel: Inco at Home and Abroad* (Kitchener: Between the Lines, 1977), 45.

<sup>25</sup>Irving Abella, *Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 91.

<sup>26</sup>ibid.

Beginning in 1943, events would occur which suggested that Carlin did not have as much control of the Communist elements in Mine-Mill as he thought. To begin, a Western District of the union was created in Canada, and Harvey Murphy, a loyal Communist, was appointed as the leader within that district, thus taking charge of the union's activities in British Columbia, much to the chagrin of Carlin who had hoped that he would have this authority across Canada.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, despite the protests of Carlin and the CCL, Robinson was able to convince the rank-and-file membership in Canada to support a "no strike" policy to ensure the stability of necessary wartime production, which was a policy that was promoted in many communist-controlled unions.<sup>28</sup> Finally, the Congress had challenged Carlin on the grounds that the *Sudbury Beacon* was printing "Communist propaganda." Carlin made no attempt to refute this claim, arguing that "he was forced to hire a devoted Communist as editor of the paper because he could find no one else 'with his experience and qualifications' for the job."<sup>29</sup>

Despite these challenges, Carlin continued to support the Robinson faction within the union, even on matters in which he personally disagreed with Robinson. For example, when Robinson was charged with trying to obtain \$5000 illegally from the president of a company that had a contract with the union, a call was made by the union's conservative faction for Robinson's resignation and the establishment of a fact-finding commission to investigate this matter. Both of these motions were opposed by Carlin, even though he knew that Robinson was guilty of the charges levied against him.<sup>30</sup> As a reward for his loyalty, the International tended to support the autonomy of the Canadian districts

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<sup>27</sup>ibid.

<sup>28</sup>ibid.

<sup>29</sup>ibid.

<sup>30</sup>ibid., 92.

in 1944 and 1945.<sup>31</sup> However, what seemed to be a victory for Carlin would not last long.

In 1946, two events occurred which signalled the beginning of the end of Bob Carlin's career within Local 598. First, Maurice Travers was appointed to the post of Robinson's personal assistant. It seemed that he was appointed to this post only because he was a loyal Communist and not for his work within the union. He had been expelled from the United Steelworkers of America for engaging in communist activities and he had never been a member of Mine-Mill before receiving this appointment.<sup>32</sup> The conservative faction within the union was now convinced that Communists were now in control of the union. Thus, at the International Convention in 1946, this group proposed a motion that would ensure that no Communist would hold an executive position within the union. Irving Abella argued that "this resolution would have passed had the Canadian delegation either abstained or voted for it."<sup>33</sup> But, under the leadership of Carlin, the Canadian delegation "overwhelmingly voted against it, and it was defeated by the narrow margin of 23 votes."<sup>34</sup> However, at this convention, divisions had formed within Local 598, which was led at the time by James Kidd, an anti-communist who had supported the resolution and would become Carlin's strongest opponent within Local 598.

At the international level, Robinson was reelected as president, though he was subsequently forced to cede his post to Travers as a result of opposition to this rigged election by locals which threatened to secede.<sup>35</sup> This would be followed by the resignation of Travis as president following an

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<sup>31</sup>ibid.

<sup>32</sup>ibid.

<sup>33</sup>ibid.

<sup>34</sup>ibid.

<sup>35</sup>ibid., 93.

investigation by the Congress of Industrial Organizations, though he effectively remained in power by appointing himself to the post of secretary-treasurer and by promoting an agreeable John Clark to the presidency while appointing Robinson as vice-president.<sup>36</sup> Carlin would continue to support the Robinson faction despite the fact that the international executive now sought full control of activities in Carlin's district. The international executive began to take control by conducting a series of policy conferences in Sudbury where briefs on wages and working conditions which were reviewed by the Communist party would be presented under the watch of Travis.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, in 1947, the international decided to conduct a massive organizing drive at the gold mines in Kirkland Lake under the supervision of Robinson with the assistance of Communist organizers imported from the United States, and without the assistance of Carlin who was obviously now the head of the district in title only.<sup>38</sup> Despite these setbacks, Carlin continued to support the Communist factions by voting against motions which would condemn "Soviet imperialism" and "Communist totalitarianism" at the CCL convention in 1947, much to the disgust of his allies in the CCF and the Congress. This vote also prompted twenty-six stewards of Local 598 to place an advertisement in the *Sudbury Star* calling on Carlin to oust the Communists from his union.<sup>39</sup> Thus, in addition to facing resistance at the international level, Carlin was also facing stiff resistance at the local level.

The person who led the resistance at the local level was James Kidd, president of the local CCF chapter in Sudbury and an influential member of Local 598. The relationship between Kidd and Carlin

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<sup>36</sup>ibid.

<sup>37</sup>ibid.

<sup>38</sup>ibid., 94.

<sup>39</sup>ibid.

was not always strained, however. Gilbert H. “Gib” Gilchrist, in his book *As Strong as Steel*, notes that when Carlin came to Sudbury, “Kidd provided Carlin with the names of 2,500 card-carrying CCF members, pro-unionists that he felt would eagerly sign a Mine Mill membership card.”<sup>40</sup> However, the friendly relationship between the two colleagues would not last long, beginning in the provincial election campaign in 1943.

In the election campaign of 1943, James Kidd had initially made a decision to run for the CCF in Sudbury, using his record as a Mine-Mill organizer and local CCF club president to present himself as the best candidate for the position. Initially, Carlin had agreed that Kidd was the “best man for the job.” Carlin declined a request by Burt Levins, the CCF Ontario secretary, to run for the party in Sudbury on the grounds that “he was too busy organizing the union and stated that he supported Kidd for the position.”<sup>41</sup> However, on July 12, Kidd was called to attend a meeting with Carlin immediately after he finished his night shift at Inco’s Frood Open Pit mine. In attendance at this meeting were Kidd, Carlin, Jim Russell, another union organizer, and Angus MacInnis, a CCF MP who was invited as a guest speaker. Those in attendance had asked Kidd to support Carlin for the nomination in the Sudbury riding after Carlin decided to seek the nomination.<sup>42</sup> According to John B. Lang, author of *a Lion in a Den of Daniels*, Kidd offered the alternative suggestion that they both run for the nomination and let the party membership make the decision.<sup>43</sup> However, this suggestion was rejected on the grounds that if Kidd — “a rank and file member of the union — contested the nomination and defeated Carlin, it would

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<sup>40</sup>Gilbert H. “Gib” Gilchrist, *As Strong as Steel* (Sudbury: Journal Printing, 1999), 16.

<sup>41</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 55 - 56.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*

provide those who were opposed to the formation of a union with the opportunity to divide the workers at a critical period."<sup>44</sup> Convinced, but dismayed, Kidd decided to withdraw his challenge to Carlin's nomination and support Carlin. That is, until after Kidd was told by Jim Rankin, a Mine-Mill organizer that Carlin was not running, only to be told again that Carlin decided to run after all.<sup>45</sup> At the nomination meeting at St. Anne's Hall, Kidd was the first to be nominated, though he would decline the nomination after Carlin accepted his nomination.<sup>46</sup> Carlin would go on to win the nomination and the Sudbury riding in the provincial election with relative ease, though Kidd would not accept this defeat graciously.

In 1945, Kidd had established himself as a responsible leader within the union, while developing a reputation as a fighter for his initial opposition to Inco's refusal to accept a "closed shop."<sup>47</sup> This opposition was later withdrawn when the negotiating committee, headed by Local 598 president Mel Withers, decided to accept a contract without a closed shop that was ratified by 75 percent of the membership.<sup>48</sup> As a result, when Withers decided not to seek reelection for the presidency of Local 598, Kidd decided to run for the position, which he won easily in the election of June 28, 1945.<sup>49</sup>

As the president of the local, Kidd proposed a policy that would see the creation of a district local that would represent the locals from Manitoba to Quebec, with Local 598 being the largest, and thus, most influential local in this district. According to Lang, Kidd's motivation was to secure Carlin's

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<sup>44</sup>ibid.

<sup>45</sup>ibid., 56 - 57.

<sup>46</sup>ibid., 59.

<sup>47</sup>A closed shop, or union shop, refers to a workplace where all non-management employees become full members of the union at the commencement of their employment, without any probationary period.

<sup>48</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA thesis, University of Gueph, 1970), 86.

<sup>49</sup>ibid., 86 - 87.

support for the idea, while using the district to provide an effective opposition to Reid Robinson from the east, which in turn would elevate Kidd's status within the union at the expense of Carlin.<sup>50</sup> However, this strategy would fail when it was announced that the District 8 Conference where Kidd would make his proposal would be held in Kirkland Lake in November 1945. With most of Carlin's supporters located in Kirkland Lake, it seemed that the Carlin-Robinson faction would be able to defeat Kidd's proposal, since Kidd's supporters were located primarily in Sudbury.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, three of the five delegates who were selected to represent Local 598 at the conference could be counted upon to provide full support for Carlin's proposals. Not surprisingly, Kidd would not get the District Union that he wanted, and thus Kidd suffered another defeat that he would not graciously accept.

Beginning in 1946, Kidd and Carlin began a series of heated debates for control of Local 598 in which the role of Communists seemed to be the main issue. Each side presented a differing opinion with Kidd arguing that the sole issue was Communism, while Carlin argued that the issue was the labour movement taking an independent stand on economic and foreign policy issues which would counter the American stance of Dulles and McCarthy.<sup>52</sup> While the debates seemed to be centred on specific issues, the rank and file came to interpret this debate as a mere clash of personalities which would ultimately determine who had control of Local 598.<sup>53</sup>

The following year, Kidd was presented with another setback when his motion to request an investigation of the 1946 Mine-Mill investigation by Philip Murray was defeated at the membership

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<sup>50</sup>ibid., 87.

<sup>51</sup>ibid., 88.

<sup>52</sup>ibid., 95.

<sup>53</sup>ibid.

meetings while motions of confidence in the International Executive Board and opposition to the secession movement were approved.<sup>54</sup> Frustrated by these developments in a local where the membership had consistently supported him at election time but not at the membership meetings, Kidd sought the assistance of a local pastor by the name of Father Murphy in addressing this matter.<sup>55</sup> After Father Murphy published a letter urging his congregation to support Kidd in his parish bulletin, Kidd was charged with violating the union's constitution by "discussing confidential business with someone outside the union."<sup>56</sup> At his trial, the trial committee ruled that Kidd did not violate the union constitution — a ruling that was rejected by the membership, thus rendering the decision inconclusive at a time when Kidd would have to seek reelection.<sup>57</sup>

In the 1947 election, Frank Southern, author of *The Sudbury Incident*, argued that the Communists were "out to get Kidd."<sup>58</sup> Both the Communist Party and the International Executive, who supported Nels Thibault for the presidency of Local 598, had launched a smear campaign in the city's parlours, streets, service-clubs, and church organizations in an attempt to damage Kidd's character to the point where he would not win reelection.<sup>59</sup> This strategy would prove to be quite successful in the Local 598 elections of June 26 and December 8, 1947, which the Thibault slate won with ease.<sup>60</sup> Kidd's supporters would argue to no avail that the latter election was rigged.<sup>61</sup> With these defeats, Kidd's

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 96.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 97.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 99 - 101.

<sup>58</sup>Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing and Printing Co., 1978), 42.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing and Printing Co., 1978), 42., and John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 104.

<sup>61</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 105.

influence in Local 598 was greatly diminished, though he would later become an influential employee of the United Steelworkers of America during the raids at Inco and Falconbridge during the 1960's.

When one looks at the fight between Bob Carlin and James Kidd for political control within Mine-Mill and the CCF, on the surface, it seems that Carlin was victorious in all of these battles. However, Kidd was successful in discrediting Carlin's reputation within the union by exposing him as a tool of the International Executive and as a questionable member of the CCF. This laid the groundwork for Carlin to fall out of favour with both the CCL and the CCF in the latter half of the decade of the 1940's.

In 1943, the CCF in Ontario experienced a surge in popularity that would result in the party forming the Official Opposition in the Ontario Government after the provincial election of that year.<sup>62</sup> No CCF candidate benefited more from this surge in popularity than Bob Carlin, who was able to garner more votes than any other CCF candidate in the process of easily winning his Sudbury riding.<sup>63</sup> Conversely, the provincial election of 1945 was disastrous for the CCF, which was reduced from thirty-four seats and opposition status to an ineffectual eight seats. However, one of those eight retained seats belonged to Bob Carlin, who was able to hold on to his blue-collar Sudbury riding.<sup>64</sup> However, Carlin's flirtations with Communist elements within his union started to arouse the suspicions of his fellow party members, who would ultimately hold him accountable for his actions and transform him from a distinguished CCF MPP to a disgraced ex-member of the party.

While conflicts had emerged between Carlin and his fellow CCF members before he was initially

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<sup>62</sup>Mike Soiski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 108.

<sup>63</sup>Jamie Swift, The Big Nickel: Inco at Home and Abroad (Kitchener: Between the Lines, 1977), 42.

<sup>64</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 85.

elected to the Ontario Legislature in 1943, it can be argued that Carlin's "fall from grace" within the party did not really begin until 1948. In February of that year, the party was disturbed by the emergence of "Price Control Committees" across the country under the guidance of the Labour Progressive Party, which in turn was controlled by the Communist Party. Of particular interest to the provincial executive of the party was a "roll back the prices" rally that was staged with the assistance of Local 598, which contributed \$25 toward the expenses of the guest speaker – a Communist spokesman by the name of Dr. James G. Endicott.<sup>65</sup> In the month which followed the rally, the Canadian Congress of Labour, which was closely allied with the CCF, had made an offer to Carlin that in exchange for his assistance in "driving out the Communist organizers from the gold fields" of Northern Ontario, the Congress' would offer full support for Mine-Mill in organizing the area.<sup>66</sup> Carlin was not impressed by this proposal since it meant having to do his part to expel his ally Reid Robinson from the union, which was something he could not do in good conscience. Thus, he rejected the CCL proposal on those grounds.<sup>67</sup> Carlin's attempts to keep Robinson within the Canadian jurisdiction of the union would fail by the end of the month, with his closest ally in the union being arrested on March 23 for engaging in Communist activities.<sup>68</sup>

Meanwhile, on April 3 and 4 of that year, Carlin chaired the Mine-Mill District 8 Wage Policy Conference in Sudbury. At this conference was a bloc of CCL representatives who had supported the action against Robinson and sought a discussion of their offer of assistance to the union in organizing

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<sup>65</sup>ibid., 111.

<sup>66</sup>ibid., 110.

<sup>67</sup>ibid.

<sup>68</sup>ibid.

locals within the district.<sup>69</sup> Andrew Brewin, president of the Ontario branch of the CCF, had contacted Carlin, urging him to “follow the party line” and support the proposals put forth by the CCL delegates. As the chair of the conference, Carlin ensured that these proposals never reached the floor.<sup>70</sup>

Disgusted with Carlin’s actions at this conference, Eldon Stobo, chair of the Sudbury CCF Labour Committee, decided to initiate the formal process which would ultimately lead to Carlin’s expulsion from the party. On April 6, he sent a telegram to William Grummett, the CCF House Leader in the Ontario Parliament, urging him to take action against Carlin, whose actions were deemed to be detrimental to the party and the Canadian labour movement as a whole.<sup>71</sup> In response, Carlin was brought to trial before the provincial CCF Executive and caucus in the legislature on April 13, 1948 for dismissing organizers who were CCF members from Mine-Mill, for “his voting record at the 1947 CCL Convention and on his defence of Reid Robinson.”<sup>72</sup> In his defence Carlin did not endear himself to the executive when he blamed the problems in Mine-Mill on those CCF organizers “who were more concerned with politics than with organizing.”<sup>73</sup> He then continued to defend himself by noting that “the union was built upon support from both the Communists and the CCF” and with this in mind, “he had worked towards achieving unity within Mine Mill and improving the conditions of the workers.”<sup>74</sup> The executive interpreted these actions as disloyal to the party and though they considered the penalty of expulsion, they settled with a refusal to endorse Carlin as a candidate in the provincial election of that year on April

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<sup>69</sup>ibid., 112.

<sup>70</sup>ibid., 113.

<sup>71</sup>ibid.

<sup>72</sup>ibid., 114.

<sup>73</sup>ibid.

<sup>74</sup>ibid., 114 - 115.

20, 1948.<sup>75</sup>

In response to this ruling, Carlin decided to run in the provincial election as an independent candidate, which in turn meant that he would be running against the CCF in that election.<sup>76</sup> In this election, Carlin's association with the CCF would finally come to a disastrous end. First, with two democratic-socialists contesting the Sudbury riding, the left-wing vote was split between these two candidates, which allowed the Conservatives to win the riding. Second, by running against a CCF candidate, Carlin had violated the CCF constitution, which was viewed by the party as sufficient grounds for expulsion, which the CCF did without any hesitation following the election of June 7, 1948.<sup>77</sup> To make matters worse for Carlin, he could no longer rely on his closest ally within Mine-Mill because Reid Robinson was deported on May 5, 1948.<sup>78</sup> Thus, by 1948, Carlin was rewarded for his neutral stance by having his power effectively eroded within Mine-Mill and by being expelled from the CCF. At this point, Carlin could still fall back on his influence within the CCL as a Mine-Mill executive. But this situation would not last long.

By this time, the Canadian Congress of Labour, in keeping with its firm commitment to rid itself of Communists, was starting to see Mine-Mill as a haven for Communists, and thus, CCL officials began to look for a means of resolving their dilemma. There has been some debate as to which single event led to the final decision to expel Mine-Mill from the Congress. First, Jaime Swift in his book *The Big Nickel: Inco at Home and Abroad*, suggests that one of the catalysts for expulsion stemmed from a

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 116.

<sup>76</sup>Irving Abella, Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 101.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 116.

Steelworkers' raid on a Mine-Mill local in which the CCL ordered both unions to "back off" so the Congress could temporarily take over the local and settle the dispute. Mine-Mill leaders refused to accept the CCL compromise, arguing that it was their fundamental right to defend themselves against a raid.<sup>79</sup> Swift also suggests that a drunken denunciation of the Congress by Harvey Murphy in Vancouver, at a time when William Mahohey (who was the assistant to Charlie Millard, Canadian director of the USWA) was in town, could have served as a catalyst for expulsion.<sup>80</sup> However, there is one incident that most historians seem to agree on as the catalyst for the expulsion. This incident seems to be the most logical catalyst since it was focussed on Aaron Mosher, the president of the Congress.

In the July 19, 1948 issue of *The Union*, which was the official Mine-Mill newspaper, an article from Timmins was printed which accused Mosher of expressing a willingness in his capacity as the president of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees to accept wage rates which were lower than those obtained by other railroad unions.<sup>31</sup> The article also went on to accuse Millard of "stating without authorization that he would settle the Hamilton Stelco strike for less than the workers were demanding."<sup>32</sup> In his book *Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour*, Irving Abella argues that the charge against Mosher was "basically accurate."<sup>33</sup> However, for the purposes of this topic, the accuracy of the charge is irrelevant. Bob Carlin attempted to make amends with the Congress by dismissing the employee who was responsible for forwarding the article to *The Union*. This was followed

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<sup>79</sup>Jamie Swift, *The Big Nickel: Inco at Home and Abroad* (Kitchener: Between the Lines, 1977), 49.

<sup>80</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 118.

<sup>32</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>Irving Abella, *Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 101.

by a formal apology to Mosher from John Clark, the International President of Mine-Mill.<sup>84</sup> But these apologetic actions were to be of no avail. In the opinion of the Congress, Mine-Mill had committed the cardinal sin of officially slandering their president and for that, they had to be punished.

On August 23, 1948, the Executive Council of the Congress decided to "suspend (Mine Mill) as an affiliate of the Congress and to leave the jurisdiction covering the mine, mill and smelter industry in the hands of the officers of the Congress."<sup>85</sup> Bob Carlin would counter this suspension by accusing Millard of "'raiding' his union and leading the opposition to Mine-Mill so that Steel could more easily take over the Mine-Mill jurisdiction in Canada."<sup>86</sup> Carlin also described this suspension as an affront to the principle of union democracy and an attack on the freedom of the labour press. He said he would appeal to other unions to petition the Congress for Mine-Mill's reinstatement on these grounds.<sup>87</sup> This campaign launched by Carlin was well received by other union locals, but their protests would ultimately be of no avail.

Following the suspension of Mine-Mill, the Steelworkers, under the leadership of Millard, increased their organizing activity in Port Colborne and Timmins, which was resisted by Mine-Mill. In an attempt to resolve this dispute, the Congress executive decided on January 11, 1949 to ask Mine-Mill and Steel to vacate these areas so the Congress could take over the organization of these areas and decide the final status of the locals when the dispute was settled.<sup>88</sup> Mine-Mill officials rightfully

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<sup>84</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 118.

<sup>85</sup>*ibid.*, 119.

<sup>86</sup>Irving Abella, Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 102.

<sup>87</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>88</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 120 - 121.

interpreted this as a raid on their jurisdiction and proof of a conspiracy between the USWA and the CCL to strip Mine-Mill of its jurisdiction. Thus, Mine-Mill refused to abide by the Congress ruling.<sup>89</sup> This action by the union was regarded as sufficient justification for the expulsion of Mine-Mill from the Congress. On March 25, 1949, the Executive Council of the Congress approved a motion that would extend Mine-Mill's suspension to an indefinite period of time and that they would present a motion for expulsion at the next Congress convention. This motion was carried at the Convention on October 9, 1949, thus expelling Mine-Mill from the Congress.<sup>90</sup> On November 15, the USWA applied for Mine-Mill's old jurisdiction in the Congress, which it obtained on January 19, 1950 in exchange for a relatively paltry sum of fifty thousand dollars to "reimburse the Congress for the expense incurred in the organization of the workers in this jurisdiction during the past year."<sup>91</sup>

Thus, by analysing the events of the 1940's surrounding Mine-Mill, and in particular, Bob Carlin's role in these events, one can clearly see that neutrality was not an acceptable stance to take regarding the issue of Communism and the labour movement. For maintaining his stance of neutrality on this issue, Carlin was punished by his union, his political party, and the CCL. First, Carlin lost any measure of effective influence he had within the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers when Communists within the International Executive took charge of organizing activities in his district. Second, for his support of the Communists in Mine-Mill, Carlin went from being an Honourable Member of Provincial Parliament for the CCF to becoming an expelled member of his party. Finally, partly as a

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 122.

result of the actions of members within his district, Carlin's affiliation with the Canadian Congress of Labour through Mine-Mill was permanently severed. With regard to Local 598, two distinct factions emerged within the local that would give rise to growing tension in the 1950's between the left-wing faction headed by Mike Solski, President of Local 598 beginning in 1951, and a conservative faction headed by James Kidd. Despite the firm control of the local by the Mike Solski executive for most of the decade, it became evident that this tension between these two factions would eventually lead to a vicious battle that would ultimately determine the fate of the local. It was also clear that for this battle to begin, a single catalyst would be needed. In 1958, that catalyst would arrive in full force . . .

## 2

*Something Hits the Fan*  
The 1958 Inco Strike

*... the only reason that they advised us to go on strike in the face of the giant stockpile of unsold nickel, was because it was a wonderful opportunity to stir up more class hatred.<sup>1</sup>*

Frank Southern

*As far as I'm concerned we were faced with a situation where the company wanted to destroy the union.<sup>2</sup>*

Mike Solski  
Past-President of Mine-Mill Local 598

The opinions above are an accurate reflection of the attitudes of those who favoured strike action in 1958 and those who thought that the decision to strike at that time was the worst thing that the executive of Local 598 could have ever done. For the remainder of his life following the strike, Mike Solski, president of the local during the strike, would constantly have to defend the decision of his executive to call the strike. Unfortunately for Solski, any defence he had was pointless against a large group of miners who demanded change after being subjected to the hardship of the strike. In 1959, these miners were able to express their opinion with their vote, which they used to remove Solski from the president's post in the local. The question is, however, was Mike Solski really to blame for this strike,

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<sup>1</sup>Frank Southern, *The Sudbury incident* (Toronto: York Publishing and Printing Co., 1978), 57.

<sup>2</sup>Tony Van Alpen, "Strike End was Sudbury's Yule Gift 25 Years Ago," *The Sudbury Star*, December 24, 1983, 27.

or was he caught in a situation where he really had no choice but to call the strike? To answer this question, the business practices and financial status of Inco during this period will be analysed, in addition to an analysis of the offers made by the company and the union, and the negotiations which followed in 1958. The impact of the strike on the miners and the community at large will also be analysed through the mention of stories of personal hardship, the back to work campaigns, the appeal of Bishop Alexander Carter and his Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie for the welfare of the miners, and other incidents which reflect the nature of the strike. Finally, the immediate fallout from the strike within the community will also be analysed as a means of understanding the attitudes of the miners toward their local executive. Through this analysis, it will be shown that Mike Solski, like Bob Carlin before him, was caught in a powerless situation where he had to strike a common ground between the factions within his local. He ultimately failed in the process.

To begin, an analysis of the financial status of Inco before the 1958 strike is necessary to understand the strike itself. From the period of 1948 to 1956, the company had experienced a substantial increase in its net earnings from \$39,100,000<sup>3</sup> in 1948 to a then record total of \$96,300,000 in 1956.<sup>4</sup> During this period, the Cold War provided Inco with a strong and reliable market in the United States. The United States military was actively engaged in an arms race against the Soviet Union, and massive quantities of nickel were needed to produce the large arsenal of weapons that was seen as necessary during this period. Thus, the decade of the 1950's was proving to be the most

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<sup>3</sup>It should be here noted that Inco reports their financial data in United States currency. This practice will be continued in this thesis for the sake of consistency regarding the reporting of Inco's financial data.

<sup>4</sup>The International Nickel Company of Canada, Annual Report 1962 (Copper Cliff: The International Nickel Company of Canada, 1963), 30.

profitable decade in the history of the company to date, and it seemed that these prosperous trends would continue.

However, in 1957, the nature of the market had changed slightly. In its annual report for that year, Inco noted that “during the latter part of the year the supply of nickel, after meeting defence requirements, exceeded civilian demand for the first time since the Korean War began in 1950.”<sup>5</sup> However, despite this excess in supply, “International Nickel operated at capacity in 1957 for the eighth consecutive year.”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, nickel sales had remained relatively consistent (approximate average of \$110 million per quarter) throughout the year despite the change in the market conditions.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the company was also actively developing new mining operations in the Sudbury District and in Northern Manitoba (in an area that would later be named Thompson, in honour of John F. Thompson, chairman of Inco) in an effort to increase its supply base.<sup>8</sup> Based on this data, the company noted that “at the time of writing this report, the demand is soft for our principal products, nickel and copper, and the outlook for 1958 is that our customers will not take as much of our production as they did during the past year.”<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the company also noted that “as the year 1958 opened, stocks of nickel available to industry were accumulating in our hands as well as in the hands of others, and the production capacity of the nickel producers was higher. As a result, more nickel than ever before will

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<sup>5</sup>The International Nickel Company of Canada, Annual Report 1957 (Copper Cliff: The International Nickel Company of Canada, 1958), 7.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

be available to industry in 1958.”<sup>10</sup> In short, the annual report that was prepared by Inco for its shareholders for the year 1957 had one overarching message — the company was stockpiling its products. This situation would greatly influence the contract negotiations in 1958, and the Company would benefit greatly at the expense of the workers.

In the first quarter of 1958, Inco began to see a noticeable drop in sales as a result of the new market conditions. Sales dropped dramatically to a low of \$85,199,000 for that quarter, which constituted a 24.3% drop in sales compared to the fourth quarter of 1957.<sup>11</sup> As a result, a series of layoffs was announced by the company to the union on March 15, 1958. This message was given directly to Nels Thibault (President of Mine-Mill—Canadian Section) and Mike Solski (President of Mine-Mill Local 598) at a meeting on that day. In Sudbury, 1330 miners would be laid off effective March 24.<sup>12</sup> The Company argued that this layoff was necessary due to “an overabundance of nickel for which there is no sale.”<sup>13</sup> This stockpile was estimated by the company to be at 100 million pounds which was in addition to the stockpile which existed in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the Company refuted the claims of the economists in the Eisenhower administration by stating that an upturn in business was unlikely for the remainder of the year and that further layoffs may be necessary.<sup>15</sup> (It should be noted here that the Company’s estimates were correct at this time. By the fourth quarter of 1958, sales had

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<sup>10</sup>ibid.

<sup>11</sup>ibid., 21, and The International Nickel Company of Canada, *Annual Report 1958* (Copper Cliff: The International Nickel Company of Canada, 1959), 21.

<sup>12</sup>“Inco Layoff Schedule: Friday March 14, 1958,” *United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives*, First Accrual, Box 27 - Thibault, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>13</sup>ibid.

<sup>14</sup>ibid.

<sup>15</sup>ibid.

dropped to \$74,751,000<sup>16</sup>)

At a Local 598 executive board meeting the following day, the union resolved to oppose this round of layoffs by stating its position to the Company in a meeting on March 17, 1958. The position of the union was stated in the following points:

- A – The Union does not accept that there is any justification for layoff.
- B – The Company to maintain its full payroll force and stockpile nickel and co-incidentally demand the establishment of new markets for the nickel supply.
- C – That incentive bonus and overtime work be eliminated.
- D – That necessary repair and overhaul work be immediately proceeded with throughout the Company's plant buildings.<sup>17</sup>

The Union had also considered presenting a proposal for full pensions to be provided to those who choose to retire at age sixty as a means of opening up more jobs for the younger workers.<sup>18</sup> However, the Company had no intention of honouring the demand of the Union for the maintenance of staff levels during this period of surplus supply. In his book *Hardrock Mining*, Wallace Clement has argued that "the capitalists in control of Inco have been among the most aggressive and opportunistic in the world," and that the imposition of layoffs is consistent with their history of dealing "savagely with their labour force."<sup>19</sup> Thus, in this particular situation of surplus which was so advantageous for the Company, Company officials would not turn away the large profits which could be obtained by imposing a layoff at a time when they could meet their demand for nickel with their surplus stock. The layoffs would

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<sup>16</sup>The International Nickel Company of Canada, Annual Report 1958 (Copper Cliff: The International Nickel Company of Canada, 1959), 21.

<sup>17</sup>"Sunday, March 16, 1958: Local 598 Executive Board Meeting," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 27 - Thibault, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>Wallace Clement, Hardrock Mining: Industrial Relations and Technological Changes at Inco (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1981), 48.

proceed as scheduled, and the union would be mindful of this when contract negotiations started the following month.

When the negotiations for a new contract between Inco and Mine-Mill Local 598 began on April 15, 1958, the Union was optimistic about reaching a settlement without having to go on strike. Since the local's certification as the bargaining agent for Inco's miners in 1943, there had never been a strike at the Company's operations in Sudbury, and Inco noted that their "relations with the several unions which represent many of the employees have over the years been generally satisfactory."<sup>20</sup> Gib Gilchrist noted in his book *As Strong as Steel* that "since 1944, there had been annual contracts between the parties that raised wages each year and kept them fairly even with other resource industries."<sup>21</sup> Local 598 was a very strong and vibrant local, both in membership and finances, and union leaders had reason to believe that the National Office would provide sufficient support for their cause. The local leaders were also aware of the nature of the industry at this time, and they attempted to present a proposal to the Company which reflected these changes.<sup>22</sup>

However, there were pressures on the Union in 1958 that it had never faced before, and had never really considered to its full extent. This was the first contract negotiation in almost a decade that occurred during a period where the Company had amassed a large stockpile that could sufficiently meet demand in the event of a strike. Second, Gib Gilchrist noted that wages at the nickel mines in Sudbury

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<sup>20</sup>The International Nickel Company of Canada, Annual Report 1957 (Copper Cliff: The International Nickel Company of Canada, 1958), 14.

<sup>21</sup>Gilbert H. "Gib" Gilchrist, *As Strong as Steel* (Sudbury: Journal Printing, 1999), 17.

<sup>22</sup>Mike Soiski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 132.

were starting to fall behind the wages at the uranium mines in Elliot Lake, and that the Local “would need to recoup these losses and maintain comparable levels of wages or the union would suffer criticism from its members, and would be compared unfavourably with the Steelworkers Union.”<sup>23</sup> This would be despite the fact that Diefenbaker had passed federal legislation against wage increases in 1958.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Gilchrist also noted that Local 598 had expended a disproportionate amount of its resources in the construction of five union halls in Sudbury and surrounding communities and a camp at Richard Lake in the South End of Sudbury, in addition to helping “many locals in distress” and giving “generously to a broad range of struggles across North America.”<sup>25</sup> Gilchrist suggested that Local 598's leaders never really considered the fact that if they went on strike, they would need to access all available financial resources, which could mean ceding some of their properties and scaling back their contributions to other causes.<sup>26</sup> But the local leaders were optimistic, and on April 15, 1958, they presented their proposals to the Company with the expectation that the matter of this contract would be settled in the same manner that they had settled all previous contracts – without a strike.

However, on April 22, 1958, during the second meeting of contract negotiations, T. D. Delamere, spokesman for Inco's bargaining committee, decided to give the Union “a lesson in economics.” Delamere noted that from 1950 to 1956, the Company had provided its workers with the highest wages and that the market demanded that they maintain production at peak levels to meet

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<sup>23</sup>Gilbert H. “Gib” Gilchrist, *As Strong as Steel* (Sudbury: Journal Printing, 1999), 17 - 18.

<sup>24</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 132.

<sup>25</sup>Gilbert H. “Gib” Gilchrist, *As Strong as Steel* (Sudbury: Journal Printing, 1999), 18.

<sup>26</sup>*ibid.*

demand.<sup>27</sup> Delamere went on to note that the share of the world's nickel produced in Sudbury had dropped steadily, and that the United States was no longer interested in continuing its stockpiling,<sup>28</sup> Thus, based on this information, Company officials announced a further layoff of three hundred miners at the Sudbury operations while continuing to produce 250 million pounds of ore per year despite the fact that they only forecast sales of 200 million tons of ore for 1958.<sup>29</sup> Finally, Delamere mentioned on behalf of the Company, "we still have faith in the future."<sup>30</sup> Under this backdrop, the Union began to press the Company for wage increases, increased investment in the pension plan, increased investment in health and welfare initiatives, and improvements in vacations to no avail.<sup>31</sup> Finally, Mike Solski told the Company that he was "glad to hear you haven't lost faith."<sup>32</sup>

To complicate matters further for Local 598, William Longridge, Secretary-Treasurer for Mine-Mill, had issued a letter on April 18, 1958 which presented a bleak financial picture for the union. Longridge noted that in addition to the problems illustrated in the monthly financial reports, the effects of employee layoffs would illustrate a more dire situation due to the fact that the union was responsible for paying severance pay and holiday pay, in addition to the loss of dues-paying members to the union.<sup>33</sup> Thus, Longridge urged all staff to reduce their expenditures on matters such as transportation, telephone use, mileage, and other staff duties, in addition to calling on the staff's support for a raise

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<sup>27</sup>"Second Meeting With Inco: April 22, 1958," Mike Solski Fonds, P019 Series 4, Box 11, File 1, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>28</sup>ibid.

<sup>29</sup>ibid.

<sup>30</sup>ibid.

<sup>31</sup>ibid.

<sup>32</sup>ibid.

<sup>33</sup>"April 18, 1958: Letter to All Officers and Staff," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 1, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

in the per capita fees.<sup>34</sup> Thus, it was starting to become evident that Local 598 might not be able to count on the National Office for effective support during its contract negotiations. In the event of a strike, the Company would be able to whittle away the Local's finances much sooner than union officials anticipated.

During the third meeting in contract negotiations on May 6, 1958, Mike Solski gave Delamere his full rebuttal to the "economics lesson" at their last meeting. Solski countered Delamere's claim that layoffs were necessary in this time of recession, and he argued that these layoffs would further aggravate the recession by reducing the purchasing power of those laid off.<sup>35</sup> With this in mind, Solski proposed a 10 percent reduction in working hours without a reduction in take-home pay.<sup>36</sup> Delamere refused to accept this suggestion on the grounds that the drop in the purchasing power that was affecting these negotiations was based entirely in the United States. Thus, an increase in purchasing power in Canada would have no effect on Inco's production.<sup>37</sup> Delamere went on to state that the company had sufficient funds to meet Solski's demands, but if they were to meet those demands, Inco would be pricing itself out of the market in a similar manner that occurred at Steep Rock.<sup>38</sup> As a result, the company countered with a proposal that would see a reduction in working hours without the maintenance of pay, which in turn would eliminate the need for layoffs.<sup>39</sup> However, Solski saw this

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<sup>34</sup>ibid.

<sup>35</sup>"Third Meeting With Inco: May 6, 1958," Mike Solski Fonds, P019 Series 4, Box 11, File 1, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>36</sup>ibid.

<sup>37</sup>ibid.

<sup>38</sup>ibid.

<sup>39</sup>ibid.

proposal for what it was — a wage reduction. Understandably, he could not accept such a proposal from a company that had consistently given wage increases in previous contracts. Moreover, the membership of the local had come to expect these regular wage increases. Failure to deliver these wage increases would be remembered by these miners when they cast their ballot in Local 598 executive elections.

On the fourth day of contract negotiations on May 7, 1958, issues such as jury duty, union security, and seniority rights were discussed. On the issue of jury duty, Delamere maintained that the company should not be responsible for maintaining the wages and job status of those called to jury duty, despite the fact that salaried employees still receive their salary in this situation.<sup>40</sup> During the discussions on union security and dues collection, Delamere exposed a weakness in the bargaining platform of the union when he posed the question, “do you contemplate setting up a strike fund?”<sup>41</sup> To this question, Nels Thibault replied, “that’s a good idea. I wasn’t thinking of it at this time.”<sup>42</sup> It is debatable whether or not Thibault was bluffing when he said this. However, given the history of Local 598, it would be safe for the company to assume that the local had never really taken the idea of a strike fund seriously because it had never gone on strike before. Moreover, Local 598's leaders had probably assumed that if their financial situation was strained due to a strike, they could turn to the National Office for help since they were the largest and most influential local in the union. Regardless, it could be argued that at this point, the company was now aware that forcing its employees to go on strike would be very beneficial because the company, unlike the union, was fully prepared for a strike.

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<sup>40</sup>“Fourth Meeting With Inco: May 7, 1958,” Mike Solski Fonds, P019 Series 4, Box 11, File 1, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>41</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>*ibid.*

Thus, when the discussion moved to the issue of seniority as it related to layoffs and recalls, company officials could continue their stance of refusing to cede anything to the union with the knowledge that they were in full control of these negotiations.<sup>43</sup>

Negotiations continued on May 15, 1958, but nothing was really settled. By this point, all issues had effectively been discussed and the position of both sides had become clear.<sup>44</sup> However, despite this, it was suggested by Delamere that another meeting be held on May 23 in the hopes of reaching a settlement because in his words, "conditions are different now."<sup>45</sup> This suggestion was agreed to by both sides, despite the fact that it appeared that the offers by both sides were final.<sup>46</sup>

On May 23, 1958, Delamere informed the union's bargaining committee that sales had dropped to 16.5 million pounds and that "stocks of unsold nickel excluding US stockpile and inventories have risen to 125 million pounds."<sup>47</sup> Delamere also noted that the company could not continue its annual rate of production of 250 million pounds when sales of only 200 million pounds were anticipated for that year.<sup>48</sup> With that in mind, Delamere presented his final proposal to the union, which was dated May 23, 1958.

After the presentation of this proposal, the local's bargaining committee met to discuss the company's offer. Committee members concluded that they "could not see any monetary concessions

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> "Fifth Day of Meetings With Inco: May 15, 1958," Mike Solski Fonds, P019 Series 4, Box 11, File 1, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> "6th Day of Meetings: May 23, 1958," Mike Solski Fonds, P019 Series 4, Box 11, File 1, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

in the company's proposal and felt that they were trying to steer [sic] our committee into conciliation."<sup>49</sup> Moreover, the committee also suggested that "if the (company's) proposal had contained anything worth while a counter proposal could be made, but not on a proposal that contained nothing."<sup>50</sup> As a result, two motions were put forward by members of the committee. First, C. Patterson put forth a motion to reject the company's proposal. This motion was carried unanimously.<sup>51</sup> Second, R. Methot put forth a motion not to present a counter-proposal to the company's offer. This motion was also carried unanimously.<sup>52</sup> When both sides returned to the bargaining table after this meeting, Delamere admitted that the company had not reviewed the cost of its proposal.<sup>53</sup> But more important, it was agreed that an impasse in negotiations had been reached, and that conciliation had to be the next step in this process.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, R. V. Bradley was appointed as a conciliator in this dispute. However, as *Local 598 News* reported on July 2, 1958, Bradley had nothing to work with because "the company had gone into conciliation without having put a single worthwhile proposal on the table and refused to make any moves."<sup>55</sup> Thus, it was announced that a Conciliation Board was to be established to address the situation.<sup>56</sup> However, while both sides were waiting for the appointment of this board, company officials decided to put into action what they had suggested at the third meeting on May 6, which was to place

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>"Conciliation Officer Fails to Budge Inco," *Local 598 News*, July 2, 1958, 1.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

all the hourly-rated employees on a 32-hour work week without making up the loss in wages.<sup>57</sup> This action was officially taken by the company to facilitate a 20% reduction in production.<sup>58</sup> However, it could be argued that by announcing this reduction at this time, the company made a conscious decision to bargain in bad faith with the full intention of provoking a strike. Moreover, the company could easily justify this action by mentioning that its second quarter sales for that year had dropped by approximately \$5 million (from \$85,199,000 to \$80,409,000) in comparison to the first quarter of that year.<sup>59</sup> This would suggest that Company officials were fully aware of the fact that they were in full control of contract negotiations at this time, and that they could easily take advantage of this situation to weaken or possibly break the union as Mike Solski suggested.<sup>60</sup>

The Conciliation Board was appointed, and the composition of the Board was made public on July 22. Judge D. C. Thomas would chair the board, while Ken Woodsworth and C. R. Bigeiow represented the union and the company respectively.<sup>61</sup> The hearings of the Board were held over a four-day period in August, with Inco making no alterations to its previous offer and making no guarantees as to when the forty-hour week would be resumed.<sup>62</sup> It became clear to everybody present at these hearings that Inco was not in any way committed to reaching a settlement that would be acceptable to both sides. In fact, Judge Thomas agreed with this observation when he stated that, "the

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<sup>57</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 206.

<sup>58</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>59</sup>The International Nickel Company of Canada, Annual Report 1958 (Copper Cliff: The International Nickel Company of Canada, 1959), 21.

<sup>60</sup>Tony Van Alpen, "Strike End was Sudbury's Yule Gift 25 Years Ago," The Sudbury Star, December 24, 1983, 27.

<sup>61</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 206.

<sup>62</sup>*ibid.*

Company's efforts during sittings of the Conciliation Board were directed almost entirely to acquainting the Union with the Company's position at the present time in the hope that the Union would bear with it and maintain the status quo."<sup>63</sup> In anticipation of an unfavourable ruling by the Conciliation Board, an article in the *Local 598 News* urged the miners at Inco to make financial preparations for a strike after the motion for a strike vote was passed at membership meetings following the hearings with the Conciliation Board.<sup>64</sup> The unfavourable ruling that the union anticipated came on September 9, 1958, when Judge Thomas ruled that "the union's request for a wage increase is not justified at the present time" in his complete acceptance of Inco's position.<sup>65</sup> Ken Woodsworth presented a minority report which was a little bit more favourable to the union, but it was still seen as something that needed improvement if any settlement were to be reached.<sup>66</sup> If the union could claim any victory in this process, it was that the Board recommended a one-year contract instead of the two-year deal that was proposed by the company.<sup>67</sup> But this victory was shallow, at best.

The following day, the union's bargaining committee offered its reaction to the Board report in that day's issue of *Local 598 News*. The bargaining committee concluded that the Conciliation Board made no attempt to conciliate anything, nor did the Board suggest any method for settling the dispute. In fact, the bargaining committee argued that the report could have just as easily been written by the company.<sup>68</sup> The committee also suggested that the Board was wrong to argue that the loss of 20% of

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<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 207.

<sup>64</sup> "Strike Vote," *Local 598 News*, August 20, 1958, 1 - 2.

<sup>65</sup> John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 207.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, 207 - 208.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> "Union Reaction to the Board Reports," *Local 598 News*, September 10, 1958, 1.

a miner's income did not represent the wiping out the gains of years of negotiations is completely without merit, and that the Board members would feel the effect of a 20% loss of income despite their higher standards of living.<sup>69</sup> Throughout the entire article, the bargaining committee members expressed their sheer disgust with the Board report while stating that they were still willing to continue to bargain in good faith.<sup>70</sup> However, the bargaining committee also stressed that in order for meaningful negotiations to occur, a 100% strike vote was necessary.<sup>71</sup> This vote would occur on September 12 and 13. Out of the 12,887 miners who cast a ballot on those days, 10,662 (or 83%) voted in favour of strike action.<sup>72</sup>

Armed with the support of the membership, the union's bargaining committee met with the company's bargaining committee in the hopes of obtaining a meaningful settlement. Mike Solski suggested that the union was willing to bargain on the basis of the minority report of the Conciliation Board presented by Woodsworth.<sup>73</sup> However, Delamere replied by stating that "this company is not anxious to have a strike" but that the company had "not succeeded in getting across to you the circumstances surrounding our business."<sup>74</sup> Delamere went on to mention that this market situation was likely to continue and that the company was "forced" to accept the majority report presented by Judge Parker.<sup>75</sup> However, despite the apparent concern over a strike, the company then immediately

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 208.

<sup>73</sup>"1st Meeting with Inco after Conciliation and Strike Vote: September 16, 1958," Mike Solski Fonds, P019 Series 4, Box 11, File 1, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

proceeded to initiate discussions on how an orderly shutdown of operations would take place. It was eventually agreed that 72 hours notice would be given to the company before a strike would begin and that the next meeting between both sides would occur the following morning, though the company had wanted that meeting to occur later that evening.<sup>76</sup>

In the joint executive boards and committee meeting which occurred the following morning, T. Byng presented the following motion: "that we call a strike against International Nickel Company on Wednesday, September 24'th, beginning with what would normally be the day shift."<sup>77</sup> This motion was carried unanimously.<sup>78</sup> The company was subsequently informed of the strike date, which the company accepted.<sup>79</sup> The company also informed the union that during the shutdown, the mines and plants would not be operated. However, the company would use this period to replace the smokestack in Coniston and upgrade the smokestack in Copper Cliff. The company also stated that it would use this time to have gas lines installed at the plant by the Manix Company and that the completion of this work was necessary to ensure no unnecessary delays in the resumption of operation after the strike.<sup>80</sup> At this meeting, the union also accused the company of provoking wildcat strikes at various locations throughout the city.<sup>81</sup> Despite the negative tone of this meeting, the union's bargaining committee was not willing to give up on a peaceful settlement just yet. The committee sent Solski to Toronto to meet

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<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> "Joint Executive Boards and Committee Meeting: September 17, 1958," Mike Solski Fonds, P019 Series 4, Box 11, File 1, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> "2'nd Meeting with Inco after Strike Vote: September 17, 1958," Mike Solski Fonds, P019 Series 4, Box 11, File 1, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, and Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 133.

with Premier Leslie Frost in the hopes that he would bring both sides together to reach a settlement. As a result of this meeting, the Premier arranged for a meeting between the two sides on September 23, with Labour Minister Charles Daley serving as a mediator.<sup>82</sup> But the company was sending its employees home and shutting down its operations instead. The union made one final concession in an attempt to avoid a strike, but to no avail.<sup>83</sup> Inco wanted a strike, and they got their wish on September 24, 1958.

There has been much debate as to why this strike was called. The two quotations printed at the beginning of this chapter effectively summarize the two main arguments presented. The first argument, which seems to be the most common argument, suggests that the decision to call the strike was made to further the cause of the Communist Party of Canada. This viewpoint was expressed by *The Globe and Mail*, and refuted by Mike Solski in the same paper.<sup>84</sup> *The Canadian Register*, a Catholic newspaper, also expressed this view in an editorial on October 11, 1958. In this case, the editor suggested that the Inco strike, along with a rash of other strikes occurring at a time when the peak of prosperity of a few years ago had passed, was being driven by Communist Party objectives to “overthrow the Western world by any means in its power.”<sup>85</sup> It should be noted that the Catholic Church was (and still is) a very strong and influential part of the Sudbury community, and thus the views of a Catholic newspaper would carry a lot of weight in this area, either directly or through homilies at Sunday Masses. However, when one

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<sup>82</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 133.

<sup>83</sup>*ibid.*, 133 - 134.

<sup>84</sup>“Union Lashes at MPPs, Mayor And Claims Workers’ Support,” *The Globe and Mail*, December 15, 1958, 1.

<sup>85</sup>“A Sinister Coincidence,” *The Canadian Register*, October 11, 1958, 4.

analyses the above evidence, it becomes clear that communism really had nothing to do with the decision to call the strike in 1958. As mentioned earlier, the miners were expecting the pattern of wage increases to continue, regardless of the company's situation. Moreover, with the series of layoffs and production cutbacks imposed by the company during that year, it was clear that for the union to maintain any sort of legitimacy at Inco, it could not merely accept these company actions without a fight. The union had made a serious attempt to bargain in good faith throughout the entire process, but without any attempt to bargain in good faith by the company, and with a strong strike mandate from the miners, it became clear that a strike would be the only option. Under these conditions, it could be argued that even the most conservative of unions would have voted in favour of strike action. In other words, Mike Solski and his bargaining committee really had no choice in this matter. But it could also be argued that the merit of this decision is irrelevant within the context of the divisions within the union. The only thing that matters here is that the strike was called, and its results would be disastrous for the union.

According to Solski, the strike, which began on September 24, 1958, started in "an orderly, well-organized and disciplined manner."<sup>86</sup> The strikers remained firm in their resolve, and the "union officers continued their efforts through direct approach and through co-operating intermediaries to persuade the company to resume bargaining."<sup>87</sup> Government agencies were asked to intervene in the matter, and appeals for "moral, political and financial support from other unions" were made.<sup>88</sup> Since

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<sup>86</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Miii: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smeiter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 134.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

Mine-Mill had established a long history of helping other locals of many unions in distress, most unions were quite willing to offer as much support as they could to Local 598.<sup>89</sup> However, it also started to become quite evident that the union would be unable to maintain its resolve for long.

To begin, the National Office was experiencing financial difficulties of its own due to layoffs related to decreased production at the mines where it represented the miners. Moreover, the union was also responsible for severance pay for these miners.<sup>90</sup> Thus, in April of that year, Secretary-Treasurer William Longridge had made an appeal to all officers within the union to reduce their expenditures as much as possible in light of the financial crisis the union was in.<sup>91</sup> Thus, when a strike was called later that year, the National Office was unable to provide Local 598 with any significant financial support. Gib Gilchrist noted in his book *As Strong as Steel*, that the total contributions from the National Office for this strike amounted to a paltry \$100,000, which wasn't nearly enough to support the miners over the period of a long strike.<sup>92</sup> But even without the adequate support of the National Office, it was argued that Local 598 should have had the financial resources to adequately support its striking miners who had paid millions in dues over the past ten years. This prompted the editor of *The Globe and Mail* to ask the question "where did the money go?" In an editorial that was published on November 20, 1958, the editor openly asked where the millions of dollars in dues collected over the past seven years went suggesting that the money might have been squandered, misappropriated to the National or

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<sup>89</sup>Gilbert H. "Gib" Gilchrist, *As Strong as Steel* (Sudbury: Journal Printing, 1999), 18 - 19.

<sup>90</sup>"April 18, 1958: Letter to All Officers and Staff," United Steelworkers of America: District 5 Archives, First Accrual, Box 1, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Gilbert H. "Gib" Gilchrist, *As Strong as Steel* (Sudbury: Journal Printing, 1999), 19.

International Office, or given to Communist allies.<sup>93</sup> In his memoirs, Alexander Carter, Bishop Emeritus of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, suggested that the money went to challenge the Smith Bill<sup>94</sup> in the United States, which in turn left the union with no money for the strike.<sup>95</sup> However, this does not seem to be the most logical explanation for the financial shortfall. The most logical explanation for the financial shortfall was presented by Gib Gilchrist when he noted the money that went to the construction of union halls and a summer camp in the Sudbury District. He explained that the union never thought that they would need these financial resources for a strike instead.<sup>96</sup>

Other financial difficulties became evident when Mine-Mill sought financial assistance from the Teamsters and United Mine Workers unions. According to Gib Gilchrist, “both unions were reluctant to be involved because of the independent position of Mine Mill with the C.I.O. and C.C.L.”<sup>97</sup> The lack of financial support offered to a union outside these organizations would become a major factor in the defeat of the Solski executive following the strike.

It should also be noted that the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, under the direction of Bishop Alexander Carter, played an active role in this strike. On October 21, 1958, Bishop Carter issued a Pastoral Letter which was read within every church in the diocese. In this letter, the Bishop clearly stated that “we have abstained and still do abstain from taking sides in this industrial dispute.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>“Where Did the Money Go?,” *The Globe and Mail*, November 20, 1958, 6.

<sup>94</sup>The Smith Bill, passed in 1940, made it unlawful to advocate the overthrow of the government by force or to join any organization which advocated such actions.

<sup>95</sup>Alexander Carter, *Alex Carter: A Canadian Bishop's Memoirs* (North Bay: Tomiko Publications, 1994), 146.

<sup>96</sup>Gilbert H. “Gib” Gilchrist, *As Strong as Steel* (Sudbury: Journal Printing, 1999), 18.

<sup>97</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>98</sup>“Circular Letter of His Excellency Most Reverend Alexander Carter D. D.: October 21, 1958,” Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie in North Bay, Ontario.

However, the Bishop also stated that they could not ignore the striking workers who were “feeling the pinch to the point of being deprived of home and, in some cases sufficient [sic] nourishment for their children.”<sup>99</sup> Thus, the Bishop called on homeowners to relax their rents against the strikers who lived in their residences, in addition to calling on dealers of food and fuel to allow the striking miners to purchase their products on credit.<sup>100</sup> The Bishop also announced the formation of a committee to ensure that the parishes within the diocese were able to provide enough food, clothing, and prayers to the striking miners who were struggling financially.<sup>101</sup> Finally, Bishop Carter chastised the union for allowing this strike to occur “without carefully considering all its implications and taking the necessary measures to alleviate distress.”<sup>102</sup> This was coupled with a condemnation of Mine-Mill’s practice of not providing annual financial statements to its members, which was something that should be regarded as a “fundamental principle in a democratic organization.”<sup>103</sup> Finally, it should be noted that in addition to these efforts to assist the community during the strike, Bishop Carter had numerous conversations with Premier Frost, both in person and through their respective private telephone lines, in which he tried to encourage the Premier to “use his influence with Inco to bring an end to this very unfortunate situation that was affecting so many of our families, especially the women and children.”<sup>104</sup>

Finally, the union had to contend with a “back-to-work” campaign in December 1958. Following a contract offer in November by the company that was rejected by the union due to no wage increases

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Alexander Carter, Alex Carter: A Canadian Bishop's Memoirs (North Bay: Tomako Publications, 1994), 147.

in the first year, *The Sudbury Star* printed a front page editorial on December 5, 1958.<sup>105</sup> In this editorial, the editor stated that “the community at large never wanted the strike, . . . that the timing of the strike was catastrophic for the union,” and that it was not in the best interest of the miners to remain on strike.<sup>106</sup> In the days following this editorial, a meeting in which the wives of the miners would express their continued support for the strike and present a resolution to march on city hall was hastily organized.<sup>107</sup> Overall, this meeting on December 10 would prove to be quite successful, with more than nine hundred women in attendance to support the union. However, there were two women present who did not support the resolutions passed at this meeting. These women would be the focus of the *Sudbury Star’s* coverage of this meeting.<sup>108</sup> As a result, a meeting was organized by Mayor Joseph Fabbro at the Sudbury Arena, with the support of local MPP’s, for December 12, 1958.<sup>109</sup> At this meeting, which was attended by two thousand women who were not necessarily miners’ wives, the focus was on the resolutions of the two women who opposed the resolutions passed at the meeting two days earlier.<sup>110</sup> One of the resolutions passed at this meeting was a proposal that expressed support for no wage increases in the first year of a contract.<sup>111</sup> These resolutions were passed in a controversial manner, with women opposing the resolutions being forced to walk down to the floor of the arena to have their votes counted.<sup>112</sup> At this point, it was starting to become clear that the strike could not go on for much

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<sup>105</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 213 - 215.

<sup>106</sup>“As the Community Sees It,” *The Sudbury Star*, December 5, 1958, 1.

<sup>107</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 135.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, and John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 216.

<sup>111</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 216.

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*

longer.

On December 19, 1958, meetings between both sides resumed under the supervision of Labour Minister Charles Daley. At this meeting, the company offered the union a three-year contract beginning on January 2, 1959, with a 1% wage increase in 1959, a 2% wage increase in 1960, and a 3% wage increase in 1961.<sup>113</sup> Soon after the presentation of the latest company offer, the bargaining committee carried a motion to present and recommend acceptance of this offer to the membership.<sup>114</sup> On December 22, 1958, the contract was ratified by the membership, and the strike officially came to an end.<sup>115</sup>

After the ratification of the contract, the officials within Mine-Mill presented the resolution as a major victory for the union. But as Gib Gilchrist noted, this sentiment was not shared by the miners who had suffered great financial hardship to get a contract that in their minds did not justify going on strike for eighty-five days.<sup>116</sup> When one analyses the financial data presented in Inco's 1958 report to shareholders, it becomes abundantly clear that Inco was the winner of this strike. In the fourth quarter of that year, while sales went down to \$74,751,000 from \$81,679,000 in the previous quarter, net earnings actually increased from \$8,920,000 in the third quarter to \$9,344,000 in the fourth quarter.<sup>117</sup> It should also be noted that the fourth quarter (which saw no production due to the strike)

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<sup>113</sup>Meeting on November 19, 1958," Mike Solski Fonds, PO19 Series 4, Box 11, File 1, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 217 - 218.

<sup>116</sup>Gilbert H. "Gib" Gilchrist, As Strong as Steel (Sudbury: Journal Printing, 1999), 19.

<sup>117</sup>The International Nickel Company of Canada, Annual Report 1958 (Copper Cliff: The International Nickel Company of Canada, 1959), 21.

was the strongest among the final three quarters of that year.<sup>118</sup> The company had clearly put itself in an advantageous position by refusing to concede anything in negotiations until a long strike had greatly weakened the financial and moral resolve of the union.

So, if the union had made the right decision in calling the strike, what went wrong? First, the union was forced into making the decision to go on strike by a company that effectively refused to negotiate. It was not possible for the financial status of the local to be considered in making this decision under these circumstances. Second, Local 598 had never been on strike before, so union leaders didn't really know what to expect when they did go on strike in 1958. As a result, they were ill-prepared for a strike when it happened. By diverting a large portion of their revenues to capital projects such as union halls and a summer camp, in addition to their constant support of other unions and political causes, the local activists were left with very few financial resources to support their own striking miners. Finally, the media and the Roman Catholic Church had succeeded in their efforts to undermine support for the strike which, in addition to the financial hardships experienced not just by the miners, but by the entire community, served to erode the morale of the strikers to the point where they were willing to accept almost any contract offer by the company.

After the contract was ratified begrudgingly by the workers, it became clear that change was about to occur within Local 598. The conservative faction of the local had possibly gained enough strength to defeat the Solski executive in the next executive election. However, the conservative leaders still needed some assistance, or "divine intervention," if they were to achieve their objective. This

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<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*

assistance would not come from a union or a company, but rather from the unlikely sources of a Church and their university.

## 3

*Onward Christian Soldiers*

## Professor Boudreau and Adult Education for Miners

*The University of Sudbury and I were accused of trying to break up the Mine-Mill Union . . . This accusation was not true; nor was this the purpose of the course. We were simply trying to help the workers to take their responsibilities within the union movement.<sup>1</sup>*

Rev. Alexander Carter  
Bishop Emeritus  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie

*Mine, Mill must be destroyed, and disappear from the map of Canada. This can be achieved only by depriving the Commies of their milch-cow, local 598 of Sudbury.<sup>2</sup>*

Prof. Alexandre Boudreau  
Director Emeritus of Extensions  
University of Sudbury

In his statement above, Bishop Carter stated that his intentions, and the intentions of the University of Sudbury were not to destroy Mine-Mill in Sudbury. Given the genuine concern that he displayed for the miners and the community as a whole during the 1958 strike and his genuine respect for the workers' right to determine their own collective bargaining agents, it can be assumed that

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander Carter, *Alex Carter: A Canadian Bishop's Memoirs* (North Bay: Tomiko Publications, 1994), 149.

<sup>2</sup>"Letter from Alexandre Boudreau to Claude Jodoin: June 5, 1959," *Jim Tester Papers* P059 File 25: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Canadian Labour Congress 50/67, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

Bishop Carter, as Chancellor of the University of Sudbury, really did not set out to break Mine-Mill. However, when one analyses the above statement by Prof. Alexandre Boudreau on June 5, 1959, it becomes abundantly clear that Boudreau's intent was to destroy Mine-Mill in Sudbury through the mechanisms he had at his disposal. Thus, it can be assumed that Bishop Carter made his statement without any real knowledge of Boudreau's motives. In this analysis of the role of these "outside influences" in the feud between Mine-Mill and the United Steelworkers of America following the 1958 strike, Professor Boudreau's "Leadership Training Course for Miners" and the Northern Workers Adult Education Association will be carefully analysed. This analysis will focus on the development and purpose of the course, the structure of the course, and its appeal to its students. By focussing on these points, it will be demonstrated that education became a major factor in determining the outcome of the Steelworker raids at Inco following the strike.

After the strike of 1958, there were many miners at both Inco and Falconbridge who were upset with the results and began thinking of ways to exact revenge on a local executive that had failed to negotiate a settlement that was worth going on strike for. Despite the fact that the Falconbridge miners did not go on strike (and thus continued to receive regular pay cheques during the Inco strike), they were still directly affected by the ratification of the Inco contract. One of the long-standing customs in labour relations at the mines in the Sudbury area was that the Inco contract would be ratified first, before contract negotiations began with Falconbridge. As a result, with the precedent of the Inco contract as a guide, the negotiations with Falconbridge tended to go very quickly, with the final result being the ratification of a contract that was similar, if not identical, to the recently signed Inco contract.

(Incidentally, this is a custom that has largely continued to this day, despite representation by two different unions, with the Falconbridge miners usually getting the same contract as Inco, with an extra perk.) According to Gib Gilchrist, this situation also occurred following the 1958 strike, with Falconbridge miners ultimately being forced to sign the same agreement that was reached at Inco.<sup>3</sup> As a result, Donald Gillis, a Falconbridge miner and Reeve of Neelon-Garson, had formed a small group of miners who sought to unseat the Solski executive.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, in Sudbury, another opposition group with the same objective was taking shape. This group included Bill Lockman, John Gouchie, Donald McNabb, Leo Legault, Tom Taylor, and Foch Meilleur.<sup>5</sup> Finally, a third group was forming among the miners in Levack who were upset with the results of the contract. This group was being led by Raymond Poirier and Tony Soden.<sup>6</sup> Eventually, the three groups became aware of each other's existence, and the groups would meet at a greenhouse owned by Ray Poirier, where it was agreed that for the next meeting, "each man would try and bring four friends," and that this process would continue for each successive meeting.<sup>7</sup>

It was starting to become clear that this opposition group would have the strength in numbers to mount a serious opposition to the Solski executive in the upcoming Local 598 elections. However, as mentioned earlier in the first chapter, the emergence of a numerically strong conservative faction was not a new concept for Local 598. But this group would be faced with the same challenge that

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<sup>3</sup>Gilbert H. "Gib" Gilchrist, *As Strong as Steel* (Sudbury: Journal Printing, 1999), 19.

<sup>4</sup>Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing & Printing Co., 1978), 59.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 60.

previous conservative factions faced, which was to convince the apathetic miners that their votes did count, and that they really could influence the executive's operation of their local. After the strike, there were certainly enough miners who wanted changes within their local. The challenge was to transform their desire for change into a belief that they could effect change. In this aspect, the group which sought to unseat the Solski executive needed outside assistance to accomplish their goal.

At this time, Bishop Alexander Carter had also seen a need for change in how Local 598 was operated. During the 1958 strike, his diocese had expended a great deal of its resources to answer the desperate pleas of miners who "having been accustomed to a fairly good salary, . . . suddenly found themselves living on a pittance."<sup>8</sup> As the Chancellor of the University of Sudbury, operated by the Jesuit Fathers, Bishop Carter became aware of a plan to develop a course that was designed to instruct miners on "the true principles of unionism" and to encourage its students to "become leaders in their unions."<sup>9</sup> Moreover, this university course would be structured in a manner which recognized the fact that the majority of its students would not have completed (or in some cases acquired) any form of secondary school education. The person who was charged with this daunting task at the university was Alexandre J. Boudreau.

Professor Boudreau came to Sudbury with an impressive curriculum vitae relating to his work with unions and his anticommunist stance, which was consistent with the views of the Catholic Church. Boudreau, who was educated by the Jesuit Fathers, had worked as an economics professor in addition

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<sup>8</sup>Alexander Carter, *Alex Carter: A Canadian Bishop's Memoirs* (North Bay: Tomiko Publications, 1994), 147.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 149.

to developing cooperatives among the fishermen in the Maritimes.<sup>10</sup> In addition to his work in the Maritimes, Boudreau had also been sent on a United Nations mission to Cambodia in 1954 to act as “an advisor in public administration” to that nation’s government.<sup>11</sup> It was reported by the *Canadian Register* that during this mission, he had a conversation with the president of the Polish Legation to Cambodia regarding the nature of Communist influence in America. During this conversation, the president informed him that “the Communists had one stronghold in Canada: the City of Sudbury.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, when this fervent anticommunist was presented with the opportunity to address this matter through his position at the University of Sudbury, he remembered this conversation and readily accepted the position.<sup>13</sup>

During his tenure at the university, Boudreau would work under the supervision of another Jesuit Father, the Very Reverend Emile Bouvier, President of the University of Sudbury. Rev. Bouvier’s curriculum vitae included the publication of a book in 1951 entitled *Employers and Employees*. This book had a decidedly anti-labour stance and was “thoroughly condemned by Gerard Picard, former president of the Canadian Catholic Confederation of Labour.”<sup>14</sup> In addition to the publication of his book, Bouvier had also established a “controversial school of ‘industrial relations’ in Mexico City” after receiving his PhD in Economics from Georgetown University, which also operated under the guidance

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<sup>10</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 137 and John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 222 - 223.

<sup>11</sup>“Mine-Mill Shows its True Color — RED,” *The Canadian Register*, November 7, 1959, 1.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 137.

of the Jesuit Fathers.<sup>15</sup> This was followed by a return to his alma mater as the head of its political economy department.<sup>16</sup> Finally, it should be noted that the appointments of Boudreau and Bouvier occurred while Laurentian University's<sup>17</sup> Board of Governors was chaired by Ralph Parker, who held the dual roles of operations manager and vice-president at Inco.

In developing his course, Boudreau would seek the assistance of the Canadian Labour Congress and the United Steelworkers of America to provide him with the materials he needed to teach his course. This is not surprising when one considers the fact that officials within the Catholic Church had often praised the Steelworkers as an ideal union. This praise from the Church stemmed from the Steelworkers' staunch opposition to communism, while acting on the Church's belief that workers had the right to organize into unions to combat the abuses of capitalism. Examples of this praise by the Church could be found in articles in *Steel Labor*, which was the official publication of the Steelworkers. In an article which appeared on June 23, 1939, Catholic Priests in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Pueblo expressed their emphatic support for the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, which was the precursor to the USWA.<sup>18</sup> This was followed by the public endorsement of the union as a bargaining agent for the workers at Bethlehem Steel by fourteen priests in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, on July 25, 1941.<sup>19</sup> Finally, in February 1946, Rev. Charles O. Rice of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh offered his support to striking Steelworkers in his city by arguing that "their cause is grave and just" and that his prayers were

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<sup>15</sup>ibid., 138.

<sup>16</sup>ibid.

<sup>17</sup>The University of Sudbury, along with Huntington University (United) and Thorneloe University (Anglican) are denominationally-based Federated Universities of Laurentian University.

<sup>18</sup>"Three Catholic Priests Praise SWOC," *Steel Labor*, (Canadian Edition), June 23, 1939, 8.

<sup>19</sup>"Priests Endorse SWOC in NLRB Election," *Steel Labor* (Canadian Edition), July 25, 1941, 5.

being devoted to their cause.<sup>20</sup> By 1959, the United Steelworkers of America had become firmly established by the Catholic Church as a model union for those in the mining industry.

Upon finding out about this course, James Kidd, now working for the Steelworkers, informed Gower Markle, Director of Education for the Steelworkers, of discussions he had with Boudreau. On January 14, 1959, Kidd sent Markle a letter outlining the details of this meeting in which he “assured the dean that the Steelworkers would give him all the literature he wants.”<sup>21</sup> Kidd went on to state that Boudreau would “use this material to show the workers how a proper International Union works and by doing so the comparison with Mine Mill will be made without actually mentioning Mine Mill.”<sup>22</sup> Finally, Kidd stated that “this educational program is a start in training union members who will be properly equiped [sic] to take a leading part in any future move that we may make.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, the Steelworkers clearly saw this course as a vehicle through which they could finally launch a successful raid in Sudbury, and Boudreau expressed a strong desire to play an active role in this raid. Acting on this fact, Markle sent a reply to Boudreau on February 9, 1959, stating that he would do what he could to honour Boudreau’s request for materials from his department.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the material support offered by the Steelworkers, James Kidd also offered

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<sup>20</sup> “Steelworkers are Right, Priest Says,” *Steel Labor* (Canadian Edition), February 1946, 12.

<sup>21</sup> “Canadian Labour Congress Letter From James Kidd to Gower Markle: January 14, 1959,” *Jim Tester Papers* P059 Box 135,1 File 25: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Canadian Labour Congress 50/67, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> “United Steelworkers of America Letter from Gower Markle to Prof. A. J. Boudreau,” *Jim Tester Papers* P059 Box 135,1 File 25: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Canadian Labour Congress 50/67, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

Boudreau a list of 90 people whom he viewed as proper candidates for this course.<sup>25</sup> As a result, when the class began on January 15, 1959, the size of the class had to be capped at 140 students.<sup>25</sup> On that day, the students received a copy of a lengthy 17-page syllabus, which clearly outlined the purpose of the course and some of the ideas that students were encouraged to explore throughout the term. However, this syllabus was also written in a manner that would conceal the course's true objectives.

In the general introduction to the course, Boudreau clearly stated that "this course is not sponsored by any organized group, not by Inco, nor by Mine-Mill."<sup>27</sup> As the above evidence from the Steelworkers suggests, this statement was a lie designed to ensure that the students did not get suspicious about the course. Boudreau then went on to stress the power of the human mind to think independently while working at a position where brainwashing was likely to occur.<sup>28</sup> In saying this, however, Boudreau also mentioned that the purpose of this course was "to help you think right."<sup>29</sup> Once again, a contradiction seems to be evident here. He then went on to state that the students had been given a mission in life by God and that assuming leadership was a fundamental part of fulfilling this divine mission.<sup>30</sup>

At this point, Boudreau then went on to describe the difference between capitalism and communism. In his description of the development of capitalism, Boudreau went on to state that abuses

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<sup>25</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 138.

<sup>26</sup>"Letter from James L. Kidd to Larry Sefton and Joe MacKenzie on March 24, 1959," James L. Kidd Fonds P051 File: Steelworkers photocopies No.8 F1,2., Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>27</sup>"Leadership Course for Miners from January 15'th to May 10'th," Mike Solski Fonds P019 Series 1, Box 5, File 10, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>28</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>30</sup>*ibid.*

developed when the fundamental principle of competition was eroded and the individual, instead of God, was glorified.<sup>31</sup> As a result of these abuses, the development of communism and cooperation occurred.<sup>32</sup>

In his critique of communism, Boudreau argued that it was “the anti-thesis of the glorification of the individual,” in that the worker lost his identity to a point where he was controlled by a dictator who robbed him of his freedom and his God.<sup>33</sup> Thus, Boudreau argued that the proper reaction to capitalism was cooperation, which was based on the love of God.<sup>34</sup> In his description of the cooperative system, Boudreau focussed on the democratic structures which provided the members with the freedoms that communism and capitalism could not provide. These structures included political and racial neutrality, an equitable distribution of riches, and control by the entire membership through a democratic election process.<sup>35</sup> However, in explaining the nature of the cooperative system, Boudreau would mention two things which would form a guide for the actions of the Local 598 executive headed by Donald Gillis, a student of Boudreau. The first was the notion that “democracy means democratic control,” but that this democratic control did not extend to democratic management.<sup>36</sup> The second point that was raised by Boudreau was that “democracy also means control of finances. And this control is essential.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, the actions of the Gillis executive regarding Local 598 finances would reflect a desire

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

for total control of the local finances. The remainder of the syllabus was dedicated to what constituted a true citizen – one who took an active part in his schools, his church, and politics.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, when one analyses the syllabus and the secondary materials for this course, it becomes clear what the purpose of the course really was. First, the course was designed to teach its students to “think right,” so they would not succumb to the allure of communism. Second, the course was also designed to train its students to assume leadership positions within Mine-Mill by which they could facilitate a Steelworkers’ raid. Finally, this course was designed to present the cooperative structure as the model to adopt to facilitate these goals.

To understand the nature of the Leadership Course, one can examine the Northern Workers Adult Education Association Course on Communism, which was also designed by Professor Boudreau. In this course, many of the themes outlined in the Leadership Course were evident, and through an analysis of this course, one can develop a better understanding of the motives which governed the actions of the Local 598 executive headed by Donald Gillis. The course itself consisted of a series of short lectures followed by a questionnaire that was answered in small discussion groups. Each of these lessons had one overarching theme, which was to emphasize the evils of Communism. For example, in the first lesson the focus was on Communism as an evil tree, with its roots being atheism, dialectical materialism, naturalism (in which nature replaced God as the highest entity), and class struggle.<sup>39</sup> The lesson plan went on to state that the trunk of a tree was a brutal dictatorship which aimed to create a

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>“Northern Workers Adult Education Association Discussion Groups on Communism: Lesson 1,” Jim Tester Papers P059 Box J35,1 File 24: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Course on Communism: 1958-1961, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

classless society that has no state, no private ownership, and no religion.<sup>40</sup> Finally, the lesson plan advocated stripping communists of their basic principles of freedom and democracy since they used these principles to achieve their ends.<sup>41</sup>

The second lesson provided a deeper analysis of communism which refuted the idea that communism was a workers' movement. The course did this by emphasizing the fact that the most powerful Communists, including Karl Marx, and the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution came from the middle and upper classes.<sup>42</sup> There was also an examination of the language used by Communists to recruit workers to their cause, such as "fascist," which referred to all non-Communists, and "peace," which referred to the "period of preparation for war and revolution."<sup>43</sup> The discussion questions which followed focussed on the idea of Communism as "a movement for the working people," which was discredited through the lecture that preceded the group discussions.

Following the lesson aimed at debunking the myth of communism as a workers' movement, a lesson which focussed on the Communists' sole aim of world domination was presented. In this lecture, it was argued that Communists had abandoned their forceful methods of expansion in favour of a more peaceful method of using the democratic process within a country. In making this claim, Boudreau stated that "they use our democratic rights to promote their subversive activities and to eventually abolish these same rights," and that "if you accuse a person of being a Communist, they will not deny

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>"Northern Workers Adult Education Association Course on Communism: Lesson 2," Jim Tester Papers P059 Box J35.1 File 24: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Course on Communism 1958-1961, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

it but they will protest and say that in a democratic country, they have the right to belong to the political party of their choice."<sup>44</sup> As a means of countering this attitude, Boudreau suggested that the Communist Party should not be recognized as a political party, but rather as a criminal organization that would not be protected by any constitution.<sup>45</sup> Finally, the students were warned against possessing an indifferent attitude toward Communists and their "democratic rights," arguing that Communists depended on the indifference of a population to achieve their goals, and that everyone was obligated to take an affirmative stand against Communism, even if it went against democratic principles.<sup>46</sup> There are two important lessons here regarding how these ideals related to Local 598. First, the largely apathetic electorate must have a fear of Communism instilled in them so that they could take affirmative action against the incumbent executive through their vote. Second, it is the duty of this new "democratic" executive to suppress any dissenting opinion by any means necessary.

The fourth lesson in this series was particularly important in relation to the removal of the Mike Solski executive from Local 598. In this lesson, the focus was on the development of Communist fronts. On this matter, it was emphasized that Communists relied on non-Communists, usually prominent citizens, to establish their power-base in an organization.<sup>47</sup> They tended to accept positions within the organization which were not glamorous, such as secretary-treasurer, while recruiting this prominent

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<sup>44</sup>"Northern Workers Adult Education Association Course on Communism: Lesson 3," Jim Tester Papers P059 Box J35,1 File 24: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Course on Communism: 1958-1961, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>"Northern Workers Adult Education Association: Lesson 4," Jim Tester Papers P059 Box J35,1 File 24: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Course on Communism 1958-1961, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

citizen to assume the more glamorous positions, such as president.<sup>48</sup> During this period, the prominent citizen was unaware of the “fact” that he was being duped into providing the Communists with a front to carry out their activities.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, the Communists within the organization would hold private meetings among themselves to “plan strategy and to map out policy,” which in turn would be carefully presented and accepted at a membership meeting to an unassuming membership.<sup>50</sup>

From this lesson plan, one can observe the justification of the removal of a non-communist from the executive of Local 598. In his book, *The Sudbury Incident*, Frank Southern made the following observations regarding John Clark, International President of Mine-Mill, and Mike Solski: “There was never any evidence that either of these men ever endorsed Communist Ideology. Both John and Mike made wonderful ‘front’ men.”<sup>51</sup> In fact, Mike Solski’s political orientation was more reflective of the Liberal Party, in which he became an active member.<sup>52</sup> But Mike Solski’s refusal to take any affirmative action against the communists within his local branded him as a Communist-sympathizer who was duped into providing the Communists within his organization with the front they needed to carry out their activities. Thus, students of this course would see the removal of Solski from the presidency of Local 598 in 1959 as an essential action if they were to rid their local of Communists.

The fifth lesson in this series focussed on the degree to which the general public was brainwashed by Communist propaganda through the establishment of “liberalism,” which served to

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<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing & Printing Co., 1978), 57.

<sup>52</sup> Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), iii.

achieve the Communist goal of undermining the Church through actions such as the abolition of religious instruction in schools, enacting laws which allow “business as usual” on the Sabbath, and by directing priests to preach “liberal” concepts.<sup>53</sup> With this theme in mind, the lesson plan then focussed on how Communists had infiltrated the newspaper and film industries. In the case of newspapers, it was suggested that communists had been placed in organizations such as the Canadian Press, the Associated Press, and Reuters, so they could spread their propaganda in “respectable” newspapers on a broad scale.<sup>54</sup> However, Boudreau also realized that the spread of this propaganda could be accomplished through union newspapers such as *Local 598 News*, which during the reign of the Gillis executive, would become the only “trustworthy” source for these students to rely on.

The next lesson, entitled “Democracy Versus Communism,” focussed on the disciplined nature of Communists, who would work as a team and were constantly trained to further the cause of the party.<sup>55</sup> What is particularly important to note about this lesson, however, is the section which described the secretive nature of Communists which enabled them to do their work without arousing suspicion. With regard to this point, the following advice was given, “anyone smart enough to spot a Commie should try to thwart his works without openly exposing him” since “Communists are trained to gain public sympathy if accused of Communist activity.”<sup>56</sup> Finally, the students were again reminded that

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<sup>53</sup>“The Establishment of Liberalism: How Badly are we Brainwashed?,” Jim Tester Papers P059 File 24: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Course on Communism 1958-1961, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>54</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>55</sup>“Democracy Versus Communism,” Jim Tester Papers P059 Box 135,1 File 24: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Course on Communism 1958-1961, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>56</sup>*ibid.*

“Communists are helped most of all by public ignorance and apathy.”<sup>57</sup> In response to this, the students were encouraged to educate their friends by “distributing books, pamphlets and papers exposing Communism.”<sup>58</sup>

What is particularly interesting to note about this lesson is that it came before the lesson on “communism’s twin weapons – praise and slander.”<sup>59</sup> This lesson condemned the actions of the Communists in praising those who supported their causes while slandering those who opposed.<sup>60</sup> However, in comparison to the previous lesson, it seems that the only reason why the communists were condemned for these actions stemmed from the fact that they were praising communists. With regard to praising anti-communism while slandering communists, it seems that this “communist” tactic is not only acceptable, but rather, it is encouraged.

The eighth lesson in this series focussed on the structure of the Communist Party itself, which once again was described not as a political party, but as “an active, militant, Soviet-dominated secret army of the hard trained troops of the Communist Conspiracy – open Party Members, undercover members, dupes and fellow-travellers”<sup>61</sup> Once again, the students were encouraged not to make direct accusations, but rather to “strengthen freedom and democracy by thwarting their efforts.”<sup>62</sup> Some

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> “Communism’s Twin Weapons – Praise and Slander,” *Jim Tester Papers* P059 Box J35,1 File 24: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Course on Communism 1958-1961, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> “Lesson 8: The Communist Party,” *Jim Tester Papers* P059 Box J35,1 File 24: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Course on Communism 1958-1961, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

suggested tactics for doing this included showing films on Communism to youth groups, refusing to cooperate with Communist “fronts,” and reporting suspicious activities to the proper authorities.<sup>63</sup>

The final lesson in this series, which provided an effective summary of the course, informed the students that it was the responsibility of every individual to fight communism.<sup>64</sup> As a guide for accomplishing this task, the “Twelve Commandments for Anti-Communists” were described. These “commandments” stressed “working quietly,” using anti-communist print media to educate themselves and those around them, persisting in their work, working through their church, and offering their work to God.<sup>65</sup>

So what did the students of Professor Boudreau learn by taking his course? First, the students were told that Communists were atheists who had no morals and were intent on destroying the Church. Second, it was stressed to the students that the Communist Party was not to be seen as a legitimate political party, which in turn justified the “necessary” suppression of their democratic right to freedom of speech. Third, it was stressed that Communists were able to work in Canada because of the apathy and work of non-Communists, who were often duped into supporting their cause. Finally, the students were encouraged to take an active role in eliminating communism in their community through control of the press, suppression of opposing ideas, slander, activity in their church, and political activity.

Through the work of Alexandre J. Boudreau, those who wished to oppose the communist

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<sup>63</sup>ibid.

<sup>64</sup>“Lesson 9: Communism is Making Great Strides Forward. Why?,” Jim Tester Papers P059 Box J35,1 File 24: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Course on Communism 1958-1961, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>65</sup>ibid.

elements within Mine-Mill now had a plan by which they could achieve their goals. However, it will be shown that the work of Boudreau was not limited to his courses. Boudreau would play a very active role in the administration of Local 598 headed by Don Gillis, his prize student. The tactics that would be used by the Gillis administration would often reflect what was taught in these courses, and these tactics would be used to launch a successful Steelworkers' raid at Inco's Sudbury operations. Armed with an electorate that demanded change after the 1958 strike and an education on how to encourage these disgruntled miners to take action and effect these changes, Don Gillis and his slate were poised to take control of Local 598 and permanently alter the course of labour relations in Sudbury.



## The Cementing of Division

## 4

*Democracy is Coming . . .*

## Local 598 Under Don Gillis and the Steelworkers Raid at Inco

*Short of sacrificing honor and autonomy, neither of which are surrenderable, we will urge an honest, sincere effort be made towards entering the Canadian Labour Congress.<sup>1</sup>*

Donald H. "Don" Gillis  
Past-President  
Mine-Mill, Local 598

Following the 1958 Inco Strike, there existed a consensus among many miners that affiliation with the Canadian Labour Congress would be necessary for their local to have the financial resources to ensure that the financial debacle of 1958 would never happen again.<sup>2</sup> In the Local 598 elections which followed the strike, Don Gillis and his campaign team capitalized on this sentiment by including affiliation with the CLC as a key plank in their election platform. As a result, on March 10, 1959, the entire Don Gillis slate was successful in winning all of the positions they contested in the Local 598 election.<sup>3</sup> Under his guidance, Gillis achieved his objective of affiliation with the CLC for the miners at Inco. However, this objective was not achieved through an honest, sincere campaign, but rather through

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<sup>1</sup>Donald H. Gillis on behalf of his Campaign Team, *Mine Mill News*, March 4, 1959, 1 and John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 224.

<sup>2</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 222.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 225 and Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing & Printing Co., 1978), 61.

the sacrifice of autonomy by affiliating with the United Steelworkers of America. In illustrating how the Steelworkers were successful in obtaining the collective bargaining rights for the miners at Inco with the help of Gillis, the actions of the Gillis executive will be analysed, with particular attention being given to how they handled their local's finances and their role in the Steel raid. Moreover, the violent clashes at the Local 598 Hall in Sudbury and at the Sudbury Arena will also be analysed. In addition, the role of Prof. Alexandre Boudreau and the Catholic Church in this dispute will also be highlighted, along with the degree to which Inco was able to take advantage of this contentious situation. Finally, the certification vote of February 27, 28, and March 1, 1962, and the fallout from that vote will be analysed in great detail.

The strike of 1958 affected the affairs of Local 598 in numerous ways, as noted earlier. One of the consequences for the strike was the postponement of the local's executive elections which were originally scheduled for November of that year.<sup>4</sup> As a result, it was agreed that these elections would be held on March 10, 1959.<sup>5</sup> Buoyed by their "victory" in the strike, the incumbent executive led by Mike Solski campaigned to seek re-election on the platform of experienced leadership, labour unity, and a promise to make all of the local's services "self-supporting" as a means of improving their financial situation.<sup>6</sup> Solski was quite confident that those who had supported him in the past would continue to support him in this election. However, during his tenure in Local 598 office, Solski was also aware of the traditional apathy among the voters in the local.<sup>7</sup> On three separate occasions, in 1953, 1955, and

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<sup>4</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 223.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 225.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 227.

1956, elections did not take place because nobody challenged his slate. Moreover, Solski lamented this apathetic situation following a referendum vote on dues in May 1958 which attracted only 1566 voters.<sup>8</sup> The regular business of a union was of no interest to the majority of the membership so long as their way of life was not disrupted and as long as they had a decent contract. Unfortunately for Solski, the union's decision of calling a long, financially-draining strike was one which forced the membership to take notice of their union's affairs. Consequently, it became evident to Solski that this election was not going to be like any other in the local.<sup>9</sup> Don Gillis, his opponent, was betting on this assumption being true.

Meanwhile, among the students of Professor Boudreau, a reform movement entitled the "Committee for Democratic Leadership and Positive Action" was selecting their candidates to run in this election. During the discussion within this group regarding the topic of whom should be the leader, it was agreed that Donald H. "Don" Gillis would be the ideal choice.<sup>10</sup> Gillis, a Falconbridge miner and Reeve of Neelon-Garson, had supported the Kidd faction within the local during the 1940's and ran unsuccessfully for the position of vice-president in 1949 against Solski.<sup>11</sup> He remained relatively silent in Local 598 politics during the 1950's, thus not affiliating himself with the controversial conservative faction of the union. This enabled Gillis to lead a conservative slate without any political "baggage" against him.<sup>12</sup> Considering that Solski had to contend with the debacle of the 1958 strike, and

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 223 - 224.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 224.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

accusations that his local was “communist-tinged,” this “clean slate” proved to be quite advantageous for Gillis.

Now that the Committee had a slate established to contest the Local 598 elections under the guidance of Don Gillis, the next task was to develop a platform to appeal to the voters. As a result, the “ten-point program” was created.<sup>13</sup> In addition to proposals of economic reforms, membership unity, and new local election bylaws, the program also advocated the establishment of co-operative stores.<sup>14</sup> It can be assumed that this last point stemmed from the fact that they were taught by Boudreau to use the co-operative system instead of communism as a means to counter the abuses of capitalism.<sup>15</sup> Finally, the program contained one key point that appealed to miners who saw a need for their local to be more financially stable. This point in the platform was that an attempt would be made by the local to affiliate with the Canadian Labour Congress.<sup>16</sup>

At this point, the Committee had a slate and a platform. The question the Committee now had to ask was, “do we have a chance of winning this election?” According to Frank Southern, author of *The Sudbury Incident*, the general consensus among this slate of candidates was that “they had no chance to win the election but calculated they would use this for a start and perhaps build up support for a future election.”<sup>17</sup> Given the relative ease with which the Solski executive was able to win prior elections, this pessimistic attitude seemed to be well founded. But this election was different, and much to the

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>“Leadership Course for Miners from January 15'th to May 10'th,” Mike Solski Fonds P019 Series 1, Box 5, File 10, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>16</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 224.

<sup>17</sup>Frank Southern, The Sudbury Incident (Toronto: York Publishing & Printing Co., 1978), 61.

surprise of the Gillis slate, the results reflected this fact.

When the votes were tabulated following the election on March 10, Solski learned that despite the debacle of the strike, he was able to retain the support he had in prior elections by receiving 3830 votes.<sup>18</sup> In the election two years prior, Solski had received 3732 votes, which was a fairly large majority.<sup>19</sup> However, Solski's fears of the apathetic voters going to the polls were well founded on this day, with the Gillis slate receiving 5629 votes, which was an increase of four-thousand votes compared to the opposition's tally in 1957.<sup>20</sup> It should also be noted that the entire twelve-man Gillis slate, of which ten of the candidates were students of Boudreau, were successful in winning their respective positions.<sup>21</sup> As a result, on the first membership meeting following the election on April 2, 1959, Don Gillis and his executive were sworn into their respective positions.<sup>22</sup> As a part of the swearing-in ceremony, each new member of the executive pledged their allegiance to the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. However, following this meeting, it would become clear that the new executive's pledge of allegiance to their union was meaningless.<sup>23</sup>

For the most part, the media praised the result of this election. In a *Globe and Mail* editorial printed on March 13, 1959, the editor described the election as "a cheering sign of maturity in the Canadian labor movement" because the rank-and-file were able to peacefully defeat a "powerful and

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<sup>18</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 225.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 225 - 226.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 225, and "Letter from James L. Kidd to Larry Sefton and Joe MacKenzie on March 24, 1959," James L. Kidd Fonds P051 File: Steelworkers photocopies No.8 F1,2., Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>22</sup>Frank Southern, The Sudbury Incident (Toronto: York Publishing & Printing Co., 1978), 61.

<sup>23</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 139.

autocratic” union leader.<sup>24</sup> The editor also stated that “the outgoing officials earned their dismissals” for plunging the local into “one of the silliest strikes in Canadian history.”<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the editor praised the courage of the newly elected executive for challenging the old regime, and for presenting a program that promised drastic changes.<sup>26</sup> The editor concludes by stating that “the Sudbury election provides an encouraging example for the ordinary members of other unions. If they really want to clean house, it can be done.”<sup>27</sup>

The Catholic Church echoed this sentiment in a front-page editorial which appeared in their newspaper, *The Canadian Register*, on March 21, 1959. In this editorial, the editor noted that

the control of the Nickel Belt area unit of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers passed from the hands of a group of men who gave every evidence of being the tools of subversive agencies to an entirely new executive pledged to promote the true interests of the thirteen thousand workers employed by International Nickel.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, the editor noted that through Solski’s decision to go on strike the previous year, the miners who were in a miserable situation realized that “their leaders were not sincerely interested in the welfare of the workers; but rather were bent on disrupting the economic life of the nation and paving the way for Communism to take over.”<sup>29</sup> In light of this situation, the editor went on to praise Gillis and his committee for providing “the true union members with sound leadership which they needed to take

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<sup>24</sup>“A Lesson From Sudbury,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 13, 1959, 6.

<sup>25</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>“They Said: It Couldn’t Be Done,” *The Canadian Register*, March 21, 1959, 1.

<sup>29</sup>*ibid.*

hold of the situation.”<sup>30</sup> Finally, the editor echoed the opinion of the *Globe and Mail* by stating that the results of the election that “the control of the labor movement can be recovered from such (good union) men if solid, right-thinking leaders will throw off their defeatism and fight for the rights of the membership.”<sup>31</sup> However, in a subsequent editorial on March 28, the editor notes that “it is too much to expect that the subversives will lie down and die after one defeat at the polls” because “these men have too much devotion to their designated cause, as well as greed for the personal spoils of office to give up permanently.”<sup>32</sup> Thus, the editor urged the members to remain active in union affairs to ensure that the subversives do not return to power.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, it is interesting to note the reaction of the United Steelworkers of America, who were observing this election with keen interest. Publicly, their assessment of the election was limited to a small article on the front page of the April 1959 edition of their newspaper *Steel Labor*. In their report, the author described the election as a “rank-and-file protest” in which “members of Mine-Mill Local 598 (Inco) last month swept communist and fellow-traveller leaders of the local out of office.”<sup>34</sup> Privately, however, the results of this election were considered to be an item of great interest. In a letter by James Kidd to Larry Sefton (Director, USWA District #6) and Joe MacKenzie (National Director of Organization for the CLC) on March 24, 1959, Kidd noted that “the recent election of officers of Local #598, Mine

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>“The Battle Is Not Over,” *The Canadian Register*, March 28, 1959, 4.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>“Sudbury Mine-Mill Local Ousts Commie-tinged Leaders,” *Steel Labor*, (Canadian Edition) April 1959, 1.

Mill has created a situation in Sudbury of which we must take cognizance."<sup>35</sup> In his letter, Kidd went on to state that "the new Officers are not concerned with cleaning up Mine Mill but would rather prefer to be in some way connected with the Congress."<sup>36</sup> In a meeting with Professor Boudreau regarding this matter, Kidd noted that it was agreed that "our objective should be a complete break with Mine Mill" and that Boudreau was having no trouble in conveying this message to his students.<sup>37</sup> Finally, Kidd informed Sefton and MacKenzie that for Local 598 to be a Congress-chartered local, they must eventually shift their formal affiliation to the United Steelworkers, which is "in line with our original plan for the Sudbury are. [sic]"<sup>38</sup> Thus, the results of the March 1959 election were clearly seen by the executives of Steel as an opportunity for them to launch a successful raid with the assistance of Boudreau and the Gillis executive. However, for Steel to achieve this objective, Local 598 had to be destabilized. The first step in this process was a complete audit of the local's finances by an auditor that would favour Steel's objectives.

In his letter to Sefton and MacKenzie on March 24, 1959, Kidd mentioned that he had discussions with Professor Boudreau regarding the program of the newly elected Gillis executive. The first item that was discussed between the two was the desire by the executive to "press for a complete audit which will in fact be more of an investigation of the financial affairs of the Union."<sup>39</sup> In selecting this auditor, it was determined that the person selected should be one with experience in accounting for

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<sup>35</sup>"Letter from James L. Kidd to Larry Sefton and Joe MacKenzie on March 24, 1959," James L. Kidd Fonds P051 File: Steelworkers photocopies No.8 F1,2., Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>36</sup>ibid.

<sup>37</sup>ibid.

<sup>38</sup>ibid.

<sup>39</sup>ibid.

unions or credit unions, and that Sefton and Mackenzie could have input on this decision.<sup>40</sup> However, the suggestion presented by Donald MacDonald, Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress, led to the final decision on whom to appoint as the auditor for Local 598. In a conversation with Boudreau, MacDonald recommended Alistair Stewart, a former CCF MP and a staff member of the United Packinghouse Workers (CLC).<sup>41</sup> Boudreau relayed this suggestion to the Gillis executive, who accepted it wholeheartedly.<sup>42</sup> As a result, Boudreau had a telephone conversation with Stewart in which Stewart expressed his interest in undertaking this task, which was a complete review of the financial transactions of the local over the past five years.<sup>43</sup> In a letter to Stewart by Boudreau on April 9, 1959, Boudreau mentioned that time or cost would not be a factor, with no time limit being imposed since a thorough investigation takes time. Moreover, it was also mentioned that the Local 598 Executive agreed to accept the suggestion of Boudreau, which was to allot \$2500 - \$3000 for the first month of this investigation.<sup>44</sup> Finally, in this letter, Boudreau informed Stewart that before his arrival in Sudbury, "all contacts (were to) be made through my office at the Department of Extension, University of Sudbury."<sup>45</sup> Officially, the decision to appoint Stewart was made by the executive of Local 598. However, it is quite evident that Boudreau, with the assistance of the officials within the CLC and Steel, was the person who not only made the final decision to appoint Stewart, but assumed a leading role in how this financial

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<sup>40</sup>ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Mike Soiski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 140 - 141.

<sup>42</sup>ibid., 141.

<sup>43</sup>"Letter from A. J. Boudreau to Alistair Stewart on April 9, 1959," Jim Tester Papers P059 Box 135,1 File24: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Course on Communism 1958-1961, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>44</sup>ibid.

<sup>45</sup>ibid.

review was to be conducted. Needless to say, the report that was released by Stewart was not a financial audit, but rather an attack on Mine-Mill disguised as an impartial audit.

When Stewart released the report at the Local 598 membership meeting of May 31, 1959, it became clear that the audit was, in the words of former Local 598 president Mike Solski, “a report that was flagrant in its innuendos, insinuations and deliberate falsehoods.”<sup>46</sup> Within this report, one could find criticism of the nature of the local’s financial reports, the misrepresentation of an expense for a trip that Solski made to Europe in 1955, which in reality was approved by the entire Canadian membership, and the mention of a \$11,000 loan payment toward the construction of a hall in Elliot Lake during the 1958 strike.<sup>47</sup> Stewart then went on to describe the costs of the local’s camp on Richard Lake and their expenditures on the construction of new halls in Garson, Creighton, Coniston, and Elliot Lake.<sup>48</sup> In addition to a “series of expenditures chosen apparently at random but clearly intended to cast aspersions on the previous leadership.”<sup>49</sup> Finally, in his report, Stewart took advantage of every opportunity he had to attack the National Executive of Mine-Mill. These critiques included a criticism of their commitment to the peace movement while they were declaring war on Local 598, that the union was run by a clique that was committed to preserving the power and influence of the Communist- leadership of the union, and that Local 598 was only engaged in “democratic trade unionism” because

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<sup>46</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 139.

<sup>47</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 233.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 234 and Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 140.

<sup>49</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 234.

they had an “honest” election in which Mike Solski was defeated.<sup>50</sup> Not surprisingly, Stewart’s report was adopted at this membership meeting, but not without opposition from those present who supported the National Office of Mine-Mill.

In response to this report, the National Office established a fact-finding committee to investigate the true nature of this report. In their report, the committee found numerous “accounting errors and mistakes in every charge made by Stewart.”<sup>51</sup> The committee also uncovered numerous instances in which Stewart did not follow proper accounting procedures. For example, Stewart “released his report to the press without authorization of the executive and before it had been adopted by the membership.”<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the committee also noted that Stewart made no attempt to follow the standard accounting practice of obtaining assistance of the former officers who were most familiar and responsible for the records which were audited (which was a practice that was regularly followed by Local 598’s regular accountant, Al Favretto).<sup>53</sup> Finally, this committee which “supplied reasonable explanations for the majority of the particular allegations related by Stewart,” did not receive any effective co-operation from the executive of Local 598.<sup>54</sup> In short, it was clear that Stewart’s report was phase one of a plan that was meant to destabilize Local 598 while discrediting Mine-Mill to the benefit of Steel. Despite the efforts of the National Office, it was clear that Boudreau, Gillis, Steel, and the CLC were successful in achieving their objective. But as mentioned earlier, this was phase one of their

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<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>51</sup> Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 140.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*,

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>54</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Gueph, 1970), 236.

program. Phase two was centred on the cultural programs of Local 598 which were under the operation of Weir Reid.

In his letter to Sefton and MacKenzie written on March 24, 1959, James Kidd mentioned that during his discussion with Boudreau, it was agreed that as a part of carrying out the program of the Gillis executive, "Weir Reid, the present director (of the Recreation Department of Local 598) will be discharged . . . as he is a dedicated commie."<sup>55</sup> Thus, at the first Executive Board meeting under Gillis it was agreed that a committee would study the state of the local's recreational program in keeping with their anti-communist stance.<sup>56</sup> Recognizing that much of the Gillis' slate's focus on fighting Communism within the local centred on Weir Reid, a self-styled Marxist, the National Executive agreed that discharging Reid would lead to positive relations between the national and local executives.<sup>57</sup> Following a Joint Executive Board meeting held in Sudbury on April 16, 1959, the Executive Board recommended that "'due to the present financial situation' Weir Reid be discharged from the staff of Mine Mill," and that "one month's salary be paid instead of giving notice."<sup>58</sup> The Gillis executive followed through on this recommendation by firing Reid without consulting the membership. Remembering what Boudreau taught him about democracy involving democratic control, but not democratic management,<sup>59</sup> Gillis justified his action by stating that "the membership had chosen a new executive board and that that

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<sup>55</sup>"Letter from James L. Kidd to Larry Sefton and Joe MacKenzie on March 24, 1959," James L. Kidd Fonds P051 File: Steelworkers photocopies No.8 F1,2., Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>56</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 228.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>59</sup>"Leadership Course for Miners from January 15'th to May 10'th," Mike Solski Fonds P019 Series 1, Box 5, File 10, Microfilm, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

board should have the right to appoint new staff members."<sup>60</sup>

The supporters of Mike Solski, who hired Reid in 1952, protested by circulating a petition which received 2532 signatures that called for a special membership meeting to discuss this matter on May 3, 1959. Don McNabb, the vice-president of Local 598 accepted this petition and promised that the meeting would be called.<sup>61</sup> However, Don Gillis objected to the proposed date for the meeting and appeared on local television to inform the membership that this meeting would take place at a later date.<sup>62</sup> This announcement was ignored, however, and the meeting proceeded as scheduled under the direction of the three executive members who remained from the Solski executive and National President Nels Thibault. At this meeting, a motion for the reinstatement of Reid and the appointment of a committee to assist him was carried.<sup>63</sup> However, due to the refusal of the Gillis executive to recognize this meeting, the motion was ruled to be without standing and a recommendation was put forward that would lead to charges raised under the constitution against those members of the executive who were present at the meeting.<sup>64</sup>

The question regarding Reid's status in Mine-Mill was raised again in the general membership meeting held on May 7, 1959. But it was clear that Gillis would try to use this meeting to gain an unfair advantage over his critics. To do this, he enlisted the help of the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board, which prepared leaflets that were sent home with its students reminding their

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<sup>60</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 229.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, 229 - 230.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*

fathers of this meeting.<sup>65</sup> It can be assumed that in issuing these leaflets, Gillis was counting on the hall being packed with a large contingent of Catholics who would naturally support his decision to fire a known Communist. This tactic proved to be quite successful, with the motion to endorse the Executive Board's decision to fire Reid being carried with a large majority.<sup>66</sup> At the conclusion of this meeting, Reid confronted Local 598 Financial Secretary Raymond Poirier with the demand that he answer to his accusations of Reid. When Poirier refused to speak with Reid, some shoving ensued, but there was no serious physical attack of any nature.<sup>67</sup> However, moments later, as he was going up a flight of stairs, Poirier collapsed and fell unconscious (though this is subject to debate according to John B. Lang, who suggests that this event might possibly have been staged by Poirier as a publicity stunt in his thesis *A Lion in a Den of Daniels*<sup>68</sup>). Gillis and the local media described this action as the result of an attack by Reid on Poirier, which is something the members did not tolerate.<sup>69</sup> The community identified with Gillis' cause as a result, and the supporters of Mike Solski and Weir Reid were effectively branded as thugs. Moreover, Weir Reid and James Tester, who was also involved in the incident, were eventually found guilty of "'conduct unbecoming of a union member' by Local 598's Executive Board."<sup>70</sup>

To ensure that the publicity remained in favour of the Gillis executive, Frank Drea, a reporter for the *Toronto Telegram*, Ray Poirier, and Professor Boudreau had meetings to discuss a series of articles that Drea would publish in his newspaper. These stories, which focussed on Reid and contained

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<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, 231.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, 232.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*

vicious accusations against him under headlines such as “Ontario Reds Recruit 7-Year-Olds,” were not well-received by Reid, who sued the paper for libel.<sup>71</sup> This case was settled out of court, but the damage was done.<sup>72</sup> Mine-Mill was officially identified with a “dirty commie,” much to the pleasure of those who supported Steel.

However, it has been argued that the Gillis executive was elected on the basis of seeking affiliation with the CLC. Having been given this mandate to undertake this task, Gillis had to act quickly to follow through on this key promise. Recognizing this fact, Professor Boudreau sent a letter to Claude Jodoin, President of the Congress, on April 17, 1959 asking him to send a letter to Don Gillis, “inviting him and his executive colleagues to an informal discussion in Ottawa with your executive, as soon as possible.”<sup>73</sup> In writing this letter, Boudreau claimed that the National Office of Mine-Mill is trying to stop Local 598 from joining the Congress, and that the proposed meeting would rectify this situation by telling the Gillis executive that the Congress “will readily discuss problems with the new Sudbury executive, but sees no point in rehashing well-known arguments with (John) Clark, (Harvey) Murphy and (Nels) Thibault.”<sup>74</sup> Jodoin accepted Boudreau’s request, and the meeting took place early in May 1959.<sup>75</sup>

The National Executive of Mine-Mill recognized the desire of their largest local to affiliate with

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<sup>71</sup> Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 142.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> “Letter from A. J. Boudreau to Claude Jodoin on April 17, 1959,” Jim Tester Papers P059 Box J35,1 File25: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Canadian Labour Congress 50/67, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 244.

the Congress. As a result, a motion was passed at a joint meeting of the executive boards of the Canadian locals on May 26, 1959 which approved a referendum among the membership to grant the National Office authorization to apply for affiliation with the Congress.<sup>76</sup> In a rare display of unity, both the Local 598 Executive and the National Office urged the membership to vote in favour of this application. The result was an 85% vote in favour of the application, which was formally filed by Mine-Mill following the election.<sup>77</sup>

However, the Congress showed no interest in welcoming Mine-Mill as a whole back into the labour movement. At the meeting between the CLC executive and the Gillis executive in May 1959, it was impressed upon Gillis that "the National Officers would use the reform administration within Local 598 as a leverage with which to gain entrance into the C.L.C."<sup>78</sup> As a result, to ensure that the National Office would gain no advantage by seeking affiliation, James Robertson, an experienced Congress officer, was given the task of assisting the Gillis executive.<sup>79</sup> However, as Boudreau noted in a letter to Jodoin on June 5, 1959, one of the methods in which Robertson assisted the Local 598 executive was to "sort of take control" of *Local 598 News*.<sup>80</sup> As a result, the content of the local's newspaper took a decided right-wing shift which would remain for the remainder of Gillis' rule within Local 598. Moreover, in this letter, Boudreau also stated that "Mine, Mill must be destroyed, and disappear from the map of

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 243.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 244.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>"Letter from A. J. Boudreau to Claude Jodoin on June 5, 1959," *Jim Tester Papers* P059 Box J35,1 File25: Laurentian University Extension Dept. Workers Educational Association Canadian Labour Congress 50/67, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

Canada. This can be achieved only by depriving the Commies of their milch-cow, local 598 of Sudbury."<sup>81</sup> From this point onward, it is clear that any action by Boudreau within Local 598 was undertaken with this objective in mind.

In a few short months in 1959, Gillis had succeeded in altering his local with the assistance of Boudreau through the misrepresentation of financial data, the undermining of cultural programs through the firing of Weir Reid, and through a series of secret meetings with officials of Steel and the CLC. However, there was a possibility that all of these gains could be lost in the executive elections of November 17, 1959. In this election, Gillis would have to stand on his record over the past seven months, and pledge to continue the program that he was elected to carry out in March of that year.<sup>82</sup> However, Gillis would not be alone in his campaign, as the activities of the Catholic Church, Professor Boudreau, and the media would assist Gillis greatly.

To begin, Bishop Alexander Carter issued a pastoral letter on October 14, 1959 that was to be read in all churches within his diocese on the Sunday before the election. In this short letter, which was specifically ordered to be read without commentary, the Bishop urged the miners to continue to take an active role in union affairs by casting a ballot in this election.<sup>83</sup> Whether this letter was designed to influence the vote in favour of the incumbent executive is debatable, since there seems to be no evidence which indicates that Bishop Carter had any direct influence on the Gillis executive similar to that

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 257.

<sup>83</sup> "Pastoral Letter of His Excellency Most Reverend Alexander Carter D. D.: October 14, 1959," Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie in North Bay, Ontario.

of Boudreau.<sup>84</sup> However, it was known that the Gillis executive was able to win their first election by arousing the interest of a silent majority. Whether this influenced Bishop Carter's decision to release this letter is debatable. However, the letter was released, and the message was clear.

Meanwhile, Professor Boudreau took it upon himself to be a leading Catholic influence in these elections. To begin, a letter was issued on September 30, 1959 to the alumni of his course urging them to attend a meeting at St. Joseph Hospital on October 4 in which a slate of officers for the election would be drawn up, a platform would be developed, and "to discuss organizational and campaign problems."<sup>85</sup> This letter was discovered by the "Unity Team," led by Nels Thibault, who stepped down from the position of National President to contest this election, and used by Thibault's team to prove that the Gillis executive was influenced by outside sources.<sup>86</sup>

Moreover, Boudreau would publicly describe this election as "a last ditch fight between Christianity and Communism."<sup>87</sup> This theme was expanded upon by Wilfred List of *The Globe and Mail* in an article he released on November 14, 1959, which describes the election campaign in Sudbury within Boudreau's framework.<sup>88</sup> The *Canadian Register* expanded on this theme even further in front-page editorial printed on November 14, 1959. In this editorial, the editor reiterates that the minority

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<sup>84</sup> could not find any evidence directly linking Bishop Carter to the activities of Local 598 at this time. However, it should be noted that this evidence might exist within the Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, and is protected by a statute of limitations. Since this is a private archive collection, the Diocese is not obligated to release any evidence of this kind under the Freedom of Information Act. Regardless, without the evidence proving otherwise, I will maintain my stance that Bishop Carter did not play any active role in the Gillis executive, or the Steel raid as a whole.

<sup>85</sup>"Outside Domination of Local 598 Proven," Mike Solski Fonds P019 File (5/5 Box F45,3), Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>86</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Danieis" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 257.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 255, and *The Sudbury Star*, October 23, 1959.

<sup>88</sup>Wilfred List, "Mine-Mill Vote Pits Church Against Reds," The Globe and Mail, November 14, 1959, 30.

of Communists within Local 598 had been able to control their local through the apathy of the membership, and that companies would deal with Communist-tainted unions because they know that they would easily gain public support at the bargaining table.<sup>89</sup> Finally, the editor cites the example of Hungary, in which the Communists were able to seize control of the government through the labour unions, as a primary reason for the miners to exercise their right to vote in this election.<sup>90</sup>

Finally, Boudreau launched a series of slanderous attacks against Thibault through a series of local meetings and through the *Sudbury Star* in which he accused Thibault of operating under an alias, and that he was able to speak fluent Polish.<sup>91</sup> Thibault refuted this claim by producing a copy of his birth certificate, which was dismissed by Boudreau as a forgery.<sup>92</sup>

Meanwhile, Thibault's "Unity Team" was campaigning on the platform of unity with the National Office, proper respect for stewards, pension vesting, better accounting, and community involvement, among other key issues.<sup>93</sup> However, Thibault's slate was faced with two formidable challenges that they were be unable to overcome. The first challenge came from a letter that was apparently circulated by the Sudbury Committee of the Communist Party of Canada. In this letter, it is argued that "evil forces in the form of outside interference under capitalist control is threatening the very foundations of your Union."<sup>94</sup> Moreover, it is argued that the Unity Team led by Nels Thibault is the group that can be

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<sup>89</sup>"When Will They Learn?," The Canadian Register, November 14, 1959, 1.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Danieis" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 256.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup>"Restore 598 to the Membership!," Local 598 Unionist (Committee for Unity in Local 598 and Mine-Mill), October 1959, 1 & 6.

<sup>94</sup>"Copy of Letter Circulated in Sudbury During Election," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 27 - Thibault, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

entrusted with the task of fighting the destructive factions within the local and ensure that the local is governed once again under the constitution of Mine-Mill.<sup>95</sup> Finally, this letter concluded by urging the miners to vote for the Thibault slate.<sup>96</sup> Whether or not this letter was actually circulated by the Sudbury Chapter of the CPC is debatable since it could be argued that this letter was planted by Gillis supporters.<sup>97</sup> Regardless, the distribution of this letter was effective in illustrating a link between the Communists and the Thibault slate.

The second formidable challenge to the Thibault slate came at the Local 598 membership meeting on November 11, 1959. Entering this meeting, Thibault had been relatively successful in campaigning of the platform of “no outside interference” through his team’s discovery of Boudreau’s letter of September 30. However, Frank Southern, author of *The Sudbury Incident*, was able to use this against him in the latter part of this meeting. At this meeting, Southern posed the following question to Thibault; “Is it true that Local 241, of Timmins, sent a thousand dollars to help you in the election campaign?”<sup>98</sup> Thibault replied by stating that the money was sent to his election committee. In response, Southern asked Thibault if it was “any of their business who we elect in Local 598?”<sup>99</sup> To this question, Thibault replied by saying that “this election is the business of the whole Union movement.”<sup>100</sup> Southern solidified his case at this point by asking Thibault if he considered “outside interference to be

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<sup>95</sup>ibid.

<sup>96</sup>ibid.

<sup>97</sup>This is the only piece of evidence that I have uncovered in the course of my research which suggests any direct link between the Communist Party of Canada and Local 598. In the absence of other evidence to support such an affiliation, it is likely that this letter was planted by Gillis supporters, and that their charges of Communist influence were unfounded.

<sup>98</sup>Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing & Printing Co., 1978), 64.

<sup>99</sup>ibid., 65.

<sup>100</sup>ibid.

all right when it is in your favour and all wrong when it is in favour of your opponent?”<sup>101</sup> With that final question, any advantage that Thibault had by mentioning the theme of outside influence was effectively gone.

In the end, the election attracted a turnout of 81% at the polls, with the final results being 7221 to 5903 votes in favour of Gillis.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, the entire Executive Board was now occupied by supporters of Gillis.<sup>103</sup> The Steel-CLC-Boudreau-Gillis alliance was now in full control of Local 598. Meanwhile, the National Office was now starting to fear that Local 598 was lost to them forever, and that Steel would soon take over.

At this time, the National Office of Mine-Mill was still processing an application for affiliation to the CLC. As mentioned earlier, the National Office had made a formal application for affiliation with the Congress following a referendum which followed a joint meeting of the executive boards in May 1959.<sup>104</sup>

It was agreed by this board that affiliation would be sought on the following terms:

1. That Mine Mill affiliate intact, as a National Union
2. That all present constitutional rights of the membership be maintained
3. That Mine Mill is prepared to accept the same obligations and enjoy the same rights as any other Congress affiliate.<sup>105</sup>

However, a certain conflict of interest is apparent in the above three points, since Mine-Mill was adamant that the constitutional right of their membership to be a member of any political party of their choice must be upheld. This position conflicted with the anticommunist stance of the Congress. In the

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 258.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 243.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 243.

Mine-Mill National Convention of 1959, Don Gillis, on behalf of Local 598, submitted two resolutions which attempted to resolve this conflict. The first resolution would bar all Communists and their sympathizers from holding any office within the union, while the second resolution would force all officers to take an oath against communism upon taking office.<sup>106</sup> These resolutions were perceived by the vast majority of the delegates at the convention as a direct attack on the fundamental part of their constitution which “refused to discriminate on the basis of ‘race, religion, or political beliefs, colour or nationality,’” and were defeated accordingly.<sup>107</sup>

On January 26, 1960, Claude Jodoin, President of the Congress, issued a letter to Nels Thibault which rejected Mine-Mill’s application for affiliation. There were four official reasons for this rejection. First, the attachment of conditions to affiliation placed by Mine-Mill was contrary to the Congress’ policy of “unreserved acceptance of the Constitution and policies of the Congress before granting affiliation to any union.”<sup>108</sup> Second, the ballot used in the referendum specified the conditions of affiliation, which would have unfairly given the Mine-Mill executive with terms to be used in bargaining.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, the application was also rejected on the grounds that there was no sincere desire for full affiliation with the Congress expressed at the Mine-Mill convention of the previous year.<sup>110</sup> Finally, this application was rejected on the grounds that it was being used to settle an internal matter and thus, was not “prepared

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>108</sup> “Letter from Claude Jodoin to Nels Thibault on January 26, 1960,” *United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives*, First Accrual, Box 70 - Mine Mill Ads, Leaflets + Clippings, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

nor submitted in good faith.”<sup>111</sup> It should be noted that Congress jurisdiction in the metal-mining industry (which belonged to the Steelworkers) did not have an official impact on the decision.

Moreover, a letter was also sent by Jodoin to Gillis on the same day. In addition to providing Gillis with a copy of the letter sent to Thibault, Jodoin also informed Gillis that “the Executive Council of the Canadian Labour Congress wishes to assure the present leadership and membership of Local 598 of any co-operation which we can give you at your request in your future activities.”<sup>112</sup> Gillis reaction to the rejection of Mine-Mill’s application is quite interesting, since he apparently had just suffered a major defeat on the most fundamental issue of his program. In the January 1960 issue of *Local 598 News*, Gillis stated that “he was very pleased with the honest approach of the CLC officers, and the agreement our delegation had reached with the Congress and Steelworkers.”<sup>113</sup> Moreover, Gillis also acknowledged that the rejection of the application was “a foregone conclusion” given the communist character of the National Office of Mine-Mill.<sup>114</sup> This would suggest that Gillis was aware that Mine-Mill could never affiliate with the Congress, and that he was always willing to accept the Steelworkers as the avenue through which his local could affiliate with the Congress.

Incidentally, the National Office of Mine-Mill issued a public statement on January 27, 1960 in which they protested the decision of the Congress on the grounds that their application contained a complete willingness to abide by the Congress constitution and that the rejection was a “desperate

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<sup>111</sup>ibid.

<sup>112</sup>“Letter from Claude Jodoin to Don Gillis on January 26, 1960,” United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 70 - Mine Mill Ads, Leaflets + Clippings, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>113</sup>“CLC Refuses Mine-Mill; Claim Commies Control National Union Office,” Local 598 News, January 1960, 5.

<sup>114</sup>ibid.

attempt to hide the real fact that Mine Mill is being kept out of the Congress on the instigation of the Steel Union who seek to swallow Mine Mill."<sup>115</sup> While the argument was soundly rejected by CLC, correspondence between James Kidd, Larry Sefton and Bill Mahoney (National Director, United Steelworkers) suggests that the Mine-Mill argument was indeed valid. In a letter to Sefton and Mahoney on January 15, 1960, Kidd expressed his desire that "the Local Union will continue to disagree with Mine Mill National Executive in which our case will be advanced."<sup>116</sup> In writing this, Kidd also acknowledges the influence that Sefton and Mahoney have as vice-presidents of the Congress.<sup>117</sup> As a result, this letter probably influenced the decision to reject Mine-Mill's application while supporting Local 598. In addition, Kidd mentions that he has compiled a list of 400 Mine-Mill members who helped to elect the Gillis Executive, and that Steel literature would be distributed in a manner that would not disturb these members.<sup>118</sup> Finally, Kidd mentions that Boudreau supports Kidd's plan for organizing Sudbury, and the Boudreau is presenting the Steel union in his classes as "the proper choice for Sudbury."<sup>119</sup> This attempt to advance the organizing campaign through these quiet measures continued for the remainder of the year through the distribution of *Steel Labour* to select individuals, meetings with ethnic groups, direct involvement with the Northern Workers Adult Education Association, and a meeting among key members of the Gillis executive, the ethnic groups, the University Education group including

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<sup>115</sup>"IUMMSW Statement by the Canadian Executive Board in the Matter of the Canadian Labour Congress Letter of January 26, 1960, rejecting Mine Mill's Application (January 27, 1960)," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 2, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>116</sup>"USWA Letter from James L. Kidd to Larry Sefton and Bill Mahoney on January 15, 1960," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 72 - Sudbury Campaign - General Organizing, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup>*Ibid.*

Boudreau, and executives from the Congress and Steel at a Church camp along Lake Nipissing.<sup>120</sup> Thus, it is evident that the Steelworkers, the Congress, Boudreau, and the Gillis executive were working together to carefully plan a successful Steel raid on Local 598.

Meanwhile, within Local 598, Alfred L. Favretto, the local's regular accountant, was preparing a financial report for the local which was completed on March 24, 1960. In his report, Favretto made a few suggestions to the local executive on how they could improve their financial standing. These suggestions included cutting back on the building program after the completion of the hall in Chelmsford, taking out a loan so the local would not have to use their strike fund for other purposes, and other suggestions which would allow the local to operate in a more efficient manner.<sup>121</sup> However, Raymond Poirier, the financial secretary of the local, found another method for the local to save money. Beginning in April 1960, Poirier withheld the per capita portion of his membership's dues from the National Office of Mine-Mill.<sup>122</sup> In response, William Longridge, the Secretary-Treasurer of the National Union, informed Poirier that the dues were not paid up, and that the dues for April would be due on June 15. If payment was not made, Longridge informed the local that "the nonpayment of the April per capita places the membership of Local 598 out of goodstanding [sic] in the Union."<sup>123</sup> In response, Poirier

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<sup>120</sup> "USWA Letter from James L. Kidd to Larry Sefton on May 10, 1960," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 72 - Sudbury Campaign - General Organizing, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>121</sup> "Sudbury Mine Mill & Smelter Workers Union Local 598 Recommendations in Accordance with the Pre-Audit Report to Mine Mill Membership on March 24, 1960," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 64 - Local 598 3/4 Correspondence, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>122</sup> "Telegram from William Longridge to Don Gillis on June 20, 1960," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 64 - Local 598 3/4 Correspondence, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

informed Longridge that “the cheque was in the mail,” (which it wasn’t) and that the local had a series of expenses which needed to be accounted for, including some additional expenses which arose from a walkout at Falconbridge,<sup>124</sup> and that this was not a time for politics.<sup>125</sup>

The per capita continued to be withheld from National Office, which prompted Longridge to inform Gillis that the continuation of this practice would result in Local 598 abdicating their right for representation at the national convention and the right of the membership to vote on matters arising from the convention under Article 19, Section 5 of the union constitution.<sup>126</sup> Longridge reiterated this fact again on June 20, 1961 and July 19, 1961 to no avail.<sup>127</sup> Moreover, in November 1961, the Local 598 executive took advantage of a bookkeeping error by the National Office to rule that Nels Thibault, Mike Solski, William Kennedy, Ray Stevenson, Lukin Robinson and M. Farrell were no longer members in good standing within the local.<sup>128</sup>

It should be noted here that a formal motion to withhold the per capita was carried by the membership at the Local 598 general membership meeting on May 4, 1961.<sup>129</sup> Thus, it could be argued here that the local was representing their members which is what a union is supposed to do.

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<sup>124</sup>The Falconbridge walkouts will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>125</sup>Letter from Raymond Poirier to William Longridge June 22, 1960,” United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 64 - Local 598 3/4 Correspondence, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>126</sup>Letter from William Longridge to Don Gillis on September 24, 1960,” United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 64 - Local 598 3/4 Correspondence, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>127</sup>Letter from William Longridge to Raymond Poirier on June 30, 1961” and “Letter from William Longridge to A. MacDonald on July 19, 1961,” United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 64 - Local 598 3/4 Correspondence, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>128</sup>“SMMSWU Local 598 Letter from Raymond Poirier to William Longridge November 14, 1961,” United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 64 - Local 598 3/4 Correspondence, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>129</sup>Frank Southern, The Sudbury Incident (Toronto: York Publishing & Printing Co., 1978), 73.

However, this is debatable since the motion was carried more than a year after the first per capita payment was withheld, and that the National Office had taken necessary actions under their constitution long before then. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, when the Gillis executive assumed their positions, they formally pledged their allegiance to the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, as they were required to do. The decision to withhold these payments with the full knowledge of the financial impact it would have on the union as a whole can only be constituted as a blatant violation of the executive's oath of office. Thus, the actions of the Gillis executive on this matter were not only unethical, but within the constitution of the union, they were illegal as well.

Meanwhile, a front-page article in the *Sudbury Star* signalled what could be regarded as the unofficial launch of the Steel raid at Inco. On August 16, 1961, the *Star* published an article entitled "Has Steel Begun Drive to Supplant Mine-Mill?" in which they reported on their discovery of two documents which suggest that a raid was being conducted.<sup>130</sup> One of these revealed documents was an invitation to the executive board of Local 598 to attend a meeting with Steel and CLC executives.<sup>131</sup> This meeting did take place on August 22, 1961. At this meeting, the CLC informed the executive that Local 598 could only join the Congress by joining the Steelworkers.<sup>132</sup> The Gillis executive accepted this situation and expressed a desire to proceed further.<sup>133</sup> However, after more than two years of private meetings, it was well established that the Gillis executive would be willing to accept any decision by the Congress, as long as they could affiliate somehow. But one member of the Gillis executive refused to

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<sup>130</sup>"Has Steel Begun Drive to Supplant Mine-Mill?," *The Sudbury Star* August 16, 1961, 1 & 3.

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>132</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 293.

<sup>133</sup>*Ibid.*

go along with this plan. As a result, Tom Taylor resigned from the executive and provided the National Office with a sworn affidavit on August 25, 1961 which detailed the collusion between Local 598 and Steel.<sup>134</sup> Consequently, the National Office used their constitution to appoint William Kennedy as the administrator of Local 598,<sup>135</sup>

The following day, Kennedy obtained an injunction from Judge J. M. Cooper which prevented anyone from interfering with his duties, and with this injunction in hand, Kennedy and fifty of his supporters occupied the Regent Street hall.<sup>136</sup> Meanwhile, while a relatively quiet crowd was developing in front of the hall, Gillis and members of his executive were attending a stewards banquet in Port Colborne. While they were in Port Colborne, Gillis was informed of the events back home, and he arrived in Sudbury at 3:30 the following morning.<sup>137</sup> The development of this crowd was aided by numerous reports by the local radio stations and inaction by the police. As a result, the crowd outside the hall also contained many people from outside the union who merely wanted to cause trouble.<sup>138</sup> When Gillis arrived at the hall, a riot broke out and extensive damage was caused to the hall.<sup>139</sup> The violence continued until Sheriff Larry Lamoureux read the riot act at 5:30 that morning.<sup>140</sup> Gillis would not reassume control of the facility again until September 6 following a ruling by Chief Justice J. C. McRuer.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 145.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid.

<sup>136</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 293.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 293 - 294.

<sup>138</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 145.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., 147.

<sup>141</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 296 - 297.

On the evening following the hall siege, Gillis addressed a crowd of four thousand at Queens Athletic Field (across the street from the hall) in which he condemned the actions of the National Office.<sup>142</sup> Also at this meeting, Don McNabb informed the crowd of the progress that was made in preparing for the upcoming contract negotiations while Poirier “delivered a harangue on communism.”<sup>143</sup> Finally, James Robertson informed the crowd that Claude Jodoin and the CLC extend their full support to the Gillis executive.<sup>144</sup>

At a meeting held on September 4, 1961 at the Legion Hall, Gillis announced that a rally would take place on September 10, 1961 at the Sudbury Arena, in which Jodoin, Mahoney, and Sefton would address the membership of Local 598 regarding CLC affiliation.<sup>145</sup> At this time, Gillis also announced that the Canadian section of Mine-Mill and the Teamsters had agreed to a mutual assistance pact on August 29, 1961. This move, which was designed to strengthen the National Office financially due to the lack of per capita funds from Local 598, instead worked against the National Office when the Gillis executive argued that affiliation with Steel was better than affiliation with the Teamsters.<sup>146</sup> Meanwhile, it was announced that this meeting would be open to all members of Mine-Mill. With that in mind, Mine-Mill president Ken Smith asked for equal time at this rally for himself, Solski, and Kennedy to refute the arguments of Jodoin, Mahoney, and Sefton. This request was denied by Gillis on the grounds that “where Smith and Solski are, there is trouble.”<sup>147</sup> However, despite this attempt to avoid causing trouble

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<sup>142</sup>Ibid., 294.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 294 - 295.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 295.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., 295 - 296.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., 297.

at the rally, the situation at the arena proved to be more than troublesome.

When the meeting took place on September 10, the atmosphere inside the arena was one of disorder. Frank Southern, who was in attendance, noted that there were four thousand men in the building. Within this crowd, there were five hundred men “filling the seats in the southwest corner (who) were yelling, booing and whistling” and that “scattered around the rest of the Arena were another 500 men yelling.”<sup>148</sup> Claude Jodoin attempted to speak to the crowd but his voice was largely drowned out by the crowd, though he did point his finger at the hecklers yelling that “it was those bums who got kicked out” in reference to the expulsion of Mine-Mill from the Congress and that those hecklers represented what Communist rule is like.<sup>149</sup> The meeting never did proceed as scheduled.

Meanwhile, outside the arena at Memorial Park, roughly three hundred supporters gathered and marched en masse to the arena.<sup>150</sup> When these people arrived at the doors of the arena, they, along with roughly four thousand other loyal Mine-Mill members were denied access to the arena.<sup>151</sup> When these members insisted on attending a meeting that was supposedly open to all members of Mine-Mill, a riot ensued.<sup>152</sup> There were numerous fistfights, and tear gas was used to break up the disturbance in the foyer of the arena.<sup>153</sup> The meeting officially came to an end when the police, realizing that they could not ensure the safety of those in attendance, forced the evacuation of the building at

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<sup>148</sup>Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing & Printing Co., 1978), 86.

<sup>149</sup>“Tear Gas, Hecklers Halt Sudbury Meeting,” *The Globe and Mail*, September 11, 1961, 11.

<sup>150</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 297.

<sup>151</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 149.

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 298.

9:30pm.<sup>154</sup> The aftermath of the event became apparent the following day when Smith, Solski, Kennedy, Thibault and six other Mine Mill supporters were arrested and fined for unlawful assembly, while Mahoney and Sefton officially declared an open Steelworkers raid in Sudbury.<sup>155</sup>

In the Local 598 monthly membership meetings which followed the rally, violence would erupt once again. While the October meetings were relatively peaceful, Gillis lost control of the November meeting following his rejection of an emergency motion proposed by Tom Taylor which proposed that “the total resources of Local 598 together with those of the national union shall be utilized for the purpose of defeating the (Steel) raid.”<sup>156</sup> Gillis was unable to control the violence which erupted at the meeting and the police had to clear the hall.<sup>157</sup> This would be the last membership meeting to be held until after the completion of the Steel raid. On December 6, 1961, Local 598 placed a full-page advertisement in *The Sudbury Star* in which they announced the postponement of the monthly membership meetings as a necessity “to keep peace in the community.”<sup>158</sup> To replace these meetings, Gillis communicated to the membership through the mass media.<sup>159</sup> By opting to communicate with the membership through dictation over the media, Gillis effectively stripped the membership of his local of the democratic rights they had as members of the union. Moreover, it should also be noted that this decision did not come at the spur of the moment. At a meeting held in July 1962 at the Empire Theatre,

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<sup>154</sup>Ibid.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid.

<sup>156</sup>Ibid., 301.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid.

<sup>158</sup>Sudbury Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, Local 598, “The Local 598 Monthly Meetings are Postponed,” The Sudbury Star, December 6, 1961, 9.

<sup>159</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Gueiph, 1970), 302.

Gillis announced that the closure of the halls was “a well-calculated move and that it had been planned for over a year.”<sup>150</sup>

Moreover, Inco was taking stock of the conflict among their workers and was poised to take advantage of the situation. The contract that was ratified following the 1958 strike was up for renewal, and negotiations were set to begin on November 15, 1961. However, at this meeting on November 15, recognizing the instability caused by the Steel raid, the company informed Gillis that “we have to have reasonable assurance that the group we meet are capable to carry through to the completion of a contract, and to be certified Union for the members” and that “there is no useful purpose in discussing this until these clarifications (who will represent Inco’s miners for the duration of the contract) have been made.”<sup>151</sup> Thus, any gains which would come from a new contract would have to wait.

On November 28, 1961, the United Steelworkers of America submitted an application for certification to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for the bargaining unit of the miners at Inco in Sudbury.<sup>152</sup> Don Gillis filed an intervention on behalf of Local 598 as the bargaining agent for the miners without directly challenging the Steelworkers’ application, while Tom Taylor also filed an intervention on behalf of the local on the grounds that Steel does not have the required 45% of official cards to warrant

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<sup>150</sup>“Press Release, United Steelworkers of America, July 9, 1962,” United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 72 - Sudbury Campaign - Press Release, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>151</sup>“Negotiation Conference between International Nickel Company of Canada Limited and Sudbury Mine Mill and Smelter Workers Union Local 598: November 15, 1961,” Nels Thibault Fonds P035 Box 138,3 File 2/29 [Mine Mill Contract Bargaining] U.D.; 1959 - 1961, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>152</sup>“The Labour Relations Act Application for Certification Before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, November 28, 1961,” Mike Solski Fonds P019 File “Appeal Book no. 1 Nov 1961 - July 1963”, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

an application.<sup>163</sup> However, despite Taylor's efforts, the OLRB ruled on February 1, 1962 that the certification vote would take place from February 27 to March 1 later that year.<sup>164</sup>

In the months leading up to the certification vote, the three parties to the dispute all launched a massive media campaign to rally support for their cause. The National Office of Mine-Mill attacked the Steelworkers and Gillis by mentioning that it was their alliance that stopped collective bargaining at Inco,<sup>165</sup> that Steel has dragged down pensions at places where they are the bargaining agent,<sup>166</sup> and by mentioning that a portion of Steel dues goes to Pittsburgh while all Mine-Mill dues dollars remain in Canada, in addition to comparing the democratic structures of the two unions.<sup>167</sup> Conversely, the Steelworkers and the Canadian Labour Congress attacked Mine-Mill by mentioning that Sudbury miner's average earnings have dropped since Mine-Mill was expelled from the Congress,<sup>168</sup> by mocking the financially strapped National Office for their issue of "victory bonds" to counter the Steel raid,<sup>169</sup> and by mentioning that unity with the rest of the Canadian labour movement is the only way that Local 598 can avoid the hardships of the 1958 strike in the future.<sup>170</sup> With the campaign strategies of Mine-Mill

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<sup>163</sup>"The Labour Relations Act Intervention Before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, December 4, 1961" and "The Labour Relations Act Intervention Before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, December 5, 1961" Mike Solski Fonds P019 File "Appeal Book no. 1 Nov 1961 - July 1963", Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>164</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 153.

<sup>165</sup>International Union of Mine Mill and Smelter Workers, "This is What Stopped Bargaining," The Sudbury Star, November 21, 1961, 5.

<sup>166</sup>International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, "How Would Like Your Pension Cut by \$1,110 a Year?," The Sudbury Star, January 6, 1962, 6.

<sup>167</sup>International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, "Steel is After Your Dues Dollar," The Sudbury Sun, January 6, 1962, 10.

<sup>168</sup>Canadian Labour Congress, "Sudbury Hasn't Kept Pace," The Sudbury Sun, January 6, 1962, 2.

<sup>169</sup>The United Steelworkers of America, "Lend US YOUR Money Then Pay YOURSELF Back!," The Sudbury Sun, February 10, 1962, 2.

<sup>170</sup>The United Steelworkers of America, "Unity is the Only Answer!," The Sudbury Sun, February 3, 1962, 2.

and Steel set, the campaign of the third party in this dispute proved to be most influential. This third party is the Sudbury Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union Local 598 under the leadership of Don Gillis.

The campaign launched by Gillis took on two approaches. First, the local outlined their proposals for a new contract through a series of advertisements which appeared in *The Sudbury Sun* from January 6 to February 23, 1962. These ads focussed on how the local would address the issues of pensions,<sup>171</sup> Inco's medical plan,<sup>172</sup> health and safety,<sup>173</sup> and other issues of importance. These proposals were released to the public despite the postponement of negotiations due to the instability regarding the status of the bargaining agent for the miners at Inco.

The second approach of the Gillis campaign was focussed on attacking the National Office of Mine-Mill. To begin, on January 29, 1962, Local 598 placed an advertisement in the *Sudbury Star* which suggested that a vote for Mine-Mill was a vote for the "Communist conspiracy."<sup>174</sup> This was followed by an advertisement on February 13 which published a ruling by the United States Subversive Activities Control Board that declared Mine-Mill a Communist organization, and linked the Canadian leadership to the Communist Party.<sup>175</sup> Finally, in a two-page advertisement which appeared in the *Sudbury Sun* on February 17, 1962, Local 598 launched their most vitriolic attack on the National Executive of Mine-Mill.

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<sup>171</sup>Sudbury Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, Local 598, "New Contract Proposals," *The Sudbury Sun*, January 13, 1962, 10.

<sup>172</sup>Sudbury Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, Local 598, "New Contract Proposals," *The Sudbury Sun*, January 20, 1962, 10.

<sup>173</sup>Sudbury Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, Local 598, "New Contract Proposals," *The Sudbury Sun*, January 27, 1962, 10.

<sup>174</sup>The Sudbury Mine Mill Union, "Is a Vote for Mine Mill a Vote for the Communist Conspiracy?," *The Sudbury Star*, January 24, 1962, 6.

<sup>175</sup>Sudbury Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union – No. 598, "Mine-Mill Declared a Communist Organization," *The Sudbury Star*, February 13, 1962, 12.

In this advertisement, the local focussed on the failure of the 1958 strike, and the actions taken by the National Office against the “democratically elected” officers of Local 598, while including the report by the Subversive Activities Control Board of the United States which formally branded Mine-Mill as a Communist organization.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, the advertisement stressed that Local 598 has followed through on their campaign promise to seek affiliation with the Canadian Labour Congress.<sup>177</sup> In all of their advertisements, Local 598 never directly urged its members to vote for any side in particular. However, the local made it very clear that they opposed the National Office of Mine-Mill. These advertisements could thus be seen as proof by the general public that the Gillis executive was working on behalf of the Steelworkers.

The election went as scheduled on February 27, 28, and March 1. However, Mine-Mill delayed the release of the results through an appeal to the OLRB. In this appeal, Mine-Mill argued that Don Gillis misled the members by saying that affiliation with the CLC did not mean joining the Steelworkers, that there were forged membership cards, and that membership fees were not paid when some of the cards were signed.<sup>178</sup> However, all three of the accounts of the appeal were dismissed on June 4, 1962, and the counting of the ballots was ordered for June 11, 1962.<sup>179</sup> When the results were released on June 12, the official total was 7182 to 6951 votes in favour of the Steelworkers, with 36 spoiled ballots.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup>Sudbury Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, Number 598, “NOW It’s Up To You,” The Sudbury Sun, February 17, 1962, 8 - 9.

<sup>177</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup>Untitled, Mike Solski Fonds PO19 File Appeal Book no. 2 Nov 1961 - July 1963 2/4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>179</sup>*Ibid.*, and John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 313.

<sup>180</sup>“The Labour Relations Act Notice of Report of Returning Officer on Counting of Ballots before the Ontario Labour Relations Board - June 12, 1962,” Mike Solski Fonds PO19 File Appeal Book no. 2 Nov 1961 - July 1963 2/4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

This result gave the Steelworkers fifteen more votes than they had required to obtain certification.<sup>181</sup>

However, Mine Mill would launch another appeal to the OLRB to contest the result of the election.

This appeal by Mine-Mill focussed on two concerns. First, the Union claimed that there were 71 ballots which were not properly stamped by the returning officer and thus were invalid.<sup>182</sup> On this charge of the appeal, it was determined that “the failure of the deputy returning officer or officers to stamp the seventy-one ballots here under consideration does not invalidate them.”<sup>183</sup> The second charge raised by the Union was that “the applicant (Steelworkers) engaged in propaganda and electioneering during the prohibited (72-hour) period (before the commencement of the vote).”<sup>184</sup> This appeal was also rejected.<sup>185</sup> Thus, with both grounds for the appeal being rejected, the United Steelworkers of America were officially certified as the bargaining agent for the miners at Inco on October 15, 1962.<sup>186</sup> However, Local 598 would continue to be the bargaining agent for the miners at Falconbridge.

Following the successful Steel raid at Inco, the Gillis executive was forced to cede their control of the local to a pro tem executive led by Tom Taylor on July 25, 1962. Gillis was later soundly defeated in the executive election by a slate led by Taylor on October 24, 1962.<sup>187</sup> Furthermore, members of the previous executive, including Don Gillis, were either suspended from Mine-Mill, or in the case of Gillis expelled with a provision that “there shall be no discrimination against him in securing his contractual

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<sup>181</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 313.

<sup>182</sup>“Ruling of the Ontario Relations Board on October 15, 1962.” Mike Solski Fonds P019 File Appeal Book #3 Nov 1961 - July 1963 3/4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid.

<sup>184</sup>Ibid.

<sup>185</sup>Ibid.

<sup>186</sup>Ibid.

<sup>187</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 156.

rights under the respective collective agreements.”<sup>188</sup> Finally, Mine Mill launched an application to reclaim bargaining rights at Inco in 1965. But the result of this vote was a more convincing victory for the Steelworkers, who obtained 8207 votes while Mine-Mill only obtained 6174 votes.<sup>189</sup> With this final defeat, Mine-Mill was forced to resign themselves to the fact that they would never regain the bargaining rights for the miners at Inco. But this was not the end of Mine-Mill in Sudbury. They still had the bargaining rights for the miners at Falconbridge. Moreover, the unquestionable loyalty of the miners at Falconbridge would become the main reason for the continued existence of Mine-Mill to this day.

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<sup>188</sup>Sudbury Mine Mill and Smelter workers Union Local 598 of the International Union of Mine Mill and Smelter Workers (Canada), Mike Solski Fonds P019 Series 1 Box 5 File 14 (Microfilm), Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>189</sup>Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895 (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1984), 158.

## 5

*When the Stick Fails . . .*

The Steel Raids at Falconbridge, and the 1967 Steel-Mine Mill Merger

*Jan 30/67*

*To the Biggest Sell-Out Artist of them all,*

*Al Skinner*

*Sir,*

*Congratulations on your sell-out  
of the miners in the U.S.A.*

*If there is a hell, and I hope there  
is, may you roast there forever along with  
your pals Larson, Gillis, Carlin, etc.*

*Yours Truly*

*R. B. Scranton<sup>1</sup>*

In the above letter, a Falconbridge miner offered his opinion on the merger agreement reached between the United Steelworkers of America and the United States section of Mine-Mill to the president of the latter union, Al Skinner. This agreement, which was reached in Tucson, Arizona in January 1967, was followed by a merger of the two organizations in Canada later that year. However, the Falconbridge miners, many of whom shared the same opinions toward Steel as Scranton, refused to have any part of this merger. As a result, despite the merger of the two unions, Mine-Mill continues to exist in Sudbury as the bargaining agent for the miners at Falconbridge. The focus of this chapter will be on the miners

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<sup>1</sup>"Letter from R. B. Scranton to Al Skinner on January 30, 1967," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 8, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

at Falconbridge, who since the inception of Local 598, had the desire for an autonomous Mine-Mill local that would represent their interests first. The chapter will begin with an analysis of the development and dismantling of Mine-Mill Local 1025, which was supposed to become the independent Falconbridge local. This will be followed by an analysis of the three failed attempts in the 1960's by the Steelworkers to obtain the bargaining rights for the miners at Falconbridge through raiding. Finally, the development of the 1967 merger agreement between the Canadian section of Mine-Mill and the Steelworkers will be analysed. In this analysis, particular attention will be given to the successful resistance by the Falconbridge miners to this merger. In the end, it will be shown that the Falconbridge miners were fully committed to the cause of obtaining an autonomous Mine-Mill local, and that they would not cede this autonomy to a union they despised under any circumstances. As a result, Local 598 became the lone surviving local of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, one of the customs of labour relations at the mines in Sudbury was that Inco contracts would be negotiated and ratified first, and Falconbridge contracts would be dealt with immediately afterward. Until the transfer of bargaining rights for the miners at Inco to the Steelworkers in 1962, Mine-Mill Local 598 acted as the bargaining agent for the miners at both companies. Overall, this was not seen as a favourable arrangement by the miners at Falconbridge because they constituted a small minority of the membership of the local, and thus their unique concerns were never really viewed as a priority by the Local 598 executive. As a result, the idea of a separate Mine-Mill local that would serve the interests of the Falconbridge miners alone was starting to be embraced by these discontented miners. As a result, on August 30, 1959, a referendum was

conducted by Local 598 among the miners at Falconbridge which sought their opinion on the formation of a separate local. The result of this referendum was an overwhelming majority in favour of the establishment of this local.<sup>2</sup> This was followed by an application for a separate charter to the National Office of Mine-Mill which contained the signatures of 1403 miners, or approximately 65% of the bargaining unit.<sup>3</sup> As a result, on February 11, 1960, the charter for Mine-Mill Local 1025 was issued under Articles 7 and 23 of the Union's constitution.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, it was further resolved that "the jurisdiction of the aforesaid Local shall be all persons working in and around the operations of the Falconbridge Nickel Mines Ltd.," and that "this jurisdiction now covered by the Sudbury Mine Mill & Smelter Workers Local 598 of the International Union of Mine Mill & Smelter workers shall be transferred as of this date to the Falconbridge Mine Mill & Smelter Workers Union number 1025 of the International Union of Mine Mill & Smelter Workers."<sup>5</sup> A few days after the granting of the charter, James Keuhl was sworn in as the president of a temporary executive board for this new local.<sup>6</sup>

On March 18, 1960, Local 1025 made a formal application to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for a transfer of the Falconbridge jurisdiction from Local 598 to the new local.<sup>7</sup> On March 26, Don

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<sup>2</sup>Excerpt from the Minutes of the Canadian Executive Board, February 11, 1960," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 14 - 1959 Falconbridge Local Setting Up Of, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 264.

<sup>7</sup>"The Labour Relations Act Application for Declaration Concerning Status of a Successor Trade Union Before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, March 18, 1960," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 14 - 1959 Falconbridge Local Setting Up Of, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

Gillis filed an intervention with the OLRB protesting the actions of Local 1025.<sup>8</sup> In filing this intervention, Gillis presented the Board with a petition signed by 305 employees and cards signed by 434 employees who wished to remain in Local 598. Moreover, Gillis also claimed that intimidation tactics were used to coerce miners into signing cards for Local 1025.<sup>9</sup> However, the local's biggest concern throughout was that a minority group from Falconbridge was enforcing its will on the entire membership of Local 598.<sup>10</sup> But it could also be argued that Don Gillis had a much more personal concern which guided his opposition to Local 1025. As a Falconbridge miner, Gillis would be forced to resign as the president of Local 598 if Local 1025 assumed the bargaining rights at Falconbridge. Moreover, if Gillis was forced to resign as the president of Local 598, there was a possibility that the new president would refuse to work with Boudreau, the Canadian Labour Congress and the Steelworkers in conducting the raid at Inco. Without Gillis in power, the Steelworkers risked facing a defeat at Inco, which is something that the Gillis-Boudreau-CLC-Steel alliance feared most. As a result, Gillis acted against Local 1025 with a sense of great urgency.

On May 4, 1960, Gillis got his wish from the OLRB when the Board ruled that the wishes of the entire membership of Local 598 must be made known before they would even consider granting a charter to Local 1025.<sup>11</sup> Following the ruling by the Board, a motion was passed at the membership

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<sup>8</sup>"The Labour Relations Act Intervention Before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, March 26, 1960," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 14 - 1959 Falconbridge Local Setting Up Of, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>"SMMSWU Local 598 Letter from Raymond Poirier to Ken A. Smith on May 25, 1960," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 14 - 1959 Falconbridge Local Setting Up Of, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>11</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 265.

meetings of Local 598 from May 5 to 10 which opposed “any dismemberment of the said local, regardless of who proposes this dismemberment.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, Local 598 had the necessary support from their membership and the OLRB to block the establishment of Local 1025. However, there was another event which would effectively put an end to the campaign for Local 1025.

On April 27, 1960, the Falconbridge miners at Hardy Mine began a walkout protesting the company’s unilateral decision to force their miners to wear safety glasses on the job.<sup>13</sup> This was followed by a general wildcat strike at all of Falconbridge’s operations on May 16 that would last for four days.<sup>14</sup> The miners had protested the decision of the company on the grounds that the decision was motivated not by a desire to improve the working conditions at the mines, but to reduce their insurance premiums.<sup>15</sup> Gillis argued that the strike was instigated by the National Office to undermine his leadership and that the strike was illegal.<sup>16</sup> However, before the miners would return to work, Gillis wanted assurances from Falconbridge regarding job protection and the handling of grievances. When R. C. Mott, Falconbridge’s General Manager gave Gillis assurances that “‘no one has been discharged’ and a committee had been established to discuss the issue of safety glasses, the workers returned to their jobs.”<sup>17</sup> However, these assurances were hollow, at best.

Following the strike, Falconbridge appealed to the OLRB to rule the strike illegal, which they

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<sup>12</sup>“Letter from Don Gillis to Ken A. Smith on May 11, 1960,” United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 14 - 1959 Falconbridge Local Setting Up Of, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>13</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 265 - 266.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 266.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 267.

did on September 28, and the company discharged eleven employees, while issuing penalties against 230 employees.<sup>18</sup> In response, the employees produced a leaflet entitled *Frame-Up!* in which they accused Gillis of arranging deals with the Falconbridge so that the officers who were active members of Local 1025 would face suspensions and dismissal.<sup>19</sup> Moreover the authors also argued that Gillis was using these actions his fellow miners at Falconbridge to influence the upcoming Local 598 election in his favour.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, following the OLRB decision which ruled the strike illegal, the Board held hearings regarding the dismissal of the miners who participated in the strike. At the conclusion of these hearings, the Board ruled against the miners, arguing that Falconbridge had the right to dismiss these miners under these circumstances.<sup>21</sup> Following these decisions, in recognition of their defeat, the charter for Local 1025 was withdrawn by the National Office.<sup>22</sup>

In 1962, the miners at Falconbridge succeeded in obtaining their own Mine-Mill local. However, this success came in the form of a major defeat for union as a whole. With the Steelworkers obtaining the bargaining rights for the miners at Inco, the work of Local 598 was now focussed entirely on representing the interests of the miners at Falconbridge. However, there was no guarantee that this situation would continue, as the Steelworkers were actively raiding the jurisdiction held by Local 598 at Falconbridge.

While the raid at Inco was being conducted, the Steelworkers were engaged in a less-publicized

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<sup>18</sup>ibid.

<sup>19</sup>"Frame-Up!," Mike Solski Fonds P019 File 3/5 Box N45,3, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>20</sup>ibid.

<sup>21</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 267.

<sup>22</sup>ibid.

raid at Falconbridge. The efforts of Steel were being met with some success, as they were able to file an Application for Certification to the Ontario Labour Relations Board in late February 1962.<sup>23</sup> Following the filing of this application, Don Gillis filed an intervention with the Board on behalf of the Sudbury Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, Local 598 on March 6, 1962. However, in filing this intervention, it is interesting to note that Gillis raised no objections to the Steelworkers' application, and that he merely intervened as "the bargaining agent of employees who may be affected by the application."<sup>24</sup> However, there were other members of Local 598 who were able to intervene successfully against the Steelworkers.

The movement to block this Steel raid successfully gained some momentum at a series of hearings before the OLRB from May 29-31, 1962. At these hearings, Mine-Mill produced a list of witnesses who either had not signed a Steel card, or signed the card and not paid the \$1.00 fee.<sup>25</sup> More hearings were held on June 20-22 and July 23-24 in which this matter was investigated further. In between these two sets of hearings, Lukin Robinson, Research Director for Mine-Mill, filed an affidavit before the Board. In this affidavit, Robinson accused Steel recruiters Gino Dovigi and James Robertson of forging signatures on Steel cards.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Robinson also noted that neither Robertson nor Dovigi could identify a group of Falconbridge miners whom they apparently recruited, nor could they provide

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 314.

<sup>24</sup>"The Labour Relations Act Intervention Before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, March 6, 1962," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 72 - Sudbury Campaign - Falconbridge File, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>25</sup>John B. Lang, "A Lion in a Den of Daniels" (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 314.

<sup>26</sup>"The Labour Relations Act Before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, Affidavit on June 26, 1962," Mike Spolski Fonds P019 File "Appeal Book No. 2 Nov 1961-July 1963 2/4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

“any recollection as to where the cards had been completed.”<sup>27</sup> Dwight Storey, the Legislative Director for the Steelworkers, refuted Robinson’s claims against Robertson and Dovigi in an affidavit of his own on September 5, 1962 to no avail.<sup>28</sup> According to John B. Lang, in the OLRB hearings held in June and July 1962, “handwriting experts testified to almost fifty forgeries among Steel’s application,” of which forty-two of these forgeries could be attributed to Robertson or Dovigi.<sup>29</sup> Even though the Steelworkers had enough legitimate cards to proceed with their application with the exclusion of the forgeries, William Mahoney (Canadian Director of the Steelworkers) realized that the forgeries would be a formidable challenge to overcome in their campaign at Falconbridge. As a result, on July 25, 1962, Mahoney announced the withdrawal of their application at Falconbridge.<sup>30</sup>

In an article which appeared in the August 4, 1962 issue of the *Sudbury Sun*, the reactions of Mine-Mill and the Steelworkers to this development were divided as expected. While the Steelworkers were disappointed with this setback, the officials of Mine-Mill were jubilant over this very rare victory over the Steelworkers during this time.<sup>31</sup> However, it was also argued that no one really knew where the forged cards came from. While Mine-Mill accused the Steel organizers for creating these forgeries, Steel organizers countered by arguing that the names of those who signed the forged cards were those of the staunch Mine-Mill supporters who were removed from the Steelworkers’ lists early in the

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<sup>27</sup>ibid.

<sup>28</sup>“The Labour Relations Act Before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, Affidavit on September 5, 1962,” Mike Soiski Fonds P019 File “Appeal Book No. 3 Nov 1961-July 1993 3/4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>29</sup>John B. Lang, “A Lion in a Den of Daniels” (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1970), 314.

<sup>30</sup>ibid.

<sup>31</sup>“Steel Union Maps Plan for Future,” The Sudbury Sun, August 4, 1962, 1.

campaign.<sup>32</sup> Incidentally, neither Don Gillis nor any members within his executive commented publicly on the withdrawal of the Steel application at Falconbridge. As for the Steelworkers' next strategy, it was agreed that a "wait-and-see" approach was the best course of action to take.<sup>33</sup>

The next course of action would come in October 1963 with the formation of USWA Local 6600 at Falconbridge. The new local was headed by J. F. MacDonald, a former Mine-Mill steward who was disgusted with the terms of a new Falconbridge contract that was ratified after the National Office of Mine-Mill refused to approve a 90% strike vote.<sup>34</sup> In particular, the members of the new local were most upset with the Falconbridge pension plan, to which Falconbridge workers were forced to contribute five percent of their wages.<sup>35</sup> This disappointment was compounded by the fact that the pension plan obtained by the Steelworkers at Inco was (and still is) funded entirely by the company.<sup>36</sup> However, due to the recent acceptance of a new contract at Falconbridge and the Ontario laws which governed this contract, the new local was unable to apply for certification until 1965.<sup>37</sup>

However, before their application was launched in August 1965, Local 6600 recruited a powerful ally. In a television interview in June 1965, Don Gillis openly voiced his support for the Steelworkers. In explaining why he remained silent in the first phase of the Steel campaign, Gillis replied that he "wanted to show the people of Sudbury that the men were joining Steel because they wanted

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<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, 1 & 3.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>34</sup> "Falconbridge Men Form Steel Local," *The Miners' Voice*, October 1963, 1.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

to — not because I told them to do it.”<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Gillis mentioned that he was neutral during the Steel raids at Inco and that he commended the miners there for choosing the right union to represent them.<sup>39</sup> Gillis followed his public proclamation of Steel by signing a membership card for Local 6600, which was heavily publicized by the Steelworkers.<sup>40</sup> However, there are some interesting conclusions which can be drawn from Gillis' actions at this time. First, due to his expulsion from Mine-Mill, Gillis was essentially a “union man without a union,” since Mine-Mill had the bargaining rights at Falconbridge. Moreover, by signing a Steel card at this time, Gillis did not face any repercussions from Mine-Mill for supporting their rival union. As mentioned earlier, Gillis had publicly maintained a neutral stance regarding the Steelworkers raid at Inco while he was the president of Local 598. However, since his actions clearly supported the Steelworkers, it can be argued that Gillis only maintained his public stance of neutrality as a means of keeping his job as 598 president, which, as mentioned earlier, was a necessary action for him to take if the Steelworkers were to win the bargaining rights at Inco. Thus, it can be argued that the only thing that changed since Gillis presided over Local 598 was that Gillis was now actually admitting that he supported Steel.

In an attempt to obtain the support of the miners in 1965, meetings were held in Chelmsford and Garson in March of that year. At these meetings, Mine-Mill was denounced as a small, financially weak union that was more concerned with the promotion of communism than they were with trade union

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<sup>38</sup>Gillis Backs Steel Drive at Falconbridge,” *Steel Labor* (Canadian ed.), June 1965, 6.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>“Don Gillis Signs Steel Card,” *The Miners' Voice*, July 1965, 3.

issues.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the meetings also promoted unity with the Steelworkers as the only viable option for these miners.<sup>42</sup> However, these meetings did not address one of the primary concerns among the miners at Falconbridge, which was Canadian autonomy.

To account for this situation, Local 6600 created a series of campaign posters in which the Canadian flag was the most dominant feature.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, these posters also stressed the fact that at that time, the USWA was Canada's largest union.<sup>44</sup> These posters were primarily geared toward attacking the failures of Mine-Mill, such as the disappearance of the strike fund that was raised by the Gillis administration,<sup>45</sup> their apparent refusal to provide financial statements to their members,<sup>46</sup> and their inferior pension plan.<sup>47</sup> However, one of these posters did focus on a positive action by the Steelworkers, which was the contract that was achieved by the INTERNATIONAL (Local 6600's emphasis, not mine) union at Continental Can in New Jersey, Toronto, Edmonton, Montreal, and Vancouver — something that Local 6600 claimed could never be won by a “peanut union” like Mine-Mill.<sup>48</sup>

To counter this argument, Local 598 argued that Steel was conducting their campaign at

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<sup>41</sup>“Mine-Mill Admits Failure at Inco,” IUSWA Fonds P038 Dossier: Falconbridge M52,1, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>IUSWA Fonds P038 Dossier: Falconbridge M52,1, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup>“Where is the Cash?,” IUSWA Fonds P038 Dossier: Falconbridge M52,1, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>46</sup>“How About a Carbon Copy?,” IUSWA Fonds P038 Dossier: Falconbridge M52,1, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>47</sup>“Mine-Mill's Famous Pension,” IUSWA Fonds P038 Dossier: Falconbridge M52,1, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>48</sup>Untitled, United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 101 - Sudbury Area - 1965, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

Falconbridge because they feared a Mine-Mill comeback at Inco.<sup>49</sup> As a result, Steel was reduced to conducting a smear campaign against Local 598 in which their members are branded as thugs.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, Local 598 also contended that Local 6600 had no bargaining program for Falconbridge, and that any gains made by Mine-Mill at Falconbridge could be lost.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, Local 598 countered the Steelworkers' claim regarding the secrecy of their financial statements by stating that monthly statements were available to their members at every membership meeting, and that these matters were "best discussed by union members, at union meetings."<sup>52</sup> Finally, Local 598 urged its members to remain calm in the face of Steel provocations, and cling to the truth.<sup>53</sup>

On August 20, 1965, the Steelworkers filed another application for certification with the Ontario Labour Relations Board.<sup>54</sup> Within this application, the Steelworkers claimed that there were approximately 2200 members in the bargaining unit at Falconbridge.<sup>55</sup> However, this number would be disputed at the Board hearings which began on September 12, 1965. According to Falconbridge, the actual size of the bargaining unit is 2424 workers.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the Board noted that of the 1071 cards presented by the Steelworkers, "89 names could not be found in the company list, eight were

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<sup>49</sup>"The M-M Bridge Fact Bulletin #3: May 14, 1965," Norman Stephen Fonds P054 File: Bulletins --- Pension Bulletins, The M-M Bridge Fact Bulletin . . . F3,4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup>"Around the Bridge With Mine Mill: July 19, 1965," Norman Stephen Fonds P054 File: Bulletins --- Pension Bulletins, The M-M Bridge Fact Bulletin . . . F3,4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>53</sup>"The M-M Bridge Fact Bulletin #3: May 14, 1965," Norman Stephen Fonds P054 File: Bulletins --- Pension Bulletins, The M-M Bridge Fact Bulletin . . . F3,4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>54</sup>"The Labour Relations Act Application for Certification Before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, August 20, 1965," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 101 - Sudbury Area - 1965, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup>"Hearing Opens on Steel Bid at Falco," The Sudbury Star, September 13, 1965, 1.

duplicates, and two were doubtful.”<sup>57</sup> This left the Steelworkers with 972 valid cards, which is five percent less than the 45% support required for a certification vote. As a result, the Steelworkers had to concede defeat for a second time at Falconbridge due to a lack of signed cards.

However, the Steelworkers’ efforts to organize the workers in 1965 were not a complete failure. In September 1965, Local 6855 was chartered to represent the office and technical employees of Falconbridge.<sup>58</sup> Following the issuing of the charter to this new local, approximately two-thirds of the 300-member bargaining unit signed Steel cards and paid their one dollar fee.<sup>59</sup> As a result, upon the filing of an application with the OLRB, Local 6855 was automatically granted certification as the representative of this bargaining unit. It should be noted that Mine-Mill never made an attempt to represent these workers, preferring to concentrate their efforts at Falconbridge to representing the miners.

In 1966, another organization campaign was launched by the Steelworkers at Falconbridge. In their campaign advertisements, Steel once again focussed on the inferior pension plans at Falconbridge,<sup>60</sup> and that the weak Mine-Mill Union was unable to effectively fight for larger wage increases because they lacked the strength of the Steelworkers.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the Steelworkers expanded on their argument regarding wage increases by focussing on the contract they were able to obtain for

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>“Expect Certification Falconbridge Office,” *The Miners’ Voice*, September 1965, 1.

<sup>59</sup>“Falconbridge Drive Goes Over the Top,” *Steel Labor* (Canadian ed.), September 1965, 1.

<sup>60</sup>“Why Not a Pension Plan at Falconbridge?,” *United Steelworkers of America – District 6 (Box1) P038 Box 1*, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>61</sup>“Steel is a Blue Chip Union,” *United Steelworkers of America – District 6 (Box1) P038 Box 1*, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

the office and technical workers, in which the hourly rated employees received wage increases of nine to eleven cents per hour.<sup>62</sup> Finally, the Steelworkers used the image of a thermometer to illustrate the rate at which they are signing up new members at Falconbridge.<sup>63</sup>

To counter the above arguments, Local 598 stressed that they would obtain an interim wage increase for Falconbridge miners, and that Steel should be fighting for that instead of raiding Falconbridge.<sup>64</sup> In presenting this argument, Local 598 also stressed that “signing a card for the raiders means no wage increase this year.”<sup>65</sup> This point continued to be stressed throughout the Mine-Mill campaign. Moreover, Local 598 also reported on the Falconbridge annual shareholders meeting in which Local 598 president Bob McArthur and Falconbridge president H. J. Fraser agreed that the Falconbridge miners had an inferior contract, but due to the Steel raid, the Company was not going to “take any actions that would bring down the wrath of the Ontario Labour Relations Board.”<sup>65</sup> The Steelworkers also commented on the discussion at the shareholders meeting, arguing that the substandard contract was not the result of a Steel raid, but rather the result of the knowledge that Mine-Mill was a weak union that Falconbridge could take advantage of in contract negotiations.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, in their campaign, the Steelworkers supported Bob McArthur in the Local 598 elections

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<sup>62</sup>“Steel Hourly Rated Employees (O and T) Get Interim Wage Boost,” United Steelworkers of America – District 6 (Box1) P038 Box 1, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>63</sup>“Balance of Power,” ILUMSMW Fonds P026 File: 41-12, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>64</sup>“The Bridge Captains’ Bulletin, February 17, 1966,” Norman Stephen Fonds P054 File: Bulletins – Pension Bulletins, The M-M Bridge Fact Bulletin . . . F3,4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup>“The Bridge Captains’ Bulletin, May 6, 1966,” Norman Stephen Fonds P054 File: Bulletins – Pension Bulletins, The M-M Bridge Fact Bulletin . . . F3,4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>67</sup>“Can You Be Sure?,” United Steelworkers of America – District 6 (Box1) P038 Box 1, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

for that year because he would support the Steel concept of “one industry – one union,” realizing that he would only be an interim president of Local 598 because Steel held the balance of power in the industry.<sup>68</sup> This argument was countered by McArthur, who stated that he would continue to work with the National Office of Mine-Mill, and that “the best thing for the ‘Bridge workers would be if Steel gets the hell out of Falconbridge.”<sup>69</sup> Finally, McArthur stated that he never granted permission to the Steelworkers to use his picture for their campaign.<sup>70</sup> However, it will be shown that Bob McArthur was not truly sincere when he made the above statements. Regardless, the Falconbridge miners believed his statement and reelected him to the presidency of Local 598 that year.

On June 21, 1966, the United Steelworkers of America filed their third application for certification within five years to the Ontario Labour Relations Board in an attempt to represent the miners at Falconbridge.<sup>71</sup> It was ruled that the size of the bargaining unit at the time of submission was 2371 men, and that the Steelworkers had submitted 1375 cards, which would have been sufficient for an automatic certification of Local 6600.<sup>72</sup> However, on July 25, the OLRB ruled that of the 1375 cards, 343 were invalid, 43 were duplicates, 28 were invalid because “the signees had not worked during the 30 days prior to, or after, the date of application,” and that 272 names were not on the list that was submitted to the Board by Falconbridge.<sup>73</sup> With this ruling, the Steelworkers no longer had the required

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<sup>68</sup>“Balance of Power,” IUMMSMW Fonds P026 File: 41-12, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>69</sup>“Bob McArthur Speaks,” IUMMSMW Fonds P026 File: 42-1, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>“A Message from the Executive of Local 6600 – USWA,” The Sudbury Star, July 29, 1966, 2.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

minimum support of 45% of the bargaining unit. The Steelworkers conceded defeat for a third time, and the application was dismissed by the Board in August of that year.<sup>74</sup> After three failed attempts to obtain certification as the bargaining unit for the miners at Falconbridge through raiding, it became clear that their use of the “raiding stick” would never lead to a successful campaign at Falconbridge. As a result, the Steelworkers decided to “dangle a carrot” before the miners at Falconbridge in the form of a merger agreement.

The idea of a merger between the two unions in Canada was initially proposed early in 1964, when USWA District 6 Director Larry Sefton issued an open letter to Canadian Mine-Mill President Ken Smith. In this letter, Sefton states that “I sincerely believe that the welfare of the nonferrous workers surmounts all other considerations. Relations between our two unions hitherto have been attended by bitter rivalry and seeming unbridgeable differences. To let these continue to divide us is to allow the events of past years to impede our future in a new age – the era of automation.”<sup>75</sup> However, this merger proposal was flatly rejected by Smith. In a series of letters to Sefton on February 24 and March 9, 1964, Smith reiterated that it was the Steelworkers, not Mine-Mill who had caused the disunity among the miners in the industry, and that since Sefton made no promise to end Steel's practice of raiding, the proposals for the merger were not deemed to be genuine.<sup>76</sup> In response, Sefton informed his staff representatives on March 11 that “it is obvious that Mine Mill leaders do not intend to accept

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., and Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing & Printing Co., 1978), 165.

<sup>75</sup>“Open Letter to Mine-Mill President,” *Steel Labor* (Canadian ed.), March 1964, 1.

<sup>76</sup>“Letter from K. A. Smith to Larry Sefton on February 24, 1964” and “Letter from K. A. Smith to Larry Sefton on March 9, 1964” *IUSWA Fonds* P038 File: Correspondence District Office M52,1, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

our invitation for merger talks. Instead they are stepping up their propaganda against our union.”<sup>77</sup> Sefton then went on to state that “we have to do some intensive campaigning ourselves, to convince Mine Mill members that their place is in our union.”<sup>78</sup> While the merger idea would not be abandoned by the Steelworkers, as illustrated earlier, a large portion of their campaign to win over Mine-Mill members which followed took the form of raiding. Thus, it can be argued that Smith was correct to maintain his position, since his members would not accept a merger with a union that insisted on using the dirty tactic of raiding to destroy their union. But the idea of a merger did not die in 1964.

In October 1966, as the United States section of Mine-Mill was engaged in merger talks with the Steelworkers, the Canadian executive again issued a statement rejecting the idea of a merger. In this statement, the Canadian Office stressed their desire to remain as a union that is autonomous from the United States, and that “what is done in Canada will be determined in its entirety by the membership of our union in Canada under the terms of our own Canadian constitution.”<sup>79</sup> Moreover, the Canadian officers of Mine-Mill reiterated their stance of Steel abandoning its policy of raiding in favour of a policy of “active co-operation between the unions.”<sup>80</sup> Thus, despite the progress that was being made in discussions between the two unions in the United States at the time (which led to a merger agreement in January 1967), the talks between the two unions remained in a stalemate for the remainder of the year.

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<sup>77</sup>“USWA District 6 Letter from Larry Sefton to Staff Representatives on March 11, 1964,” IUSWA Fonds P038 File: Correspondence District Office M52,1, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup>“Canadian Mine Mill Chiefs Reject Unity,” The Miners’ Voice, October 1966, 2.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*

However, in 1967, this stalemate between the two unions was broken, and the idea of a merger between the two unions became a real possibility. To begin, on February 2, 1967, the two unions agreed to a non-raiding pact. In making this agreement, both unions agreed that "rivalry between our two organizations in the non-ferrous metal and other related industries in Canada is inconsistent with our purpose, prevents unity of the employees within those industries and gives assistance to the employers within those industries," and that the purpose of the agreement was to "create a climate conducive to exploratory discussion of possible organic unity between our unions."<sup>31</sup> With this agreement, the factor that was identified by Smith as the greatest impediment to any merger between the two unions was eliminated. As a result, discussions between the two unions continued with the goal of a merger agreement that would be acceptable to both parties.

At a conference for the national officers in Mine-Mill held in Edmonton on February 17, the officers formally agreed to continue further discussions with the Steelworkers regarding unity between the two organizations.<sup>32</sup> These discussions led to the signing of a merger pact between the two unions on April 29.<sup>33</sup> The terms of the merger pact, which was designed to eliminate inter-union rivalry in the non-ferrous metals industry, stipulated among other things, that local Mine-Mill unions would retain their assets, records, and property under a new Steel charter, and that members of good standing in Mine-

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<sup>31</sup>"Agreement Between the United Steelworkers of America and International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (Canada) Dated at Toronto This 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of February, 1967," Mike Solski Fonds P019 File "Exhibit Book Feb 1967 - Nov 1967 4/4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>32</sup>"National Union, Mine Mill & Smelter Workers, Conference on February 17, 1967," Norman Stephen Fonds P054 File: Merger Agreements & Papers 1966-67 F3,5, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>33</sup>"Steel, Mine Mill Sign Merger Pact," The Miners' Voice, May 1967, 1.

Mill would become members in good standing of the Steelworkers.<sup>84</sup> In essence, Mine-Mill would cease to exist, with the Steelworkers assuming all of the jurisdictions held by Mine-Mill. But for this agreement to take effect, it needed to be ratified at a special convention of Mine-Mill that was held in Winnipeg from June 23 - 25.<sup>85</sup>

However, before this convention could take place, each local had to elect their delegates for this convention. Moreover, in the case of Local 598, an additional plebiscite was held. On the ballot for this plebiscite, there were two items to vote on. The first item urged members to answer yes or no to the following statement, "I am in favour of merging Mine Mill into the Steel Union."<sup>86</sup> The second item urged members to answer yes or no to the following statement, "I am in favour of the Sudbury Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union Local 598 continuing as an independent local union if necessary."<sup>87</sup> In the May 1967 issue of Local 598 News, the executive of Local 598 urged the membership to vote "no" on the first question and "yes" on the second question.<sup>88</sup> In making these recommendations, the Local 598 Executive Board stated that they were "of the opinion that the merger agreement is premature. They are of the opinion it was reached without proper discussion among the Mine-Mill membership. The wounds from the last raid are not yet healed. Yet, we are now being called on to accept the Steelworkers as faithful brothers."<sup>89</sup> The Local 598 executive then went on to state that "it is necessary

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<sup>84</sup>"IUMMSW Summary of Merger Agreement on May 2, 1967," IUMMSW Fonds P026 File: 39-20, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>85</sup>"Stee., Mine Mill Sign Merger Pact," The Miners' Voice, May 1967, 1.

<sup>86</sup>"Official Returns from the Local 598 Elections held on May 31, 1967," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 8, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup>"A Statement from the Executive Board, Local 598," Local 598 News, May 1967, 1.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*

to test the sincerity of the Steelworkers Union through joint co-operative trade union action."<sup>90</sup> However, it should be noted that the views of the Local 598 executive did not reflect those of Local 598 President Bob McArthur, who openly endorsed the merger on the grounds that Mine-Mill has always sought unity with the rest of the labour movement, and that for the union to have any influence on CLC policies, they must merge with the Steelworkers.<sup>91</sup>

When the plebiscite took place in Sudbury on May 31, the membership of Local 598 opposed the merger of Mine-Mill into the Steel Union by a vote of 834 to 432.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, the members also voted in favour of maintaining Local 598 as an independent local union if necessary by a vote of 925 to 320.<sup>93</sup> As a result, at the Special Convention in Winnipeg, Local 598 presented two resolutions which called for the National Office to respect the wishes of those locals who wished to remain independent, and for the Convention to demand the resignation of the National Officers, and the election of a pro tem executive board.<sup>94</sup> However, the National Executive Board countered with a resolution for the Convention to endorse the merger agreement, and to hold a referendum for the entire membership on August 3, with the result to be binding on all members of the National Union.<sup>95</sup>

At the Special Convention in Winnipeg held on June 23 to 25, the delegates voted 64 to 38 in

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Bob McArthur, "598 News," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 8, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>92</sup>"Official Returns from the Local 598 Elections held on May 31, 1967," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 8, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>"SMMSWU Resolutions," Norman Stephen Fonds P054 File: Merger Agreements & Papers 1966-67 F3,5, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>95</sup>Unfiled, Norman Stephen Fonds P054 File: Merger Agreements & Papers 1966-67 F3,5, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

favour of the merger agreement and to a binding referendum among the membership on August 3.<sup>96</sup> Among the delegates who voted in favour of the merger was Local 598 President Bob McArthur. In defending his decision, McArthur stated that "I support the merger because I don't want us younger workers to have to go through the futility of fighting raids and division as have the older brothers of this union."<sup>97</sup> For going against the wishes of his membership, sixty-five members of his local formally charged McArthur with "conduct unbecoming a member of the Union, betrayal of oath of office." and "acting other than the wishes of the membership" under Article 19, Section 7 of the Mine-Mill constitution on July 5, 1967.<sup>98</sup> In response, on July 14, McArthur informed the trial committee that the trial was illegal, and that he was on trial strictly for "political reasons" because he endorsed the merger.<sup>99</sup> But unlike Don Gillis before him, McArthur had the support of the National Office in his attempt to merge his local with Steel.

On August 3, 1967, the membership of the Canadian Section of Mine-Mill voted in favour of the merger agreement. Officially, 5122 members voted in favour of the merger, 2522 members voted against the merger, while 58 members spoiled their ballots.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, every local voted in favour of the merger with the exception of Local 598, whose members continued to voice their opposition to

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<sup>96</sup>"Canadian Mine-Mill Votes Three to One for Unity," Steel Labor (Canadian ed.), July 1967, 9.

<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup>Untitled to L. Stevenson, United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 8, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>99</sup>"Letter from R. W. McArthur to Local 598 Trial Committee on July 14, 1967," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 8, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>100</sup>"Certified Ballot Count of Returns of Referendum Ballot Held August 3, 1967, of Merger Between the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smeiter Workers in Canada and the United Steelworkers of America," Mike Solski Fonds P019 File "Exhibit Book Feb 1967 - Nov 1967 4/4, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

the merger.<sup>101</sup> In response, the Local 598 Executive, with the exception of McArthur, formed the Nickel Belt Labour Club and took actions to seize the properties which belonged to Local 598.<sup>102</sup> In response, McArthur urged Mine-Mill president Ken Smith to take action against the executive of Local 598. This request was granted on August 3 when Smith ruled that the members of the Local 598 executive had forfeited their offices, and that James Keuhl was to be appointed as the administrator of the union.<sup>103</sup> The members of the executive launched an appeal against this action.

While the officers of Local 598 were preparing their appeal, they received an unexpected ally. In an article which appeared in the August 11, 1967 issue of the *Sudbury Star*, Tony Soden, former president of USWA Local 6500 (Sudbury-Inco) stated that it is "immoral to force the majority of Falconbridge Nickel Mines workers into Mine-Mill Local 598 into an organization they have no confidence in."<sup>104</sup> According to Frank Southern, author of *The Sudbury Incident*, Soden's support for the Falconbridge miners is what effectively ended the attempt to merge Local 598 with the Steelworkers.<sup>105</sup> However, Local 598's battle for autonomy continued for two more years after Soden's endorsement.

Meanwhile, James Keuhl and Steelworkers organizer Ontario Mancini were working to establish Local 598 Steel under the terms of the merger agreement. To begin, Keuhl and Mancini ordered the publication of a Steel newspaper entitled *The Unity News*, which was meant to serve the interests of

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<sup>101</sup>"Mine Mill Members Back Steel Merger," *The Miners' Voice*, September 1967, 1.

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup>"IUMMSW Declaration of the Canadian President of the International Union of Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers, Pursuant to Sections 7 and 8 of Article 19 of the Canadian Constitution on August 3, 1967," *Norman Stephen Ford's P054 File: Canadian Autonomy of M&M F3.5*, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>104</sup>"Favors Canadian Union Autonomy," *The Sudbury Star*, August 11, 1967, 3.

<sup>105</sup>Frank Southern, *The Sudbury Incident* (Toronto: York Publishing & Printing Co., 1978), 184.

Local 598.<sup>106</sup> Distribution of the newspaper began on November 3, 1967 among the Falconbridge employees.<sup>107</sup> The second action to be taken by Keuhl and Mancini was the mailing of “Local 598 Steel” cards to the membership of Mine-Mill at Falconbridge.<sup>108</sup> However, before these actions were taken, Bob McArthur formally filed his resignation as president and business agent of Local 598 to James Keuhl on October 30, 1967 on account of the fact that he accepted another position in the trade union movement.<sup>109</sup>

On February 12 to 15, 1968, the Local 598 Executive’s case against the merger was brought before the Supreme Court of Ontario.<sup>110</sup> When the decision in the case was made on May 9, 1968, Judge J. M. King ruled that the Mine-Mill constitution needed to be altered before such an agreement could be enforced on Local 598, and that “the merger agreement to which reference has been made in not binding upon ‘Local 598 Mine Mill.’”<sup>111</sup> Moreover, on the matter of the appointment of James Keuhl as administrator of Local 598, the Court ruled that “the administration imposed on ‘Local 598 Mine Mill’ in August 1967 is void and of no effect.”<sup>112</sup> This decision was hailed by executives of Local 598. Norman Stephen, financial secretary of Local 598, called the ruling “a magnificent step forward

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<sup>106</sup>“USWA District 6 Letter from Terry Mancini to Larry Sefton on November 1, 1967,” United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 104; 1967 Sudbury Area (2) Folder 1, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup>“SMMSWU Local 598 Letter from R. W. McArthur to James Keuhl on October 30, 1967,” United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, First Accrual, Box 104; 1967 Sudbury Area (2) Folder 2, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

<sup>110</sup>“S.C.O. Ruling by Judge J. M. King, May 9, 1968,” Norman Stephen Fonds P054 File: Lawsuit brought by anti-merger forces 1968 - 1969 F3,5, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*

for the Canadian labor movement. It means we won't be dominated by any foreign trade union."<sup>113</sup>

However, Larry Sefton dismissed this ruling as "completely unrealistic," and pledged to appeal the ruling.<sup>114</sup>

On February 12 to 14, 1969, the case was brought before the Court of Appeal in the Supreme Court of Ontario. When the decision was reached on July 15, Judge J. A. Evans agreed with the previous ruling a year earlier which stated that there was no provision in the Mine-Mill constitution that would legally enable such a merger to be forced on Local 598.<sup>115</sup> As a result, Justice Evans dismissed the appeal.<sup>116</sup> With this ruling, the United Steelworkers of America were forced to concede defeat at Falconbridge to Mine-Mill Local 598.

Thus, after three Steel raids, a merger agreement that was endorsed by the National Office of Mine-Mill and Local 598 President Bob McArthur, the placing of the local under administration, a Supreme Court of Ontario ruling, and the rejection of an appeal by the Steelworkers in the Supreme Court a year later, the Sudbury Mine Mill and Smelter Workers Union Local 598 had succeeded in defeating the Steelworkers for the bargaining rights at Falconbridge. In achieving this victory, Local 598 ensured the survival of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, albeit in a much smaller form. To this day, Mine-Mill Local 598 continues to represent the miners at Falconbridge, while USWA Local 6500 continues to represent the miners at Inco. For the past three decades, the two

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<sup>113</sup>"Mine Mill Executives Hail Ruling," *The Globe and Mail*, May 10, 1968, B01.

<sup>114</sup>"Steelworkers, Mine-Mill Merger Ruled Invalid by Supreme Court," *The Globe and Mail*, May 10, 1968, B08.

<sup>115</sup>"In the Supreme Court of Ontario Court of Appeal, July 15, 1969," *Norman Stephen Fonds* P054 File: Lawsuit brought by anti-merger forces 1968 - 1969 F3,5, Laurentian University Archives Centre in Sudbury, Ontario.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*

organizations have represented their miners admirably in negotiating favourable contracts with Inco and Falconbridge. As a result, the Steelworkers and Mine-Mill have shown that though they are divided, they can still stand tall and proud as fine representatives of the Canadian labour movement.

## *Divided We Stand . . . Together*

### Events Since 1969, and Some Concluding Remarks

On Labour Day 1969, a sight that many deemed to be inconceivable was observed in Sudbury. At the Labour Day Parade, a photograph was taken in which Jim Tester, President of Mine-Mill Local 598 and Homer Seguin, President of USWA Local 6500 were seen together, in their respective union garb, engaging in a friendly conversation while drinking beer.<sup>1</sup> One would assume that over the past decade, the two presidents would have developed some bitter, irreconcilable differences that would have prevented them from speaking to each other. However, since the rejection of the Steelworkers' appeal regarding the merger of Local 598 into their organization, both unions have resolved to work on improving the conditions at their respective workplaces, much to the benefit of the workers they represent, and the region of Sudbury as a whole.

Conversely, the civility among the two local presidents has not always been reflected by other members in their respective organizations. For example, when the Mine-Mill Centennial Conference held in Sudbury in May 1993 was being organized, it was announced that Steelworkers' officials were invited to the event, as a means of acknowledging their pivotal role in the history of Mine-Mill. In response, Laure St. Jean, a Mine-Mill member for more than 40 years, commented that "I'm not scared to say that

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<sup>1</sup>"Photograph of Jim Tester and Homer Seguin at the Labour Day Parade in Sudbury in 1969," United Steelworkers of America: District 6 Archives, Fifth Accrual, Box 477 F11-2 Local 6500-Sudbury, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

some of those Steelworkers, or ex-Mine-Millers who used Mine Mill to get their jobs, that they're coming here to speak at the conference – it's a disgrace."<sup>2</sup> His attitude toward the Steelworkers was further elaborated when he stated that "they screwed my life for the last 30 years, after the raids in the 1960's. It was like someone coming into your house and taking your wife."<sup>3</sup> The views of St. Jean regarding the Steelworkers are reflective of the opinions of many Mine-Mill members who, in the words of Bob McArthur, perceived the Steelworkers as "opportunistic intruders intent on destroying a grassroots organization that transformed the quality of life on and off the jobs in the region."<sup>4</sup> As a result, the organizers of the Centennial Conference acknowledged the fact that "it will be difficult to get some people in the same meeting room together."<sup>5</sup>

However, the Mine-Mill Centennial Conference, which was sponsored by Laurentian University's Institute of Northern Research and Development and Mine-Mill, was a successful event which brought together many of the key figures mentioned throughout this thesis to celebrate their union's history. Moreover, this conference represented a resolution of differences between Mine-Mill and Laurentian University – an institution that had sought to destroy Mine-Mill through the work of Alexandre Boudreau three decades earlier. Following this conference, Mine-Mill Local 598 began their next century of existence by affiliating their local with the Canadian Auto Workers on August 20, 1993. As a result, CAW-Mine Mill Local 598 has been able to maintain their autonomy as a Canadian miners' union, while obtaining access to the financial resources and political influence of one of Canada's strongest unions.

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<sup>2</sup>"Bitter Memories of Local Union Wars Linger," The Sudbury Star, April 15, 1993, B1.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>"Memories Linger of Violent Raids in '50's and '60's," The Sudbury Star, April 21, 1993, B1.

<sup>5</sup>"Bitter Memories of Local Union Wars Linger," The Sudbury Star, April 15, 1993, B1.

Meanwhile, Local 6500 of the Steelworkers has proven to be a very influential local within their union. Following the retirement of International President George Becker on February 28, 2001, Secretary-Treasurer Leo W. Gerard, who began his union career as a steward of Local 6500, assumed the post vacated by Becker. As a result, Local 6500 has developed a very strong, influential connection with the International Executive, which in turn allays the fears of those who argued that a union based in Pittsburgh would not be concerned with the affairs of a local in a small Canadian city in Northern Ontario. Incidentally, Leo's father, Wilfred, was a chief organizer for Mine-Mill Local 598 while the raids were being conducted in Sudbury. Moreover, Wilfred Gerard was also one of the men who was arrested for his role in the arena riot in 1961.

Finally, in 2002, the two organizations achieved a new level of cooperation which signalled the most decisive end to their long, bitter conflict in Sudbury. In response to a decision by Falconbridge officials to reduce the number of first aid attendants at their Onaping operations, CAW-Mine Mill Local 598 and USWA Local 2020 filed a joint complaint with the Ontario Ministry of Labour. Following an investigation, the ministry ruled in favour of the unions on September 24, arguing that the company had acted in violation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.<sup>5</sup> Following the decision, Local 598 President Rick Gryllis acknowledged that joint action between the two unions had been discussed prior to this investigation, but that this was the first time that the two organizations had followed through on such discussions.<sup>7</sup> Though the conflict between the two organizations had ended years earlier, this

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<sup>5</sup>"Steel, Mine Mill Hail Joint Win," The Sudbury Star (Online Edition), September 25, 2002.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

action can be described as the official end of a divisive past, and the beginning of a future of cooperation between two strong unions that will serve to benefit the workers in Sudbury's mines for many years to come. One can only hope that the previous statement will prove to be valid over the coming decades.

After analysing the conflict between the Steelworkers and Mine-Mill in Sudbury, one must ask what conclusions could be drawn from these events. First, the conflict which culminated with the Steel raids did not begin spontaneously in 1958. The development of this conflict began soon after Mine-Mill became certified as the bargaining agent for the miners in Sudbury in 1943, and continued to develop through the establishment of defined politically-based factions among the membership, the transfer of the mining jurisdiction to the Steelworkers in 1950 within the Canadian Congress of Labour, and the development of a situation in which, as Bob Carlin found out, neutrality was an unacceptable, and highly unproductive stance to adopt. However, the development of these factions in the 1940's and 1950's did give rise to a stalemate within Local 598 which lasted for most of the decade of the 1950's, which was characterized by the largely unchallenged rule of the executive led by Mike Solski.

The above point leads to the second conclusion that is to be reached, which is that the 1958 Inco Strike broke the stalemate between the two factions, thus creating the situation in which a Steelworkers raid became possible. The financial devastation that was felt throughout the City of Sudbury as a result of this strike forced the miners to become more involved within their union. Moreover, this strike also prompted the community as a whole to take action to ensure that the community would survive. Finally, the increase in community involvement was spearheaded to a large

degree by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, who saw a need to help the miners who, through a lack of careful planning by their union, were facing great difficulties with bill payments, grocery bills, heating costs, clothing allowances, and other household expenses that they had always been able to afford before the strike. While the official stance of the Diocese was one of neutrality during this conflict, it became clear that they were not pleased with how Mine-Mill handled the debacle of the strike. From this point onward, the Catholic Church played a pivotal role in deciding the outcome of the conflict between the Steelworkers and Mine-Mill.

A third conclusion which can be drawn from this study is that though the miners in Sudbury were sufficiently inspired to take action against their union following the 1958 strike, they still needed some outside assistance to ensure that any action that would be taken would be effective. In this regard, the role of Prof. Alexandre J. Boudreau and the University of Sudbury was essential in determining the final outcome of the conflict between Inco's miners. In seeking the assistance of the Steelworkers and the Canadian Labour Congress while developing his courses, and by instigating the formation of what has been described as the Gillis-Boudreau-Steel-CLC alliance through numerous private meetings, Boudreau created the foundation for a successful Steel raid at Inco's operations in Sudbury. The actions of the Don Gillis administration from 1959 to 1962 reflected the fact that they were students of Boudreau, and that they, like Boudreau, were equally committed to the elimination of communism in Sudbury by any means necessary, even if it meant being traitors to their union at the expense of the democratic rights and effective representation of their membership. Finally, the actions of Professor Boudreau reflect the views of the Jesuit Fathers (who founded the University of Sudbury) and the Catholic Church as a whole

regarding communism as the greatest threat to Christian civilization.

Furthermore, there are numerous conclusions which could be drawn regarding the situation at Falconbridge. The first and most important conclusion to be drawn from these events is that though the miners at Falconbridge constitute a relatively small group, their story is not insignificant. The actions of Mine-Mill's membership throughout the decade of the 1960's were pivotal to ensuring the survival of their union to this day. As a result, the detailed analysis of the situation that this thesis attempted to address was long overdue. Second, the miners at Falconbridge were not as adversely affected by the 1958 strike at Inco (on account of the fact that they were still working and collecting paycheques), and thus the situation regarding Mine-Mill at Falconbridge was not as precarious as the situation of the union at Inco. Finally, the events at Falconbridge illustrate the fact that unions are democratic institutions in which the will of the membership will be enforced, regardless of the obstacles they face in the process. The Mine-Mill members at Falconbridge were committed to establishing a Mine-Mill local that would serve their interests exclusively. As a result, the members refused to allow the dismantling of Local 1025, three Steel raids, and a merger agreement that was imposed on them by their National Office to prevent them from achieving their objective. For those who argue that unions are run by "union bosses" who exploit their members, the events at Falconbridge in the 1960's expose the flaws of their argument by proving that unions are indeed run by their rank-and-file membership.

Finally, the Steelworker raids at Inco and Falconbridge reveals that financial resources which are allotted to fund and defend against these raids are better spent on addressing the needs of their respective membership bodies. After a decade of bitter conflict between the Steelworkers and Mine-Mill,

the two organizations finally realized that their feud was only hurting their members. As a result, after the resolution of their conflict in 1969, both organizations have endeavoured to work together to better represent the miners in Sudbury. This process has been long and difficult for both organizations, and there are many miners who harbour animosities toward other miners to this day as a result of the conflict. However, by working together, it is clear that the two unions have grown stronger, and that the greatest beneficiary of this growth is the rank-and-file member. One can only hope that this new spirit of cooperation between the two organizations will continue, and that the democratic rights and interests of the rank-and-file will never again be sacrificed to further the cause of one union over another.

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