

Bust Amid Boom: Automotive Plant Closures in Windsor, Ontario, 1945-1965

Tim Liebrecht

A Thesis
In the Department
of
History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (History) at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

November, 2025

© Tim Liebrecht, 2025

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: **Tim Liebrecht**

Entitled: **Bust Amid Boom: Automotive Plant Closures in Windsor, Ontario,
1945-1965**

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (History)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

_____ Chair
Dr. Peter Gossage

_____ Examiner
Dr. Ed Dunsworth

_____ Examiner
Dr. Matthew Penney

_____ Supervisor
Dr. Steven High

Approved by _____

[Chair of Department or Graduate Program Director]

[Month/day/year] _____

[Dean of Faculty]

Abstract

Bust Amid Boom: Automotive Plant Closures in Windsor, Ontario, 1945-1965

Tim Liebrecht

The post-war decades are often considered boom years in North America's economy, especially in the auto manufacturing industry. Contrary to this understanding, however, Windsor, once Canada's foremost auto manufacturing hub, saw a steep decline in its industrial output. Its major employer, the Ford Motor Company of Canada, moved its headquarters and principal operations to Oakville in 1953. Many parts manufacturers would follow suit. In total, this industrial exodus would result in thousands of Windsor workers losing their jobs. Union officials tried to prevent the relocation of automotive jobs out of Windsor, but to little avail. For their part, municipal officials were reluctant to interfere in the hopes of attracting future investment, while provincial and federal politicians viewed this as too localized an issue. As far as they were concerned, investment in other regions of Ontario was still investment and, on balance, provincial job numbers were still on the rise. Windsor may have been losing jobs, but other areas within Ontario were the beneficiaries. Ultimately, then, I argue that Windsor challenges the traditional timeline of deindustrialization, with its focus on the 1970s and 1980s. Plant movements are intrinsic to capitalism, as companies seek to avoid unions and control wage costs.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, thank you to my supervisor, Steven High. I cannot overstate the patience, support, and kindness he offered throughout this process.

I would like to thank the Deindustrialization and Politics of Our Time project. Their financial support allowed for me to move to Montreal, as well as take research trips both to Windsor and Detroit. Having the opportunity to engage with such a wide variety of deindustrialization scholars regularly provided important thoughts on my own work.

I am greatly indebted to the staff at the Walter P. Reuther Archives at Wayne State University, the Local History branch of the Windsor Public Library, and the Windsor Municipal Archives for their support in identifying and accessing useful material. Special thanks to Mary-Lou Gelissen for letting me ask too many questions about growing up in Windsor, and for great Windsor pizza recommendations.

Thank you to so many friends, classmates, colleagues, and professors, both in Montreal and Ontario, who have provided invaluable support and advice throughout this process. I would like to specifically mention Barbara Lorezkowski, Matthew Hayday, Donna Whittaker (who keeps the department running), Gab McLaren, Liam Devitt, Amanda Whitt, everyone else I had the pleasure of sharing class and exchanging feedback with, Drew McKinnon, Chris Jarrett, and Joe Mullins. And to so many more, I know I'm forgetting to mention – your support did not go unnoticed.

And finally, thank you to my family, especially my grandparents, John and Ankie, my sister, Abby, and my parents, Fred and Marita. And Lucky and Leo. Your love and support throughout my academic journey have made this all possible.

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	vi
List of Terms and Abbreviations.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: The Removal of an Industrial Stronghold: Ford Windsor.....	19
Ford-Canada Attempts to Flee the Union.....	21
Labour Reactions to Ford-Canada Plant Relocations.....	27
Conclusion.....	35
Chapter 2: Auto Parts Closures and Municipal-Labour Relations in Windsor.....	37
Plant Movement of Auto Parts Manufacturers.....	40
Plant Movements and Windsor City Council.....	53
Conclusion.....	59
Conclusion.....	61
Bibliography.....	66

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Cars blockading the road during the 99-day strike.....	4
Figure 2.1. <i>Windsor Star</i> Headline. “Oakville Gets Huge Ford Plant.”.....	19
Figure 2.2. Table: Windsor Manufacturing Employment, 1951-1961.....	22
Figure 2.3. Table: Ontario Average Weekly Manufacturing Earnings, 1955-1961.....	22
Figure 3.1. Postcard depicting Ford-Canada’s Oakville plant.....	37
Figure 3.2. Historic Photograph of McDougall Street, Windsor.....	48

List of Terms and Abbreviations

UAW	United Auto Workers
Ford-Canada	The Ford Motor Company of Canada
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
NDP	New Democratic Party
Auto Pact	Canada-United States Automotive Products Agreement

Introduction

Windsor, located at the southwestern tip of Ontario, across the river from Detroit, was a booming industrial town of over 160,000 people in 1950. While what is now Windsor may otherwise have existed only in relative obscurity, the move by Gordon McGregor to negotiate with Henry Ford to establish the Ford Motor Company in Canada in 1904 brought the city quickly to the fore.¹ Tradesmen and labourers came from across the province, the United States, and from overseas, to work in the new Ford-Canada plant and the burgeoning auto industry in what was then known as Ford City. The city had been built on the auto industry.

Windsor, however, experienced plant closures and extensive job loss during the second half of the twentieth century. Runaway auto manufacturing plants not only crippled the local economy in the short term but also led to longer-term instability for the city's industrial base. Thousands of workers faced sudden and often permanent unemployment, as the flight of capital elsewhere in the province left them with few alternatives in a city that relied so heavily on the auto sector. Families were thrust into economic precarity, with unstable or lower-paying jobs meant to replace the relative security of unionized manufacturing work. With little support from the provincial or federal governments, the United Auto Workers (UAW)² organized resistance to these plant closures. The combination of these factors and the ever-increasing mobility of capital left Windsor's workforce especially vulnerable.

¹ Herb Colling, *Ford City* (Windsor: Biblioasis, 2017), 31-43.

² The United Auto Workers, hereafter referred to as the UAW, and their documents feature heavily in this thesis. They would remain the union representing most Canadian auto workers, including those in Windsor, until the formation and separation from the UAW of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) in 1985. The CAW would later merge with other unions to become Unifor in 2013.

The timing of these plant closures is of particular interest. A typical timeline of deindustrialization suggests a boom in manufacturing across all sectors, including auto manufacturing, in the immediate postwar period. That was not the case, however, in Windsor. Most notable was the relocation of Ford-Canada's Canadian headquarters and principal manufacturing plant to Oakville in 1953. Once a booming industrial hub in Canada, by 1961, industrial employment in Windsor had declined to one-third of its 1953 level.³ Windsor was joined only by Brantford as the two urban areas in all of Canada that saw a decrease in industrial employment between 1949 and 1961, while other cities saw up to thirty percent growth in manufacturing employment.⁴ Although many industrialized communities elsewhere in Ontario appeared to be thriving, their prosperity depended in part on the decline of industry in others.

Founded on August 17, 1904, Ford-Canada secured exclusive rights to manufacture and sell Ford vehicles throughout Canada and the British Empire, except for Britain and Ireland.⁵ The company's rapid growth spurred the incorporation of Ford City as a distinct municipality in the area that is now Windsor in December 1912, underscoring the centrality of Ford-Canada's presence in the region and the company's significance to its economic and social development.⁶ In this way, the development of Ford-Canada and the emergence of Windsor as an industrial city became inextricably linked, as the city's growth and identity were shaped by the success of the automotive industry.

³ Windsor City Council, *Comments on the Memorandum on Industry Location, 1963* (Windsor, ON, 1963), 2-3.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Herb Colling, *Ford City* (Windsor: Biblioasis, 2017), 21. For more on the history of Ford-Canada's beginnings in Windsor, see: David Roberts, *In the Shadow of Detroit: Gordon M. McGregor, Ford of Canada, and Motoropolis* (Wayne State University Press, 2006).

⁶ Ibid, p. 31

Initially founded as a separate entity from the American Ford Motor Company, Ford-Canada's independence reflected the combination of protectionist trade policy and imperial opportunity that existed in the early twentieth century. While Henry Ford was the principal, sole owner of the Ford Motor Company, he only controlled 13 percent of Ford-Canada.⁷ This structure proved beneficial, given the high tariffs that made importing automobiles into Canada costly, as well as Canada's access to other foreign markets throughout the British Empire.⁸ In this way, Ford-Canada became a means to circumvent trade barriers and an instrument for international expansion, while also accessing an otherwise underdeveloped Canadian manufacturing base. However, as the American company struggled throughout the immediate post-war years, Henry Ford's son, also named Henry, sought to consolidate control, purchasing shares in Ford-Canada and increasing his stake to a controlling 52 percent by 1946.⁹ This brought about a new corporate structure and strategy that emphasized closer ties between the Canadian and American companies, requiring Ford-Canada to be increasingly reliant on technical expertise from the United States. As a result, Ford Motor Company took control of Ford-Canada's export markets, further diminishing the former's autonomy.

By the mid-twentieth century, Ford-Canada's dominance in the region and the strength of organization of Windsor's workers paved the way for one of the most significant events in Canadian labour history: a 99-day strike. Beginning on September 12, 1945, approximately 11,000 workers of UAW Local 200 walked off the job, notably demanding union recognition and

⁷ Dimitry Anastakis, "From Independence to Integration: The Corporate Evolution of the Ford Motor Company of Canada, 1904-2004," *The Business History Review* 78, no. 2 (2004): 214-215.

⁸ *Ibid*, 223.

⁹ *Ibid*, 231-233.

automatic dues checkoff, as well as other job protections and improved working conditions.¹⁰

The strike quickly demonstrated Windsor's growing union militancy, also drawing widespread support from the community and other plants, with numerous other workers joining in sympathy strikes.¹¹ This strike action not only underscored the power of collective action in a burgeoning post-war economy like Windsor's, but also laid the groundwork for legal and institutional shifts that would redefine labour relations in Canada.



Figure 1.1. Windsor Star Archives. November 7, 1945. Cars blockading Riverside Drive.

The strike would culminate in the landmark legal decision that would result in the Rand Formula, which established automatic dues checkoff for all workers within an applicable bargaining unit. Essentially, then, companies would be required to recognize and work directly with unions, mandating that companies collect dues from all employees. However, the Rand Formula did not go so far as to require a closed shop. The belief was that all employees benefited

¹⁰ Colling, *Ford City*, 129.

¹¹ Sam Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers : the Birth and Transformation of a Union* (James Lorimer & Company, 1995), 45-49.

from a union and therefore should all be required to pay dues, but that, nonetheless, a closed shop, whereby no non-union employees would be allowed to work at a company, would be antithetical to the rights of the individual to determine what organizations they belonged to.¹² The Rand Formula exists as a sort of compromise, as new responsibilities were entrusted to unions as well. Namely, they had to conduct secret ballot votes of their membership before lawfully engaging in collective bargaining, as well as prevent wildcat strikes and discipline employees who participated in them.¹³ This settlement not only reshaped labour relations at Ford-Canada but also marked a turning point for Canadian industrial unionism more broadly, cementing Windsor's reputation as a centre of organized labour activism and giving companies additional reason to leave the city altogether.

This thesis is rooted in the existing canon of deindustrialization studies that first emerged in the 1980s. Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, an economist and a political scientist, published their key text, *Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry*, in 1982. While not the first to acknowledge industrial plant closures and their related impacts, they were part of a first wave of scholars framing these processes in these terms:

By *deindustrialization* is meant a widespread, systematic disinvestment in the nation's basic productive capacity. Controversial as it may be, the essential problem with the U.S. economy can be traced to the way capital – in the forms of financial resources and of real plant and equipment – has been diverted from productive investment in our basic national

¹² Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker, *Labour before the Law : the Regulation of Workers' Collective Action in Canada, 1900-1948* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 284-285.

¹³ Ibid.

industries into unproductive speculation, mergers and acquisitions, and foreign investment. Left behind are shuttered factories, displaced workers, and a newly emerging group of ghost towns.¹⁴

Bluestone and Harrison importantly frame this as a process of coordinated deindustrialization, rather than a simple economic downturn. They also brought forth an early consideration of the personal and family costs of job loss and plant closure.¹⁵ Robert Laxer, classified as an economic nationalist, earlier put forward the ‘deindustrialization thesis’ in the Canadian context in 1973. He argued that American-owned corporations had a propensity for favouring American workers over Canadian labour, thereby contributing to the early deindustrialization here.¹⁶ His was one of the earliest articulations of a framework of economic dependency, and served as a basis for continued discussions of economic decline and the limits of sovereignty in labour and industrial policy.

Charlotte Yates, for example, would extend this critique in *From Plant to Politics: The Autoworkers in Postwar Canada*, as she demonstrated how the Canadian section of the UAW focused on a more militant, grassroots approach to resistance distinct from its American counterparts. She observed that the UAW rejected “responsible unionism” in Canada, instead favouring mass action and coalition-building.¹⁷ In this way, Yates highlighted how workers and

¹⁴ Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York, NY: Basic Books Publishers, 1982), 6.

¹⁵ Bluestone and Harrison, 10-12.

¹⁶ Robert M. Laxer, *(Canada) Ltd: The Political Economy of Dependency* (Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 9.

¹⁷ Charlotte Yates, *From Plant to Politics: The Autoworkers Union in Postwar Canada* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 228.

their unions navigated the inequalities first identified by Laxer, linking questions of economic dependency to those of class solidarity and political struggle.

The evolution of this scholarship throughout the 1980s reflected an increased concern with how Canadian unions were adapting to this restructuring. Carla Lipsig-Mumme's analysis of union resilience in the face of plant closure underscored the organizational strength that was required for the later Canadianization of unions – the process by which Canadian sections of major American-headed unions, like the UAW, split off to become distinct entities.¹⁸ In a similar way, Jane Jenson and Rianne Mahon traced the divergent paths of Canadian and American unionism in “Legacies for Canadian Labour of Two Decades of Crisis,” by attributing, in part, Canada's distinct development to the institutionalized relationship with the New Democratic Party.¹⁹ Elaine Bernard further explored this partnership in the context of opposition to free trade by illustrating how being faced with economic crisis fostered a deeper political consciousness within the working class and organized labour in Canada.²⁰ Extending this further still, Noah Meltz's comparative study of private and service sector unions in both countries emphasized the legislative protections for Canada's unions in later decades.²¹ In this way, he argued in favour of

¹⁸ Carla Lipsig-Mumme, "Canadian and American unions respond to economic crisis," *Journal of Industrial Relations* 31, no. 2 (1989): 232-233.

¹⁹ Jane Jenson and Rianne Mahon, "Legacies for Canadian Labour of Two Decades of Crisis," in *The Challenge of Restructuring: North American Labor Movements Respond : Conference Entitled 'North American Labour Movements into the 1990s: Similarities or Differences' : Papers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 84-85.

²⁰ Elaine Bernard, "Labour, the New Democratic Party, and the 1988 Federal Election," in *The Challenge of Restructuring: North American Labor Movements Respond : Conference Entitled 'North American Labour Movements into the 1990s: Similarities or Differences' : Papers*, ed. Jane Jenson and Rianne Mahon (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 148-149.

²¹ Noah Meltz, "Unionism in the Private Sector-Service Sector: A Canada-United States Comparison," in *The Challenge of Restructuring: North American Labor Movements Respond : Conference Entitled 'North American Labour Movements into the 1990s: Similarities or Differences' : Papers*, ed. Jane Jenson and Rianne Mahon (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 215.

the notion that Canadian labour's response to deindustrialization and anti-union efforts was shaped by a combination of institutional supports and political alignments that did not exist in the United States. Together, then, these works provide the groundwork for later studies of Canadian deindustrialization, situating economic decline alongside unionism, national policy, and continental integration.

Broadly speaking, deindustrialization scholars most often engage in studies on the regional level. Much of the work in the United Kingdom, for example, has included discussions of moral economy and has also often been focused on the policies of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in the 1980s. One such example is work done by historian Jim Phillips, who analyzed the deindustrialization of Scotland's coal industry through the post-war period.²² Much has also been written in the United States on the Rust Belt, where deindustrialization has been especially destructive. Christine Walley is an example of a scholar who considers the local effects of deindustrialization. She brings together the personal and the wider process through an examination of her own family's experiences with deindustrialization in Chicago, and the ways that class, race, and gender intersect in the process.²³ This common local and regional approach to deindustrialization makes intuitive sense, as these processes have such devastating effects on the community level, but they also hinder potential considerations across regional divisions. By

²² Jim Phillips, "The Moral Economy of Deindustrialization in Post-1945 Scotland," in *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, ed. Steven C. High, Lachlan MacKinnon, and Andrew Perchard (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2018), 313-330; Jim Phillips, *Scottish Coal Miners in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

²³ Christine J. Walley, *Exit Zero: Family and Class in Postindustrial Chicago* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 7.

looking too narrowly at one case, there exists a risk of generalizing what might be specific to a locality or region.

These studies underscore the importance of regional and local perspectives in understanding Windsor's experiences with plant closures, which unfolded as a distinctly place-based and community-rooted process. Windsor's trajectory was shaped by its dependence on the auto industry and by the limited attention it received from higher levels of government. While Windsor faced instability and job loss, other regions of Canada, especially elsewhere in southern Ontario, remained largely unaffected or even benefited from industrial restructuring through greater investment. Windsor's industrial history was also marked by recurring cycles of decline and renewal. Ford-Canada's 1979 investment of over half a billion dollars, for example, was projected to create more than 2,600 jobs directly, and thousands more in related services and industries.²⁴ However, these gains were short-lived as the following decades brought further layoffs and plant closures. This uneven trajectory complicates efforts to portray Windsor as a totally post-industrial city and also helps explain its neglect by policymakers. Ultimately, nationally generalized studies fail to capture these nuances. Only a locally-focused analysis can fully account for the distinct economic, political, and social conditions that shaped Windsor's experience of deindustrialization.

One significant case is presented by Jefferson Cowie in his influential book *Capital Moves*, where he tracks RCA as it moved television manufacturing from one US locality to the next over the post-war decades. The resulting chain of capital migration began in Camden, New

²⁴ News Release by Ford of Canada News Service, August 15, 1979, Ford Expansion, 1977-1980, City of Windsor Municipal Archives, Windsor, ON.

Jersey, and ended across the border in the Mexican city of Ciudad Juarez.²⁵ Similar trajectories could be mapped away from Windsor to other Ontario and Quebec towns such as Stratford, Dunnville, and Montreal.²⁶ Most of these towns were small, though the magnetic force of the fast-growing Toronto area was strong. As with RCA, some companies literally moved production, removing machinery from the old factory and transporting it to the new plant. Mostly, however, there was some overlap between the old and new sites of production, but the results remained the same.

As Cowie explains, the process of plant closure is rarely sudden:

The firm that abruptly closes down and abandons its workers to the streets, although perhaps the dominant image of the problem, is actually much less typical than the plant that undergoes a more subtle process of cutbacks, attrition, and the gradual relocation or elimination of industrial jobs. The closure of any plant is of political and social concern, but the final shutdown of a factory... usually comes only at the end of a long, silent process of job relocation.²⁷

In Canada, there exists a unique process of deindustrialization, which, while not as severe as that which occurred in the nearby American Rust Belt, was central to understanding Windsor's economic struggles. Steven High makes the case for this relatively lower severity, which he broadly frames around a new nationally framed solidarity expressed by labour unions

²⁵ Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves : RCA's Seventy-year Quest for Cheap Labor* (New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2001), 1-11.

²⁶ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32; Summary of Runaway Plants Leaving Windsor. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

²⁷ *Ibid*, 6.

and the legislative response, or lack thereof, by Canadian policymakers.²⁸ High and others have also highlighted the importance of nationalism in framing early discussions of deindustrialization in Canada. He argues that nationalism was a means by which unions and workers have been able to mobilize against job loss, especially in the context of plants moving out of the country.²⁹ Dimitry Anastakis also argues that nationalism served as a vehicle for Canadian organized labour to garner support for the Canadianization of unions like the Canadian Auto Workers.³⁰

Nationalism served to politicize industrial closures when jobs were lost in Canada. However, unions and political figures were concerned about the eradication of certain manufacturing jobs from the country, not just one part of it. In the case of Windsor in the 1950s and 1960s, where jobs were not being moved out of the country but down the highway to another part of the province, nationalism failed to transform the fight to save jobs for the community. Efforts were certainly made at the municipal level of government and among local union leaders to use nationalism as a way to mobilize opposition. However, since provincial net job figures remained the same or even increased despite Windsor's plant closures, they were unable to convince the Ontario government to intervene.

Other work on Canadian deindustrialization has often taken the form of case studies. For example, Carmela Patrias and Larry Savage produced a labour history of the Niagara region,

²⁸ Steven High, "I'll Wrap the F*#@ Canadian Flag around Me': A Nationalist Response to Plant Shutdowns," in *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 167-91.

²⁹ High, "I'll Wrap," 168-9.

³⁰ Dimitry Anastakis, "Between Nationalism and Continentalism: State Auto Industry Policy and the Canadian UAW, 1960-1970," *Labour/Le Travail*, no. 53 (Spring 2004): 107.

with some focus on late-twentieth-century deindustrialization there.³¹ More recently, various pieces can be found in *The Deindustrialized World* collection, including, for example, two pieces by Lachlan MacKinnon and Andrew Parnaby, which respectively examine different facets of deindustrialization in Sydney, Nova Scotia.³² These case studies provide a working timeline of deindustrialization in Canada and across North America; one that generally traces a post-war boom followed by closure and ruination in later decades. They also offer a valuable point of comparison to Windsor's plant closures, serving both as a reference for understanding local developments and as an illustration of the ongoing challenges that deindustrialization has imposed on workers.

These studies often centre community, and the impacts of deindustrialization at that local level. Therefore, it is also prudent to consider the intersections of class and community, as Lucy Taksa does in her 2000 article in *Labour History* "Like a Bicycle, Forever Teetering between Individualism and Collectivism: Considering Community in Relation to Labour History." For Taksa, notions of community had too often been simplified in labour history – either community was detrimental to class solidarity because of the inherently inter-class dimensions of a physical place, or proximity encouraged class solidarities to emerge and remain strong.³³ As an

³¹ Carmela Patrias and Larry Savage, "Living in a Dying Town: Deindustrialization in Welland," in *Union Power: Solidarity and Struggle in Niagara* (Edmonton, AB: AU Press, 2012).

³² Lachlan MacKinnon, "Environmental Justice and Workers' Health: Fighting for Compensation at the Sydney Coke Ovens, 1986-90," in *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, by Steven C. High, Lachlan MacKinnon, and Andrew Perchard (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2018), 68-86; Andrew Parnaby, "Growing Up Even More Uncertain: Children and Youth Confront Industrial Ruin in Sydney, Nova Scotia, 1967," in *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, by Steven C. High, Lachlan MacKinnon, and Andrew Perchard (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2018), 87-110; Lachlan MacKinnon and Andrew Parnaby, *Cape Breton in the Long Twentieth Century: Formations and Legacies of Industrial Capitalism* (Canadian Committee on Labour History: AU Press, 2024); Lachlan MacKinnon, *Closing Sysco: Industrial Decline in Atlantic Canada's Steel City* (University of Toronto Press, 2020).

³³ Lucy Taksa, "Like a Bicycle, Forever Teetering between Individualism and Collectivism: Considering Community in Relation to Labour History," *Labour History*, no. 70 (May 2000): 16-17.

alternative, she presents a framework that considers what identity means, and specifically, how race, gender, and place inform an individual's participation and sense of belonging in a community.³⁴ This has significant implications for Windsor plant closures. The deeply local feeling of betrayal, and the reality that other towns mere hours away were gaining from its losses, meant that class as an exclusive means of understanding workers' resistance is insufficient. As Taksa also argues, class and community develop in often similar ways, and who is integrated into those conceptualizations is also defined by identity. An individual's inclusion or exclusion from these groups is a fluid process. In this case, Windsor's working class and who they blamed for plant closures was informed by processes similar to those of community development. Proximity, ethnicity, and gender, among other factors, are crucial in understanding how labour's resistance to plant closures was undertaken and who participated in it.

Windsor has also served as a topic for deindustrialization case studies. Recent scholarship, especially, has taken a comparative approach, often analyzing Windsor plant closure through a political and labour-centred framework. Early work framed deindustrialization as an economic inevitability, focusing on plant closures and job loss as the outcome of broader economic and structural forces especially the draw from the United States.³⁵ More recently, however, studies have contrasted Windsor against Detroit to underscore the distinctiveness of Windsor's trajectory. Where Detroit's deindustrialization was shaped largely by suburbanization, racialized disinvestment, and strategic plant relocation by the Big Three auto manufacturers,

³⁴ Ibid, 20-28.

³⁵ As an example of this earlier work, also see: Mel Watkins, "A Staple Theory of Economic Growth (1963)," in *Staples and Beyond: Selected Writings of Mel Watkins* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 32-56; Kari Levitt, *Silent Surrender: The Multinational Corporation in Canada* (MacMillan Canada, 1970).

Windsor confronted an interrelated set of pressures of interprovincial investment, favouring of the Greater Toronto Area, and declining Canadian content in the automotive industry.³⁶ High extends this contested narrative, emphasizing the city's militant unionism, epitomized by the 99-day strike of 1945 and the persistent struggle against plant closures. He also utilizes a comparative approach, highlighting different instances of labour resistance to company overreach and the continual struggle for companies to justify the closure of plants.³⁷ By integrating political and labour perspectives into considerations of Windsor's deindustrialization, these studies provide a crucial foundation for my research aimed at further complicating the story of Windsor.

Finally, it is important to understand the Canadian automotive industry and the literature that has been written about it. There is a common focus on the industry's origins in Windsor, and the fact that auto manufacturing in Canada is inextricably linked with the establishment of Ford-Canada in the city. The company not only anchored Windsor as a hub of auto production but also set the template for the industry's structure in Canada, one characterized by deep economic and technological ties with the United States. Early government policy, as Stewart Melanson notes, reflected attempts to foster a distinctly Canadian manufacturing base through high tariffs which was aimed at making potentially limited domestic markets viable.³⁸ Yet, even from its very beginnings, the industry's 'Canadian' characteristics were circumscribed by geography and

³⁶ Patrick Cooper-McCann and Andrew Guinn, "Why Windsor Deindustrialized Differently than Detroit," *Labor History* 65, no. 3 (2024): 274-276.

³⁷ Steven High, "A fruitless exercise? The political struggle to compel corporations to justify factory closures in Canada," *Labor History* 63, no. 3 (2022): 297-301.

³⁸ Stewart Melanson, *Learning from the Past – Volume 1: The Automotive Industry and Economic Development in Ontario; a Historical Perspective (1904 to the Present)*, research report no. 2009-WPONT-006, Working Paper Series: Ontario in the Creative Age (Martin Prosperity Institute, 2009), 2-6.

ownership. As Dimitry Anastakis argues, Canadian automotive history must be understood through the lens of proximity and integration with the United States.³⁹

Much of the relevant work has therefore revolved around tensions between national protections for the Canadian auto industry and efforts towards an integrated, continental approach. Anastakis's 2004 *Labour/le Travail* article "Between Nationalism and Continentalism: State Auto Industry Policy and the Canadian UAW, 1960-1970" is perhaps the most poignant articulation of this idea, as he frames the Canadian auto sector as one arena where debates around economic sovereignty and North American economic integration were being played out.⁴⁰ The structural imbalances within Canada's automotive industry became especially pronounced during the post-war period, as the dominance of the Big Three automakers, Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler, concentrated both production and managerial control in predominantly American hands. This dynamic underscored Canada's subordinate position within the continental auto industry, where critical decisions around investment, production, and technological innovation were being made outside of the country. The loss of traditional export markets and a growing number of imports threatened the viability of the domestic industry. In response, the negotiation of the 1965 Auto Pact, an example of managed trade, aimed to maintain production levels and stabilize the Canadian manufacturing industry while integrating the industry on a continental basis.⁴¹

³⁹ Dimitry Anastakis, "Schism: The Canadian UAW and the End of Auto Worker Internationalism," in *Autonomous State.: The Epic Struggle for a Canadian Car Industry from OPEC to Free Trade* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 210-251.

⁴⁰ Dimitry Anastakis, "Between Nationalism and Continentalism: State Auto Industry Policy and the Canadian UAW, 1960-1970," *Labour/Le Travail* 53.

⁴¹ Richard White, *Making Cars in Canada: A Brief History of the Canadian Automotive Industry, 1900-1980* (Ottawa: Canada Science and Technology Museum, 2007), 71-88.

The restructuring of the automobile industry during the 1960s fundamentally transformed both its geography and organization in Canada. As John Holmes observed, this decade, spanning the years before and after the signing of the Auto Pact, was marked by a profound reorganization in which the distribution of auto plants and internal decisions around production were becoming increasingly interdependent.⁴² That is to say, he reinforced the notion that the Canadian auto industry was more reliant on decisions being made in the United States. By the 1970s and 1980s, this growing integration with and reliance on the American market prompted efforts to reassert some level of autonomy by Canadian governments and unions. Dimitry Anastakis contends that Canada did not, therefore, experience deindustrialization to the same level of severity as that in the United States, owing to stronger state intervention in later decades and more robust labour institutions.⁴³ Although this longer view of the post-Auto Pact period lies beyond the scope of this thesis, it reveals an auto industry that would be continually marked by instability. Across this historiography, a consistent theme is emergent: the Canadian auto industry had long been defined by the tension between aspirations for self-sufficiency and the realities of dependence on the United States. From Ford-Canada's first operations in Windsor to the signing of the Auto-Pact and a fully integrated market, scholars have framed the auto industry as being both a symbol of national industrial ambition and a barometer of Canada's economic relationship with the United States.

⁴² John Holmes, "Industrial Reorganization, Capital Restructuring and Locational Change: An Analysis of the Canadian Automobile Industry in the 1960s," *Economic Geography* 59, no. 3 (1983): 254-256.

⁴³ Dimitry Anastakis, "Industrial Sunrise? The Chrysler Bailout, the State, and the Reindustrialization of the Canadian Automotive Sector, 1975-1986," *Urban History Review* 35, no. 2 (2007): 28.

This thesis is grounded in extensive archival and newspaper research. The Walter P. Reuther Library archives at Wayne State University in Detroit served as a key repository for primary source material, providing access to a comprehensive collection of UAW records, including correspondence between the international and local union leadership and local officials in Windsor, as well as broader union responses to runaway plants. The organization of the relevant fonds closely reflects the hierarchical structure of the UAW itself, facilitating a clearer understanding of institutional decision-making and communication patterns. For example, records pertaining to Canadian offices and sub-regions are grouped together, while documents originating from the president's office are maintained as a distinct collection. Throughout the research process, I devoted significant effort to tracing connections between correspondence from different locals, and linking them to material related to various plant closures, ensuring that the broader narrative of labour responses and union strategy could be presented and correlated as comprehensively as possible.

The Windsor Public Library's Local History Branch also offered a rich collection of materials that provided local and industry perspectives on plant closures and their broader social and economic impacts. Functioning as a centre of community memory, the branch housed a range of sources, including independently produced local histories, oral histories, union newsletters, and various other materials produced by local individuals and organizations. These records not only contributed to a reconstruction of the chronology of plant closures in Windsor, but also provided a textured view of how Windsorites experienced and eventually remembered this period of industrial upheaval. Complementing this, the Windsor Municipal Archives contained municipal government reports, planning documents, and committee minutes, which offered a different institutional perspective. While these sources were less directly relevant to the

lived experiences of workers, they highlighted the evolving relationship between local government and auto manufacturing companies. This relationship would prove crucial in the unfolding deindustrialization. Together, the holdings of the Local History Branch and the Municipal Archives revealed the rhetorical and policy-based responses to plant closure, allowing for a more complete understanding of how they were navigated and remembered by the community.

Where does Windsor, then, fit into this broader picture? I argue here that Windsor contradicts the dominant narrative of the post-1945 decades as a period of boom and then bust. Instead, Windsor serves as an example of how deindustrialization is intrinsic to capitalism and capital's control over labour and production. Management decisions to close or move a plant were often based on anti-unionism or the desire for higher returns on investment, as opposed to broader overarching economic factors. Historically, one of capital's greatest strengths has been its control over the geography of manufacturing. The Windsor example offers valuable insights into a much bigger story of capital flight as a growing number of manufacturers moved production down the highway, out of the province or state, or overseas.



Figure 2.1. Windsor Star front page headline. Wednesday, October 31, 1951.

Chapter 1

The Removal of an Industrial Stronghold: Ford Windsor

“This border city on the Detroit River was shocked and bewildered today when the Ford Motor Company of Canada, Windsor’s largest employer, announced plans to move its assembly operations to Oakville, near Toronto.” – New York Times (November 1, 1951).⁴⁴

The Ford Motor Company of Canada’s 1951 decision to shift its automotive assembly operations from Windsor, where it had been producing cars since 1904, to a new greenfield site in Oakville was not altogether unexpected, as newspapers had been reporting since July that the company had purchased a large block of land in the area. While the company initially denied that it had any immediate intentions of building on the site, rumours circulated, especially as layoffs mounted in Windsor. But Ford-Canada’s October 30th announcement still had the power to shock. According to the *New York Times*, Windsor mayor Arthur J. Reume was “stunned” and “surprised.”⁴⁵ The *Toronto Globe and Mail* reported that the general response in the city was one

⁴⁴ “Windsor Stunned by Ford Removal,” *New York Times* (NYT) (1 November 1951).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

of “resentment” towards the company.⁴⁶ For their part, the editors of the *Windsor Star* lamented that the decision would “rob us of... development and growth we had reason to anticipate.”⁴⁷

As we will see, the union and the company were locked in a bitter struggle over a range of issues that sparked wildcat strikes, lockouts, pickets, worker occupations, sabotage, firings, and even criminal charges. By January 1952, there were 3,000 outstanding union grievances against Ford-Canada, whereas a typical UAW plant had 40 or 50.⁴⁸ Canadian UAW Director George Burt⁴⁹ blamed the anti-unionism of Ford-Canada President Rhys M. Sale. The atmosphere within the plant had grown ever more hostile, as management and labour viewed each other with suspicion. Ford-Canada’s refusal to engage with the union in a meaningful way only served to exacerbate tensions.

While only 2,000 of Ford-Canada’s 11,000 Windsor workers worked directly in assembly, the union feared that this was only the beginning of the bad news. UAW Local 200 President Charles Macdonald feared that “Ford has decided to virtually abandon Windsor as its Canadian site.”⁵⁰ Ford insisted, however, that it remained committed to the city, announcing a huge \$32 million investment to convert the assembly buildings into “the largest and best-equipped engine plant in the Canadian automotive industry.”⁵¹ Nonetheless, the union’s fears were well-founded. By 1962, there were only 4,000 Ford-Canada workers left in Windsor.

⁴⁶ *Toronto Star*, (1 November 1951), editorial.

⁴⁷ *Windsor Star*, (31 October 1951), editorial, page 4.

⁴⁸ “Cites Goon Charges: Burt Blast Disparages Sale as Ford Exec,” *Globe and Mail* (5 January 1952).

⁴⁹ George Burt served as Canadian Director of the UAW from his election in 1939 until 1968. Throughout this period, he would also maintain a significant public presence with his involvement with the burgeoning New Democratic Party in the 1950s, as well as the Canadian Labour Congress and the Ontario Federation of Labour.

⁵⁰ List, Wilfred. “Shocked, Bewildered Reaction in Windsor,” *Globe and Mail* (1 November 1951).

⁵¹ “Ford to Expand Plant at Windsor by \$32,500,000,” *Globe and Mail* (18 November 1952).

The 99-Day Strike at Ford-Windsor in 1945 represented a watershed moment in Canadian labour history as it contributed to a reshaping of the framework of industrial relations across the country. In fact, that historic confrontation helped establish the legal and institutional foundations of Canada's post-war labour relations regime under the Rand Formula, notably the closed union shop in exchange for losing the ability to strike during the life of the contract.⁵² If Windsor became a national symbol of worker militancy and union strength during the early post-war years, its later struggle with plant relocation and job loss became emblematic of the broader crisis facing the auto industry in Canada. To understand the later unrest, it is essential to first examine the state of Ford-Canada and the UAW in the immediate post-strike period, before turning to the broader consequences of deindustrialization, including job loss, community disruption, and the shifting geography of industry.

Ford-Canada Attempts to Flee the Union

The labour situation in 1950s Windsor was marked by intense conflict between Ford-Canada and the UAW. Between 1951 and 1955, Windsor's economy and community were upended by a relentless cycle of strikes, lockouts, firings and layoffs, criminal charges, and overall hostility between labour and the company. This period of sustained class conflict coincided with Ford-

⁵² A report was authored by Justice Ivan Rand on January 29, 1946, to quell labour tensions following the strike that was ended by the federal government the preceding December. It has since become known as the Rand Formula. The Rand Formula was fundamentally a compromise agreement: union dues were automatically collected by the company on behalf of the union, but it also limited a union's ability to act as clear penalties for wildcat strikes were also included. For more on the Rand Formula and its broader implications, see: Debra Parkes, "The Rand Formula Revisited: Union Security in the Broader Era," *University of New Brunswick Law Journal* 34, no. 1 (2010); UNIFOR, *Where Did Our Rights Come From? The Rand Formula and the struggle for union security* (UNIFOR, 2013), https://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/legacy/documents/document/full_booklet_-_english.pdf; Lascelles, Michael. *Legislative Provision for the Compulsory check-off of Union Dues and Agency Fees: A Review of Issues*. Ottawa, Labour Canada, 1980.

Canada's decision to transfer its principal assembly production and its corporate headquarters to Oakville. This restructuring was not coincidental. Instead, it emerged in large part due to the ardent union resistance in Windsor, both around key issues such as wages, seniority, and a province-wide master agreement. Highlighted in the tables provided below, despite year-over-year decreases in manufacturing and auto industry employment relative to other parts of the country, Windsor still saw the highest average wages when compared to the rest of the country.

Manufacturing Employment – Metropolitan Windsor, 1951-1961. Survey of Member Establishments, Windsor Chamber of Commerce. Figure 2.2.

Year	Auto Employment	% of Total Manufacturing Employment	Total Manufacturing Employment	% in Total Population
1951	26,360	72.4	36,404	22
1953	27,031	69.6	38,802	22.1
1955	25,554	68.5	37,259	20.0
1957	20,892	63.2	32,980	17.2
1959	15,635	58.2	26,000	13.4
1961	14,030	51.9	27,030	14.1

Comparison of Weekly Earnings, Manufacturing Annual Averages, 1955-59 and November 1960-61. Figure 2.3.

Year	Montreal	Toronto	Hamilton	St Catharines	Brantford	London	Windsor
1955	61.51	67.11	69.70	73.92	62.22	61.47	75.59
1957	68.09	73.66	80.30	81.00	65.99	67.08	78.13
1959	73.65	78.98	88.48	88.04	72.69	73.06	90.72
1961	80.52	84.55	94.99	92.49	77.74	80.51	98.04

As the *Globe and Mail* reported in July 1951, a few months before the relocation of Ford-Canada's assembly operations to Oakville had even been announced, tensions within Windsor were already boiling over. For example, more than 3,000 Windsor workers were sent home

following a speed-up dispute.⁵³ The breaking point for many workers came with Ford-Canada's 1951 announcement of its decision to relocate assembly operations and, soon thereafter, the company's corporate headquarters to Oakville. The union's reaction was swift and strong. While company management claimed the move was strictly a business decision, aimed at moving the company closer to the major market of the Toronto area, union leaders and workers understood it to be a calculated move against Windsor's strong labour movement. Charles Macdonald described the decision as a deliberate abandonment of Windsor in retaliation for years of union militancy, and assured workers and interested parties alike that the UAW would work to ensure their presence was maintained in any new plants.⁵⁴ This resentment was echoed by the *Windsor Star's* editorial board, which decried the company's move as "something difficult to imagine would ever happen," accusing Ford-Canada of betraying a community that had sustained its growth for decades.⁵⁵ Windsor workers responded with escalating industrial action, leading to a wildcat strike in December 1951 that saw more than 12,000 workers off the job in protest over mass firings and perceived corporate bullying.⁵⁶

The strike was more than a temporary disruption. Workers not only halted production but shut down the Ford complex in Windsor entirely, including the powerhouse, which led to pipes freezing, production lines collapsing, and millions of dollars in damage.⁵⁷ Of particular concern was the damage done to the machinery within the plant, which, it was claimed, had been totally

⁵³ "Speedup Dispute Brings Ford Layoff," *Globe and Mail* (20 July 1951).

⁵⁴ "Shocked, Bewildered Reaction in Windsor," *Globe and Mail*. (1 November 1951).

⁵⁵ *Windsor Star*, October 31, 1951, editorial, page 4.

⁵⁶ "12,000 at Ford Idle in Wildcat Strike," *Globe and Mail* (4 December 1951).

⁵⁷ "What the Strike did to Ford Plant at Windsor," *Globe and Mail* (27 December 1951).

destroyed in some cases and rendered unusable in others.⁵⁸ The sheer scale of the disruption sent a powerful message: Windsor workers were prepared to fight for their rights with everything they had. There was much at stake for the union, especially if Ford managed to keep the union out of its new Oakville assembly plant. Strikes became a well-worn tool in the battle for job security, and Ford-Canada workers used it to devastating effect. Even when the company sought to criminalize these actions, charging union actors with criminal offences following the strike, public support and union solidarity forced the Crown to eventually drop the charges.⁵⁹ This period was therefore defined by conflict as Ford-Canada unsuccessfully attempted to reassert control through layoffs, firings, and relocation.

In the following year, UAW Local 200 once again filed for strike authorization at the Ford-Canada plant.⁶⁰ The scope of this strike request was wide, covering virtually every aspect of the proposed collective agreement, including central issues such as wages, layoff procedure, and seniority rights. In particular, the employer resisted efforts to lay off workers based on city-wide seniority, a system which had been in place in Windsor since 1942. Ford-Canada insisted that seniority should be tied to the plant, not the locality, going so far as to threaten to move the rest of its Windsor operations unless the union conceded. In response, the union planned a series of protests, without ultimately resorting to further strike action.⁶¹ The union demands reflected an understanding of the broader need for stronger worker protections and adequate compensation

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ "Crown Drops Charges Against Ford Workers," *Globe and Mail* (30 April 1952).

⁶⁰ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 149, Folder 4, Strike Authorization Request. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

⁶¹ "Union Raps Ford Layoffs," *Windsor Star* (10 January 1953).

in the face of layoffs or permanent job loss. However, the unfolding class conflict played directly into the company's narrative of Windsor being a hotbed of labour militancy.

Importantly, these strikes were not spontaneous outbursts but carefully organized responses by a union movement, now deeply aware of the implications of corporate restructuring. In the lead-up to the transfer to Oakville, the UAW had already been negotiating key provisions in the collective agreement, especially seniority rights. The union insisted that layoffs, particularly during temporary shutdowns, must follow seniority principles to protect workers with longer service from short-term dismissal. When Ford-Canada began issuing layoff notices in waves, first in 1951, then in 1953, the union was ready to escalate its demands commensurately.⁶² In March 1953, Ford-Canada announced a major layoff, costing several hundred workers their jobs, but the decision was met with swift resistance as the UAW quickly recognized the company's underlying strategy. While the company ostensibly attributed the job cuts to external factors such as supply chain disruptions and the lingering effects of the Korean War, the company deliberately targeted union stewards and other activists for termination in a clear attempt to weaken organized labour.⁶³ Rather than yielding to these pressures, Windsor autoworkers staged additional strikes and intensified their demands for stronger bargaining rights and workplace protections.

Subsequent years saw the struggle intensify as Ford-Canada not only relocated its assembly operations, but also dismantled Windsor's role as a corporate centre, moving its

⁶² "Move to Oakville Brings New Layoff: 955 Hourly-Rated Employees Lose Jobs on Temporary Basis this Week," *Windsor Star* (28 September 1953).

⁶³ "Several Hundred Men Laid Off at Ford Plant," *Windsor Star* (14 March 1953).

headquarters to Oakville as well. This occurred during a massive strike, signalling the company's continued determination to punish the militant workforce in Windsor, and was made especially clear as it was announced that only a small number of top company employees would be offered the chance to move with the company.⁶⁴ Accordingly, it was not only shopfloor workers who were at risk of losing their jobs. Many white-collar workers at Ford-Canada's Windsor headquarters, who were unionized themselves, were also at risk of losing their jobs. The strike, therefore, escalated into one of the longest industrial actions in Canadian history, lasting 109 days and spreading beyond Windsor into newer Ford-Canada plants in Oakville and Etobicoke.⁶⁵ The company hoped that relocating operations would break union militancy, but Canadian workers held the line. They maintained mass pickets and engaged in acts of cross-plant solidarity, leveraging these actions to force some company concessions.

Ultimately, the tenacity of Windsor's Ford-Canada workers secured meaningful improvements, despite staunch corporate opposition. The strike ended in January 1955 after 109 days. The UAW workers achieved an Ontario-wide master agreement and expanded seniority rights that applied well beyond Windsor's shrinking industrial base.⁶⁶ In this way, the union succeeded in securing rights that had eluded Canadian autoworkers for decades, including provisions that curbed Ford-Canada's ability to exploit local layoffs and plant closures to undermine collective bargaining strength. Even as the company dismantled Windsor's central role in its operations, Windsor workers refused to accept Ford-Canada's "Big Stick" approach to doing business, resisting the company's strong-arm tactics, including firings, legal charges, and

⁶⁴ "Toronto Gets Ford HQ but Only Top Officials Moving from Windsor," *Globe and Mail* (22 October 1954).

⁶⁵ "Ford of Canada Strike Ends," *Wall Street Journal* (28 January 1955).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

threats of total withdrawal.⁶⁷ The labour movement in Windsor, therefore, confronted not only a hostile employer but also deep economic turmoil and political marginalization. The determination and militancy of Windsor's workers played a central role in advancing union rights within the broader landscape of Canadian labour relations. Nonetheless, these hard-fought advances came at a steep cost.

Labour Reactions to Ford-Canada Plant Relocation

The relocation of Ford-Canada's assembly operations to Oakville, combined with a series of layoffs, provoked serious alarm within the UAW Canadian Director's office. For George Burt and his staff, Ford-Canada's withdrawal from Windsor was more than just a localized industrial crisis. It represented a broader and deeply troubling shift in the structure of the Canadian automobile industry. The move signaled a growing corporate tendency to relocate production away from established union strongholds in search of cheaper labour and weaker collective agreements. Through this lens, Ford-Canada's actions were interpreted as part of a larger pattern of corporate reorganization that would eventually threaten the hard-won security of industrial workers across the country. Acting UAW Local 200 President Charles MacDonald responded by sending a telegram to Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, along with several senior cabinet ministers, urging them to "correct regulations and reduce taxes to avert mass unemployment in [the automobile] industry."⁶⁸ His appeal underscored the union's growing belief that government intervention would be necessary to protect Canadian workers from the consequences of corporate

⁶⁷ "Big Stick's No Answer," *Globe and Mail* (8 December 1951).

⁶⁸ UAW Local 200 Records, Box 2, President Outgoing for June-August, 1951, Telegram to Prime Minister. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

restructuring, and to ensure governmental policy served working-class interests rather than international capital. The need to act had become obvious.

In 1956, two years after the relocation of Ford-Canada's operations, the Canadian UAW launched a concerted effort to strengthen the bargaining position of union locals, urging them to pursue the inclusion of transfer rights in their collective agreements. This strategy was aimed at addressing the "growing problem of how to cope with work being moved from one plant of a corporation to another plant of a corporation within a geographical area, or between a plant of a given corporation to an isolated area where the company has opened a new plant or has transferred work to an existing plant."⁶⁹ In other words, they were concerned with the unchecked ability of corporations to shift production to hitherto non-unionized areas. By formalizing transfer rights in collective agreements, the UAW hoped to mitigate the worst effects of plant movements, and bolster job security for union members. It also hoped such a clause would help the union organize runaway plants. Only then could wages and benefits be taken out of competition.

During these years, the Canadian UAW presented Windsor, and specifically the case of Ford-Canada, as a powerful example underscoring the necessity of such contractual clauses. Framing their arguments around the broader issues of plant closure and job transfers, the union emphasized the importance of protecting workers' ability to transfer between plants. Equally critical, they argued, was the preservation of existing seniority rights, which they viewed as

⁶⁹ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, Folder 6, Inter-Office Communication from Emil Mazey. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

essential to safeguarding bargaining power and long-term job security.⁷⁰ Notably, little consideration was given to severance pay at the time. But perhaps more importantly, it symbolizes an attempt by the union to extend its reach to a new location, and as UAW officials promised, the union would fight for a strong union presence at new plants.⁷¹ Capital flight has often been used as an anti-union strategy. This tactic proved less effective in Ontario, at least before trade liberalization had progressed to the point in the 1970s and 1980s where employers could move production outside the country.

When the time came for formal notice to be given to Windsor employees, Ford-Canada informed current employees that they could apply for positions in the Oakville plant, but there would be no guarantees of employment. Ultimately, the company did make some concessions to those selected for Oakville, agreeing that they would “be credited with the number of years of service he or she has accumulated with the company, for the purposes of pension, group insurance and vacations, in accordance with... existing plans.” Ford-Canada would not, however, cover their moving expenses.⁷² This limited interpretation of the collective agreement disappointed George Burt and the UAW. In response, Burt suggested that seniority should be applied to layoffs and transfers. He expressed a similar belief that other aspects of the existing agreement, such as night-shift premiums, overtime rates, and statutory holidays, would also

⁷⁰ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, Folder 6, Sample Transfer Clauses Contained in UAW-CIO Agreements. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

⁷¹ List, Wilfred. “Shocked, Bewildered Reaction in Windsor,” *Globe and Mail*. (1 November 1951).

⁷² UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 140, Folder 1, Ford-Canada memo to employees. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

remain in place.⁷³ Once again, the Canadian district of the UAW insisted on the continued presence of the union in new plants regardless of their specific location.

The International UAW's headquarters, located just across the Detroit River from Windsor, followed what was happening closely. UAW President Walter Reuther was forced, on several occasions, to intervene with the Ford Motor Company on behalf of the Windsor workers. His principal concern, as with George Burt, was to safeguard the institutional strength and bargaining position of the union in Canada. Central to this was ensuring that the UAW would represent Ford-Canada workers in Oakville, which likely prevented UAW labour leaders from aggressively opposing Ford's relocation strategy. The interests of the union local and the national and international unions were not always aligned. In the years that followed, even as the UAW acknowledged the hardship experienced by Windsor workers, Walter Reuther's office appeared to view what happened as a strategic success: Ford-Canada's attempt to run away from the union failed miserably.⁷⁴ Internal union records demonstrate that the UAW concluded that it had managed to preserve its organizational strength and hold on Canada's auto industry by securing certification of the Oakville plant.

That said, the Canadian UAW understood the need to be prepared going forward. For example, the union collected samples from collective agreements of transfer clauses for displaced workers and encouraged its locals to negotiate these. If a plant moved to a location within the same city or region, then the union aimed to establish a contractual obligation to give

⁷³ Ibid. Burt reply to Ford-Canada Memo

⁷⁴ UAW: President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Box 236, Folder 9. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

workers the chance to move with their jobs with full seniority and benefits.⁷⁵ If production were moved out of a city entirely, which was the more likely scenario, the union sought to provide workers with preferred hiring rights so they could move to the new location with some compensation for the costs associated with that move.⁷⁶ In providing sample contract language to union locals, Secretary-Treasurer Emil Mazey explicitly hoped to guide locals in the “growing problem” of how to cope with work being moved from “a given corporation to an isolated area where the company has opened a new plant.”⁷⁷

One essential form of action available to the union was public protest. On October 17, 1962, for example, the UAW organized a motorcade to Toronto – dubbing it the “Trek to Toronto” – to protest government inaction vis-à-vis plant shutdown and relocation. Ford Windsor’s Local 200 led the charge against “runaway industry.”⁷⁸ Despite Ford-Canada’s refusal to release its entire workforce for the Trek, hundreds of Ford workers defied their employer and joined the motorcade, alongside unemployed and retired workers, to confront the Ontario government directly.⁷⁹ Over 1,000 participants traveled from Windsor to Toronto in a display of solidarity, carrying banners and demanding legislation to prevent companies from relocating plants. The official delegation, led by George Burt, secured a meeting with Premier John Robarts

⁷⁵ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, Folder 6. Sample Transfer Clauses Contained in UAW-CIO Agreements, January 1956. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, Folder 6: Correspondence between Emil Mazey and Officers, Board Members and International Representatives. January 10, 1956. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

⁷⁸ UAW Region 7: Sub-Regional Office Records, Box 32, Folder 6: Sample transfer clauses prepared by Research & Engineering Department, UAW-CIO. January, 1956. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

⁷⁹ "Ford Men Join Trek: Defy Company on Motorcade," *Windsor Star*, (16 October 1962).

and members of his cabinet, delivering a message about the devastation plant closures were inflicting on Windsor's economy and workforce.⁸⁰

This mobilization reflected the organizational strength of Windsor's union movement. Yet, these protests revealed tension between the city and the labour movement. While many viewed the Trek as a legitimate expression of worker frustration, segments of the press and public accused some elements of the UAW of resorting to sabotage and intimidation tactics. The *Windsor Star* ran scathing editorials, condemning the so-called "Goon Squad" for engaging in harassment, including tire slashing and destruction of equipment, which they claimed undermined public sympathy and had the potential to tarnish Windsor's reputation among industrial companies.⁸¹ This dual narrative of righteous worker protests on the one hand and destructive, militant behaviour on the other exposed deep divisions in Windsor's approach to resisting plant movement. The UAW's Trek to Toronto marked a high-profile if ultimately unsuccessful attempt to secure additional legislative protections for auto sector jobs in Windsor.

Windsor City Council's reaction to Ford-Canada's relocation of its auto-assembly operations was muted, unlike its more robust response to later reactions to later auto parts closures. Their inaction can be explained by the structural barriers to municipal intervention in the economy. In Canada's federal political system, the provincial and federal governments have much more power. City officials were also concerned that bold action in opposition to plant movements might discourage future investment in Windsor. Discussions between the UAW and

⁸⁰ "Majority to Stay at Work: Plans Move for Motorcade to See Premier," *Windsor Star* (Windsor, ON), October 10, 1962, 3.

⁸¹ John Lindbland, "Now," *Windsor Star* (Windsor, ON), October 20, 1962, 6.

the city would only occur in earnest in the early 1960s. While union officials presented a 28-point plan for City Council's consideration, there was little municipal councillors could do, even if they had wanted to. Nonetheless, the UAW demanded that Council pass by-laws that would "prohibit... industry from running away and deserting a community for greed and profit."⁸² Such legislation not only appealed to those hoping to keep industry in Windsor, but also symbolized a broader support for the city's anti-deindustrialization movement.

For many autoworkers, Ford-Canada represented far more than a place of employment; it was the cornerstone upon which families, homes, and an entire way of life had been constructed. The company's presence in Windsor had long been intertwined with the city's identity, defining not only its economic stability but also its sense of collective purpose. The *Windsor Star* captured this profound emotional attachment, describing this relocation announcement as a "shock to the entire community."⁸³ The paper emphasized the disorientation felt by workers who had assumed Windsor's status as a permanent centre of industrial prosperity was secure. Ford-Canada's announcement signified the loss of thousands of jobs, and also the unraveling of social and familial networks as many workers felt compelled to uproot their lives and move to Oakville. For Ford-Canada workers in Windsor, and the city as a whole, the decision marked a deep rupture of trust that exposed the fragility of the community's economic foundations and its reliance on the previously existing corporate stability.

⁸² UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, Folder 7. Brief on Unemployment Presented to Windsor City Council, April 10, 1962. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

⁸³ "Ford Decision Severe Blow," *Windsor Star* (Windsor, ON), October 31, 1952, 4.

Among workers themselves, resentment ran deep, made worse by the stark contrast between corporate profits and the day-to-day struggles of Ford-Canada employees. *The Globe and Mail* noted that workers openly criticized the company's leadership for prioritizing profits over the livelihoods of its workforce, with one worker remarking, "You'd think a man would be satisfied with just keeping a couple million... Myself, I'd be satisfied with just \$500 in the bank."⁸⁴ These frustrations occasionally boiled over into direct action on the shop floor. Ford-Canada faced frequent acts of sabotage within its Windsor assembly plant, where vehicles on the production line were damaged, as the personal cars of workers perceived as scabs were similarly targeted.⁸⁵ Historian Jeremy Milloy provides important further context, arguing that these acts of property violence were rarely those of a 'lone-wolf' but rather coordinated displays of collective resistance, and were entirely commensurate with the levels of violence inflicted on workers by the company.⁸⁶ Though rarely acknowledged publicly, such acts reflected the hostility that existed between workers and management. The company made these momentous decisions unilaterally despite their far-reaching consequences for workers, their families, and the wider Windsor community, including the very people who had "grown up with [Ford-Canada]."⁸⁷ The community's frustration extended beyond the economic impact of plant relocation to encompass

⁸⁴ "Ford Firm Represented Through Whole City," in *Globe and Mail*, November 20, 1954, in *Ford Expands to Oakville: The Impact of a Dominant Industry on a Canadian Community*, ed. MacKinnon, Rob et al. (Windsor, ON: Canada Studies Research Project, 1977), 53.

⁸⁵ "So Much Sabotage," in *Windsor Star*, November 3, 1951, in *Ford Expands to Oakville: The Impact of a Dominant Industry on a Canadian Community*, ed. MacKinnon, Rob et al. (Windsor, ON: Canada Studies Research Project, 1977), 26.

⁸⁶ Jeremy Milloy, *Blood, Sweat, and Fear : Violence at Work in the North American Auto Industry, 1960-80* (UBC Press, 2017).

⁸⁷ "Grew Up Together," in *Windsor Star*, October 31, 1951, in *Ford Expands to Oakville: The Impact of a Dominant Industry on a Canadian Community*, ed. MacKinnon, Rob et al. (Windsor, ON: Canada Studies Research Project, 1977), 24.

corporate disregard for their lives, making the potential transfer to Oakville a deeply painful prospect for many Windsor autoworkers.

Conclusion

Ford-Canada's relocation of its assembly operations and then, in the middle of a strike, its corporate headquarters as well, to Oakville, marked a critical point in Canadian industrial history. While company officials framed the decision as a strategic move, bringing production and administration closer to the growing markets of the Toronto area, it had far-reaching implications for Windsor's working class. For the thousands of workers who lost their jobs or were forced to relocate, the company's justification was unconvincing. Instead, many trade unionists saw the move as the beginning of the "runaway shop" problem in Canada. Ford-Canada's relocation allowed the company to circumvent a militant union culture in Windsor, moving to locations with weaker union organization.

What makes Ford-Canada's exodus so significant is its early timing. The 1953 move predated the vast closures and layoffs of the 1970s and 1980s, suggesting that the vulnerabilities of Canada's auto industry were not exclusively connected to the ebbs and flows of a broader global or domestic economy. Decades before "deindustrialization" became a commonly understood framework, and in a decade remembered for its booming economy, Windsor experienced the consequences of corporate restructuring and relocation firsthand. This relocation of automotive assembly operations also revealed the limited ability or willingness of politicians at any level to interfere with corporate decisions. Unions would engage in protests and public campaigns to draw attention to these early relocations, but only with limited effectiveness. Ultimately, then, Ford-Canada's move to Oakville served as a harbinger of what was to come in

the years ahead as auto-parts companies shifted production to be closer to the assembly plants or in search of lower wages and non-union environments.

Chapter 2

Auto Parts Plant Closures and Municipal-Labour Relations in Windsor

“The labour movement learned long ago that raiding results in the raiders being raided and nobody gaining. Results in [the] long run of industrial raiding will be the same on the community level. Only the ratepayers and the workers will suffer; only industry will gain through unfair concessions from the raiding communities – George Burt, Canadian Director of the UAW (October 2, 1959)⁸⁸

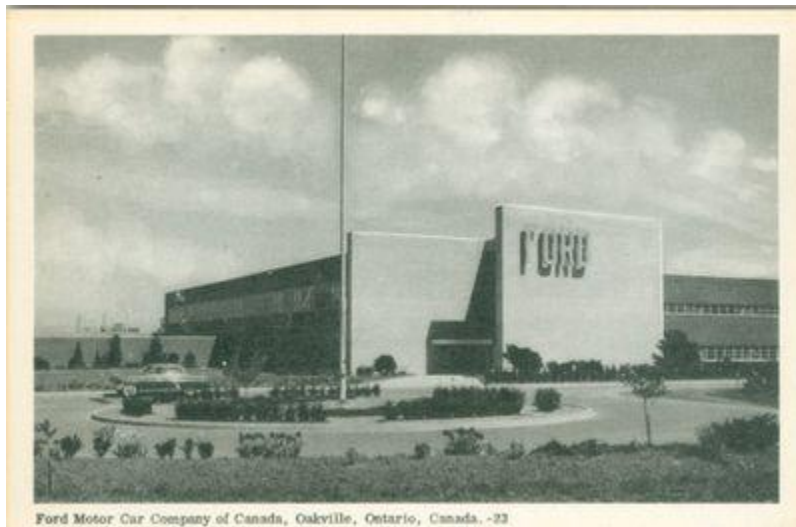


Figure 3.1. Postcard depicting Ford-Canada plant in Oakville, 1953. The Photogelatine Engraving Company. <https://images.ourontario.ca/Test21/3583083/data>

The Ford Motor Company’s decision to move its Windsor assembly operations to Oakville had far-reaching repercussions for the auto-parts sector. In the years that followed, many of these feeder plants slowly shifted production to other parts of Ontario to be closer to their

Big 3 customers. General Motors had two assembly plants in the Toronto area, one in Oshawa and the other in Scarborough, and American Motors later located its assembly plant in Brampton. Unlike auto-assembly, most auto parts suppliers moved to smaller towns located within a two- or

⁸⁸ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, File 5, Telegram from George Burt to Leslie Frost, October 2, 1959. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

three-hour drive from Toronto. These were lower-wage areas with a large reserve of available labour, especially women. Because unions were able to organize these new plants, trade unionists usually referred to them as “plant movements” rather than anti-union “runaway shops,” which was the language used by trade unionists in the United States.⁸⁹ That being said, prevailing wages and benefits in small-town Ontario were substantially lower than in highly unionized cities like Windsor.

Most of the auto parts plants that closed in Windsor during the 1950s and 1960s were, in reality, not simple shutdowns but relocations, as companies sought to re-establish operations elsewhere in Ontario, or in some cases, across provincial lines in Quebec. In certain instances, the connection between closure and relocation was direct: machinery, tools, and even whole production lines were physically transported from Windsor to newly constructed facilities located hours away. More commonly, however, particularly among the larger manufacturers, the process unfolded gradually. New plants were opened years in advance of older facilities being totally closed, reflecting a calculated reallocation of capital rather than a sudden withdrawal. This deliberate pattern of relocation underscores the extent to which capital mobility shaped Canadian industrial geography in the mid-twentieth century. Consequently, the study of plant movements and capital flight provides a valuable analytical framework for understanding the broader dynamics of Windsor’s deindustrialization.

Crucially, these closures were not limited to major auto manufacturers. They spread throughout the industry writ large, where independent and multinational parts manufacturers

⁸⁹ Steven High, "The Deindustrializing Heartland," in *Industrial Sunset : the Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 102-3.

followed the assembly plants to the Toronto area. Here, too, management aimed to lower wages and dampen union militancy, but there was the added economic pressure of remaining near the Big 3 assembly plants, which were their customers. The chairman of ACCO Mechanical Handling System, which was a smaller company providing industrial supplies and servicing, noticed that “subsequent to the post-war growth of new plants and industries in the Hamilton-Toronto area, there has been a continuing transfer of large segments of the automotive industry from Windsor to the area east of London, and west of Oshawa.”⁹⁰ ACCO claimed to “become impressed with the attractiveness of the Toronto-Hamilton area as a manufacturing location,” and prompted by the move of major auto manufacturers, concluded that it was no longer feasible to “truck steel from Hamilton to Windsor, fabricate it in the latter city, then ship the finished product to Burlington.”⁹¹

Canadian UAW leaders George Burt and Hugh McConville made this same point clear in a 1962 letter to Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, where they not only highlighted rising national concerns over plant closures, but emphasized “the plight of Windsor and its surrounding municipalities because of the exodus of a large number of plants, who all seem to be moving towards Toronto following the movement of the Ford Motor plant to the Oakville area in 1954.”⁹² For Burt and McConville, this trend represented more than a local hardship. It reflected a structural transformation in Canada’s postwar industrial landscape and long-established

⁹⁰ Chairman’s Report of the Manpower Assessment Committee at Canadian Material Handling Systems Limited. 17 July 1973. File Technological and Economic Change Adjustment Assistance. Acco Mechanical Handling System (Windsor).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² UAW Region 7: Canadian Office, Box 32, File 10. Correspondence between George Burt, Hugh McConville, and John Diefenbaker. November 5, 1962. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

working-class communities. Their appeal to the federal government was therefore not merely a call for assistance, but a demand for a coordinated response to curb the outflow of industry from traditionally industrial hubs. This concern would soon become intertwined with municipal efforts to attract new industries through incentive programs.

Thus, another dimension of the unfolding politics of auto plant closure involved accusations that some municipalities were illegally offering incentives for employers that relocated to their localities. Given the threat, Windsor City Council was initially viewed as a natural ally by the UAW, which worked closely with municipal officials on a collective political response. While initially hopeful, it became clear that Windsor municipal officials were both unable and unwilling to act. Despite a fifteen-point plan being presented by the city, the UAW continued to argue that the actions of Windsor officials were insufficient and, in response, crafted their own plan, offering a more aggressive approach modelled after British legislation.⁹³ Rather than being natural allies, the municipality became another obstacle through which the UAW had to navigate. As a corollary, the UAW believed other municipalities were engaging in unlawful practices so they might become attractive relocation sites for auto plants.

Plant Movement of Auto Parts Manufacturers

In the 1950s and early 1960s, Windsor-area plants experienced a steady wave of closures, as companies relocated their operations to other parts of Ontario, or in some cases, to elsewhere in Canada altogether. While the transfer of jobs to lower-wage locales, especially overseas, has become emblematic of the globalized neoliberal trade policies of the late twentieth century, this

⁹³ Statement to Windsor City Council from the UAW. September 10, 1962. Windsor Municipal Archives.

pattern of capital mobility had much earlier roots. Long before corporations began pursuing cheaper wages across borders, they engaged in domestic forms of reorganization that served similar purposes. By moving production from heavily unionized industrial centres like Windsor to smaller towns and the Toronto area, both with weaker labour organization, employers sought to reduce wage costs, weaken union influence, and regain more total control over production. These early relocations not only foreshadowed the later logic of globalization, but also highlighted how strategies to contain labour and maximize profits were already deeply embedded in Canada's industrial landscape.

While Windsor experienced the first reverberations of plant closure with Ford-Canada's relocation, it was not the only major auto manufacturer to have contentious experiences with Windsor-area workers. After initial union certification at Chrysler's plants in the Windsor area in 1952, the company filed a series of conciliation requests.⁹⁴ Much of the disagreement arose from lowered production targets, and with the benefit of hindsight, Chrysler's ambition to shift production away from the Windsor area.⁹⁵ Not only does this speak to broader trends of plant closure and lowered production, but it also highlights the ongoing conflict between the union and company, which marked many companies' experience of doing business in Windsor.

In a 1964 study undertaken by the Economic Council of Canada, one-quarter of auto manufacturing job losses in Windsor that year were found to originate in plant closures and the partial relocation of operations elsewhere.⁹⁶ In 1951, 22% Windsor's total population was

⁹⁴ UAW Region 7: Toronto Sub-Regional Office Records, Box 53; Chrysler Corporation Certification, 1952; Conciliation, 1954. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ G.R. Horne, W.J. Gillen, and R.A. Helling, *A Survey of Labour Market Conditions, Windsor, Ontario, 1964: A Case Study*, research report no. Special Study No. 2 (Ottawa, ON: Economic Council of Canada, 1965).

employed in manufacturing, and 72% of that was in auto plants.⁹⁷ These rates saw a precipitous decline following Ford-Canada's decision to leave the city. By 1961, only 14% of the population in Windsor was employed in manufacturing, and the proportion of those in the auto industry was just under 52%.⁹⁸ Much of this job loss can be attributed to auto parts manufacturers following the assembly plants out of town. There were nearly 40,000 workers in Canadian parts plants by 1969, but just under 7,000 of those were in Windsor.⁹⁹ Rather than acting as the auto manufacturing hub of Ontario, Windsor had become one of many such cities, and the only one experiencing year-over-year decreases in employment in the sector.

Indeed, the UAW became convinced that smaller towns were offering financial incentives to encourage manufacturers to relocate to their communities. UAW District Director George Burt called this practice industrial raiding. This was a common practice in the United States, but direct payments were illegal in Ontario. Writing in 1959, Burt urged Ontario Premier Leslie Frost to launch an investigation, insisting that companies did not blame high wages or union activity in manufacturing cities like Windsor for their decision to leave. He concluded that the appeal for moving operations must therefore lie with the unlawfully proposed conditions presented by destination municipalities.¹⁰⁰ While he conceded that the Ontario Municipal Act does allow for municipalities to "offer a fixed assessment for a specific number of years," Burt

⁹⁷ Manufacturing Employment – Metropolitan Windsor, 1951-1961. Survey of Member Establishments, Windsor Chamber of Commerce. Windsor Municipal Archives.

⁹⁸ See Figures 1.2 and 1.3 for full data. Manufacturing Employment – Metropolitan Windsor, 1951-1961. Survey of Member Establishments, Windsor Chamber of Commerce; Comparison of Weekly Earnings, Manufacturing Annual Averages, 1955-59 and November 1960-61.

⁹⁹ Confidential Memorandum on "Economic and Manpower Trends in Automotive Parts Industry" to the Minister from L.E. Couillard (DM). 31 March 1971. File 3325-6-1 Industries -Automobile and Parts Manufacturing General (Start 1973).

¹⁰⁰ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, File 5, Telegram from George Burt to Leslie Frost, October 2, 1959. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

highlighted some “flagrant” violations committed by some municipalities such as Lindsay, located northeast of Toronto near Peterborough, including “free water, specified tax rate, free land or ridiculously low rental [fees].”¹⁰¹

After the urging of Burt and the UAW, Leslie Frost tasked the Department of Municipal Affairs with investigating allegations of violations of the Ontario Municipal Act. However, as Frost later communicated to George Burt, provincial investigations did not uncover any wrongdoing on the part of the smaller municipalities.¹⁰² Officials responsible for industry in these municipalities were also ardently opposed to any suggestion that they engaged in unlawful behaviour. In one case, M.M. DeGroet, the Chairman of the Lindsay Industrial Committee challenged each of Burt’s accusations. DeGroet reiterated the commonly presented arguments that companies were aiming to decentralize operations and “move from congested areas to the more pleasant living in smaller centres close to their markets.”¹⁰³

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) increasingly acted as a magnet within Canada’s auto industry. The larger available workforce and proximity to a major market were the ostensible reasons why companies moved, and appeared to be palatable enough to both stakeholders and political figures. In some cases, parts manufacturers moved directly with Ford-Canada, and opened new plants in Oakville for ease of access to their major and sometimes sole client, while

¹⁰¹ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, File 5, Correspondence between George Burt and Ontario Municipal Board Vice-Chairman, Al Kennedy, September 29, 1959. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹⁰² UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, File 5, Correspondence between Leslie Frost and George Burt. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹⁰³ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, File 5, M.M. DeGroet Correspondence with Leslie Frost, October 3, 1959. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

others moved elsewhere in the Metropolitan region.¹⁰⁴ Unlike moves to smaller communities, there was a perception that there was less municipal interference in this relocation process. By contrast, small communities, further from the GTA, had to work to attract industrial growth. As a result, Ontarians began to speak in terms of the “Golden Horseshoe” of industrial prosperity from Toronto through Hamilton to St Catherines.¹⁰⁵

No explanations were usually offered when auto-parts suppliers announced that they were leaving Windsor. This was certainly the case for Fibre Products of Canada Limited, which moved to Brantford in 1955.¹⁰⁶ In such instances, a company simply vacated the Windsor area, with minimal or no notice. In other cases, only a limited, and often generic, explanation would be provided, as with Penberthy Injector Company in 1955, Canadian Automotive Trim in 1957, and Standard Products Limited in 1961. Only the very broad explanation of “economic reasons” was provided for the move to the GTA from Windsor.¹⁰⁷ These companies safely cited the growing manufacturing base that existed in that region. Penberthy Injector Company, for example, pointed out that all of its raw materials came from the Toronto area, and over 95% of its customers were there.¹⁰⁸ For many companies, it only made sense to move to their major suppliers and/or clients.

¹⁰⁴ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, Folder 7. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹⁰⁵ Steven High, "Gold Doesn't Rust: Regions of the North American Mind," in *Industrial Sunset : the Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 34-40.

¹⁰⁶ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, Folder 7: UAW Press Release. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Only occasionally did companies directly cite Ford-Canada's decision to move its Windsor operations as the primary reason for their own decision to follow, as was the case with Gotfredson Limited (which produced truck bodies for Ford-Canada) in 1954.¹⁰⁹ In some cases, such statements were likely an effort to deflect blame away from themselves. At the same time, given the reliance on Ford-Canada and other major automakers that parts plants had, it further entrenched the narrative that plant movement was an unavoidable consequence of broader industrial shifts rather than a decision rooted in the pursuit of cheaper labour and the avoidance of unions. Ultimately, as far as they were concerned, responsibility lay with the major auto manufacturers, whose decisions had a powerful influence over the region's economy. These smaller parts plants felt more justified in presenting themselves as not having abandoned Windsor willingly, but as subordinates needing to follow the major manufacturers.

There was also a significant gendered dimension to plant movement, where women were disproportionately affected. As sociologist Pamela Sugiman has shown, women workers were especially vulnerable when plants were relocated because they were often excluded from seniority systems that might have otherwise served to protect their employment. In the mid-1960s, General Motors laid off nearly 400 women from their Windsor plant's cutting and sewing departments, jobs designated as "female" and structurally distinct from the rest of the plant.¹¹⁰ These women had no opportunity to transfer, even as male workers were being hired off the street in other departments and existing workers were protected by their union seniority lists. The

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Pamela Sugiman, "Unionism and Feminism in the Canadian Auto Workers Union, 1961-1992," in *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy and Militancy*, ed. Linda Briskin and Patricia McDermott (University of Toronto Press, 1993), 172-173.

separation of “men’s” and “women’s” work in and between factories, which was not made illegal in Ontario until 1970, left women workers highly vulnerable to plant movements.¹¹¹

As Steven High argues in *Industrial Sunset*, plant closures and job losses in this period were not gender-neutral processes. Instead, they compounded existing inequalities, as women were more likely to be concentrated in so-called low-skill positions in smaller shops or exclusively female departments that were often the first to be eliminated.¹¹² Moreover, the male-dominated union culture of the period often sidelined women’s voices, further limiting their ability to contest these inequities. In 1962, only 16 percent of Canadian trade unionists were women.¹¹³ Their low representation in union leadership and other typically male-dominated spaces in industrial plants also contributed to their diminished ability to navigate fair treatment during plant movement. Therefore, deindustrialization in Windsor’s auto part plants both reflected and reinforced a gendered division of labour, leaving women particularly exposed to losing their jobs when plants downsized or left Windsor.¹¹⁴

Deindustrialization and the effects of plant movement in Canada must also be considered through the lens of race. Steven High’s study on so-called “mill colonialism” in Northern Ontario exposed the racially and ethnically driven understandings of plant closure, which especially impacted towns largely supported by a single industry. High argues that such towns

¹¹¹ Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, "Gender, Modernity, and Liberty: Canadian Women's Labour and the Law, 1880s-1950s," *Labour/Le Travail*, no. 39 (Spring 1997): 87-123.

¹¹² High, "The Deindustrializing," 102-8; Also see: Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour : Women and Work in Post-war Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 2010).

¹¹³ Sugiman, "Unionism and Feminism," 172-173.

¹¹⁴ See also: Brandi Lyn Lucier, "From 'Chrysler Girls' to 'Dodge Boys': The Emergence of Women in From 'Chrysler Girls' to 'Dodge Boys': The Emergence of Women in Windsor's Automotive Industry, 1964-1976 Windsor's Automotive Industry, 1964-1976" (master's thesis, University of Windsor, 2001).

were not merely economic projects, but were similarly cultural and colonial ones, underpinned by narratives of white settlement and control.¹¹⁵ In his example of Sturgeon Falls, the paper mills symbolized Anglo dominance over Franco-Ontarians and Indigenous people, where English bosses and schools reinforced an implicit racial and linguistic order. Therefore, when the plant closed, it eroded these hierarchies, leaving the Francophone and Indigenous residents behind, groups that were far less likely to leave the region.¹¹⁶ Jason Hackworth's work complements this by situating plant closure within a broader framework of racially motivated urban decline. Hackworth critiques dominant explanations for urban land abandonment in the United States, including various economic and political factors, suggesting that race is too often neglected as a motivating factor. He presents a theory of white populations, perceiving Blackness as a threat to their established social order, creating physical and institutional barriers that worsen urban decay for racialized people.¹¹⁷ Considered together, High and Hackworth reveal that plant closure and deindustrialization are never race-neutral. In both urban and rural settings, the withdrawal of industry reflects racial hierarchies and reproduces inequalities.

Of course, this is highly relevant to the Windsor case. While plant closures were occurring in the city, municipal officials endeavoured to undertake urban renewal projects in Windsor's downtown core. In particular, the McDougall Street Corridor, a traditionally Black neighbourhood in the city centre, was targeted for so-called urban renewal. This process

¹¹⁵ Steven High, "Deindustrialization on the Industrial Frontier: The Rise and Fall of Mill Colonialism in Northern Ontario," in *The Deindustrialized World : Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, by Steven C. High, et al. (UBC Press, 2018), 257-283.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Jason Hackworth, "Race and the Production of Extreme Land Abandonment in the American Rust Belt," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42, no. 1 (2018): 51-73.



Figure 3.2. Historic photograph of Windsor’s McDougall Street. McDougall Corridor Walking Tour. <https://mymainstreet.ca/walk-through-the-black-history-of-windsors-mcdougall-street>

involved the demolition of the homes of over 250 Black families living in the immediate area, with little opportunity for them to live or find employment elsewhere in the city.¹¹⁸ The timing of this initiative, coinciding with the early waves of plant closures, such as those at Ford-Canada, compounded the already difficult effects of

deindustrialization. Urban renewal, presented as a strategy for modernity and economic revitalization, not the least because of the broadly detrimental impact of Ford-Canada’s relocation, masked the reality of exclusionary racial politics. Windsor’s Black residents were effectively rendered disposable in the name of development, and their communities were sacrificed for projects that offered them no material benefit. They were also often left needing to leave Windsor altogether to find employment, housing, or both, as other companies and landlords in other parts of the city proved reticent to provide opportunities to displaced Black Windsorites.¹¹⁹ As they were forced to leave, so too did the clubs, organizations, churches, and other vehicles for community engagement. Therefore, in Windsor, as elsewhere in Canada, plant

¹¹⁸ Willow Key, "In the Name of Progress': Postwar Urban Renewal and the Razing of Black Spaces in Windsor, Ontario , 1957-1980" (master's thesis, University of Windsor, 2024), 52-70.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 77-90.

closure and the reactions to it were not neutral economic processes, but instead, a deeply social and racialized one.

The Canadian UAW sought to protect Windsor auto-part workers from outright job loss by proposing that they move with their jobs in cases where the plants were covered by the same collective agreement. This was the case with the Big 3 automakers, but not auto-parts suppliers for the most part.¹²⁰ Among the long list of auto parts companies that moved out of Windsor during this period, only a small number of UAW certification forms exist in the historical record.¹²¹ The union could only remain effective in protecting their workers if their presence persisted into the new plants, and in many cases, it is clear they did not.

It also proved difficult because of the structural organization of international unions like the UAW, as it was organized into local unions, each with its own collective agreement and seniority lists. Consequently, each union local maintained a degree of autonomy in negotiating its own collective agreement, and any inter-local solidarity would have emerged only when the timing of re-negotiations coincided across multiple locals.¹²² Another major problem was that competing unions organized auto-parts plants. Of course, the UAW covered a significant number of workers in the sector, but other unions, such as the United Steelworkers, the United Electrical Workers, and the International Association of Machinists, had also organized plants. If a new plant were organized by a different union, then there was almost no possibility of transferring

¹²⁰ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, Folder 6, Sample Transfer Clauses Contained in UAW-CIO Agreements, January 1956. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹²¹ UAW Region 7: Toronto Sub-Regional Boxes, Box 53. Canadian Automotive Trim Conciliation, 1956. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹²² John Holmes, "Re-scaling Collective Bargaining: Union Responses to Restructuring in the North American Auto Industry," *Geoforum* 35 (2004): 11-12.

with seniority. While competing unions in Ontario tried to find a way to remedy this problem, no deal could be reached. Unionized industrial workers in Canada, like the United States, were therefore almost always tied to a single mill or factory.

Despite these difficulties, the UAW did attempt to negotiate some recognition of seniority for workers transferring between plants within larger companies. George Burt not only made strong efforts to support transfer rights in their negotiations with individual companies, but also attempted to work with competing unions to achieve these ends.¹²³ However, given the fact that each local had its own collective agreement, even in cases where workers were able to transfer to a new plant, they were rarely covered by their previous contract. Therefore, when they moved, they did so without their seniority. This was significant because seniority determined things such as pay, who was laid off, which workers had the more desirable shifts, and the first choice of vacation time.

Hard-hit Windsor received minimal support from higher levels of government. The plant closure issue in the 1950s and the early 1960s, the height of the post-war boom, was not perceived as a provincial or national problem but a local one. If the 1945 Ford-Canada strike had profound implications for worker-capital relations across the country, not so the closures that followed. Broader political action to address plant relocation would not come about until the following decades; however, these closures did reinforce the centrality of community solidarity. During a subsequent wildcat strike of Ford-Canada in 1951, the support provided by workers'

¹²³ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, File 5. George Burt, Canadian Director of the UAW, to William Dodge, CLC. November 16, 1959. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

families and the wider community was central to the ongoing efforts to secure greater job security for workers, especially those with seniority.¹²⁴ Workers could not depend on government intervention to support them, even when large numbers of jobs were lost. Given the smaller workplaces, auto parts workers had even less political leverage than those in auto-assembly.

For companies, an added benefit of moving operations within the province was that it worked against political interference, as the jobs were not lost to Ontario or Canada, just to Windsor. Ford-Canada may have offered its employees the chance to relocate to the new Oakville plant, but few took up the offer.¹²⁵ In 1962, George Burt wrote to the leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, which, due to their formal ties to the Ontario Federation of Labour, was effectively the political wing of organized labour, to say that they were dissatisfied with how Windsor's municipal officials had responded to the plant closing problem. That Burt's call for action was directed at the municipal government was telling, as it emphasized the local support for the union, and by omission, the lack of provincial or national support.

Nonetheless, the union lobbied the Ontario legislature to require companies to apply to a government-sanctioned board before closing or relocating a factory. For the UAW, the mandate of this board should be to ensure "the basic human rights and welfare of the workers and general well-being of the community and [that] the country will be safeguarded and shall receive

¹²⁴ Ford Motor Company of Canada Public Relations Division, comp. *The Strike at Ford of Canada: The 12-Day Wildcat Strike Ended Friday, Dec 21, 1951 After a Secret Ballot by Members of the Union* (Windsor, ON: Ford Motor Company of Canada, 1952), 1-8.

¹²⁵ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records; Box 140, Folder 1; Ford-Canada memorandum. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

consideration prior to private profit.”¹²⁶ Similarly, union leaders appealed to Canadian national feelings, arguing that American companies were unduly harming Canadian workers through their plans for relocation.¹²⁷ Charles Brooks put it most bluntly when advocating for government grants to attract industry to Windsor: “The history of the auto industry in Windsor is tragic when you consider huge plants... have been left black as grim reminders of an auto town that once manufactured cars and at the same time tax havens for the corporations and realtors who use them each year as a tax write-off.”¹²⁸ These concerns not only applied to the major auto manufacturers, but to parts plants as well.

The UAW also pointed towards British and other European legislation in the hope that they could serve as a useful model in the Canadian context. For example, the UAW made specific policy recommendations inspired by the British model, where financial incentives encouraged companies to remain in so-called “Development Districts.”¹²⁹ Windsor would have been one such designated area. Similar efforts were made by American labour leaders, who, after visiting with several of their European counterparts, highlighted the sometimes decades-long

¹²⁶ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, Folder 5. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹²⁷ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office, Box 32, File 10. Correspondence between George Burt, Hugh McConville, and John Diefenbaker. November 5, 1962. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹²⁸ Charles Brooks, President UAW Local 44, to Eugene Whelan, Herb Gray and Mark MacGuigan. 30 January 1975. File 2, Box 1, Mayor’s Automotive Committee, 1975. University of Windsor Archives. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹²⁹ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 33, File 5. A Study of the United Kingdom Local Employment Act, 1960 and the Possible Application of Some Features in Canada. April 20, 1962.

legislative action being taken in those countries.¹³⁰ Adoption of such policies would have been especially impactful on the auto parts sector.

Plant Movements and Windsor City Council

Windsor's deindustrialization brought to the fore the relationship between the UAW and area municipalities, especially the City of Windsor. Through various resolutions and public engagements, the UAW prioritized saving jobs and maintaining workers' rights. While municipal officials were sensitive to the concerns of the UAW, they were also tasked with attracting new investment and retaining existing manufacturers. These goals could often be at odds. Therefore, in the face of the increasing deindustrialization of Windsor, the UAW launched a campaign in 1961 that not only highlighted the severity of plant closures, but also the evolving relationship between unions, municipalities, and other levels of government.

Integral to the UAW's argument was the assertion that corporate decisions around plant relocation were not strictly business decisions. Instead, they contended that these decisions had vast implications for local economies, workers' livelihoods, and the strength of communities. As the UAW Council's Plant Movement Committee explained, "Corporate decisions on plant location can no longer be regarded as the private concern of business and industry alone."¹³¹ This stance contravened the dominant economic thinking of the time, which treated decisions around plant relocation as a business judgement rather than one that required public oversight. The

¹³⁰ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records, Box 32, File 10; Joint Economic Committee. Congress of the United States. Economic Programs for Labor Surplus Areas in Selected Countries of Western Europe, 1960. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹³¹ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. Canadian UAW Council Plant Movement Committee. Resolution No. 4 – Plant Movement. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

UAW now contended that such a position was detrimental to Windsor, which had experienced the loss of industry since the early 1950s.

The real beginning of deindustrialization in Windsor can be marked by Ford-Canada's decision to relocate to Oakville in 1953. This not only had the direct impact of loss of jobs from that specific plant, but also established a trend for subsequent industrial relocations out of Windsor. As Hugh McConville, Chair of the Windsor Area Plant Movement Committee, and President of UAW Local 195, an amalgamated local which included most of Windsor's auto parts plants, noted, this move initiated "a continuing industrial hemorrhage," which reduced Ford-Canada's workforce from 12,000 in 1951 to 4000 in 1962.¹³² Because of the scale of the industrial exodus, McConville argued that there had not been a sufficient public or governmental response, or in his words, "no public or government body has made any attempt to apply the necessary tourniquet."¹³³ He suggested that local government had only made efforts to attract "small enterprises [which employed] only a few people and [paid] totally inadequate and ridiculous low wages."¹³⁴ The problem, then, was not only the relocation of plants and loss of jobs, but also the demonstrated unwillingness to confront it in a meaningful way.

The UAW's proposals were designed to fill the political vacuum. By drawing on international models, especially British laws concerning industrial location, the union advocated for policies that would require companies to seek government approval before relocating, while

¹³² UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. Letter addressed "To the Citizens of Windsor" from Hugh McConville, President Local 195 UAW, Chair of the Windsor Area Plant Movement Committee. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹³³ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. Statement by Hugh McConville, President Local 195 UAW, Chair of the Windsor Area Plant Movement Committee. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹³⁴ Ibid.

also providing incentives for companies to remain in so-called economically distressed regions. The UAW even sent copies of British legislation to Windsor's municipal officials in the hope that a Canadian response could be modelled after their approach.¹³⁵ Steven High also makes this point, as it became increasingly common for unions to cite policy frameworks from Western Europe.¹³⁶ George Burt argued that these recommendations were "in no way radical ones... [and] have been tested and tried in many of the now prosperous democratic countries of Western Europe."¹³⁷ Under British laws, companies were sometimes denied permission to relocate plants, and were also offered grants to locate in high-unemployment areas of the country. And although the UAW never directly advocated for such drastic measures, there was a strong post-war move to nationalize certain raw material industries in the UK.¹³⁸ The UAW, then, hoped to replicate these processes in Canada by advocating an approach that was "similar to that of Great Britain under which a combination of positive controls and financial inducements are used to guide the location of new plants."¹³⁹

This framing was crucial as, rather than appearing adversarial, the UAW presented its suggestions as both reasonable and in line with practices common in other countries. Despite these efforts to work cooperatively, the UAW still faced opposition from the Windsor City

¹³⁵ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 5. George Burt to J.B. Adamac, City Clerk of Windsor. January 23, 1961. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹³⁶ Steven High, "A fruitless exercise? The political struggle to compel corporations to justify factory closures in Canada," *Labor History* 63, no. 3 (2022): 303-11.

¹³⁷ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. Statement by George Burt, Director of the Canadian UAW, on UAW resolutions presented to Windsor City Council. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹³⁸ Jim Tomlinson, "A 'Failed Experiment'? Public Ownership and the Narratives of Post-war Britain," *Labour History Review* 73 (2008): 199-214.

¹³⁹ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. Canadian UAW Council Plant Movement Committee. Resolution No. 4 – Plant Movement. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

Council. Neighbouring municipalities, like Sandwich East, Sandwich South, and the Township of Tecumseh, were readier partners and endorsed the union's calls for greater government intervention.¹⁴⁰ Windsor City Council, however, narrowly rejected these proposals, with the mayor, Michael J. Patrick, casting the deciding vote against the union.¹⁴¹ In a statement, Patrick described this proposal as a "dictatorial and arbitrary law," and generally argued that future investment would be difficult to attract if such legislation were enacted.¹⁴²

Windsor Council's failure to fully endorse the UAW's recommendations revealed the political tensions between organized labour and municipal officials. The UAW wanted to politicize industry decision-making and plant relocation, while city leadership remained committed to economic development grounded in market freedom and a generally pro-business approach. The frustration of the UAW was clear, and was especially evident in a 1962 brief given to Windsor City Council: "Windsor has stood by helpless over the past ten years and watch the exodus of industry and the loss of jobs and income with what appears to have been an appalling indifference."¹⁴³ Certainly, this tension is not unique to Windsor, but it was especially acute in a city where the fate of such a large proportion of workers was in the hands of a single industry.

¹⁴⁰ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 10. Township of Sandwich East to Herb Kelly, President of Local 200, UAW. September 19, 1962; UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. Statement by George Burt, Director of the Canadian UAW, on UAW resolutions presented to Windsor City Council. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹⁴¹ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. Letter addressed "To the Citizens of Windsor" from Hugh McConville, President Local 195 UAW, Chair of the Windsor Area Plant Movement Committee. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹⁴² "Patrick Cites Job Solution: Mayor Explains Non-Support of Union Attacks on Industry," *The Windsor Star* (Windsor, ON), September 1, 1962, 6.

¹⁴³ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. Letter addressed "To the Citizens of Windsor" from Hugh McConville, President Local 195 UAW, Chair of the Windsor Area Plant Movement Committee. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

However, in response to this mounting pressure, Windsor City Council approved the establishment of a Special Committee on Industrial Plant Movements in September 1962. The goals of this committee were to further review the submissions made by the UAW, including the referenced examples of international legislation, especially from the United Kingdom.¹⁴⁴ While this represented a concession to the UAW's campaign for government intervention, it fell short of the far-reaching changes the union ultimately sought. The Special Committee's original mandate comprised fifteen proposals from the mayor, but would eventually include consideration of UAW proposals as well. However, the union argued that the mayor's proposals "[could] in no way be taken to relate to the problem of keeping the jobs and industries which we already have."¹⁴⁵ The UAW continued to insist on strong government action, and lobby Windsor City Council to recognize that decisions regarding plant closure and relocation could no longer be made in isolation from public oversight.

Canadian UAW officials often infused their demands with economic nationalist rhetoric. In this way, the case of Windsor was the beginning of this nationalist framework being mobilized in union messaging. For example, the Canadian UAW Council's Plant Movement Committee argued that business decisions were being made "frequently abroad as foreign control of Canada's natural resources and manufacturing industry continues to gain a tighter grip."¹⁴⁶ These conclusions foreshadow broader conversations about the state of the Canadian economy,

¹⁴⁴ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. W.G. Phillips, Chairman of the Special Committee on Plant Movements to Michael J. Patrick, Mayor of Windsor. September 21, 1962. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹⁴⁵ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. Statement to Windsor City Council from UAW. September 10, 1962. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

¹⁴⁶ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. Canadian UAW Council Plant Movement Committee. Resolution No. 4 – Plant Movement. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

especially the manufacturing sector, in the coming decades. The UAW did not solely blame local officials or companies, but instead, highlighted the structural vulnerabilities in the Canadian approach to deindustrialization, which were propagated by all levels of government:

We insist that the time has come to provide for public scrutiny and investigation into the needs and causes of relocation before the final decision to relocate is put into effect. Our proposal is not arbitrary or dictatorial in any sense. We do not propose, as some representatives of management have alleged, that we are seeking an absolute ban on any company, regardless of necessity to move its operations. What we are seeking from both levels of senior governments – at Toronto and at Ottawa is the adoption in this country of legislation similar to that of Great Britain under which a combination of positive controls and financial inducements are used to guide the location of new plants.¹⁴⁷

Their solution, rooted in public oversight and safeguards for workers, aimed to offer increased control over plant location and industrial investment in the face of ever-growing corporate power.

The union's campaign during the early 1960s also highlighted the limits of the authority held by municipal government. Windsor city officials could pass resolutions and establish committees, but they lacked the power necessary to force a plant to remain open in the city. Given Windsor City Council's reticence to support the UAW's proposals, the union later redirected its lobbying efforts to the provincial and federal level, where officials had greater ability to effect real change. This meant that Windsor's position on deindustrialization was

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

reactive. It had to bear the costs of deindustrialization and job loss, but had few avenues by which to prevent it.

The UAW's ongoing efforts to protect its members in Windsor highlight an interesting case of municipal-labour relations. They illustrate how unions were attempting to constrain management rights by politicizing the plant closing/relocation issue. This chapter also reveals the structural and ideological barriers that prevented municipal governments from acting. Hugh McConville and the UAW's Windsor Area Plant Movement Committee insisted that "more than hand-wringing ought to be done about the continued flight from Windsor by industry."¹⁴⁸ In the end, they were left wondering who would act if Windsor officials did not.

Conclusion

Ford's decision to move its assembly operations to Oakville had long-term repercussions for Windsor as its suppliers gradually moved production to be closer to their clients and distance themselves from trade union militancy. Smaller towns located North, East, and Southwest of Toronto offered both. The Canadian UAW, led by George Burt, did its best to protect Windsor members by encouraging the Ontario government to further restrain municipalities from incentivizing companies to relocate, a practice that was common in the United States but mostly illegal in Ontario. The union also urged Windsor City Council to use its influence to defend local workers. However, city officials, influenced by the Windsor Industrial Commissioner, feared that

¹⁴⁸ UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records. Box 32, File 11. Letter addressed "To the Citizens of Windsor" from Hugh McConville, President Local 195 UAW, Chair of the Windsor Area Plant Movement Committee. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (Detroit, MI).

any further acts of political defiance would only discourage future investors and convince existing manufacturers to leave.

The signing of the Auto Pact in January 1965 integrated the North American automotive industry. Windsor's location, just across the river from Detroit, once again became more advantageous. Accompanying guarantees that the same number of automobiles would be built in Canada as sold here, along with Canadian-content rules for components, meant that the danger of Windsor losing manufacturing jobs to the United States under the Auto Pact was contained for the time being. Both union and government officials entered into a new paradigm of labour and industry: free trade.

Conclusion

The immediate postwar decades, often hailed as the “*trentes glorieuses*” of unionized prosperity, were years of economic uncertainty and upheaval in Windsor as employers moved automotive production elsewhere. The hemorrhaging of manufacturing jobs in the city only ended with the signing of the Auto Pact in 1965, which resulted in the integration of the auto industries of Canada and the United States. Integration also came with risks, as Dimitry Anastakis has shown so well in his book *Auto Pact: Creating a Borderless North American Auto Industry, 1960-1971*.¹⁴⁹ Even so, the Auto Pact triggered massive restructuring within Ontario’s auto sector. After a relatively long history of trade agreements between the United States and Canada occurring on a sector-by-sector basis, the Auto Pact represented a leap towards free trade within that sectoral framework.¹⁵⁰

While the Auto Pact ultimately proved to be a boon for Canadian autoworkers, its immediate effects were considerably disruptive. In the short and medium term, ongoing plant closures and relocations caused significant hardship for Windsor workers. Shortly after the signing of the Auto Pact, Ford-Canada laid off an additional 1,302 workers from its Windsor operations.¹⁵¹ Although most of these workers were eventually recalled, they returned under the less secure classification of “temporary” workers, reflecting a broader trend towards precarity in

¹⁴⁹ Dimitry Anastakis, *Auto Pact: Creating a Borderless North American Auto Industry, 1960-1971* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 91-92.

¹⁵⁰ For more on the trade relationship between Canada and the United States, see: Randall White, *Fur Trade to Free Trade: Putting the Canada-US Trade Agreement in Historical Perspective* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1988).

¹⁵¹ C.M. Birch and J.B. Gertz, *The Impact of Layoff and Recall at Ford-Windsor: An Examination of the Effect on Employees of the Ford Foundry and Engine Plants of the Reorganization of Production Facilities Arising from the United States-Canada Automotive Trade Agreement* (Windsor, ON: Ontario Economic Council, 1966), 12-17.

auto sector employment.¹⁵² At the same time, the import penetration of the Canadian auto market surged dramatically, rising from just 13% in 1955 to 51% by 1960,¹⁵³ further underscoring the volatility and restructuring that characterized this transitional period of Canadian auto manufacturing.

While the immediate aftermath of the Auto Pact brought significant challenges, including layoffs, additional restructuring, and lingering anxieties about foreign competition, the agreement ultimately signalled a move away from Windsor plant closures being the dominant concern of labour. By integrating Canadian auto production into a continental framework, Windsor became increasingly dependent on decisions made by multinational manufacturers and vulnerable to fluctuations in the American market. Hence, the Auto Pact therefore serves as a useful and necessary bookend to this initial period of deindustrialization in Windsor.

In the decades to follow, Windsor did not experience industrial ruination of the scale of the American Rust Belt. When it moved its auto-assembly operations, Ford-Canada announced that it intended to locate a new engine manufacturing plant in Windsor, which would employ 2,600 workers, and forecasted “several thousand additional jobs in supplier and service industries.”¹⁵⁴ This announcement tempered some of the initial fears surrounding Ford-Canada’s withdrawal and helped preserve some semblance of Windsor’s status as a hub of automotive production. In this way, Windsor managed to avoid the full-scale industrial collapse that devastated many American manufacturing towns.

¹⁵² Ibid, 26-27.

¹⁵³ James Dykes, *Canada's Automotive Industry* (Toronto, ON: McGraw-Hill Company of Canada, 1970), 63.

¹⁵⁴ News Release by Ford of Canada News Service, August 15, 1979, Ford Expansion, 1977-1980, City of Windsor Municipal Archives, Windsor, ON.

The complexity and often contradictory nature of industrial disinvestment were especially visible in Windsor's experience. Even as plans for a new engine plant were underway, layoffs persisted in other divisions of Ford-Canada. In 1980, for example, the company closed its casting operations in Windsor, resulting in the loss of almost 900 jobs, underscoring the city's continued vulnerability to restructuring.¹⁵⁵ Despite new investments, Windsor was unable to escape the looming and ongoing threat of further plant closures and employment instability. Over time, hallmarks of a post-industrial landscape began to emerge, as hotels, casinos, retail chains, and other low-wage service sector jobs began to occupy a growing share of the local economy.¹⁵⁶ While it would be inaccurate to describe Windsor as a fully post-industrial city, its development reveals a more nuanced trajectory. One defined by recurring cycles of deindustrialization and reinvestment that had shaped the city and its working-class identity since the 1950s.

Ultimately, the Ford-Canada move from Windsor to Oakville marked a pivotal turning point in the city's industrial and social history, exposing the vulnerabilities of a community deeply tied to the successes of the automotive sector. While the immediate impacts of layoffs, community disruption, and heightened labour unrest were prevalent, the episode revealed deeper structural transformations beginning to shape postwar industrial relations. The UAW initially resisted closures by framing them as deliberate corporate strategies aimed at weakening union strength, particularly when layoffs first targeted union stewards and militant labour activists.

¹⁵⁵ UAW, Director for Canada Robert White to Windsor Mayor Bert Weeks, telegram, April 3, 1980, Ford Expansion, 1977-1980, City of Windsor Municipal Archives, Windsor, ON.

¹⁵⁶ For more about casinos as a replacement industry in Windsor, see: Alissa Mazar, *Deindustrialization and Casinos : a Winning Hand?* (Routledge, 2021); Andrew Hurley, "The Transformation of Industrial Suburbs since the Second World War," in *The Deindustrialized World : Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, ed. Steven High, et al. (UBC Press, 2018), 208-231.

Ford-Canada, however, attributed the decision to broader economic pressures, including supply chain disruptions caused in part by the Korean War and the need to be closer to the economic power of the Greater Toronto Area, underscoring their competing narratives. This situation not only intensified tensions but also redefined the balance of power between labour, corporate management, and the state, as workers and the union strengthened their appeals for government intervention. The Ford-Windsor case is indicative of the early stages of Canada's deindustrialization, predating larger-scale plant shutdowns and job loss of the 1970s and 1980s, and also situates Windsor within broader debates around industrial decline and working-class resistance. Far from representing an isolated corporate decision, the Ford-Canada relocation foreshadowed a prolonged restructuring of Canada's auto industry, one in which Windsor's contestation of jobs, community stability, and the future of industrial labour would be central.

The subsequent shutdowns and relocations of automotive parts plants compounded Windsor's economic challenges, as these smaller companies, though not directly owned by one of the Big Three automakers, remained deeply dependent on their presence in the city. When Ford-Canada relocated, many of its suppliers were compelled to follow, further eroding Windsor's industrial base. Union frustration intensified, not only over corporate decisions to abandon the city but also the incentives offered by other municipalities eager to attract these firms. To the UAW, these relocations represented a double betrayal: workers were punished by corporate decisions beyond their control, while local governments rushed to undercut one another in a race for investment. The union pressed for direct government intervention to safeguard employment. Yet, these appeals were often met with a limited response, as governments remained hesitant to challenge corporate autonomy in an era defined by market-oriented policies. For Windsor, this reluctance was compounded by the perception that the

growth experienced by other regions allowed the provincial and federal politicians to minimize their involvement.

Ultimately, the case of Windsor and Ford-Canada complicates dominant narratives of North American deindustrialization by illustrating the significant industrial decline that occurred during a period typically remembered for prosperity and manufacturing expansion. Ford-Canada's early relocation and the subsequent dispersal of its dependent parts plants demonstrate the uneven geography of industrial change. Deindustrialization in Canada was neither a sudden phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s nor exclusively a consequence of global economic shifts. Instead, it was a gradual and systematic process, inherent to the dynamics of capitalism, with an apparent origin in Windsor in the 1950s. This analysis challenges conventional periodization of deindustrialization and highlights Windsor's importance as a central locale for understanding the earliest contours of industrial decline in an era of national economic growth.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs. UAW Region 7: Canadian Office Records Fonds.

Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs. UAW Region 7: Toronto Sub-regional Office Records Fonds.

Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs. UAW Local 200 Fonds.

Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs. UAW Secretary Treasurer Emil Mazey Fonds.

Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs. UAW: President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records Fonds.

Windsor Municipal Archives.

University of Windsor Archives. Papers of Windsor Mayor Bert Weeks Fonds.

University of Windsor Archives. Papers of Hugh Peacock Fonds.

Newspaper Sources

Globe and Mail, "12,000 at Ford Idle in Wildcat Strike," (4 December 1951).

Globe and Mail, "Big Stick's No Answer," (8 December 1951).

Globe and Mail, "Cites Goon Charges: Burt Blast Disparages Sale as Ford Exec," (5 January 1952).

Globe and Mail, "Crown Drops Charges Against Ford Workers," (30 April 1952).

Globe and Mail, "Ford Firm Represented Through Whole City," (20 November 1954).

Globe and Mail, "Ford to Expand Plant at Windsor by \$35,500,000," (18 November 1952).

Globe and Mail, "Shocked, Bewildered Reaction in Windsor," (1 November 1951).

Globe and Mail, "Speedup Dispute Brings Ford Layoff," (20 July 1951).

Globe and Mail, "Toronto Gets Ford HQ but Only Top Officials Moving From Windsor," (22 October 1954).

Globe and Mail, "What the Strike did to Ford Plant at Windsor," (27 December 1951).

Lindbland, John. Windsor Star, "Now," (20 October 1962).

List, Wilfred. Globe and Mail, "Shocked, Bewildered Reaction in Windsor," (1 November 1951).

New York Times, "Windsor Stunned by Ford Removal," (1 November 1951).

Wall Street Journal, "Ford of Canada Strike Ends," (28 January 1955).

Windsor Star, editorial, (31 October 1951), page 4.

Windsor Star, "Ford Decision Severe Blow," (31 October 1952).

Windsor Star, "Ford Men Join Trek: Defy Company on Motorcade," (16 October 1962).

Windsor Star, "Grew Up Together," (31 October 1951).

Windsor Star, "Majority to Stay at Work: Plans Move for Motorcade to See Premier," (10 October 1962).

Windsor Star, "Move to Oakville Brings New Layoff: 955 Hourly-Rated Employees Lose Jobs on Temporary Basis this Week," (28 September 1953).

Windsor Star, "Patrick Cites Job Solution: Mayor Explains Non-Support of Union Attacks on Industry," (1 September 1962).

Windsor Star, "Several Hundred Men Laid Off at Ford Plant," (14 March 1953).

Windsor Star, "So Much Sabotage," (3 November 1951).

Windsor Star, "Union Raps Ford Layoffs," (10 January 1953).

Other Primary Sources

Beshiri, Roland. *Employment Structure in Rural and Small Town Canada: The Manufacturing Sector*. Report no. 21-006-XIE. Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2001.

Birch, C.M., and J.B. Gertz. *The Impact of Layoff and Recall at Ford-Windsor: An Examination of the Effect on Employees of the Ford Foundry and Engine Plants of the Reorganization of Production Facilities Arising from the United States-Canada Automotive Trade Agreement*. Windsor: Ontario Economic Council, 1966.

Canadian Labour Congress. "1945: Windsor's Ford Strike." Canadian Labour Congress. Last modified 2021. <https://canadianlabour.ca/who-we-are/history/1945-windsors-ford-strike/>.

Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, RG 20, Volume 1609, File 6-41, 1c, NAC. As found in High, Steven. "I'll Wrap the F*#@ Canadian Flag around Me': A Nationalist Response to Plant Shutdowns." In *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2003, page s 174-5.

Dominion Bureau of Statistics. "Gross Domestic Product at Factor Cost of Industry of Origin, Canada." Chart. In *The Canadian Economy: Organization and Development*, by Ian M. Drummond, edited by Lloyd G. Reynolds, 8. The Irwin Series in Economics. Georgetown: Irwin Dorsey, 1966.

Dominion Bureau of Statistics. *Motor Vehicle Manufacturers, 1960: Annual Census of Manufactures*. Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1962.

Ford Motor Company of Canada Public Relations Division, comp. *The Strike at Ford of Canada: The 12-Day Wildcat Strike Ended Friday, Dec 21, 1951 After a Secret Ballot by Members of the Union*. Windsor: Ford Motor Company of Canada, 1952.

Horne, G.R., W.J. Gillen, and R.A. Helling. *A Survey of Labour Market Conditions, Windsor, Ontario, 1964: A Case Study*. Research report no. Special Study No. 2. Ottawa: Economic Council of Canada, 1965.

House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade. *House of Commons Committees, 33rd Parliament, 2nd Session : Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, Fourth Report*. Government of Canada, 1987.
https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.com_HOC_3302_43_7/1?r=0&s=1.

The Ontario Workman (Toronto). "Provincial Grand Lodge, K.O.S.C." February 20, 1873, 20th edition, 4.

Privy Council Office. *Report, Royal Commission on the Automotive Industry*. By V.W. Bladen. Ottawa, 1961.

Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development of Prospects for Canada. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada*. Ottawa, 1985.

Select Committee on Plant Shutdown and Employee Adjustment. *Interim Report*. Government of Ontario, 1980.

Secondary Sources

Anastakis, Dimitry. *Auto Pact: Creating a Borderless North American Auto Industry, 1960-1971*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005.

Anastakis, Dimitry. "Between Nationalism and Continentalism: State Auto Industry Policy and the Canadian UAW, 1960-1970." *Labour/Le Travail* 53.

- Anastakis, Dimitry. "From Independence to Integration: The Corporate Evolution of the Ford Motor Company of Canada, 1904-2004." *The Business History Review* 78, no. 2 (2004): 213-53.
- Anastakis, Dimitry. "Industrial Sunrise? The Chrysler Bailout, the State, and the Reindustrialization of the Canadian Automotive Sector, 1975-1986." *Urban History Review* 35, no. 2 (2007): 37-50.
- Anastakis, Dimitry. "Schism: The Canadian UAW and the End of Auto Worker Internationalism." In *Autonomous State.: The Epic Struggle for a Canadian Car Industry from OPEC to Free Trade*, 210-51. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013.
- Azzi, Stephen. *Walter Gordon and the Rise of Canadian Nationalism*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.
- Baccini, Leonardo, and Stephen Weymouth. "Gone For Good: Deindustrialization, White Voter Backlash, and US Presidential Voting." *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 2 (2021): 550-67.
- Baruth-Walsh, Mary E., and G. Mark Walsh. *Strike!: 99 Days on the Line : the Workers' Own Story of the 1945 Windsor Ford Strike*. Ottawa: Penumbra Press, 1995.
- Bernard, Elaine. "Labour, the New Democratic Party, and the 1988 Federal Election." In *The Challenge of Restructuring: North American Labor Movements Respond : Conference Entitled 'North American Labour Movements into the 1990s: Similarities or Differences' : Papers*, edited by Jane Jenson and Rianne Mahon, 137-53. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.
- Bluestone, Barry, and Bennett Harrison. *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry*. New York: Basic Books Publishers, 1982.
- Buckley, K.A.H. "Capital Formation in Canada, 1896-1930." In *Canadian Economic History: Classic and Contemporary Approaches : a Selection of Essays*, by Mel Watkins and H. M. Grant, 211-22. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1999.
- Cameron, Duncan, and Daniel Drache. *The Other Macdonald Report: The Consensus on Canada's Future That the Macdonald Commission Left out*. Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1985.
- Colling, Herb. *Ford City*. Windsor: Biblioasis, 2017.
- Cooper-McCann, Patrick, and Andrew Guinn. "Why Windsor Deindustrialized Differently than Detroit." *Labor History* 65, no. 3 (2024): 369-87.

- Cowie, Jefferson. *Capital Moves : RCA's Seventy-year Quest for Cheap Labor*. New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2001.
- Cowie, Jefferson. "Old Fashioned Heroes of the New Working Class." In *Stayin' Alive : the 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class*, Paperback ed., 23-74. New York: New Press, 2012.
- Curtis, Jennifer. "Failures of the Sociological Imagination: Trump, 'Brexit,' and the Politics of Unfinished Conflict." *The Sociological Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2020): 187-205.
- Dykes, James. *Canada's Automotive Industry*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Company of Canada, 1970.
- Forsey, Eugène. "Insights into Labour History in Canada/Considérations sur l'histoire du syndacalisme canadien." *Industrial Relations* 20, no. 3 (1965): 445-77.
- Fudge, Judy, and Eric Tucker. *Labour before the Law : the Regulation of Workers' Collective Action in Canada, 1900-1948*. Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Gindin, Sam. *The Canadian Auto Workers : the Birth and Transformation of a Union*. James Lorimer & Company, 1995.
- Hackworth, Jason. "Race and the Production of Extreme Land Abandonment in the American Rust Belt." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42, no. 1 (2018): 51-73.
- Hamelin, Spencer. "A New Scale of Activism: Canadian Unions and the North American Free Trade Agreement, 1992–1999." *Labour/Le Travail*, no. 80 (Fall 2017): 157-83.
- High, Steven. "Deindustrialization on the Industrial Frontier: The Rise and Fall of Mill Colonialism in Northern Ontario." In *The Deindustrialized World : Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, by Steven C. High, Lachlan MacKinnon, and Andrew Perchard. UBC Press, 2018.
- High, Steven. "A fruitless exercise? The political struggle to compel corporations to justify factory closures in Canada." *Labour History* 63, no. 3 (2022): 297-315.
- High, Steven. *Industrial Sunset : the Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003.
- Holmes, John. "Industrial Reorganization, Capital Restructuring and Locational Change: An Analysis of the Canadian Automobile Industry in the 1960s." *Economic Geography* 59, no. 3 (1983): 251-71.
- Holmes, John. "Re-scaling Collective Bargaining: Union Responses to Restructuring in the North American Auto Industry." *Geoforum* 35 (2004).

- Hurley, Andrew. "The Transformation of Industrial Suburbs since the Second World War." In *The Deindustrialized World : Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, edited by Steven High, Lachlan MacKinnon, and Andrew Perchard. UBC Press, 2018.
- Iacovetta, Franca, and Mariana Valverde. "Gender, Modernity, and Liberty: Canadian Women's Labour and the Law, 1880s-1950s." *Labour/Le Travail* 39 (Spring 1997): 87-123.
- Irwin, Douglas. *The Nixon Shock after Forty Years: The Import Surcharge Revisited*. Report no. 17749. NBER Working Paper Series. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2012.
- Jackson, Andrew. *From Leaps of Faith to Hard Landings: Fifteen Years of 'Free Trade'*. Research report no. 28. Canadian Labour Congress, 2003.
- Jenson, Jane, and Rianne Mahon. "Legacies for Canadian Labour of Two Decades of Crisis." In *The Challenge of Restructuring: North American Labor Movements Respond : Conference Entitled 'North American Labour Movements into the 1990s: Similarities or Differences' : Papers, 72-92*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.
- Key, Willow. "'In the Name of Progress': Postwar Urban Renewal and the Razing of Black Spaces in Windsor, Ontario , 1957-1980." Master's thesis, University of Windsor, 2024.
- Lascelles, Michael. *Legislative Provision for the Compulsory check-off of Union Dues and Agency Fees: A Review of Issues*. Ottawa, Labour Canada, 1980.
- Laxer, Robert M. *(Canada) Ltd: The Political Economy of Dependency*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973.
- Levitt, Kari. *Silent Surrender: The Multinational Corporation in Canada*. MacMillan Canada, 1970.
- Lipsig-Mumme, Carla. "Canadian and American unions respond to economic crisis." *Journal of Industrial Relations* 31, no. 2 (1989): 229-56.
- MacKinnon, Lachlan. *Closing Sysco : Industrial Decline in Atlantic Canada's Steel City*. University of Toronto Press, 2020.
- MacKinnon, Lachlan. "Environmental Justice and Workers' Health: Fighting for Compensation at the Sydney Coke Ovens, 1986-90." In *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, by Steven C. High, Lachlan MacKinnon, and Andrew Perchard, 68-86. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018.
- MacKinnon, Lachlan, and Andrew Parnaby. *Cape Breton in the Long Twentieth Century : Formations and Legacies of Industrial Capitalism*. Canadian Committee on Labour History : AU Press, 2024.

- Mazar, Alissa. *Deindustrialization and Casinos : a Winning Hand?* Routledge, 2021.
- Melanson, Stewart. *Learning from the Past – Volume 1: The Automotive Industry and Economic Development in Ontario; a Historical Perspective (1904 to the Present)*. Research report no. 2009-WPONT-006. Working Paper Series: Ontario in the Creative Age. Martin Prosperity Institute, 2009.
- Meltz, Noah. "Unionism in the Private Sector-Service Sector: A Canada-United States Comparison." In *The Challenge of Restructuring: North American Labor Movements Respond : Conference Entitled 'North American Labour Movements into the 1990s: Similarities or Differences' : Papers*, edited by Jane Jenson and Rianne Mahon, 207-25. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.
- Meltz, Noah. "Unionism in the Private-Service Sector: A Canada-US Comparison." In *The Challenge of Restructuring : North American Labor Movements Respond*, by Jane Jenson and Rianne Mahon. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.
- Milloy, Jeremy. *Blood, Sweat, and Fear : Violence at Work in the North American Auto Industry, 1960-80*. UBC Press, 2017.
- Moulton, David. "Ford Windsor 1945." In *On Strike: Six Key Labour Struggles in Canada 1919-1949*, by Irving Martin Abella, 129-69. Toronto: James Lorimer, 1975.
- Norrie, K. H., and Doug Owram. *A History of the Canadian Economy*. 4th ed. Toronto: Thomson Nelson, 2007.
- Parkes, Debra. "The Rand Formula Revisited: Union Security in the Broader Era." *University of New Brunswick Law Journal* 34, no. 1 (2010): 223-42.
- Parkes, Debra. "The Rand formula revisited: union security in the Charter era." *University of New Brunswick Law Journal* 34, no. 1 (2010): 223-42.
- Parnaby, Andrew. "Growing Up Even More Uncertain: Children and Youth Confront Industrial Ruin in Sydney, Nova Scotia, 1967." In *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, by Steven C. High, Lachlan MacKinnon, and Andrew Perchard, 87-110. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018.
- Patrias, Carmela, and Larry Savage. "Living in a Dying Town: Deindustrialization in Welland." In *Union Power: Solidarity and Struggle in Niagara*, 117-24. Edmonton: AU Press, 2012.
- Phillips, Jim. "The Moral Economy of Deindustrialization in Post-1945 Scotland." In *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, edited by Steven C. High, Lachlan MacKinnon, and Andrew Perchard, 313-30. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018.

- Phillips, Jim. *Scottish Coal Miners in the Twentieth Century*. Edinburgh University Press, 2019.
- Roberts, David. *In the Shadow of Detroit : Gordon M. McGregor, Ford of Canada, and Motoropolis*. Wayne State University Press, 2006.
- Sugiman, Pamela. "Unionism and Feminism in the Canadian Auto Workers Union, 1961-1992." In *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy and Militancy*, edited by Linda Briskin and Patricia McDermott. University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- Taksa, Lucy. "Like a Bicycle, Forever Teetering between Individualism and Collectivism: Considering Community in Relation to Labour History." *Labour History*, no. 70 (May 2000): 7-32.
- Tomlinson, Jim. "A 'Failed Experiment'? Public Ownership and the Narratives of Post-war Britain." *Labour History Review* 73 (2008): 199-214.
- UNIFOR. *Where Did Our Rights Come From? The Rand Formula and the struggle for union security*. UNIFOR, 2013.
https://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/legacy/documents/document/full_booklet_-_english.pdf.
- Walley, Christine J. *Exit Zero: Family and Class in Postindustrial Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Watkins, Mel. "A Staple Theory of Economic Growth (1963)." In *Staples and Beyond: Selected Writings of Mel Watkins*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006.
- White, Randall. *Fur Trade to Free Trade: Putting the Canada-US Trade Agreement in Historical Perspective*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1988.
- White, Richard. *Making Cars in Canada: A Brief History of the Canadian Automotive Industry, 1900-1980*. Ottawa: Canada Science and Technology Museum, 2007.
- Wilson, Gregory. "'Our Chronic and Desperate Situation': Anthracite Communities and the Emergence of Redevelopment Policy in Pennsylvania and the United States, 1945-1965." *International Review of Social History* 47, no. S10 (2002): 137-58.
- Yates, Charlotte. *From Plant to Politics: The Autoworkers Union in Postwar Canada*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.