

## 15. PROGRESSIVE WORKER

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The next problem that confronted us was what to do because we weren't about to declare ourselves out of existence. We still wanted to be active. Of course we were still in the NDP. Ernie Hall was then Provincial Secretary of the NDP. They had an office on Broadway at the time. They owned the building, as a matter of fact. They had to sell it later because they ran into financial difficulties. They had their headquarters there, right across from the Teamsters' Hall on Broadway. After the thing burst and particularly after we got active on our own there was a lot of public interest in us. Tom Haslett, a reporter from the *Province*, used to come around and see me. Used to come over when I was still working nights at the Pender. He used to drop in when there was nobody around and he'd talk to me. One time he was talking about being a member of the Party and the NDP simultaneously. He said, "Of course, you're not a member of the NDP any longer." And I said, "Well, yes formally I am. It doesn't mean anything to me anymore. I don't intend to be active there. But, my dues are still paid up and as far as the formality is concerned, yes, I'm still a member." He never said anything about what he was going to do, but he told me later that he went around to the NDP headquarters, and got hold of Ernie Hall. He said, "Jack Scott was expelled from the Communist Party a few months ago. He's a member of the NDP." Hall said, "Oh no. He's not a member of the NDP." Haslett said, "Oh yes he is." Hall went over to the files. A couple minutes later he came back holding a card in his hand. Haslett said he was really red in the face. He told Haslett, "Yes he is a member, but not for long." They never even gave me a trial. Worse than the CP. They sent letters of expulsion to myself, to Jerry Lebourdais, to Gene Craven, and to Bob Edwards, the four that they knew of. They knew others were there, but they didn't know their names at the time. We all got letters expelling us.

It didn't matter to me. I didn't pay any attention to it, because at that time we were off on a different tack, doing something different. We knew that it was coming up to a point that we were going to be put out of the Party so we sort of began making preparations for something like that to happen. That year I did what I'd been doing for several years. I took my vacation in around June or July. It must have been June. I would take my vacation from work and I would also take a leave of absence. I had a total of about six weeks off. I used to go across the country, meeting with people and talking to groups and so on. That year three of us decided to go across the country, John Wood, Martin Amiabel, who became a great source of trouble later, and myself. I remember we drove all day. We got in to Calgary late at night and found that we couldn't get a place to stay because the Stampede had started that day. Ended up driving to Red Deer, staying overnight, and then we drove up to Edmonton, met some people there that we talked to and came back down. We drove through to Winnipeg, talked to people there.

We had been in contact with people in Ontario, urging them to do something. We got into Toronto and nothing had been done and so we drove around Ontario,

rounding people up. We'd come all the way from BC and we organized a conference ourselves in Toronto in the King Edward Hotel and we got a group together. There were some people who came from Windsor, some from London, from Hamilton, from Ottawa, and a couple of other points. We did the organizing for this, spending our time driving around frantically and meeting people. One guy who we talked to was a lawyer, one of old Endicott's sons. He was going to go to Cuba. He thought it was very important that he go to Cuba. I told him that as far as I was concerned he could go ahead to Cuba. We met and we got an agreement that they would start organizing a periodical, a weekly or monthly, and we would help them with funds, with writing articles, with circulation and so on. That was agreed on. We raised some money right there to go towards production of the first issue.

We went on to Montreal and we established contact with a group that had set itself up there as a China Friendship Association shortly after we had out here. We also got in contact with the socialist group that was set up there that was actually a front for the FLQ at the time. Established contact with them. We came back.

Then, Endicott came back from Cuba and he was quite opposed to anything concrete really happening. He called a conference in London. Just changed all of the decisions that had been made. We had big disagreements later. This put us into the position that we never wanted to happen of starting an isolated group out here at the tail end of the country. We wanted something to support in the central part of the country. Logical place for it to be.

Endicott wrote me some private letters and I knew what his position ended up being. His position grew out of his interpretation of the Cuban Revolution. He rejected, quite correctly, the idea that the Cuban communist party, which was called the Socialist Party, had anything to do with the revolution. It didn't until the very last moment. So Endicott comes up with the theory that the Cuban Revolution was a mass movement with no party involved. It was only after the Revolution was successful that a party was formed. He argued that what must be done in Canada was build up a movement, make the Canadian revolution, and after it is successful the Marxist-Leninists could all pop out and say, "Ah ha, fooled you, we're here and taking over." This is essentially what it amounted to.

I wrote about this in a document that was mailed around to people throughout the country, and got assailed for using Endicott's private letters to me to make my case against him. But Mance Mathias, an autoworker who was the leading figure in the Essex County committee of the CP for many years before the split, wrote to me to say that what I had revealed was precisely the position Endicott put across in London. "You were a bit harsh," he said, "but you were right." At any rate, Endicott persuaded many people that we had been in touch with the validity of his position and that did in any possibility of getting something going in Ontario. But again we weren't about to go out gently, quietly. We decided at this point we would set up the Progressive Worker Movement.

We knew we had a fair bit of working-class support in the Lower Mainland. Lebourdais was President of the Oil Workers' Union at the Shellburn refinery and it was quite a radical nest. We thought we could pretty well run the show there, and we did. Even before we were kicked out of the Party we had done things there that

indicated the workers were willing to take our leadership. For instance, Wacky Bennett had come out with legislation that any union that gave any amount of their dues to the CCF would lose their check-off. The Oil Workers had about 750 members in BC at the time. The International was scared shitless, the union is about to go out of existence because of this. We decided that we would take it in to the Oil Workers and the workers could decide. They voted to tell Wacky Bennett to go to hell and to pay the usual dues percentage to the CCF. That's what they did and that's what happened. The local then set up dues collection with the members since the check-off was cancelled and out of more than seven hundred workers there was only one who refused to pay his dues. The IWA, the Steelworkers, the whole bloody lot of them caved in, but not the Oil Workers where we had some influence.

Lebourdais was really popular in the Oil Workers local. This was borne out in a funny way one time, a little bit after the club got expelled from the Party. Having established the Canada-China Friendship Association, which incidentally was the only one at the time and for some years after in the whole of the North American continent, we were led into all kinds of events that were quite peculiar in many ways. We informed the China Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries that we had set this up and who the officers were. Lebourdais, who was the president, gets an invitation to go to China as a friend. Go on a guided tour. So he decides to go and he goes and asks for leave. He was working in the Shellburn oil refinery and he's the president of the local and he goes and asks for leave of absence and they say no. They weren't going to give him leave of absence to go to China. The goddamn Chinese had taken all their refineries from them. They weren't going to let him off to go there. Lebourdais comes to see me. "I'm gonna quit." "Don't quit. Why quit?" "What am I supposed to do?" "Before you take any action on it," I said, "call a meeting of the local and tell them. Put it to the workers." He's got nothing to lose anyhow. He called a big meeting. He told them he had been invited to go to China and he accepted the invitation, went down to the company, asked for a leave of absence and the company wouldn't let him go. A real right-wing character, everybody knew is a pro-company guy, is the first on his feet. "Who the hell do this company think they are that they can tell people where they're going to go and where they're not going to go." He said, "I move that we send Jerry Lebourdais to China as a delegate from the local." Motion seconded, passed unanimously. They send a delegation to the company and the company gets scared: "We didn't know he was going as a delegate from the union. Thought he was just going on his own." They gave him a leave of absence and off he goes to China as a delegate.

So we started *Progressive Worker*. We got an A.B. Dick offset, an IBM typewriter, and all the equipment necessary to put something out. We rented a big old house on East Georgia and moved into it as headquarters. We put our printing equipment in the basement and went to work getting out the first issue of *Progressive Worker* which came out in October of 1964.

We wanted to build a movement in Canada, to put forward a particular ideological current around which a movement could coalesce, in which cadre could be built. And hopefully at some point a party could be organized. But we were not about to call ourselves a party at that point. We had maybe forty or fifty people, which was

not bad in this area. We had two groups in Vancouver. Then groups got started in New Westminster and in Victoria and in Nanaimo. We became fairly substantial. But it was what we never wanted to be. A British Columbia group that was trying to move the whole bloody country.

We maintained contact with a number of people in Ontario, including the old Party dissidents in Essex County. I used to go down there later because they would organize meetings for me to speak at, sold subscriptions to the *Progressive Worker*, but they would never actually come together and take over and move something. At one time Hensbee and Roger Perkins went down there to Toronto to live, but we were worse off with them two down there than with nobody at all. They were terrible. They set up a group and put out a paper of theirs which only resulted in two issues, called *Left Leaf*. They sold subscriptions that were never filled and we got some nasty letters from a few universities — the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and one or two others. They were already subscribing to us. I wrote to them and told them, sorry, we're prepared to fill your subscriptions for *Progressive Worker*, but really it's got nothing to do with us. But Hensbee and Perkins used our name. We had no control over them.

Getting out our paper was our first public activity. We started the *Progressive Worker* and it lasted for six years. There are lots of things I would like to see different now in retrospect, but in view of all the difficulties we were up against it wasn't a bad effort on the whole. We got a lot of support. We got a lot of subscriptions to the paper. We could have continued to put out the paper after we finally dissolved because we were getting enough money. We weren't getting organization, but people would send us subscriptions when we put out an appeal for money, and we got big donations in money. Anna Louise Strong, who lived in China and who I visited a couple of times, gave us money. She was way out in left field. She had an account with the Royal Bank of Canada and she gave me a cheque for a thousand dollars for *Progressive Worker*. Very wealthy. We never ran into any financial difficulties as far as money was concerned.

We only saw the paper as something that would be an organizer that would get people together. This was where we lost out. Outside of British Columbia, it didn't get people to actually organize. Like I say, we got support. In fact, about three years after the last issue of *Progressive Worker* came out, I got a letter from Moncton, New Brunswick, from a group there that was functioning on the left. They had come across an issue of our paper and they wanted to set up contact with us and get copies of *Progressive Worker* to distribute in Moncton. We're already years out of existence at this time. There was a lot of sympathy out there. Certainly we had over fifteen hundred subscribers and we sold papers on the streets. We were putting out about three thousand copies of the paper, which was more than the *Tribune* was selling, because our paper was really being sold. A lot of their papers were going in a bloody furnace. Membership put pressure on them to sell papers and subscriptions. A lot of them were getting five copies and I know this for a fact and the bloody copies were going straight into the furnace without even being taken out of the wrapper, and they paid for them themselves.

We grew a bit locally, not terribly. The main problem was we didn't get groups

going in the rest of the country. This was the problem. It became a local BC group, which, like I say, we never wanted to happen. Just the way things developed. We were able to go out and hold meetings in various places, particularly myself and a bit later on when I began to get invitations to speak at universities and so on it certainly extended a lot of contacts. But a lot of people were sort of floating off and sort of doing their own things. Organizing little groups here and there and for some reason or another didn't want to become affiliated with anything in particular. This is the period of do your own thing sort of business. Sort of a revolt against organization.

We wanted to build a party that would be, in our eyes, a revolutionary party. And I'm not saying that in the sense of some of the groups that were active around at the time. They were going to make a revolution there and then. No matter what! The idea was propounded that a revolutionary should make revolution. We wanted to promote the idea of revolutionary change amongst the people. We were not going to make a revolution ourselves. We wouldn't call ourselves a party, although there was plenty of pressure on us, including later when there was closer contact with China. The Chinese Party people kept asking us, when are you going to organize a party? Of course, our position was, a party will be organized when there is a call for it amongst the workers, but we are not going to set up forty or fifty people as a party like some were doing. Like the Workers' Communist Party. Nothing outside of Montreal when they decided that within six months they were going to have a party.

I remember when we got out a couple of issues of *PW* we sent some copies to China. We got an order from China for an odd number, what appeared to be an odd number. Three hundred and some copies, subscription for six months at a time. Sent the money. We were selling subscriptions for I think about three dollars a year. It wasn't paying anyhow. We charged the same subscription to China as anywhere else. I remember when I got this order for three hundred-odd subscriptions for a six-month period, stating they would continue subscribing to us as long as the paper came out. I later found out what they did was to take orders from the various places that sold foreign Communist papers and they just totalled them up, plus the number they wanted for the Central Committee and that's why the odd number came out. They weren't just ordering a blanket number for support, which is what the Soviet Union was doing with the *Tribune*. That never happened to us.

I remember the time the Progressive Labor Party started up in the States. We had some effect. People down the west coast had come to the movement through us. They came up, and wanted to talk. Some in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco. People asked us to organize groups of Progressive Workers. We were internationalist but that would be a little bit foolish. We said there is a party in the States, Progressive Labor, and we put them in touch with Progressive Labor.

We were in touch with Progressive Labor and for a long time we had fairly friendly relations with them. One of the Rosens came from New York, came up to see us. They of course were off on a tangent on repression and the state was going to start attacking them and they were going to have to be able to get out of the country in a hurry at some point and they would need passports and they couldn't

get them in the States and they wanted us to get Canadian passports for them. I told him, "If you want Canadian passports, you get them yourself. We'll tell you how to do it, but we're not getting passports for anybody, besides we can't." It had to be your signature, it had to be your photograph, it had to be your details. It was easy then. The guy who killed Martin Luther King had two Canadian passports. That put the kibosh on Canadian passports. After that things toughened up and the state put out passports that you could only have for five years instead of for ten and you had to go through all kinds of rigmarole to get them. It became more difficult, but at that time it was easy.

I mentioned to Rosen that we had got this order for subscriptions from China. "Oh, that's great. Charge them twenty, twenty-five dollars for a subscription. You can make some money off it. They'll understand. They'll appreciate it." I said, "Look Rosen, this goddamn paper will survive with support in Canada or it won't survive at all. We're not going to depend on anything from outside." So we continued to supply. It cost us a great deal more for postage because they wanted the bloody thing sent air freight. After the first subscription, we wrote and explained to them that we would still supply the paper for the subscription but we simply had to charge for mailing the shipment. So, we charged the regular plus what it cost for shipping. We never got anything extra.

We had good relations with Progressive Labor for some time. When I came back from China in 1967 there was over forty of these contacts on the west coast that we'd steered to PL who came up here. I couldn't go to the States and they wanted to hear a report and have a discussion on China. From California, as far south as Los Angeles, all the way up to Oregon, Washington State particularly. They were *PW* readers, and often took bundles of papers to distribute in the US. A group of them came up and we had an all-day meeting. I made a report and they asked questions. We had a lot of discussion.

We had a very close relationship with these west coast PLers. One or two of them turned out to be real characters. There was a guy named Van Lydigraff in Seattle. He had been with the U.S. Air Force. He was flying those transport planes over the Himalayas from India. Flying goods into China at the time of the war against Japan. He was one of that group that got rounded up in California that were training in guerilla warfare. They had a Los Angeles group that was nailed for plotting to kill a Senator. They were being trained by two FBI agents and had made plans to assassinate a Senator, a US Senator. The FBI really made the plans. These two agents surfaced and Van Lydigraff and the rest got arrested.

Van Lydigraff used to be in Progressive Labor. He came up here a lot. One time he asked me to arrange to buy some guns for him in Canada. He had seen that they sold guns in the hunting stores here, hunting supplies stores and pawn shops and so on. I told him, "What the hell are you talking about, Van. For Christ's sake, guns are a lot easier to get in the United States than they are here." I go and buy three or four guns here they're gonna want to know what the hell I'm gonna do with them. He was really pretty way out in left field.

Not all of them associated with PL were so crazy. Once I remember we were putting a lot of material on Vietnam across the border into the United States, stuff

from China that couldn't have gotten in otherwise, and other stuff. We once took two carloads of material across the border and hauled it down to San Francisco. We split it into two halves. We gave some of it to one group and some of it to Progressive Labor people. I forget the name of the other group, but I suspected they had Trotskyist tendencies. They put the stuff out, but the PL burned theirs. Got scared. After we sneaked it all across the border and took the big risk!

Bill Epton, who was with PL then, was a different sort entirely. He was a black agitator with a real presence in Harlem. Eventually he got out of PL, but at the time I'm talking about he was with them and had been arrested during some riots. The funny one about him was that when he was arrested he got out on bail and we got word about a plan to have him come to the west coast of the U.S. to speak at some meetings. Speak at Seattle, Portland, San Francisco. This was about 1965.

I immediately wrote to PL and said that we would like him to come on up to Vancouver for several days. We'd arrange some meetings in various spots and he could come up from Seattle. No problem. It's only 150 miles. Didn't hear anything. On his bail, he wasn't supposed to leave New York State without the permission of the court. He went into court to ask permission to go to the west coast to these meetings, to Seattle and to these other places and to Vancouver in Canada. The judge said he is not going to be permitted to go to the west coast of the United States. If you want to go to Canada, bring in an invitation to me and I'll consider it. I got word right away and I immediately sent an open invitation which I sent to Epton to come visit in Vancouver and he took it into court and the judge gave him permission to come out to British Columbia. Utterly ridiculous, but I suppose it's not their country. They don't care what he does.

He wasn't supposed to get in. I suppose what they figured is that likely he would fly to Seattle and come up from Seattle to Vancouver, which is the logical way, but he went to Toronto and he got off the plane in Toronto and I guess there was some kind of a mix-up. They asked who he was. Bill Epton. "Where are you going?" "I'm going out to Vancouver." "What for?" "I'm going to speak at some meetings out there, give some lectures." "Not politics?" "Oh no." "Okay." So he comes out here and we had organized some meetings at Victoria and Nanaimo and somewhere else on the island and two or three around Vancouver. The first one at UBC. So we took him to the island first and when we came to UBC there's an immigration guy there. He asked Epton, "How did you get into Canada?" He told him he came through Toronto. "Didn't anybody say anything to you?" He pulled out a slip. He said, "Did you ever get one of these?" He said, "No, nobody ever gave me one of those." "I've got to give you one or somebody's gonna get in trouble." So he wrote one out and gave it to him. He wasn't supposed to get in. Here he is not allowed to travel in the United States and he's up here in Canada speaking at meetings here. We had some pretty big meetings. Quite successful.

He talked on the negro question in the States, particularly on the fight in the ghettos which was very big then. There was Watts in Los Angeles. There was Harlem in New York. There was a lot going on in the black movement. This is what he spoke on in a very militant way, of course. We had successful meetings. When he went back, he was sentenced to twelve years for criminal syndicalism. It doesn't

seem to me he served twelve years or anything like it. It seemed to me that it wasn't too long after that that he had an invitation to go to China and he went. He got an invitation, incidentally, to go to China after he broke with PL. The Chinese were looking on him as an important figure in the black movement which he was in New York, certainly in Harlem he was very well known, very influential in a militant way in Harlem.

What happened between PL and us was that there was this Trotskyist group in New York that was way out in left field. The Spartacist group. It would have been about September 1966. They published a leaflet extremely critical of Vietnam. They knew about differences that existed and were critical of Ho Chi Minh. There were criticisms to be made. In October, PL copies what the Spartacist League has said, and elaborates on it at great length, which was really an attack on Vietnam. There's to be no negotiations. Ridiculous bloody business. They were prepared to fight to victory to the very last Vietnamese. They came out quite directly and said that the Vietnamese should refuse to negotiate, should refuse to sign any agreement. They should be prepared to smash the American military machine in order to make it possible for the American working class to move forward in revolution. Ridiculous bloody position. We thought we were pretty far to the left. This was going some.

I wrote an article which was discussed before it was published. It was in *PW* Not saying anything about PL's new line, but stating our position on Vietnam. One of the things that we made quite clear was that as long as the people of Vietnam are fighting American imperialism with arms in hand we were not going to come out and criticize them. If we had criticisms, we would take them up privately with the Vietnamese. We were not going to attack them, because you couldn't attack them and at the same time call for support. This was our position, right or wrong, which is not the same as the old bugaboo about the Soviet Union. This was a question of the people who were fighting, who were in the trenches. This came out in *PW*.

The people along the west coast, who were also put out about PL's position on a number of other things, immediately took this article and copied it and began mailing it out to PL people all over the bloody country. This got Rosen in New York uptight. He sent me a letter that he wanted to send somebody to have a discussion with us. I thought, well, we're gonna have some kind of discussion to iron out our differences. So, they had, at that time, Freddy Jerome down in northern California. Freddy was the son of old B.J. Jerome, who was the Communist Party's commissar of culture for many years. Great supporter of Browder until Browder came under the gun and then, of course, he never had been a supporter of Browder. A survivor in the Party. Freddy was the California organizer of the PL. He came up on a Sunday morning when we were having a committee meeting anyhow. Gene Craven went out to the airport and picked him up and brought him to the meeting.

Jesus Christ. What a goddamn business. He comes into the meeting and starts denouncing us about this article, that it has been used to attack the PL in the States. Some of their people along the west coast creating a mess. "Calm down," I said, "you're not gonna tell us what to write." That's our position on Vietnam and he's

telling us we should publish something changing it. Wants us to line up with them. I said, "That's our position on Vietnam. You're not about to change it. As far as it being used in the States is concerned, nobody ever asked us our permission to publish and distribute it and if you're asking us to denounce anyone for doing that, we're not about to do it. Why should we? It's our position." "Well," he said, "we're stating China's position. The Chinese have told us that they agree with this position, but they can't come out openly and say it." I said, "I know what the Chinese position is. But the Chinese are not publishing their position. If they did, we would tell them where we agree and where we don't." "Well, the Chinese suggested that we publish this position." I said, "If the Chinese want to make their position public, it's not up to you to do it. It's up to them. Let them state it."

A big thick book came out around that period, a biography of Ho Chi Minh. He's waving this, and yelling, "I have positive proof here that Ho Chi Minh was a revisionist for twenty years." Some bourgeois academic. I said, "You're not impressing us. We don't give a shit what Ho Chi Minh has been for twenty years. It's a question of support for the people who are fighting imperialism. That's our stand. Do whatever you like about Ho Chi Minh." There was simply no agreement between us at all.

Before that there had been Phil Taylor. He was the organizer in Southern California and he'd been coming up to Canada, supposedly to make arrangements he wanted because of Cuba. He couldn't go from the States, but he could from here. Lots of Americans did. Come up to Canada to go to Cuba. He got to know a woman in Toronto and got involved with her. He was coming up from Los Angeles to Toronto, spending some time there with her, going to New York, back to Los Angeles. He's moving around in this triangle. He did it for a couple of years.

He's up sleeping with this woman and the Watts uprising is taking place right in his locality and he was not even there. I told him, "This is bloody nonsense. You've got to make up your mind. Are you gonna take her to the United States?" "Well, I can't do it." "Then stay here, make up your mind, and quit the goddamn commuting. If you want to stay here, we can talk about what maybe you can do about organizing something here in the Toronto, Ontario area." He said, "Rosen won't hear of me coming here." This was before our break with PL. I said, "Well, if I give you a letter to Rosen asking him to let you stay here for a year — maybe in that period you can make up your mind what you're gonna do — would that help." "Well," he said, "you can try." So I wrote him out a letter. He was going to New York. He took it to New York. Apparently Rosen told him to get the hell back to southern California. Wouldn't let him stay.

After the split came with PL and things began to sharpen up in the struggle with them, Taylor suddenly appeared permanently in Toronto, organized his Canadian Party of Labor group, which was nothing more nor less than the Canadian branch of Progressive Labor. Progressive Labor paid him. He was reporting regularly by long-distance phone to New York and they were paying his phone bills, which must have been fairly enormous. He began getting people around him. The Canadian Party of Labor was formed as a basis of opposition to PW and destroyed any pos-

sibility of our making headway organizationally in central Canada. Roger Perkins joined them. They continually attacked us.

CPL had a couple of sympathizers out here. I think probably they may still have, although they haven't been doing anything. Ed Lavelle at Capilano College was one of their people and there were two or three others. They organized meetings here. When Perkins came back here he was with them for awhile. Perkins is a joiner. He was in everything. He was in two or three different Trotskyist factions. He was one of the very few people that joined Sheila Delany's Red Collective up at Simon Fraser University. It was a ridiculous outfit. He joined another group that came along. I forget the name of it. It was a fly-by-night. It didn't last long and he's now in the Communist Party. They had Taylor out a couple of times, but he hasn't been out in donkey's years and they haven't done anything for a long time. They used to organize the odd discussion group and that. They pretty well liquidated themselves. I haven't heard of them in quite awhile.

PL began to be more and more discredited. They had some people who worked in a warehouse and were in the warehouse local of the Longshoremen's Union in northern California. It was on the verge of a strike, I guess. They began putting out leaflets criticizing the union leadership. Very poor job. At one point, the union, I think, was bargaining for something like thirty-five or forty cents an hour and they came out with a leaflet saying that the union leadership were preparing to sell out the membership for a fifteen cent an hour settlement whereas the workers wanted twenty-five cents an hour, which was less than what they were negotiating for. Within a couple of days, the employers offered twenty-five cents an hour and said this is what the membership want. PL gave them the evidence. The workers in the warehouse were so hostile to them that they had to quit. There was two of them that had to quit their jobs because the workers were so bloody hostile to them. The leadership said, "We could have got more, but these characters went out and told the bosses this is what they're willing to settle for and this is what they gave us." Real stupidity. Totally discredited themselves.

In 1966 I went on a speaking tour, addressing various groups that were forming in Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, London, Windsor, Kitchener, Montreal, and Ottawa. Gary Perly was there in Toronto, for instance, and his group became the Committee for Canadian Independence or whatever. They organized a couple of meetings. There was a sort of Independence Group in Kitchener. There was a Lebanese guy there at the time. He was chairman and he completely threw me off. He made introductory remarks and began talking about the need for a Canadian bourgeois revolution for independence. He sort of staggered me. I didn't know where to begin then. While I was certainly in the business of opposing U.S. domination of Canada, which I saw as an important factor and we had to struggle against, I certainly didn't see the primacy of the democratic revolution. I think he was affected by what was going on in Lebanon at the time. Again, I went down to London where there was a student group and I spoke at the university and I spoke in Hamilton to the group there that was mainly around the steel plant and drawn from electrical workers at Westinghouse.

I had quite successful meetings. Fairly big meetings. Of course, I'm promoting

*Progressive Worker* and our point of view. I spoke in McGill to a group that had been in touch with Hardial Bains and they had broken with Bains and they were the group that finally became the Workers' Communist Party. Something else in between. The Communist League or something like that. They became the Workers' Communist Party. They organized meetings in the city and at the university. Mainly a student body at the time.

Many of the gatherings turned around the national question and American domination of Canadian unions. That was the subject that the particular group in Montreal wanted. So I spoke on that. Gave our views on that. In London they wanted a talk about labour and the labour movement and a lot of historical development so I talked about that. I tried to respond to what was the interest of the particular group and at the same time try to bring in some kind of a political message from the point of view of *Progressive Worker*. On the whole, I considered the tour fairly successful. Developed, got subscriptions, some money for *Progressive Worker*. This was the kind of work you do to try to build a movement. Unfortunately, again, we didn't get any *Progressive Worker* movements going. I helped the other groups to get going. They used me if they were able to bring in people they didn't have before by having me there as a speaker and then they were able to recruit. But I was not on the ground and there's nobody on the ground to be able to recruit for the PW. As far as we are concerned, we are still in the same organizational position. We haven't grown. But other groups we made contact with have some agreements with us on some specific points.

The next year I went on another tour, this time speaking mainly on China and Vietnam. I had been to China and was given a short film taken in South Vietnam, which I brought back with me. It was about the guerrilla struggle there. I was coming through Customs at the airport and I had filled in the Customs declaration of where I'd been and what I had done. "How did you get to China?" asks the Customs guard. You know, he's going on at great length, saying how nobody can get to China. Finally I said, "Oh, I know Mao Tse-tung. He gave me an invitation." He's still going on and I'm getting mad. "Look, what business is it of yours where I go? It's none of your business. You're here to check me through Customs. Let's get on with it." This resulted in him going through my luggage with a fine-tooth comb. He gets to the film and says, "What's this?" I tell him and he says it has to go to Ottawa to be examined. It goes and then I get it back.

Anyway, I use this film on the speaking tour. Each province it has to go through the censor board. In Ontario Hensbee has organized a couple of meetings for me and I went to London and Windsor. I got an invitation to go across to Detroit and speak but I said, "No way. I'd land in jail in a hurry." Had to have the film go through the censors. Took it somewhere in Scarborough. Hensbee drove me out and I think I'm going to get it censored and get it back in a few hours. But I'm told it will take a few days. I've got a meeting the next night and explain how I need it. The next morning I got it back, and they didn't even charge me, which they were supposed to do. Couldn't figure out why it all went so easily, but we got the film back and had very successful meetings with it.

We did quite a bit of campaigning for Vietnam. We raised a fair bit of money

for Vietnam. We were in a battle royal with the CP. We started raising money before they did. Some of the Party members started accusing us of splitting the Vietnam Solidarity movement, but we just told them we had started raising money first. We had a discussion about this. The Party, you see, wanted all of the money for medical supplies. Nothing is going for guns or ammunition or anything like that. "We're not in that. We're for peace. We want aid for Vietnam. We're not going to raise any money for buying bullets or those kinds of things, just medical supplies." We had a discussion about this and our position was any money we raised was not going to decide the issue in Vietnam. If money was going to make a difference that money should come from China and the Soviet Union. They could pour all kinds of it in. The little bit we got didn't amount to much. Our position was to have people make a political commitment. If they're only going to give twenty-five cents it should be done with political understanding. So, our position was, this money is not going to Hanoi, it is going to the Provisional Revolutionary government in South Vietnam. Then they can do what they want with it. If they want to buy Band-Aids, that's their business. If they want to buy bullets to fight Americans, that's their business. We're not putting any conditions on it. It's going to them. The politics was that money we sent was going for a military defeat of imperialism. We were accused by the CP of being a bit provocative.

There were lots of demonstrations in front of the court house around Vietnam. Big marches' committees would get together and have very successful marches over a period of a couple of years on the Vietnam question. The CP even worked with their bitter enemies the Trotskyists. They didn't get along too well together, but they met anyhow. We sent delegates there, but we sent delegates who would put out our position. We had been organizing — all of us together — the march from the city hall along Broadway and along Grant and down around the American consulate and to the court house. There we'd hold a meeting.

One year the police didn't want this to happen. They suggested, you meet at the south end of the Granville Bridge, walk across the Granville Bridge, go down one of the cutouts and come around Seymour Street, around the back streets and down Georgia to the court house. In other words, don't disrupt traffic. So the Trotskyist delegates were critical of this. The CP were prepared to accept it. The Trotskyists being a minority said they'd go along with it, though they were opposed to it, that there should be no restrictions by the police. We knew this was coming, so we sent delegates, two delegates with our position. We argued to refuse the conditions of the police and march as we always did. We decided that if we were turned down we would walk out of the committee. So we got turned down. Combined vote the Trotskyists and the CP. We wanted a challenge. We got turned down and our delegates stood up and said, well, we're withdrawing from the committee but we will be on the march. We pulled out.

We got together with this group of students at UBC. They weren't all that radical, but they were more sympathetic to our position than to the position of the combined CP/Trotskyist line. We decided that the CP and Trotskyists can do what the hell they liked. We were going to start the march at the city hall. So we put all propaganda out on that basis. We had banners. That was the year we had done great

big life-size banners of a Vietnamese holding a rifle up. We made life-size banners of this. Incidentally, people were carrying them home. They were really good banners. Packed them in their car. Oh, we made a hell of a pile of them. Spent quite a bit of money. We mobilized at City Hall. Must have been pretty close to four thousand at City Hall. We marched from there down Broadway. Police didn't interfere. The only thing that happened was there were a couple of carloads of engineers from UBC. They were right-wing as hell. They had banners on, "Bomb the Kong." They were harassing us up and down. We had a few run-ins with them.

We marched down Broadway and we came to the Granville Bridge and there they had, oh, less than a third of the people that we have got, standing on the south end of the Granville Bridge waiting for us to come up so we can fall in. And they have these little Picasso peace doves. A lot of people started discarding their Picasso peace doves and asking us for the banners with the guy holding the rifle. We had them swamped. The CP was mad as hell. The *Sun* published a front-page picture of the parade on Granville Street with the CP banner showing, surrounded by our slogans and banners. They made a decision then they weren't going to participate in any more marches. It didn't show properly their line.

They started across Granville Bridge and we had put three or four of our young people in the front. I remember Gene Craven and Bob Edwards were both in the front. There were a couple of others that were there, right in the front, with orders not to veer off Granville. Go straight down Granville, never mind. So we have these people waiting at the south end of the Granville Bridge. They held the main banner. They immediately put themselves in the front of the parade. They were about twenty-five or thirty feet out in front of our parade and all the other groups fell in. We had a big parade. Possibly had a total of around seven or eight thousand people by the time everybody gathered together. We headed across the Granville bridge and we come to the Seymour cut-off. Two guys, two CPers, are out front of the banner and started down the Seymour cut-off according to the agreement with the police. Of course, a few minutes later the front end of the parade was up there and kept going straight down. Our guys go and everybody, of course, followed them. The banner is there. They had to run like hell to get the banner in front of the parade again. They headed straight down Granville. The police never made a murmur, and we just kept going.

This engineer's car came driving back in with the slogan, "Bomb the Kong." I reached out and I tore the bloody banner off, the "Bomb the Kong" banner. They came to a screeching stop and three or four of them piled out. They were going to beat the shit out of me. Homer Stevens — he's got fists like hams — he just hauled off and I heard his fist hit the guy's jaw. He really landed him one. They cleared out of there in a hurry. I was really glad somebody came to my defence. I couldn't have handled them. Homer wasn't a bad guy. His mistake was when he went back into the Party and had to crawl back in. Anyhow when we all got to the old court house it was quite a big meeting. Of course we're not on the speaking end. We're going around taking up a collection. We really got shit. We took all the collection. We had big tomato cans labelled, "Give for bullets not band-aids." We're giving out free literature and we raised over six hundred dollars in the collection. When they

came to take up a collection they got hardly anything. We took all the collection and they had expenses. We always collected money separate for expenses. Everything we made in the collection went to Vietnam, went to the government.

There was a group of these "Bomb the Kong" people sitting up in the steps, right up where the speakers were, you know. A couple of young guys came up to me and said, "We shouldn't let those people stay up there. That's a provocation." I said, "If you want to do something about it, go kick them out." Up they went, up the bloody steps. They grabbed these guys and they were hauling them off down the steps. Both the CP and the Trotskyists were screaming at them: "Leave them alone. They've got a right to their opinion." "They can have their fucking opinion someplace else, not here." They got run out.

We were always bumping into the CP. There was a group of students in the Student Union at UBC that started organizing a week of discussions on Czechoslovakia in 1968 after the Soviet invasion. One day one of them phoned me up and they asked me if I would speak at one of these meetings. I said, "Sure, I'll come out and speak." They said, "Well, will you mind speaking with Mr. Morgan?" "No I won't mind speaking with Mr. Morgan, but Mr. Morgan will mind speaking with me." They said, "Oh no, he has agreed to come." I'm surprised that he'll come and speak at all because they weren't taking the platform. They were staying out of sight and writing articles and so on but they weren't coming out holding public meetings. They were holding internal Party meetings. I wanted to hear him speak in public, because I was eager to put a couple of questions to him at a public meeting. I asked them if Morgan knew I was speaking. "No, we haven't told him yet," they said. "If you want him to speak, you'd better drop me because he will not." They still insisted he'd agreed to speak. They had all the advertising out and everything. Of course, Morgan backed out. I don't think he was going to speak anyhow even if I hadn't been there. I went out to speak and still it had only been known a little while before that Morgan wasn't going to show up. There were eight or nine Party members sitting beside each other about the third row back. They came there expecting Morgan to speak because this is what was in the UBC paper and on the posters and so on. The person in the chair got up to say that Morgan had backed out, he wasn't going to come to speak. These Party members got up just like one man, and in one motion moved out. Walked right out of the auditorium. They weren't waiting around at all.

I wouldn't say we were that aggressive in recruiting people to PW. We were there. People knew where we were. We were on the streets selling the paper, we were holding meetings, we were telling people, "You want to join us. Here's where we are." We didn't have recruiting drives like the CP used to have with prizes and so on. Recruit so many and you're a gold star recruiter, or a silver star recruiter, or a bronze star recruiter, or whatever. This was all nonsense to us. If there were people who were willing to commit themselves to the work, then they could come and say so. There were people who came around who were prepared to help. People who didn't belong would come and help us out at *PW*. Stapled it, folded, what the hell have you. But they didn't want to belong.

There were quite a few native Indians used to come around. They didn't belong.

As a matter of fact, they had a group of their own. What did they call it? The Red something or other group. They sent a delegation to China one time. I remember when they started one of them came to me and asked me to come and give some lectures on native Indian history. "What the hell are you talking about? Native Indians! You should be giving me some lectures." "We want somebody who's a Marxist." I knew a bit about native Indian history anyway, but I had to get knowing a bit more and get some lectures together.

They had their headquarters up above the China Arts and Crafts Store that we opened through the Canada-China Friendship. We opened it actually as an outlet for literature, but in order to be able to survive, and we got some arts and crafts in there to sell. When we opened it up the *Seattle-Post Intelligencer* had a photograph of the store on their front page and said that this was a centre for bringing goods from China to smuggle into the United States. Within a few days, there are people coming in there from around Seattle and Bellingham. "We want to buy something. Can you tell us how to smuggle it into the United States." Just drew it to their attention. Yeah, there was goods there they wanted.

PW rented the upstairs and also a place in the back where we put our print shop after we moved out of the house on Georgia. We had a great big barrel. A great big huge thing. About an eighty-gallon, wooden barrel. It was there when we moved in. It was sitting in a corner of the basement. We left it there. Nobody was about to lug the bloody thing around to get rid of it. It just sat there and it had a cover on it. Bobbi Lee was sitting on it one day and Hensbee is there and she asked Hensbee, "What's in the barrel?" He says, "That's where we keep the rifles." Later on when she wrote her autobiography, *Struggles of a native Canadian woman*, she told about the barrel where the PW used to keep their rifles hidden. She believed it.

People used to come around. Come in the office, used to give us a hand. We had trouble with Hensbee a couple of times, because every once in a while he would get an idea that somebody was just coming in there as a stool pigeon and he would bodily throw them out. We had a few arguments with him. He was an awful character. Everybody who didn't look just right was an FBI or an RCMP agent. He would get uptight about it.

Progressive Worker really made its impact, really got rolling, in the period 1963, 1964, 1965. It was a movement that was largely confined in this original period of vitality to people who had fought within the CP, working-class people. They had an approach that was at odds with the Party and it finally reached the point where they were expelled or squeezed out. For a few years we were able to play a small role within the class struggle in the Lower Mainland, lots of strikes and things like that, but the complexion of the times began to change as the 1960s wore on. If you want to talk about a proletarian movement we were it. No other group in the country was to the same extent that we were.

More and more, however, the student movement began to dominate the scene and with this shift things changed for us in PW. We had a discussion one day that lasted for several hours about how we were going to recruit students to PW. The students were having discussions about implantation. This came out of the United States, from PL. Students were going to go in among the workers and get jobs in

the plants, leave the universities and teach the workers how to organize and how to fight for the revolution. I used to argue against this. I thought that the experience of PL in the States, for example, was proof that it wouldn't work. They had people in New Jersey who had gone into a plant and were agitating like hell for a strike. They knew if there was a strike, PL was going to be there for them. But you know the worker with a family has to look at who is gonna put bread on the table and a strike becomes a very important thing. The implanters want to make issues, to develop controversy. I think we might have been able to have some kind of steady influence on this kind of thing in PW if we had been a real force on the scene in the later 1960s and beyond, but the truth is we were on the decline.

We tried to start up something by getting a coffee house going on West Tenth Avenue. It was called the Advanced Mattress Coffee House. The name wasn't ours; it was there. It was a big store where a small mattress company had been doing business, called the Advanced Mattress Company. They went broke and rented the place out and the name was there so we kept it.

It was really a good affair, operating pretty well every night. There would be entertainment some nights. Once a week, on Thursday, they had what they called Blab Night. Anybody could get up and speak. It would be wide open discussion there. Particularly on that night. There was simply nothing like it after it closed down until La Quena opened up on Commercial Drive, which is a little higher class than Advanced Mattress was. More business-like. Got more personnel. A lot of pretty good people went to the Mattress. Milton Acorn used to come. I remember when I published his poem "Where's Che Guevera" which is one of Milton's better poems. I published it on the back page of the *Progressive Worker* where we used to publish poetry all the time. He was out there one time and he got up and he said, "Now, for twenty-five cents, you can buy a poem by Milton Acorn, 'Where's Che Guevera,' and on the back for free, you get a copy of *Progressive Worker*." All kinds of characters used to come out there. Drugs were a big thing then. We were arguing against all kinds of drugs. We were arguing on the basis, if you're fighting for a different kind of society you've got to have your bloody head about you. We can't have you taking drugs. If you're dropping LSD and smoking pot and what have you, you don't have your senses about you. It was the same in PW. We never made any rule, but we argued against it to the point that most people refrained. We weren't that successful in the Advanced Mattress.

Peter Cameron was with *Progressive Worker* at this time. One of his sisters, Joyce, was around too. She lived in the same house with us and through the Camerons we had some students come to us from Carleton University in Ottawa. It was very funny really, for their father was a mandarin in Ottawa. His son is in PW, his daughter Joyce is in the student movement, and another daughter, Barbara, was around the Communist Party. He does have one respectable offspring, however, a daughter who was working for the Liberal party.

Peter was quite an effective person. He's the one who laid out the front page of *PW* for most of its existence. We had some really good front pages. In fact, there were times when the front pages were selling the papers on the street more than the content. Some of them were fairly dramatic. He used to drive us to distraction be-

cause he was always late. Never failed in being late with his front page. We'd have everything done, everything but that sheet with the front page on it run off and ready to go. Everybody stewing and storming and waiting for Peter to show up with the design for the front page. Otherwise he was quite effective. Eventually Cameron, who now works for some professional union making piles of money, got involved with CAIMAW and that was taking up all his time.

Lebourdais was gone. He was a good guy for organizing. A guy who could go in amongst people, work them up and convince them. Friendly, hail-fellow-well-met. Real good. The kind of guy who develops into a working-class leader. But he had personal problems and when the movement began to decline he drifted out. He's one of the group that's up in northern BC now in that business of being evicted from the land that they occupied amongst the Indians out there in the Meadow up near Williams Lake, near Quesnel. I saw him on TV a couple of times, looking quite spaced-out. But while he was in PW he was quite effective. He's a good element, he's a fighter, he's a militant. And he did have, certainly, have a leadership capacity. He could bring people along with him. When they started up there with their own environmental movement he ran for the Green Party in the provincial elections.

The point about all of this is that PW was running out of steam by the late 1960s. It was a new period and we couldn't adapt all that easily to it. We were a proletarian outfit and it seemed that things were not going in that direction. We just petered out, stopped functioning really.

People simply began drifting away. We ended up like a lot of these movements. We grew in the period when everybody sort of thought that the revolution was gonna be yesterday, that sort of business. My experience was too long for that. And, of course, it didn't happen. The struggle became more protracted and a little more difficult and, in some ways, less interesting. People left. We had some internal problems. There was an internal group that developed, that wanted to go a different way. They went off and organized a group by themselves, which didn't last long.

Most of the differences were personal. A big issue was made by some of the group about the dictatorship within the PW, which was anything but dictatorial. I was accused of being one of the dictators. Lebourdais was named as a secondary dictator. It was utterly ridiculous. The fact is that at least one of them, Martin Amiable, wanted to be the leader. He was totally incapable, and I made it understood that this was my position. He got quite hostile and he had his own supporters who gathered around. He had come out of the Party with us and was in the NDP. He's back there now. He never did get expelled. He had been in the Dutch army in the Philippines and when he was living here he was on welfare and doing all kinds of fly-by-night things. Never applied himself consistently. He wanted a movement that he could be the leader of and so he got it for a while.

And then there were attacks from other groups. Canadian Party of Labor made a lot of attacks on us, and there were attacks coming from other directions. Things gradually dwindled down. There were only seven of us at the end. If the seven of us had stayed together and wanted to we could have kept the paper coming out. We still had readers and people willing to send us money, but we never went for the

idea of a small group being a party and gonna shape the entire bloody world. We simply looked at it from a realistic point of view, recognizing that we hadn't grown outside of BC and that we were splitting apart. It was ridiculous to think that we were going anywhere and so we decided that that was it. Around 1970 we quit the business and wound up with the final issue of *Progressive Worker*. Looking back on it, it was earlier, in the mid-1960s, that we had our greatest impact.