

SFU Simon Fraser University Special Collections
and Rare Books

Finding Aid - Communist Party of Canada fonds (MsC 48)

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Rules for Archival Description

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Communist Party of Canada fonds

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Summary information

Repository:	Simon Fraser University Special Collections and Rare Books
Title:	Communist Party of Canada fonds
ID:	MsC 48
Date:	1991-1992, 2002 (date of creation)
Physical description:	13 cm of textual records
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Founded in Ontario in 1921, the Communist Party of Canada is one of two federally registered Communist parties in Canada, the other being the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), an anti-revisionist Maoist party. Though without elected federal or provincial representation at present, the CPC is active in trade unions, the civic reform movement, and a number of social justice, anti-war and international solidarity groups and coalitions. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the party was thrown into crisis. The CPC leadership and a segment of its general membership began to abandon Marxism-Leninism as the basis of the Party's revolutionary perspective, and ultimately moved to liquidate the Party itself, seeking to replace it with a left, social democratic entity. The protracted ideological and political crisis created much confusion and disorientation within the ranks of the Party for over two years. Ultimately, the majority in the Central Committee (CC) led by Maurice Hewison of the party voted to abandon Marxism-Leninism. An orthodox minority in the CC resisted this effort. Provincial conventions were held in 1991 in British Columbia and Ontario. At the B.C. convention, delegates threw out one of the main leaders of the Hewison group. A few months later, Ontario delegates rejected a concerted campaign by Hewison and his supporters, and overwhelmingly supporters of the Marxist-Leninist current to the Ontario Committee and Executive. The Hewison group moved on August 27, 1991 to expel eleven of the key leaders of the opposition and also dismissed the Ontario provincial committee. The expelled members threatened to take the Hewison group to court. After several months of negotiations, an out-of-court settlement resulted in the Hewison leadership agreeing to leave the CPC and relinquish any claim to the party's name, while taking most of the party's assets to the Cecil-Ross Society, a publishing and educational foundation previously associated with the party. Following their departure a convention was held in December 1992 at which delegates agreed to continue the Communist Party. The renovated party, now with fewer than 1,000 members,

was smaller than before the split and had lost a number of assets. It was not in a position to run fifty (50) candidates in the 1993 federal election, the number required to maintain official party status. As a result, the CPC was deregistered by Elections Canada, and its remaining assets were seized by the government. A prolonged legal battle ensued, resulting in a Supreme Court of Canada ruling in 2003 that overturned a provision in the Elections Act requiring fifty candidates for official party status.

Custodial history

Obtained from Bill Vander of New Westminster in 2001.

Scope and content

Fonds consists of material relating to the end of the Communist Party of Canada; includes newspapers, correspondence, legal documents; ephemera.

Notes

Title notes

Finding aids

Printed inventory available.

Other notes

- Publication status: published
 - Level of detail: Full
 - Status description: Published
 - Alpha-numeric designations: BCAUL control number: SFL--2372
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Access points

- Communist Party of Canada (subject)
- Textual record (documentary form)
- Politics (subject)

Series descriptions
