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MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

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BOSSY, Walter J.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF W.J. BOSSY

Walter J. Bossy (Wladyslaw, Wolodymyr, Vladimir Bossy) was born on May 21, 1899, in the village of Jaslo in the county of Lemkivschyna, then under the Austro-Hungarian Empire. By today's ethno-cultural criteria, his father was a Ukrainian from the village of Korovycha, county of Cieszeniv in the province of Galicia; his mother is alleged to be of Polish background.

At age seven Bossy commenced his primary education in Jaslo and completed it in the city of Przemysl, where he also commenced his "gymnasium" or secondary education. Bossy states he completed this in Vienna in 1917; however, during those war years he seems to have had little time to further his education. During 1914-1915 he acted as a volunteer first-aid scout in the transport camps of the sick and the wounded. In 1916, he volunteered and became part of the Ukrayinski Sitchovi Striltsi (Ukrainian Sitch Sharpshooters). Later that year he was drafted into the 34th Division of the Austrian Home Guard and was stationed at Kharkow. After qualifying for office candidacy, he was sent for officer field-training at Cholon. Completing these courses in 1917 he was sent to rejoin his unit; soon after it was sent to the southern front, near Albania.

In September 1918, he returned to the Striltsi and during an assault on Lvov against the Poles, was wounded and taken prisoner. After being transported through Kharkow, Vienna and Budapest, Bossy returned in 1919 to the Striltsi and was sent to Tarnopol to organize the Ukrainian Cavalry (where he probably met the Ukrainian girl Mary Ruszczak, his future bride). By this time he had become integrated into the Ukrainska Halyschak Armia (Ukrainian Galician Army) as a Sotnyk (leader of 100 men) and he continued to work his way up the ranks. In May, 1920, he answered the call to fight for the Ukrainian National Republic under General Petliura and left for Kiev. Upon returning to Galicia with his instructions, Bossy was arrested by the Poles for treason and espionage but was released on January 1, 1921 (and was married two weeks later).

He accepted a bailiff's position at a state school near the University of Lublin (where he attended some classes in his spare time). When the Ukrainian students started their boycott of Polish schools in 1922, Bossy also left, returning to his parents in Przemysl. There he became head of the Ukrainian Student Union of the area and began taking courses at the Ukrainian Underground University in Lvov during the fall of 1923. In 1924, his wife's brother Joe Ruszczak, already in Canada, arranged to pay for his sister's and her family's transportation to Canada.

On April 13, 1924, W.J. Bossy, his wife and two sons arrived at Halifax on the Cunard Line's "Ausonia". He went to his brother-in-law's farm in Elmira, Ontario, where he stayed only a short while. He believed that he could repay his debt faster if he worked in Toronto rather than on the farm. (Four years later, his brother-in-law took legal action to collect the \$360.00 debt).

In Toronto, Bossy worked several weeks as a labourer with the C.N.R., then left to try his hand at newspaper publishing. In May 1924 he established the short-lived Ukrainian bi-weekly "Probij" (only 8 issues). During this time he organized the Federation of Ukrainians in Eastern Canada, and called for the creation of a Ukrainian Sitch in Canada. The Sitch organization was established in Western Ukraine prior to World War I with ideological-political and physical training objectives. Bossy travelled through Ontario speaking at meetings which protested the Polish takeover of Western Ukraine and organized branches of Sitch. He drafted a constitution for a Sitch Organization, received a Dominion Charter from the Federal Government and established seven branches in Ontario.

Under Bossy's leadership the organization in Eastern Canada adopted the Hetman Ideology (supporting a Ukrainian monarchy) as expounded by W. Lipinsky. Bossy was also to have his chance at organizing the west. While in Toronto, in 1924, he had taught at a Ukrainian Parochial School sponsored by a West Toronto Ukrainian Catholic Parish. For the 1925 academic year, he received an appointment at St. Joseph's College, in Yorkton Saskatchewan, to teach Ukrainian and Latin. From Yorkton, Bossy continued to direct the Sitch movement, establishing over 26 branches in two years.

In November of 1926, he left his teaching position at Yorkton to assume the editorship of the "Ukrainian Canadian" -- Bishop Budka's Ukrainian Catholic weekly in Winnipeg which supported the Hetman movement. He made the newspaper the organ of the Sitch organization. When the paper changed ownership his editorial policy conflicted with the desires of the new owners, National Press, for a neutral stand towards all political trends. They decided to relieve Bossy of his duties, but he sued them in the so-called "libel" case. The courts decreed that the publishers must pay the costs (over \$3,000) and this resulted in the financial collapse of Canada's first Ukrainian newspaper in 1932.

Bossy then took a job with the C.N.R.'s Colonization and Immigration Department, but was again turned out in 1929. That year, and the following one, Bossy concentrated his energy on the Hetman movement, started the "Sitch" newspaper (which also folded for lack of funds) and separated the Canadian Sitch Organization from the control of the North American Sitch headquarters in Chicago. Bossy also joined the Reading Association "Prosvita" and became a vice-president in that body in 1930. Soon after, an internal power struggle developed (possibly monarchist vs. communist), which Bossy won through the courts.

In 1931, Bossy left for Montreal where he spent the greater part of the next forty years. He established a Sitch branch and a Ukrainian scouting group (Plast) at Iberville. In January 1933, Bossy noted that the St. Roch Public School had 25 to 30 Ukrainian pupils registered so

he asked to teach Ukrainian. Although he failed the Catholic Central School Board Examination that year, he was taken on as a special teacher to teach a special Ukrainian language class at that school. In October of 1935, Bossy drew up an elaborate memorandum in which he argued that the Montreal Catholic School Commission required a Special Representative to ensure that the "foreign" children were obtaining a Catholic education rather than a Protestant one. In October 1936 Bossy again appealed for the creation of a special office for Canadians neither French nor British in origin. A month later he was appointed as an Auxiliary Assistant to the Director of Studies. He commenced compiling statistics about the "foreign" Catholic children in the protestant schools and those in the Roman Catholic schools of Montreal. In 1937, Bossy prepared a Memorandum in which he projected the organization of the "foreign" population of Montreal and offered his services as a liaison officer between a Permanent Council on New Canadians and a New Canadian Friendship House ---- to no effect. Bossy maintained his position as auxiliary assistant on contract until 1940 when his work was questioned and the contract terminated. Upon the intervention of friends, the Commission decided to allow him to continue in his position. In March 1946, Bossy was refused a salary increase, and resigned, only to ask for re-instatement in 1947. In April 1948 he was suspended pending reports from his supervisor -- no one seemed to know what Bossy was doing. A month later he was again re-instated after the intervention of his friend the Rev. J. Mignault. Bossy resigned in May 1949.

Almost ten years later, Bossy again asked the Commission for employment and became a principal's aide. In 1961 he retired due to poor health and applied for a pension on the basis of "Seventeen years of teaching".

In 1934, in Montreal, W. Bossy met J.J. Fitzgerald -- editor of the only English Catholic weekly in Montreal --- "Montreal Beacon". A life-long friendship developed and the seed for a new political movement was planted --- the Classocracy League of Canada. Along with Edward La Pierre and a few other close friends, they planned to develop this form of christian society on a class basis - to erase the inequalities of capitalism and oppose the threat of communism. Bossy's role was to organize all the "New Canadians" who were of non-English, non-French background. He wrote "A Call to Socially Minded Christian Canadians", numerous articles and helped to draft the constitution, oaths, and by laws. Although the movement floundered Bossy continued his activities amongst non-English, non-French Catholics in the Montreal area.

In 1938 Bossy was instrumental in organizing a New Canadian Allegiance Day in Montreal in which thousands of Canada's third element showed their allegiance to the Crown and to Canada. He expanded the ad hoc committee for the Allegiance Day into the Federation of New Canadians. Bossy believed that unity in diversity could be harnessed, however the goals of such a federation were at best nebulous. He was naive in believing he could tap

this reservoir of ethnic energy to maintain a position of power and prestige for himself.

With the advent of war, Bossy decided that Ukrainian Canadians had a potential role in freeing Western Ukraine from Poland. Therefore, he enrolled in military training courses, received a Certificate, and published the "Sitch" newspaper calling on Ukrainians to commence physical and military training to free Western Ukraine. His plans lacked support so he enlisted in the Canadian army, and received a commission. In 1941, when the U.S.S.R. entered the war and became Canada's ally, Bossy left the service.

After the war, the increased immigration, Bossy saw fertile ground for the establishment of a New Canadian Service Bureau. He published a Memoire -- "Canadien francais et Neo Canadien" (1948) and an Album --- "Un homme et son oeuvre --- W.J. Bossy --- un mouvement Neo Canadien" (1950). Bossy's drawback was not lack of ideas or energy, but lack of funds. He solicited donations from countless individuals but could never make ends meet. In 1949 he borrowed heavily from Dr. Saine who intended using the Bureau as a base for political advancement. Such an idea was neither new nor repugnant to Bossy, who had been offering his services to various political parties since 1930. Therefore, when Saine advanced Bossy enough money to travel to Winnipeg for Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent's Western Election tour to organize the ethnic vote, Bossy left all behind and went immediately. However, when the Liberal party failed to reward Saine and Bossy for their efforts, Saine sued Bossy to retrieve the money he had "borrowed", and Bossy was forced into bankruptcy, losing also the farm at Grimsby Beach which he had acquired several years earlier.

Before leaving for Montreal in 1931, Bossy had passed over the Supreme Command of the Sitch to S. Mozevsky, but maintained close contact with the organization, visiting Hetman Paul Skoropadsky in Europe (1934), hosting his son, heir to the Ukrainian throne, Hetmanych Danylo Skoropadsky in Montreal in 1937, and publishing the bi-weekly "Sitch in 1939". Now he returned to the Hetman Organization and with the assistance of J.J. Fitzgerald managed to weather his financial storm. In 1950 he hosted a National Convention of the United Hetman Organization (formerly the Canadian Sitch) at his farm in Grimsby Beach. He established the Ukrainian Scientific Institute and, in 1952, assumed the editorship of the "Ukrainian Toiler" in cooperation with I. Korchynsky and J. Tarnovych. Bossy's paper rivalled the other Hetman organ "Nasha Derzhava" (Our Country) under M. Hetman. The papers could not make ends meet. Soon an internal political struggle developed in the United Hetman Organization and an irreparable division occurred, permanently weakening the entire movement. Bossy changed his paper's name to "Ukrainian Catholic Toiler", "Ukrainian Christian Worker" and then to "Canadian Citizen", but still unable to become financially stable he left the paper and Korchynsky maintained it under its original name until 1956.

In 1963, while in retirement, Bossy organized the Institute of the Canadian Ethnic Mosaic Confederation to educate people to the need for writing the Canadian Constitution on the basis of multiculturalism. This new Constitution was to reflect the ethnic influence in Canada as well as the role of the English and French founding races. The Executive Council of the Institute had twelve members each representing groups of different ethnic groups. Bossy, as the driving force behind the Institute was an active contributor to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, after which the Institute gradually faded out of existence. Bossy died on January 3, 1979 and was buried in the family burial plot on Ile Bizard near Montreal.

(by Paul Migus)

General Description of the Bossy Papers

Originals, 1920-1973. 4 meters.

The papers were acquired from Mr. Bossy in 1972.

Photographs were transferred to the National Photography Collection
(accession no. 1975-255)

Maps were transferred to the National Map Collection
(73-18047, 73-18762)

A list of books transferred to Public Archives Library appears at
the end of this finding aid.

Personal Papers	1920-72.	(vol. 1-2)
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Newspaper Clippings and Scrapbooks		(vol. 13-20)
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Cards and Miscellaneous items		(vol. 21)

Notes on the Organization of the Bossy Papers

The arrangement of the papers is by subjects. These subjects reflect Bossy's major interests and undertakings such as new Canadian activities, political and religious activities and counselling. The correspondence section has been arranged alphabetically by author with correspondence "in" and "out" in the same file. The newspaper clippings relating to J.J. Fitzgerald and his mimeographed paper "Abundance" are at the end of the correspondence section along with the Fitzgerald letters. Correspondence relating to specific subjects appears in the appropriate subject area of the papers.

W.J. BOSSY PAPERSMG 30
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- Ph. D. Thesis: Notes and Bibliography	1930-1954
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"News Behind the News"

Expo 67

1964-1967

Mastheads

Ethnic Press

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Ukrainian

Ukrainian

Ukrainian

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	Quebec Election	1964
	George Bossy's Nomination Campaign	1968
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