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## Establishing the South Slavic Radical Labour Press in Canada The 1931 Reminiscences of Anyox Miner Marko P. Hećimović

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## NOTE AND DOCUMENT / NOTE ET DOCUMENT

# Establishing the South Slavic Radical Labour Press in Canada: The 1931 Reminiscences of Anyox Miner Marko P. Hećimović

**Stan Granic**

IN FEBRUARY 1931 THE EXECUTIVE of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) published a series of resolutions that served as a handbook for the work of CPC members. The sixth resolution was dedicated to language-based mass organizations and it underscored that Slavic and other immigrant workers constituted “an important and integral part of the Canadian working class.” The resolution stressed that Slavic immigrants were employed in all sectors of heavy industry and were among “the most exploited” workers in the country. However, the CPC recognized that, with the exception of Ukrainians, Slavic workers in Canada were not sufficiently organized. To assist in the organizing of Slavic workers “for the revolutionary class struggle of the Canadian proletariat as a whole,” the CPC formed a Slavic Bureau which worked at establishing separate language section clubs and newspapers for those Slavic immigrant workers that were unorganized. Nine months after the CPC resolution appeared, the Toronto newspaper *Borba* (The Struggle) was launched for South Slavic immigrant workers in Canada.

Before the 1 November 1931 launch of Toronto’s *Borba*, Croatian and other South Slavic immigrants in Canada who were supporters of the working class, members of trade-unions, or were CPC sympathizers or members, relied on the immigrant press published south of the border. The CPC supported the distribution of the radical immigrant labour press from the US into Canada as a preliminary step in establishing contacts and nurturing connections among South Slavic immigrant workers in Canada. However, at the request

of diplomats of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Canadian government began to prohibit the entry into Canada of these American-based newspapers. This included the Chicago newspaper *Radnik* (The Worker), which was barred from Canada in 1929. Subsequent efforts in Chicago to publish the newspaper *Borba* and then *Iskra* (The Spark), specifically for South Slavs in Canada, met the same fate.

In an effort to reach out to the predominantly unskilled South Slavic mining, forestry, railway, and construction workers in Canada, the CPC and the Canadian Labor Defense League (CLDL) also appointed several activists, including the Croats Tomo Čačić (1896–1969) and Edo Jardas (1901–1980), and the Serb Miloš Grubić (1899–1995), to organize these workers. Among the initial efforts taken by Čačić and Jardas to reach out to these workers was to print the Vancouver bulletin *Neuposleni radnik* (The Unemployed Worker) in 1931 and to distribute it throughout the mining and logging camps of British Columbia and Alberta.

During this period, one of the grassroots contacts that Čačić, Jardas, and Grubić relied upon was the Anyox, BC miner Marko P. Hećimović (1894–1967). Hećimović had been a regular subscriber to Chicago's *Radnik* at the time that it was banned in Canada. For this reason, he was contacted to engage and encourage his co-workers to subscribe to and donate to the anticipated launch of Toronto's *Borba*. In the reminiscences that follow, Hećimović reveals that key South Slavic members of the CPC and officials of the CLDL were in touch with him. He also shares his first encounter with Jardas, describing from his perspective the series of events that led to Jardas assuming the editorship of *Borba* after Čačić was arrested in Toronto on 12 August 1931 for membership in an unlawful organization and for seditious conspiracy.

Hećimović wrote his reminiscences in 1939 for the Toronto newspaper *Slobodna misao* (Free Thought), a publication of the Croatian Educational Association (CEA). This newspaper was launched on 15 September 1936 as a successor publication to *Borba*. The change in name and focus of the newspaper was in response to the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the World Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) held in July 1935. By adopting the softer sounding *Slobodna misao* (Free Thought) as the name of the newspaper, the CEA hoped that a broader readership could be reached among the predominantly working-class Croatian immigrant community. This was in keeping with the Comintern's conscious decision to move away from sectarianism and toward a "popular front" and "united front" strategy.

Reminiscences like those penned by Hećimović were encouraged by editors of immigrant working-class newspapers when they looked back on the challenges and achievements of the labour movement in Canada. We learn a number of things about Hećimović's experiences and his role in organizing from his brief, first-hand account. During the early 1920s, members and sympathizers of the CPC from within the ranks of the nascent South Slavic

**POZOR! PODUPRIMO AKCIJU ZA 8 STRANICA "BORBU" PRI LIKOM PRVE GODIŠNICE JEDINE RADNICKOSJELJACKE ROBE NE NOVINE U KANADI NA NASEM JERZIKU "BORBE"**

# borba

LIST RADNIKA I SELJAKA IZ JUGOSLAVIJE U KANADI

Izgradimo jedinstveni masovni front za borbu protiv zločinaca kapitalizma, masovnog otpuštanja, pogoršanja uvjeta rada, života radničke klase, za pristojno održavanje besposlenih po državi, poštovaćemo!

Vol. 2, No. 40

Wednesday, October 19th, 1932 Toronto, Ont. Srijeda, 19 Okt. 1932

Cijena 5c. God. 2 Br. 40

## U BORBU ZA SLOBODU OSMORICE NAŠIH DRUGOVA

**NAPREGNIMO NASE SILE ZA OSLOBODJENJE KLASNIH DRUGOVA, POLITIČKIH ZATVORENIKA**

U pozadini strahovnih tamno-sivih zidova robaonice Kingston, nalazi se u tamnim ćelijama osmorica naših drugova. Tim Buck, Tom Ewen, Sam Carr, Malcolm Bruce, John Boychuk, Matija Popović, A. T. Hill i Tomo Čačić, naši neustrašivi i nepokolebljivi vođe radnog naroda, bori se slobodu političkih zatvorenika.

Kritik se izveo iz hiljade radničkih grudi za oslobodjenje ovih naših borbenih drugova. CLDL kao jedina radnička masovna obrambena organizacija, odlučila je da radne mase Kanade poveru u odlučnu borbu za oslobodjenje ove osmorice drugova i svih ostalih boraca klase. Radnici okrenući od straha u lične borbe, organiziraju se u masovne organizacije, organiziraju se u masovne organizacije, organiziraju se u masovne organizacije.

CLDL, nada se da će, i da mora, osloboditi naše drugove.

## ČLANSTVU HRVATSKE BRATSKE RADNICE

### Glasaje za rezoluciju odsjeka 202; odbacite ljestvicu glavnog odbora

Prođi vama se nalaze dva predloga za usvajanje. Prvi predlog je za usvajanje rezolucije odsjeka 202, koji nam daje taj princip odnosa u našoj Zajednici, a drugi je ljestvica glavnog odbora, koji sugovara taj princip i stavlja naše Zajednice na podlogu obilne osiguranja trgovacke institucije. Sa svakim glasom vi imate odluku: Da li će Zajednica ostati kooperativno radničko političko društvo sa ogromnom većinom onih dijela članova, koji su u našoj Zajednici. Ogrumna većina naših članova misli se među milionima besposlenih, koji očajno žive u gladi i miseriji. Besposleni članovi, kao i oni koji još rade dan-dva na tjedan sa misernim nadnicama, nisu u stanju da plaćaju svojih pristojbi i na to ih već ima preko 10.000 na rezervi. Svi ovi članovi su već jednom noćem javni Zajednice. Udaljeni strahovnog glada i miserije, povremeno se bore među radnim narodom i otuda je stalno gomila mi-

**BORBA PROTIV DEPORTACIJA MOŽA BITI PODVOSTRUCENA**

Toronto, Ont. 12. okt. — (C.L.D.L.) Hiljade radnika od mora do mora demonstriralo je u ogromnim demonstracijama s obilnim dijelom kanade na neposredno putanje na slobodu osmorice drugova u Halifaxu, kao i drugih radnika koji su po kanadskim buržoaskim vlastima prisiljeni na deportaciju radi osvajanja aktivnog učesnika u radničkom pokretu ili radi besposlice. Stotine protivnih struktura odlučile su na masovna emigracije sa svih masovnih protivrčnih skupština. Hiljade individualnih protesta također je već odlučeno u Halifaxu, glas protesta čuje se gotovo iz svakog kućnog i napunjenog imigrantskog Kanade. Na uprskos velikih nadziranja, još nismo uspjeli ovi odlučni kampanji izvesti otkazivanje za oslobodjenje kao ovih osmorice drugova tako i ostalih radnika koji su pridržani za deportaciju. Ovi radnici koji su pali žrtvom buržoaskih reakcija u Halifaxu, već su deportirani. Američki vojni i policijski nadzornici, drug Meles i Grier, i drugi generalni inspektori, koji su se nalazili u Montrealu prije odlaska deportacije.

Osimakim slučajevima drugova u Halifaxu nalaze se pred vrhovnom sudom Kanade i odluka će biti svakako, da se koji se ne mogu nadati.

The upper half of the first page of the 19 October 1932 issue of Toronto's *Borba* (The Struggle).

Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada.

immigrant community in Canada relied a great deal on the propaganda support of the South Slavic section of the Communist Party of the United States. This support even included the publishing of newspapers in Chicago specifically for Canadian South Slavic comrades. The ties between these two groups had deep roots among leaders like Čačić who had cut his teeth in organizational activity for the International Workers of the World (iww) and the Socialist Party of America during his stay in the US from 1913 to 1920.

Paradoxically, while organizers like Hećimović and Čačić never shied at expressing their pride in their Croatian origins, they were also internationalists in terms of their working-class outlooks. This paradox is exemplified by Hećimović's personal contributions and his collecting of donations from other South Slavic workers for humanitarian assistance in support of working-class causes at the local, national, and international level. He not only assisted his fellow immigrant countrymen who became destitute during the Great Depression, but also revealed his working-class solidarity by donating and collecting money for strikers in Britain and the United States, as well as for impoverished families of fallen comrades in China.

During the 1930s, Croatian and South Slavic immigrant workers often constituted from 10 to 20 per cent of the lumber and mining camp populations

and through their shared experiences and labour battles, they were able to overlook regional and national differences and develop a strong sense of working-class solidarity. As Hećimović describes, he collaborated with Croatian, Montenegrin, Serbian, and Slovenian workers and activists. While most rank-and-file South Slavic members of the CPC had little to no formal education, this does not mean that their leaders were inexperienced. Individuals like Čačić had been active organizers during earlier stays in the US and had received education and training during spells in the Soviet Union.

Due to their labour agitation in places like Anyox, Flin Flon, and Noranda, as well as their general protest against economic conditions during the Great Depression, many South Slavic immigrant workers and activists were not only persecuted by Canadian authorities, but also by the Yugoslav government through its diplomats who often worked in tandem with the federal government to try and clamp down on radical immigrants. While South Slavic labour organizers paid dearly for their activism, their collaboration on the front lines of strike actions and organizational work created bonds between them. Although some of Hećimović's comrades and friends like Čačić and Petar Žapkar (1897–1936) were deported from Canada, they were later reunited in Spain with other South Slavic comrades from Canada when they volunteered to fight on the republican side during the Spanish Civil War. This reunion was to be repeated a few years later during World War II when some labour organizers in Canada like Joso Šarić (1895–1944) joined the British Special Operations Executive and were dropped behind enemy lines in their occupied homeland to support their former comrades in the anti-fascist Partisans as they fought their common fascist enemies.<sup>1</sup>



I ARRIVED IN CANADA ON 7 August 1925 and began working in Anyox, BC on 22 September that same year.<sup>2</sup> As soon as I received my first pay, I joined a

1. The first part of the translation is from the introductory portion of Marko P. Hećimović, "Kako sam radio dok nije bilo novine ni pokreta" [My activities prior to the launch of our newspaper and movement], *Slobodna misao* (Toronto), 14 November 1939. The remainder of the piece is a complete translation of Marko P. Hećimović, "Uspomene iz mog rada za novinu" [Reminiscences of my activities for the newspaper], *Slobodna misao*, 2 December 1939. The introduction, notes in square brackets in the main body of the translation and all footnotes have been provided by the translator. The CPC's "Resolution on Language Mass Organizations" was located in *Resolutions of Enlarged Plenum of Communist Party of Canada* (February 1931), pp. 46–53, in Ministry of the Attorney General fonds (hereafter MAG fonds), RG 4, vol. 4, Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO). A copy of this AO collection is part of Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), Communist Party of Canada fonds (hereafter CPC fonds), AO records, MG 28 IV4 (R3137-0-5-E), microfilm reel M-7381.

2. Hećimović was born in Konjsko Brdo, Perušić, Lika region of Croatia.

mutual benefit society.<sup>3</sup> The miners in Anyox had a reading room that was almost as good as a public library. Anyone who had the desire to read had plenty to choose from. There were newspapers in several languages. In our language we had [the American-based newspapers] *Radnik* (The Worker), *Svijet* (The World), *Hrvatski list and Danica Hrvatska* (Croatian Gazette and The Croatian Morning Star), and *Srpski glasnik* (Serbian Herald).<sup>4</sup>

I read *Radnik* and *Svijet*, and eventually subscribed to the former. While reading *Radnik* my political consciousness gradually developed. I also read various books and brochures and became all the more aware that we workers had to struggle to improve our economic standing and political freedom.

3. This was likely the Pittsburgh-based National Croatian Society (*Narodna hrvatska zajednica*), established in 1894. In 1925 there were three other American-based South Slavic mutual benefit societies operating lodges in Canada: New York's Serbian National Federation Srbadija (*Srpski savez "Svesna Srbadija"*), Pittsburgh's United Serbian Federation Concord (Sjedinjeni savez "*Srbobran-Sloga*"), and Chicago's Slovenian National Benefit Society (*Slovenska narodna potporna jednota*). These societies provided basic financial aid to their members in case of work accident or illness and assistance to their families in case of death. While Hećimović was working in Anyox, attempts were undertaken to establish Canadian-based mutual benefit societies. The Croatian Fraternal Society (*Hrvatska sloga*) was launched in Winnipeg in 1926 and the Yugoslav Canadian Benevolent Association (*Jugoslovenski kanadski potporni savez*) was established in Vancouver in 1929. Both these societies were short-lived while the American-based societies expanded throughout Canada. For more on the National Croatian Society (ncs) which changed its name to the Croatian Fraternal Union in 1926 see Peter Rachleff, "The Dynamics of 'Americanization': The Croatian Fraternal Union between the Wars, 1920s–30s," in Eric Arnesen, Julie Green and Bruce Laurie, eds., *Labor Histories: Class, Politics, and the Working-Class Experience* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 340–362.

4. In a later article Hećimović wrote that he also read Pittsburgh's *Zajedničar* (The Fraternalist), the official organ of the ncs. Marko P. Hećimović, "Ja sam Hrvat i najviše volim hrvatske napredne novine," ["I'm a Croat and enjoy Croatian progressive newspapers the most"], *Novosti* (Toronto), 11 April 1942. Chicago's *Radnička straža* (Workingmen's Guard) was launched in 1907 by the Croatian Workingmen's Educational and Political Association with Milan Glumac Jurišić serving as its first editor. In 1917 it ceased publication and was re-launched under the successive names of *Slobodna misao* (Free Thought), *Nova misao* (New Thought), and *Znanje* (Knowledge) before becoming *Radnik* in 1922. *Radnik* was the organ of South Slavic Section of the Workers' Party of the USA, later the Communist Party of the USA. New York's *Hrvatski svijet* (Croatian World) was launched in 1908 and later purchased by Niko Gršković. He renamed it *Jugoslovenski svijet* (The Yugoslav World) in 1917 following its amalgamation with Chicago's *Hrvatska zastava* (Croatian Flag) and Cleveland's *Slovenski svet* (Slovenian World), all three of which supported the dissolution of Austria-Hungary and the establishment of a South Slavic state. In 1922 Gršković dropped Yugoslav from the title after becoming disillusioned with developments in the new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (hereafter Kingdom of the scs). In 1923 Stjepan Brozović's New York newspaper *Hrvatski list* (Croatian Gazette) was combined with Ivan Krešić's *Danica Hrvatska* (The Croatian Morning Star) also in New York to create *Hrvatski list and Danica Hrvatska*, with Krešić as publisher and editor. San Francisco's *Srpski glasnik* (Serbian Herald) was launched in 1909 and existed under that name until 1935.

Before my arrival in Canada I possessed workers' ideas, but I did not know how those ideas were to be implemented; I did not know how to arrive at the final destination.

Not only did I read labour newspapers and books, but I also sold them. However, my greatest success was in the collecting of donations for workers' causes. During the 1926 general strike in the United Kingdom, I collected about \$270 to support strikers there. I also collected donations for the Colorado coal strike [in 1927], receiving individual donations ranging from twenty-five cents to ten dollars. Much more was collected for the Colorado strike than for England. Several of us were engaged in this donor campaign including comrades Ivan Miloš and the now deceased Stjepan Dasović.<sup>5</sup>

I was also engaged in collecting donations in support of the families of fallen comrades in China. The committee in New York sent me a collection sheet and two photographs of Chinese children with their mothers who lived in inhospitable regions of China without adequate food and water. One of the reproductions depicted how the Yellow River in China flooded the land and took all that the people had. Those photographs touched me deeply.

I was not only active in labour causes, but also assisted individuals who were in need. We helped to send off to the old country three men from the Lika region [of Croatia] who had taken ill while in Canada. We also collected money for several widows and always came together to help our countrymen whenever they were in need.

Then challenging times struck me and other readers of *Radnik*. We received a notice from the editors of *Radnik* stating that they were no longer permitted by the Canadian government to send their publication to us.<sup>6</sup> A week later we received a different and smaller newspaper called *Borba* (The Struggle). It also came from Chicago.<sup>7</sup> I received it a couple of times and then it stopped

5. Stjepan (Stipe) Dasović (1901–1937), was born in Prvan Selo, Perušić, Lika region, Croatia. Before immigrating to Canada in 1926 he was a member of the Croatian Sokol movement and a strong supporter of the Croatian Peasant Party. He was employed as a tailor, miner and also worked in other jobs in British Columbia. Dasović's experiences working as a miner radicalized him and he became an active member of the Workers-Peasant Educational Club and supported the launch of *Borba* in 1931. He volunteered and fought on the republican side during the Spanish Civil War and was killed in action at the Battle of Jarama in 1937. "S. Dasovic," *Slobodna misao*, 17 June 1937; Ivan Štimac, "U spomen drugu Dasoviću" [In memory of comrade Dasović], *Slobodna misao*, 2 December 1939.

6. *Radnik* was barred from Canada at the urging of diplomats of the Kingdom of the scs. Ante V. Seferović, the Consul General of the Kingdom of the scs in Montréal, was notified by the Customs Division of the Department of National Revenue about the ban. He in turn sent out a notification to all known organizations and establishments belonging to South Slavic immigrants in Canada underscoring that the newspaper was prohibited from the country. This included the Winnipeg Croatian language weekly *Kanadski glas* (Canadian Voice) which proceeded to publish the notice. "Zabrana ulaza 'Radnika' u Kanadu" [*Radnik* prohibited entry into Canada], *Kanadski glas*, 19 August 1929.

7. The Yugoslav Bureau of the Communist Party of the United States (CPUS) began to publish



coming.<sup>8</sup> Then another newspaper called *Iskra* (The Spark) arrived. It reached us a couple of times and then nothing.<sup>9</sup> After *Iskra* was discontinued, no other Croatian language workers' newspapers came to us from the United States.<sup>10</sup> There were other workers' newspapers available in English, Ukrainian, and Russian, and those who could read them did so. This went on for three years until our Canadian workers' newspaper *Borba* appeared.

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*Borba* in Chicago for delivery to sympathizers in Canada after *Radnik* was prohibited. The first issue of this newspaper appeared on 15 January 1930. An article addressed to readers on the front page of the premier issue of Chicago's *Borba* makes clear that this newspaper specifically targeted Canada since other publications were prohibited from entering the country. The editorial in the same issue underscored that its purpose was to "spread genuine workers education, agitation, and propaganda, to organize the working-class in its struggle, and to battle against unemployment, injustice, poverty, capitalist oppression, exploitation...." This first issue also covered working conditions and the experiences of the unemployed in Canada. "Naša riječ" [Our word], "Naša 'Borba'" [Our struggle] editorial, "Besposlica dohvaća cijelu Kanadu" [Unemployment reaches all of Canada], and "Radne prilike i život naš u Kanadi" [Working conditions and our life in Canada] all from *Borba* (Chicago), 15 January 1930. Copies of the first four pages of this issue are part of the serial collection of LAC.

8. Yugoslav diplomats again complained to Canadian authorities which resulted in *Borba* being barred from Canada. According to the notice sent out by the Consul General of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Customs Division of the Department of National Revenue prohibited the entry of Chicago's *Borba* on 14 April 1930. "Zabranjen ulaz 'Borbi' u Kanadu" [*Borba* prohibited entry into Canada], *Kanadski glas*, 28 April 1930.

9. *Iskra* was published in Chicago in place of *Borba*, but it also experienced the same fate and was barred from Canada at the close of 1930. Secretary of the Language Department, Central Committee of the CPUS to the CPC, 7 January 1931, Records of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Public Use Copies fonds, RG 146 (R929-0-4-E), vol. 63, file 96-A-00109 (Communist Party USA), part 4, LAC. In 1930 South Slavic members of the CPC contacted the South Slavic Bureau of the CPUS about the possibility of publishing *Iskra* in Canada. This prompted an exchange of correspondence from late October 1930 to mid-January 1931 between the Language Department of the CPUS and the CPC. The CPC underscored that it supported the printing of *Iskra* in Canada only if South Slavic members of the CPC would be willing to finance the securing of a leading South Slavic comrade from the US who could lead the publishing endeavour. In the meanwhile, the CPC asked the Language Department of the CPUS to forward its mailing list of South Slavs in Canada who were receiving its publications. CPUS to Agit-Prop Department CPC, 22 October 1930, MAG fonds, RG 4, vol. 4, envelope 41, p. 4A2808, AO [LAC, CPC fonds, AO records, MG 28 IV4 (R3137-0-5-E), microfilm reel M-7378, p. 4A2808]; CPC to Secretary Language Dept. CPUS, 9 January 1931, MAG fonds, RG 4, vol. 4, envelope 41, p. 4A2827, AO [LAC, CPC fonds, AO records, MG 28 IV4 (R3137-0-5-E), microfilm reel M-7378, p. 4A2827].

10. The mention of a third newspaper entitled *Naprijed* (Progress) and printed in Chicago in place of *Iskra* appears in an unsigned overview of the history of the South Slavic progressive movement published by the Executive Committee of the Council of Canadian South Slavs. *20 godina: kratki pregled historije naprednog pokreta jugoslavenskih iseljenika u Kanadi* [Twenty years: A brief history of the progressive movement among South Slavic immigrants in Canada] (Toronto: Izvršni odbor Vijeća kanadskih južnih Slavena, 1950), 9.





Several months before the first issue of [Toronto's] *Borba* (The Struggle) appeared [on 1 November 1931] I received a letter from Vancouver sent by the committee charged with launching the newspaper. At that time I was working in Anyox, BC. The letter stated:

"Dear friend and subscriber to *Radnik*. We are certain that you enjoy reading this labour newspaper, however it has been barred from arriving for several years. The time has now come for us workers from Yugoslavia to launch a labour newspaper in Canada. For that reason, we are providing you this list of potential subscribers so that you can engage our workers. Any money that you collect, even the smallest amount, will help to defray the cost of a certain number of copies."

I read that letter and thought about it after supper. I invited over several workers and read them the letter. Following a brief discussion, all agreed that it was necessary to collect as much money as was possible to support this endeavour.

"Very well Marko, you go among the men as you know them the best and we'll all sign up right now," they stated.

"Marko, how much are you donating?" one of them promptly asked.

"Here, I'm giving five dollars," I responded.

"Ha, that's fair, here I'll give three."

Thus, two by two, three by three, we in the room collected fifteen dollars.

Then I went from worker to worker. Having carried the list into the mine, it got smudged. After having approached them all and realizing there was no need to wait, I then called the now deceased S[tipe] Dasović and Simo Barjaković to tally how much money we raised. I counted and they counted; we barely made it to the end. Nevertheless, we counted \$42.60. I sent what was collected.

I believe I sent that money to Miloš Grubić in Vancouver.<sup>11</sup> There was no response. I waited.... Then one day a response and a receipt for the money

11. Grubić (1899–1995) was born in Petrinjci, near Sisak, Croatia and immigrated to Canada in 1926. He initially worked on a farm near Winnipeg, then on a road construction gang north of Vancouver and as a miner at Britannia Mine. In 1930 he joined the CPC and assisted Čačić in helping to establish chapters of the South Slavic Workers Educational Club (SSWEC) in Vancouver and elsewhere in British Columbia. In the lead up to the first national convention of the SSWEC in August 1932, Grubić visited South Slavic settlements to drum up support for the organization which was subsequently renamed the Workers-Peasant Educational Club (WPEC) at the convention. In 1935 he led a joint delegation of the WPEC and the CLDL that met with the Yugoslav Consul in Montréal to protest against the treatment of political prisoners in Yugoslavia. When the Serbian Progressive Movement was established in 1936 as a separate organization, Grubić became its secretary and first editor of its organ *Pravda* (Justice), launched in 1937. During World War II he volunteered in the Canadian Armed Forces and helped to recruit for the British Special Operations Executive (SOE). He later wrote a brief history of the labour movement among South Slavic immigrants in Canada. "Miloš Grubić,"

arrived from Toronto. However, the name on the receipt was unknown to me; it was Tomo Čačić.<sup>12</sup> I asked around if anyone knew the man.

"He's from our village," responded Smiljančan.

"Ah ha, so next time all of you'll give money."

"Hey, let's wait and see what the newspaper writes," they responded.

Everything was quiet again for a time. Then one day a tall man arrived in Anyox. I listened in on his conversations. I noticed that when he spoke to the Montenegrins he had a Serbian accent. And then when he spoke to those from the Croatian Littoral region, he spoke in pure Littoral dialect. One day I came to the reading room – there is no rest for the wicked – and there he was speaking to a mechanic in Italian. I listened in, but understood that language poorly, so I asked the Italian, "Is that man Italian?"

"No...."

"...because he speaks Italian better than me!"

On another occasion in the mine I overheard him talking to a German miner in the German language. At one point I asked one of the Montenegrins, who the man was.

"Oh, he's a true-blue Croat."

After about a week the man came to me in my room. He was escorted by my Montenegrin friend who said to the stranger, "There, that's Marko."

I invited him to sit down. I looked him over. He was a big, young man. I asked him if he brought any letters or greetings for me.

"Neither one nor the other, since I came from Vancouver. I know your friends over there, so they told me if I found you in Anyox that I should meet and get to know you. I remember you. We used to send you that little bulletin for the unemployed."<sup>13</sup>

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in Vladislav Gacić, ed., *Jugoslovenski napredni pokret u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama i Kanadi 1935–1945* [The Yugoslav progressive movement in the United States of America and Canada, 1935–1945] (Toronto: Nordam Yugoslav Publishers, 1983), 149–150; Miloš Grubić, "Kratak opis historije radničkog pokreta doseljenika iz Jugoslavije u Kanadu" [A brief history of the Yugoslav immigrant workers' movement in Canada], in *Jugoslovenski napredni pokret*, 153–177; "Milos Grubic, 1899–1995," *People's Voice* (Vancouver), May 1995.

12. Čačić (1896–1969) was born in the village of Bužim, near the town of Gospić, Lika region, Croatia and immigrated to the US in 1913 at the age of seventeen. He worked as a labourer in Montana, Utah and Oregon in the forestry, mining, and smelting industries. In 1916 he joined the Socialist Party of America and in 1920 travelled to the Soviet Union where he attended political classes in Moscow before returning to his homeland, then called the Kingdom of the scs. In 1924 he immigrated to Canada where he helped to promote the distribution of the Chicago newspaper *Radnik* (The Worker) among South Slavic immigrant workers in BC mining and lumber camps. He became a labour organizer, joined the CPC and spearheaded the effort to publish the weekly *Borba* (The Struggle) whose trial issue appeared in Chicago on 15 January 1930. "One of the Eight: Tom Cacic," *The Unemployed Worker* (Vancouver), 17 December 1932; Anthony Rasporich, "Tomo Čačić: Rebel Without a Country," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 10, 2 (1978): 87.

13. The mimeographed *Neuposleni radnik* (The Unemployed Worker) was printed in

"That's right. There are lots of workers over there who know me, not personally, but through letters and collaboration. Sometimes Miloš writes to me, sometimes Šaban, sometimes Kangrga, and the last letter I received was from Desnica. I only know him personally."

I asked him who served as translator for the unemployed bulletin.

"I was the one who struggled [with that task] since I still don't know the English language well," he replied.

"Oh, so that was you. So you're Edo Jardas?"<sup>14</sup>

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Vancouver and distributed to South Slavs. A four-page copy of *Neuposleni radnik: organ Worker Unity League u Vancouveru. Jugosloven[ska] sekcija*, vol. 1, no. 4, dated Wednesday, 30 December [1931], is found in Newspapers and Periodicals in Finnish (Vapaus), Ukrainian, German and Serbo-Croatian Languages, MAG fonds, RG 4, vol. 23, D 697, reel 24, pp. 23I0697–23I0700, AO [LAC, CPC fonds, AO records, MG 28 IV4 (R3137-0-5-E), microfilm reel M-7399, pp. 23I0697–23I0700]. This bulletin was modelled on *The Unemployed Worker*, the organ of the Workers' Unity League of Vancouver. Versions of *The Unemployed Worker* appeared in many cities and towns including Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Sudbury, Port Arthur, Toronto, and Windsor. The title was sometimes altered as in the case of the *Brandon Unemployed Worker* in Brandon, Manitoba and *The Unemployed Bulletin* in Edmonton. Issues of these bulletins are part of LAC's general serials collection and are also located in various fonds including: Royal Canadian Mounted Police fonds, RG18 (R196-156-5-E), vol. 3516; CPC fonds, AO records, MG 28 IV4 (R3137-0-5-E), microfilm reel M-7395, pp. 21H0917, 21H0918, 21H0944; William Doskoch fonds, MG 30 (R2430-0-1-E), D394, file 33, LAC. The Doskoch collection contains an eight-page (21 April, no year, no. 3) issue of *The Unemployed Bulletin* (Edmonton). Stephen L. Endicott, *Raising the Workers' Flag: The Workers' Unity League of Canada, 1930–1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 273–274, 404n7.

14. Eduard (Edo) Jardas (1901–1980), was born in Zamet, near Rijeka, Croatia and immigrated to Canada in 1926. He worked on a rail gang and as labourer in the forestry, fishing, and mining sectors in British Columbia. Jardas joined the CPC in 1929, participated in the Anyox strike and in organizational efforts among miners in Ontario's Schumacher-Timmins region and Rouyn-Noranda, Québec on behalf of the Workers' Unity League. In 1936 he held talks in Toronto on various political themes at a three-month course for communist activists and edited *Borba* from 1932 to 1936. He volunteered to fight in Spain and initially served in the George Washington Battalion. He promoted the formation of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion as a separate Canadian unit in Spain. He was wounded in action and later when he returned to Canada the wound failed to heal and part of his leg had to be amputated. During World War II he was the secretary of the Association of Canadian Croats and helped to coordinate fundraising initiatives and humanitarian drives among South Slavic immigrants in support of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's anti-fascist forces. In 1943 he helped establish the Movement to Aid the Old Homeland and the Council of Canadian South Slavs in 1944. Following the conclusion of the war he led the returnee movement of some 1,800 predominantly Croatian communists and progressives from Canada back to their old homeland and then settled in Yugoslavia permanently. Jardas sided with Tito following his break with Stalin and went on to become mayor of the city of Rijeka and also served in the federal legislature. Edo Jardas (Alleged to Be Associated with La *Borba*, a Communist Journal), Immigration Branch fonds, RG 76-I-A-1 (R1206-127-4-E), vol. 405, file 591532, microfilm reel C-10295, LAC; F[ilip] H[ameršal] k, "Jardas, Edo (Eduard)," in Trpimir Macan, ed., *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 6, I–Kal (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2005), 357; Edo Jardas, "Od Rijeke do Toronta i nazad" [From Rijeka to Toronto and back], in *Iseljenički almanah 1974: Bosna i Hercegovina* (Sarajevo: Matica iseljenika Bosne i Hercegovine, 1974), 132–134.

"Yes, it's me."

"Then, I'm glad that we've become acquainted. I'm struggling here with some letters from the Canadian Labor Defense League."<sup>15</sup>

"Very well, I'll help you," said Jardas. "We'll talk about this another time."

"Are you from the Lika region Marko?"

"Yes I am. Why do you ask?"

"I know a lot of people from Lika who live in Vancouver. One of them was appointed to establish a labour newspaper."

"Oh, that's likely Tomo [Čačić]," I said.

"How do you know him?"

"Well, I've already collected money here for the newspaper."

"That's great. And how long have you worked in this mine Marko?"

"Oh, how long, don't ask. It's already ruined my health. I've been working over five years."

"Then you know the conditions in this area very well."

"Of course I know the conditions."

So there you have my first meeting and discussion with Edo Jardas, the [man who went on to become the] leader of the Croatian Educational Association.<sup>16</sup> From then on, all my work in Anyox took place in conjunction with Edo, until he left to edit the newspaper [*Borba*].

All the mail came to Edo. This included the first package of *Borba* issues. To be sure, I sold more newspapers and secured more subscriptions than Edo. It was a challenge to accomplish success with subscriptions among the workers and the recently arrived men who kept on coming. I knew these workers for years, intimately as they say, and had influence with about 75 per cent of them. Therefore, I was able to succeed among them. On our first occasion, Edo and I obtained twelve yearly subscriptions and two half-year subscriptions. Edo

15. The CLDL was established in Toronto in 1925 with the goal of protecting strikers from prosecution. Founded and led by the Methodist Minister Rev. Albert E. Smith, the CLDL reached a membership of 17,000 in 350 branches across Canada by 1933. It cooperated closely with the CPC and was banned in 1940. In 1941 Smith established the National Council for Democratic Rights in its place. A.E. Smith, *All My Life: An Autobiography* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1977); *The Canadian Labor Defense League: Constitution 1927* (Toronto: [CLDL] National Office, 1927).

16. When this meeting between Jardas and Hećimović took place, the Croatian Educational Association (CEA) was not yet in existence. During the early 1930s, branches of the Workers-Peasant Educational Club were being established in Canada with Croatian, Montenegrin, Serbian, and Slovenian members. The CEA was launched in 1936 when separate South Slavic organizations began to be formed in response to the decisions of the Comintern's Seventh Congress of July 1935. At that time, the Comintern consciously moved away from sectarianism and toward a "popular front" and "united front" strategy. "Organizacioni izvjestaj sa konvencije" [Organizational report from the convention], *Borba*, 10 September 1936; "Izvjestaj o stampi na prvoj konvenciji H.P.S." [Report on the press during the first convention of the Croatian Educational Association], *Borba*, 12 September 1936; Ivan Avakumovic, *The Communist Party in Canada: A History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 121.

subscribed himself, S[imo] Barjaković and Joso Šarić,<sup>17</sup> while I subscribed the remainder. We also raised about twelve dollars for the newspaper fund.

Thus we sought donors for the fund and I was always more successful than Edo.

One day word reached us that Tomo Čačić was arrested over there [in Toronto].<sup>18</sup> So, Edo and I collected money for Tomo Čačić. First I went to Smiljančan and Ružimčan. Everyone gave generously. No one refused. I

17. Šarić (1895–1944) was born in Lovinac, Lika region, Croatia and immigrated to the US in 1912 where he joined the rww. He returned to the homeland in 1920. Following a strike at a factory in Slavonski Brod where he worked as a mechanic, he was arrested and imprisoned. In 1925 he came to Canada and worked in Copper Mountain and then Anyox, where he helped to organize for the Mine Workers' Union of Canada. Following the Anyox strike Šarić was arrested and tried, and was forced to leave for eastern Canada where he continued to organize for the labour movement and the CPC, particularly among the South Slavs. In 1942 he volunteered to join the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) and received initial training at Camp X, a commando training facility located on Lake Ontario between Whitby and Oshawa. He was transported to Egypt where he received additional training and was then parachuted into the Krbava region of Croatia in 1943. In 1944 he was captured by Ustaše forces and executed. Juraj Šarić, "O smrti druga Jose Šarića" [About the death of comrade Josko Šarić], *Novosti*, 20 February 1947; Ivan Čolak, "Dvadeset i tri godine od smrti Jose Šarića" [Twenty-third anniversary of the death of Josko Šarić], *Jedinstvo* (Toronto), 6 October 1967.

18. On 11 August 1931, police raided the offices and homes of key CPC officials in Toronto. The following day Čačić was arrested when he arrived at the headquarters of the Workers' Unity League. He was later tried as part of "The Eight" CPC officials under Section 98 of the Criminal Code (membership in an "unlawful association" and "seditious conspiracy"). Čačić received a two year sentence that he served at Kingston Penitentiary before being deported in 1934. He had just completed tours of South Slavic settlements in Sudbury, Kirkland Lake, Timmins, Hamilton, and Windsor on behalf of the CPC and the CLDL when he was arrested. During his arrest, the detective found credential letters on Čačić's body that were personally signed by the CPC's Executive Secretary Tim Buck and CLDL's General Secretary Rev. A.E. Smith. These letters of endorsement authorized Čačić to organize among South Slavic immigrants and urged CPC and CLDL organizations to extend their assistance to him. Supreme Court of Ontario trial transcripts, *Rex v. Buck et al.*, Exhibits 9 and 10, pp. 71–73, MG 28 IV4 (R3137-0-5-E), microfilm reel M-7412, CPC fonds, AO records, LAC; "Seventh Red Held; Ewan to Surrender, Counsel Announces," *The Globe* (Toronto), 13 August 1931; "The Canadian Labor Defense League Grows!" *Labor Defender* 2, 3 (July 1931). Following his deportation, several comrades assisted him in escaping to the Soviet Union where he went on to attend the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West. He volunteered to fight in Spain in 1936, escaped French internment in 1941 and joined Croatian anti-fascist forces during World War II. In 1943 he contracted tuberculosis, had a leg amputated and was bed-ridden for the duration of the war. He settled in Osijek after the war and occasionally wrote pieces in the South Slavic progressive press in Canada. Čačić's arrest in Toronto, his trial alongside high ranking CPC officials, his prison term in Kingston, and his deportation cemented his legendary status among Croatian and South Slavic communists and progressives in Canada. For more on Čačić see Rasporich, "Tomo Čačić," 86–94; Dennis G. Molinaro, "'A Species of Treason?': Deportation and Nation-Building in the Case of Tomo Čačić, 1931–1934," *The Canadian Historical Review* 91 (2010): 61–85; Tomo Nikšić, "Životni put Tome Čačića: in memoriam" [The life's path of Tomo Čačić: In memoriam], *Matica* (Zagreb), 11 (November 1969): 432.

collected during the day and then gave the list to Edo to collect at night. We collected \$72.

When Čačić was released pending trial, Edo received a letter from the Executive Committee [of the Workers-Peasant Educational Club] informing him that they unanimously adopted Čačić's recommendation to appoint Jardas the editor of the newspaper [*Borba*]. Čačić wrote:

"Stand up now comrade Jardas, accept your proletarian duty and come to edit the newspaper. You are somewhat more well-read and have technical experience. We can tell you in advance that you will not have a salary, but you will be guaranteed a proletarian existence. We will not beg you, but rather if you feel that you can place yourself at the disposal of and work for the good of the working class, then that is good. If you agree to come, write immediately. If by chance you do not have sufficient money to pay for a travel ticket, write how much you need, although we cannot send you more than half the cost of the ticket."

One afternoon, Edo called me and Simo Barjaković over to his room.

"Here, listen to what's written in this letter."

He read it to us and asked us our opinion. One of us responded.

"Since they've written so, it's best that you accept."

"But what should I do when I don't have enough for a ticket."

"Here, I'll lay out my plan, if you and Simo agree." They accepted and I continued, "Listen comrade Edo, you work for another two weeks and both Simo and I will help you out and then you'll have your ticket. Do you agree with this Simo?"

"Yes, I agree."

There, the three of us hatched a plan which succeeded. After two weeks Edo purchased a ticket from Anyox to Toronto for \$100.06.

Before Edo left for his trip, I called him to my room for a chat.

I began, "Listen comrade Edo. I'm a worker who's been all over the world these past twenty years. Even before World War I I'd been to many European industrial lands: Austria-Hungary, Italy, Germany, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania. I was even enlisted to work on the construction of the Baghdad railway in Persia. I was a prisoner in Tsarist Russia and took in the Revolution. I've experienced all the evil there is to experience and discovered what's best for man and that's: honesty, morality, and loyalty toward the society in which one's found. From time to time, comrade, you enjoy the drink a little too much."

To this, Edo responded, "I can drink moderately, but I don't believe I could ever leave it completely."

Then Edo threw back at me, "I read, if I recall, how Karl Marx sat together with Engels, Bebel and Bakunin and shared a glass of wine in a Paris café, but nevertheless today they celebrate Marx."

Here I felt that my advice was not completely accepted by Edo. Anyhow, that is how he left for Toronto.



I remained in Anyox for several more months and then left. At the time of my departure from Anyox, there were 42 subscribers to *Borba*. All issues arrived in one package under my name and I delivered them from room to room, from house to house, like a paperboy. When I came out of the mine, I was never too tired to deliver the newspapers. This was because I was aware that the level of class consciousness would rise and greater enthusiasm would be achieved for the struggle to achieve a better life for us all the more that workers read labour literature. That is what motivated me to do this.

When I left Anyox, I arrived in Toronto and met with Edo. I followed his work and activity. I immediately noticed that he behaved as I had hoped, that is, he stopped drinking. To some of his acquaintances who drank excessively, he would say, "Stay away from that. I no longer drink alcohol. Sometimes I don't even have lunch due to being overworked and when I do order lunch, it's not more than fifteen cents."

"How so?" they asked.

"Very easy, my pay is twenty dollars a month."

"My God, that's little," responded his friends.

"Would you like to come to my place with [Petar] Žapkar<sup>19</sup> and Miloš [Grubić]?" I then asked.

"What do you have to drink?" asked Žapkar.

"I'll bring a gallon of sour milk."

That is enough for now and I did not even elaborate on the success of our newspaper over these last eight years. However, if we work in the future as we have in the past, then it will be adopted by many more people. If we combine

19. Žapkar (1897–1936) was born in Marino Selo, Antunovac, Pakrac, Slavonia region, Croatia and immigrated to Canada in 1924 where he worked as a miner. He collaborated with Čačić in helping to lay the ground work for the launch of *Borba* in Toronto in 1931. During this period Žapkar held executive positions at several CPC-affiliated organizations in Hamilton that sent formal protests to the Attorney General of Ontario regarding the police raids and prosecutions conducted against the CPC and its officials. Following Čačić's incarceration at Kingston Penitentiary, Žapkar took over as editor of the newspaper and became the national secretary of the WPEC. At the close of 1932 he toured various South Slavic settlements in Canada on behalf of the CLDL. This tour included a film that featured abuses perpetrated by the security apparatus of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Part of the purpose of the tour was to collect donations to help support the families of political prisoners in the homeland. When he arrived in Sault Ste Marie, Žapkar was arrested together with the local secretary of the CLDL. He then proceeded to Port Arthur and was later arrested in Fort Frances for his role in the strike of forestry workers. He was given a one-year sentence and deported to Yugoslavia in 1934. While en route to Yugoslavia he escaped while in France and made his way to the Soviet Union. Žapkar spent two years in the Soviet Union and volunteered to fight in Spain where he was killed in action at Cuidad. Correspondence of Hamilton branch of the Friends of the Soviet Union (3 September 1931), Hamilton mass meeting (2 November 1931) and Hamilton CLDL branch (13 August 1931) to the Attorney General of Ontario, MG 28 IV4 (R3137-0-5-E), microfilm reel M-7412, pp. 29L0248, 29L0490, microfilm reel M-7413, p. 29L0628, CPC fonds, AO records, LAC; "Petar Žapkar: poginuo u borbi protiv fašizma u Španjolskoj" [Petar Žapkar died in battle against fascism in Spain], *Slobodna misao*, 18 March 1937; "Petar Žapkar," *Slobodna misao*, 2 November 1939; 20 godina, 13–14, 30–32, 41.

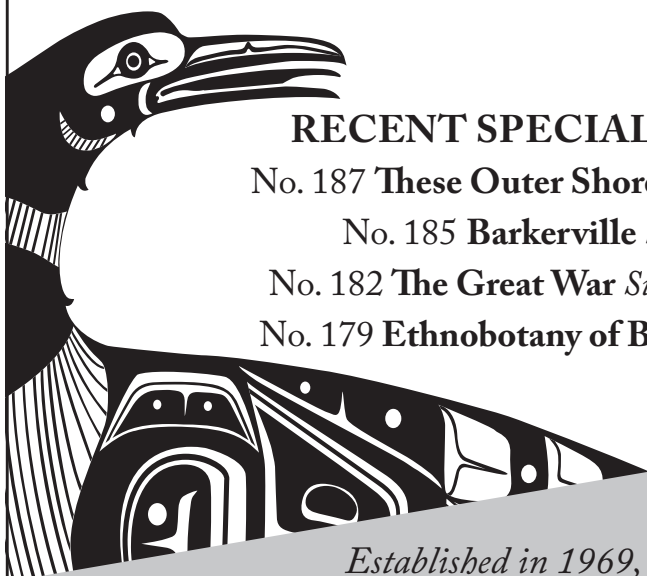
our great experience with the knowledge we have today, as well as the energy we had when we launched the newspaper, then it will bring the true workers line to almost all Croatian workers in Canada.

May the circulation of [the newspaper] *Slobodna misao* (Free Thought) spread throughout the land.

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