



**TIM BUCK**

JANUARY 6, 1891 - MARCH 11, 1973

# THE LENINIST LEGACY OF TIM BUCK

January 6, 1986, marks the 95th anniversary of the birth of Tim Buck, Canada's outstanding Marxist-Leninist.

From his earliest involvement in the working-class struggle, Tim Buck was at the cutting edge of the battle for revolutionary change. His writings are profound Leninist insights into Canadian political reality. His life and work are an example of the Communist credo, that is, putting all theory to the test of political action and practice.

In times of crisis and conflict, such as Canada is entering today, it is mandatory for the leadership of the Communist Party of Canada to turn the attention of its members, specially its young members, to the work of the Party's outstanding theoreticians and leaders, to study closely how they solved problems when confronted with political crisis and rising class struggles.

First among these is Tim Buck.

Tim Buck was a brilliant educator of the working-class. Drawing upon the worker's experience he generalized their hopes and dreams into practical political programs for improving life today and winning socialism tomorrow. He was a tireless organizer of the political activity of the Communist Party and encouraged all members, especially the youth, to take the political initiative for the Party's policies and goals.

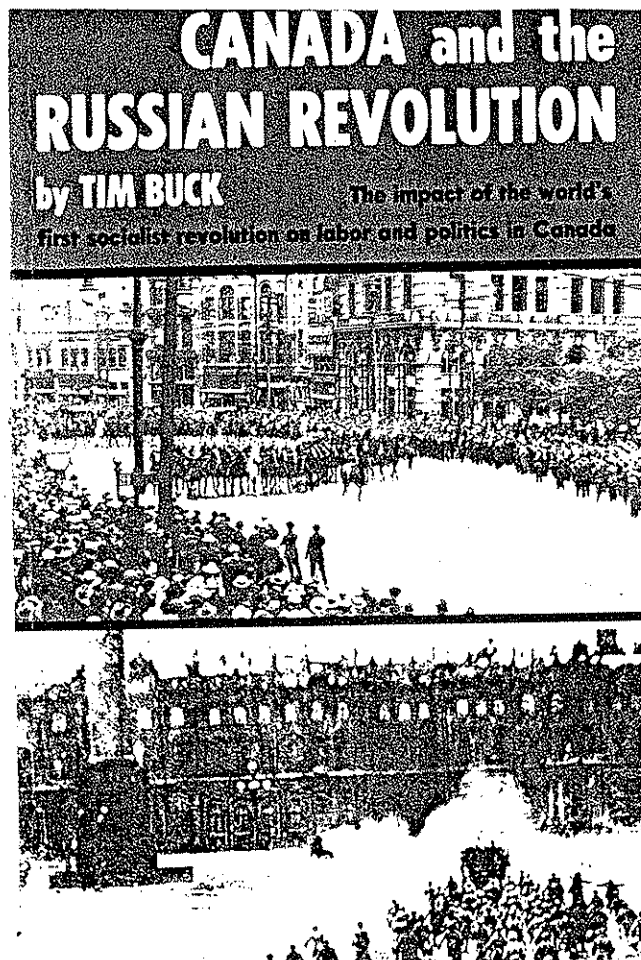
**WORKERS AND FARMERS LOVED HIM BECAUSE HE WAS ONE OF THEM.**

He always identified himself with the struggles of the working people as a worker. He was at ease with working people, sharing their hardships, battling for their needs and constantly seeking their views on the political issues of the day. In the process, he won prestige and support for the Communist Party and the cause of socialism.

TIM BUCK WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF

THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN 1922.

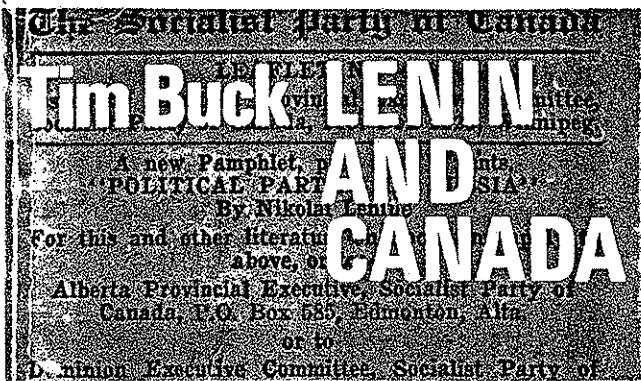
The Party was born out of a world-wide revolutionary upsurge which followed the Russian Revolution of 1917. In spite of the campaign of slander by the capitalist press against the new socialist state, Canadian labour greeted the revolution.



In his work "Canada and the Russian Revolution" (Progress Books, Toronto, 1967) Buck analyzed the impact of the world's first socialist revolution on labour and politics in Canada and showed the links between the October Socialist Revolution and the landmark Western Labour Conference of March 13, 1919, which represented a higher level of political consciousness among advanced workers and which, in turn, was a major factor in the militant and disciplined manner workers organized and conducted the

Winnipeg General Strike of June, 1919.

Describing the dramatic impact of the Russian Revolution on the thinking of Canadian workers, Tim Buck wrote, "Like a great light it dawned upon us that, for the Canadian working class to defeat capitalist reaction and achieve socialism, the revolutionary workers must be guided by a party of a new type...the organized expression of the collective will to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Lenin and Canada, p 24, Progress Books, Toronto, 1970)



Buck carefully analyzed events to explain to socialist-minded workers that working-class political advance was only possible if the party leading them was scientific in method and revolutionary in practice.

"...life was to teach us very soon that a political party is WHAT IT DOES." (Canada and the Russian Revolution, p 92)

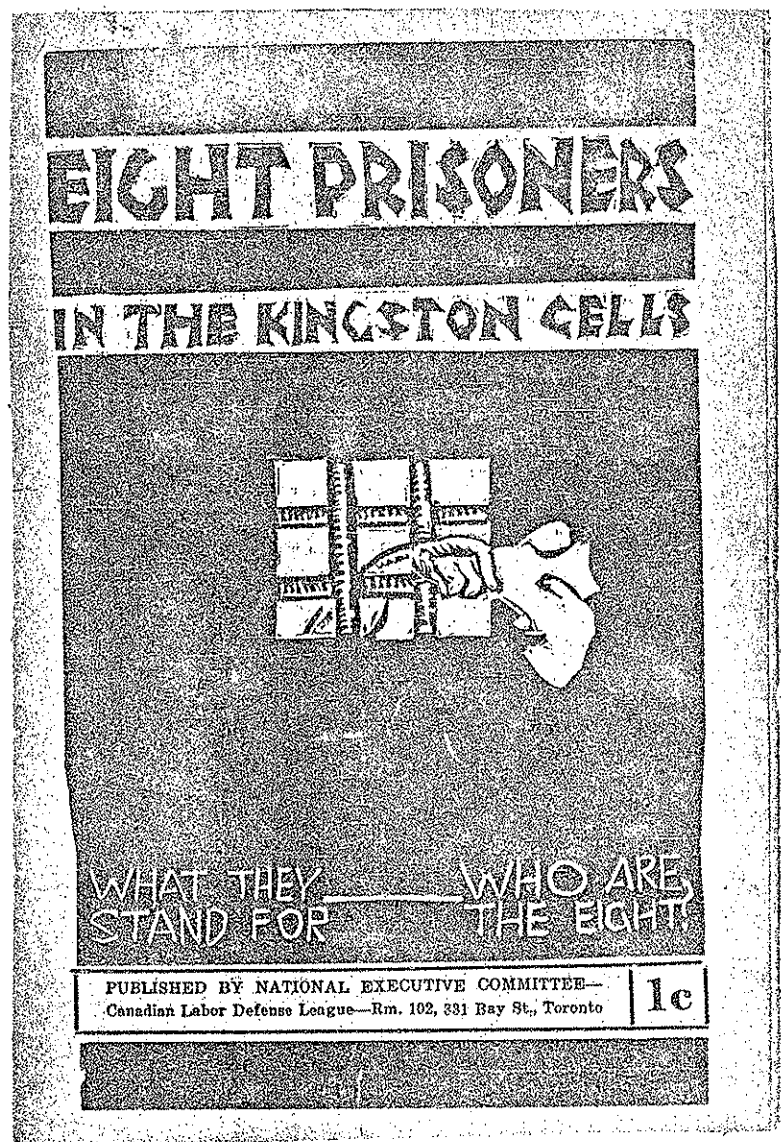
Not everyone in the labour movement, or even in the leadership of the Communist Party, fully grasped the changed world and the new possibilities for winning support for socialism which arose after the October Revolution. The American Exceptionalism theories of Jack MacDonald leadership group in the Communist Party held that, "Marxism applies everywhere else in the world except North America." (Yours in the Struggle, p 135, NC Press Ltd., Toronto, 1977)

The world-wide collapse of the capitalist economy in 1929 was a challenge to the Communist Party to provide the working class and farmers with a revolutionary path of advance.

Militant programs demanding work or wages, cash relief and unemployment in-

surance, protection for farmers from the rapacious actions of the banks, defense of homeowners from foreclosures, side-by-side with an intense campaign to organize the unorganized--all were inspired and carried into action by the Communists.

The reformist illusions of the American Exceptionalists evaporated in the heat of rising class battles. A class-against-class confrontation was emerging culminating in the violent reaction of the Bennett government against the trekkers at Regina in 1935 when the Communist-led On-To-Ottawa Trek of single unemployed reached that city.



In 1931, Tim Buck and other prominent leaders of the Communist Party were jailed and persecuted, and a great popular democratic movement demanding their release swept the land.

Buck emerged as an historical figure carrying the banner of Marxism-Leninism for millions to see.

He became a historical figure with few illusions about predestination or any grandiloquent notions about himself but, rather, because he convinced the majority of the members of the Communist Party, and those who supported the Party, that it was necessary and possible for the Communist Party to take the historical initiative away from the capitalist class at critical turning points and have decisive influence on popular mass thinking.

Tim Buck aroused such deep hatred and fear in the hearts and minds of leaders of Canadian capitalism because he helped to convince masses of Canadian working people that political independence from the blandishments of the old line parties was the only road to widened democracy and economic advance for the common people. Buck displayed the greatest distrust and hostility to ideas that suggest that capitalist parties are willing to act in the interests of the working class.

The critical element in a popular mass break with bourgeois politics was to politicise trade union action. In his famous booklet directed to the trade union left, "Steps to Power, A Program for the Trade Union Minority of Canada" published by the Trade Union Educational League (circa 1925) Buck wrote,

"Our problem and the aim of this booklet is to direct our activities and the activities of our organizations so that, instead of merely functioning as a kind of bargain counter across which officials continually haggle with the boss in a futile effort to maintain a balance between wages and the cost of living, our organizations will also engage in struggles for more fundamental things; which struggles, in turn, while strengthening the unions, will bring them into direct conflict with capitalism as a system."

Tim Buck understood as only a militant worker can, that workers struggle for a reform but often do so with revolutionary expectations. In each battle

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Room 301, 95 King St. E.  
Toronto, Ontario

## STEPS TO POWER

A Program of Action for the Trade Union  
Minority of Canada

By TIM BUCK

Published by the  
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95 King Street East, Toronto. Room 301.

for wages and broadened democracy workers strive for a fundamental improvement in their quality of life but are never fully satisfied with the outcome. The inherent desire of the workers to fight it out with the bosses to a conclusion is the germ of the idea so brilliantly revealed by Marx and developed by Lenin--the idea of working class power.

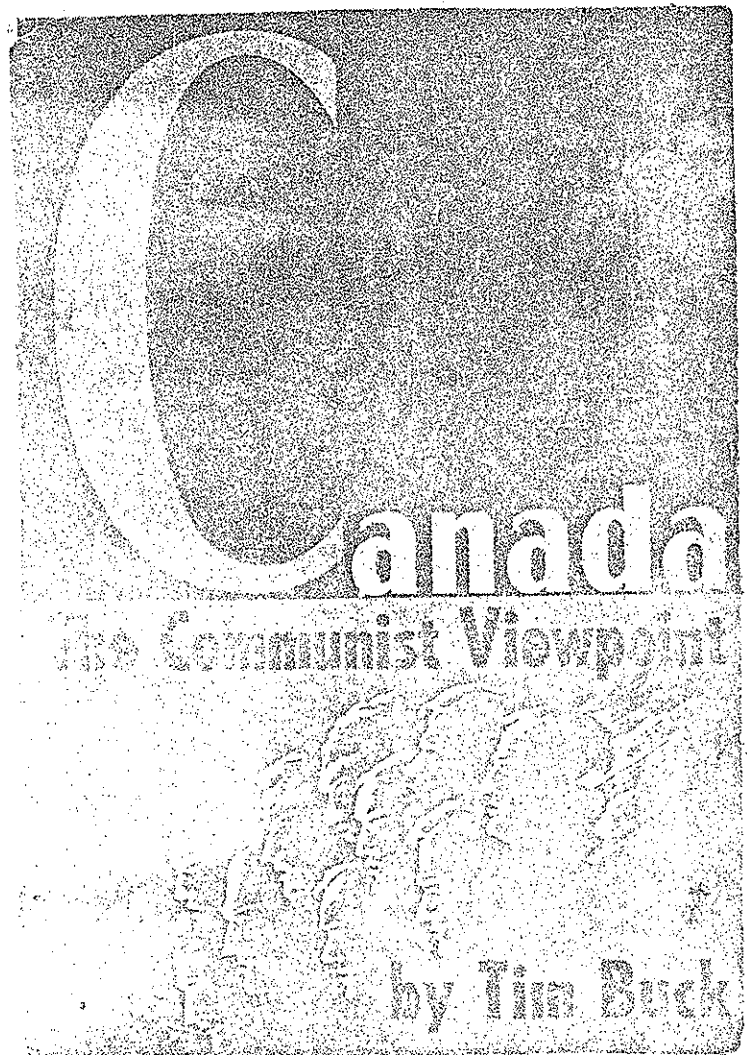
Coming "Into direct conflict with capitalism as a system," in the era of state monopoly capitalism means, in the first place, to defeat the power of monopoly over the destiny of the country and its people.

In an article published in Volume 13, World Marxist Review, July, 1970, Buck, under the heading "The Working Class and leadership of the Nation," wrote "In the countries of highly developed capitalism today it is not enough to reject the policies of state-monopoly capitalism, to expose their anti-democratic character and the extent to which they undermine the vital interests of the nation, necessary and important though such exposures are. Communist and Workers parties, leaders of the revolutionary forces of the working class are called upon increasingly to make the vital leap from theory to practice. They have to assume responsibility for concrete democratic alternatives to the nihilistic policies of the monopolists which now are leading to national disaster. They have to fight by all democratic means that are available and others that will be developed in the course of the struggle, to take over the actual ideological leadership of the nation."

Having defined the task and proceeding from the real circumstances of Canadian-U.S.A. relations in North America, he outlined with utmost clarity and practicality the consequences of continued U.S. control of Canada.

In his famous book "Canada The Communist Viewpoint" (Progress Books, Toronto, 1948) Buck openly challenged the sell-out policies of the Liberal Party's Abbot Plan.

In this fundamental work, Buck exposed the fatal flaw in Abbot's plan of politically and economically integrating



Canada and the U.S.A. The plan was based on the expectation of a war between the U.S.A. and the USSR in which Canada would emerge on the world stage as a junior partner sharing power and riches in a new world (Pax Americana) order. As Buck predicted, world development did not proceed as planned by the U.S. imperialists.

The dreams of the United States imperialists of world domination and atomic blackmail of the Soviet Union gradually came apart at the seams. The Soviet military matched U.S. in novations, bomb for bomb, rocket for rocket. The Soviet economy did not decline after the war but revived and flourished.

At the same time the countries of the third world in Africa, Asia and Latin America began to overthrow their colonial masters and embark on non-capitalist paths of development. The British empire



melted away in a series of independence struggles in India, Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Cuba, right on the doorstep of the U.S.A. opted for socialism. Instead of uninterrupted imperialist expansion, in which Canada would prosper as the closest ally of the U.S.A., a general crisis of capitalism has deepened and intensified all crisis phenomena of capitalist development in Canada.

Buck was among the first Canadians to show the profoundly reactionary content of U.S. domination of Canadian development.

The preoccupation of Canadian high finance with sharing in the U.S. plunder of Canada is a corrupting influence on Canadian government domestic and foreign policy

Successive Canadian governments have presented no consistent challenge to U.S. imperialism's exploitation of Canada. Both Liberal and Conservative governments have rallied Canadian public opinion against aspects of U.S. imperialist pressure, but never against the essence of U.S. imperialist policy: world domination via the destruction of socialism.

The spectre of the loss of 250,000 jobs in Eastern Canadian manufacturing industries as the result of a free trade pact with the United States would represent a calamity for the working class of Canada. Its spin off effects on Western Canadian agriculture and raw material and transportation industries would be disastrous. The working class and farmers are gradually becoming aware of the terrible threat they face.

Buck was passionately opposed to free trade, viewing such schemes as forms of the de-industrialization of Canada and a loss of jobs. Free trade talks had more to do with resolving inter-capitalist conflicts over profits than it did with the interests of Canada and Canadians.

"The partnership of Canadian with

# PUT MONOPOLY UNDER CONTROL

**A NEW ECONOMIC POLICY FOR CANADA**

**TIM BUCK**

U.S. monopoly capital is charged with antagonisms. Canadian monopolists share cynically in the super-profits extracted from the people by the maintenance of higher prices and lower wages than in the U.S.A., by restricting development of our manufacturing industries and foreign trade. They profit cynically in the sell out of the resources of this country to U.S. ownership and control... But as they become bigger and stronger, their striving to secure maximum profits and a larger measure of control impels them irresistably into rivalry with the senior partners and to use the Canadian state machinery for their own advantage. There is an antagonistic partnership." (Put Monopoly Under Control, p 68)

Inspired by the prospect of the Communist Party once again showing the way out of the crisis as it had done in the 1930s, in the anti-fascist mobilizations of the 1940s, and in its rallying cry for Canadian Independence in the 1950s, Tim Buck was given the task of concretizing the Communist Party's proposals to Put Monopoly Under Control.

This became the title of a brilliant tract outlining the Communist Party's new economic policy for Canada. Published

by Progress Books, 1964, the book stands out even today as a practical guide to action for all those democratic Canadians who support nationalization, developing Canada's natural resources, for a Canadian energy and water conservation policy, for solving the provincial-federal crisis, for curbing the corporate rip-off of the national treasury, for a new democratic tax and banking system, and for the revival and expansion of Canadian industry and agriculture. It is an inspiring image of what Canada could be like for the working people-- free of the greed and despoiling pillage of the monopolies.

Conscious of the need to inspire the anti-monopoly struggle, Buck never allowed himself or the Party he led for more than 30 years, to deceive the democratic masses that anti-monopoly struggle was a parliamentary cake-walk to power.

"It is to be expected that as the anti-monopoly movements rise the monopolists will try by all their means with their great power to prevent the people from taking the control of our country's development out of their hands. Nothing is to be gained by minimizing the ferocity with which they will seek to retain their grip or their tremendous influence from the bottom right to the top of capitalist circles.

"What must be emphasized is the decisive thing, that the monopolies can and must be defeated because the future of Canada depends on it." (Put Monopoly Under Control, a New Economic Policy For Canada, p 66, Progress Books, Toronto, 1964).

Buck avoided sterile theorizing or speculation about static stages or simply perceived political alliances and strategies for defeating monopoly that life and reality failed to support.

In his most theoretical work of the 1970s "Lenin and Canada" (Progress Books, Toronto, 1970) Buck carefully analyzed the significance of the emergence of a left wing trend within the NDP which championed Canadian independence and socialism. He cautioned,

"There is not yet a formal united front of communists and left social democrats in Canada. Such a development will correspond with a substantially higher level of labour political action than is general at the present time. But the line of action advocated by the left wing in the convention and supported by a third of the delegates is one of the streams of action for peace and for Canadian independence which, with patient but consistent work, will converge in struggles for immediate demands. In such struggles more and more political activists will recognize that Marxism-Leninism is our sole guide to victory." (page 90).

It was typical of Tim Buck to express his intense ideological partisanship in this way. He never allowed any other current on the left to win by default.

Increased influence among workers for ultra-leftist or right wing reformist ideas rested partly in the weaknesses of the Communist Party. Taking up this theme Buck wrote, "Closing the gap between the pace of the rise of militancy and that of ideological development will be, and can only be, a result of the enhancement of the role of communists in the planning and development of the aims of their fellow workers as well as the leadership of their immediate activities." (Lenin and Canada, p 125)

Tim Buck was an internationalist and was a founder-participant in the international Communist movement. He helped to organize the International Brigades that went to Spain.

After attending a world peace conference in Geneva in 1936 he went directly to Spain where the civil war (transformed into an anti-fascist war of national liberation) was in full swing and Madrid had become the focal point of world politics.

He spent time with Lister's troops in the front line and attended a meeting at Aranjuez, near Madrid. From this meeting an appeal was issued for international volunteers to go to Spain to fight in the first war against fascism.

Buck returned to Paris and sent an appeal to Canada for aid to Spain. He returned to Canada and held mass meetings and was actively involved in bringing the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion into existence.

During the Vietnamese war Tim Buck led the first delegation from a capitalist country to go to Viet Nam to express the solidarity of the Canadian people with the struggle of the Vietnamese people against the aggression of U.S imperialism.

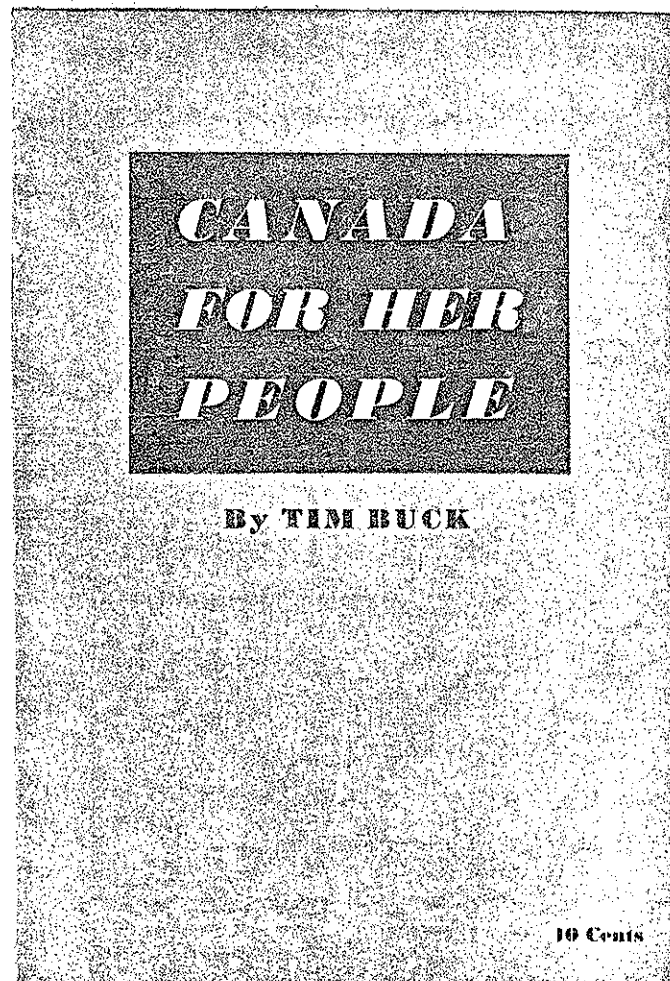
After this visit Buck returned to Canada and held mass meetings across the country which led to the setting up of many committees in solidarity with Viet Nam.

Tim Buck imbued the Canadian Communists with a spirit of internationalism and solidarity with workers everywhere. Today, when U.S. militarism and their Canadian flunkies aim to integrate Canada into Star Wars it is vital for the Communist Party to reveal the common interests of U.S. and Canadian workers and to propose joint actions to make North America a continent of peace rather than a staging ground for nuclear war.

What is new in today's class battles is the possibility of a rather rapid political merger of the peace movement, the struggle of the organized labour and farmed movements for jobs, markets and security, and the forces working for detente between the socialist and capitalist countries, represented by the series of summits between the USSR and the USA.

The prospects of breaking the international deep-freeze and the attendant decline of Reaganism and its extreme right wing war mania opens up new prospects for political mass work in which the working-class must take the initiative for a program of demands that puts its interests first.

It is the task of the Communist Party to point out to the working class and all of the democratic masses of our country that jobs without detente is impossible.



Prime Minister Mulroney's plan for the sell-out of Canada to the highest U.S. bidder can be challenged, but not with rhetoric.

The basis upon which U.S.-Canadian relationships can develop in a progressive direction will be found in the common class interests of U.S. and Canadian workers. It is the task of the Communist Party of Canada to counter the reactionary schemes of international capitalist high finance and militarism with working-class internationalism.

Unemployment in the U.S.A. cannot be solved by destroying Canadian industries and Canadian unemployment cannot be solved by militarizing the Canadian economy. Canadian and U.S. workers have common goals of peace, jobs and security, and common enemies of war and poverty.

It is in the interests of U.S. workers to support Canadian independence and in the interests of Canadian workers to support U.S. workers' demands for shifting the U.S. economy from preparations



for war to production for peace. And it is in the interests of both Canadian and U.S. workers to promote the work for detente with the Soviet Union.

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and new problems  
of struggle for peace,  
socialism and democracy

**TIM BUCK**

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There is a growing mass realization among workers and farmers, however weakly defined, that there is a great potential for mutually beneficial economic relations between the North American economies of Canada and the United States and the socialist community of nations.

U.S. farmers deeply resented the Reagan ban on trade with the Soviet Union.

There is a growing circle of Canadian manufacturing interests which desire improved trade with the Soviet Union.

From an "after thought" item tagged on the end of the Communist Party's program, detente must be fully integrated into all of the demands and

programs it advances on behalf of the working class. Detente offers unlimited possibilities for popularizing the achievements of socialism. It is the principle means to convince millions of the benefits of nuclear disarmament and shifting whole economies from militarism to peaceful production. Detente is the most effective way to isolate the lunatic pro-war right wing forces. Detente is mass politics--a winning strategy for for working-class advance.

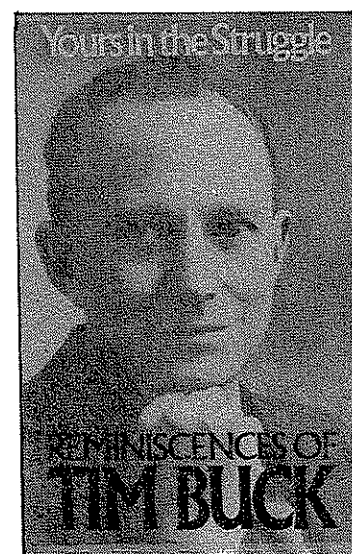
As Communists advance into the decade of the 80s and into the period of the active struggle for disarmament and jobs through peaceful development, the counsel of Tim Buck will continue to be a valuable and contemporary factor in democratic advance and ultimately the victory of socialism in Canada.

"D.C." Jan 6, 1985  
for THE COMMITTEE OF CANADIAN COMMUNISTS,  
217-1808 Smith Street,  
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