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### *Political Reawakening*

IN 1946 CCF PREMIER Tommy Douglas initiated the amalgamation of three Saskatchewan Indian organizations into the Union of Saskatchewan Indians. But when the CCF ended its financial and organizational support, the Union faded, and by 1951 the USI was little more than a name. Twelve years later Douglas repeated his initiative, with essentially the same motives: the eventual provision of normal social, health and educational services to Saskatchewan Indians. Saskatchewan, along with Quebec and other provinces, was asking the federal government to gradually transfer jurisdiction over Indians to the provinces.<sup>1</sup> Douglas was looking to a rejuvenated Indian organization for support of this position. David Knight, an Indian sympathetic to the CCF, was favored by the CCF as the head of the new group. At the October 1958 conference attended by 91 chiefs and councillors from 41 bands (at government expense), Knight was elected chairman of a provisional committee which was to establish the new organization.<sup>2</sup> But a year later, at the founding convention of the new organization, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (FSI), the Indian delegates elected as their president that arch-nationalist and most durable of Indian leaders, John Tootoosis.

In 1955 the welfare council of greater Winnipeg began holding annual conferences of Indian and Metis to discuss the issues facing native people. At the 1960 conference Marion Ironquill, Bill Wuttunee and Jean Cuthand,\* all formerly of Saskatchewan, proposed the establishment of a national native peoples' organization, the first such attempt since the mid-1940s. The National Indian Council (NIC) was formally organized the next year.<sup>3</sup>

Concern for the Indian was spreading. Liberal students, educators,

\*Jean Cuthand's father was John Tootoosis, but she was adopted by Adam Cuthand, a prominent Indian clergyman in the Anglican Church. Cuthand had grown up in LaRonge and attributes her political consciousness to Norris' patient teachings.



church people and unionists were establishing committees on Indian affairs and passing resolutions deploring the situation facing Canada's native people. The most sophisticated and prominent of these groups was the Indian-Eskimo Association (IEA), a Toronto-based creation of the Canadian Association for Adult Education. The aims of the IEA, like those of other white groups, reflected the liberal ideology of their creators, "[to] promote...concern...mutual understanding and co-operation between these [native peoples] and other Canadians."<sup>4</sup> Only on the prairies did these groups actually get involved directly with the people they were "concerned" about. Manitoba led the way as they had in other areas of native policy by establishing Indian-Metis friendship centres. The aim of the centres, which spread into Saskatchewan and Alberta in the early sixties, was the bridging of the gap between urban native people and urban whites. The cross-cultural aspect of the centres was accompanied by counselling and drop-in centre functions. The third centre, after Winnipeg and Regina, was established in Prince Albert in 1962.

What all these organizations had in common, including the FSI and the NIC, was their close relationship with liberal whites in government and government agencies. The IEA and the friendship centres were completely dominated by whites although native people gradually became involved. The FSI would not have existed without the initiative of the CCF, and the Winnipeg Welfare Council gave the founders of the NIC both the opportunity and implicit encouragement to meet and discuss the idea of a national organization.

These government initiatives were not the result of any sudden recognition of the plight of native people. The state and its agencies had been aware of the problems all along. What had changed was the exposure of the situation to the general public.

The sudden appearance of the Indian was due in part to the rapid urbanization of the prairie provinces. Between 1946 and 1966 the farm population of Saskatchewan dropped by half, while the urban population increased to half the total population. Indian people, too, were moving to the cities to look for work. Generally improved health conditions and a slowly building resistance to tuberculosis meant a rapidly increasing Indian population<sup>5</sup> which could not be accommodated on already crowded and economically desperate reserves.

In 1960, at the same time that it gave the Indian the right to vote in provincial elections,\* the CCF government made it legal for Indians to consume alcohol and patronize public drinking establishments. They were still denied the right to bring alcohol onto the reserves. As a result, Indians often continued drinking, in and around the towns close to

\*The CCF was prompted to grant the franchise, against the wishes of Tootoosis and the FSI, by Diefenbaker's granting of the federal franchise in early 1960.



their reserves, after the bars closed. White townspeople came to see the Indian as a threat to their communities and racial tension began to build. The effects of alcohol quickly focussed attention on the Indians' desperate situation, and the federal and Saskatchewan governments implemented a joint program in the Kamsack area aimed at community development. But the situation was already out of hand. By 1963 Saskatchewan was being labelled Canada's "Alabama."<sup>6</sup> The title was earned by nine businessmen and farmers of Glaslyn, a small town near North Battleford, who beat a young Salteaux Indian to death; the reason—a group of Indians had camped in the town's sports field and were drinking.

To Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady there was nothing new in the revelations about Indian conditions in rural and urban Canada. Norris had been hammering away at white complacency for 30 years. He interpreted the sudden reversal of attitudes as a response to the Indian threat to white, middle-class security.

Norris' contempt for the sudden, hypocritical concern of whites was surpassed by his frustration at the absence of independent native leadership or any democratic native movement. The appearance of what he called "captive" and "colonized" leaders and organizations caused him considerable anguish and anger. Regarding the FSI, he wrote to Brady in 1962:

The FSI...[exists] in name only, without registration of members or locals. They were trying to get the various Indian bands...to come in as a unit without a plebescite of the people involved...If the [new] President, Mr. David Knight, had to appear before a Commission of Enquiry all he could show at the moment are minutes of an Executive Council. A group of generals without an army...All this has taken place under...the sponsorship of the provincial government who have footed the bill...<sup>7</sup>

Not only were Saskatchewan Indian leaders promoting an undemocratic organization, some of them were allowing themselves to be shamelessly used by the politicians. Prime Minister Diefenbaker had given the Indians the federal franchise just weeks before the CCF gave them the provincial vote. It did not take long for opportunists in the old parties to move in. Norris expressed his contempt for the situation to Brady.

The Liberals and Conservatives are each contemplating to put one or two Indians on their provincial council. I [can] just see them there, with a beeg cigar stuck in their face, sitting up on the



platform, performing monkeys to the tune of a juke box.<sup>8</sup>

Norris wasn't much more impressed by the NIC. He recognized its positive features—inclusion of Indians and Metis and social and economic reform objectives—but saw in it fundamental weaknesses, the same weaknesses which plagued the so-called “national” organizations of the 1940s. What was needed, eventually, was a federation of mass membership, provincial organizations. The NIC was an organization of leaders. Its subsequent lack of resources reduced it to activities promoting Indian and Metis culture. Even among white liberals it had little credibility—in a 1961 national fund raising drive it attracted only three individual donations and one from an organization.<sup>9</sup>

Norris considered leadership to be as much a dilemma in the sixties as in the thirties and forties. He expressed his despair to Brady:

The Neestows of Canada may work something out for themselves but there has been damn little leadership and understanding shown so far. We can find a number of [opportunists] . . . ready for a fast buck. Practically all progressive viewpoints allegedly presented by Indians have so far come from friends sympathetic to their cause. . . .<sup>10</sup>

This was a painful admission for Norris to make, since among these liberal native leaders were “neestows” Norris himself had inspired.

In the CCF party and government, Norris was still seen as the principal Metis spokesman in Saskatchewan. As such he was invited, in 1962, to take part in a commemorative service at Batoche\* “To Honor Those Who Fell in the Saskatchewan Rebellion of 1885.”<sup>11</sup> As a tentative first step in correcting Metis history, the Metis were to share the honors with the Royal Regiment of Canada (formerly the Royal Grenadiers), which was sponsoring the July 4 events as part of its hundredth anniversary. Encouraged to take part in the ceremonies by socialist friends, Norris used the occasion to deliver a corrective lesson in Canadian and Metis history. His speech read, in part:

. . . as a representative of the Metis people, I feel we do take exception to this term “rebellion” in the sense of rebelling against the Crown. It is unfortunate that early historians have recorded the Metis struggle for justice in this light. It is even more unfortunate that in our schools the facts of the Northwest

\*Norris and Brady took part in an informal commemorative service at Batoche the year before, organized by a friend, Art Davis, and attended by 30-40 people—Indian and Metis and whites, most of the latter CCF'ers.



Uprising were distorted. . . Among those who gave their lives in those troublesome days is David Louis Riel. . . now regarded by many as a great Canadian patriot. In the comparatively isolated and small Red River settlement, Riel carried on a similar battle for freedom as waged by Mackenzie and Papineau in the year 1837. For these activities he was persecuted, hounded and forced into exile.<sup>12</sup>

Norris carefully chose impeccable Canadian establishment sources to bolster his interpretation of history, mixing quotes from the newspapers of the time (blaming Lieutenant Governor Dewdney for the events of 1885) with John Diefenbaker's 1961 statement, "They tried to have wrongs rectified and there was injustice in the western land." He took strong exception to the inscription on a monument at Fish Creek, which read: "The rebels were defeated and driven from the field." Norris pointedly retold the battle of Fish Creek, which in fact saw a rout of the Canadian forces.

Norris' bluntness was most unwelcome at the Batoche service, which was supposed to be a nice, "all-is-forgiven" celebration. (Ethel Brant Monture, a prominent Indian author, had even been assigned the honor of reviewing the troops.) Norris, however, would not be pacified. Reminding those attending, most of whom were young troops, that "the conditions of my people and the Indians of Canada is a blot on our country," Norris finished his speech and led the Metis in attendance to the grave of Gabriel Dumont, where he unveiled the stone marker which still stands overlooking the South Saskatchewan River.

Norris' Batoche history lesson was perfectly in keeping with his political character. He was always teaching—whites and natives. He saw native people's lack of self-respect as a major barrier to their self-determination. It was here that native heritage played its most important role. By retelling their history, Norris hoped to give back to native people the pride he believed crucial to their liberation.

Nowhere was the lack of self-worth more evident than among native prisoners at the federal penitentiary at Prince Albert. In the early sixties Norris and a fellow Metis from Prince Albert, Alex Primeau, organized the Native Brotherhood at the "pen,"<sup>13</sup> building on the inmates' involvement in Alcoholics Anonymous and Norris' prospectors' training program. Norris led the twice monthly meetings, which were conducted in strict accordance with rules of order—to teach members some of the mechanics of self-determination. There was no talk of prison conditions. Norris lectured on Indian and Metis history, and on the skills the inmates would need to overcome oppression outside. The Brotherhood also established a debating club. One of the high points of the Brotherhood's activities was the victory of its two top debaters over



the national college champions from the University of Saskatchewan.<sup>14</sup>

Brady was pre-eminent among the Metis as an historian and strategist, but Norris was equally well versed in Metis history, and there were few people anywhere in the country who had Norris' understanding of the Indian Act and the Indian treaties. His normal role of agitator prevented scholarly pursuits, but in the political calm of the early sixties his thoughts turned to writing. Brady, writing to an old Metis colleague from Alberta, referred to Norris' plan "to write a work on the legal and constitutional aspects of scrip and other Metis rights as well as Indian Treaty rights."<sup>15</sup> Yet Brady knew the barriers facing a working man who wished to write, and he pointed out in his letter that Norris would have to wait until retirement to accomplish his task. Underscoring Norris' vulnerability, he also expressed the hope that Norris, who was "not in good health...[would be] spared to accomplish this design."

Norris' criticisms of the new native leadership aside, he could not avoid being drawn into the liberal politics he despised. He attended national conferences of the IEA and at least one annual conference of the NIC. In Prince Albert he gradually became involved in the Indian-Metis Service Council, which ran the local Indian-Metis Friendship Centre.

For Norris it was a period of frustration and confusion. He scorned the Service Council when it was founded in 1958 by the Prince Albert Council of Women and YWCA to counteract prostitution among young native women. To Norris the founders were a bunch of do-gooders looking at symptoms instead of causes. Yet he could not long ignore action from any quarter which claimed to help native people. At first he encouraged several of his socialist friends in Prince Albert to get involved in the council. By 1963 he was on the council's board of directors.

Norris never lost his ambivalence towards these liberal organizations. The domination of Indian affairs by whites and the state was, for the Metis militant, a humiliation. Norris' distrust of white liberal organizations seemed to contradict his views on the role of progressive governments. Not relinquishing the distrust, which was based on deep political convictions and experience with the Metis Association of Alberta, he still clung to the view that progress was most likely to come through progressive governments and resigned himself to working in this indirect way. He wrote to Brady in February, 1962:

At my age I have not the energy or the will to campaign among them. It takes too much energy with the end result of being kicked in the teeth. I believe that as much good can be done by trying to influence M.P.s and M.L.A.s to enact progressive



legislation...<sup>16</sup>

Norris' pessimism led to doubts that native people organizing on their own could influence the state. In 1961 he wrote to Adrian "Pete" Hope\* of Alberta, "It is my opinion, the day is past when the Metis may seek and obtain special privileges because of their ethnic origin."<sup>17</sup> At the same time he wrote to Brady expressing the belief that the "Neestows must work out their own destiny," but also revealing a new cynicism about the possibilities, "I know of a quicker way to rehabilitate the whole of the Indian and Metis population, which would require a form of paternal dictatorship. The Soviets did it in Siberia and made it work."<sup>18</sup>

Brady followed the new developments closely, but the new organizations involved urban whites and natives. Brady did not refer to it, but he might well have seen a special irony in the new attention to the native fact in Canada. The link between the "progressive" Metis and the nomads, in which Brady had put his hopes in the past, was being created anew by the state and its liberal ideologists. By encouraging involvement, providing forums for debate and facilities like the friendship centres, the state was breaking down the class barriers which worked to separate the "progressive," educated natives from their underprivileged cousins. The liberal overtures to potential native leaders implicitly advanced the view that co-operation with the state was the natural and proper solution to the "native problem." A generation of native leaders was being schooled to view the state as a welcome partner rather than a threat to native political autonomy. In this context Malcolm Norris was an anachronism. Liberal whites and their native proteges respected him as a Metis statesman while dismissing him as a militant from the past.

In LaRonge there was no question of a captive or colonized leadership among the native people. There was no leadership at all, and little prospect, in Brady's assessment, that it would develop in the near future. While Norris was gradually being drawn away from the CCF and back into the native struggle, Brady, in the face of desperate conditions in the north, was being drawn back into CCF politics for the first time in almost ten years.

Two development issues preoccupied Brady as they had done in the past—co-operative enterprises and native education. The CCF's only new initiative in recent years involved the transformation of the Saskatchewan Government Trading stores into retail co-operatives. Brady was extremely disappointed by the move, for it was taken without any effort to educate native people in co-operative principles.

\*Hope was trying to rejuvenate the old Metis Association of Alberta in 1961-62.



These "castor oil co-ops" as Brady called them (the natives were being given what the CCF decided was good for them) had serious flaws. Brady criticized the scheme for not providing economic incentives for native people to use them: the weaker co-ops were to be indirectly subsidized by the successful ones. This deprived the latter of incentives and encouraged "a dangerous parasitic tendency" in the former. Brady applied the same principle to retail co-op stores that he did to producer co-ops: "The appeal to self-interest is essential in this work among [native people]; when it is lacking, disaster follows."<sup>19</sup>

Brady's desire to press ahead with the promotion of co-operative, community training and properly run co-ops was matched by his concern for education in general. In a submission to CCF education minister, Woodrow Lloyd, Brady, speaking for the Council of Lac La Ronge School District, underlined the relationship of education to the "general economic and social problems of Northern Saskatchewan" and pointed out that northern education at this point ignored these problems. Those responsible for education, said Brady, treat the native in the same manner as the "flamboyant publicists of the tourist industry... as incidental color against a background of tall evergreens and the romantic haze of teepee smoke." He went on to list ten principles to be followed in northern education, among which were:

- Equality of educational opportunity...irrespective of financial resources.
- Rigorous enforcement of compulsory education among Indian and Metis.
- Establishment of resident hostels and associated folk schools [where necessary].
- Training for citizenship...by the introduction of student self-government.
- The establishment of adult education facilities...whereby illiteracy can be eradicated.
- The establishment of a special selection apparatus for northern teaching appointments.<sup>20</sup>

Brady's renewed efforts to develop strategies for the north led inevitably to his decision to return to CCF politics. It was clear to Brady after seven years in LaRonge that only through government intervention could conditions be improved. It was a conclusion Norris had reached ten years earlier and was prompted in Brady by the fact that prospects for spontaneous native resistance had not improved since he arrived in LaRonge. It was also prompted by political changes in the white community in LaRonge.

The late fifties witnessed a distinct political polarization in the



village. For the first time since Brady took up residence in LaRonge, there was more than a handful of active CCF'ers. In response to increasingly frequent expressions of reaction and explicit racism Brady and other left-wingers decided to nominate a candidate for the 1960 provincial election. With the larger CCF membership in LaRonge the local radicals could choose a candidate without fear of the decision being overturned by party headquarters in Regina. Allan Quandt was nominated and Brady took on the job of campaign manager.<sup>21</sup>

The radicals' only hope of winning the election lay in convincing the native people that Quandt did not stand for the past actions and policies of the CCF. Quandt was well known and popular with the native population. While his status as a small businessman put him in the same class as other whites in town, he had always been in the forefront among whites in defending the rights of native people. The campaign focussed, not on promoting present CCF policies, but on the promise that Quandt, if elected, would fight for progressive changes directed by the interests of Indians and Metis.

Not surprisingly, the provincial CCF organization did little to support their candidate. Quandt's personal integrity and promises of change were up against longstanding hostility to the CCF and its DNR administration and the Liberals, who ran the most unscrupulous political campaign in the history of the north. With truckloads and planeloads of booze, handsfull of five-dollar bills, with red baiting, open threats to jobs and welfare checks, the Liberals bullied and bought their way to victory. It was a devastating defeat for the LaRonge socialists. It was humiliating because many native people were apparently so apathetic toward the political process that they were willing to sell their votes. The outcome was bitter, too, because the CCF's policies and attitudes over fifteen years had completely alienated the people from the only party in the province which might ever make progressive changes in the north.

After the election Brady, Quandt and others decided to put in writing the policies they had been advocating for a decade. In a submission written by Brady dated September 1, 1960, the LaRonge CCF Club put forward to the party its proposals for "A Single Agency in the North."<sup>22</sup> It was, in part, a response to the confusion and petty rivalries between government departments which had plagued the implementation of policies in the north for over a decade. But more than that it was a comprehensive program for the decolonization of the north. The single agency would deal with all aspects of social and economic policy affecting native people; it would use co-operatives as the main economic tool for native rehabilitation and would, under a director "with authority," have politically sympathetic staff to run the programs. With those general principles as guidelines, the document



presented in detail 22 economic, social, research and educational projects.

The idea of a single agency was not new. It had been talked about for years, ever since the overlapping of government services was recognized as a problem. There were many versions of the concept, as diverse as the people and agencies advocating them. Bureaucrats in the DNR simply wanted more efficient administration. They would have had little sympathy for much of the LaRonge proposal. Cabinet agreed with the single agency concept in principle, but no minister was prepared to fight vigorously for it. It was never considered a priority. The Budget Bureau, cautious financial watchdog of the government, advised in 1961 that a single agency was crucial if the government seriously wanted "active and positive leadership in integrated program planning and execution."<sup>23</sup> But the anticipated cost and the threat to cabinet ministers' political empires scuttled any hope of change in the north.

In 1962 Brady attended the annual convention of the CCF in Saskatoon determined to confront the party on its record in the north, its failure to address the terrible plight of native people and its betrayal of its political principles. On the floor of the convention Brady took on Tommy Douglas in a debate over why the CCF lost the election in the north. Brady was not the dynamic speaker that Douglas was, but he had an unshakeable grasp of detail and a memory which spanned a generation of CCF blundering in the north. The facts could not be denied and Brady soon had the premier backed into a corner—only to allow him to slip away. Claiming the CCF lost "hundreds" of votes because of its policies, Brady walked into a typical Douglas counter-attack. The total number of votes cast in the north, Douglas quickly pointed out, only amounted to hundreds. With this cheap shot the premier turned the audience in his favor,<sup>24</sup> demonstrating once again that the CCF would not willingly admit to its errors in the north.

Agrarian populism, CCF-style, never came to grips with the colony in its midst. The CCF left native people of the north to continued economic and social disintegration and turned its attention to the agrarian society whose new prosperity the CCF had guided into being. For the middle-class farmers of Saskatchewan and the growing urban population it was an era of more amenities and greater expectations. The CCF was facing a far different Saskatchewan than it had inherited from the Liberal Party in 1944.

In 1957 the CCF government and the University of Saskatchewan founded the Centre for Community Studies (CCS) to study and assist the development of southern communities. In 1960 the centre signed a three-year contract with the DNR to do socioeconomic surveys of the north. While the CCF was not prepared to act in the north, it was, apparently, concerned enough to study its problems.



The economists, anthropologists and sociologists studying "conditions" in northern Saskatchewan soon contacted Jim Brady and Malcolm Norris. For Norris and Brady many of the social scientists were unexpected, intellectual allies who had no vested interest in the CCF and could see objectively the results of fifteen years of CCF policies. The academics had found unexpected colleagues. Charles Brant, an anthropologist with the CCS, recalled of Brady:

I was utterly amazed...to discover the depths to which a committed radical could become self-educated. His cabin in LaRonge contained a library that one would normally associate with a professional scholar, and Jim knew a tremendous amount about many countries, peoples and their historic and recent struggles. I talked with him a bit about my World War II experiences in the U.S. Army in China; he took down his copy of the work of the great Chinese revolutionary Lu Hsun and lent it to me—I did not know him or his work at all.<sup>25</sup>

Brady became friendly with several of the academics, among them Art Davis, the head of the research division of the CCS. Davis shared Brady's socialist convictions and recognized in Brady a valuable source of insights into what he would later refer to as "the northern dilemma." The mining industry in Saskatchewan was in the doldrums and the unemployed Brady soon began working for the CCS.

Brady enjoyed his part-time work with the centre. It involved interviewing the Metis and Indian residents of Prince Albert, North Battleford and Meadow Lake. The purpose of the surveys was to test the assumption that these three communities were "gateways" for native people migrating from the north. The assignment, which Brady undertook during the winters of 1960-61 and 1961-62, gave him the unique opportunity to study Indian and Metis social history and actually get paid for it (though his salary was modest).

The winter in Prince Albert also gave Brady the first opportunity in years to resume his friendship with Norris on an almost daily basis. This gave both men considerable pleasure. At the suggestion of Norris, "whose steadfast support never failed to encourage [him]," Brady wrote, on his own time, an extensive report based on his research in Prince Albert. Remarkable among his findings was that of all the hundreds of Indian and Metis living in Prince Albert in 1960 only one indicated that he had migrated permanently from the north, suggesting that, desperate northern conditions notwithstanding, native people were reluctant to move south to seek anything but temporary employment. Brady's research revealed the interesting migration history of the Prince Albert Metis. They could be divided into three



groups: those from the pre-rebellion days who were now fully integrated and unrecognizable as Metis; French Metis from south of Regina, forced northward during the Depression, and more recent arrivals from surrounding reserves and Metis settlements.<sup>26</sup>

By 1963 most of the CCS reports on the north were completed. They were a resounding vindication of the northern socialists' ten-year struggle against the CCF's policies. The interim report in 1961 could scarcely hide its horror at the power of the DNR's conservation officers. These men, dressed in RCMP style uniforms and driving distinctive, high-powered cars with large whip aerials, controlled not only conservation but "community administration, tax collection, local government projects, the Saskatchewan Hospital Services plan, social welfare and community development." These officers, said the report, "are, in fact, comparable to the District Officer or District Commissioner of the British Colonial Service. In most communities... they are, in fact, the government." The detailed reports confirmed what the CCF's anthropologist had told them nearly ten years ago: "[The northern programs] speeded up the end of the old way of life while failing to fit people for life in the new... It provided certain services of modern... life but not the necessary economic base."<sup>27</sup> Another report stated that positive government initiatives had virtually come to a halt by the early fifties. The reports contrasted the meagre resources allotted to native people with the benefits of forest and mineral wealth being reaped by southern society. Many of the reports pulled their punches in deference to the centre's CCF sponsorship. The most damning studies were deliberately suppressed by the centre's administrator.<sup>28</sup> The conclusion was, in any case, inescapable: the CCF stood condemned for its fifteen year record in the north.

As might have been expected, even these objective assessments of northern policies fell on deaf ears. The CCF was more interested in suppressing the most critical reports than in responding to the recommendations for change. The need for comprehensive, co-ordinated social and economic planning was ignored; even the measures for alleviating the worst conditions were not implemented. The recommendation for a single agency, supported by a similar recommendation from the Treasury Board, was once again rejected by the cabinet.<sup>29</sup>

Brady's new initiatives in the CCF had once more brought him into the realm of active politics, and he took on other projects as well. In 1960 these included assisting the establishment of a native handicraft co-operative and his election to the board of directors of the recently established co-op store in LaRonge. He was also involved in school board elections in the village. For the first time Brady seems to have been involved in an attempt to apply a union strategy to the problems of



native economic insecurity. Hoping to provide tourist guides with better pay—as well as Unemployment Insurance benefits, workman's compensation, etc.—Brady helped set up a meeting between guides and the prairie Regional Director of Organizing for the Canadian Labor Congress.<sup>30</sup>

Brady's renewed political initiatives also rekindled his partnership with Malcolm Norris. In the election campaign, the submission to the CCF on the single agency, and the CCS studies, they worked together. And the activity sometimes went beyond native politics as when both men became involved in the most critical international issue of the day: the threat of nuclear war. It was a topic which permeated most political discussions, and Norris even referred to it in his speech at Batoche. Brady and Norris joined their socialist colleagues and hundreds of others in an anti-bomb march at the legislative buildings in Regina in April 1961.\*

But Brady's new political resolve proved to be short-lived. His efforts in the CCF and his high hopes for the influence of the CCS studies had come to nothing. The union effort also failed. Nothing changed. In 1963 the effect of repeated political defeats and disappointments was visible on Jim Brady. He became careless about his usually neat appearance; he withdrew from socializing and political discussions; and he began to drink. The iron resolve which characterized his life seemed to weaken. A self-confessed "tired radical," Brady no longer had any political projects. An autobiography, which he began at the suggestion of Art Davis, was abandoned. Brady—the determined, objective revolutionary—had apparently been defeated by the northern dilemma, a dilemma which Norris personified by a figure from Cree mythology, "We-sah-Kay-cha—an ingratiating creature...with no physical form...full of cunning."<sup>31</sup>

Brady had always held the conviction that no matter how appalling the CCF stand might be on any single issue, or on native issues in general, the provincial Liberal Party could only be worse. His experiences in the early sixties shook that conviction and left him no alternatives. For Norris the conviction still held, despite the CCF's dismal record in the north and its questionable Indian affairs initiatives in the south. By 1963 the FSI was becoming a tool of the CCF; the government had lost its leading role to the Liberal government of Quebec in fighting the Indian Affairs Branch, and it was years behind the Tory government of Manitoba in community development.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, as long as the CCF held power—and the promise of

\*Ironically neither Norris, Brady nor others in the peace movement in Saskatchewan made the connection between Saskatchewan uranium (used in the U.S. weapons program) and nuclear weapons.



progress—Norris seemed bound to stay in the background of the native movement.

On April 22, 1964 the Liberal Party led by Ross Thatcher, the demagogic champion of the Saskatchewan petit bourgeoisie, brought an end to twenty years of CCF government. The election results shocked the CCF-NDP (the party changed its name to the New Democratic Party in 1961, but in Saskatchewan the old name died hard). Half-hearted party supporters were suddenly jolted into renewed dedication as the prospect of four years of reactionary Liberal rule began to sink in. For Malcolm Norris, however, the results had a different effect. His dream of native rehabilitation by a progressive government was wiped out and with it went the principal barrier to Norris' re-entry into democratic native politics.

The political trauma of the CCF-NDP defeat was followed, just weeks later, by a tragedy in the Norris family. Ethel, Malcolm's second daughter from his first family, committed suicide. Shortly before her death, Ethel went to Malcolm seeking advice and solace on a personal matter. In the style of the "hard knocks" philosophy which he never seemed able to discard, Norris gave her little comfort. Ethel's death left Norris stunned. And it made him realize how far he had strayed from the Indian philosophy he held in such high esteem. He told his daughter Betty, "I have not been a good enough Indian."

The death of his daughter and the defeat of the CCF-NDP spun Norris around and faced him towards the native world again. He immediately withdrew from active support of the CCF and soon withdrew from the comfortable circle of white friends. That spring and summer Norris began planning for a new, autonomous native movement.

But things had changed since the 1930s. Then a spontaneous movement had sought Norris out. Then there was a strong, unifying issue. In 1964 there was no such issue, no such unity, and possibly not even the basis for a movement. There was certainly no movement looking for a leader. There was a leader looking for a movement. In the 1930s Norris was one man on a complete team of leaders—among them the extraordinary Jim Brady. Now he was alone. The last ten years in LaRonge had left Brady tired and cynical. Life in the most severely depressed settlement in the north and years of political inaction had distorted Brady's political perspective. The machinery had rusted. He could not completely discard a call to action by his old comrade and he would once again serve the Metis movement. But Norris needed Brady's old dedication and Brady's heart was not in it.\* For the demanding,

\*Pete Tomkins remained a close friend of Brady and Norris throughout this period. He retained his dedication to the Metis and his interest in their struggles, but advancing age and ill health prevented his active participation in the 1960s.



day-to-day organizing that lay ahead, Norris needed a new associate, and with uncharacteristic good luck, Malcom Norris found his man.

Norris had met Don Nielson some years earlier in northern Saskatchewan. Nielson was a Metis teacher—aggressive, intelligent, charismatic and proud of his ancestry. He also had an instinctive political understanding. He considered himself a socialist, but was not involved in any political party and had no connections with the new class of government-oriented native leaders. He had been a student leader at the University of Saskatchewan and was the founder and past president of the Northern Areas Teacher Association. Indignant about the conditions endured by the Indian and Metis people, Nielson responded immediately to Norris' proposal for a new grass roots native organization.<sup>33</sup>

Norris was greatly encouraged by the addition of Nielson to the enterprise. He must have realized that he had only a few years left to effect the changes he saw necessary. In Nielson, Norris saw the potential for his replacement and the beginning of a new core of leaders who would carry on the tradition of democratic, autonomous political struggle.

Organizing a provincial Metis association was an enormous task. In the urban centres the Metis were scattered and diffuse, alienated, without roots and without connections to tie them together. These conditions had prompted state action and the subsequent development of government-dominated leaders. But Norris, initially at least, would choose not to take on this new native alliance with the state. The brand of democratic, militant politics Norris sought would be built in the north. It was in the north where the daily features of colonialism were crystal clear and where the Metis were the majority in their own settlements. Here there was potential and need for an independent, anti-colonial organization. Norris wanted a provincial organization, but it would start in the north and base its independence among northern Metis.

There is some suggestion that Norris hoped to include Indians—treaty as well as non-treaty—in the new organization. Such a union was impossible in the thirties and forties, but Norris had greater hopes of native unity in 1964—perhaps because of the urbanization of native people in the south and the common social structure in the north, and perhaps, as well, because the Indian now had the franchise. But his plans to include Indians were vague and may have existed only as future hopes.

Norris could scarcely have set a more arduous and long-term goal than a province-wide organization. Furthermore, he had neither the time nor the youthful health and energy he enjoyed in the thirties. Restricted to evenings and weekends, the task of initiating the



movement must have seemed overwhelming. Fortunately, Norris was to find an unexpected ally in this enterprise.

The new premier, Ross Thatcher, had presented himself as a friend of the native people and made the plight of the native an issue in his election campaign. He had promised to establish a special government agency or department to deal specifically with the native situation and after the election Thatcher wasted little time in publicly displaying his commitment to the native people. He called a conference of Indian and Metis for September 21 and 22, 1964, inviting all the major Indian and Metis community leaders and chiefs.

About 80 delegates, considerably fewer than the government had hoped for, registered for the Saskatoon conference. It was ironic that the conference was held in the castle-like Bessborough Hotel, a symbol of the power of white society. Many of the leaders had been refused service at less prestigious establishments. Most of the Indians were chiefs, although a few "unofficial" Indian delegates also attended. Of the Metis delegates, some were chosen by the three friendship centres in the province and others were probably invited by government employees in native communities.

The geographic representation of the delegates must have been gratifying to Malcolm Norris. Some 25 northern settlements were represented. Only three Metis communities south of the North Battleford-Prince Albert line sent delegates.<sup>34</sup> In twenty years the Metis political scene had changed dramatically. The early Metis Society of Saskatchewan (1937-47) was dominated by southern Metis communities, with only two or three locals existing north of Prince Albert-North Battleford. Assimilation and urbanization had evidently had a negative effect on Metis national consciousness in the south. It was now the north's turn to take the political lead. It seems fair to suggest that almost twenty years of political teaching in the north by Norris and Brady also had something to do with the turnabout.

Malcolm Norris was in his element at the conference. Premier Thatcher and his cabinet were on foreign territory. They walked into a situation they neither understood nor appreciated. The conference was billed as an opportunity for government to listen to native people. They listened, but their intentions were obvious; their policies had already been decided. Thatcher and the Liberals stated their intention to establish an Indian-Metis agency or department and to press, as their CCF predecessors had done, for transfer of jurisdiction over Indians from the federal government to the province. The Indians viewed this as a direct attack on their treaty rights and made their opposition clear. From that point on the conference was little more than an exercise in frustration for the new government.<sup>35</sup>

There was no theme more constant in Indian politics than the defence



of treaty rights. The Indians' fear of losing these rights by accepting or negotiating any change in their relationship to the Canadian government, was stated and restated during the conference. John Tootoosis, who was serving as a translator for the government, added his voice to those who wanted no change in their status and no unity with the Metis. Few Indians then supported Tootoosis' concept of a sovereign nation of Indians, but they recognized in him a strong defender of their treaty rights. At the end of the conference the Indian delegates were presented with a motion to accept all the resolutions passed in earlier study groups. The motion passed but found vigorous opposition from Indians. Speaking for a majority of the Indians present, Peter Dubois of the Muscowpetung Band of Fort Qu'Appelle stated: "I cannot support any move that might undermine my Treaty rights. . . You cannot blame us, from past experience, for our suspicions against the whites and what they promise."<sup>36</sup>

Most of the Indians at the conference were timid and conservative in outlook. Reflecting their history of dependence on the Branch—and their long political isolation—they responded to questions about their concerns by detailing the countless small issues of particular reserves and even the petty grievances of individual Indians. Unable to formulate broad social and economic demands, many of the elected chiefs consulted with Branch officials at the conference before speaking at all.<sup>37</sup>

There were some who took a bolder stand. They were the uninvited, "unofficial" delegates—leaders by virtue of their own independent stature among the Indian people—who, like Johnny Callihoo before them, refused to accept officially sanctioned positions as chief or councillor under the Indian Affairs Act. Even these, however, held to the majority Indian opinion on treaty rights.

In his usual blunt style Norris berated the Indian leaders who rejected unity with the Metis for being selfish and ignoring their less-fortunate brothers. He reminded the Indians how the authorities had repeatedly divided the Indian and Metis, to their detriment, from the time of the North West Rebellion to the present. He ridiculed them for clinging to treaty rights, taunting them with the challenge, "I don't have a government [treaty] number stamped on my ass like a hog going to market."

Norris' derision was the product of years of frustration at delivering the same message countless times with little headway. He blamed the Indians' isolation on reserves for their disabling fear of the white man and their refusal to join forces with the Metis to fight for improved conditions. The position taken by some Indians that the Metis and the white man were in the same camp was to Norris the sheerest hypocrisy for there were few "pure blooded" Indians. Norris also resented the



deceit of those Indian leaders who rejected his advice publicly, but continued to seek it privately. This pattern continued even at the conference, where Norris' room was constantly being visited by individuals and delegations, Indian and Metis, seeking opinions and advice.<sup>38</sup>

Norris' oratory, although it failed to move the Indians on the unity issue, delighted Indian and Metis alike when it was turned against the government. A master at poking fun at white society, Norris spoke in English until ruled out of order and then turned his back on the government platform and spoke to the delegates in Cree. He scorned the government's promise to spend "huge sums" on northern roads for the tourist industry, pointing out the minimal benefit the industry held for native people. He attacked the government for suggesting that fighting forest fires was viable employment, giving examples of successful Indian and Metis fishermen who were forced to abandon their nets to fight forest fires at \$1 a day, when footloose "pale faces" were passed over.

In contrast to the Indians, the Metis took a defiant stand on social and economic issues and demonstrated their political understanding by making broad demands regarding access to the natural resources of the north. Nor was it just Norris and Nielson who spoke up. The northern Metis were in a militant mood.

The conference was a political fiasco for the Liberals. Not only had they earned the wrath and suspicion of the Indians, but they were publicly humiliated by the Metis. Faced with detailed attacks on their promises, cabinet ministers were forced to admit they knew little about the north. Most importantly, the humiliation took place in front of television cameras and was eagerly recorded by other media. The media was just "discovering" the native people, and they searched enthusiastically for any sign of militance. Don Nielson, the sharply dressed, articulate young rebel, was a favorite source of quotes and commentary.

At the end of the conference it was announced that there would be a short meeting to discuss the formation of a new Metis and non-treaty Indian organization. About 25 people attended this meeting and another short gathering before the conference broke up. The mood was enthusiastic and militant, and must have given Norris great encouragement. Only one voice, that of Alex Daniels, the lone Metis from the south, expressed reservations about the aggressive tone of the meeting. Norris and Nielson were elected co-chairmen and instructed to form a "central agency" for the new organization in Prince Albert. All others were to consider themselves "initiators" and were to undertake a membership drive and the organization of local Metis committees.<sup>39</sup>

The enthusiastic response to Norris' call for action may have left him



wondering why he hadn't made the call years earlier. He now attacked the job of organizing with great energy. He and Nielson kept in regular contact with the two dozen members of the organizing committee; minutes of the September conference were sent out, and the organizers were kept up to date on developments by periodic newsletters.

In October Norris was admitted to hospital to have, in his own words, the "main valve in my water works taken out." He wrote to Brady about the operation and about another, more serious development:

Whilst in hospital I was visited by an administration official from the Regina office who informed me that I was to be forcibly superannuated as of January 1, 1965. My anniversary date [retirement] is May 26, 1965.<sup>40</sup>

Norris' dismissal had been ordered by Premier Ross Thatcher and another Liberal cabinet minister, John Cuelenaere from Prince Albert.<sup>41</sup> Liberals, in contrast to CCF'ers, had no qualms of ridding themselves of their political enemies. Davie Stuart, Thatcher's righthand man in the cabinet and later his successor as Liberal leader, took the view that the government simply could not afford to have people on salary who were actively hostile to their policies. Stuart, a small businessman from Prince Albert, was familiar with Norris' political views: "He always preached his political philosophy from the time he arrived in Prince Albert. This was long before I was involved in politics... He would turn the natives against the storekeepers and merchants."<sup>42</sup>

Norris could not have been completely surprised at his dismissal, for it confirmed his assessment of the Liberal government's politics. Yet he could not be entirely objective; he genuinely believed that his job wasn't compromised by his political activity and, more to the point, that he was morally correct. Norris was bitter about his dismissal and disturbed by the lack of protest by his fellow workers who knew the value of his work but feared the consequences of speaking out on behalf of such a high profile enemy of the government.

Norris' health continued to deteriorate. In November he and Nielson were in North Battleford for a meeting with local Metis, who insisted afterward on having a party and putting the two organizers up in a hotel for the night. After carrying his suitcase up the stairs, and refusing Nielson's offer of assistance, Norris collapsed from a heart attack. It was a minor attack but must have served notice to both Norris and Nielson that the old Metis warrior's days were numbered.

In the six months following the September conference Norris and Don Nielson were inseparable partners. They travelled on weekends to



as many communities as possible, and by Christmas they had five locals organized and were preparing for a founding convention in the spring. Norris spent most of his time in the northwestern part of the province, where the Metis communities of Green Lake, Beauval and Ile a la Crosse\* responded eagerly to the new organization.

Brady responded to the organizing effort and in October a LaRonge local was initiated with five members. But there were problems. The membership was scattered. And in December, Brady reported, "There is a general problem of apathy due to the serious problem of alcoholism."<sup>43</sup> While the Metis supported the idea of an association, they would not contribute to it. Brady met with Metis from three other communities near LaRonge and had received more positive responses. But locals had not yet been set up, and Brady informed Norris that he would be working in the bush for the next two months and would be unable to follow up on his initial work.

January brought Norris' superannuation, and the threat of financial hardship forced him to accept the position of executive director for the Prince Albert Indian-Metis friendship centre, the very operation Norris had dismissed as "do-gooderism" in the past and that was now funded by the provincial Liberal government, which had just fired him. Not all board members of the local Indian-Metis service council were happy with the decision, but the board now had a native majority and its new president, Don Nielson, was delighted by the decision—and its political irony.

Norris must have felt the restrictions of his position, as well as its irony. Treating the small, daily problems of the centre's native clients was not Norris' idea of political work and he was kept tied to the centre by its many activities. He made the centre the office of the new organization.

In February Norris wrote to Brady that eight locals were now organized, but there were problems:

There is a Splinter Group who are evidently playing footsy with the Liberal government and who have not registered with us. Come the convention in March we shall bar them from discussion and debate. I understand there are forty-five families in this group.<sup>44</sup>

The splinter group was probably in Regina. In March a group of Metis met there to discuss Metis affairs and a new Metis organization. The

\*These communities, as well as Buffalo Narrows and LaLoche, form a north-south line of primarily Metis settlements up the west side of the province. They were connected by road in the 1960s and are often referred to, collectively, as "the west side."



Allan and Roberta Quandt



Malcolm Norris in his study, 1958.

New Breed



Don Neilson, co-founder,  
Metis Association of  
Saskatchewan, 1964.

New Breed



Joe Amyotte, President,  
Metis Society of  
Saskatchewan.



meeting was initiated by Alex Daniels.<sup>45</sup> While there is no documented evidence that Liberal politicians were directly behind the Regina group, it seems clear that they were already manoeuvring to manipulate the politically cautious southern Metis. Daniels was a placement officer in the new Indian-Metis Branch set up by the provincial government and a friend of Allan Guy, who, according to Daniels, advised him not to run for office in any Metis organization as it would damage his credibility. It was Guy who had defeated Allan Quandt in the 1960 election, and he and Norris were bitter political enemies.

Later that spring Norris and Nielson travelled to Regina in the hope of mending fences. It was no use. Daniels, spokesman for the Metis who met with Norris and Nielson, expressed the view that there should be separate Metis organizations for the south and the north. He argued that the Metis of the south were more assimilated than those of the north and their problems quite different. Even their language differed—the northern Metis speaking primarily Cree and the southern Metis a combination of English, French and Cree. The Metis of the north were closer to the Indian in their ways; the Metis of the south closer to the whites.

The deciding factor in the split was political, not cultural. In Daniels' words, Norris wanted to work against the government, while the southern Metis wanted to work with the government. Acknowledging the real differences between north and south, Norris countered that the need for unity was an overriding concern, but he was not about to compromise on the broader political question. From this point on, Saskatchewan Metis would be divided—ideologically and geographically—into two camps.

The founding convention of the Metis Association of Saskatchewan (MAS) was held April 3-4 in Prince Albert. Twenty delegates and seven associate members attended, fewer than Norris had hoped for. Nevertheless in just 6 months they had organized 16 locals—mostly on the west side—and had signed up 281 paid-up members and 125 who hadn't yet paid.<sup>46</sup> Positive responses were coming from all over the north, but the response was uneven—Green Lake and Cumberland House were enthusiastic while LaRonge was uncommitted. Each community, while sharing common economic and social problems, was different, and a multitude of factors affected the willingness of a settlement to organize and fight for their rights: the relative influence of the reactionary Catholic Church, the size of the white population, the availability of work, the proximity to roads to the south and existence of local leadership.

Norris was cautious in his expectations and tried not to push too hard. Referring to resolutions passed at the April convention, Norris wrote to Brady:



We cannot travel any faster than the people are willing to follow, it will be noted that the resolutions . . . are those of the delegates who attended the founding convention. We have not injected anything of our own for the time being in order that the members and delegates themselves will move as they understand the situation and are ready for more militant action . . .

These submissions and the nature of replies [from Liberal cabinet ministers] are only intended as a means of educating our membership. They will learn through this process, I hope, . . . when they have suffered sufficient reverses to their well intentioned submissions . . . There is hardly a member who has joined the organization through any ideological reason. Just the same [as] co-op stores, they might get a dividend.<sup>47</sup>

Norris and Nielson conducted meetings in nearly 40 communities. Norris always presented two themes to the gatherings: the need for self-respect and the need for unity in the struggle for self-determination. He would tell of the Metis struggles and anecdotes from Indian history, dramatizing the events. In one breath he was pleading with them to "have faith in yourselves," and with the next he would goad and challenge them, telling the men, "You have lots of guts over a beer table but no guts when facing the white man."<sup>48</sup>

Norris was a consummate Metis politician. He knew better than to get involved in local family or partisan disputes, and he was careful not to speak privately with whites in any community. The pattern of the meetings was always the same. After being introduced by a local Metis, he would ask those gathered what issues they were facing and, after giving his opinion, he would encourage the establishment of committees to deal with those issues. He never barred whites from the meetings and often made jokes about white society, chipping away at the myth of white invulnerability. He would also have the Metis laughing at themselves and even employed humor when dealing with the most dangerous adversary, the Catholic Church. He never attacked the priests openly, and he carefully laid out his arguments so that any opposition from the Church would reflect badly on the Church itself. In a deliberate tactic to further disarm the clergy, Norris made a point of always having tea with the local priest.<sup>49</sup>

Norris' primary objective was to make people think for themselves and to this end he used a combination of challenge and inspiration. If there were whites in the crowd, he would deliberately challenge them on an issue to get them angry. "The Metis had a colonial mentality and would side with their white relatives and get so mad that they would be forced into the discussion. Some Metis would go away angry, but the next time Malcolm came they would be there stating their positions and



working for the local group," recalled Don Nielson. People knew that underneath his rough manner, Norris was, as John Tootosis put it, "a man for the people, not for himself."<sup>50</sup>

The initial success of the Metis association was gratifying to Norris, but by August there were signs of trouble. The annual convention called for August 4-5 in Prince Albert attracted delegates from only three MAS locals—Green Lake, Ile a la Crosse and Canoe Narrows. Norris did not despair, for memberships and renewals were coming in. But the turnout was disappointing, and the annual convention was downgraded to a general meeting.<sup>51</sup>

A more critical setback by far was the resignation of Don Nielson. Norris was acutely aware of the need for strong political leadership, and he had pinned great hopes on Nielson. His departure left Norris depressed. The association was at a critical phase, and Norris knew at 65 and in deteriorating health he could not build or even maintain the organization by himself. Brady, his organizing efforts having ceased, could offer only advice and moral support.

Norris was also picking up hints of serious political opposition. The Prince Albert friendship centre had not yet received its grant for the new year, and the Liberal government let it be known that Norris was the cause of the delay. In a letter to Brady, Norris explained,

It has been intimated to me that we should patch our political fences, implying that we should seek support from Mr. Steuart . . . and Mr. Guy . . . In other words they imply political captivity. I am quite perturbed about the whole thing. It may develop into an economic squeeze . . . no money, no centre."<sup>52</sup>

On October 30 the MAS held its third general convention in Prince Albert. The turnout—twelve delegates from five communities (Green Lake, Meadow Lake, Canoe Narrows, Beauval and Prince Albert)—was barely better than the August meeting. Total memberships were down to 179 from the peak of 353; three locals—Cumberland House, Ile a la Crosse and Sandy Bay—were defunct. There were some positive notes. A new and enthusiastic local had been formed at Meadow Lake, south of Green Lake, and Brady had made a new effort in LaRonge, signing up sixteen members. A dozen resolutions were discussed and passed, all of which dealt with economic issues in the communities represented. Despite the small turnout the executive elections took place, with Norris acclaimed president and Brady declared organizer, in absentia.<sup>53</sup> The MAS, off to a great start a year earlier, was now just holding on.



## 14

### *The Threat of State Intervention*

THE ECONOMIC and political crisis of the thirties radicalized thousands of Canadian workers and farmers, and profound disillusion with the country's political system led to direct political action to reform that system. By the 1960s reforms had long been in place, conditions had much improved and most farmers' and workers' organizations were at peace with the status quo. The tradition of direct action politics, frozen by the cold war and co-opted by relative prosperity, was transferred to students and native people. The gulf separating students and native people notwithstanding, there were to be links between these two movements. The student movement in the United States, which inspired its Canadian counterpart, had its beginnings in the struggle against racism. The civil rights movement was led by blacks but had attracted wide support from liberal and socialist whites. The student wing of the movement, led by the interracial Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee sponsored cross-cultural, community organizing projects in which white students lived and worked in black communities.<sup>1</sup> When the student movement reached this country, race conscious Canadian students turned their attention to the plight of native people and in the decade that followed made various attempts at building alliances.

In Saskatchewan it was inevitable that those students would immediately run into Malcolm Norris. While Norris was organizing MAS locals in northern Saskatchewan, Jim Harding was doing academic research in the west side communities. Harding was a student activist who had recently cut his ties with the NDP by stepping down as the president of the New Democratic Youth, the party's youth wing. He was president of the Student Union for Peace Action, the student wing of the peace movement in Canada and the forerunner of the "new left." He was among a growing number of students, many with family connections to the CCF-NDP, who had lost respect for the NDP and



had none for what they considered the fossilized dogmatism of the Communist Party. They found their inspiration in the American civil rights and anti-Viet Nam war movements. That inspiration came partly from the highly democratic, direct action strategy employed by the movements, and partly from American youth's rejection of U.S. culture as fundamentally violent and corrupted by consumerism. When Harding met Norris he was immediately struck by Norris' unique analysis of the native question. He recalled:

Malcolm was the first person I talked to in Saskatchewan who could blend Marxism and libertarian politics. He talked of the importance of a racial analysis of class society. No one, up till then, talked about the colonization of Indian and Metis. He often talked about other parts of the world, drawing analogies with Saskatchewan.<sup>2</sup>

The students could easily find racism in Canada; they would find it more difficult to reproduce the solidarity achieved by whites and blacks in the American civil rights movement. The Canadian and American situations differed significantly. In the first place blacks played a crucial role in the American economy; Indians and Metis in Canada did not. Blacks were not plagued by the divisions which prevented unity among Indians and Metis. Perhaps the most important difference was that the movement in the United States was led by blacks, and in Canada there was no sign of similar, direct action leadership among the Indians or Metis, and no militant movement to support.

It may seem surprising that Norris, so acutely aware of these deficiencies, nevertheless encouraged student action based on the American experience. Perhaps the moral indignation which was moving the students to action reminded Norris of his own youthful anger and fervor. He saw a chance for critically minded, educated—albeit middle-class—Canadians to experience the day-to-day reality of Canadian native people. His generation of socialists, even his closest white allies, understood the dilemma of native people and supported Norris. But that support was largely within the old political forms, the CCF and the CP and government; and little had come of it. In the absence of militant native leaders Norris evidently felt that these students might act as catalysts in the radicalizing process—a task he could not do alone and in which he was beginning to doubt his effectiveness. Jim Harding recalled:

I was at many native meetings with Norris: Indian-Eskimo Association; Metis Association and FSI [Federation of Saskatchewan Indians] and Indian Affairs sponsored meetings and