

Ian McKay

**Joe Salsberg, Depression-Era Communism, and the  
Limits of Moscow's Rule**

Gerald Tulchinsky's *Joe Salsberg: A Life of Commitment*<sup>1</sup> provides us with an outstanding portrait of a smart, complex, warm-hearted, and effective humanitarian – a man grounded in his community, yet with an egalitarian vision that extended well beyond it. In all these respects, he was rather like Gerald Tulchinsky himself. My remarks today, drawn from a larger project on the history of the left in Canada from 1921 to 1948, can be focused on two sentences from this remarkable book: in one, Salsberg “showed few overt signs of being a Stalinist, except in the remotest sense” (Tulchinsky 2013, 70); in another: “He was, above all other aspects of his identity, a loyal communist, a Stalinist really...” (Tulchinsky 2013, 116). What did it mean to be a “Stalinist” or a “loyal communist” from the 1920s to the 1950s?

The existing literature provides a fairly straightforward answer: it meant subservience to Moscow. According to this “Moscow Rules” interpretation, the Canadian party (and particularly the party leadership) was the epitome of slavish adherence to the dictates of Moscow and to its often-changing line. With reference to Canada, we have now a substantial scholarly historiography – going back to William Rodney's classic (and still useful) *Soldiers of the International* and through the writings of Ian Angus, Ivan Avakumovic, Norman Penner and Bryan Palmer, that emphasizes the abject submission of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) to Moscow, whose unquestioning submission to Moscow-conceived directives and total adherence to the Moscow Rules meant that Soviet leaders, Stalin above all, essentially held all meaningful power in the movement. (John Manley, the *doyen* of Canadian Communist studies, takes up a more nuanced stance, one that on balance admits substantial qualifications to, although not the abandonment of, the Moscow Rules paradigm).<sup>2</sup> In 2002, in a piece wittily entitled “Nina Ponomareva's Hats,” focused on Britain but with some opening comments about Canada, historians John McLlroy and Alan Campbell tell the story of Nina Ponomareva, a Soviet discus thrower whose arrest for stealing hats from a London store in 1956 sparked the withdrawal of the Soviet team from an athletics match: the British Communist newspaper *Daily Worker*, in apparently its first independent criticism of a Soviet action, called this decision “regrettable.”<sup>3</sup> Apart from some quibbles about issues as insubstantial as Nina Ponomareva's unfortunate penchant for pilfering hats, Moscow invariably ruled. If Cold War stereotypes have undoubtedly played a role in shaping the prevailing sense of a monolithic, externally directed Canadian Communism, it should be pointed out that much of this work constitutes scholarship based upon primary sources by respected historians.

Yet I don't think this thesis quite works in Canada. Much depends here on how terms and issues are defined. The problem, it seems, is not so much empirical as analytical. In essence, the literature defines “Canadian Communism” as “the leadership of the Communist Party of Canada as it sought to model itself upon the policies of the Comintern and of the Soviet Union.” Party leaders – Tim Buck above all – exerted themselves to enforce a Moscow Line upon the Party, and the Party in turn stood for “Communism.” With respect to the CPC's positioning on the question of Canadian

foreign policy, as demonstrated most glaringly in its defense of the Hitler–Stalin pact, there is surely much substance to this “traditional” interpretation, since such a line change would unlikely have occurred in response to the opinions of rank-and-file Canadian Communists. The next step is then to take such undoubted subservience on the part of the leadership of the CPC to the foreign-policy demands of the Soviet Union to be uniformly typical both of the span of the Party’s history from 1928 to 1939 and, further, to attribute to such “transmission-belt” authoritarianism in the Party the essence of the *movement* as a whole, one submerged in sectarianism, alienated from the ranks of labour, and prone to unrealistic “revolutionary posturing.”<sup>4</sup> There is often some respect paid to counter-indications of the “Nina Ponomareva” variety, but they do not unsettle the essential “traditionalist” narrative: that of leaders, the CPC, and the broader small-c communist movement they influenced working as one to further the interests of the Soviet Union and slavishly follow the Moscow Rules.

Yet on closer examination many elements of this position are unclearly stated and its evaluative criteria opaque or shifting.<sup>5</sup> The suggestion that Moscow ruled on every *important* question demands clarity and consistency. Basing myself on an examination of the scholarship that has emerged about the party over the past decade, and my own partial reading of the Communist International (Comintern) papers released in the 1990s, I would put forward the following five propositions that, if established, would count *against* what I have defined as the Moscow Rules position. I find: (a) that a given ‘Moscow Rule’ could be complicated, contradictory, subject to rival interpretations, even subject to Canadians’ interventions — and once propounded could even sometimes be amended at its source; (b) that the Comintern Papers especially, which are rich in almost incessant proclamations about the need for the party to become an homogeneous and monolithic army of ‘steeled militants,’ eloquently demonstrate how loosely such declarations approximated to Canadian realities. This relatively small movement was spread out across a vast land-mass, encompassed discrete language federations and francophone Québec, and lacked most of the conventional tools of patronage that kept other big cross-Canada parties together. So, in short, neither ‘Moscow’ nor ‘Toronto’ managed to ‘rule’ this communist terrain in a disciplined, centralized fashion; (c) that in this ‘defeat’ of Toronto (and Moscow) resides what was extraordinary and dynamic about the Communist Party and the communist movements more broadly defined: both retained through the 1930s, even in the depths of the notorious Third Period, the flavor of radical democracy. Any ‘Moscow Rules’ interpretation that minimizes grassroots ‘left-wing communism’ as a dynamic force in relief camps, unemployment movements, anti-deportation struggles and trade unionism, either by treating these as merely ‘secondary questions’ or the foible of a few inconsequential subalterns, is curiously out of touch with Canadian realities. Comintern control over *these* realities was weak. The Toronto-based leadership, which sometimes questioned a Moscow Rule, could itself often neither micro-man-

age nor even fully understand its own Red periphery. In short, what we find here not so much a monolith as a diversity of communisms, a movement of movements, ones that headquarters struggled, with very uneven success, to homogenize and discipline; (d) that much of what was creative and democratic about Depression-era Communism emerged in the spheres of culture and everyday life, wherein we find not slavish adherence to a party line but an openness to experimentation, change, and diversity – more “modern” ways of thinking and living *otherwise* – a pattern of particular relevance within the national and ethnic minorities gravitating to the left in the 1920s and 1930s; (e) and that these four propositions lead to sharper distinction between the Communist Party and the much broader communist “movement of movements” within which it operated, one that suggests Communists were a much more variegated and diffuse *cohort*, only a minority of whom were in a given year officially party members, functioning within an even more general *revolutionary formation* made up of communists, social democrats, anarchists, anti-unemployment activists, ‘hall socialists,’ ethnic activists, and an emergent civil rights movement, all of whom wanted the top-to-bottom transformation of Canadian society. This then leads to the even more striking conclusion that, for most people who were either big-C or little-c “communists” of some description in the era of the Depression, it was this movement of movements, in all its diversity and liveliness, and not slavish adherence to Moscow or the decisions taken by Communist Party leaders Toronto, that constituted the essence of revolutionary politics in the 1930s.

What then, did it mean to be a communist in the 1930s? Did it mean being a “Stalinist”? The answer surely depends on what we mean by this difficult and even toxic term. If by ‘Stalinist’ we mean an ‘admirer of Stalin,’ in a general sense – as the most prominent figure in the socialist experiment unfolding in the Soviet Union from 1928 to 1945 – then surely Joe Salsberg in the Depression Era was such an entity, as were the vast majority of leftists and democrats and, after 1941, most liberals – Stalin’s stern visage adorned wartime Toronto’s city hall, after all, and he was *Time Magazine’s* “Man of the Year.” But if we mean by ‘Stalinist’ a person rigidly adhering to a Party line emanating from Moscow and ultimately from Stalin himself – with the entire Party (to cite David Lewis of the CCF) reduced to being “one of Stalin’s puppet instruments for the defense of the Soviet Union and of its brand of Communism around the world”<sup>6</sup> – and a person committed to an authoritarian style of politics, effectively instantiated by Stalin’s movement in Canada: then surely the evidence of Tulchinsky’s book tells against any such characterization. And there is a lot a stake in such exercises in labeling, since the very application of the term “Stalinist” taints everyone to whom it is applied with conspiracy in mass murder – which is why it has been polemically effective, but also why it should be applied with scrupulous caution in scholarly work. To term Canadian Communism – and the much broader revolutionary formation of which it was part – “Stalinist” seems to me to be a mistake, one that oversimplifies a more complicated and interesting picture.

In this presentation, let me focus briefly on three Depression-era issues that might clarify the 'Moscow Rules' debate.<sup>7</sup> The first is how best to organize the working class; the second is how to create and propagate a communist vision in Canada; and the third – which, because it pertains most closely to Tulchinsky's *Salsberg*, I'll explore in slightly more detail – is the place within that vision of ethno-cultural minorities. On all three fronts, I submit, the "Moscow Rules" interpretation fails to accommodate important evidence.

With respect to the organization of the working class, the 'Moscow Rule,' at least from 1928 to 1935, was that the Communists were a proletarian party, fighting a struggle of 'class against class.' They should be based in industries, organize party cells and nuclei, and focus significant energies on organizing the unorganized in radical organizations (many affiliated with the Communist-led Workers' Unity League). To an extent, this Moscow Rule was undoubtedly received and to a point applied. Yet, as Stephen Endicott reveals, there were two powerful emitters of the 'Rule' in Moscow – the Red International of Labour Unions and the Comintern – whose interpretations of it were not exactly the same. He reveals repeated Canadian efforts to refer the rule back for clarification and adjustment. When the rule actually was applied, some Canadians, explicitly distancing themselves from the Moscow, did so in ways that suited their reading of the local circumstances on questions pertaining to fundamental organizational questions. In short, they directly defied Moscow. Overall, he finds – in a period often dismissed as one of a series of 'Third Period' adventures and calamities – a series of successful struggles, ones that testified to the *practical* application to Canadian realities of *particular* strategies of Communist organizing. The style of the Workers' Unity League was one that emphasized rank-and-file control over strike committees and the careful preparation of strikes. These are indications that are *starkly* different from the stereotype of 'Third Period' manipulation, adventurism, and autocratic rule.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the most basic problem with the application of the "Moscow Rule" of class against class was, as Mark Culligan has pointed out, that the CPC by the mid-1930s was not principally made up of workers in factory cells but, on its own admission, of thousands of the unemployed. Communists succeeded in establishing leadership over a much larger movement not because they applied a Moscow-inspired sectarianism but because they elaborated a grievance-based, grassroots and dynamic model of practical organizing.<sup>9</sup> This is the same movement that produced the On-to-Ottawa Trek and the Vancouver occupations – grassroots movements that still stand as some of the Depression's most important struggles, neither of them centrally planned by the Party. If "Stalinism" requires the top-down management of an increasingly sectarian and narrowly class-based movement in the interests of Soviet foreign policy, it is hard to see how such patterns fit Canada from 1928 to 1939. Nor does it help us understand why thousands of Canadians who did not work in mines and factories would have flocked to join such a movement in both the Third Period and then that of the Popular Front.

With respect to organizing an oppositional communist culture, one might assume that Depression-era Communists, as supposed “Stalinists,” would have sought to enforce the Leader’s cultural edicts: making the cult of personality and socialist realism *de rigueur* and strictly enforcing Party discipline with respect to deportment and values. What we find, instead, is an extensive, under-explored and complicated communist cultural world, wherein even those seeking the ‘Moscow Rule’ were often perplexed by the diversity of rules on offer. In Montreal and Toronto, cultural producers wrestled with new forms, many of them suggestive of their engagement with North American urban modernity and budding forms of abstraction more than their slavish adherence to Moscow. To all this evidence of a variously expressed drive to be revolutionaries in expressive life, the skeptic might well murmur, “Nina Ponomareva,” but that otiose skeptic would need to be reminded that for Communists, the cultural front was no sideshow and that when the Party leadership was imprisoned in 1931 and the organization hounded under Section 98 and the Padlock Law, cultural producers provided the most visible face of a movement forced underground. Overall, the remarkable experiments in realist aesthetics in fictional writing and painting and film do not align comfortably with any sense of communist culture as the reproduction of ‘Stalinist’ pieties.<sup>10</sup>

Given our interest in situating *Salsberg* in its Communist context, the theme of ethno-cultural relations merits a bit more attention. The existing ‘Moscow Rule’ historiography speaks eloquently, and truthfully, of the attempts to Bolshevize the party, ones antedating Stalin’s leadership, according to which the specific ethnic structures gravitating to communism in the 1920s were required to yield up their autonomy to the centre in Toronto. “Federalism” in a truly Stalinist party – with its implication of a division of authority and a measure of local control – was not a term of commendation. According to the Executive Committee of the Communist International in April 1929, it was impermissible — to use a much-favoured word of the day — for a Communist Party to include within itself quasi-autonomous national sections, when it should be instead a strongly centralized party.

From 1924, schemes of Bolshevization had explicitly targeted the ‘problem’ that most Canadian Communists were Ukrainians, Finns, and Jews. And the ‘Moscow Rule’ became increasingly clear: a supposed Communist party containing ‘parties within the party’ was flouting it. Ham-fisted attempts to impose this rule upon the major language groups have been well documented. Anyone who works in the Comintern papers will come across numerous reports of particular Party districts having a “bad composition” – usually meaning too many Ukrainians or Finns and not enough Anglos or French Canadians. One can also, quite rightly, underline the expulsions of prominent Communists from minority backgrounds, the slights delivered to many others, and the often agonizing contradictions experienced by minority communists like Salsberg as they came to understand that Stalin’s Russia, rhetoric notwithstanding, had not demolished but fortified the walls of the ‘Prison-house of Peoples.’ And

one can also, with equal justice, underline the Party's incoherence and zig-zags on the question of Québec. All the leading stars of the 'New Party' emerging in the Third Period — Buck, Morris, Carr, Smith, Ewen and Weir — crusaded against the language federations with zeal, leaving behind them, many scholars suggest, a legacy of bitterness and frustration. And on the Québec question, the CPC leadership provoked a major split in Montreal and a trial on trumped-up charges of anti-Semitism in 1946-7 because its Francophone members 'zigged' when the leadership demanded 'zag':<sup>11</sup>

So, if we follow this well-trodden path, we can easily conclude: Moscow ruled — and ruled stupidly: first in emphasizing a barren politics of Anglo-conformity and pan-Canadian nationalism; second in confusedly developing a position of Canadian Independence, recanting it in vintage zig-zag style, and then pushing it to the fore-front again (in slogans for Peace and Canadian Independence); and third, in manufacturing a bogus form of Canadian Nationalism in the 1940s transparently reducible to the foreign policy interests of the Soviet Union. In short, what we 'know' about Depression-era Communism is that a monolithic party shaped by Moscow ran roughshod over ethnic particularities, subordinated Canadian interests to Russian interests, and adopted in this sphere the same brutal 'Stalinist' methods perfected in the Soviet homeland itself.

As my brief characterizations of these positions suggest, I have no interest in defending the CPC in its handling of ethnic or national questions. What I am after is a sober reconnaissance of its practice and its implications for the broader movement. And such a reconnaissance must begin simply by acknowledging that the CPC was the first attempt in Canada to organize a modern, powerful, left-wing *party* in a contemporary sense — that is, a stable organization with a discernible membership and leadership structure, capable of intervening from coast to coast, with a program, regular conventions, and elected representatives in various political bodies and ultimately in Parliament. Until the late 1930s, when the CCF began to acquire some of this organizational capacity, in part because it was compelled to learn from its Communist rivals, the CPC was in essence *the* major party of the left in Canada. The CPC was thus an experiment in creating a 'party of a new type' that aimed to revolutionize Canadian political and social life. And in undertaking this mission, it inescapably collided with deep-seated 'peculiarities of the Canadians' — their division into two major language and many other ethnic groups and the perpetually unresolved question of the actual political sovereignty of the Canadian state itself.

The Party's initial experiment in 'federalism' in 1922 whereby it bestowed recognition upon the Finnish Socialist Organization as the 2,236-member strong Finnish section of the Workers' Party of Canada, accompanied by equivalent recognition of the Ukrainians, meant (as Norman Penner remarks) that the "distinctive characteristic of the Communist Party and its alter ego, the Workers' Party, was not its centralism but the opposite. No other political party, at that time or subsequently, was

based on a federation according to language."<sup>12</sup> In 1925 the Party decided to create a Jewish federation, thus extending the 'federal' model to another group; accompanying this was active Communist participation in and support for the dynamic Yiddish left press that provides material for so many of Gerald Tulchinsky's most arresting passages in *Joe Salsberg*.

I think the evidence from 1928 to 1939 shows a consistent *attempt* to rein in the language federations and the related cultural communities. I also think it shows that this attempt succeeded on paper and failed in practice. The Finns in Canada were indeed hounded – and then, revealingly, drawing on their strong connections to the very centre of the Comintern itself, they fought back, leading even to the recall 'for retraining' to Moscow of the hapless Stewart Smith, whose role in Communist historiography seems forever to be that of Lenin School ingénue whose enthusiasm overrode political common sense. They then launched themselves into a romantic and tragic attempt to build Soviet Karelia, a migration that the Canadian Party leadership regarded with substantial misgivings.<sup>13</sup> Federalism as an explicit principle was rejected; federalism as a *de facto* practice was a stubborn reality.

In the Jewish community that so shaped Salsberg, the tendency through the 1930s and 1940s was for a greater intensity of organizing, exemplified by the Jewish summer camps, thriving Yiddish schools and groups, and ultimately the emergence of the numerous and influential United Jewish People's Order. Camp *Naivel't*, the Jewish Folk Choir, an energetic Yiddish press: none of this quite tallies with a monolithic 'Stalinist' party successfully imposing a Moscow Rule.<sup>14</sup> Many of these organizations and activities were not strictly speaking 'Communist-run': many of their leaders did not answer directly to the Party, nor did most rank-and-file members. Much the same pattern applies among the Ukrainians: indeed, Penner himself suggested that with respect to this group, one was dealing with a distinct group given preferential treatment by Moscow in some respects "treated better than the Canadian Party itself." In truth, as Penner puts it, "although federalism as an organizational structure was abolished, federalism in matters of policy remained."<sup>15</sup>

We should bring back to our mind the key thesis of the 'Moscow Rules' position: apart from truly trivial questions, "all meaningful power" rested with Moscow, leaving local Communists with little choice but to accept every twist and turn of party policy. It would be difficult to imagine a more vital issue to Communists than the creation of a disciplined and monolithic proletarian party of a new type, capable of forging hardened class warriors capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie – indeed, Rodney reminds us, veritable "Soldiers of the International." Hence the campaign for Bolshevization and the often curt treatment of language federations: the party should be based on the mines and factories, not on ethnic halls and gymnastics teams and mandolin orchestras. But it then becomes a real puzzle, if Moscow really did rule in this explicit organizational sense, why the ethnic communist communities flour-



ished, along with countless mandolin orchestras and folk-dance troupes and gymnastics teams – many of them well into the post-1945 period. The provisional answer would be that when it came to regulating obdurate ethno-cultural realities ‘on the ground,’ Toronto-channeling-Moscow might indeed attempt to ‘rule’ – although as we see it did so in a quite contradictory fashion, especially on ethno-national questions – but it often could not prevail. Even where it did ‘rule’ in one sense – as in the expulsion under false pretenses of many French Canadian members in 1946 – its rule was paradoxical, in that prior to the expulsion the Party had nurtured the very network of francophone radicals it now declared unwelcome.

So, if the ‘ethnic’ application of the ‘Moscow Rules’ paradigm comes down to the claim that the burden of Depression-era Communism reduces to the imposition of Anglo-conformity, at the behest of Moscow, I think it amounts to a wrong turn. Its portion of the truth – evidenced in reports to the Comintern lamenting this or that district’s ‘bad’ ethnic composition – is counterbalanced by its oblivious disregard of a more obvious reality, which is that it was within the Communist Party that many foreign-born and first-generation Canadians acquired the skills and capacity to organize effectively within their newly-adopted country. They often did so in contexts that the CPC first encouraged, then discouraged, then encouraged again: and which, above all, it had neither the will nor the capacity to uproot. We run the risk, in the Moscow Rules interpretation, of erasing such ethnic radicalism from memory or reducing it to purely peripheral status in our histories of the “real” movement. My point is that, for many Communists, the “real” movement was the one they found on their doorstep, speaking their language and educating their kids – not the one in distant Toronto proclaiming the decisions of the politburo.

Of course, the skeptic might still say: did it really matter that the ethnically-defined camps children attended were not under the thumb of the Party? But here we come up against some of the inadvertently elitist implications of the ‘Moscow Rules’ position itself. The application of a ‘Moscow Rules’ model, with all its Cold War resonances, can become merely the mirror-image of official Part history, in which those who establish the ‘meaning’ of Communism, as commemorated in official accounts and an almost infinite quantity of memoirs, are the duly certified ‘Canadian’ luminaries in the pantheon – those who stuck with the Party through thick and thin. The forgotten ‘losers’ – those who within ethnic communities defended different understandings of Marxism and revolution, or the grassroots militants who thought communism should be about organizing the unemployed, or the dissidents who sought other communisms – are consigned to the margins. Yet why should we who have no commitment to Cold War agendas or Communist hagiographies feel obliged to abide by these highly selective principles of pantheon-construction? One can imagine a very different style of left-wing history in Canada in which Alf Haudamäki, Danylo Lobay, Max Dolgoy, Manya Lipshitz, Maurice Spector, Tomo Čačić, Henri Gagnon and Arvo Vaara, to cite but eight prominent ‘minority’ Communists,

figure as prominently as the ‘stars’ of Canadian Communism.<sup>16</sup> If what we want to explore is what it meant to be a Communist in the Depression Era and what a more broadly-defined movement for communism meant to those affected by it -- acquiring certain ways of thinking and being, a familiarity with certain ideas and texts, a way of thinking about the past, present and future, an evolving tradition of militant activism and revolutionary struggle -- then the Moscow Rules position starts to look less and less useful.

It is, of course, always important to remember how Moscow (and Toronto) was trying to rule in this heterogeneous and complicated terrain -- and to document the moments when that “rule” did impose itself upon this complicated movement of movements. But it is as important not to be trapped by the illusion that the reality constructed by the documents of the ‘district office’ in Toronto for the edification of ‘head office’ in Moscow bore much resemblance to the actual realities as they unfolded on the ground. There was much more to this movement, much more democratic excitement and cultural creativity, than one might guess from the collected writings of Tim Buck.

Let me conclude by once more commending *J.B. Salsberg: A Life of Commitment* to you. Beyond its analytical contribution to our growing grasp of the complicated history of interwar radicalism in Canada, it also provides a three-dimensional, warm-hearted and wonderfully grounded portrait of a radical who demonstrated how much Jews in Canada contributed to the emergence in Canada of a revolutionary formation of activists and intellectuals -- a formation encompassing a new way of thinking about history, about the struggles of the present, and the challenges of the future. And it is a portrait that seems quite different to me from any received notion of “Stalinism” and the “Stalinist.” It may well be that this terminology itself has reached its best-before date, indiscriminately lumping together as it does radically different people pursuing very different agendas, whose basis of unity lay not in affirming the rule of a dictator but in developing manifold and creative ways of living otherwise.

Here is a book that reminds us of the hundreds of struggles waged by Canadians in the depth of the Depression -- against unemployment, against discrimination, against injustice and against tyranny; and it also bears eloquent, complicated witness to both the achievements and limitations of an entire socialist formation. Organize the unorganized: as Gerald Tulchinsky reminds us, here was the core of Salsberg’s philosophy, which he applied to an astonishing spectrum of issues. To quote from the book:

Be it the organizational status or problems of workers on buttons and shirts in Kitchener; needle trades in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, or Edmonton; hard-rock mining in Val D’Or, Sudbury, and Timmins, automobiles in Os-hawa, St Catharines, Windsor, and Regina; ships on the Great Lakes; boilers

and canning in Vancouver; textiles in Cornwall; forestry at the Lakehead and in British Columbia, or steel, rubber, furniture, printing, railways, confectionery, retail stores, stationary engines from Glace Bay and Dalhousie to London and Edmonton, Salsberg was in the know, on the alert for RCMP spies and informants, and aggressively advancing the formation of industrial unions (Tulchinsky 2013, 51-52).

And he was standing up for justice in the legislature, where Salsberg – who never there extolled communism or the ‘workers’ paradise’ and who argued forcefully for the beleaguered Black community of Dresden and on behalf of the rights of free speech – rarely seems to have been the pliant tool of Cold War song and legend. We owe to Gerald Tulchinsky a tremendous debt of gratitude for having given us such a vivid, convincing portrait of one of Canada’s most distinguished Communists – and for adding new questions and new propositions for we historians and activists for whom this revolutionary history still matters.

**1**

Gerald Tulchinsky, *Joe Salsberg: A Life of Commitment* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

**2**

See William Rodney, *Soldiers of the International: A History of the Communist Party of Canada, 1919-1929* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968); Ivan Avakumovic, *The Communist Party in Canada: A History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975); Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada* (Victoria: Trafford for South Branch Publications, 2004); Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond* (Toronto: Methuen, 1988); Bryan D. Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992) and (among many invaluable articles by John Manley,) John Manley, “Moscow Rules? ‘Red’ Unionism and ‘Class Against Class’ in Britain, Canada, and the United States, 1928-1935,” *Labour/Le Travail* 56 (2005): 9-49.

**3**

John McIlroy and Alan Campbell, “Nina Ponomareva’s Hats: the new revisionism, the Communist International and the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1920-30,” *Labour/Le Travail* 49 (2002): 147-87.

**4**

Palmer, *Working-Class Experience*, 228, 229.

**5**

Kevin Morgan, “The Trouble with Revisionism: or Communist History with the History Left In,” *Labour/Le Travail* 63 (2009): 144.

**6**

David Lewis as cited in Tulchinsky, *Salsberg*, 70.

**7**

Other equally significant phenomena calling for re-evaluation include the role of Communists in local government, in the women’s movement, and in peace activism. See (especially on local government) Stefan Epp, “A Communist in Council Chambers: Communist Municipal Politics, Ethnicity, and the Career of William Kolisnyk,” *Labour/Le Travail* 63 (2009): 79-103; Kyle Franz, “Alberta’s Red Democrats: The Challenge and Legacy of Blairmore Communism, 1921-1936,” (PhD diss., Queen’s University, 2013); Doug Smith, *Joe Zuken: Citizen and Socialist* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1990); on women, Lorne Beswick, “Birth Control or Red Regime: Toronto’s Communists and the Eastview Birth Control Trial,” (Cognate essay, Master of Arts, Queen’s University, 2011); Nancy Butler, “Mother Russia and the Soviet Fatherland: Canadian Women and the Communist Party of Canada, 1929-1939,” (PhD diss., Queen’s University,

2010); and on the peace movement, Victor Huard, "The Canadian Peace Congress and the Challenge to Postwar Consensus, 1948-1953," *Peace & Change* 19, no. 1 (1994): 25-49; Stephen Endicott, *Rebel Out of China: James G. Endicott* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 2004; originally published 1980).

## 8

Stephen Endicott, *Raising the Workers' Flag: The Workers' Unity League of Canada, 1930-1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

## 9

Mark Culligan, "The Practical Turn of the Communist Party of Canada: how the Social Insurance Campaign Created a 'Party of the Unemployed,' 1931-1936," (Cognate essay, Master of Arts, Queen's University, 2013).

## 10

On left cultural work in general, see James Doyle, *Progressive Heritage: The Evolution of a Politically Radical Literary Tradition in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002); Candida Rifkin, *Comrades and Critics: Women, Literature, and the Left in 1930s Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Jody Mason, *Writing Unemployment: Worklessness, Mobility, and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Canadian Literatures* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); Alan Filewod, *Committing Theatre: Theatre Radicalism and Political Intervention in Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2011); Scott Forsyth, "Communists, Class, and Culture in Canada," in *Working on Screen: Representations of the Working Class in Canadian Cinema*, eds. Malek Khouri and Darrell Varga (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 46-72; Esther Trépanier, *Peintres juifs de Montréal: Témoins de leur époque 1930-1948* (Montreal: Les éditions de l'homme, 2008).

## 11

On the CPC in French Canada, see Bernard Dionne et Robert Comeau, eds., *Le droit de se taire: Histoire des communistes au Québec, de la Première Guerre mondiale à la Révolution tranquille* (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 1990); Henri Gagnon, *Les militants socialistes du Québec: d'une époque à l'autre* (Saint-Lambert: Les éditions heritage, 1985); and Andrée Lévesque, *Red Travellers: Jeanne Corbin and Her Comrades* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006).

## 12

Penner, *Canadian Communists*, 272.

## 13

See Michel Beaulieu, "Proletarian Prometheus: Socialism, Ethnicity, and Revolution at the Lakehead, 1900-1935," (PhD diss., Queen's University, 2007), published as *Labour at the Lakehead: Ethnicity, Socialism, and Politics, 1900-35* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2011); Reino Kero, "The Canadian Finns in Soviet Karelia in the 1930s," in *Finnish Diaspora: Canada, South America, Africa, Australia and Sweden*, Michael G. Karni (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1981), 203-214; Varpu Lindström, "'Heaven or Hell on Earth?' Soviet Karelia's Propaganda War of 1934-1935 in the Finnish Canadian Press," in *North American Finns in Soviet Karelia in the 1930s*, eds. Ron Harpelle, Varpu Lindström and Alexis Pogorelskin (Petrozavodsk: Petrozavodsk State University Press, 2008), 83-104; and Alexey Golubev and Irina Takala, eds., *The Search for a Socialist El Dorado: Finnish Immigration to Soviet Karelia from the United States and Canada in the 1930s* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014).

## 14

On the Jewish community and Communism, see Ruth Frager, *Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Jewish Labour Movement of Toronto 1900-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); Ester Reiter, "Secular Yiddishkai: Left Politics, Culture and Community," *Labour/Le travail* 49 (2002): 121-146; Mercedes Steedman, *Angels of the Workplace: Women and the Construction of Gender Relations in the Canadian Clothing Industry, 1890-1940* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997); Daniel Stone, ed. *Jewish Radicalism in Winnipeg, 1905-1960* (Winnipeg: Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, 2002); Gerald Tulchinsky, "Ben Lappin's Reflections on May Day Celebrations in Toronto's Jewish Quarter," *Labour/Le Travail* 49 (2002): 211-21. An outstanding recent contribution to this literature is found in Seemah C. Berson, ed., *I Have a Story to Tell You* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2010).

## 15

Penner, *Canadian Communism*, 279; 276. For other recent work on the Ukrainian left in Canada, see Marco Carynnyk, "Swallowing Stalinism: Pro-Communist Ukrainian Canadians and Soviet Ukraine," in *Canada's Ukrainians: Negotiating an Identity*, eds.

Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Rhonda Hinchey, "Raised in the Spirit of the Class Struggle: Children, Youth, and the Interwar Ukrainian Left in Canada," *Labour/ Le Travail* 60 (2007): 43-76; S. Hunchuck-Holyck, "Of course it was a Communist Hall': A Spatial, Social, and Political History of the Ukrainian Labour Temples in Ottawa, 1912-1965," Jim Mochoruk, "'Pop & Co' versus Buck and the 'Lenin School Boys': Ukrainian Canadians and the Communist Party of Canada, 1921-1931," and Andriy Makuch, "Fighting for the Soul of the Ukrainian Progressive Movement in Canada: The Lobayites and the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association," all in *Re-Imagining Ukrainian Canadians: History, Politics, and Identity*, eds. Rhonda Hinchey and Jim Mochoruk, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011); Cassandra Luciuk, "A necessary bridge to a radical consciousness": Rethinking the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple and the 'peculiarity' of Ukrainian-Canadian identity," (Cognate essay, Master of Arts, Queen's University, 2013); Frances Swyripa, *Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

## 16

Of particular interest on the question of Communists and ethnicity is Denis Molinaro, "A Species of Treason? Deportation and Nation-Building in the case of Tomo Čačić, 1931-1934," *Canadian Historical Review* 91, no. 2 (2010): 61-85, which draws out the wider implications of one important deportation case.