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## A New Scale of Activism

### Canadian Unions and the North American Free Trade Agreement, 1992–1999

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## ARTICLE

# A New Scale of Activism: Canadian Unions and the North American Free Trade Agreement, 1992–1999

**Spencer Hamelin**

DESPITE CANADA'S CURRENT ECONOMIC INTEGRATION within the North American market, free trade has long been a contested feature of the development of Canada as a nation-state. Daniel E. Turbeville and Susan L. Bradbury describe free trade as a "scarlet thread" running through the history of both Canada and United States.<sup>1</sup> In Canada, this thread begins with the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, the first comprehensive move toward trade liberalization in Canada, which eliminated tariffs on nonmanufactured products.<sup>2</sup> The treaty was abrogated in 1866 and Canadian attempts to re-establish a reciprocity treaty throughout the late nineteenth century proved futile.<sup>3</sup> In 1910, this trend seemed likely to be reversed, as Wilfrid Laurier's government was approached by the Taft administration requesting that reciprocity be re-established on similar terms.<sup>4</sup> However, after reaching an agreement, Laurier's Liberal government was defeated by Robert Borden's Conservatives in 1911

1. Susan L. Bradbury & Daniel E. Turbeville, "From Fur Trade to Free Trade: Rethinking the Inland Empire," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 29, 3 (1999): 447.

2. Bradbury & Turbeville, "From Fur Trade to Free Trade," 447; J. L. Granatstein & Norman Hillmer, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States into the Twenty-First Century* (Toronto: Thomson Nelson, 2007), 25.

3. Randall White, *From Fur Trade to Free Trade: Putting the Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement in Historical Perspective* (Toronto: Dundurn, 1988), 59, 75; Granatstein & Hillmer, *For Better or For Worse*, 39.

4. White, *From Fur Trade to Free Trade*, 87; Granatstein & Hillmer, *For Better or For Worse*, 66.

and, as a result, the reciprocity agreement died.<sup>5</sup> The next instance of a successful free trade agreement between Canada and the United States was the Canada–United States Automotive Products Agreement (Auto Pact) signed in January 1965.<sup>6</sup> The Auto Pact was an important move toward bilateral free trade, as duties were eliminated from auto parts.<sup>7</sup>

The most comprehensive bilateral free trade agreement was the 1989 Canada–United States Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA). CUFTA featured prominently in the 1988 federal election, for the first time prompting intense campaigns orchestrated by social movements against the agreement.<sup>8</sup> However, Brian Mulroney's pro-free-trade Progressive Conservatives won the 1988 federal election and CUFTA came into effect on 1 January 1989.<sup>9</sup> The next year, preliminary discussions began on the topic of a continental free trade agreement.<sup>10</sup> These talks led to the Trilateral Ministerial Oversight Meeting on 12 June 1991 in Toronto, officially launching the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations.<sup>11</sup> As had been the case with CUFTA, NAFTA prompted a hostile response from social movements, which orchestrated campaigns in all three NAFTA countries. In campaigns against both CUFTA and NAFTA, Canadian organized labour played a prominent role. Despite efforts to block the deal, NAFTA was signed in 1992 and took effect on 1 January 1994.<sup>12</sup>

The way in which some Canadian unions and labour organizations mobilized to confront the spread of free trade agreements differed dramatically preceding and following the implementation of NAFTA. This article seeks to address the following questions: What were these changes and what forces were driving them? How did unions in Canada react to the advance of neoliberal policies on a continental scale? What kind of alliances and forms of solidarity resulted? Subsequent to the failure of domestic political efforts to prevent the passage of NAFTA, some Canadian unions and labour organizations made use

5. James G. Foley, *Résumé of General Elections of 1896, 1900, 1904, 1908, and 1911 and of By-Elections Held Between July 11, 1896 and January 1st, 1916* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1970), 7.

6. White, *From Fur Trade to Free Trade*, 112; Dimitry Anastakis, *Auto Pact: Creating a Borderless North American Auto Industry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 93.

7. Anastakis, *Auto Pact*, 5.

8. Terrance Wills, "Summit Sparks Huge Coalition to Fight Free Trade," *Montreal Gazette*, 6 April 1987.

9. Bill Dymond, Michael Hart & Colin Robertson, *Decision at Midnight: Inside the Canada-US Free Trade Negotiations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994), 422.

10. Dymond, Hart & Robertson, *Decision at Midnight*, 422.

11. Maxwell A. Cameron & Brian W. Tomlin, *The Making of NAFTA: How the Deal Was Done* (London: Cornell University Press, 2000), xi, 81.

12. External Affairs and International Trade Canada, *NAFTA: What's It All About?* (Ottawa 1993), 1; Cameron & Tomlin, *The Making of NAFTA*, 208.

of emerging international political opportunities and strengthened alliances with regional counterparts in countries experiencing trade liberalization.<sup>13</sup>

In this article, I focus on two main time periods in order to address the impact of Canadian organized labour's response to NAFTA. First, I examine the domestic and international context of labour activism during the period between CUFTA and NAFTA. I then turn to the period following the passage of NAFTA to investigate emerging forms of transnational activism that it spurred.<sup>14</sup>

My approach to this topic is largely based on primary source materials located at Library and Archives Canada. Canadian labour organizations and individuals that participated in the labour movement have produced ample archives that include newspaper articles, magazine clippings, union newsletters, bulletins, union reports, personal communications, memos, budget proposals, policy documents, public statements, faxes, New Democratic Party (NDP) federal election campaign and research documents, and conference proceedings. Other primary source materials include North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation (NAALC) National Administrative Office original submissions, public reports of review, ministerial consultation documents, and public communications.

The Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE) are the primary focus of this paper. These three labour organizations were prominent in building international solidarity, and they maintained robust archival collections.

## Historiography

MANY HISTORIANS OF FREE TRADE can be aptly characterized as "high political" historians because of their emphasis on formal political structures and the language of politics among the public and within the institutions of Canadian politics.<sup>15</sup> Many historians and journalists, such as J. L. Granatstein, Norman Hillmer, Graham Fraser, and Sally M. Weaver, exemplify this

13. In her examination of transnational institutional fields, Tamara Kay argues that such fields gave rise to transnational actors and regional interests. That said, transnational solidarity in this period extended beyond NAFTA's institutions and beyond regional confines. Kay, *NAFTA and the Politics of Labor Transnationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 16, 20.

14. Jonathan Graubart identified two stages of NAFTA protest activity: grassroots resistance to the agreement itself and more affirmative forms of activism. This paper does not embrace this classification, as resistance to NAFTA continued following its implementation, but the implementation of the agreement did lead to distinct changes in organized labour's approach to activism. Graubart, *Legalizing Transnational Activism: The Struggle to Gain Social Change from NAFTA's Citizen Petitions* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 52.

15. Susan Pedersen, "What Is Political History Now?," in David Cannadine, ed., *What Is History Now?* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 41, 46.

school, emphasizing statesmanship, electoral politics, party leadership, and public opinion polls in their works.<sup>16</sup> Statesmanship and party leadership, in particular, highlight the prominence of the role of individuals in the political process. Both early and recent historical works on free trade in the Canadian context – ranging from Emerson Bristol Biggar's 1911 work *Reciprocity: The Trade Treaty of 1854–1866* to more recent works by Fraser and Weaver, Michael Hart and Bill Dymond, and Bruce Doern and Brian Tomlin – focus primarily on statesmanship, leadership, and the role of negotiators in the political process.<sup>17</sup>

Many historians view reciprocity and the broader objective of free trade as an essential element of Canadian autonomy. Biggar and Donald C. Masters, for example, explicitly link Canadian political autonomy and economic policy as well as implying a teleological belief in progress toward Canadian autonomy as a nation-state.<sup>18</sup> This tendency to view trade policy as a symbolic and literal manifestation of economic and political autonomy and as an expression of nation building is apparent in more recent scholarship as well. Granatstein and Hillmer, Gordon Ritchie, Randall White, and Michael Paiva all demonstrate this approach to free trade in their respective works on the topic.<sup>19</sup>

In recent historical scholarship, many authors have deviated from nationalist discourses and embraced a more transnational historical approach. Even works by traditionally nationalist historians, such as Granatstein and Hillmer's *For Better or for Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, engage with Canadian and American history from a continental perspective.<sup>20</sup> Granatstein

16. Graham Fraser & Sally M. Weaver, *Playing for Keeps: The Making of the Prime Minister, 1988* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989), 13; J. L. Granatstein & Norman Hillmer, *For Better or for Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1991), 309.

17. See Fraser & Weaver, *Playing for Keeps*, 17 (on the importance of political leadership and its impact during the 1988 federal election); Dymond, Hart & Robertson, *Decision at Midnight*, x, xi, xiii (for commentary on the importance of the individuals negotiating free trade pacts); Bruce G. Doern & Brian W. Tomlin, *Faith and Fear: The Free Trade Story* (Don Mills: Stoddart, 1994), 2, 5 (on the importance of “determined men and women” in the making of CUSTA).

18. Emerson Bristol Biggar, *Reciprocity: The Trade Treaty of 1854–1866 between Canada and the United States* (Toronto: Biggar Wilson, 1911), 6, 9; D. C. Masters, *The Reciprocity Treaty of 1854: Its History, Its Relation to British Colonial and Foreign Policy and to the Development of Canadian Fiscal Autonomy* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1963), xii.

19. For examples of each respective author linking free trade to Canadian nationhood as well as economic and political autonomy, see the following: Granatstein & Hillmer, *For Better or for Worse: 1990s*, 293; Gordon Ritchie, *Wrestling with the Elephant: The Inside Story of the Canada-US Trade Wars* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1997), 2, 133, 195; White, *Fur Trade to Free Trade*, 45; and Michael Paiva, “Surmounting Trade Barriers: American Protectionism and the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement,” MA thesis, University of Waterloo, 2009, i, iii, [https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/bitstream/handle/10012/4678/Paiva\\_Michael.pdf](https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/bitstream/handle/10012/4678/Paiva_Michael.pdf).

20. Michel Ducharme & Jean Francois Constant, “Introduction: A Project of Rule Called Canada – The Liberal Order Framework and Historical Practice,” in Jean-Francois Constant

and Hillmer share a similar continental approach with Dimitry Anastakis's work on the Auto Pact.<sup>21</sup>

In *NAFTA and Labor in North America*, Norman Caulfield asserts that the nationalist discourse of earlier historical literature becomes an impediment when examining transnational trade regimes and represents a dated approach rooted in the context of the postwar period.<sup>22</sup> Joel Stillerman furthers this perspective in his 2004 article "Transnational Activist Networks and the Emergence of Labor Internationalism," describing "national institutional structures" as "dilemmas" in historical treatments of transnational subject matter.<sup>23</sup> Caulfield's and Stillerman's respective approaches represent a movement away from nationalist narratives through the adoption of a transnational analysis. Their methods focus not on political figures and electoral politics, but on social movements and political opportunity structures.<sup>24</sup>

Beyond the scope of traditional historical scholarship, scholars of industrial relations, international law, and social movements have all engaged in evaluations of NAFTA and its ramifications for organized labour. Ian Robinson, whose work focuses on labour movement power and resources, argues that the medium- to long-run benefits of NAFTA in regard to organized labour outweigh its short-term consequences.<sup>25</sup> Though Robinson highlights the decline of bargaining power resulting from the global spread of neoliberalism, he suggests that an increase in the capacity to mobilize and a shift toward social unionism could counteract some of NAFTA's negative effects on organized labour.<sup>26</sup> In agreement with Robinson's approach, Greg Albo and Dan Crow argue that economic slowdown, neoliberal free-market policies, and the internationalization of capital necessitate the mobilization of membership.<sup>27</sup> Albo

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& Michel Ducharme, eds., *Liberalism and Hegemony: Debating the Canadian Liberal Revolution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 3. Granatstein and Hillmer refer to the shared continental history of Canada and the United States, regarding "the application of law, conciliation, and arbitration, rather than force, to the settlements of disputes," as "the Canadian-American way." Granatstein & Hillmer, *For Better or For Worse: 1990s*, ix–x.

21. "Thus, the agreement integrated the auto industry on a continental basis, and for Canadian policymakers, paradoxically, this continentalism was a form of economic nationalism." Anastakis, *Auto Pact*, 8.

22. Norman Caulfield, *NAFTA and Labor in North America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 2, 3, 6.

23. Joel Stillerman, "Transnational Activist Networks and the Emergence of Labor Internationalism in the NAFTA Countries," *Social Science History* 27, 4 (2004): 577.

24. Stillerman, "Transnational Activist Networks"; Caulfield, *NAFTA and Labor*.

25. Ian Robinson, "NAFTA, Social Unionism, and Labour Movement Power in Canada and the United States," *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* 49, 4 (1994): 657.

26. Robinson, "NAFTA," 669.

27. Greg Albo & Dan Crow, "Neo-Liberalism, NAFTA, and the State of the North American Labour Movements," *Just Labour* 6/7 (2005): 12, 14, 15, 19.

and Crow further argue that domestic capacity must precede international collaboration in order to be successful.<sup>28</sup> This article is influenced by the work of Ian Robinson, Joel Stillerman, and Tamara Kay in its focus on international geopolitics, political opportunity, and the negative effects of neoliberalism as a catalyst of tactical change.<sup>29</sup> I reject the notion that the nation-state is a limiting factor in historical research, instead viewing it as one among many integral scales of activism. Additionally, this article rejects Albo and Crow's suggestion that domestic recovery from the effects of neoliberalism must occur as a prerequisite to effective transnational activism.<sup>30</sup> The successes highlighted in this article prove that this is an exaggerated claim.

## Theoretical Background and Concepts

### *Social Movement Theory*

In order to understand how Canadian unions and labour organizations confronted and adapted to transnationalism, I draw upon works of social movement theory, particularly in regards to reconciling national and transnational historical narratives. For the purposes of this article, social movements are understood as a sustained challenge by a network of social movement organizations that share objectives and bonds of solidarity as well as tactics that include, but are not limited to, protest actions.<sup>31</sup> I draw from political process theory and accept the central tenet of political opportunity structure: that features of regimes encourage or discourage collective action.<sup>32</sup> The strategic choices of the unions examined here are closely interwoven with the rise and fall of political opportunities on domestic and transnational scales. However, the use of political opportunity structure as a theoretical framework necessitates a more nuanced approach. William A. Gamson and David S. Meyer, for example, indicate that a distinction is to be made between stable, structural sources of political opportunity, such as institutions and political tradition, and volatile sources of political opportunity, such as public

28. Albo & Crow, "Neo-Liberalism," 12.

29. Stillerman, "Transnational Activist Networks," 577; Robinson, "NAFTA," 657; Kay, *NAFTA*, 16, 20, 35.

30. Albo & Crow, "Neo-Liberalism," 12.

31. This definition is an interpretation and synthesis of common elements of social movements identified by Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. Della Porta & Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1999), 14–16; Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3; Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1978), 9.

32. Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 18; Charles Tilly, *Contentious Politics* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2007), 49.

policy and political discourse.<sup>33</sup> This paper will focus primarily on the latter. Additionally, political opportunity structure will be used in a fashion that acknowledges unions and labour organizations as rational actors, cognizant of the volatility of political opportunities.<sup>34</sup>

Political process theory relies on the interaction between social movements and what Sidney Tarrow describes as “complex policy networks” that involve the state.<sup>35</sup> But what is the role of the state in a social movement history of a transnational agreement like NAFTA? Social movements’ efforts aimed at transnational or global institutions are due not to the irrelevance of the nation-state, but to the targeting of one of the layers of institutions as political opportunities arise. Tarrow and Charles Tilly define this as scale shift, which they define as follows: “Scale shift is a complex process that not only diffuses contention across space or social sectors, but creates instances for new coordination at a higher or lower level than its initiation.”<sup>36</sup> The theoretical approach of this article is consistent with a multilayered or multilevelled analysis, acknowledging the state as an important institution within layers of institutions existing at levels from local to global.<sup>37</sup> Through the stated approach, the article will attempt to answer what John D. French calls “the challenge of the new millennium” in labour history: the integration of transnational and domestic historical developments.<sup>38</sup> As Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith indicate in *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity*, a purely transnational approach to history is based on a misleading premise; specifically, they write, “The apparent opposition among strengthening local, national, and global institutions is based on a false premise: that more power at one level of governance is necessarily disempowering to people at others.”<sup>39</sup> Local and national institutions are still very relevant to social movements, and

33. William A. Gamson & David S. Meyer, “Framing Political Opportunity,” in Doug McAdam, John McCarthy & Mayer Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 277–279.

34. David S. Meyer & Debra C. Minkoff, “Conceptualizing Political Opportunity,” *Social Forces* 82, 4 (2004): 1463.

35. Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 25.

36. Tarrow & Tilly, *Contentious Politics*, 94.

37. Kay, *NAFTA*, 15. For an example of an approach minimizing the role of the domestic level of activism, see Jackie Smith & Joe Bandy, “Introduction: Cooperation and Conflict in Transnational Protest,” in Joe Bandy & Jackie Smith, eds., *Coalitions across Borders: Transnational Protest and the Neoliberal Order* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 1.

38. John D. French, “Another World History Is Possible: Reflections on the Translocal, Transnational, and Global,” in Leon Fink, ed., *Workers across the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labor History* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9.

39. Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello & Brendan Smith, *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 2002), 40.



the state, in spite of its “thinning,” remains an important institution within layers of institutions existing at levels from local to global.<sup>40</sup>

### **Neoliberalism**

NAFTA was and remains representative of the entrenchment and expansion of neoliberal economic policies. Though scholars differ on the precise definition of neoliberalism, most scholars agree upon basic fundamental elements.<sup>41</sup> Neoliberalism is a political program based on the primacy of the free market with minimal restraints.<sup>42</sup> Ganti Tejaswini concisely summarizes its three fundamental elements: deregulation, liberalization, and privatization.<sup>43</sup> Neoliberalism can be viewed as a return to some of the fundamental elements of liberal economic thought, but what accounts for the prefix *neo* in the term?<sup>44</sup> Unlike Adam Smith, who considered the pursuit of self-interest a product of “natural liberty” leading to a naturally self-regulating market, neoliberalism requires concerted political effort and the use of state power.<sup>45</sup> As Anwar Shaikh argues, neoliberalism is not a process that is natural, but rather a political project requiring “global intellectual, political, and economic power.”<sup>46</sup> Free trade agreements, including but not limited to NAFTA, are representative of a neoliberal political project because they promote and consolidate its intended aims through deregulation due to increased capital mobility; impose

40. Nelson Lichtenstein, “Labor Internationalism: Introduction,” in Fink, ed., *Workers across the Americas*, 355; Brecher, Costello & Smith, *Globalization from Below*, 34.

41. Deborah Johnston & Alfredo Saad-Filho, “Introduction,” in Deborah Johnston & Alfredo Saad-Filho, eds., *Neoliberalism: A Critical Reader* (London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2005), 1.

42. Hugo Radice, “Neoliberal Globalisation: Imperialism without Empires?,” in Johnston & Saad-Filho, eds., *Neoliberalism*, 91.

43. Tejaswini Ganti, “Neoliberalism,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43 (2014): 91.

44. Simon Clarke, “The Neoliberal Theory of Society,” in Johnston & Saad-Filho, eds., *Neoliberalism*, 50.

45. Ganti, “Neoliberalism,” 92; Johnston & Saad-Filho, “Introduction,” 3; Adam Smith, “Of the Agricultural Systems, or of Those Systems of Political Economy which Represent the Produce of Land as Either the Sole or the Principle Source of Revenue and Wealth of Every Country,” in W. J. Ashley, ed., *Select Chapters and Passages from the Wealth of Nations of Adam Smith, 1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), 256; Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 9.

46. Anwar Shaikh, “The Economic Mythology of Neoliberalism,” in Johnston & Saad-Filho, eds., *Neoliberalism*, 58. Ricardo Grinspun and Robert Kreklewich also discuss the tendency of neoliberal political programs to surface without and sometimes in spite of democratic forces. Grinspun & Kreklewich, “Consolidating Neoliberal Reforms: ‘Free Trade’ as a Conditioning Framework,” *Studies in Political Economy* 43, 1 (1994): 35. Jim Glassman also highlights the irony of the active involvement of the state in a process widely perceived to reduce the power of the state. Glassman, “Neoliberal Primitive Accumulation,” in Nik Heynen, James McCarthy, Scott Prudham & Paul Robbins, eds., *Neoliberal Environments: False Promises and Unnatural Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 95–96.

constraints on public policy, thus locking in neoliberal reforms; and encourage downward harmonization.<sup>47</sup> Additionally, free trade agreements create a political constituency supportive of them, made up of those who benefit, while crippling their opponents – particularly organized labour, which suffers from reductions in membership through job loss.<sup>48</sup> As such, NAFTA was not a part of an irresistible, teleological movement toward a naturally market-oriented society but part of a concerted political effort toward the entrenchment and advancement of neoliberalism. Though NAFTA, within the broader framework of neoliberalism, was advanced with concerted political effort, it was also resisted. This article will focus on the resistance to this political project.

## Historical Context

### *Internal Developments within the CLC and the AFL-CIO*

The CLC and the AFL-CIO both underwent internal changes that facilitated a movement toward collaboration and solidarity during the period following the passage of NAFTA. The CLC was staunchly in favour of free trade until the mid-1970s, having embraced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and actively attempted to silence nationalist elements within the Canadian labour movement.<sup>49</sup> A shift in orientation occurred in Canada between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, driven by the growth of left-wing nationalist public sector unions within the CLC, hostility to Pierre Elliott Trudeau's suspension of collective bargaining and wage controls, the emergence of labour leaders influenced by the social movements of the 1960s, the 1981–83 recession, and the election of Brian Mulroney as prime minister.<sup>50</sup> Miriam Smith argues that the lack of political power wielded by the CLC and the unwillingness of the Mulroney government to compromise or engage with the Congress drove the CLC to redirect its focus onto collaborating with social movement organizations.<sup>51</sup> In other words, the features of the Canadian political landscape resulted in a restriction of political opportunity, contributing to a

47. Grinspun & Kreklewich, "Consolidating Neoliberal Reforms," 33, 34, 40, 41. See also the following work by Gerardo Otero, which highlights the contrast between capital mobility and captive national populations within NAFTA countries: "Neoliberal Globalization, NAFTA, and Migration: Mexico's Loss of Food and Labour Sovereignty," *Journal of Poverty* 15, 4 (2011): 387.

48. Grinspun & Kreklewich, "Consolidating Neoliberal Reforms," 40.

49. Miriam Smith, "The Canadian Labour Congress: From Continentalism to Economic Nationalism," *Studies in Political Economy* 38, 1 (1992): 35, 42.

50. Ian Robinson, "Economistic Unionism in Crisis: The Origins, Consequences, and Prospects of Divergence in Labour – Movement Characteristics," in Jane Jenson & Rianne Mahon, eds., *The Challenge of Restructuring: North American Labour Movements Respond* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 32; Smith, "Canadian Labour Congress," 36, 37, 40, 53.

51. Smith, "Canadian Labour Congress," 53.

strategic pivot in CLC policy toward mobilizing its members and the general public to offset its loss of influence.<sup>52</sup> In the United States, the election of John Sweeney as AFL-CIO president and the election of the New Voices slate to the executive in 1995 caused a substantial shift in AFL-CIO policy that brought the organization closer in orientation to the CLC.<sup>53</sup>

Both the CLC and the AFL-CIO also benefited from the end of the Cold War, which eased ideological tensions within the labour movement. Hitherto, the AFL-CIO and CLC had been staunchly anticommunist. In the United States, anticommunism was central to AFL-CIO foreign policy, which was influenced by State Department funding for the organization's international activities.<sup>54</sup> As American international unions were dominant within the CLC until the 1970s, AFL-CIO foreign policy affected the CLC's foreign and domestic policy, which took a similar anticommunist route, resulting in the expulsion of unions like UE because of their radicalism.<sup>55</sup> This was an obstacle to building international solidarity, as the foreign activities of both the AFL-CIO and CLC adversely affected labour activism and undermined independent unions' search for recognition.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, the AFL-CIO had demonstrated both support for and collaboration with the US government in campaigns against democratically elected governments and had supported unions controlled by dictatorial regimes in Latin America, creating an atmosphere of profound hemispheric distrust.<sup>57</sup> The end of the Cold War relaxed these political and ideological tensions and allowed the AFL-CIO and CLC to pursue different priorities in Latin America.

Before anti-NAFTA campaigning began in Canada, trends in the leadership of the CLC moved the Congress toward consolidating an activist stance and laying the groundwork for a deeper focus on collaborative work with allies beyond the confines of parliamentary politics. The first development was a challenge by "union militants" to Shirley Carr's leadership.<sup>58</sup> Dave Werlin,

52. Robinson, "NAFTA," 669. The scale shift model of social movement theory is important to remember here, as a nationalist stance does not necessarily detract from building international solidarity. For example, when Bob White led the Canadian autoworkers to break with the UAW in 1985, the newly formed CAW devoted more resources to solidarity with Central and South American unions. Sam Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers: The Birth and Transformation of a Union* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1995), 204.

53. Kay, *NAFTA*, 4.

54. Michael E. Gordon & Lowell Turner, "Going Global," in Michael E. Gordon & Lowell Turner, eds., *Transnational Cooperation among Labor Unions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 19.

55. Gindin, *Canadian Auto Workers*, 236; Kay, *NAFTA*, 39.

56. Kay, *NAFTA*, 41.

57. Kim Scipes, *AFL-CIO's Secret War against Developing Country Workers: Solidarity or Sabotage?* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2010), 84, 101, xii.

58. Virginia Galt, "Carr May Face Challenge at CLC Convention," *Globe and Mail*,

former president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, seasoned activist, and Communist, led the insurgents in opposition to Carr.<sup>59</sup> As part of a renewed commitment to collaboration and coalition work driven by Werlin's challenge, Carr released a ten-year plan, approved in principle by delegates at the CLC convention in May 1990, outlining the importance of "work with like-minded groups."<sup>60</sup> Carr was re-elected on 17 May 1990, but with Werlin winning 29 per cent of the votes.<sup>61</sup> A "major structural review" was part of the shift in policy to a more activist stance that was intended to refocus the CLC's work, according to Carr, "back to the grassroots level where it belongs."<sup>62</sup> The challenge from the radical left in the form of Werlin was central to this commitment. Emphasis on coalition building was also echoed in Carr's addresses to the CLC's membership. For example, she stressed the importance of coalition work at the 7th Biennial CLC Women's Conference, held in 1990, titled "Empowering Union Women: Toward the Year 2000."<sup>63</sup> The fact that these priorities were emphasized in different contexts following Carr's re-election indicates the consolidation of the CLC's commitments to its allies in social movement organizations and coalitions.

### ***Early Political Efforts and Collaboration with the NDP prior to the Implementation of NAFTA***

Canadian labour activism against NAFTA does not appear prominently in the Canadian press until 1992. That summer, the CLC announced its mobilization against NAFTA alongside the CAW and the Action Canada Network (ACN), whose campaigns also became prominent in the mainstream press.<sup>64</sup> One reason for the rise in prominence of organized labour's campaigns at that time could be public opinion. In 1992, a widely reported Angus Reid public opinion

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12 May 1990.

59. Galt, "Carr May Face Challenge."

60. Virginia Galt, "CLC Vote Will Test Support for Activist Stance," *Globe and Mail*, 16 May 1990.

61. Virginia Galt, "New Mandate Accompanies Carr Re-election," *Globe and Mail*, 18 May 1990.

62. Shirley Carr quoted in Galt, "New Mandate."

63. Shirley Carr, "Opening Address," presented at Empowering Union Women: Toward the Year 2000, in *Report from the 7th Biennial CLC Women's Conference, Ottawa, Ontario*, 7, Grace Hartman fonds, MG31 B58, box 11, file 7, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC); "Report from Working Groups and Recommendations," presented at Empowering Union Women: Toward the Year 2000, in *Report from the 7th Biennial CLC Women's Conference, Ottawa, Ontario*, 7, Grace Hartman fonds, MG31 B58, box 11, file 7, LAC.

64. Alan Freeman, "Opponents Promise a Battle: Labour, Opposition Parties Renew Attack on US Free Trade Deal," *Globe and Mail*, 13 August 1992; Cameron & Tomlin, *The Making of NAFTA*, xii; Jonathan Ferguson, "Free Trade Foes Come Out Swinging," *Toronto Star*, 14 August 1992.

poll of 1,509 Canadians, leaked by the Council of Canadians, indicated plummeting support for the deal: from 46 per cent in favour in February 1991 to 29 per cent by summer 1992.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, Canada was experiencing an economic contraction.<sup>66</sup> Despite the beginning of economic recovery in 1992, that recovery was slow.<sup>67</sup> After the experience of the recession of the early 1990s, and given the fact that it had immediately followed the adoption of CUFTA, the Canadian public were likely disillusioned with further free trade agreements. With such a precipitous fall in the popularity of NAFTA, it is logical that unions and their coalition allies would seek to exploit the opportunity to capitalize on this trend in public opinion.

At this time, the CLC still largely viewed stopping the passage of NAFTA as something that could be done through lobbying, working with political allies, and blocking the deal in the House of Commons or the Senate.<sup>68</sup> For example, on 28 September 1990, Bruce Campbell, a senior economist for the CLC, and Nancy Richie, the CLC executive vice-president, spoke before the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade.<sup>69</sup> CAW president Buzz Hargrove urged Members of Parliament to stall ratification of the deal until a federal election could be held.<sup>70</sup> Hargrove warned Progressive Conservative Members of Parliament that ratifying NAFTA before an election could hurt their results in certain ridings.<sup>71</sup>

Canadian unions also sought to lobby sympathetic provincial NDP governments as a means of stopping, or at least obstructing, the passage of NAFTA. At the CLC's National Political Action Conference, attended by 500 activists, including delegates from the anti-free-trade coalition Common Frontiers,

65. "News Bulletins NAFTA Support Crashes," *Globe and Mail*, 4 July 1992; Deborah Dowling, "Free Trade: Support for New Deal 'Crashed,' Poll Says," *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 July 1992.

66. Robin W. Boadway & Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Economics and the Canadian Economy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), 727; and Peter C. Newman, "The Non-Recovery that Stumps the Economists," *Maclean's*, 4 January 1993, 60.

67. Boadway & Stiglitz, *Economics and the Canadian Economy*, 727.

68. Freeman, "Opponents Promise a Battle."

69. John Bosley, *Minutes of the Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, Responding Pursuant to Standing Order 108 (2) an Examination of the Canada - U.S. - Mexico Trade Negotiations*, Audrey McLaughlin fonds, R11545, box 18 (hereafter AMF), file 36, pp. 35–36, LAC.

70. Valerie Casselton, "Stall NAFTA till after Election, Union Urges," *Vancouver Sun*, 18 February 1993. Hargrove, who got involved with the United Auto Workers (UAW) through his employment at a Chrysler plant in Windsor, Ontario, was chairperson of shop stewards at his local before becoming a UAW staff member. Hargrove was Bob White's administrative assistant in the 1980s before White became president of the newly formed CAW in 1985. Buzz Hargrove, *Laying It on the Line: Driving a Hard Bargain in Challenging Times* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2009), 12, 15; Bob White, *Hard Bargains: My Life on the Line* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987), 129.

71. Casselton, "Stall NAFTA."

activists identified the provincial and federal political process as crucial to fighting the deal.<sup>72</sup> The NDP was a powerful ally at the provincial level in British Columbia, Ontario, and Saskatchewan, where the party governed.<sup>73</sup> Activist and economist Mel Watkins encouraged conference attendees to pressure NDP provincial governments to defy federal implementation of NAFTA.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, as early as 1992, organized labour's strategy gained traction; NDP provincial governments were among the early opponents of NAFTA in Canada.<sup>75</sup> Premiers Mike Harcourt of British Columbia, Bob Rae of Ontario, and Roy Romanow of Saskatchewan formed a powerful anti-NAFTA alliance, representing 50 per cent of the Canadian population and 65 per cent of Canadian exports.<sup>76</sup> Despite NAFTA's labour opponents having useful and sympathetic allies at the provincial level, NAFTA negotiations were taking place at the federal level. As such, unions looked to the 1993 federal election as the next political opportunity to defeat NAFTA.

Organized labour's political and electoral strategy remained one of the key elements of anti-NAFTA activism leading up to the 1993 federal election. As Mike Edwards noted in the national labour magazine *Our Times*, mobilizing public support for the NDP and halting the passage of NAFTA were at the core of organized labour's strategy.<sup>77</sup> The potential to block NAFTA in the House of Commons or the Senate prompted organized labour to focus its efforts on the federal government.<sup>78</sup> In autumn 1993, the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) and the CAW arranged a protest as part of a 23-city anti-NAFTA tour, at which they erected a cardboard wall outside the office of Windsor West Liberal MP Herb Gray with the names of all of the companies that the PSAC and CAW alleged to have been victims of outsourcing or closures as a result of free trade agreements.<sup>79</sup> The action was organized in protest of Gray's absence from Parliament at the second reading on the agreement.<sup>80</sup> This was a result of the PSAC and CAW recognizing the strategic importance of the 83 Liberal candidates elected in the 1988 federal election.<sup>81</sup> Some labour federations joined

72. Mike Edwards, "CLC Action Plans," *Our Times*, March 1993, 14–15.

73. Tilly, *Contentious Politics*, 52.

74. Edwards, "CLC Action Plans," 14–15.

75. Freeman, "Opponents Promise a Battle."

76. Ferguson, "Free Trade Foes."

77. Edwards, "CLC Action Plans," 14–15.

78. Freeman, "Opponents Promise a Battle."

79. Sue Bailey, "Anti-NAFTA Tour Targets MP Gray," *Windsor Star*, 14 September 1993.

80. Bailey, "Anti-NAFTA Tour."

81. Energy, Mines, and Resources Canada, "Results of the 34th Federal Election November 21, 1988" (map), accessed 15 July 2017, [http://ftp.maps.canada.ca/pub/nrcan\\_rncan/raster/atlas/eng/federal\\_election/mcr\\_0197.pdf](http://ftp.maps.canada.ca/pub/nrcan_rncan/raster/atlas/eng/federal_election/mcr_0197.pdf).

forces with coalition allies, encouraging citizens to stop NAFTA in the electoral arena. The ACN and the Alberta Federation of Labour launched a campaign urging voters to cast their ballots strategically, for only anti-free-trade candidates.<sup>82</sup> Though many unions sought to stop NAFTA through lobbying and elections, acts of protest also occurred during the period preceding the implementation of NAFTA.

In summer 1992, there was a surge in protest activity, yet even union protests were closely coordinated with and attended by NDP delegates. For example, on 7 October 1992, NDP MP for Essex-Windsor, Steve Langdon, CAW representative Larry Bauer, and federal NDP candidate for Windsor West, Emily Carasco, participated in a protest outside a Chrysler Canada minivan plant that was timed to coincide with Mulroney's endorsement of NAFTA alongside his Mexican and American counterparts.<sup>83</sup> The ACN also joined in condemning Mulroney's visit.<sup>84</sup> On 17 December 1992, as Mulroney conducted the ceremonial signing of NAFTA, ACN activists, including Tony Clarke, Maude Barlow, and CLC vice-president Jean-Claude Parrot, using visitors' passes given to them by opposition MPs, denounced the agreement.<sup>85</sup> Though in a few instances unions carried out protest activities without an NDP presence, the two groups were very much intertwined in the early stages of opposition to NAFTA.

### ***Political Alliance and Growing Tensions between Unions and the NDP***

The context in which organized labour and the NDP collaborated was one fraught with contradictions. Despite the fact that many Canadian unions continued to collaborate closely with the NDP, the 1988 federal election had led to considerable strain in the relationship between some unions and the party, particularly because of campaign strategy during that election.<sup>86</sup> This conflict was driven by a strategic gulf between NDP leadership and party brass and the party's grassroots supporters as well as allied unions.<sup>87</sup> The NDP lacked focus on the topic of free trade, driving a wedge between the party and its fellow free trade opponents in the Liberal Party.<sup>88</sup> Additionally, the NDP was harshly

82. Dave Pommer, "Voters Urged to Kill Trade Pact," *Calgary Herald*, 30 September 1993.

83. Sarah Sacheli, "Workers Give Short Shrift to Protest," *Windsor Star*, 8 October 1992.

84. Linda Diebel, "PM Denies Electioneering Charge: Ceremony 'Political Theatre,'" *Windsor Star*, 8 October 1992.

85. Ian Austen & John Lund, "Hecklers Disrupt NAFTA Signing," *Calgary Herald*, 18 December 1992.

86. Hugh Winsor, "The Left: Which Way to Turn? Part 2," *Globe and Mail*, 20 November 1989.

87. Judy Steed, *Ed Broadbent: The Pursuit of Power* (Markham: Penguin Books, 1989), xxxiii.

88. Steed, *Ed Broadbent*, xv, xxxiii; Martin Cohn, "Broadbent Takes One Last Shot at Deal: Rally on Main St. Concludes NDP's Anti-Free Trade Campaign," *Toronto Star*, 21 November 1988; "Whither the NDP" (editorial), *Toronto Star*, 16 October 1988.



criticized by some figures in the labour movement for placing a select group of senior MPs and party hacks in charge of the 1988 campaign.<sup>89</sup> Some individuals within the labour movement, such as John Fryer of the National Union of Public and General Employees and vice-president of the CLC, considered severing all institutional links with the NDP.<sup>90</sup> Bob White of the CAW and Leo Gerrard of the United Steelworkers Canada (USW) both wrote public statements criticizing the NDP's handling of the 1988 election campaign.<sup>91</sup> After the election, Sam Gindin of the CAW also stressed the need for a critical reassessment of the relationship between organized labour and the NDP at a more fundamental level than electoral strategy.<sup>92</sup> In spite of these tensions, the CLC invested heavily in mobilizing support for the NDP in the early 1990s. Research staff from the USW and the CLC helped the NDP with the development of their political platform.<sup>93</sup> Additionally, the CLC's political action director was one of several CLC representatives sitting on the NDP's Strategy and Election Planning Committee.<sup>94</sup> Despite the maintenance of close ties, a second crisis was brewing as the 1993 federal election approached, namely, a critical opportunity to end Canada's commitment to NAFTA.

### ***Collapse of a Political Opportunity: Labour and NDP Tensions before the 1993 Federal Election***

During the 1993 election, federal NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin promised to use the six-month provision in CUFTA to end the agreement, repeatedly aired concerns regarding NAFTA, and appeared to be an ideal ally for Canadian organized labour on trade issues.<sup>95</sup> That being said, political feuds between provincial NDP governments and organized labour exacerbated existing tensions

89. Linda Diebel, "Broadbent Blamed for Election Failure," *Toronto Star*, 7 December 1988.

90. Winsor, "The Left."

91. Bob White signed his first United Auto Workers (UAW) membership card in February 1951 and quickly rose through the ranks, becoming the UAW's Canadian director in 1978. White was instrumental in the CAW's separation from the UAW in 1985 in order to take a less compromising approach to bargaining. White, *Hard Bargains*, 13, 142.

92. Sam Gindin to Bob White, 6 December 1988, Daniel Benedict fonds, R12411, box 48, file 12, LAC. Economist Sam Gindin was a prominent figure within the CAW who served as head of its research department. Vanessa Lu, "The Shy Man Who Shaped Workers' Windfalls: Strategist Sam Gindin Helped Auto Workers Keep Wages," *Toronto Star*, 24 January 2000.

93. Bob Baldwin & Andrew Jackson, "Policy Analysis by the Labour Movement in a Hostile Environment," Working Paper 41, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 2005, 21, <http://www.queensu.ca/sps/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.spswww/files/files/Publications/workingpapers/41.pdf>.

94. Alan Whitehorn, "The NDP's Quest for Survival," in Alan Frizzell, Jon H. Pammett & Anthony Westell, eds., *The Canadian General Election of 1993* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994), 44.

95. Audrey McLaughlin to editor of *Financial Post*, 3 December 1991, AMF, file 38, LAC.



at a politically crucial moment. The central cause of disillusionment was the NDP provincial governments' acceptance of neoliberal policies.<sup>96</sup> In January 1993, executives of the CLC intervened, requesting a closed door session with all three NDP premiers.<sup>97</sup> This closed door session involved a frank and harsh condemnation of provincial policies that the CLC perceived to be damaging to the party's popularity among its rank-and-file members.<sup>98</sup> With open hostilities surfacing between the NDP and its allies among organized labour, many commentators predicted trouble for the federal NDP.<sup>99</sup> This rift in the labour-NDP relationship was the second to surface in a span of just five years and occurred at the worst possible strategic moment for those seeking to block NAFTA through electoral means. The party managed to attain just 6.9 per cent of the popular vote in the 1993 federal election.<sup>100</sup>

Not only were these tensions damaging to the federal NDP, but they also sparked renewed debate within organized labour on the tactical wisdom of supporting the party in the first place. In a 1993 article for *Our Times*, Hargrove stated that the CAW "cannot simply leave politics to the government we elected."<sup>101</sup> In the summer of 1993, the CAW's 400-member governing council made three important decisions: to cease supporting any NDP members of provincial parliament who had voted for the social contract; to limit riding association donations to the minimum level required for membership; and most importantly, as identified by Leslie Pape, "to [build] ties with other social movements in an effort to assemble a pressure group that could

96. Bob Hebdon, "Collective Bargaining: Public Sector Restructuring under the Ontario Social Contract, 1993–1996," *Industrial and Labour Relations Review* 52, 2 (1999): 196–212; Kevin Ward, "Social Contract Is Suicide for Premier Rae," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 4 August 1993; William Walker, "\$2 Billion Will Be Cut, Rae Vows," *Toronto Star*, 5 June 1993.

97. Bob Rae, *From Protest to Power: Personal Reflections on a Life in Politics* (Toronto: Viking, 1996), 206.

98. Rae, *From Protest to Power*, 206.

99. Mike Trickey, "Rae a Millstone for McLaughlin," *Windsor Star*, 11 March 1993.

100. Parliament of Canada, "Electoral Results by Party," updated 22 October 2015, Library of Parliament, <http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/ParlInfo/compilations/ElectionsAndRidings/ResultsParty.aspx>. The rift between organized labour and the NDP, however, is only one of many factors that led to the decimation of the party in the 1993 federal election and the triumph of supporters of NAFTA. NDP support for the Charlottetown Accord also contributed to a loss of NDP support, because of the decisive rejection of the accord by the Canadian public and the perception of participating parties as "establishment" parties. The rise of the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party also problematized the NDP's 1993 campaign. Alan Frizzell, Jon H. Pammett & Anthony Westell, "Introduction," in Frizzell, Pammett & Westell, eds., *Canadian General Election of 1993*, 4; Whitehorn, "NDP's Quest for Survival," 43.

101. Buzz Hargrove, "Desperately Seeking the NDP," *Our Times*, March 1993, 17–18; Laura Fowle, "Tough-Talking Hargrove Touted as Likely to Succeed Bob White Heir Apparent to CAW Presidency?," *Financial Post*, 3 January 1992.

push government and the NDP to the left.”<sup>102</sup> With the conclusion of the 1993 federal election and the failure of blocking NAFTA through political means, some Canadian unions – recognizing the failure of previous tactical methods and the sheer scale of change taking place – sought to resist neoliberalism on a transnational basis.

## **A Transnational Turn? The Expansion of Labour Solidarity across Borders**

### ***The CAW and the FLATIM: An Emerging Alliance***

The close involvement of the CAW with the Federación Latinoamericana de Trabajadores de las Industrias Metalúrgicas, Mecánicas y Mineras (FLATIM) was one of the most prominent instances of cross-border solidarity undertaken in the immediate aftermath of the implementation of NAFTA. FLATIM was founded on 10–11 July 1991, but had been in development since the 1989 International Metalworkers’ Federation (IMF) world congress in Copenhagen.<sup>103</sup> From the very beginning, the CAW observed the federation with interest, issuing a report on the founding congress and planning to send White as a delegate (although he was ultimately unable to attend).<sup>104</sup> Economic integration was the main item on the agenda at FLATIM’s founding congress.<sup>105</sup> One of the stated goals of the congress was to “achieve harmonization and similar standards in the handling of social problems and labour questions.”<sup>106</sup> Though the CAW’s preliminary interest in FLATIM had preceded the implementation of NAFTA, this interest expanded and deepened afterward.

By 1994, the year in which NAFTA was implemented, FLATIM represented 2.7 million workers from sixteen Latin American states; it had almost doubled its membership from 1991 to 1995.<sup>107</sup> Given the fact that 430 million out of 460 million Latin Americans lived under either the Andean Pact or Mercosur in 1995, the challenge of regional integration was on the agenda once again, but

102. Leslie Paip, “The NDP Has Lost a Devoted Ally in the Canadian Auto Workers,” *Toronto Star*, 28 August 1993.

103. Dan Benedict, “Report on the Founding Congress of F.L.A.T.I.M. (The Latin American Federation of Metal, Mechanical, and Mine Workers),” 1991, Daniel Benedict fonds, R12411, box 49 (hereafter DBF), file 21, p. 1, LAC.

104. Benedict, “Report,” 1.

105. Benedict, “Report,” 2.

106. Benedict, “Report,” 1.

107. Dan Benedict, “With the Latin American Metalworkers in July, 1995,” n.d. DBF, file 6, p. 3, LAC; Liberación: Latin American Federation of Metal Machine, and Mine Workers, “FLATIM Proposes Globalization of Union Action and Solidarity to Face Globalization of the Economy,” n.d., DBF, file 6, pp. 5, 6, 9, LAC; Dan Benedict to Buzz Hargrove, June–July 1995, DBF, file 1, LAC.

this time, a CAW delegation was present and proposals were more nuanced.<sup>108</sup> Hargrove attended the second FLATIM congress and was a fitting representative because of his extensive background in international solidarity and human rights work, particularly in Latin America, with the CAW.<sup>109</sup> In the 1994 Declaration of Santo Domingo, FLATIM introduced hemispheric policy objectives, including free trade agreement social clauses and continental and hemispheric engagement.<sup>110</sup> Two items in the Declaration of Santo Domingo addressed particular priorities for the labour movement in Latin America in the face of regional integration:

Effective participation in the integration process of the region: The organized workers should participate actively in the process designed for the formulation of large economic spaces (MERCOSUR, Andean Pact, NAFTA), for this is the most effective guarantee [*sic*] to provide them with the necessary social contract and thereby avoid that these integration processes lead to the loss of jobs, in any of the signatory countries.<sup>111</sup>

By “contract,” the declaration refers to a Latin American social clause. In a memo to Hargrove in the summer of 1995, labour activist Dan Benedict confirms this objective, stating, “Major trade union goal is to get a pro-labour ‘Social Clause’ into the pacts.”<sup>112</sup> Benedict worked with the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the IMF, the UAW, and the CAW and did extensive international solidarity work throughout his career.<sup>113</sup> The idea of the social clause was largely inspired by the 1992 adoption of the European Social Charter.<sup>114</sup> That said, it was also part of a broader debate at the time regarding the possibility of a social clause for the GATT or its successor, the World Trade Organization.<sup>115</sup> In fact, free trade opponents in all three NAFTA countries looked to the European Social Charter as a model for alternatives because of its perceived emphasis on social justice, workers’ rights, continental uniformity, and compensatory investment policies to reduce inequality between states.<sup>116</sup>

108. Liberacion, “FLATIM Proposes Globalization,” 5, 6, 9; Benedict to Hargrove, June–July 1995, LAC.

109. Fowle, “Tough-Talking Hargrove”; Liberacion, “FLATIM Proposes Globalization,” 6.

110. Liberacion, “FLATIM Proposes Globalization,” 6, 9, 10.

111. Liberacion, “FLATIM Proposes Globalization,” 10.

112. Benedict to Hargrove, June–July 1995, DBF, file 1, LAC.

113. Allison Lawlor, “Global Advocate for Workers’ Rights,” *Globe and Mail*, 15 October 2003.

114. Pharis J. Harvey, “Prepared Statement by Pharis J. Harvey, Executive Director, International Labor Rights, Education, and Research Fund Before the Hearing of the Ways and Means Committee U.S. House of Representatives on the Proposed U.S.–Mexico Free Trade Agreement,” 1991, AMF, file 46, LAC.

115. Jan Orbie & Lisa Tortell, “From the Social Clause to the Social Dimension of Globalization,” in Jan Orbie & Lisa Tortell, eds., *The European Union and the Social Dimension of Globalization: How the EU Influences the World* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 6.

116. Manfred McDowell, “NAFTA and the EC ‘Social Dimension,’” *Labor Studies Journal* 20, 1

On the surface, some of these objectives would appear to have been achieved with the North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation (NAALC). Unions in Canada and the United States, however, were not satisfied, having rejected the NAALC early in the development of NAFTA because they were reluctant to accept compromise when more concrete measures could be won.<sup>117</sup> The NAALC was also less appealing to organized labour, given Jean Chrétien and Carlos Salinas's rejection of sanctions to enforce its provisions.<sup>118</sup> Additionally, labour law in Canada is under provincial and not federal jurisdiction; therefore, the NAALC applies only to provinces that are signatories.<sup>119</sup> Following the signing and implementation of NAFTA, most Canadian unions, including the CAW, viewed the NAALC as insufficient to warrant promotion or participation. Instead, the CAW, at the second FLATIM congress in 1995, promoted the attainment of strong enforcement mechanisms and warned against NAFTA side accords, which it described as being "strictly for decoration only" with "no credibility."<sup>120</sup> One year later, a CLC document echoed this sentiment, stating that the NAALC was "almost imperceptible" and designed to divert criticism.<sup>121</sup> The CAW and CLC shared their experiences resisting NAFTA with their regional counterparts. Additionally, the CAW and CLC shared their experiences with the effects, or lack thereof, of the agreement's side accords following its implementation. These experiences are evident in the policy objectives shared by the CLC and the CAW with their Latin American counterparts and in the CAW's stance on the NAALC.

### ***NAFTA Expansion to Chile: A New Front***

By the mid-1990s, international visits between Canadian unions and their Latin American counterparts, which had previously been focused mainly on Mexico, expanded to include Chile. As Chile's absorption into NAFTA became an increasingly realistic possibility, unions, particularly the CAW, directed their efforts toward blocking NAFTA's expansion and building connections with their Chilean counterparts. The CAW's collaboration with Chilean unions was slow to develop. Chilean officials expressed interest in joining NAFTA as early as 1991; however, Chilean officials were awaiting the final results of

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(1995): 30–48.

117. Kay, *NAFTA*, 9.

118. "Canada Won't Support Sanctions to Enforce Standards in NAFTA," *Montreal Gazette*, 26 May 1993; Robert G. Finbow, *The Limits of Regionalism: NAFTA's Labour Accord* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006), 53, 60, 61.

119. Ian Robinson, "The NAFTA Labour Accord in Canada: Experience, Prospects, and Alternatives," *Connecticut Journal of International Law* 10, 2 (1995): 476.

120. Canadian Auto Workers, "North American Free Trade and Canadian Workers," n.d., DBF, file 5, LAC.

121. Canadian Labour Congress, *Challenging "Free Trade" in the Americas: Building Common Responses*, n.d., DBF, file 3, p. 9, LAC.

NAFTA negotiations.<sup>122</sup> It naturally follows that the first priority for Canadian unions like the CAW was to prevent the agreement from materializing in the first place. Following the passage of NAFTA, concerted efforts were made to establish ties with like-minded Chilean unions. A 7 July 1995 memo sent from Benedict to Hargrove indicates that the CAW sought to establish relations with unions including the Chilean Copper Workers' Federation and the electrometallurgical union Confederación de Trabajadores Electrometalúrgicos, whose president, Salvador Castro, had been in communication with Benedict via phone.<sup>123</sup> In documents pertaining to the second congress of FLATIM, held on 27 July 1995 in Buenos Aires, Benedict discussed future collaboration in light of the expansion of NAFTA.<sup>124</sup> After its passage, the CAW sought to work with its Chilean counterparts to halt NAFTA's expansion.<sup>125</sup>

### ***The NAALC: Failure or Opportunity?***

The passage of NAFTA also opened up an entirely new array of institutions and mechanisms that were used by organized labour. Despite the obvious shortcomings of the NAALC and the almost unanimous rejection of the side accord by organized labour in NAFTA countries, some predicted its usefulness to organized labour while NAFTA was still in its infancy and while the NAALC had only begun to be utilized. Authors such as Steven Herzenberg, Jonathan Graubart, and Robert G. Finbow saw potential opportunities for social movements in the NAALC, and indeed, these opportunities arose.<sup>126</sup>

Canadian unions' active participation in National Administrative Office (NAO) submissions under the NAALC did not begin until 15 December 1997, which was three years after the first submission filed under the labour accord.<sup>127</sup> In fact, some scholars, including Parbudyal Singh, suggest that unions were

122. Linda Diebel, "US Senate Opens Door to Trade Talks," *Toronto Star*, 25 May 1991; "Chile Wants to Join Free-Trade Group, Official Says," *Montreal Gazette*, 29 May 1991.

123. Salvador Castro was also an IMF liaison. Benedict to Hargrove, June–July 1995, LAC; Daniel Benedict, "Draft Program Chile. Notes on Phone Call from Salvador Castro, Santiago," n.d., DBF, file 1, p. 1, LAC.

124. Benedict, "With the Latin American Metalworkers," 1.

125. The expansion of NAFTA to Chile was defeated in 1997 in the US Congress, but since these events were largely a domestic matter in which Canadian unions had limited involvement, it is beyond the scope of this paper. Finbow, *Limits of Regionalism*, 244.

126. Stephen Herzenberg, *Calling Maggie's Bluff: The NAFTA Labor Agreement and the Development of an Alternative to Neoliberalism* (Orono: Canadian-American Centre, University of Maine, 1996), 1, 9, 13; Graubart, *Legalizing Transnational Activism*, 54, 93, 5; Finbow, *Limits of Regionalism*, 220, 223, 231, 233.

127. United States NAO Submission 940002, "In re: General Electric Company: Submission and Request for Review," United States Department of Labor, 14 February 1994, 17, [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/submissions/pdf/US\\_940002\\_GE\\_submission.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/submissions/pdf/US_940002_GE_submission.pdf); US NAO Submission 940001, "In re: Honeywell, Inc.: Complaint," United States Department of Labor, 14 February 1994, 7, [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/submissions/pdf/us\\_940001\\_honeywell\\_submission.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/submissions/pdf/us_940001_honeywell_submission.pdf).

limited by their utter rejection of NAFTA, which is reflected in the late usage of the NAALC by Canadian unions.<sup>128</sup> The submission in question was to the US NAO and filed by a large number of organizations, including the CAW, the USW Canadian National Office, USW Local 6363 in Sudbury and USW Local 3950 in Mississauga (each representing Echlin Incorporated workers), and the UE.<sup>129</sup> The submission was filed against Mexico's government-affiliated Confederación de Trabajadores de México (CTM) and Echlin Incorporated.<sup>130</sup> Mexican labour groups and coalitions such as the Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT) and the Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Libre Comercio (RMALC) also participated in the submission.<sup>131</sup>

Submitters argued that the grievance had been filed due to "the failure of Mexican authorities to guarantee the rights of workers to freely organize an independent union at a plant in Ciudad de los Reyes, Mexico."<sup>132</sup> FAT affiliate Sindicato Trabajadores de la Industria Metal-Mecánica (STIMAHCS) in 1996 began an organizing drive at a plant affiliated with the Echlin corporation in Reyes and in May 1997 petitioned a Conciliation and Arbitration Board (CAB) for the right to administer contracts on behalf of employees of an Echlin affiliate.<sup>133</sup> The submitters claimed that the CAB worker representative's CTM affiliation was a conflict of interest that prevented a fair ruling.<sup>134</sup> They also claimed that STIMAHCS sympathizers faced surveillance, threats (including death and rape threats), and violent attacks by CTM assailants organized by the Echlin affiliate's management.<sup>135</sup>

128. Parbudyal Singh, "NAFTA and Labor: A Canadian Perspective," *Journal of Labor Research* 23, 3 (2002): 442.

129. US NAO Submission 9703, "Public Communication on Labor Law Matters Arising in Mexico: Election Contest between Government and Independent Unions," United States Department of Labor, 15 December 1997, 1, [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/submissions/pdf/US\\_97-03\\_ITAPSA\\_submission.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/submissions/pdf/US_97-03_ITAPSA_submission.pdf).

130. US NAO Submission 9703, 1.

131. US NAO Submission 9703, 6–7.

132. US NAO Submission 9703, 1.

133. US NAO Submission 9703, 11.

134. US NAO Submission 9703, 11–12.

135. US NAO Submission 9703, 1, 12, 14, 20–23, 25, 36. US NAO Submission 9703 was not the only submission related to the ITAPSA plant in Reyes la Paz; the first NAO submission filed with the Canadian NAO, CAN 98-1, also addressed this issue. CAN 98-1 was filed by the CLC, the USWA Canadian office, the CAW, and the FAT among 48 labour and NGOs. This submission was also filed regarding the 9 September 1997 vote on representation held at the ITAPSA plant. This submission was accepted by the Canadian NAO on 4 June 1998, months after US NAO Submission 9703 was filed. Human Resources Development Canada, "Review of Public Communication CAN 98-1 (Part I): Report Issued Pursuant to the North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation" (Ottawa 1998), i, 7, 43, <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/labour-relations/international/agreements/naalc/1998-1a.html>; US Department of Labor, "Submissions under the North American Agreement on Labor

What is significant about US NAO Submission 9703 and Canadian NAO Submission CAN 98-1 is the broader context in which these grievances were submitted. Echlin was a multinational corporation existing in all three NAFTA countries, laying the groundwork for transnational unity and collaboration. Eleven unions were involved in the UE-initiated Echlin/Dana Workers' Alliance in all three NAFTA countries, including the American and Canadian USW, the UAW and CAW, and the FAT.<sup>136</sup> Transnational collaboration is evident in all stages of the grievance's submission. In fact, on 5 November 1998, three Mexican workers visited Ottawa for hearings on the labour abuses being committed at the Echlin affiliate's plant.<sup>137</sup> Robin Alexander, UE director of international affairs, assisted the workers with the preparation of their testimony.<sup>138</sup> Present at the hearing were Benedicto Martinez, STIMAHCs general secretary and national FAT coordinator; Dick Martin, secretary treasurer of the CLC; Lawrence McBreaty of the USW Canada; and representatives from the CAW.<sup>139</sup>

US NAO Submission 9703 and Canadian NAO Submission CAN 98-1 were also the most decisive NAO rulings in favour of organized labour at the time, validating the workers' struggle to freely organize.<sup>140</sup> The Public Report of Review found that workers were not afforded protections guaranteed under the Mexican constitution and federal labour law, that the CAB had violated workers' right to form an independent union, and that "workers engaged in lawful organizational and informal activities outside a workplace were subjected to physical attack by persons associated with the established union at the plant and in the presence of company officials."<sup>141</sup> The Canadian NAO's report was also submitted after the American NAO had submitted its own report on the issue.<sup>142</sup> Similar to the US report, the Canadian NAO found

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Cooperation (NAALC)," accessed 27 August 2015, <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/trade/agreements/naalc.htm>.

136. United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers (UE), "Mexican Workers Tell of Safety Hazards," *UE News*, November 1998, [http://www.ranknfile-ue.org/uen\\_1198\\_echlin.html](http://www.ranknfile-ue.org/uen_1198_echlin.html); Ian Thomas Macdonald, "NAFTA and the Emergence of Continental Labour Cooperation," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 33, 2 (2003): 186.

137. UE, "Mexican Workers."

138. UE, "Mexican Workers."

139. UE, "UE Calls for Action on Echlin's Rights Abuses," *UE News*, October 1998, [http://www.ranknfile-ue.org/uen\\_1098\\_echlin.html](http://www.ranknfile-ue.org/uen_1098_echlin.html).

140. UE, "US Government Backs Labor Alliance in Complaint on Mexican Unionbusting," *UE News*, August 1998, [http://www.ranknfile-ue.org/uen\\_0898\\_nao.html](http://www.ranknfile-ue.org/uen_0898_nao.html).

141. US Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, US National Administrative Office, *Public Report of Review of NAO Submission No. 9703* (Washington, DC, 31 July 1998; revised 21 August 1998), 70, [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/pdf/US\\_97-03\\_ITAPSA\\_report.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/pdf/US_97-03_ITAPSA_report.pdf).

142. "Public Communications Submitted to the Canadian National," Secretariat of the



that Mexico had not conformed to its obligations under the NAALC and that proper enforcement and protections had not been provided to STIMAHCS-affiliated workers by the Mexican government.<sup>143</sup> In December 1997, Echlin agreed to meet with the Echlin Workers' Alliance to investigate the incident.<sup>144</sup> On 17 December, another small victory was won when Echlin's stockholders agreed to consider a code of conduct drafted by the Workers' Alliance one day after workers staged a protest in front of Echlin's headquarters in Branford, Connecticut.<sup>145</sup>

Canadian unions and their regional allies also used the NAALC to challenge labour abuses and validate their struggles domestically. US NAO Submission 9804 – submitted by a vast array of Canadian labour organizations, such as the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, CLC, Organization of Rural Route Mail Couriers, the Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers' Union of Canada, the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ), Teamsters Canada, and Common Frontiers – targeted the Canada Post Corporation and the Canada Post Corporation Act.<sup>146</sup> Sympathetic labour organizations included the AFL-CIO-affiliated National Association of Letter Carriers and the American Postal Workers Union, in the United States, and Mexican labour groups such as the Sindicato de Telefonistas de la Republica Mexicana.<sup>147</sup> The submitters alleged that the Canada Post Corporation Act denied rural route mail carriers the right to organize and enjoy the employment security, higher wages, paid holidays and vacations, and benefits that letter carriers in other regions of the country enjoyed.<sup>148</sup> On 1 February 1999, the US NAO declined to accept Submission 9804.<sup>149</sup> Despite this refusal, the submission reveals that transnational solidarity was used to draw attention to domestic labour issues in Canada in addition to labour abuses in Mexico.

Though some small victories were won and some minor concrete gains made through the mechanisms of the NAALC, the true value of the side accord was in

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Commission for Labor Cooperation, accessed 27 August 2015, [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/submissions/pdf/can\\_98-1\\_Itapsa\\_submission.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/submissions/pdf/can_98-1_Itapsa_submission.pdf); US Department of Labor, *Public Report of Review*.

143. US Department of Labor, *Public Report of Review*, 1.

144. UE, "Echlin Agrees to Probe of Mexican Election," *UE News*, January 1998, [http://www.ranknfile-ue.org/uen\\_0198\\_echlin.html](http://www.ranknfile-ue.org/uen_0198_echlin.html).

145. UE, "Echlin Agrees to Probe."

146. US NAO Submission 9804, "Violations of NAALC Labor Principles and Obligations in the Case of Canadian Rural Route Mail Couriers," United States Department of Labor, 2 December 1998, 1, 2, [https://www.dol.gov/ilab/submissions/pdf/US\\_98-04\\_Mail\\_Couriers\\_submission.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/ilab/submissions/pdf/US_98-04_Mail_Couriers_submission.pdf).

147. US NAO Submission 9804, "Violations," 1.

148. US NAO Submission 9804, "Violations," 8–9.

149. US Department of Labor, "Submissions under the NAALC."



its capacity to build collaboration and consensus among organized labour and social movement organizations. As Ian Robinson stated in 1995, "the Accord should probably be understood as a tool for organizing and mobilizing public opinion for an alternative to the neoliberal model of globalization, rather than as a new body of regulations that will be an important part of that alternative model."<sup>150</sup> Indeed, the fostering of collaboration and consensus highlighted the value of the NAALC in the mid- to late 1990s.

### ***Building a Transnational Movement: Common Understandings and Common Alternatives***

Canadian coalition groups like the ACN and Common Frontiers, in which organized labour was very active, collaborated with regional counterparts to build consensus on a common alternative program. On 28 November 1993, major anti-free-trade coalitions from all three soon-to-be-NAFTA countries met to discuss proposals for the development of an alternative social and economic agenda, resulting in the document *A Just and Sustainable Trade and Development Initiative for North America*. This document was produced by the Citizen's Trade Campaign and the Alliance for Responsible Trade from the United States, the RMALC from Mexico, and the ACN. The organizations sought to reach "common understandings about the impact of accelerated integration on our respective peoples."<sup>151</sup> The document focuses on process, policies, and politics, calling for "comprehensive, multilateral protection of workers' rights and workplace health and safety standards."<sup>152</sup> Not only are worker's rights and workplace standards included, but also "making international workers' rights enforceable."<sup>153</sup> The latter point is important to point out in light of the NAALC's adoption as part of NAFTA.

Many of these proposals were echoed and expanded upon in the 1999 document *Alternatives for the Americas: Building a People's Hemispheric Agreement*, published by the Alliance for Responsible Trade, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and Common Frontiers.<sup>154</sup> The document was

150. Robinson, "NAFTA Labour Accord," 491.

151. Action Canada Network, Alliance for Responsible Trade, Citizens' Trade Campaign, and Mexican Action Network on Free Trade, "A Just and Sustainable Trade and Development Initiative for North America," in Robin Broad, ed., *Global Backlash: Citizen Initiatives for a Just World Economy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 129.

152. By process, the four organizations refer to the secrecy in which NAFTA was being negotiated and the advice from corporations that all three governments were receiving. By policies, the organizations refer to putting goods, services, and capital above social and environmental realities. By politics, the deepening of neoliberalism and restrictions on the role of governments in sovereign states are at issue. Action Canada Network et al., "A Just and Sustainable Trade," 130, 132.

153. Action Canada Network et al., "A Just and Sustainable Trade," 132.

154. Alliance for Responsible Trade, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and Common Frontiers, *Alternatives for the Americas: Building a People's Hemispheric Agreement* (Ottawa:

originally prepared for the Summit of the Peoples of the Americas in April 1998 in Santiago, Chile.<sup>155</sup> It proposed numerous policy initiatives including adjustment assistance, investment in sustainable practices, and enforcement mechanisms for workers' rights violations, but most importantly, it challenged the ideological bedrock of NAFTA: "trade and investment should not be ends in themselves, but rather the instruments for achieving just and sustainable development."<sup>156</sup> Building alternatives to neoliberalism and seeking transnational and eventually hemispheric consensus on those alternatives was part of a reaction to NAFTA shared throughout Canadian organized labour and beyond. As Robinson suggests, NAFTA prompted organized labour to engage in constructive dialogue as to what the alternative to neoliberalism would look like in a post-Cold War world.<sup>157</sup> The participation of Canadian unions and labour organizations in building regional and hemispheric alternatives worked in tandem with Canadian labour's efforts in transnational activism and collaboration. This had the effect of deepening relations between labour organizations and facilitating more effective political demands through mutually agreed upon policy objectives.

## Impact

CANADIAN UNIONS' PARTICIPATION in transnational activism against free trade has yielded mixed results. Strengthened international ties and successful consensus building are among the most significant achievements of this period, but the legacy and longevity of Canadian unions' efforts toward transnational solidarity are also worth discussing in order to evaluate their impact. In terms of the legacy of these efforts, Canadian unions participated in successful transnational campaigns against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), proposed in 1994 to integrate all of the Americas into a free trade bloc, excluding Cuba.<sup>158</sup> Social movement organizations, including Canadian unions, formed the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in 1997 to oppose the agreement.<sup>159</sup> The AFL-CIO and the Brazilian United Workers' Federation were the primary architects behind the alliance, but it expanded rapidly and displayed a remarkable capacity to build consensus,

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Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Common Frontiers, 1999).

155. Alliance for Responsible Trade et al., *Alternatives for the Americas*, 1.

156. Alliance for Responsible Trade et al., *Alternatives for the Americas*, 8.

157. Robinson, "NAFTA," 672.

158. John W. Foster, "The Trilateral Alliance against NAFTA: Sinews of Solidarity," in Bandy & Smith, eds., *Coalitions across Borders*, 222.

159. Marcelo I. Saguier, "The Hemispheric Social Alliance and the Free Trade Area of the Americas Process: The Challenges and Opportunities of Transnational Coalitions against Neoliberalism," *Globalizations* 14, 2 (2007): 256.

given the diversity of its membership.<sup>160</sup> After an enormous mobilization at the Summit of the Americas in Québec City in 2001, which generated significant publicity for the HSA, the alliance expanded to Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Uruguay, Colombia, and Argentina in addition to gaining the backing of the socialist governments of Venezuela and Cuba.<sup>161</sup> The agreement, to this day, has yet to take shape, signifying a significant victory for the HSA. However, in terms of longevity, the momentum driving campaigns against NAFTA and the FTAA has proven difficult to sustain. In recent years, the most contentious free trade agreement to be proposed is undoubtedly the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Some incidents of transnational solidarity have occurred in opposition to the agreement, such as a cross-border summit in British Columbia and Washington State, which culminated in the “North American Unity Statement Opposing NAFTA Expansion through the Trans-Pacific Partnership.”<sup>162</sup> However, anti-TPP coalitions lacked the presence of both the HSA and anti-NAFTA coalitions. This is no doubt symptomatic of the difficulties inherent in maintaining mobilized memberships and alliances against free trade agreements over the course of decades, with limited success. In spite of this, growing frustration with free trade, and with neoliberalism more broadly, is apparent and requires a productive outlet. As Marcelo I. Saguier states, “there is not sufficient attention to the extent that new forms of global resistance contribute to bringing about a culture of diversity, tolerance and democracy.”<sup>163</sup> At a time in which right-wing, racist, and authoritarian alternatives to neoliberalism have grown in popularity and produced shocking electoral victories, an inclusive, equitable, and democratic alternative is crucial.

160. Saguier, “Hemispheric Social Alliance,” 256. Marcelo I. Saguier attributes the rise of the HSA to the secrecy of negotiations and the subsequent closing of political opportunities (pp. 254–255).

161. “Protests against the Summit of the Americas Spread across Western Canada,” *Canadian Press Newswire*, 21 April 2001; Saguier, “Hemispheric Social Alliance,” 257. The occurrence of mass protests at the 1997 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in Vancouver and the 2001 Summit of the Americas in Québec City is indicative of a tactical shift among social movement organizations that occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s toward large-scale, dramatic confrontations targeting highly publicized events, such as summits. International examples include the 1999 World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Seattle and the 2001 G8 summit in Genoa, Italy, both of which resulted in massive protests and violent confrontations. Daniel Béland & Mike Zajko, “Space and Protest: Policing at International Summits,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26 (2008): 724, 725, 728; Jeffrey S. Juris, “Performing Politics: Image, Embodiment, and Effective Solidarity during Anti-Corporate Globalization Protests,” *Ethnography* 9, 1 (2001): 64, 67.

162. Council of Canadians, “Tri-National Campaign Launched in Opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership,” media release, 1 December 2012, <http://canadians.org/media/trade/2012/01-Dec-12.html>.

163. Saguier, “Hemispheric Social Alliance,” 252.

## Conclusion

FOLLOWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NAFTA, participation in transnational activism became increasingly common among Canadian unions alongside their regional counterparts experiencing trade liberalization. The collapse of domestic political opportunities and the implementation of transnational trade regimes and institutions encouraged and expanded nascent coordinated action on a transnational scale. Canadian unions' usage of political opportunities, close alliance with the NDP, and active involvement in anti-free-trade alliances all represent consistencies in organized labour's methods of resisting free trade agreements, but some of these consistencies faced profound challenges in the period in which NAFTA was negotiated and implemented. NDP success on the provincial scale as well as political efforts, pressure, and lobby tactics encouraged early efforts against NAFTA within the Canadian political process. However, underlying tensions from the 1988 federal election and between unions and provincial governments caused significant political damage to the NDP at the federal level. As the party had been the only strong opponent to NAFTA on the Canadian political scene, these conflicts were significant factors in the failure of Canadian labour's electoral efforts to stop NAFTA.

Though some transnational links were developed before NAFTA was implemented, these linkages came to fruition following the agreement's passage. The CAW looked to deepen its relationship with the quickly expanding FLATIM, sending delegations and consulting with the federation about its experiences with NAFTA. Following the implementation of the agreement, the CAW also actively expanded its contacts in Chile, the next target of NAFTA expansion. Numerous other Canadian labour organizations took advantage of political opportunities presented by the NAALC, coordinating efforts with unions in all three NAFTA countries and challenging domestic laws affecting Canadian unions. The participation of the CLC, CAW, and anti-free-trade coalitions constructed alternatives to neoliberalism and sought to gain consensus on these alternatives by collaborating with their regional counterparts. The development of alternatives to neoliberalism ran parallel to unions' efforts to resist these policies and sought to challenge this economic paradigm on the scale on which it was being implemented. So long as free trade agreements have been negotiated, they have been resisted and continue to face resistance. The "scarlet thread" described by Bradbury and Turbeville continues to be woven into Canada's historical fabric.

## Principal Acronyms

ACN	Action Canada Network
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations
CAB	Conciliation and Arbitration Board
CAW	Canadian Auto Workers
CLC	Canadian Labour Congress
CTM	Confederación de Trabajadores de México
CUFTA	Canada–United States Free Trade Agreement
FAT	Frente Auténtico del Trabajo
FLATIM	Federación Latinoamericana de Trabajadores de las Industrias Metalúrgicas, Mecánicas y Mineras
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
FTQ	Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
HSA	Hemispheric Social Alliance
IMF	International Metalworkers' Federation
NAALC	North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAO	National Administrative Office
NDP	New Democratic Party
PSAC	Public Service Alliance of Canada
RMALC	Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Libre Comercio
STIMAHCS	Sindicato Trabajadores de la Industria Metal-Mecánica
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UAW	United Auto Workers
UE	United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers
USW	United Steelworkers Canada

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