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# REVIEWS/COMPTES RENDUS

Kathryn McPherson, *Bedside Matters: The Transformation of Canadian Nursing, 1900-1990* (Toronto: Oxford University Press 1996).

**NURSING IS WORK.** Laying aside for a moment the storied achievements of nursing leaders, the illustrated histories of hospitals and other health institutions, and the vocational calling which has inspired myriad romantic cultural representations, we find at the centre of nursing a core of hard, day-to-day work. For the majority of the thousands of Canadian women who were and are nurses, nursing labour has borne little relation to popular conceptions of the "soothing hand on the fevered brow." Rather, it has embodied a continuing struggle by nurses to define for themselves the boundaries and conditions of their livelihood *vis-à-vis* the demands of the health industry and Canadian society as a whole.

Kathryn McPherson, in a long overdue history of Canadian nursing, begins with the assertion that nursing work and the "ordinary nurses" who perform it have gone *understudied and underappreciated*. Three competing models of historical inquiry — professionalization, proletarianization, and gender — have dominated most recent revisionist nursing history, focusing on the problem of nursing's continued subordination to capital and patriarchy. McPherson theorizes that, taken individually, these approaches do not sufficiently explain the contradictory position that nurses have held in Canadian society. It is clear, she concedes, that

nurses have, as "the physician's hand," and "daughters" of the hospital, played second fiddle to the male-dominated professions of medicine and hospital administration. But as she rightly notes, "the social relations of class, gender, and ethnicity combined to create a distinctive position" of privilege for nurses in relation to many other female and male workers. (18) As individuals and in groups, nurses have on a day-to-day basis defended this privileged position, constructing and reconstructing their profession and work to resist unfair demands by the health care industry. To McPherson, the 20th century has thus seen a "transformation" of Canadian nursing, brought about in part by the agency of "ordinary nurses."

In order to make this gradual transformation more visible to the historical eye, McPherson divides her study into five "generations" of nurses which approximate chronologically the major periods in the development of Canadian health care. Disappointingly, the "first generation" of nurses, those who practised before 1900, receives only passing mention; as she notes, fragmentary evidence continues to obscure these women in history. In McPherson's analysis, then, the position of professional nurses in Canadian society was established in the years 1900-1920, as hospital-based nursing schools proliferated. Young women in this period were offered an apprenticeship-style training by hospitals, designed to produce nurses who through their bourgeois manners, sexual respectability, and disciplined, obedient efficiency, would cast a positive light on the institution and facili-

tate the production of health. Other historical treatments of these schools have focused on the exploitation of apprentice nurses, the strict discipline, and the rote learning which characterized nursing training. Taking a cue from American nursing historian Barbara Melosh, however, McPherson illustrates that nurse-apprentices and graduates created an occupational identity which gave them social resources as nurses and as women and which helped to mitigate the negative aspects of nursing practice. This identity was composed of a set of common experiences and skills related to the practice of nursing, but also of the homogeneous gender, ethnicity, and standards of bourgeois behaviour which came to represent professional nursing.

McPherson demonstrates this process of identity-formation well in her third chapter, where she reconsiders conceptions of nurses' daily work. She quickly lays to rest the common belief that nursing work before the post-World War II "age of miracle drugs" was largely "unscientific," composed primarily of repetitive and unskilled domestic caring tasks. Chastising feminist historians for ignoring nurses in studies of women's relationships to science, McPherson insists that repetitive nursing work routines were designed not just to make nursing labour more cost-effective, but also more medically efficacious. Nurses adhered strictly to rituals of practice that they had learned by rote because they understood that "good nursing technique," which was based in scientific theories of asepsis, would reduce the possibility of error in an environment where mistakes could mean death or disability for patients. She goes on to explain that although nursing became more technologically sophisticated following World War II, nurses since the turn of the century experienced their work as being based in a science of medicine which was mysterious to most other women and men. This knowledge, McPherson argues, was formed by nurses into a craft culture which recognized that

their caring skills were a necessary and valuable part of the curing process directed by doctors, and which served as a backbone to nurses' later political efforts to achieve a more valued status in society.

Throughout the book the theme is foregrounded that ordinary nurses, rather than having simply been victims of gender discrimination, have engaged in a process of negotiation with the Canadian health industry and patriarchal society. Possessing an indispensable skill as a bargaining chip, they have succeeded in numerous instances at forcing improvements in their work conditions and educational system. Nurses' mass exodus from their poorly paid, overworked profession in the 1950s, for instance, created a "nursing shortage" which prompted hospitals to completely restructure staffing policies and to increase pay scales in order to attract married nurses back to the profession. However, as female third party employees with an ambiguous professional status, nurses have also borne the brunt of rationalization and work intensification in periods of "fiscal restraint." McPherson, to her credit, remains realistic in her account of nursing's progress, recognizing that gains in some areas have been tempered by nursing's continued subordination to economics. Ever hopeful, though, she charts an increasingly unified militancy amongst rank and file nurses in the last few decades, especially following feminism's critiques of gender inequality in the workplace, which have prompted nurses once again to organize around their common gender. In the end, it is clear that McPherson's history of Canadian nursing is far from politically neutral. As she states in her conclusion, her study of nursing's occupational traditions aims at a revaluation of nursing and a "defence" of nurses' collective needs and aspirations. Far from detracting from her study, this political engagement adds passion and purpose to her research and writing.

In constructing this defence, however, it appears that McPherson may have

remained too uncritical of her subjects, the rank and file of nursing. For example, while it appears that Canadian nursing leaders and organizations have followed racist and classist policies in the past regarding minority nurses and even patients, there is little mention of the attitudes of individual nurses. This omission takes on more relevance when one considers the expanding hierarchy in hospital health care which have placed RNs at the top of a series of certified and uncertified health workers, many of whom are women from under-privileged ethnic and economic backgrounds. Have nurses in the white middle-class majority used this new hierarchy to protect their own status, either as individuals or groups, at the cost of perpetuating racist and classist systems of inequality? McPherson raises this possibility, but does not pursue it with much diligence.

As well, in a study which explores the "everyday lives" of working nurses, nurses' relationships with patients do not receive a comprehensive analysis. To be sure, McPherson establishes that nurses were and are dedicated to the well-being of their patients, citing "patient-care services" as the priority of all nurses. However, the power relations between individual nurses and patients receive only occasional mention, with the exception of a discussion of nurses' strategies for fending off sexually demanding male patients. This gap seems particularly significant in light of the increasing attention paid in the last two decades to instances of physical and emotional abuse of patients by nurses, and *vice versa*. A plethora of unflattering portrayals of nurses in popular culture since the early 1950s (from the infamous Nurse Ratched to Susan Nelles) seem to indicate an unease on the part of health care consumers with the power of privilege wielded by nurses. Worse, nurses have been the subject of sociological studies of varying credibility which have problematized them as "authoritarian," "dictatorial," and lacking in "femininity." How have "ordinary nurses"

dealt with these issues? Have they always acted as patient advocates, or have the combined stresses of intensified workloads, physical strain and injury, undervalued work, and persistent sexism in their work environment led some to abuse their positions of power in the hospital? McPherson's analysis occasionally touches on this possibility, but we are left with the impression that although nurses used their privileges of class, race, and skill to create and defend a status position in society, this privileged position was never abused in their relationships with patients.

The book's subtitle, *The Transformation of Canadian Nursing, 1900-1990*, is somewhat misleading. As McPherson herself admits in the text, her study focuses on the experiences of the majority; female, white, hospital nurses. Minorities, men, and extra-institutional nurses receive, for the most part, only peripheral attention. Moreover, her research and writing are weighted heavily to the first half of the century; analyses of nurses' daily work, sexuality, and education are much more complete in reference to the years 1910-1942. The fascinating and well-researched chapter on nurses' sexual attitudes and expression, for example, halts abruptly in 1967, leaving the reader to wonder whether issues of social and sexual behaviour for nurses were resolved on the Canadian Centennial.

These limitations aside, this book defines the state-of-the-art in Canadian nursing history, and opens new chapters in the histories of labour and gender. McPherson's research, which is exceptionally wide-ranging and incorporates oral history, highlights numerous sources and archival deposits which have previously gone untapped. Students of Canadian nursing history now have an introductory text which is highly accessible, and thus will no longer need to rely on antiquated or international sources. Most importantly, McPherson has succeeded in pushing historical discussion beyond one-dimensional theories which have

portrayed the nursing profession as powerless and preyed-upon, by providing a historical voice for "ordinary nurses." As provincial and federal governments in Canada pursue "fiscal responsibility" in health care, with the attendant proletarianizing tendencies for nurses, *Bedside Matters* serves to draw attention to the methods by which nurses have defended their profession in the past.

James M. Wishart  
Queen's University

Frank Leonard, *A Thousand Blunders: The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and Northern British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 1996).

"A THOUSAND BLUNDERS" hardly exaggerates the number of errors the management of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway made in building its line through British Columbia. Frank Leonard concedes management was not wholly to blame; like some other transcontinentals, the GTP "was probably never economic." (269) Yet, in this treatise on "how not to manage" a company, he carefully explains that at almost every turn, from the railway's inception in 1902 and its commitment "to premature construction on the west coast" (18), to its collapse in 1919, GTP managers made mistakes. Grossly overestimating traffic potential, expecting federal subsidies to cover most construction costs, and assuming it could get provincial land grants and generate capital for construction by selling town-site lots, the company built to a higher standard than provided for by original estimates, accepted high overruns, and failed to follow business principles that could have reduced its losses.

In studying these blunders, Leonard untangles the complex maze of negotiations with federal and provincial governments and junior officials' battles with local residents (including Indian bands)

and promoters of rival townsites. While so doing, he illuminates some dark corners of provincial history such as the Kaien Island affair and access to Indian Reserve land and adds to the histories of Prince Rupert, Prince George, and Hazelton.

Labour relations — the subject of one chapter — were no exception to the pattern of blunders. Leonard persuasively argues that "backward" and "wasteful" labour policies (92) contributed to the GTP's downfall by extending the period over which it had to pay interest on borrowed capital and wait for revenues. Given the belief of president C.M. Hays that labour shortages and transiency resulted from the navvies' rejection of work away from "palaces of amusement" (104), the chronic labour shortages of the GTP and its contractors are not surprising. Not only did they pay lower wages than the Canadian Northern and the Alaska Railways but camp food was "unfit for a dog," bunkhouses were worse than pig sties (96), workers sometimes had to sue contractors for wages, and had to sign waivers relieving employers from liability for injuries on the job.

As long as unhappy employees could find other work, they protested by moving on. In 1909, however, Patrick Daly, who hoped to organize the entire GTP work force for the Industrial Workers of the World, persuaded a number of day labourers in Prince Rupert to strike for higher wages. The GTP imported strike-breakers and — Leonard does not explain how — convinced J.D. McNiven, the Department of Labour's fair wages officer, that its wages were fair. Although it was ostensibly against private street contractors, the GTP actively worked to break the 1911 strike that led to the "Battle of Kelly's Cut." Leonard suggests the GTP feared a successful strike might raise wages and encourage the campaign of the Industrial Association, a local union, against Prince Rupert City Council's arrangement with the GTP over the assessment of waterfront properties. Curiously,

he does not link the dispute with the IWW, though these links have been made by others.

The Prince Rupert conflict was relatively minor compared to the construction workers' strike organized by the IWW in the summer of 1912 after the better-known Canadian Northern strike lost momentum. On the GTP, an unknown number of men laid down their tools but the strike was so peaceful and most strikers so distant from the city, that the GTP and its contractors, Foley, Welch, and Stewart, largely ignored it except for vilifying the strike leaders and bringing in strike breakers. After six months, the IWW called off the strike. Leonard argues that while claiming that it achieved better working conditions, the IWW admitted the GTP and its contractors did not meet its original demands. More relevantly for Leonard's overall thesis, the strike was also a failure for the GTP, which lost much of the 1912 construction season. By acceding to the workers' demands for higher wages before the strike, Leonard argues, the GTP would have saved money in the long run through lower interest charges and better opportunities for traffic.

What is as frustrating for readers as it was for Leonard is the sparseness of records presenting the strikers' point of view. Alas, a fire in the Prince Rupert Labour Temple in the 1930s destroyed most local records of unions. And, few records of contractors, provincial sanitary inspectors or federal fair wages officers have survived. Told mainly from its own records, Leonard's critique of company policies is even more damning.

Leonard supplemented the files of the GTP's legal department, his principal source, with government records, especially the federal Department of Railways, newspapers, and a nice variety of small collections in local archives in northern British Columbia. Well-chosen maps, photographs, and drawings, sensibly placed near the related subject, com-

plement the detailed but very readable text.

The GTP was the victim of its own "thousand blunders" but Leonard provides plenty of evidence suggesting the federal government was at least guilty of contributory negligence. Caught up in the optimism of the Laurier era, it neither supervised labour conditions adequately nor maintained a firm check on what was, after all, largely its own creature. For both railway and government, the greatest blunder of all was expecting the pre-war boom to last forever.

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André Dufour, *Tous à l'école. État, communautés rurales et scolarisation au Québec de 1826 à 1859* (Montréal: Cahiers du Québec, Collection Psychopédagogie 1996).

ISSU D'UNE thèse de doctorat, cet ouvrage propose, à partir d'un corpus documentaire pratiquement inédit, un coup d'oeil nouveau sur une période moins connue de l'histoire de l'éducation au Québec, notamment les deux décennies qui précèdent les lois scolaires des années 1840.

Andrée Dufour nous propose donc une périodisation nouvelle, faisant débiter les processus de scolarisation systématique du Bas-Canada avec les écoles de syndics en 1826, au lieu de les présenter rapidement comme un échec, selon le récit de l'historiographie traditionnelle. Ce point de départ sert à démontrer que justement, une des impulsions initiales provient du milieu même, et non pas uniquement des autorités politiques et religieuses qui s'étaient affrontées durant deux décennies autour du projet de l'Institution Royale. On sait que pendant que ce débat avait cours, les populations urbaines avaient déjà pris le virage de la scolarisation des enfants. L'objectif d'encadrement religieux de



l'école avait cédé progressivement la place à des objectifs plus directement rattachés au développement économique. C'est ce que l'A. avait découvert dans son étude du réseau scolaire de l'Île de Montréal entre 1825 et 1835. (*RHAF*, 41/4 [1988], 507-35) Cette fois, c'est à une étude du milieu rural qu'elle nous convie.

La grande originalité de cet ouvrage réside dans son angle d'approche et sa problématique. Voici une étude qui se situe d'emblée hors de la dichotomie Église/État, et qui se démarque aussi de la comparaison entre courants libéraux et conservateurs. C'est de scolarisation qu'il est question ici, c'est à dire d'écoles, de maîtres et de maîtresses, d'écoliers et d'argent pour mettre en place tout ce réseau. Dépasant la simple description institutionnelle, s'attachant à une vision globale des processus de scolarisation, recherchant les liens véritables qui unissent discours et pratiques, (au lieu de s'attarder à la seule analyse du discours), l'A. nous démontre que l'on connaissait mal les origines de notre système d'éducation. Elle se trouve ainsi à emprunter le cadre d'analyse développé par Bruce Curtis dans *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871* (1992) en l'appliquant au Bas-Canada/Canada Est.

Pour ce faire, elle utilise un corpus inédit de documentation, la correspondance échangée entre les communautés locales et les appareils d'état pour procéder à l'implantation des premières écoles. Devant l'ampleur de matériel à examiner, plus de 50 000 lettres pour la seule période 1842-1859, elle a choisi un échantillon de vingt localités, dont elle a analysé la correspondance durant un tiers de siècle. Il s'agit «d'un échantillon aléatoire, stratifié, effectué en fonction de quatre critères: taux d'inscription scolaire, traditions éducatives, proximité ou éloignement des centres urbains, traditions culturelles.» (29-30) Dans cet échantillon, on trouve six localités à majorité anglo-saxonne. Cette étude prend donc en compte l'influence de la population rurale, «qu'on a décrite si souvent

comme indifférente, apathique, hostile même à l'instruction.» (21-2)

L'ouvrage est divisé en trois périodes, chacune elle-même divisée en trois chapitres consacrés au financement des écoles (chap. 1, 4, 7); aux maîtres, à leur formation et à leur certification (chap. 2, 5, 8); aux élèves eux-mêmes, considérés sous l'angle de l'âge de la fréquentation scolaire, du calendrier scolaire et de l'assiduité (chap. 3, 6, 9). La première période, 1826-1836, décrit le processus d'implantation des écoles de syndics et démontre leur incroyable popularité au tout début des années 1830, alors que la Chambre d'assemblée ne lésinait pas sur le soutien financier qu'elle pouvait leur apporter: 15 pour cent du budget total du gouvernement du Bas-Canada. L'A. démontre aisément que c'est durant ces brèves années que l'habitude d'envoyer ses enfants à l'école s'est prise au sein de la population rurale.

La seconde période couvre les années 1836-1849, alors que le système implanté précédemment est emporté par la tourmente insurrectionnelle et que les autorités coloniales tâtonnent pour implanter un nouveau système d'éducation après l'Acte d'Union de 1840. A l'instar de Wendie Nelson, l'A. expose une nouvelle interprétation de la soi-disant «guerre des éteignoirs,» et montre au contraire des communautés rurales fort diligentes à pourvoir leurs territoires respectifs d'écoles primaires à des conditions fiscales et financières qui leur conviennent.

La troisième période couvre la période 1849-1859, où on assiste à l'édification progressive du système adopté, jusqu'à l'implantation effective du Conseil de l'Instruction publique en 1856, dont les membres sont finalement nommés en 1859. C'est durant cette période, qui allait consacrer le partage des responsabilités entre l'Église et l'État, qu'on observe plusieurs phénomènes: le rôle des commissions scolaires, celui de l'inspectat, la féminisation du personnel enseignant, l'adoption d'un calendrier scolaire et d'un système de récompenses

pour les élèves les plus assidus, et le problème de la diversité des manuels scolaires. L'ensemble forme un texte à la fois aride et intéressant, aride par l'abondance des textes législatifs qui sont analysés, intéressant par les nombreuses citations issues de la correspondance en provenance des villages choisis par l'échantillon.

L'A. se trouve ainsi à mettre les feux de ses projecteurs sur la population elle-même et nous convainc aisément qu'elle a eu raison d'examiner cette correspondance oubliée qui révèle des accents inconnus dans notre passé collectif. Elle rejoint ainsi la thèse de Jean-Pierre Charland, sur les idéaux libéraux des premiers concepteurs de notre système d'éducation (*RHAF*, 40/4 [1987], 505-35), thèse qu'elle étend à l'ensemble de la population, et alimente le courant soi-disant révisionniste de l'historiographie. Voici une historienne qui propose une nouvelle interprétation de l'histoire de l'éducation, la modernité puisant de profondes racines dans des épisodes méconnus de l'histoire du XIXe siècle. Par ailleurs, elle peut démontrer le caractère partial ou incomplet de plusieurs affirmations des autorités de l'époque, ayant confronté les textes les plus connus avec des sources inédites. Elle conteste également la thèse de Labarrère-Paulé sur le caractère catastrophique de la féminisation du personnel enseignant au XIXe siècle.

Il reste malgré tout un problème. En occultant presque systématiquement la *documentation en provenance des autorités religieuses*, elle en minimise les impacts et les influences de tous genres. Sans toutefois nier son rôle «particulièrement important [à cause de son] statut exclusif dans le paysage religieux canadien-français» (256), elle ne le fait guère intervenir dans son analyse. C'est pourtant d'une interaction à trois personnages qu'est sorti le système d'éducation du Québec: l'État, l'Église et les communautés locales.

On peut regretter notamment que le hasard de l'échantillon n'ait désigné au-

cun de ces villages où on sollicitait la présence de religieux ou de religieuses. C'est durant la dernière période étudiée que se produit le grand démarrage de l'invasion congréganiste, notamment après 1850. La pénétration des congrégations religieuses dans le territoire québécois est un phénomène mal connu et surtout mal évalué. Il a été tour à tour exalté et vilipendé, méprisé ou louangé. Comme de juste, la réalité se situe souvent entre les deux positions, et on aurait aimé connaître l'opinion d'une ou deux communautés locales sur la venue des «bonnes soeurs» dans un village. Son échantillon l'a fait passer à côté des signes avant-coureurs de la vague congréganiste.

L'A. ne dit mot non plus des enseignements eux-mêmes, méthodes, manuels en usage, programmes, examens. Mais on conçoit que cette analyse supplémentaire aurait retardé considérablement l'achèvement d'une recherche déjà colossale dont le caractère novateur ne saurait nous échapper. À l'heure où on discute toujours de la confessionalité de notre système scolaire, il est pertinent de se souvenir que les populations locales n'étaient guère mobilisées par cette problématique aux alentours des années 1840. C'est ce qui ressort en tous les cas, des citations présentées: les communautés rurales se soucient de lecture, d'écriture et de calcul, et pas du tout d'instruction religieuse. L'A. a-t-elle occulté ces citations? C'est ce qu'il faudrait savoir.

On peut se demander ce qui fait figurer cet ouvrage dans la collection «psycho-pédagogie», des Cahiers du Québec alors qu'il s'agit manifestement d'un ouvrage d'histoire, à l'instar d'ailleurs de deux autres ouvrages de cette collection. On peut aussi tiquer que le choix de la photo qui orne la couverture, avec son poteau de fils électriques qui la situe bien nettement hors de la période couverte par le volume. Enfin, on doit souligner quelques erreurs dans le texte: phrase incomplète 30; «XVIIe siècle», au lieu de «XVIII», 35; «parviennent» au lieu de

«proviennent.» 92; erreurs qui déparent quelque peu un ouvrage par ailleurs fort intéressant dont il faudra tenir compte dans les études subséquentes sur l'histoire de notre système d'éducation.

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Jacques Saint-Pierre, *Histoire de la Coopérative fédérée de Québec. L'industrie de la terre* (Québec: Presse de l'Université Laval 1997).

À l'occasion du soixante-quinzième anniversaire de la fondation de la Coopérative Fédérée, une entente intervenue entre cet organisme et l'INRS-Culture et Société a permis de soutenir une recherche originale de Jacques Saint-Pierre consacrée à une importante page d'histoire de la coopération agricole au Québec. L'auteur a dépouillé les fonds d'archives de la Fédérée et mis partiellement à contribution plusieurs autres séries de documents imprimés ou manuscrits. Avec beaucoup d'à propos, il a aussi interrogé pas moins de soixante-dix acteurs bien placés pour évoquer une série d'anecdotes et événements dont les sources écrites sont rarement états. Le texte qu'il vient de livrer au public découle donc d'un effort documentaire considérable, même si l'ouvrage représente autant un travail de synthèse qu'une analyse généralement bien conduite. Rédigé en une langue sobre et efficace, il est abondamment illustré de photographies souvent inédites, de quelques graphiques ainsi que de cartes localisant les coopératives agricoles et les succursales de la Fédérée.

Il est beaucoup question dans ce livre des exigences concrètes du métier de cultivateur ainsi que de réseau complexe et en perpétuel changement des associations mises en place pour regrouper les achats et les produits de la ferme, du début du siècle jusqu'à l'époque la plus récente. Contrairement à l'étude de Jean-Pierre Kesteman (*Histoire du syndicalisme agri-*

*cole au Québec*, Boréal 1984) consacrée à l'Union des cultivateurs catholiques, les idéologies prennent moins de place et la présence du clergé catholique, surtout évoquée lors de la fondation de coopératives locales, semble nettement plus discrète. Jacques Saint-Pierre nous rappelle plutôt que la Coopérative Fédérée, un peu à l'image des associations de «Grain Growers» de l'Ouest canadien, a eu pour principal objectif la promotion d'une agriculture orientée vers des marchés qu'il s'agissait d'élargir et de mieux exploiter, dans un contexte marqué par la rapacité ou l'incompétence de vendeurs et acheteurs ayant largement profité de leurs négociations individuelles avec les agriculteurs.

Rien de tout cela n'a été facile. La réputation de la Fédérée a été assez longtemps compromise en raison des circonstances ayant entouré sa naissance en 1921: à l'instar d'un grand nombre de ruraux, le rédacteur du progressiste *Bulletin des agriculteurs*, Noé Ponton, s'est élevé contre le paternalisme du ministre de l'agriculture de l'époque, Joseph-Édouard Caron, qui a pratiquement maintenu l'organisme sous tutelle jusqu'en 1929. Il a aussi fallu composer avec une UCC souvent hostile à l'approche affairiste de la Coopérative, et ce jusqu'à ce qu'une entente intervenue en 1938 vienne un peu clarifier les rôles et permettre l'amorce d'une collaboration partielle, mais relativement efficace. La conjoncture économique a aussi pesé lourd. La crise subséquente à la première guerre mondiale, la récession des années trente ou encore la longue période d'engorgement des marchés à compter du milieu des années cinquante ont multiplié les ruptures et les recommencements. Mais les difficultés les plus considérables tenaient peut-être aux agriculteurs eux-mêmes: l'esprit coopératif, malgré les efforts d'une longue série de propagandistes, n'a pénétré que lentement en milieu agricole, notamment lorsqu'il devait se manifester à l'échelle régionale ou nationale. La démonstration de l'auteur réfute donc

l'opinion souvent formulée suivant laquelle les artisans de la terre auraient été naturellement enclins à l'associationnisme en vertu d'une vieille tradition d'entraide associée aux impératifs de la vie quotidienne en milieu rural.

Jacques Saint-Pierre a voulu construire un historique équilibré. Pour ce faire, il a dû à la fois prendre en compte le contexte général de l'évolution du milieu agricole, l'histoire institutionnelle de la Coopérative fédérée, de même que la mouvance générale de coopératives locales, régionales et parfois nationales de toutes sortes. Dans l'ensemble, il s'acquitte bien de cette tâche exigeante qui l'amène à chausser une paire de lunettes à foyers multiplés. En conformité avec ses objectifs initiaux, il accorde une importance particulière à la dynamique interne de la Centrale: cadre réglementaire, dirigeants, modes de gestion, succursales, membership, chiffres d'affaires. Le plan chronologique de l'ouvrage oblige cependant à répéter à quelques reprises cette opération parfois rebutante pour le lecteur. Rebutante mais néanmoins essentielle: on a trop parlé ailleurs du monde rural sans faire atterrir le concept. Ici, bien au contraire, défile une longue série de thèmes reflétant à la fois les préoccupations des artisans de la coopération et de quelques générations d'agriculteurs: améliorer les sols, utiliser des rations animales équilibrées, obtenir ou produire des semences de meilleure qualité, diversifier la production laitière, améliorer l'efficacité de la production sans surinvestir. Une image forte se dégage du texte: celle d'un monde rural plus ouvert qu'on ne l'a cru aux changements. En contrepartie, on présente sans nostalgie des activités tombées en désuétude: l'élevage du mouton régresse, les lineries disparaissent, les opérations de moulange tributaires de l'énergie hydraulique n'ont plus leur place dans un univers en voie d'industrialisation rapide. L'auteur analyse avec lucidité les mutations si fondamentales de l'après-guerre, dont le cours s'est accéléré à partir des années soixante. Il n'es-

camote pas la crise financière de la Fédérée (1962), non plus que les dissensions qui ont compromis l'unité du monde coopératif agricole, particulièrement à l'époque de l'introduction des plans conjoints de mise en marché et de la montée de coopératives fortes et tentaculaires, telle celle de Granby.

Les administrateurs et gestionnaires de la Fédérée ont été les témoins privilégiés de ces événements. Le plus souvent, ils ont favorisé les changements susceptibles de prévenir l'anarchie qui menace constamment l'offre de produits agricoles. Parmi eux, peu de noms vraiment connus: Henri-C. Bois, Louis-Philippe Poulin, Joseph-Armand Pinsonneault .... Ce n'est pas un hasard: être coopérateur, hier comme aujourd'hui c'est d'abord brasser des affaires. Le livre arbore un sous-titre significatif: *L'industrie de la terre*. L'auteur ne dissimule d'ailleurs pas sa sympathie pour une institution qui a, dans un contexte très concurrentiel, formulé des stratégies fondées sur la logique de l'agro-business. Même si divers courants d'idées contestent aujourd'hui cette orientation, l'ouvrage dont nous achevons la lecture a toutefois su éviter le piège de l'apologie. Et la richesse de son contenu donnera plus de poids aux arguments des historiens qui remettent en question la justesse de l'expression «Grande Noirceur.»

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Pierre Frénette, sous la direction de, *Histoire de la Côte Nord* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval 1996).

COMME LES AUTRES publications de la collection *Les régions du Québec*, cette histoire de la Côte Nord vise à présenter la vulgarisation d'une synthèse historique d'une région du Québec, depuis ses origines amérindiennes et inuit jusqu'à nos jours. Plusieurs thématiques suscitent l'intérêt des neuf auteurs de ce volume.

Entre autres, la géographie, l'évolution démographique, le développement économique, le cadre institutionnel, les questions culturelles et religieuses et le façonnement d'une identité régionale.

Ces thématiques se regroupent en trois volets et respectent un cheminement chronologique qui cadre bien dans l'historiographie québécoise et canadienne. La première partie englobe la longue période allant des débuts jusqu'au XIXe siècle (1830). Cette partie porte une attention particulière à l'occupation de groupes d'origines diverses et à la façon dont ils «exploitèrent et partagèrent les ressources» du territoire. (16) Comme on peut s'y attendre, les auteurs concluent que les contacts entre Autochtones et Européens transforment le tissu social des premiers habitants, surtout après la mise en place du commerce des fourrures. Par contre, les Autochtones continuent de constituer la majorité de la population.

La deuxième partie (1830-1945) présente les différentes catégories de populations qui s'établissent progressivement sur la partie ouest de la côte, particulièrement après la fin du monopole de la Compagnie de la baie d'Hudson sur le territoire. De nouvelles activités économiques découlant des secteurs du bois et de la pêche amène bon nombre de travailleurs à élire domicile temporairement ou en permanence sur la côte. Quoique l'apport démographique des Blancs demeure modeste, le déclin démographique des Autochtones de son côté est tout de même constant.

La troisième partie (1945 à nos jours) démontre que le développement économique d'après-guerre gravite autour des ressources minières et hydrauliques. Les nombreuses entreprises qui s'installent ont un grand besoin de main-d'œuvre ce qui aura pour effet d'accélérer le peuplement de certaines villes. A un point tel que la population régionale atteindra les 100 000 habitants et que de nouvelles institutions et organismes permettront à la Côte-Nord d'acquiescer une plus grande unité.

Contrairement à certaines monographies régionales d'une autre époque, celles de la collection de l'IQRC mettent plus d'accent sur les origines pré-européennes. Dans cet ouvrage, les 72 pages consacrées à cette période incluent une bonne série de cartes et d'illustrations qui permettent de mieux apprécier la vastitude du territoire et la diversité de ses ressources naturelles. Soulignons le souci des auteurs de mieux faire connaître l'apport des disciplines connexes à l'histoire. Sans elles, il serait difficile de constituer un corpus documentaire permettant d'avancer de nouvelles hypothèses sur l'histoire des populations pré-européennes. La réflexion des auteurs sur le rôle de l'archéologie et l'ethnologie en sont un bon exemple. Des encadrés nous fournissent aussi des précisions supplémentaires sur certains aspects de la vie des premières nations soient le travail de la pierre (87) et les outils (89) utilisés. Pour le profane, la répartition et l'identification des groupes amérindiens peut paraître complexe. C'est ainsi que les tableaux compilatifs (103) contribuent à présenter un portrait global du phénomène.

Là où la tâche des auteurs se complique, c'est lorsqu'ils tentent de circonscrire les territoires de chasse et de pêche des groupes amérindiens. Le lecteur doit alors comprendre qu'à l'époque, les Amérindiens et les Inuits n'avaient pas à se soumettre à des frontières territoriales imposées par les Blancs. Le caractère saisonnier des excursions de chasse et de pêche peut conduire les premiers occupants de la Côte Nord jusqu'à Terre-Neuve. Qui plus est, il est également difficile de respecter scrupuleusement les cadres chronologiques traditionnels imposés par les périodes de la pré et de la post conquête britannique (avant et après 1760).

Le lecteur moins familier avec l'historiographie amérindienne récente, sera possiblement plus à l'aise avec la section sur la période coloniale. En fait, les manuels d'histoire plus anciens donnaient l'impression que la «vraie» his-

toire du Canada ne débutait qu'avec les premières explorations. Au mieux, avec l'arrivée des premiers morutiers européens. Cette section s'insère très bien dans le cadre synthèse de l'historiographie de la Nouvelle-France. Quoique, de l'aveu même des auteurs, plusieurs hypothèses demeurent en suspens, d'autres travaux ethnologiques et anthropologiques pourraient mettre en lumière certaines questions.

Comme c'est souvent le cas dans les monographies régionales, certaines thématiques bénéficient d'une plus grande place, entre autres, en raison du nombre d'études disponibles. Par exemple, la présence des morutiers français et la traite des fourrures à Tadoussac font l'objet d'excellents passages. C'est ainsi que l'on constate que l'attention portée à la période 1650-1760 dépasse de beaucoup celle allouée à la période 1760-1830. Durant le XIXe siècle, il faut noter que les pêcheries de la Côte Nord font face à des difficultés similaires à celles de régions comme la Péninsule acadienne du Nouveau-Brunswick. Parmi ces problèmes, mentionnons le fait que les pêcheurs des autres régions canadiennes sont considérés comme des «étrangers,» au même titre que les Américains.

Comme pour la période 1760-1830, la section consacrée à la première moitié du XXe siècle semble quelque peu négligée. Par exemple, en parlant du cheminement de l'importante compagnie des Robins, on ne consacre qu'un court paragraphe à la période 1886-1930. A signaler une petite erreur chronologique dans le traitement de la gestion gouvernementale des pêches. Les auteurs parlent déjà d'une gestion fédérale en 1857. Il est aussi un peu étonnant que l'on ne parle aucunement des routes ou de la navigation à vapeur, durant la première moitié du XXe siècle.

La section sur la première moitié du XXe siècle fait ressortir une autre difficulté des monographies régionales; doit-on organiser les chapitres par régions à l'intérieur desquels on aborde

des thèmes ou encore, organiser les chapitres selon des thèmes où l'on insère chaque région? L'un des points forts de cette section réside dans l'accent mis sur la marginalisation des Montagnais. Certains volumes d'histoire canadienne oubliaient trop souvent les Amérindiens, une fois l'époque de la Nouvelle-France terminée. En fait, contrairement à d'autres sections, celles sur les Amérindiens présentent une analyse plus poussée des problématiques et se limitent moins à une simple narration descriptive des activités. Par exemple, les questions relatives à la santé, à l'éducation, à la religion et à la vie culturelle relatent surtout les réalisations sans vraiment faire ressortir de problématiques particulières.

La troisième partie est sans l'ombre d'un doute la mieux documentée au point de vue quantitatif. En effet, on dispose de multiples sources gouvernementales permettant de mesurer l'évolution démographique, l'urbanisation et l'industrialisation. Les auteurs saisissent bien l'un des grands constats de la période; les fluctuations économiques relatives aux lois du marché pour certaines ressources minières et hydroélectriques. Si l'on met l'accent sur l'étude du rôle de ces ressources comme moteurs économiques, on ne néglige pas pour autant la contribution d'activités plus traditionnelles telles l'agriculture et la pêche.

On fait également ressortir l'attribution des rôles pour les capitales régionales de Baie-Comeau et de Sept-Iles depuis les années 1960. L'un des phénomènes du XIXe et XXe siècle est celui des villes-champignons qui se développent autour d'une industrie unique, que ce soit le bois, les mines ou l'hydroélectricité. Certaines villes ne survivront pas aux lois changeantes du marché. D'ailleurs, les auteurs concluent que «l'évolution récente de la Côte Nord est toujours caractérisée par sa dépendance envers les ressources naturelles dont l'exploitation est rythmée par le cours mondial des matières premières.» (576) A l'approche du XXIe siècle, la Côte Nord lorgne

résolument vers un développement économique basé, en autres, sur une relance soutenue de l'industrie forestière, une exploration minière accrue, le maintien d'une industrie touristique et sur la pêche.

Comme toute autre monographie régionale d'envergure, celle sur la Côte Nord peut donner l'impression qu'il s'agit d'une superposition d'histoires locales. Par contre, cette synthèse d'histoire régionale, de par sa mise en contexte plus large, donne accès à des éléments essentiels de l'histoire canadienne. On y exploite bien les nouvelles historiographies contemporaines. C'est donc plus qu'une «histoire régionale» puisqu'on y retrouve les fondements thématiques relatifs à des questions toujours débattues dans de récentes publications en histoire canadienne. De manière générale, cet ouvrage représente une belle réussite, fidèle à la tradition d'excellence établie par l'IQRC.

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Danielle Juteau et Nicole Laurin, *Un métier et une vocation. Le travail des religieuses au Québec de 1901 à 1971* (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal 1997).

DANIELLE JUTEAU et Nicole Laurin nous livrent ici les fruits d'une analyse attendue depuis la publication, en 1991, d'une étude majeure sur le phénomène des communautés religieuses de femmes au Québec (CRF) de 1900 à 1970. Après nous avoir fait connaître la trajectoire des CRF sur une période de 70 ans — à l'aide d'un vaste corpus comprenant quelque 3 700 religieuses réparties dans 24 communautés — et découvrir qui étaient ces femmes qui avaient pris le voile au Canada français en plus grand nombre qu'ailleurs, les auteures nous entraînent cette fois dans l'univers méconnu de leur travail. Un travail incommensurable, qui

échappe à la comptabilité officielle parce qu'effectué au sein de l'institution ecclésiale, hors marché et hors-salariat. Un travail tout aussi invisible dans cette institution, absent, du moins dans sa réalité concrète, du discours des hommes d'Église qui exercent, par le biais de l'autorité pontificale ou diocésaine qui leur est conférée, un contrôle sur les communautés de femmes en rédigeant, notamment, leurs propres constitutions.

«Amour, oubli de soi, service,» les épithètes utilisées pour qualifier le travail des religieuses renvoient à une certaine conception chrétienne du monde et de la féminité — on parle alors de maternité «spirituelle» pour distinguer les religieuses des autres femmes — caractéristique de la société canadienne-française de la première moitié du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les analogies entre la vocation religieuse et le travail des femmes révèlent, plus encore, l'existence d'une troisième configuration du travail féminin, les religieuses se révélant à la comparaison semblables et différentes à la fois des mères-épouses et des salariées. «Toutes les femmes travaillent,» titrent les auteures. Elles sont affectées à l'entretien physique des êtres humains, que ce travail soit effectué, avec ou sans rémunération, dans le cadre de la famille, du marché ou de l'Eglise. «Les religieuses travaillent hors salariat dans des organisations consacrées à l'entretien des êtres humains» (145); de là cet autre titre, plus évocateur: «Nous sommes toutes des religieuses!»

Si le cas des religieuses permet de découvrir, concluent les auteures, «[...] la situation générale des femmes» (161), la configuration du travail des religieuses présente des différences appréciables avec celles des mères-épouses et des salariées. Contrairement à ces dernières, les religieuses ne sont «ni cols bleus» (ouvrières de métier) «ni cols roses» (employées de bureau), deux catégories d'emplois majeures chez les salariées. Cela s'explique, selon les auteures, par la mission des CRF centrée sur l'offre de services plutôt que sur la production de

biens. Les CRF comptent par ailleurs une forte proportion d'administratrices (environ 20 pour cent pendant toute la période), oeuvrant dans une catégorie d'emplois qui échappent, en bonne partie, aux salariées. La mobilité professionnelle plus importante dans cette organisation est imputable, selon les auteures, à l'absence d'hommes. Les religieuses se distinguent également des mères-épouses dans la mesure où elles n'ont à entretenir ni enfant ni mari et, hors du cadre privé du foyer, elles accomplissent leur travail de façon plus collective et plus spécialisée. Ainsi, certaines religieuses assument le travail domestique ou les services ménagers pour l'ensemble des membres d'une communauté, d'une institution ou d'un service, alors que d'autres se consacrent exclusivement à leur travail professionnel comme infirmière ou enseignante.

S'étant fixé comme objectif de tenir compte de «toutes les dimensions du travail des religieuses» (162), c'est-à-dire ses attributs palpables, sa répartition, son évolution, les auteures ont dû se livrer, en douze ans de travail ardu, à la recherche de nouvelles données et à l'interprétation d'un phénomène masqué par le voile. Les obédiences des religieuses, ces «désignations annuelles reçues des mains de la supérieure» (18), ont fourni matière à analyse pour plus de 10 000 emplois occupés par les 3 700 religieuses de l'échantillon. La catégorisation des titres d'obédiences recueillis en fonction des grandes catégories d'emplois de «Statistique-Canada» est reproduite à l'annexe 2. L'ampleur de ce corpus et, plus encore, la difficulté de comparer les emplois des femmes du monde ecclésial avec ceux des laïques, donnent une idée des défis que les auteures ont dû surmonter. Où classer, par exemple, les emplois de maîtresses des novices, ou encore ceux de bâtisseuses de chapelles, qui n'ont pas leur équivalent dans le monde laïc?

Après avoir pu établir quelques équivalences, notamment en regard des catégories d'emplois utilisées par «Statis-

tique-Canada», les auteures nous font découvrir, données à l'appui, un pan inédit et fort révélateur du travail des femmes. «[...] entrer au couvent, c'est entrer dans un univers de travail,» si l'on en juge par le taux très élevé d'activité des religieuses dont 98,9 pour cent occupent un emploi en 1901, alors que 89,9 pour cent le font encore en 1961. (23) Au cours de leur vie religieuse, elles auront changé d'occupation deux, trois fois et parfois davantage. Que font-elles? Pour l'ensemble de la période, un peu plus de 40 pour cent sont affectées à des postes de soutien (surveillantes de salles, compagnes, employées aux travaux domestiques, aux services ménagers, dans les cuisines, les buanderies, les lingerie, secrétaires, réceptionnistes, préposées aux achats, clavigraphes, magasiniers, électriciennes, employées à la production artisanale ou agricole dans les jardins, les poulaillers ...), un peu moins de 40 pour cent occupent des postes de professionnelles (infirmières, pharmaciennes, diététistes, techniciennes de laboratoire, bibliothécaires, travailleuses sociales ...) et de semi-professionnelles (aides-infirmières, techniciennes en assistance sociale, bibliotechniciennes ...) et environ 20 pour cent remplissent des charges administratives (administratrices générales, administratrices d'établissements ou de services).

Fait surprenant, constatent les auteures, les CRF connaissent une très grande stabilité dans la structure de la main-d'oeuvre et la répartition des emplois entre les religieuses. Tout se passe comme si les communautés, évoluant tel un marché protégé, étaient restées imperméables aux influences externes, à l'abri des transformations survenues ailleurs dans la société québécoise. A l'intérieur de cet ensemble clos toutefois, les auteures ont pu identifier des différences significatives dans l'organisation du travail et la distribution des emplois en fonction surtout de l'activité principales des communautés. Ainsi, les communautés spécialisées dans l'enseignement se



démarquent de toutes les autres, comptant dans leurs rangs une proportion beaucoup plus importante de travailleuses professionnelles (enseignantes). L'édifice des CRF connaît quelques fissures dans les années 1950 pour s'effondrer dans la foulée des transformations survenues pendant la «Révolution tranquille», alors que l'État prend à sa charge le financement et bientôt le contrôle de l'organisation et de la distribution des services éducatifs et socio-sanitaires. «C'est donc sous l'impulsion de forces externes et des nouvelles relations qui se tissent entre le capital, l'État et l'Église au Québec que l'ancien système d'organisation de la main-d'œuvre féminine s'est effondré.» (110)

Dans ce processus, «[...] les hommes se réservent les emplois administratifs qu'occupaient jadis les religieuses, et qui commandent dorénavant des salaires importants.» (110-1) Les auteures révèlent à l'analyse que la main-d'œuvre féminine religieuse n'échappe pas, malgré ses attributs spécifiques, au phénomène de ségrégation qui touche la main-d'œuvre féminine laïque. Le phénomène de concentration des emplois et celui que les auteures nomment ici *sex-typing* font partie de l'univers de travail des religieuses. Dans le premier cas, les auteures ont constaté que, pour l'ensemble de la période à l'étude, les emplois d'enseignantes, de ménagères et d'administratrices d'établissement occupent à eux-seuls toujours plus de 70 pour cent de l'ensemble des religieuses. (44) Le deuxième phénomène, mesuré en fonction du pourcentage de femmes par rapport à l'ensemble des travailleurs d'une catégorie d'emplois, révèle que l'institution ecclésiale présente un très haut niveau de *sex-typing*, les religieuses étant spécialisées dans l'entretien des êtres humains, les religieux se réservant l'exclusivité de certains postes.

A travers le caractère paradoxal du travail des religieuses: «Confinement dans l'espace et déplacement à travers le monde, ghettos d'emploi et mobilité occupationnelle, travail gratuit et postes de

commande, autonomie interne et contrôle externe [...]» (145), les auteures identifient une cohérence, associée au travail des femmes en général, qui reposerait sur les rapports de sexes. Elles en concluent que: «Ce qui est important, ici, c'est d'être affectées fondamentalement à la charge physique des êtres humains. Ce n'est pas le vécu commun, les expériences identiques, les qualités féminines mais un rapport en vertu duquel les femmes occupent certaines places plutôt que d'autres [...], simultanément salariées et non salariées.» (154) Les auteures avouent s'être démarquées, dans leur approche, de celle qui imprègne plusieurs travaux récents sur la «construction genrée» et celle «du sens» ou encore de l'idéologie naturaliste. Elles s'en sont effectivement démarquées non pas tant en reprenant quelques éléments de leur discussion publiée ailleurs sur l'appropriation des femmes ou sur l'existence de «classes de sexes», mais précisément, comme elles l'affirment elles-mêmes, parce qu'elles se sont intéressées à la «face concrète» du travail des religieuses.

L'apport inestimable de cet ouvrage est d'avoir pu documenter l'immense contribution cachée des religieuses à la société québécoise et d'avoir su interpréter cette contribution en regard de l'ensemble du travail des femmes. Dans cet ouvrage concis de 194 pages, on retrouve 38 tableaux, 2 figures, 4 annexes, des références documentaires nombreuses qui apportent, sans contredit, de nouvelles connaissances sur le travail des femmes au Québec au XXe siècle. Ce lourd appareillage scientifique, fort instructif pour les spécialistes du sujet, risque cependant de décourager les lecteurs et lectrices à la recherche d'une lecture divertissante. Un ouvrage majeur à lire au retour des vacances seulement!

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Nadia Fahmy-Eid, *et al.* *Femmes, Santé et Professions: Histoire des diététistes et des physiothérapeutes au Québec et en Ontario, 1930-1980: L'affirmation d'un statut professionnel* (Montréal: Fides 1997).

CAN A SOCIOLOGIST review the research of a historian? In Feminist Studies, the response to that question must be positive. We are, after all, part of a new "interdiscipline" whose results should be comprehensible across disciplinary boundaries. On the other hand, as feminist scholars know only too well, we carry with us a considerable baggage from our disciplines of origin to the point where comprehensibility might be present, but disciplinary biases may predominate. This may account for my perspective on the work in question. It is for the reader to decide whether feminism's interdisciplinary aims are betrayed by sheer disciplinary prejudices.

In brief, Nadia Fahmy-Eid and her colleagues provide us with a detailed history of the developing occupations of physiotherapy and dietetics over the period 1930-1980, in both Ontario and Québec. It should be noted that they use the term "professions" in French which, of course, does not translate into the same word in English. Nevertheless, they treat both occupations as potential professions in the English sense, and their account basically focuses on attempts at professionalization. The research team relates this history to the development of the health professions in general, rooting these two female-dominated occupations within the context of their relations to connected professions, particularly Medicine. The role of the State in limiting the aspirations of these mainly female occupations is outlined, and a gender explanation advanced for their difficulties in attaining full professional status. The research involved is meticulous. Every possible source has been consulted; obviously, the documents of the relevant associations have been particularly helpful.

Given that we previously had little information available on these two areas of women's work, this volume is a welcome addition.

Paoline Fahmy adds a substantial chapter at the end of the volume, analysing interviews with 13 physiotherapists and dieticians to add a dimension of "lived experience" to the historical account. Interestingly, she starts this chapter by saying that she is leaving the so-called "objective" and "scientifically reassuring" field of written sources to listen to those mainly involved in the two fields. (269) This statement is troubling, for it minimizes the very strong feminist emphasis on women's experiences; in addition, it diminishes some extremely interesting material which merits better treatment than to be tagged on at the very end of the work (after the Conclusion), instead of being integrated into the body of the work.

Why physiotherapy? Why dietetics? These are, of course, key questions. The authors grapple with them at an early stage of the study, saying that these two occupations are typical of the pattern of women's entry into the field of health professionals: a discrete entry to the field, taking an initial background position, but managing to improve professional status over time. (10) In effect, this becomes a historical case study of two similar occupations, relatively limited in size (fewer than 500 for each of Ontario and Québec in 1961, up to around 2,500 for each province by 1981). (44) While appreciating the exemplary nature of these occupations, one is forced to wonder whether two contrasting occupations might not have provided more interesting material; in particular, social workers who constituted an even smaller group in 1961, multiplying to over 4,000 members, by 1981), might have been a good backdrop for the discussion of either physiotherapists or dieticians. (44) Or to put the matter briefly, the contrasting case study method might have revealed more explanatory

material than a parallel method, where only small differences can be delineated.

The work is largely descriptive — a good solid account of pressures for professional status on the part of two female-dominated occupations (they are finally accorded "titre réservé" by the State). The hypotheses that are put forward tend to be statements within an assumed research framework rather than possibilities that require exploration. For example, with respect to the knowledge base for both dietetics and physiotherapy, one "hypothesis" put forward is that theoretical knowledge has a higher status than practical knowledge. (88) But there is no way of proving or disproving this statement on the basis of the data presented; it is rather an assumption for examining the kind of knowledge that is transmitted to students in the two fields.

The theoretical framework comes from the standard literature on the professions, including Derber, Parkin, Sarfati-Larson, and Witz. This is a largely masculinist literature, relatively dormant over the past decade. But I wonder whether it was wise to employ such a framework for there is only one possible conclusion: these occupations did not gain full professional status (or what one might call the "failed profession" conclusion in parallel to the "missing persons" scenario which characterizes many discussions of women's entry into male arenas). As with most masculinist frameworks, women do not fit and do not "make the grade," and Witz's attempt to delineate how women's work can be "added on" to the professional literature only serves to reinforce such a negative conclusion.

Instead, I think it would have been more interesting to underline what women did achieve in these two occupations as they slowly and quietly made progress over the period in question. In fact, their achievements are remarkable — from the status of "masseurs" and "home economists" early in this century, they progressed to specialists with university-level educational qualifications

who managed to obtain both legal and professional acknowledgement of the importance of their expertise. The specificity of their contributions could then be highlighted and the pattern of women's contribution to the health field could begin to be formulated in its own right. In effect, instead of being measured against a male standard and found wanting, the experience of these women dietitians and physiotherapists could serve to develop a new framework of analysis which, I suspect, could be enormously illuminating in our thinking about the health professions in general. It is the very excellence of the research contained in this volume which give rise to this possibility. All the data are there; we just have to get rid of the male standard.

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Alison Macleod, *The Death of Uncle Joe* (London: Merlin Press 1997).

LA VIE D'ALISON Macleod fut intimement liée au mouvement communiste de Grande-Bretagne. Lors de son adhésion au parti, en 1939, elle a presque 19 ans. Travailleuse dans les chantiers navals de Bristol pendant la guerre, elle entre au *Daily Worker* comme secrétaire de rédaction en 1944, puis elle devient responsable des recensions d'ouvrages et plus de tard de la critique des émissions de télévision. Elle démissionnera du journal et du parti le 29 avril 1957. La date n'est pas sans intérêt: c'est au lendemain du congrès du PCGB, bouleversé par les révélations de Khrouchtchev au XXe congrès du PCURSS en novembre 1956. La majeure partie du livre est consacrée aux événements traumatiques de 1956: l'invasion de la Hongrie par les blindés soviétiques et le discours de Khrouchtchev sur les abus du stalinisme, les révélations sur l'anti-sémitisme en URSS, sur l'étendue des purges des années trente puis sur les procès Rajk en

1949 et Slansky en 1952, enfin sur la grande vague de terreur stalinienne. Les essais nucléaires soviétiques fournirent la dernière goutte qui fit déborder le vase déjà rempli de doutes, de révolusion et de remises en question.

Devant les révélations des "aveux" arrachés par la torture, des disparitions et de tous les autres abus qui ont marqué les années stalinienne, deux interprétations sont habituellement avancées: ou ces crimes sont imputables à Staline et son entourage, avec ou sans la complicité des partis membres de l'Internationale communiste, ou ils sont intrinsèques au communisme. L'auteure penche pour cette dernière explication. La responsabilité déborde le monde soviétique pour retomber aussi sur tout l'appareil des partis membres de la Comintern et sur la nature même du communisme.

Alison Macleod est de ceux et celles qui assument leur part de responsabilité: nous savions, écrit-elle, et nous n'avons pas voulu parler. Pourquoi? Parce que les accidents de parcours n'étaient pas jugés importants, parce que les atteintes aux libertés fondamentales étaient d'abord dénoncées dans la presse capitaliste, non-crédible sur ces questions en période de guerre froide, et surtout parce que les militants étaient prêts à tout sacrifier, même la vérité, pour l'avènement du socialisme. Ils n'en savaient guère plus que ce qu'ils apprenaient de leurs dirigeants et de la presse du parti. Macleod rapporte les reproches de certains membres de ne pas avoir été informés de la terreur, d'avoir été bernés par des dirigeants mieux informés. Elle se rétracte, se renie et n'hésite pas devant les questions et les comparaisons embarrassantes: au sujet du MacCarthyisme, elle remarque que si des carrières ont été brisées, les vies sont restées sauvées.

La journaliste nous entraîne dans les dédales de la salle de rédaction du *Daily Worker* et fait revivre toute une galerie de personnages: Harry Pollitt, Rajani Palme Dutt, les membres du Comité central, et surtout l'équipe du *Daily Worker*

rassemblée autour de Johnny Campbell. Les vétérans et les spécialistes s'y retrouveront et apprécieront les portraits franchement campés de toute une génération de communistes britanniques. Les non-initiés souhaiteront sans doute un index des noms.

Journaliste de métier, Alison Macleod prenait des notes. D'abord pour son mari, Jack Selford, militant comme elle et directeur des spectacles au *Unity Theatre*, curieux de ce qui se passait en URSS. Elle en a prises tout au long de sa dernière année au parti: aux réunions du comité de rédaction, à celles de sa section et aux congrès du PCGB jusqu'à avril 1957. C'est en se fondant sur ces notes, ainsi que sur des entrevues avec ses anciens camarades, entre autres Mick Bennett, Peter Fryer, Brian Pearce, qu'elle a écrit son livre. Un personnage qui ressort au-dessus des autres est Johnny Campbell, rédacteur en chef du journal, alors âgé de 62 ans. Si bien qu'il s'agit autant de la mort du père Johnnie, tant aimé par son équipe, que de celle de l'oncle Joe. On suit ainsi jour par jour l'évolution des hésitations et des prises de position des dissidents puis, la dissidence étant vaincue, les démissions et les expulsions qui marquèrent le printemps 1957. En tout, le parti perdit alors quelque 7000 membres, soit plus du quart de ses effectifs. A la suite de quoi les stalinistes consolidèrent leur position et poursuivirent leur idéal, soutenus par les irréductibles.

Quelle admission de défaite pour une militante de 18 années au parti d'écrire à l'actif de son bilan: "Of all the causes Jack [Selford, son mari] and I campaigned for in our party days, we could feel completely happy only about the National Health Service." On est frappé par tant d'humilité: elle a été trompée, elle abjure, elle se définit même comme une «stooge», terme qui ne peut être traduit que par laquais. Elle sait reconstituer l'angoisse qui a marqué les semaines précédant les ruptures: «Pourquoi me suis-je sentie coupable? Parce que j'avais entendu parlé [des déportations], même

avant la mort de Staline, et j'avais choisi de ne pas en savoir plus.» (154) Or, il manque quelque chose à ces confessions. Il manque une analyse qui expliquerait pourquoi tant de personnes, pas toutes naïves, ont adhéré à une organisation aussi perverse et délétère. Jamais il n'est question de cet idéal altruiste qui a inspiré les militants, de cette volonté d'instaurer une justice sociale, voire de changer le monde, qui fait partie de l'expérience de chaque nouveau membre. Peut-être l'ancienne militante a-t-elle jugé qu'il s'agit là d'une évidence, mais dans l'amnésie qui s'installe depuis l'automne 1989, il ne serait pas superflu d'étoffer l'expérience communiste de ses personnages.

Il faut noter que, dans un geste très généreux, l'auteure a prêté ses notes à Francis Beckett pour la rédaction de son excellente histoire du PCGB, *The Enemy Within, The Rise and Fall of the British Communist Party* (Pluto Press 1995). Ce qui explique qu'on retrouve verbatim les mêmes anecdotes et citations dans les deux ouvrages.

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Margaret Kechie and Marge Reitsma-Street, eds., *Changing Lives: Women in Northern Ontario* (Toronto: Dundurn Press 1996).

*CHANGING LIVES: Women in Northern Ontario* is the latest addition to a growing body of cross-over literature on women in northern Canada. This anthology brings together a group of twenty-nine essays originally presented at the symposium of the same name held at Laurentian University's Institute for Northern Ontario Research (INORD) in May 1995. The forty-three contributors range from poets and psychotherapists to historians and political scientists.

The collection begins with a series of moving poems by Valerie Senyk, entitled "Voices of Five Women." These poems

describe a range of women's sexual, domestic, and political experiences. The women in the poems are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and they set the stage very well for the essays that follow. These essays are grouped into four parts which delve into issues of diversity, work, daily life, and organizations working for change in northern Ontario.

The first section includes seven short essays on the experiences of native, Ukrainian, Hispanic, African-Canadian, and lesbian women in northern Ontario. The tension caused by one's position as a "visible" and "invisible" minority is explored here in an effective and meaningful way. Lesbians and their history remain largely invisible in northern Canada, a fact no better evidenced than by the "anonymous" identity of one of the authors of the essay on this subject. This is an important point and one that academics and activists in larger urban centres often overlook: in northern and rural communities, closets are deeper and darker, and the risks of coming out are often much greater.

The section of most interest to students of labour history is Part II, "Worlds of Work." Here the editors have grouped essays by Varpu Lindstrom, Karen Blackford, Karen Dubinsky, and others detailing the working lives of women from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Lindstrom's analysis of Finnish women's ground-breaking work in the lumber camps of the northern Ontario effectively augments the work of Ian Radforth and others on the history of that industry. Jennifer Keck and Mary Powell's essay on women miners and maintenance workers at Inco leads the way to discovering that mining was not just a male domain, while Karen Dubinsky offers us a thoughtful piece that is part autobiography (about her Ukrainian grandmother) and part discussion of the recent debate over the use of personal narratives in scholarly writing.

This section is followed by a set of essays loosely grouped under the heading

"Daily Stresses." Here the excellent essay by Nancy Forestell detailing the effect of dangerous mine work on mining families leads off a set of others on poverty and violence within anglophone and franco-phone families in the region. The final section deals with political activism and the important contributions of women's groups and the cooperative movement in the region.

As is often the case with the published proceedings, the essays in *Changing Lives* are rather uneven in length and quality. The editors have provided short, descriptive introductions to each of the four sections and these are a great help. Yet their general introduction might have provided greater context by analyzing — rather than describing — the content of the collection. The reader comes away wondering what it is about northern Ontario that is unique? What makes these women's stories so important? Are these experiences similar to or different from women's experiences elsewhere in Ontario or are they more like women's experiences in other parts of the Canadian North — the NWT, Yukon, Nunavut, or the other provincial norths? To speak of "the North" in Canada is not to define it as the Sudbury-Timmins area, yet the editors have not acknowledged this very important fact. It seems clear that the experiences of northern Ontario women, as described in this volume, are remarkably similar to women working and raising families in other northern communities across the country. Women in the nickel belt and in the lumber camps of this region have a great deal in common with women in resource-based communities in British Columbia, Alberta, and the Territories and these connections need to be addressed.

Still, we have an important set of essays here, and a collection that serves as an significant step in telling the stories of northern women in all of Canada. Indeed, *Changing Women* points to the need for similar conferences and anthologies on

the experiences of women in the rest of the North.

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Ira Robinson and Mervin Butovsky, eds.,  
*Renewing Our Days: Montreal Jews in the Twentieth Century* (Montréal: Véhicule Press 1995).

THIS ANTHOLOGY tells us nothing about Canadian labour history, or even about workers today. Some of its articles are not historical at all. However, there is much here for students of ethnicity, Canadian literature, and of Montréal. First, let me deal briefly with the essays of particular interest to students of ethnicity. William Shaffir's "Safeguarding A Distinctive Identity: Hasidic Jews in Montreal" describes their principal "boundary creating mechanisms": "exotic customs," the organization of their own schools and (in the case of the Lubavitch sect) proselytizing. His arguments convince, except the contention (80) that these Jews have responded to recent societal changes: the changes are unspecified and not one example of such response is given. Basing their conclusions on interviews, Joseph Levy and Yolande Cohen discuss the adaptation of Moroccan Jews to Montréal life. The paper makes interesting distinctions among three generations, but does not always go beyond speculation when accounting for inter-generational differences in attitude; for example, the resurgence of "particularistic orientations" among the young. (117) Next, Simcha Fishbane discussed the Bat Mitzvah ceremony (a recently developed counterpart, for twelve-year-old girls, of the traditional Bar Mitzvah for boys). The lengthy preparation for the ceremony, and the rite itself, are described in detail, and the author speculates (very plausibly) about how the practice meets the needs of congregations in a time of expanding roles for North American women generally.

For students of Canadian literature in English, two papers will appeal especially. Michael Benazon summarizes key themes in Montréal Jewish novels since 1945. He concludes that while the authors shared the French-Canadian preoccupation with cultural cohesiveness, they also supported English-Canadians' growing desire to foster pluralism. The novels also reveal the limits of integration: rarely, for example, does the protagonist enter a stable relationship with a Gentile. However, he concludes (without attempting explanation) that younger writers now show a falling off in Jewish consciousness. Martin Butovsky's "Irving Layton: The Invention of Self" is a highlight of the book; it is rare for an article to probe an author's mind so deftly, and to account for its evolution so convincingly.

The remaining three essays are historical in nature. For those unfamiliar with the history of Montréal's Jewish community, the most useful one may prove to be the editors' "Introduction," which provides as fine an overview as one could wish for. The other two historical papers are highly specialized. Ira Robinson's choice of topic — the "Kosher Meat War" of 1922-25 — makes his the lesser of the two. His explanation of the importance to North American Jews of buying kosher meats (as one of only two customs the whole community agreed to preserve) is useful. However, he rather strains himself when reaching (38) for some significance to this tale of a clique of rabbis trying to monopolize the supervision of killing animals intended for kosher tables, especially as he does not explain the grounds on which the court put an end to their pretensions. Jack Jedwab's study of efforts at rapprochement between Jewish and French-Canadian intellectuals and journalists, 1939-1960, is more important. He shows that the revelation of the Holocaust ended the respectability of anti-Semitism among leaders in French-speaking Québec as much as in English-speaking North America. The Canadian Jewish Congress took intelligent advan-

tage of the change (at *Le Devoir*, for instance), through its *Cercle Juif de Langue Française*, formed in 1947. In the later 1950s, the group's focus shifted strategically away from Catholic Church leaders to younger intellectuals and media personalities. Jedwab is careful, however, to observe that these efforts of Jewish leaders to affirm the importance of the French language left most Jewish Montréalers indifferent. This paper makes a significant contribution to the growing literature on the years that prepared Québec for the Quiet Revolution.

In short, *Renewing Our Days*, while shedding no light on Canadian labour history, should be recommended for its contribution to several other areas of Canadian studies.

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Lee Selleck and Francis Thompson, *Dying for Gold: The True Story of the Giant Mine Murders* (Toronto: Harper Collins 1997).

THIS IS THE second pair of journalists to write a detailed account of the 1992 Giant Mine/Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers (CASA) conflict in Yellowknife, a strike/lock-out culminating in the murder of nine strikebreaking miners and the conviction of striker Roger Warren. The authors describe an isolated northern landscape of inevitable violence, raise doubts about Warren's culpability, and portray an employer intent on breaking the union.

In contrast, *The Third Suspect* (Red Deer College Press 1995) by journalists David Staples and Greg Owens, published soon after Warren's trial in 1995, is sympathetic to the strikebreakers' viewpoint, relegating the union's perspective to the sidelines. Staples and Owens were sent to Yellowknife to cover the dispute for the *Edmonton Journal* after the murders occurred. In the style of a true crime

story, with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as key sources, the writers describe events leading to the pursuit and conviction of "third suspect" Roger Warren, who confessed and later recanted to setting an explosive in an underground work site which killed nine miners in the early morning hours of 18 September 1992. Staples and Owens persuade the reader justice was served by Warren's trial and conviction.

Selleck and Thompson do not offer as conclusive a story in *Dying for Gold*. They draw more extensively on interviews with the strikers and acknowledge the wider context of the labour movement and history. Both covered the dispute over a five-year period, first as reporters for Yellowknife newspapers and then as full-time authors. Their research sources, unfortunately not footnoted, include information gained from access-to-information requests and papers, personal notes, and interviews from some of the key people involved in the dispute.

The writers do not dismiss the union's initial pre-strike position as unreasonable. Many of the 234 CASAW members believed company president Margaret Witte arrived at Royal Oak's Giant Mine from the United States with a union-breaking corporate agenda. A tentative agreement between the union and management called for concessions and did not include provisions protecting the union activists whose jobs were threatened by disciplinary practices implemented under Witte's direction. More than 70 per cent of participating CASAW members therefore voted down their bargaining committee's proposed contract. In May 1992 about the same percentage of members voted to strike. Management locked out its employees and hired replacement workers to keep the gold mine operating. Eventually 38 CASAW members crossed their own picket line to join the newly hired replacement workers.

Giant Mine hired Pinkerton security guards to protect property, management, and workers crossing the union's picket

line. Added to the show of force were RCMP officers, whose specially equipped riot squad and Emergency Response Team were deployed in situations when regular officers would have been more appropriate. Much later a RCMP Public Complaints Commission report, written by a body independent of the police, severely criticized the RCMP for its actions during the dispute.

Picket line tensions were compounded by sabotage, intrigue, assaults, and arrests. In June a "riot" among picketers on company premises led to the firings of 38 CASAW members, including Roger Warren. By this time 100 members were still picketing, assisted by their spouses who had formed an auxiliary crucial to sustaining the picket line. The authors are critical of the union's illegal actions, suggesting "Early on, they fell into a classic trap, making mistakes that played into the hands of the company. Some members resorted to foolhardy and criminal acts." (xx) These acts included spray-painting graffiti in the mines and blowing up a satellite dish and a ventilation shaft on company property.

In June the union supported a final mediation option — an industrial inquiry commission — and continued to lobby to ban the use of replacement workers. But Labour Minister Marcel Danis working with his federal government colleagues in the Mulroney government was reluctant to intervene. The Liberals as the Opposition party questioned "unduly harsh police intervention" and supported a law banning the use of replacement workers, but later reversed this position. Picketing continued throughout the summer and the day before the fatal blast, CASAW legal counsel Gina Fiorillo filed an unfair labour practice complaint with the Canadian Labour Relations Board stating, in part: "While the company has a legal right to utilize scabs, it knowingly provoked a violent and confrontational labour dispute when it chose to continue operations at the mine by hiring scabs in an effort to break the Union." (99) When the dispute



ended, the government would also do some soul-searching on the CLRB's ineffective response to the Giant dispute and other cases. Their report stated the CLRB "... played a disgraceful game of political football rather than take effective action — at the expense of workers and employers who depend on the labour board." The root causes of their incompetence were "... philosophical differences, personality conflicts, and poorly qualified appointments by the Mulroney government." (244)

The blast which killed the nine miners in the fifth month of picketing created a "cataclysm" as the authors describe it. Conspiracy theories were entertained by some, but the RCMP and employer set their sights on the strikers. Corporations contributed toward reward money, law enforcement personnel were given a generous mandate and the hunt was on. Wire-tappings, undercover agents, paid informers, extensive interrogations, search warrants on private homes were all part of the extensive search directed almost exclusively at a portion of the CASAW membership.

When a press conference at the CASAW union hall was interrupted with the news of Warren's confession thirteen months after the police investigation began, one of the striker's wives, June Roberts, was watching the news on TV with her friend. "I looked at her and she looked at me and our eyes swelled up with tears. Oh my God, they're going to get us now. We were petrified," Roberts told the authors. (118)

As CASAW members' feelings intensified with the admission that a striker had committed the murders, one doctor offered a "hot line" for the strikers to call. "How come you're concerned about our feelings now? Nobody in the community cared what's happened to us during the strike" came the strikers' bitter response, as told to the writers by a union supporter. (121)

Warren's arrest more than a year after the murders was soon followed by a con-

tract agreement on the heels of a CLRB bad faith ruling against the employer. Federal government appointments of seasoned BC mediators Vince Ready and Don Munroe made conciliation between the two groups possible. The strikers returned to work 1 December 1993, accepting many of the terms of the original tentative agreement. Most of the fired workers eventually returned as well. Warren was tried in a packed courthouse in Yellowknife. Vancouver criminal defense lawyer Glen Orris described Warren as a 52 year-old married man with grown children and a lifetime occupation as a hard rock miner. He argued Warren's confession was induced by the RCMP and presented factors in Warren's psychological state during the dispute which contributed to his false confession. But on 25 January 1995, a jury convicted Warren of nine counts of second degree murder (meaning the act was not planned and deliberate) and sentenced him to 20 years in prison without parole.

Warren has been in Stony Mountain Penitentiary in Manitoba since his conviction. His case has been appealed, timed with the publication of Selleck and Thompson's book. The appeal in May 1997 was lost but further legal action is planned. Members of the victim's families attending Warren's trial were satisfied with the verdict. They have filed a \$33 million lawsuit through the Workers' Compensation Board naming various individuals and parties on both sides of the picket line culpable.

Selleck and Thompson are unable to reveal the "truth" of the mine murders at the book's end, but they do raise questions about Warren's guilt. "People will take some tales to their graves," the authors believe. (xx) *Dying for Gold* may not satisfy the reader with all the answers but it does enlarge our understanding of the context within which this tragedy took place. The patterns of the miners' struggles from start to finish have been played out in like manner many times over around the globe. This is an important

story to tell although the lessons are not new: the use of strikebreakers increases violence (and as the authors note, in Canada results in disputes lasting five times longer), a show of paramilitary force also leads to more violence, and the CLRB and federal government's unwillingness to act decisively can be fatal. In hindsight, the union could have sent in key activists to help negotiate their contract, given all the signs that Witte was going to be a hard bargainer, to avoid a bargaining committee/leadership split. And the illegal and "foolhardy" actions of some of the picketers was not a show of strength but increased vulnerability.

Selleck and Thompson pull together all these lessons and more in their conclusion. They observe that union-busting is not "a figment of trade unionists' paranoid imaginations. The reality is that recent Canadian history is rife with union busting and avoidance, on scales large and small." (326) Other Canadian examples in the previous two decades cited by the authors are the Clearwater fish plant, Nationair, Giant, Zeidler Forest Industries, and Gainors. *Dying for Gold* is an important labour story of tragic proportions and presents a highly detailed and thoughtful case study of value to both trade unionists and scholars.

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D.W. Livingstone and J. Marshall Mangan, eds., *Recast Dreams: Class and Gender Consciousness in Steeltown* (Toronto: Garamond Press 1996).

THIS BOOK EXAMINES class and gender consciousness based on 1984 surveys of almost 800 Hamilton, Ontario couples, 200 steelworkers and their wives, in-depth interviews with a subsample of steelworker pairs, and interviews with 20 female steelworkers; a 1989 telephone survey of a small subsample of "middle class" women, and 1994 interviews with

20 couples interviewed a decade earlier. Three of the five chapters are revisions of previously published papers.

Livingstone and Mangan discuss nine Marxian and Weberian class schemes and provide frequency distributions of the class positions and attitudes of male employed respondents for each scheme. Class, however measured, was significantly associated with the several indicators of class consciousness. Most men, including steelworkers, defined themselves as middle class, with wealth/income as the criterion.

In Chapter 2 Livingstone and Mangan examine attitudes of employed couples. Women's class identification and oppositional class consciousness (defined as support for the interests of one class and hostility toward the interests of another class or classes) were influenced more by their husbands' than their own class position. While both sexes support women's employment rights, women who were not employed, men whose partners were not employed, capitalists, and the self-employed evinced a relatively low level of support for such rights.

Based on combinations of male and female class positions, Livingstone and Asner break households into 25 categories. There were small variations in the share of housework done by men across class categories, but only among dual earner couples who held "middle class" jobs did men's portion of domestic labour approach that of women. The greater the earnings of the woman the greater the share of housework handled by men. Overall, the data show some movement toward greater male responsibility for household labour, but women still do most of it.

A slight majority (60 per cent) of both working and middle-class men with employed partners disagreed that men should have priority for jobs in periods of high unemployment. Overall, the data show a trend toward declining support for favouring the hiring of males. However, a majority of male steelworkers with

homemaker wives supported men's priority for jobs (as did most of these workers' partners). Livingstone and Luxton argue that stereotypical images of male factory workers deflect discontent with work and bosses. Dangerous working conditions, for instance, are not seen as employer imposed but as challenges to masculine prowess. This is an interesting argument, but no evidence is provided to support it.

The final chapter is the jewel of the collection. Seccombe and Livingstone construct a sophisticated explanation of why workers are not more militant and why their consciousness is riddled with inconsistencies. They reject the concept of false consciousness, arguing that workers' world views are not rooted in backwardness, brainwashing, or confusion. (The role of the media is played down, too much so for my taste.) They also reject post-modernists' ideas of fragmented selves, shifting identities, the primacy of language and discourse, and the marginalization of class. Opting for a materialist interpretation, the authors maintain workers' consciousness is based on conflicting material interests that are contradictory and have multiple sources. These interests take shape not just in the workplace but also in households and communities and centre around disparities of wealth and power among classes, ethnic/racial groups, men and women.

Interviews done in 1984 and 1994, particularly those of several relatively militant trade unionists, are used to illustrate the theoretical argument. Workers condemn downsizing, speedup, poor working conditions, and their own insecurity. At the same time, they support productivity increases and endorse labour-management cooperation to maintain their plant's viability. Workers have an interest in struggling against capital to improve their economic and working conditions as well as an interest in cooperating with capital to protect their jobs. Conflicting interests and attitudes also reflect a) workers' vulnerability to reprisals, b) possible rewards for compliance, c) the

view that the likelihood of winning struggles is remote, and d) the belief that short term gains may lead to big defeats in the long run. The authors argue that working class compliance or habituation to capitalism "is much more likely to be secured through the 'dull compulsions of everyday life' and a pragmatic aversion to taking imprudent risks than by an abiding faith in existing institutions and leaders." This framework satisfactorily explains the contradictory consciousness of average, relatively militant, workers. However, a broader conceptual sweep that incorporates additional sources of ideology probably is required to understand the world view of thoroughly militant or conservative workers, who were not discussed in this essay.

The interviews revealed greater fear and insecurity in 1994 than ten years earlier. People believe the middle class (themselves) is disappearing. They are worried about their own security and especially the limited opportunities for their children. These fears help to explain why these mainly white workers expressed progressive ideals on ethnicity, race, and gender equality, but rejected hiring policies they regarded as reverse discrimination.

Each chapter of this well-crafted book contains an informative literature review, important information on class and attitudes, and provocative explanations of results. The data were collected prior to the election and drastic actions in Ontario of Mike Harris' Tories and the massive day of protest in Hamilton. One wonders what impact these developments might have had on opinions.

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Betty Wood, *Women's Work, Men's Work: The Informal Slave Economies of Lowcountry Georgia* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press 1995).

BETTY WOOD TELLS a tale of competing self-interests. Once the Trustees lifted the ban on slavery in Georgia in 1750, planters, many fresh from the slave economy of South Carolina, streamed into the colony. Eager to reap maximum returns from the fertile lands they had appropriated from the indigenous peoples of the region, these planters opted to increase their profits by allowing their slaves provision grounds on which to grow produce to feed themselves. In this way masters could reduce their inputs to a bare minimum and comfort themselves with the belief that slaves would be less likely to abscond from the places in which they had invested considerable efforts for themselves. Some historians have viewed this as a particularly cynical manipulation on the part of masters, who thereby compelled their slaves to sustain themselves in bondage through their own efforts. Wood, however, builds on the work of Philip D. Morgan and others to tell a very different story.

Solidly grounded in studies of slave societies in the Caribbean as well as the American South, Wood's project examines the informal slave economies that arose as slaves were permitted to exchange surplus produce from their provision grounds. Wood determined that these economies emerged as a consequence of repeated negotiations between slave and master: negotiations which garnered African Americans a measure of control over the structure of work itself, over the material conditions of their lives, and over their spiritual lives. The dynamic was simple. Slave produce and slave labour let out for hire was in effect "heavily subsidized" by the masters. As such it necessarily undercut goods and services produced by free labourers. As a consequence, Georgians, particularly in towns such as Savannah and Sunbury

came to depend on access to goods and labour bartered or purchased from slaves. Although the disposable income slaves acquired in this manner was minuscule, eager retailers soon came to count on it. The results were small but significant improvements in the degree of autonomy and mobility experienced by some slaves, especially men. This autonomy permitted some African Americans to maintain family ties, to improve the quality of their lives, and to worship as they chose. It also enabled a tiny minority to purchase freedom.

Wood argues convincingly that these were family economies. Food grown, acquired or purchased by African Americans and shared in a family context undermined the patriarchal authority that the provision of rations by the master was meant to underscore. The freedom to travel to and from markets created opportunities to form and sustain family relationships that extended beyond the bounds of the plantation. The best evidence that these were family economies has probably been obscured by the laws obstructing manumission. Yet Wood's discussion reveals the painstaking process by which a few African Americans accumulated the price of their freedom or that of their loved ones, pennies at a time. Thus Wood's research has important implications for those interested in the history of the black family in slavery.

One index of the extent of white Georgians' dependence on slave produce and slave hiring is Wood's practice of referring to Africans or African Americans in slavery in Georgia as bondpeople. Prior to the Revolution, in the Chesapeake colonies in particular, the presence of a range of forms of unfree labour, especially the presence of indentured servants, complicated the use of this term. However, in Georgia there were almost no indentured servants. Virtually all bondpeople in Georgia were slaves. The point is not merely semantic. Slaves not only supplied the agricultural labour needs of Georgia's white planters, they

also came to occupy the place of freed white servants with respect to casual and skilled labour for hire and the production of foodstuffs. The informal slave economy made it very difficult for white artisans or smallholders to establish themselves in the economy of lowcountry Georgia, a fact that white labourers protested vigorously. This in turn guaranteed continuing dependence on African American labour and product. The heated debates over minimum wage levels for white labourers and Sunday markets revealed growing concern over these issues. Indeed, Wood's evidence gives an interesting twist to sabbatarianism in the South.

White labourers were not the only Georgians with reservations about these informal economies. Dependence on slave produce and hired slave labour also undercut measures of racial control. Slaves had to be permitted to traffic with boatmen to carry their produce to market or be free to go themselves. Slaves hired out to others had to be permitted to stay at large in the towns far from their masters' watchful eyes. Masters who purchased provisions from slaves could not effectively prohibit less affluent whites from doing business with and from fraternizing with slaves working for wages in the towns. Wood implies that after 1830, as masters awakened to the hidden consequences attached to these concessions, their misgivings on these issues hardened into a determination to maintain strict racial control, and thus to suppress these activities. This brought the practice of race control in lowcountry Georgia into line with other regions in the South. For the task system which undergirded these informal slaves economies was unique to the Sea Islands of South Carolina and the lowcountry of Georgia, a point to which Wood might have given more emphasis. The opportunities the task system created for African Americans living in those regions ended after 1830. For those slaves who lived elsewhere in the South and

laboured in gangs, they had barely existed at all.

Wood ends her study in 1830, the point at which Georgia planters, presumably motivated by fears of servile insurrection, choked off the ameliorative tendencies generated by these informal economies. However, these increasingly oppressive slave codes came far too late to undermine the African American families that these informal slave economies had nurtured and sustained in Georgia for eighty years.

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Julie Saville, *The Work of Reconstruction: From Slave to Wage Laborer in South Carolina, 1860-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994).

RECOVERING AFRICAN-American experiences of emancipation and their participation in the reconstruction of the former Confederacy are notable achievements of recent American historical scholarship. Whereas it was once common to characterize freedpeople as confused and irresponsible, the evidence now available indicates that they well understood freedom's promise and acted purposefully to translate promise into practice. Ironically, labour histories of the transformation of slaves into free workers have not been abundant. Julie Saville's *The Work of Reconstruction*, an analysis of rural Carolina freedmen's efforts to gain control over their private and working lives as free people and of the forces that defeated them, is a welcome and needed contribution. In their search for autonomy and self-determination, former slaves, Saville argues, became "... equal participants in nineteenth-century struggles to establish workers' standing in the American Republic." (1) But theirs was an especially difficult challenge requiring that they stand up to former masters and question some of the most deeply held values

of their northern allies. As they plotted their own course, black Carolinians repudiated "... the personal sovereignty on which their masters' and mistresses' rights to command human property had rested," and rejected the "emergent claims that subjection to landowners' management and to the discipline of an abstract market constituted freedom." (2) The Saville book, a labour and social history on the state level presented in five chapters, is an ambitious, insightful, and unusual Reconstruction monograph.

Liberation came earliest to Sea Island slaves, and following the Federal invasion Yankee investors flocked there to become planters, make profits, and prove the superiority of free labour capitalism over slavery. They brought to the islands a number of assumptions about labour and management that left the contrabands unimpressed. Man had to work in order to eat, they said, but their listeners knew from experience that food was a precondition, not the result, of their labour. The free man was at liberty to accept an employer's terms or move on, they said, but freedmen associated freedom with ownership or control of sufficient productive resources to be independent. They denied that dependence on wages and that working in an authoritarian regime were inconsistent with freedom, but former slaves were dubious. Former slaves wanted autonomy and the means to determine for themselves, individually and collectively, the shape of their lives. Yankee planters discovered to their dismay that shifting to wage labour involved far more than substituting cash for the lash. Their work rules and pay schedules clashed with the workers' habits and aspirations, occasionally negated gains that slaves had won, and strained the fabric of black communal values. Neither the rightness nor advantage of Yankee free labour systems and Yankee economic rationality was obvious to freedpeople.

Rural workers traveled from slavery to free labour along one of three main routes, according to Saville. Slaves resid-

ing on home plantations in the lowland blackbelt of South Carolina typically made collective decisions regarding ownership of the plantation and the redistribution of provision plots. Subsequent struggles with former masters pivoted around land ownership, the size of provision grounds, and control of labour time. Refugee slaves gathered in contraband camps were among the earliest recruits for Yankee-run free labour plantations during the war because they had neither the social cohesion nor material resources to resist recruitment. The third route wended through the upcountry, a region of small plantations and farms, small slaveholding units, and large white populations. Upcountry freedmen did not dare act collectively, make public demands and demonstrations, or seize lands as had many lowcountry Blacks. They tended to act as individuals and made family reconstitution their highest priority. The transition to free labour there involved endless conflicts over job definition, pay levels, authority, and racial etiquette which made sharecropping particularly attractive to landlords.

In chapters three and four freedmen face a returning planter class whose property and political rights had been restored. Having already lost the fight for confiscated lands, freedpeople took their fight for independence in novel directions. Most notably, upcountry freedmen countered landowners' insistence on paying shares or wages after harvest with a demand for control of the crop. Essentially, they sought a tenancy arrangement empowering them to determine crop mix, store and market at least their share of the crop, and pay the landlord. Planters fought back furiously and successfully. Many then replaced white tenant farmers with black sharecroppers, thereby fueling the rage many poor and middling whites had for freedmen and their political allies. In lowland plantation districts, hard times made worse by drought, threats of replacement by temporary labourers, and unrelenting landowner pressures forced

freedmen to accept smaller provision grounds and pay higher labour rents. By the early 1870s most rural black Carolinians had become sharecroppers in a system that bestowed full managerial authority on landlords and deprived labour of substantive autonomy. In that system, Saville contends, they were wage labourers dependent on, not partners of, property owners.

The form and function of black politics during Reconstruction are the subjects of the final chapter. The Union League and the Republican party spread rapidly from late 1866 onwards, building upon the work of and developing interactive ties with drilling societies, protest committees, and religious congregations and other black groups. Freedmen understood that church, League chapter, and Republican club had distinct characters that nonetheless shared, with the larger black community, a common fate. The party could in consequence count on powerful community pressure to bring out the vote and ostracize freedmen suspected of political disloyalty. A masculine working-class culture grew up around electioneering which included shaming dissenters, engaging in rough and tumble at the polls, and devising tactics to insure the safety of black voters. Modeled on the army, the Union League expressed freedpeople's concerns with a distinctive assertiveness and confidence. Appearing in force on election days, League chapters gave heart to wary black voters and pause to foes considering violence. League activities went well beyond partisan politics: its second most frequent activity was helping croppers fight evictions and, like labour groups of the time, it advanced a wide range of self-improvement reforms. The linkages between the Republican party and black social, economic, and religious groups also made it vulnerable to economic pressures that powerful political enemies employed against the black rank and file of the party. The party found no effective way of protecting its supporters from eviction.

Newly emancipated slaves had no wish to become sharecroppers. When the possibility of receiving confiscated lands vanished, freedmen fought for a robust independence based on acquiring what Saville calls "the substances of social existence," like food, animals, and shelter, and on winning a share of social power then monopolized by whites. (191-2) Landowners crushed their efforts, their economic initiatives, and punished them for the "impertinence" of drilling, joining the League, voting Republican, and even putting the well-being of their families over obedience to their employers. That the old planter class fought hard to conserve its traditional privileges is not surprising. Saville's assessment of the Yankee role in the process is less orthodox and rather dark. She presents the northern designers of free labour experiments in South Carolina as capitalist modernizers whose attitudes, values, and interests [as much as their racial outlooks] predisposed them to discount the freedpeople's tendency to equate freedom with autonomy and self-sufficiency. What sets this book apart in the Reconstruction field is its primary focus on rural black workers and the processes by which wage relations were fashioned between them and landowners. Deeply rooted in primary sources and laden with telling observations, Saville's labour history of emancipation in the Carolina countryside is usually convincing, consistently engaging, and uncommonly valuable.

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Paul B. Bellamy, *A History of Workmen's Compensation, 1898-1915: From Courtroom to Boardroom* (New York: Garland Publishing 1997).

PAUL BELLAMY provides a refreshing insight into the institutions, socio-economic structures, and personalities that shaped the response to Cleveland's indus-

trial injury problem during the first two decades of the 20th century. By interweaving his text with lengthy quotations and summaries from Ezra Brudno's *The Jugglers*, Bellamy constructs a narrative detailing his vision of Cleveland's past. Bellamy relies on Cleveland lawyer Brudno's novel "and its graphic, if exaggerated, delineation of a work injury lawsuit to provide a dramatic narrative reenactment of the historical reality of pre-compensation litigation between workers and employers." (10) Bellamy's narrative introduces the reader to Cleveland's personal injury lawyers, accident victims, and the antics they engage in to recover wages lost to injuries before the introduction of Ohio's Workmen's Compensation Act in 1914. In his book, Bellamy devotes chapters to emergence of the American Steel and Wire Company, the legal and judicial framework for worker injuries, the cultural composition of the steel working industry, the role of juries in shaping compensation settlements, and the broader impact of American Steel and Wire's compensation plan. Bellamy argues throughout that workmen's compensation is best conceived as a successful effort by corporations, who for both racial and economic reasons, led the movement for compensation reform and sought to freeze "the common law of negligence into a static statutory framework." (xvii) Bellamy's historical narrative is entertaining and insightful, both for what it includes and for what it excludes.

Four major themes are developed through Bellamy's work. Bellamy shows how the displacement of Irish and German workers in the American Steel and Wire Company by immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe provided the opportunity for big business to restrict access of these immigrant workers to American legal institutions. A line of difference was drawn in the social structure of the steel industry as the new immigrant labour was constructed both in the broader society and by the corporate elite

as outside the American social and legal system. The second theme developed through this book is the role of juries in shaping benefits to injured workers. Jurors, being mostly labourers, often sympathized with the plaintiff. Given the nature of jury composition, and the corruption of jury placements and bribes documented in state investigations, it is no surprise that corporations not only lost most trials in state courts but paid large settlements. Bellamy also shows how the state and more conservative federal courts produced different outcomes for plaintiffs and defendants. He shows that at a time when labour-management conflict was subdued, legal conflict over work injuries was one way for labour to assert its power in the workplace. The third theme developed is that compensation is not a progressive development. State compensation really is the right to trial and recovery of wages after an injury frozen and transformed into a bureaucratic system to regulate wage earners. Ultimately, Bellamy's book is about how wealth is allocated in the American economy. Compensation was not about ensuring better lives for workers; it was about ensuring that corporate American remained unthreatened by the rising power of labour.

Bellamy's work addresses a clear gap in the historiography of workers' compensation. The movement has been misunderstood by a triangulation between historical perspectives. On one side, compensation development has been thought of as the first step in the social safety net development sweeping North America in the early 20th century. Thus, compensation has been understood as a *natural by-product* of the Progressive Era and as a real concession to organized labour who, it was thought, played a significant and singular role in its development. This scholarship has been cast into doubt by more recent, quantitative studies. Bellamy shows that corporations were mostly in support of some form of compensation reform. Why, if it was a social-



istic concession to labour, would corporations support it? Bellamy's quantitative evidence confirms for the reader that corporations supported compensation reform because it benefited them. At a time when wage rates increased 30 per cent, industrial injury settlements went up 300 per cent, giving any employer a reason to support freezing compensation benefits. Thus, his work steps outside of the typical scholarship that sees compensation as a reform vehicle. His work is refreshingly unencumbered by the approach legal historians have taken to the subject. The argument in this book suggests that the Progressive Era was really a conservative force and a vehicle for middle class reformers and the corporate elite to express and enshrine their values.

Bellamy's narrative discusses the class and ethnic issues that are essential to understanding the broader effect of workplace injuries but neglects to consider directly the rôle women played in shaping compensation legislation. Workmen's compensation and the workplace is presented as an exclusive male domain. Women do appear in the book, but the reader encounters them only in descriptions of the home. Bellamy appears to be making a distinction between public and private in this thinking about history. This dichotomy has some implications for his understanding of the subject. The formation of labour and social organizations is critically affected by women whether they are present and participate or not. Understanding the exclusion of women is important because it sheds light on the underlying, unspoken, purpose of some organizations and processes. Thus, one of the purposes behind the compensation system was to exclude female labour force participation by ensuring that injured men were not dependent on women for income after an injury. Despite the fact that many of the men in Bellamy's study were in America without families and that none of the injured workers in his study was female, the exclusionary objective of compensation remains a critical

element to consider. Compensation reform ignited a debate about female labour force participation. Reformers assumed that a woman's place was in the home. Compensation was given as a pension in order to enable a widow to live without taking work from a male labourer. It would have been interesting for Bellamy to consider the perspective Ohio's compensation reformers had of female labour when they designed that state's legislation, especially since one of the objectives of this work is to "suggest new ways of thinking about the present as well as the past." (xvii) One would hope that a dichotomy between public and private with women excluded from the public sphere would not be part of this understanding because gender is now regarded as a major axis in understanding state power; consideration of it in compensation development is important.

Overall, Bellamy provides an insightful look at the working relationships generated by class conflict in early 20th century Cleveland. His conclusion brings the reader back to his main thesis that the steel corporation's dominance over national policy formation was a critical factor in understanding compensation development thought in the United States. His work remains, overall, insightful in its careful consideration of historical causation. He notes that the increase of Eastern and Southern Europeans in the steel industry workforce provided the opportunity for compensation development, but stops short of saying directly that the steel industry, or these new labourers, caused compensation reform. What corporations did manage was to shape the development of compensation as a publicly administered solution to what was constructed as a public problem, rather than a private labour-relations problem. The impression left from this book is the persistent effectiveness of America's corporate elite in taking advantage of opportunities to meet their needs.

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Anthony V. Esposito, *The Ideology of the Socialist Party of America, 1901-1917* (New York: Garland Publishing 1997).

THE CONCEPT of republicanism has come under fire of late from intellectual historians who argue that its recent application to ideas and events in the 19th and 20th centuries has pretty much destroyed what was already a creaky interpretive structure. Esposito's study of socialist thinking during the heyday of the Socialist Party (SP) suggests that this critique has yet to register among historians of the US left. Given the dismal state of Marxism at present, and the unlikelihood that many of these historians will follow Sean Wilentz in arguing that liberalism might serve anti-capitalist purposes, we have good reason to expect that republicanism, bloodied but unbowed, will live to fight another day. Certainly it performs useful service in this book, even as it falters, finally, at just the point that critics of the concept would predict.

Esposito uses republicanism to account for the appeal and relative success of the SP during the decade and a half before World War I. The party's ideology during these years, he argues, was a potent, if finally unstable, compound of Marxism and small producer republicanism. Amenable to notions of "class" and "class struggle" proper to the former, SP ideology also encompassed the critique of economic dependence, to suspicion of social inequality, and the celebration of active citizenship and productive labour that mark the tradition of classical republicanism. As such, it allowed socialists to represent themselves as a *bona fide* American and genuinely radical alternative to Republicans and Democrats.

Socialists committed to this hybrid ideology were also predisposed to favour "political" over "economic" forms of class struggle — the ballot box over the workplace — and this eventually proved their undoing. Fearful of the rebelliousness so evident in the activities of the unorganized portion of the working class,

and outmaneuvered by Progressives in its courtship of middle class voters, the SP lost ground on all fronts after 1912. The republican/Marxist partnership fell apart in the process, leaving socialists to choose between the increasingly "liberal" (269) politics of Morris Hillquit and the party leadership and the syndicalism of Big Bill Haywood and the "mass action" left. The latter concocted a new blend of Marxist and republican ingredients, that is they recognized that the class struggle has its "wellspring in the workplace" (266) and expressed "a republican distrust of the state and a desire for self-reliance" (267), but this new left suffered mightily from wartime repression. Thus, the point of view for which Esposito has the most sympathy never "received an adequate hearing" (267) and was displaced after 1917 by Bolshevism.

That the SP was animated by ideological commitments from outside the Marxist tradition is a commonplace that, as far as I know, only Daniel Bell was able to ignore completely. By choosing republicanism as the handiest tool for both recovering these commitments and given them a defensible anti-capitalist demeanour, Esposito joins a campaign that now includes most historians of the US left. His account of SP ideology echoes most faithfully the analysis Nick Salvatore undertakes in *Eugene Debs, Citizen and Socialist*. (1982) Such fresh insights as he provides can be found in a narrative that ties the progressive development and eventual decomposition of socialist republicanism to specific episodes of working-class restiveness and employer intransigence. Esposito then tacks this narrative to the old story of SP factionalism, thereby supplying a new, somewhat sturdier frame for — even as it corroborates, in all essentials — the pro-left-wing version told forty years ago by Ira Kipnis.

Our willingness to credit these achievements will depend most upon whether we accept Esposito's delineation of republicanism as a distinct, relatively consistent set of ideological commit-

ments. Two features of his argument evoke reasons for rejecting this procedure and, together, illustrate the very weaknesses in the concept highlighted by Daniel Rodgers, Lance Banning, and others. First, it is not clear what we gain by labelling many of the ideas encountered in the book republican rather than, simply, liberal. Esposito finally pins this tag to the agenda that Hillquit and the electoral socialists were pursuing after the war, but does not convincingly distinguish this agenda from the strategy these folks had been following all along. Second, it is not clear why such non-liberal commitments as socialists upheld during these years should be called republican. The concept of class struggle that Esposito uses to connect the mass action left with the republican tradition inspires these leftists to engage in what looks, on close inspection, like trade unionism — specifically, the “militant” variety pursued of necessity by those, like the western miners or immigrant textile workers drawn to the IWW, who still faced unyielding employers and a gun-slinging state. While we might profitably debate the virtues and debilities of this kind of unionism as the backbone of an anti-capitalist politics, the cause of understanding does not seem to be much advanced by establishing its alleged republican credentials.

In addition, Esposito devotes so much energy to the analysis of republicanism that he has nothing left for Marxism. For the most part, he lets “class struggle” or, sometimes, “the labor theory of value” stand in for Marxism and, finding a number of socialists using those phrases, presumes the SP’s claims on Marx’s heritage to be self-evident. To be sure, socialist intellectuals were seriously engaged during this period with Second International Marxism, but Esposito manifests little interest in examining this engagement. In his willingness to accept Marxist phrases as evidence confirming the presence of Marxist concepts, he is finally not so different from Daniel Bell. Like Paul

Buhle’s *Marxism in the USA* (1987), Esposito’s study presents a history of Marxism wherein Marxism itself, strictly defined, escapes analysis. The result is an engaging, and at times quite compelling, account of SP ideology that nonetheless skirts the key theoretical issues at stake in the reconsideration of American Marxism.

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Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso 1996).

MICHAEL DENNING’S 550-page examination of United States left-wing culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War is the most substantial intervention into US cultural studies on the terrain of Left theory and artistic practice since the late 1950s and 1960s. At that time scholarly books by Daniel Aaron, Walter Rideout, and James B. Gilbert established “literary radicalism” as something far more complex than the earlier, conspiratorial stereotypes introduced by Eugene Lyons’ *The Red Decade* (1941) and popularized during the anti-radical witch hunt.

Rideout, Aaron, and Gilbert, however, tended to over-privilege the 1930s, thus treating subsequent events as a tragic dissolution of the tradition; judging the cultural achievements of the Left too modestly; and disproportionately focusing on European-American males. Denning’s book is a qualitative advance in all those areas, in addition to placing literary culture in the context of broader practices, although he does not address the relationship of sexual orientation to radical cultural production.

It is true, of course, that Denning has not laboured alone in the endeavour to reconstruct the tradition. His book has features of a summary, synthesis and fresh interpretation of a large body of

creative research contributed by the hundreds of academics in the fields of English Literature, US History, and American Studies who came of age under the *zeitgeist* of the 1960s radicalization and its aftermath. Still, if there must be a single spokesperson for this diverse layer of scholars, one could hardly ask for a more sophisticated and articulate one than Denning. Although a bit younger than those of us from "the Generation of '68," he has a commendable personal record of association with the most rigorous and searching currents in Marxist cultural studies, such as the Marxist Literary Group in the US, and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, England. Recently, Denning exemplified his belief in activist commitment as one of a handful of Yale professors unequivocally on the side of the graduate students seeking union organization.

The genius of *The Cultural Front* inheres in its ambitious conception. The strategy is appropriately aimed at establishing radical culture not only centrally, a "Second American Renaissance," but in doing so on a non-elitist basis (that is, eschewing artificial bifurcations among cultural regions) and from a Marxist interdisciplinary perspective. To facilitate his project, Denning forges a cultural studies explanatory framework, partly from European sources (he employs Antonio Gramsci's "historical bloc") and partly from the indigenous US sources (he appropriates C. Wright Mills' "cultural apparatus"). In his last three hundred pages, he offers new paradigms for organizing themes, genres, and types of cultural production, providing case studies of figures and moments.

Due to the breadth of Denning's scope — he discusses cartoons, musicals, theatre, jazz — *The Cultural Front* is comprehensive and encyclopedic as an overview of the period, but understandably limited from the viewpoint of more specialized fields of research. For example, if one just focuses on literary genres, poetry is barely treated in the vol-

ume, and the whole complex issue of cultures of oppressed national minorities is dissolved into multicultural formations. His consideration of Marxist literary criticism is limited to the familiar few big names.

Fortunately, the weaknesses of *The Cultural Front* are instructive, not fundamental, offering forums for thoughtful discussion and debate that can only strengthen Denning's overall objective. For example, Denning's use of Gramsci adds yet another chapter to the ongoing debate about the appropriation of the Italian Communist's theory for diverse ends, to which Perry Anderson drew our attention in his classic 1976 essay.

Another area now opened for fresh exploration concerns Denning's delineation of "formations." Here I will simply suggest that the discussion has barely begun. Part of the validation of Denning's case is that the field is far richer than even such a large book can acknowledge. The study of many radical texts, and careers, have not yet made it into published form, let alone received the benefit of any kind of collective discussion by scholars. Perhaps Denning should have presented his formations more tentatively. I am awed by his fresh interpretation of Dos Passos' *USA* and his fine review of Orson Welles' career; but I'm occasionally baffled at some of the yoking together that ensues when incorporating lesser-known texts into a formation.

Denning's approach is also to be admired for treating the left tradition (that is, Communism, Socialism, Popular Front Liberalism, radical nationalism of oppressed minorities, early moments of socialist-feminism, and even Trotskyism and anarchism) in a unified manner, rather than through counterposition. Of course, he is not the pioneer of this ecumenical view that treats the various Left currents as part of one movement. Paul Buhle and Maurice Isserman have been promoting such a broad approach to the radical movement for over a decade; feminist scholars such as Paula Rabi-

nowitz and Charlotte Nekola have included a range of political perspectives in their effort to establish a radical tradition in women's literature; and there have long been African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American scholars who have insisted on a unitary traditions of non-European people of colour, regardless of political divergences on various matters.

It is to Denning's credit that he stands on this legacy. But what he uniquely contributes is the more controversial effort to subsume all radical culture practice under the aegis of the Popular Front. This includes Communist cultural work of the early decade (the "Third Period"), such as the 1932 League of Professionals, and writings of Trotskyist-influenced intellectuals who cohered in a Left opposition to the Peoples Front around the journal *Partisan Review* after 1936.

Recent scholarship certainly encourages a more nuanced understanding of the Popular Front. There is evidence of a kind of strategic anticipation of certain aspects of it in 1934, and scholars such as Charles Post and Robin Kelley have shown that stages might exist in its 1935-1939 applications, as well as divergencies in implementation on the local level. In my own case, ten years ago I started studying the lesser-known figures in the Communist-led cultural milieu, especially of the 1940s and 1950s, discovering a breadth of concerns not reducible to the politics of the Third International. Still, I think there are grounds to retain many of the traditional left-wing challenges to Popular Front politics; least of all, do I regard frank acknowledgement of the Stalinist system's barbarisms as some sort of capitulation to the Cold War discourse.

Denning's approach may be perceived, perhaps unfairly, as one-sided cheerleading. I would prefer to defend his book as elaborating only one part, albeit a major one, of a larger picture of mid-century Left cultural production. To me, it seems possible to acknowledge the insufficiency of the anti-Popular Front (and

the corresponding anti-mass culture) criticism of Lionel Trilling, Philip Rahv, Irving Howe, *et al.* But this is a far cry from dismissing them altogether.

Denning certainly makes the case more eloquently than any predecessor that this cultural tradition is intimately linked to the humanizing activities of ordinary labouring people of all colours and both genders, as well as those cultural workers, organic and traditional, variously allied with emancipatory social movements. Still, what makes an inspirational case on a general level needs to be rendered more specific if it is to provide an accurate assessment of experience to contemporary cultural activists. Subsequent scholars will have to augment Denning with more discrimination than *The Cultural Front* allows in regard to the strengths and weaknesses of the policies, practices, and solutions of our Left predecessors.

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*Striking Flint: Genora (Johnson) Dollinger Remembers the 1936-37 General Motors Sit-Down Strike* as told to Susan Rosenthal (Chicago: L.P. Page 1996).

THIS ATTRACTIVELY designed booklet, with its gripping story, cries out for classroom use and should be on the shelf of every labour historian. Genora Johnson Dollinger (1913-1995) played a decisive role in the legendary Flint sit-down strike of 1936-37. In her autobiographical recollections, published posthumously, she accomplishes multiple feats: retelling in simple words the important history of the sit-down wave that allowed the CIO to finally organize American industry; adding important new political insights that go well beyond the film *With Babies and Banners* (1978), in which she figured prominently; enhancing our comprehension of the role of gender ideology and the importance of women in the industrial

union movement of the 1930s and 1940s; and evoking in wonderful detail a life dedicated to the emancipation of the working class.

Johnson (her name in 1936, at age 23, when she was married to GM worker and fellow Socialist Party activist Kermit Johnson), was a Michigan native raised in Flint, a virtual company town. Central among her many interesting observations on the strike itself is her explanation of the crucial political education and strike preparation carried out by socialist organizations, especially the Socialist Party. This is a welcome correction to the many accounts that inflate the role of the Communist Party. Although the rebellion's timing was unplanned, Johnson's reflections make it clear that the Flint sit-down would not have taken shape without the network and perspective forged in secret, radical mass meetings: "Many revolutionaries, so-called, talk about 'spontaneous combustion of the workers.' I can't see that at all, because it took time for the organizers in various plants of this whole General Motors empire to talk to the workers and to bring them to classes — to make some contact — create a bond. You had to trust your fellow worker if you were going to be an active union member because we had an awful lot of spies in there, a lot of people who would get special favor for squealing on somebody else." (9)

The narrative of the strike focuses upon the innovations Johnson is most famous for: the children's picket, the Women's Auxiliary, and the Women's Emergency Brigade, a militant Auxiliary subgroup willing to wield clubs and risk danger in defense of the men who had occupied the plants. As is often the case with oral history, the most fascinating passages are in the side comments. We learn that the decision to organize the women, for example, came only with the practical crisis created by the appearance on New Year's Eve of numerous wives at the plant windows who, angry at the prospect of being deprived of their traditional

revelry, yelled at their husbands, "If you don't cut out this foolishness and get out of that plant right now, you'll be a divorced man!" (12) Even then, many union men resisted pro-union organizing by women, protesting with stereotyped sexual innuendoes: "I was often called a 'dyke.' Some men said that women who came down to the picket line were prostitutes or loose women looking for men. But as more married men with families became active in the strike, they kept those elements quiet." (14)

Sure to send chills up anyone's spine is Johnson's account of the "Battle of Bulls Run," when the police were turned back from their assault on Fisher Body 2 on 11 January 1937. Johnson was the only woman to remain inside the plant when the battle erupted. UAW leader Victor Reuther had been rallying the picketers and strikers with loudspeakers, when a problem arose — the batteries on the sound car began to run down. Despite never having used a loudspeaker to address a large crowd before, Johnson took over the loudspeaker and began attacking the police. She called them cowards for "shooting into the bellies of unarmed men and firing at the mothers of children." Johnson then appealed to the women in the crowd to "Break through those police lines and come down here and stand beside your husbands and your brothers and your uncles and your sweethearts." As Johnson watched, one woman struggled forward and, despite being grabbed at by the police, broke through and began walking towards the battle zone. Others followed, both men and women. As the police would not shoot people in the back the battle ended. (15-6)

Many of Flint's white workers were fresh from the Jim Crow South. Of 12,000 workers employed by Chevrolet, only 400 were Black. Of those, none were production workers; all worked in the foundry or as janitors. Johnson explains how the strike prompted a dramatic rethinking by many white workers, often when their prejudices were challenged by socialist

strikers: "The only Black sit-downer in the Flint strikes was Roscoe Van Zandt in Plant 4. At first, the southern white workers didn't know what to make of it. All they could say to him was, 'What the hell are you doing here? You haven't got any job to protect.' ... When it came time for the victory parade, the strikers voted for Roscoe Van Zandt to carry the flag out of the plant." (24)

But even readers long familiar with such inspiring pictures of the Flint sit-down may find themselves brought up short by the story of Johnson's subsequent suffering. Blacklisted in Flint, she embarked on a speaking tour for the CIO. It left her exhausted; she collapsed from tuberculosis, losing a lung. Shortly thereafter she lost her youngest boy, Jarvis, in a car accident. Then her older son, Dennis, died of multiple sclerosis. She and Kermit separated.

Despite these agonizing tragedies, Johnson was soon remarried to Sol Dollinger, a socialist and trade unionist, who would be her steadfast companion for the next half-century. During World War II, she became an industrial worker and effective rank-and-file organizer of women war workers in Detroit, only to suffer a brutal beating at the hands of mafia goons in 1945. In 1977, when invited back by the UAW and GM for a 40-year anniversary celebration of the sit-downs, she declined but showed up to issue a strongly worded denunciation of "tuxedo unionism," that is, bureaucratic cosiness with corporations, and concessionary bargaining, which were destroying the UAW she built.

One can only hope that the militant labour movement Genora Johnson Dollinger hoped to see revive will be aided by Susan Rosenthal's marvellous oral history. *Striking Flint* provides a new generation with the bracing story of woman who to the end of her life remained dedicated to "social ownership of the means of production" as the only way "to stop the ruling class from dominating

humanity, and for working people to achieve their liberation." (41)

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Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (New York: Basic Books 1995).

THE UNITED Automobile Workers Union (UAW) has been a popular research topic of historians, journalists, activists, and other labour specialists, giving us a not only vast, but also highly contentious literature on the topic. No single person is more central to these scholarly and contemporary debates than long time (1946-1970) UAW president, Walter Reuther. Discussions of Reuther's leadership often revolve around the factional struggles that the UAW encountered — and in which Reuther played a pivotal role — during the 1930s and 1940s. Any biography of Reuther is necessarily, therefore, cast into a web of highly polemical and tendentious debates which seemingly require the author to declare allegiance to one side or the other.

Nelson Lichtenstein's recent biography of Walter Reuther is a welcome contribution to this literature. Much to his credit, Lichtenstein skillfully avoids simply taking sides in the fifty-year debate. Neither celebrating nor vilifying Reuther, Lichtenstein attempts to understand the ambitious politically and socially motivated labour leader within the specific context which he lived. Lichtenstein convincingly argues that Reuther consistently sought broader social and political changes, but that Reuther failed when he became "imprisoned within institutions, alliances, and ideological constructs that were largely of his own making." (300)

World War II is the crucial period in Lichtenstein's analysis. During World War II, Lichtenstein argues, Reuther abandoned the shopfloor syndicalism that

the auto workers utilized successfully in the mid-1930s in favour of corporatist solutions. This "Faustian Bargain" provided Reuther access into elite political and business circles but also required compromises which hindered his capacity to transform larger society. While the UAW made advances for its members, increasing wages, benefits, working conditions, and job stability, the range of possibilities for the UAW to create political and social change narrowed. When political and social radicalism emerged strongly in the 1960s, Reuther's attachment to limited collective bargaining goals, his alliance with the Democratic party, and his desire to maintain unquestioned leadership in the UAW all hindered his ability to embrace others who shared goals of broader social and political change. He became trapped by the political and social world he had created.

A central component of the bargain that Reuther made with political and business leaders included, according to Lichtenstein, the control of a sometimes turbulent and unpredictable rank-and-file. Reuther's desire to achieve political power and maintain dominance in the UAW required that the UAW become a "responsible" union which submitted to a system of "industrial jurisprudence" to solve shopfloor problems. This led to the creation of highly complex, slow, and often unresponsive grievance procedures, which left committeemen with little shopfloor power. Early attempts of the UAW to play a larger role in the workplace failed to displace traditional management prerogatives. The UAW and Reuther became attached to strict enforcement of contracts which both provided material gains to its members, and sometimes constrained rank-and-file militancy.

In Lichtenstein's analysis, Reuther's alliance with the Democratic party proved most limiting to his larger goals. He supported Socialist party candidates like Norman Thomas in the early 1930s, but by World War II abandoned any hope of third party politics. He focused his atten-

tion on realigning the Democratic party, attempting to transform it into a truly liberal-labour party. Reuther's alliance with the Democratic party was seductive in its potential; but real power within the party proved quite illusive. The alliance led to some of Reuther's more difficult and embarrassing political compromises. The tactics used by Reuther in attempting to undermine the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party at the 1964 Convention, for example, were unseemly and belied his very public support of mainstream civil rights organizations.

Lichtenstein argues that Reuther became trapped not just by the institutions which he helped create and the alliances he forged, but also by an ideological narrowing of political options in the postwar period. At the same time, we might quibble with Lichtenstein's emphasis of causality on the narrowing of the political landscape. He argues that the general rightward shift that followed the 1946 election combined with the growth of anti-communism led to a "sharp turn against Communists within virtually all labor and liberal organizations." (257) Lichtenstein acknowledges the rank and often opportunistic nature of Reuther's widely cast anti-communism, but he also sees Reuther's attacks as a necessary reaction to the more general anti-communism growing in politics and society. Anti-communism, in this perspective, was necessary for the very survival of the UAW. But this is misleading. Reuther and other important UAW staffers such as Joe Rauh played early and critical roles in legitimizing the pervasive anti-communism that defined postwar American liberalism. In addition, Reuther's anti-communism was much more than a reaction to the 1946 election and the rightward turn of American politics. Reuther used anti-communism to bludgeon many of his enemies well before 1946 and often in a haphazard fashion which helped delegitimize any politics to the left of his own. Reuther's anti-communism thus had a serious impact in narrowing the political



possibilities in the Democratic party. When Lichtenstein argues that Reuther "positioned the UAW at the left margin of conventional politics," (303) he suggests that Reuther analyzed the politics of the possible and sought the most radical position available. But this is again misleading. Reuther was positioned "at the left margin" of mainstream politics primarily because he had made — in liberal organizations like ADA and in the UAW — politics any further left susceptible to anti-communist attacks from many different quarters.

It is unfortunate that Lichtenstein, who pays close attention and attempts to address important political and racial issues in a nuanced manner, fails to address gender issues. In the early portions of the books, which deal with the formative years of the UAW, Lichtenstein contents with the organization of female workers into the UAW. But after Lichtenstein follows Reuther's corporatist turn during World War II, women disappear entirely from the book. The UAW Women's Department developed into an important organization both within the UAW and within the larger trade union and feminist movements. Yet it is entirely absent from Lichtenstein's study. Moreover, it is probably not a coincidence that when Lichtenstein addresses women skillfully, he relies almost exclusively on the secondary work of other historians, as opposed to making his own original contributions. We must conclude that after World War II either Reuther had no concern for women's issues or the Women's Department, or that Lichtenstein found them insufficiently important to include. Neither explanation is very satisfying.

Placing the above criticisms aside, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit* is a consistently and convincingly argued book. It is well informed by the secondary literature and based on extensive primary research. Lichtenstein attempts to see Reuther as a complex and powerful political and trade union leader who operated within a specific political and social con-

text. He should be applauded for trying to understand Reuther outside of rank polemical terms, a perspective which will certainly attract more academic critics than allies. This is a major contribution to the already rich UAW historiography which is sure to continue old debates while also beginning new ones.

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Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism 1945-1968* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 1995).

BOYLE CHALLENGES the emerging argument that during the height of postwar liberal ascendancy, a centralized and bureaucratized labour movement sowed the seeds of its own destruction by abandoning hopes for a social democratic breakthrough. He does this by focusing on one of the largest and most politically active unions in the country: the UAW. He concentrates his analysis on four national policy areas (full employment, federal urban policy, African-American civil rights, and the containment of Communism in Asia) and presidential election campaigns between 1945 and 1968, which together lay at the centre of both the UAW's and the nation's agenda during this period. He doesn't hesitate to admit that his approach is unabashedly top-down, institutional history.

Boyle locates the UAW, its top leaders, and especially its president, Walter Reuther, as the "inheritors of the social democratic ideological and political formations" that the union struggled to establish in earlier decades, and the forces that kept the quest for progressive politics alive. The post-war UAW leadership built a cross-class, biracial reform coalition based on unionists, middle-class liberals, and African Americans. It appealed to middle-class liberals by supporting economic growth and anti-communism, and

to blacks by vigorously supporting civil rights. This coalition worked within several structural constraints. First, the coalition's home was in the Democratic Party, which, due to a strong conservative Southern contingent during the 1930s through the mid-1960s, was more concerned with maintaining consensus than with promoting a coherent reform program. It was also constrained by the structures and pro-capital orientations of federal government agencies, which did not lend themselves to social democratic experimentation. The labour movement's own compromised structure also added to the UAW's constraints: the AFL-CIO merger in 1955 placed the UAW in league with a majority of conservative unions. And finally, the UAW's own internal political system, based on a coalition that included some conservative leaders and rank-and-file members, also constrained the President's freedom of action.

Boyle's argument puts Reuther and the UAW at the extreme left of the Democratic party and the labour movement. Although this is largely an accurate characterization if we limit ourselves to powerhouse unions and the period after 1950, it ignores the role and influence of other possible "true inheritors" of the social democratic legacy: the so-called "Communist dominated" unions and locals of the CIO. Although most of these unions and locals were effectively eliminated during their purge from the CIO in 1949 and 1950, with Reuther's active participation and full support, two important left-wing unions (UE and ILWU) and several large locals remained. Both of these unions appear briefly later in Boyle's story, in their roles as recipients of Reuther's offer in 1968 to join in the Alliance for Labor Action, which was Reuther's unsuccessful attempt to recapture the progressivism of the early CIO period. The left-wing unions represented a distinct faction of the CIO that was largely responsible for many aspects of the CIO's early progressivism and their purge was harmful for both progressive labour politics

and union democracy. It is therefore ironic and telling that Walter Reuther, the inheritor of social democratic politics, suffered defeat during the 1960s for the lack of more unions like the ones he helped eliminate. Here it is clear that Reuther's longstanding policy of anti-communism seriously constrained his ability to forward the social democratic agenda.

Another source of progressivism came from within the UAW itself, from its largest local, Local 600 organized at the Ford River Rouge plant. The UAW president and executive board attempted, but largely failed, to completely purge entrenched Communists and their sympathizers from the local's "Progressive Caucus." Boyle contends that whereas it had the opportunity, Local 600 did not create a radical movement within the UAW. Rather, its president, Carl Stellato, adopted opportunist positions which moved workers in a conservative direction. But what he fails to notice is that the local's Progressive Caucus continued to push its politically left-wing and racially integrationist positions on Reuther and the international union. These onslaughts did not amount to a groundswell, but they did earn the local a reputation of being a "thorn in Reuther's side." If Reuther's caucus had taken the left-wing's position on integrating the UAW International Executive Board during the 1940s, it would have had less conflict within its own caucus during the period of civil rights activism. Fundamentally, I do not disagree with Boyle over the degree to which the UAW and Walter Reuther contributed to progressive politics; but I do disagree with the idea that they constituted the ideological vanguard.

Despite the impressive coalition, Boyle argues that the UAW's efforts could not have made headway within the post-war political structure. It was the 1960s activism that broke the stalemate and opened possibilities for new initiatives. Reuther maintained important connections with and provided important (and

heretofore not adequately documented) support for the Civil Rights struggle, but put his concerted efforts into moving L.B. Johnson's War on Poverty to the left. In his early dealings with Johnson, Reuther compromised his position on Vietnam in order to obtain a voice in shaping Johnson's domestic agenda. Reuther's failure to oppose the Vietnam War eventually alienated him from the New Left, which the UAW had earlier nurtured, and this, along with growing racial conflict, led to the collapse of Reuther's reform coalition.

Boyle has done a commendable job in this rigorously researched and carefully crafted work. He has provided us with a powerful analysis of the important role the UAW and Walter Reuther played in post-war liberalism and substantial insight as to the reasons for its shortcomings. And importantly, he captures the largely ignored and forgotten contributions that this important union made to the civil rights movement and the liberal agenda. This book is required reading for anyone interested in the US labour movement, and especially for those interested in its role in US politics.

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Tom Zaniello, *Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds, and Riffraff: An Organized Guide to Films about Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1996).

HERE IS A MOST useful reference book for anyone with an interest in the representation of workers on film. Tom Zaniello, an English professor who teaches film studies at Northern Kentucky University, has compiled a selection of 150 titles, mainly American, that have something to tell us about organized labour and working-class life. Only 28 of these films appear in the 1996 edition of Roger Ebert's relatively discriminating *Video Companion*, so we are certainly

getting a glimpse of what lies beyond the mainstream film and video culture.

Clearly the labour film has been around for some time. The earliest listed here is D.W. Griffith's *A Corner in Wheat* (1909), a 12-minute silent film based on the fiction of Frank Norris and described as "the labor theory of value dramatized." From the 1920s we have classics such as Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike* (1924) and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926). The existing body of research on labour films, much of it cited in Zaniello's notes, tells us that following the somewhat open atmosphere of the silent era the Hollywood film industry constructed a durable set of labour stereotypes, mainly but not exclusively negative, that have remained with us down to the present day. Meanwhile, since the 1970s there has been an upsurge of both documentary and independent film-making (exemplified by the work of Barbara Kopple and John Sayles), and new markets have appeared in the form of made-for-TV films and distribution by videocassette. Much of this, Zaniello suggests, holds some promise for the appearance of "more varied, less stereotypical images of labor." (5)

In all, this guide is an admirable piece of work and a pleasure to use. An introduction sets out the selection criteria and places the emergence of the labour film in context. Each entry includes a short essay of a page or more, plus production information and references to readings and related films. There is also advice on availability, always a problem for those of us dependent on local video outlets or impoverished library collections of visual resources. And there is a helpful thematic index. The longest entries are for Films Focusing on Women in or near the Workforce (there are 21 listed), Films Mainly about Strikes (18 listed), Films about Miners (also 18), Films with Positive Images of Unions (14), Films about Farmworkers (14), Films about the Depression (12), and Films about the Auto Industry (11). There is a Must-See list of ten films and, what is always a concern, Films for

Children (five are listed). Among the 32 documentaries included, those directed by Barbara Kopple are most prominent — *American Dream*, *Fallen Champ*, *Harlan County USA* and *Out of Darkness*. Bravely, the author has included his own e-mail address, so anyone with comments (and most readers will be tempted to identify omissions that may or may not fall within the selection criteria) will be able to contribute to revisions of the list. There is one embarrassing error that shows up with surprising frequency in reputable publications: the fictitious *International Workers of the World* make two appearances — on page 40 (*Boxcar Bertha*) and again on page 129 (*Joe Hill*), though fortunately not in the entry on *The Wobblies*.

The selection here is overwhelmingly American. There are only ten European films, plus eight British, three Australian and two Canadian films. The Canadian entries are both documentaries, Sturla Gunnarson's film about Bob White and the historic 1984 General Motors negotiations, *Final Offer* (1985) — "more 'f-words' than autoworkers," comments Zaniello in an otherwise appreciative review — and Laura Sky's documentary about women working in the open pit mines of British Columbia, *Moving Mountains* (1981). Certainly the Canadian entries could be more extensive.

Among feature films, the obvious recommendations would be the Canadian classics, *Goin' Down the Road* (1970), a gritty drama about Maritimers looking for work and fulfilment in Toronto at the end of the 1960s, and *Mon Oncle Antoine* (1971), a portrait of social life in the Asbestos country of Québec in the days before the Quiet Revolution. Most recently the award-winning production of *Margaret's Museum* (1995) contains powerful images of the Cape Breton coal country and its people, although the film is flawed by a weak grasp of the historical context of the 1940s which leads to some significant anachronisms along the way. Although many Canadian features contain interesting glimpses of the working-

class experience, it is fair to say that Canadian film-makers have neglected the more specific concerns of labour history. Sooner or later we should expect to see dramatic films placed in such contexts as the Great Upheaval of the 1880s, the Labour Revolt of 1919, the Great Depression of the 1930s or the struggles for union rights in the 1940s. Indeed it is not difficult to imagine an award-winning director such as John Greyson (who was arrested in a movie theatre for handing out leaflets promoting the Toronto Days of Action in 1996) placing a dramatic feature in the context of contemporary labour struggles.

Not surprisingly, a larger number of documentary productions could also have been considered for inclusion in this guide. The representation of workers on film goes back at least to the earliest days of the National Film Board, when documentaries such as *Coal Face Canada* (1943) and *Careers and Cradles* (1947) focused on the problems of mobilizing (and demobilizing) workers for the war effort. Canadian workers continued to appear as subjects of realistic documentaries such as Terence Macartney-Filgate's *The Backbreaking Leaf* (1959) and Clément Perron's *Day after Day* (1962). By the 1970s the tough choices facing Canadian workers in the era of globalization were portrayed in films such as Martin Duckworth's *Temiscaming, Quebec* (1975) and Laura Sky's *Shutdown* (1980). In a historical vein, the work of women on farms and factories in World War I was effectively presented by Maureen Judge in *And We Knew How to Dance* (1994) and the work of African-Canadian women in Claire Prieto and Sylvia Hamilton's *Black Mother Black Daughter* (1989). The most extended effort to address labour history was a potted history of the CCF-NDP and the unions, a four-part series entitled *Imperfect Union: Canadian Labour and the Left* (1989). Despite my own misgivings (as an uncredited researcher, writer, and interviewer who had disagreements with the director), I would

also include Martin Duckworth's film about the Cape Breton coal miners, *12,000 Men* (1978), for the opportunity to revisit veterans of the early 20th century labour wars. Perhaps the most appealing of the NFB efforts in labour history was *Canada's Sweetheart: The Saga of Hal C. Banks* (1985), a docudrama directed by Donald Brittain and featuring excellent performances by Maury Chaykin and R.H. Thomson; while it is a full two-hour film, the first 30 minutes provide an excellent introduction to the struggle between the CSU and the SIU and, incidentally, a corrective to the many US films about the corruption of unions. Unfortunately, the suspension of the NFB's film and video loan service will make it more difficult to gain access to these productions unless public libraries and educational institutions (and even unions) begin to collect more aggressively in the field.

This discussion would be incomplete without reference to the numerous independent productions that also focus on workers and labour. Two of the most notable efforts look at the 1930s, in each case bringing new documentary material and new insights to the story of the Great Depression — Richard Boutet and Pascal Gelinas' *The Ballad of Hard Times* (1983) and Sara Diamond's *On to Ottawa* (1992). The contradictions of the 1940s are presented in Sara Diamond's *Keep the Home Fires Burning: Women, War Work, and Unions in British Columbia* (1988). On the public sector upheavals of the 1960s there is *Memory and Muscle* (1995), a spritely account of the historic 1965 postal strike, highlighting the militancy of the rank and file, produced by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. *A Wives' Tale* (1980), by Sophie Bissonnette and Martin Duckworth, provides an inside story of the 1978 Inco strike in Sudbury, showing the tensions between the miners' wives and the union leadership. Bissonnette has also produced a wonderful portrait of the Québec radical Léa Roback, *A Vision in the Darkness*

(1991). And there is more, much of which is unfortunately difficult to identify or gain access to despite the efforts of independent distributors such as Full Frame Film and Video. At the 1996 Toronto International Film Festival at least two new documentaries focused on workers' lives: Maria Drazilov's self-explanatory *My Mom Works at Sears* (1996) and Selwyn Jacob's *The Road Taken* (1996), a history of black railway porters in Canada. Meanwhile, recent made-for-TV feature movies in Canada have included films about hockey players organizing a union in the 1950s, and Diana Kilmury's campaign for reform in the teamsters' union. There has even been a well-intentioned but misleading recreation of a young woman's working life in the Cornwall, Ontario cotton mills of the 1860s [sic], the shortcomings of which were discussed in some detail on the H-Canada List; as it turns out, the film *Lyddie* was actually based on a good American juvenile novel set in Lowell, Massachusetts but too much context was transposed uncritically, perhaps unconsciously, into Canada.

All this is a reminder that at the end of the 20th century a good deal of history is being produced on film. For those who care about the standards of popular history, this can be problematic, as the languages and practices of film often fail to meet the standards of written history. At one level this should require us to be more active in promoting historical literacy both among producers and among consumers of history on film. It is surely reasonable to expect film-makers to make use of the available research and creative treatments of the subject matter. At another level, as Robert Rosenstone has argued in *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (1995), historians should also be making a sympathetic effort to understand the rules of the medium and appreciate the new ways of presenting history represented by film and video, both in the documentary and in the dramatic feature.

The editors of *Labour/Le Travail* could help in this process by including more discussions and reviews of film and video productions in the pages of the journal. Although this review has strayed from a discussion of the book under review, let us take the reviewer's enthusiasm as a measure of the interest of the subject matter so effectively introduced there. While the Canadian content might obviously be expanded in such a guide, this is an excellent reference work and should be consulted by anyone teaching labour history or labour studies.

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James J. Lorence, *Organizing the Unemployed: Community and Union Activists in the Industrial Heartland* (Albany: State University of New York Press 1996).

WHILE THE "industrial heartland" in *Organizing the Unemployed's* title is only one US state (Michigan), labour historians on both sides of the US/Canadian border will find it of much wider value. It explores two topics which, of late, have been receiving increased attention: (1) the role of the left in the labour activism of the 1930s; and (2) the bureaucratization of the labour movement itself, even before the onset of World War II. There is even more to recommend *Organizing the Unemployed*, for, by placing under a microscope the relationship between the official labour movement and the organizations of the unemployed, it addresses an issue close to the top of the AFL-CIO's current agenda. The reader will find additional dividends in the book's focus on perhaps North America's key union of the past sixty years, the United Auto Workers' union. James Lorence probes these issues through his own perspective, and not all readers will agree with his analysis. All, however, are sure to find this a most readable book,

and a book which furthers the discussion of themes important to historians and activists alike.

*Organizing the Unemployed* opens with a rich narrative account of the unemployed movement in Michigan in the early years of the Great Depression. Lorence divides the state into three geopolitical regions: Detroit, the Upper Peninsula, and outstate industrial areas. Each of these regions had different histories prior to the Depression; each experienced the economic crisis in different ways; and each gave birth to somewhat different sorts of movements. But in all three regions, the left played the key role in the instigation, organization, and direction of the unemployed movement.

In Detroit, militants built Unemployed Councils based in neighbourhoods. Through massive demonstrations and direct confrontations with authorities, these councils gained expanded relief for the unemployed, indirectly influenced legislation, and helped spur a national unemployed movement. These unemployed organizations served as important "schools" for the participants. Their emphasis on racial non-discrimination later became a defining feature of the industrial union drives in the auto industry, and many of their most active members became union organizers a few years later in the auto industry.

In the Upper Peninsula (the "UP"), extractive industries — copper, iron, and lumber — had collapsed as quickly and dramatically as had the auto industry in Detroit. Unemployment grew and living conditions worsened. As an industrial frontier which had opened to development only in the late 19th century, the UP was home to a cluster of tight-knit ethnic groups, especially Finns, whose imported radical traditions had been deepened by a generation's struggles with some of the US's most powerful corporations. In the early 1930s, communists came forward to organize cooperatives, build coalitions with struggling farmers through the

United Farmers League, and demand relief from employers and the state.

In the third region, the small manufacturing towns in which native-born white Protestant workers were the dominant group, a more varied — and “milder” — left led the way among the unemployed. Socialists headed the Unemployed Citizens League and the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, but they, too, veered towards public demonstrations, marches, and direct action when the authorities rebuffed their reasonably couched demands for relief.

But conditions changed quickly, thereby altering the context for the unemployed movement and, soon, the movement itself. In 1933 Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed the presidency and launched the “New Deal,” a collection of programs which responded to grassroots organizing and popular pressure. The economy also began to pick up, and more than a few of the unemployed returned to work. Lorence demonstrates that, even more importantly, the attention of radical organizers shifted from the breadlines and the neighbourhoods to the factories, mines and mills. With more government assistance forthcoming, unemployment declining, and fewer militant activists among the unemployed, the movement and its diverse organizations began to decline.

To be sure, the movement did not disappear, and Lorence is careful to trace the emergence of a new organization, the Workers’ Alliance, through which radicals sought to incorporate the organizational and ideological advances represented by the Unemployed Councils, the United Farmers League, and the Unemployed Citizens League. The Workers’ Alliance also reflected an important strategic step — a focus on organizing those formerly unemployed men and women who had gotten jobs on the diverse relief and “make work” projects funded by the state and federal governments. The Workers’ Alliance, Lorence emphasizes, saw these men and women as workers who

ought to be organized in union-like fashion.

But, Lorence demonstrates, it took the newly emerging United Auto Workers’ union, with its expanding membership, resources, and political influence to successfully carry out this organizational agenda. The “recession” of 1937-1938 put the UAW to the test, and, for the most part, they passed with flying colours. Unemployed Michigan workers came under the auspices — and influence — of the UAW Welfare Committee. The unemployed had indeed become linked to the employed in a solid organizational fashion, but in a way which left behind the militant action and radical ideas of the early 1930s.

Once they were within the purview of the UAW, Michigan’s unemployed became subject to the internal factionalism and rapidly expanding bureaucratization of the union. As a result, the radical potential represented by unemployed organizing earlier in the decade became lost to the wider working-class movement. We are left, then, with Lorence’s refrain: “This analysis reminds unionists, community organizers, and policymakers that the labor movement once functioned as a social movement dedicated to goals that transcended the limits of business unions.” (2)

Readers of *Organizing the Unemployed* will certainly make up their own minds about Lorence’s analysis, but they are sure to find much of value to chew on here.

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Peter B. Levy, *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1994).

PROFESSOR LEVY’S major thesis in writing about the relationship of the New Left (“an uprising of students against the dominant policies and cultural mores of

American society") and organized labour in the 1960s — is that it was a "complex phenomenon" and not the one-dimensional adversarial relationship conveyed by the enduring image of "hard hat" construction workers punching and kicking anti-war demonstrators on Wall Street in New York City in 1970. Rather, Levy maintains that the relationship should be viewed "dialectically": "Cooperation was the main theme of the first half of the decade; confrontation was the main theme of the second half of the 1960s; and the synthesis or reconciliation of sorts appeared after 1970." He emphasizes not only the conflicts between the New Left and organized labour, but also what he calls "the numerous instances of cooperation, especially on the local level." (5)

The book begins with the emergence of the New Left in the early 1960s, identifies the goals Levy says it and organized labour shared, details the financial and other support provided by certain unions, and cites a few instances where some members of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) supported union strikes and boycotts. Even then, however, divisions developed between the two over the racial issue and US foreign policy, particularly its anti-communist emphasis that organized labour supported. Although it is often difficult to determine who is using whom, Levy concludes that "cooperation predominated in the early 1960s because the New Left believed it needed allies to bring about social change." (22)

In the chapter dealing with the years 1964-5, which Levy calls the "high water mark in the history of American liberalism," (26) he discusses the New Left's and labour's involvement in the Mississippi Summer, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's challenge at the National Democratic convention in Atlanta City, various local Economic Research and Action Projects conducted by SDS, and the United Mineworkers strike in Hazard, Kentucky. Rather than the legacy of mutual betrayal and distrust many historians found in the aftermath of the Free-

dom Summer, Levy finds an "ambiguous legacy" (40) reinforcing collaboration in some instances and preventing it in others. As evidence of mutual cooperation, Levy also cites the march on Selma, Alabama.

Levy then describes the deterioration in what cooperation there had been between organized labour and the New Left. Vietnam, he says, turned "a fragile relationship into a confrontational one" with the "Wall Street rampage symbolizing the polarization." (63) According to Levy, the clenched fists of the Black Power movement also "affronted labour's assimilative sensibilities." (98) Finally, the counterculture with its "long hair, drugs, permissive sexual mores, [and] informal and unkempt clothing" antagonized organized workers possibly more than the New Left's politics. (86)

Levy also discusses how various New Left groups, particularly SDS, "ultimately collapsed in the process of debating the correct line on the working class," while what he calls the broader New Left continued to "probe the labour question." (121) He believes this "open and vibrant dialogue" inspired a generation of scholars "to unearth a tradition of collective action and community strength on the part of working people." (123) Building on the "theoretical ponderings of the intelligentsia," Levy says the New Left supported local union organizing drives, particularly those involving the farm workers. (165)

This text began as a dissertation under the direction of Eric Foner. It is generally well-written despite occasional lapses into dissertationese and the excessive detail so characteristic of doctoral theses. It is clear where the author's sympathies lie. Yet, he has presented all the relevant evidence, especially concerning the New Left's activities and views. For a more in-depth analysis of organized labour's side during this period, I recommend Alan Draper's *Conflict of Interests: Organized Labour and the Civil Movement in the South, 1954-1968* (1994).



I learned a great deal from Levy's book. My problem is with his interpretations of the evidence he presents. He has documented instances of cooperation between the New Left and organized labour. The key question, however, is whether those instances of cooperation mattered. What did they accomplish? What did they change? What influence did they have?

Levy reminds the reader at several points that neither the New Left nor organized labour were monolithic. What that meant, however, was that only a portion of the New Left made any serious efforts to join with organized labour whereas the favourable response from organized labour came almost totally from "social activists unions" with left-wing traditions such as the United Electrical Workers (UE); United Packinghouse Workers (UPWA); Transport Workers Union (TWU); and the west coast longshoremen (ILWU). It is easy, therefore, to overstate the extent of the cooperation. It is also easy to overstate the quality of the cooperation that did occur. Most of it, even in the early 1960s, involved contacts of short duration, song-fest "hootenannies" and talk-fest conferences producing not much but rhetoric. Talk that comes to nothing must be distinguished from deeds.

Levy's book is a catalogue of New Left talk and beliefs, most of them dogmatic, naive if not foolish, and revealing almost complete ignorance of organized labour and working people. In explaining the failure of some SDS programs, for example, Levy notes that "the poor felt more strongly about inadequate housing, recreation, and welfare benefits than other liberal/left issues." (32) In other cases, striking miners in Kentucky "were more interested in bread and butter gains than catalyzing an interracial movement of the poor" (37); some leftist intellectuals "responded with hostility at the suggestion that communists might be the enemies of freedom" rather than "progressive allies"; others thought the "black working class might be the vanguard for

the social revolution" (77); and, as Levy points out, white radicals "more so than blacks themselves tended to believe the rhetoric of the Panthers and other black militants." (81) Counterculture leftists also uttered moronic comments that repelled most working people, such as "until we started eating all the acid we couldn't figure out what was happening." (93) Other New Leftists talked of students leading "a proletarian revolution" and workers as "soldiers in the revolutionary army." (110) This last notion adds arrogance (some called it elitism) to ignorance and naiveté about labour, organized or not.

This and other evidence in the book would easily justify a conclusion that the New Left and organized labour formed no coalition because they had almost nothing in common including beliefs, tactics, experiences, and goals. Levy strains a bit to find positive aspects of the relationship. He is also rather gentle in his criticism of the New Left, faulting it (in massive understatement) only for a "somewhat faulty analysis of the situation," (37) allowing that certain Socialist scholars had a "certain unrealistic view of their times." (126) He does acknowledge that their "stance insured that they would have little chance of forging lasting ties with labour in America." (126)

Levy also seems determined to exonerate the New Left from blame for what he calls the conservative backlash of the past twenty years. That subject, however, is beyond the evidence he has amassed. If Levy is arguing that cooperation between organized labour and the New Left was of consequential proportions even in the early 1960s, his evidence does not support that conclusion. The evidence presented does support his contention that the relationship was not solely antagonistic. At most, however, Levy's interesting book only chips a bit at the conclusions of the historians he criticizes.

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Marat Moore, *Women in the Mines: Stories of Life and Work* (New York: Twayne 1996).

SHORTLY AFTER Marat Moore won a discrimination suit against the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in May 1996, this book was released. The culmination of a 15-year-long sojourn by Moore, it is a compilation of interviews with 24 women whose lives and work are informed by, and inform, the mining of coal and life in coalfield communities across the United States and abroad.

It is one of a kind, in which coal miners and coalfield activists tell their stories, in their own voices, without the varnish (or interference) of academics or journalists. The voices presented here (culled from a total of 70) eventually become a chorus enlightened by a highly informative and well-documented introduction, followed by a burning afterword that demands that we credit the sacrifice of working-class women and open up every facet of society so that they may take the place that they have *earned*: front row center.

The stories presented lay out a pattern of the themes that thread their way through the book. Women in the coalfields are a tough, independent, defiant, loving lot. Just like the men and their children. They love their union, but are frustrated and disillusioned as a leadership that should know better turns its back on them, and even attacks them for their activism. So they reach out to women workers outside of the coalfields and in other nations. They form their own organization — the Coal Employment Project (CEP). They fight. They work hard, and at the bottom want nothing more than most workers want — a decent chance to earn enough at honest labour to raise their families. Such women are of many races. Most are heterosexual, some not. Most are mothers who want to pass on the meanings and traditions of their lives to their children. All want to protect their children from the suffering that they

know. Many follow in the footsteps of their fathers and grandfathers. Many have women role models. Some just find their own way. Gender relationships in the coal communities are complex. But as Joy Huitt notes, eventually a crew must become a single person in order to get the job done right. This is one of the greatest gifts of working-class life. Working as a crew, feeling as a single being, doing something collectively useful. And finally, that is what happens here, as these 24 stories become one, large, complex tapestry.

And something should also be said of the 25th story, that of Marat Moore, the woman who wove the fabric of this book. Her story is not written on the page, but in the work and sacrifice that put this book together. She, too, reaches for the stars.

Moore worked underground in a coal mine for a year and also worked as a journalist in the coalfields. Then she joined the staff at the UMWA as a writer/photographer during the early Trumka years. She won numerous awards for her work and eventually became an associate editor of the *UMW Journal*, the union's official publication. A self-described "outspoken woman," Moore did not sit well in the offices of the UMWA in Washington, DC. Nor did her activism in CEP, which she threw her energies into when she felt stifled as a labour bureaucrat. In January 1994, UMWA President Richard Trumka hired a new executive director — Brad Burton. Burton soon fired Moore, initially using an excuse of economic restructuring. (Trumka, who okayed Moore's dismissal, later became secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO on a "reform" slate. Burton remains his executive assistant).

Apparently, the two did not expect Moore to respond. Marat Moore sued the UMWA for sex discrimination. Her lawyers noted that a male permanent replacement, with lesser qualifications, had been selected to take Moore's job even before she was fired. They also proved that a

number of men who had been fired at the same time were let go for incompetence, a charge that could not be attached to Moore. The trial ran for five days.

After a one-hour deliberation, the jury slammed the UMWA with a \$450,000 damage award. The union has appealed the decision, but the short jury deliberation and severity of the judgment suggest that the UMWA leadership is wasting tens of thousands of dollars of members' money in an effort to whitewash an act that should never have taken place in a union headquarters — or any other kind of workplace.

However, recent cases at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Mitsubishi, Texaco, the Eveleth Taconite Mine in the Mesabi Iron Range and elsewhere show that sexism and racism run rampant in US workplaces in 1996. In every one of these cases, the owners, managers, federal and state governments, and high-ranking military officials were well aware of the formalized, systemic discrimination that is a way of life. Despite laws to the contrary, and in violation of basic human rights and decency, gender and race discrimination rule worklife in the United States.

Worse, in nearly every case where a trade union has been involved, union leaders and staff have ignored — or even participated in — systemic discriminatory behavior. Ultimately, systemic discrimination will change only when the structures and systems that govern worklife are redesigned to benefit workers' human and economic rights.

Until then, the chorus sung by these women from the mines reminds us to keep reaching for the stars, their strong hands grabbing us by the collars and shaking us, not allowing us to avert our eyes from the truth. That's what working-class women do.

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Roy J. Adams, *Industrial Relations Under Liberal Democracy: North America in Comparative Perspective* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press 1995).

ROY ADAMS DOES NOT like North America's system of industrial relations. He believes that its "adversarialism" weakens economic performance and, in practice, excludes well more than half the work force (that is, the unorganized) from "industrial citizenship." Adams would like to transform that uneconomic and undemocratic system by introducing many of the practices and institutions of European industrial relations. This is the underlying argument of his survey and comparative analysis of the relations of workers, bosses, and governments on the two sides of the Atlantic.

The book helpfully lifts the readers' horizons beyond the apparently immutable arrangements to control class conflict in North America and invites them to contemplate a different past and a potentially different future. Adams brings to this project a wealth of knowledge about the diverse ways in which labour-management relations are handled in European countries, and the strongest parts of the book are the central chapters on contemporary collective bargaining. His attempts to explain the striking contrasts he finds are less sure-footed, however.

Adams begins with three chapters that try to encapsulate the rise of capitalist wage labour and the divergent paths that were followed in Europe and America. In such an analysis, he might have considered the distinctive forms of capitalist development and class formation within these two continents. Instead, he relies heavily on the old institutional labour history of Commons, Taft, and others to focus narrowly on the emergence of particular labour movements between 1880 and 1920. Ignoring the wealth of new writing since the 1970s, he is therefore able to reduce the North American experience to an acceptance of "business unionism" and

the European to socialist unionism. Part of the problem with this characterization is empirical — in both cases it is overly simplistic and misleading. The notion of "American exceptionalism," in particular, has become a highly debatable concept in the burgeoning social history of the European and North American working classes. For example, Adams pays no attention to the compelling insights that David Montgomery has brought to our understanding of the American workers' movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and that suggest a much more complex picture than the phrase "business unionism" can convey. In particular, Montgomery, along with many other American and Canadian labour historians, has urged us to consider the serious challenges presented in the Great Upheaval of the 1880s and the workers' revolt at the end of World War I, which often parallel European developments.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, we are hard-pressed to know which "Europe" we are being presented with. Britain stays out of the picture most of the time, but here was surely a quite different case from Germany or Sweden, since British workers produced no strong socialist party in the late 19th century but did develop formalized collective-bargaining structures in several sectors by the 1870s and 1880s. Southern Europe also hovers uncomfortably at the edges of his picture. Too much gets unnecessarily homogenized in this discussion.

More important, however, is the analytical weakness of his argument. In explaining the historic differences, Adams gives greatest weight to what he calls "labor's strategic choice" in Europe and America. The vocabulary of "choice" minimizes deep controversy within the workers' movement (the right wing of labour on both continents often collaborated with government and business attacks on the left) and the level of resistance workers faced in working out strategic directions. He claims, for example, that the working class upsurge in the

1917-25 period simply "came to an end in 1920-21 as a result of a deep recession. Radical organizations lost their appeal, and many of them faded into history." (28) The disintegration of the IWW is treated in a similarly vague fashion. Adams rarely puts on centre stage the belligerent refusal of American (and Canadian) employers to concede any power to workers, formally or informally. He never brings into this analysis the different politics of production and distinctive workplace regimes that arose in these different national jurisdictions (why were Frederick Taylor and his new management theories apparently so much more popular in America?) He scarcely acknowledges the relentless level of overt repression — from brutal strikebreaking to persistent rooting out of union activists — that North American employers engaged in, often with the active support of the state, not simply the intervention of troops or police, or the active suppression of radicals, from the IWW to the Communist Party, but, probably even more important, the regular anti-labour rulings of the courts, which enshrined the individual contract of employment as the central framework of relations between workers and their bosses. Repression of radical options went on in Europe as well, especially during the fascist era from the 1920s to the 1940s and beyond in Spain and Portugal. The constraining effects of the Cold War on all these workers' movements is also ignored in this discussion. In short, the historical analysis in the book suffers from a failure to situate "choice" within the real constraints of class confrontation.

That weakness carries over into the prescriptive thrust of the book. Adams wants North American, especially US, employers and state officials to embrace some of the key features of the postwar industrial-relations institutions in Germany and Sweden (Japan slips in here as another attractive model, though its quite distinct history is not explored in the same way as the others). Yet not only does he

offer no hint of how that might happen in North America, beyond suggesting that "governments" would have to take action (is that a reasonable expectation from the administrations of Clinton or Chretien, let alone Ralph Klein or Mike Harris?); but also, as he hints at a few points, European industrial relations have actually been getting more "North American," in the sense that national bargaining and other features of the postwar framework are being dismantled. He offers no analysis of this trend, which would have taken him into the new belligerence of capitalist employers internationally in the 1980s and 1990s. He seems to be promoting a dying cause.

Many readers will find much to agree with in Adam's conclusion that American industrial relations disadvantage American workers. But many will also find that his effort to explain how they got into this mess and how they might get out of it lacks sufficient analytical depth to be convincing.

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Nancy L. Green, *Ready-to-Wear, Ready-to-Work: A Century of Industry and Immigrants in Paris and New York* (Durham: Duke University Press 1997).

NANCY GREEN has set herself an enormous task, the examination of a century of ready-made garment production in both Paris and New York. In this comparative economic history of two industries in different cultural settings, 7th avenue in New York and the Sentier in Paris, Green explores the different rhythms of economic and historical development. The comparison is "spatial, ethnic, and temporal." She claims her "poststructural structuralist" approach permits an interactive comparative method that offers a fresh analytical focus "by not only constructing the comparison and analysing the differences from the

historian's point of view but also examining the asymmetric visions about style and standardization perceived by the garment industrialists and analysts on both sides of the Atlantic." (9)

This is a complex study, frequently difficult to follow and the author's circuitous style of presentation is not for the casual reader. The first section, "Fashion as Industry," and the second, "The social consequence of Flexibility," are almost separate books and the author makes little attempt to integrate them. Section one is meant to explore the economic differences between the two centres, while section two focuses on the character of each labour force and explores the similarities of labour conditions in Paris and New York.

The first section documents the growth of the industry in Paris and New York from the late 19th century to the present. Green points out how variations in style and attitudes toward industrial development shape the economic differences between the two centres. Green asks, "why do Bermuda shorts look different in Paris and New York?" According to Green this seemingly simple question is actually quite complex: "A post-structural structuralism has to ask how a single garment, like a single industry, may vary from one side of the ocean to another. It means exploring and respecting the differences while understanding the similarities." (105) This problematic is the central focus in the first section of the book. Using a number of different variables — markets, labour movements, forms of labour legislation, product style and production process — Green compares the two industrial centres.

The argument culminates in chapter four. There, Green argues that the way clothing manufacturers and industrial analysts understood and constructed difference between the two centres was reflected in the different rhythms of economic development. "French garment discourse has thus set up a certain dichotomy between art and industry paralleled

by the difference between French and American industries." (111) In conceptualizing the competition between the garment manufacturing centres as a reflection of the reciprocal visions each had of the other, Green examines the literature of the past century for descriptions of the industry. French high fashion was seen by the French as a reflection of good taste in an age of mass production, while the standardization of clothing manufacture in the USA was seen by the Americans as "a defence of democracy" and a celebration of advances in capitalist production methods. The author explores how the cultural languages of production offer clues to understanding the position of the industry in the world market. She concludes, "Producing the large part for the domestic market, it is no wonder that American manufacturers have been more concerned with constructing a defensive definition of American style, while French clothiers have focused more on an offensive definition of an exportable French style." (117) These reciprocal visions were also reflected in the different rhythms of economic development and Green argues that the slower acceptance of mass produced clothing in Paris was not only cultural, it also protected the survival of *petite* and *moyenne* couturiers.

In my view these constructs of French and American ready-made production can not fully explain the differences between the two industries. Certainly the influences of wars, patent law, and fashion demands shaped the different economic responses in each centre. French fashion remained attached to small-scale hand-made production techniques longer than their American counterparts, but each centre also served a quite different market. Such differences between Paris and New York industry partially explain why Bermuda shorts are not the same in both centres. However, while Green then takes this comparative history beyond the industry and examines the role of social movements and social legislation in fur-

ther developing differences between the two centres, she does not examine the industry's links to the large mass buyers who determine production and pricing in many of the small contract shops. In a search for difference, Green points out that American style business unionism developed a strong institutional culture which facilitated the growth of standardized clothing. By contrast in France, the "fractured and rebellious" trade unions never achieved the same organizational impact. Green concludes: "these different outcomes show that (1) neither technology nor industrial development necessarily explain patterns of industrial relations, (2) nor do national explanations that ascribe small scale industrial characteristics to France alone." (124) Instead, Green finds the answer in the union's relationship to the political sphere.

In Green's account two factors explain the different paths of American and French garment unions: each union's relationship to the welfare state and their confrontations with Communism. The American state refused to intervene in the marketplace while in France, the unions saw the state as an important part of the regulatory mechanism. Green's brief discussion of the state's role in the economic history of the industry revisits the recent studies on legislative responses to homeworking in the USA and offers comparative information on the French response to homework. Green's complex and tangled argument shows that the two centres are more alike than they are different. The historical differences seem to fade in recent times as global restructuring in the garment industry moves to integrate all garment production centres into a common world capitalist system. The hallmark of this industry has always been low wages and the almost exclusive use of women and immigrant labour; it remains that today.

*Ready-to-Wear and Ready-to-Work* is the first book about the garment industry that employs a comparative approach. After describing developments on 7th Ave-

nue and the Sentier at great length, Green turns to "address the industrial comparison frontally to identify more clearly those elements of demand and supply, of union and state intervention which distinguish the two industries." (105) This approach draws the author into a complex explanation of the variations in the economic structure of each industry. But the account fails to explain why an industry that is of major importance to both industrialized countries continues to operate in a manner characteristic of a turn-of-the-century sweatshop. No matter where the industry is located it creates an international degree of exploitation that transcends both time and place. The same low wage and gender-specific schemes occur wherever and whenever the industry develops. Green's survey of the differences between Paris and New York does not offer any fresh theoretical insights into the underlying structural causes for this pattern. While her form of analysis allows the author to explore the minute movements in markets, growth patterns, union strength, and state legislation, the questions she poses concerning the variation in the industry's growth in Paris and New York — namely that central question concerning difference, that is, the appearance of those Bermuda shorts — seems to be misplaced, or at least not answered. In the search for variants between the two centres, Green ignores the central problematic in the clothing industry: Why are women and new immigrants the central workforce in all garment centres? It makes little difference whether they work in Paris, New York, Mexico, the Philippines, or southern Ontario, and it matters not whether it is 1920 or 1990: the exploitation in these sectors of the labour force persists over time and space. The issue is that Green's poststructuralist analysis does little to reveal where power actually lies in the productive system. Her account of the growth of the two centres becomes an exercise of detailed description lacking appropriate terminology.

The text does not adequately reflect the author's extensive research and previous, related work. She examined a wealth of secondary source material, including writings on industry by social scientists, labour representatives, government researchers, and promotional materials. In addition, Green made extensive use of archival materials on both sides of the Atlantic and conducted interviews with key informants. Yet, the book remains a series of loosely connected essays on the garment industry because of the author's attempt to link her evidence to a poststructuralist analysis. For instance, Green's discussion on how the changing relationship between arts and industry is reflected in the language of the fashion industry, is more successfully presented in her essay "Art and Industry: The Language of Modernization in the Production of Fashion." (*French Historical Review*, 18, 3 [Spring 1994]) There Green explained how the rise of ready-made goods challenged the notion of *haute couture*. The economic problem of standardization became a cultural issue as the debate over the superiority of French fashion over American productivity raised issues about the role of fashion in industrial development. Green revisits these same themes in the book, but they are not well articulated and are frequently lost in the obscurantism of her "poststructuralist structuralism."

The second part of the book looks at the social consequences of flexible specialization where "seasonality is the temporal expression of flexibility" and "subcontracting is its spatial manifestation." (144) Here Green examines the long-term outcomes of seasonality and contracting on ethnic and gender relations in the industry. She argues that "both structure and its representation can account for the specific labor force drawn to the sewing machines." (160) The reality of the industry's poor economic conditions and its representation as a sweatshop trade, positioned the industry in the secondary la-

bour market and thereby made it attractive to women and immigrants.

The growth of contracting and subcontracting, particularly pronounced in women's ready wear where constant style changes determine the length of production runs, generates instability in the industry. This economic uncertainty can not be understood until one explores the role of retailers in shaping and controlling product demand, an element of the story left unexplored by Green. The precarious nature of garment making is fuelled by larger retailers. In a search for ever cheaper garments the retailers dictate to manufacturers the price they will pay and this pushes manufacturers to search for an ever cheaper labour source. As a result, the industry has always been an immigrant industry and, while the faces of the immigrants have changed over the past 100 years, their labour marks the trade in all countries where the industry prevailed. These features of the trade make it an interesting context within which to examine the interplay of gender and ethnicity, but one must look both inward and outward to fully understand the exploitative character of the trade's use of women and immigrant labour.

Green examines the immigrant and gendered character of the labour force working in this dispersed assembly line of homework, workshop, and factory by questioning the categorizations of "women" and "immigrants." She asked, "Who caused the sweatshops anyway? Immigrants and women, or industrial flexibility? Labor supply or industrial demand?" (161) Green finds the answer in the character of the low skilled nature of the work and tries to show how skill is "imported and transformed and transferred" through generations of immigrant waves. She maintains these shifts in definitions of skill remained fluid over time. The outcome of de-skilling is constantly shifting definitions of men's work and women's work and according to Green this fact brings into question "the very notions of 'women's work' and 'immi-

grant labor'." She observes that skill has been redefined as speed with sewing machines given the designation of sewing machines as women's technology and that male garment workers have become largely a figment of the past. Yet, according to Green, "the history of the industry, with its mixed industrial form of concentrated as well as dispersed labor, is perhaps the best example of how 'women's work' could at different times be homework, homework, factory work and 'men's work.'" (170) In my view, though gender roles and immigrant labour are never fixed in time and space, they certainly were persistent. Tasks may be redefined, the ethnic origin of the immigrant at the machine may change, but one fact remains, women and immigrants continue to do the work at extremely low wages. Green's poststructural analysis describes how the jobs in the industry change, how the attributes of the worker doing the job are re-defined, even carried over to the next generation that takes their place in front of the machine, but the exploitative character of the work is ignored.

The author examines immigrant labour in much the same manner. She concludes, "Women, immigrants and immigrant women have thus been flexible categories representing ... flexibility in the labor force. Micro labor markets and internal hierarchies differentiate workers at different times, yet at a more general level, women and immigrants function similarly as an inexpensive yet expansive labor source." (187) Drawing on the work of Roger Waldinger and Mirjana Morokvasic, the author moves to integrate her argument on several levels through shifting her focus from labour supply to industrial demand, to the interface between the inherent characteristics of women and immigrant labourers and the structural demand for flexibility in the industry. As Green sets out "the way in which ethnic groups perceive themselves and define their boundaries against others within a common industrial setting" (292), she argues that structural features



of the trade (flexibility and contracting), rather than cultural characteristics of the specific immigrant community, explain the continued presence of immigrant labour as the chief source of labour supply and further they account for the specific character of inter group dynamics.

The book is at its best during this discussion. Green concludes that in the transitory character of the ethnic labour force, the phenomenon of ethnic networks is an "ever-renewed but ever-temporary phenomenon" (288) as immigrant children rarely join their parents in the industry and new generations of immigrants come into the shops to replace the last wave of workers. Green's analysis provides some interesting findings. First, similar cultural representations are applied from one group to the next; second, at any given time the garment industry offers tales ranging from exploited immigrants to remarkable success stories, and contradictions abound in the characteristics attributed to any one group; third, the reliance on national characteristics can impose differential causality on a single phenomenon. Finally, these contradictions emerge from the immigrant community themselves. Gender-defined work is transformed over time and is altered in different places, immigrant groups come and go, yet, the exploitative nature of the work persists through time and place. Green's complex argument explores the variations in these occurrences. Such insights, however, do not make the book a success and the analytical framework does more to obscure her observations than it does to reveal the underlying structural features of the ready-to-wear industry. The question still remains, why does the exploitation of women and new immigrants continue to shape the industry, irrespective of time and location? Green's fancy intellectual footwork never quite comes to terms with this question.

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Donald Woodward, *Men at work: Labourers and building craftsmen in the towns of northern England, 1450-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995).

WHEN BERTHOLT BRECHT'S reading workman contemplated his predecessors in the mysteries of the manual arts, he gave them souls and personalities as well as strong arms and broad backs. That is not the case with this book; it is not that Woodward has not tried to meet Brecht's workman's expectations, but rather that the sources are frustratingly silent. This book, then, is as much about what we can know about previous generations of ordinary workers who did ordinary jobs in ordinary times as it is about the very real limits of that knowledge. Despite his hardest efforts, Woodward's *Men at Work* end up as the abstractions so beloved of neo-classical economic historians — thus we learn a lot that is new and interesting about wage rates and standards of living in addition to the social historian's concerns with life cycle and conditions of work, although this largely relates to wages again — but not the human sensibilities envisioned by the Brechtian worker.

In the northern towns studied by Woodward, labourers were usually hired as helpers or assistants and, as such, were expected to be an extra set of hands and legs for their boss who was usually their employer as well as their master. Yet even at the end of his study these labourers and journeymen remain for Woodward a "shadowy group" who lived in a "twilight world" as part of a "floating population" of extra hands and legs — something like the *instrumentum vocale* of the ancient world. These speaking tools "remained dependent on their employers and, although the exact nature of that dependency cannot be determined, a master's powers were much greater than even the harshest employer could dream of today." (66) For labourers, social mobility was not part of the deal. The northern building

labourers seem to have resembled the journeymen of pre-revolutionary France studied by Michael Sonenscher rather more than the 16th-century London masters and apprentices described by Steve Rappaport.

Among these building labourers there was an oversupply of labour which led some to "grub a living of dubious legality by working in an unregulated way on the fringe of the city." (237) It is crucial to bear in mind that the towns of northern England were really not much more than villages — most had fewer than 10,000 inhabitants and some had less than 2,500. These proletarians, then, were always able to breathe country air; and, in an ironic twist, it was country air that made them free. Most labourers retained a "toehold" on the land over and above the small gardens that went with their cottages; so, for example, among sixty carpenters living in Elizabethan Lincolnshire, at the end of the 16th century, those who were not completely indigent and had their goods subjected to a post-mortem probate inventory, were all involved in agriculture. Another sample of twenty-four urban craftsmen showed that two-thirds also kept up some involvement with the land. In all likelihood, the remaining one-third were less well off. In this perspective, then, the processes of proletarianization studied here bring to mind Charles Tilly's observation that lifetime moves into the proletariat compromised the dominant social process so that a good deal of proletarian action consisted of efforts to retain or recapture individual control over the means of production.

Woodward's silence about the labour process means that the cornerstone of the building workers self-definition — skill — is not given the prominence it deserves. We learn, of course, that labourers were distinguished from craftsmen for juridical reasons as well as for social and economic ones, but we never are told about how these different statuses were played out in the labour process itself. I

was very disappointed to still remain uninformed about how apprentices developed skill — of course, we all know the usual story that a youthful caterpillar was apprenticed at twelve, then for a couple of years did this, followed by a few years of doing that, with the result that by the time he was twenty-one he emerged his chrysalis as a mechanic butterfly. But how, exactly, did such a boy learn to saw a straight line, to cut a dovetail, to read the grain and to plane a board smooth and flat, or to brick a chimney? And, even more to this point, how and why did some boys learn to do this better than others?

Looking at this book's index — just like others of its kind in labour and economic history — provides information about apprenticeship such as "benefit to master, 60"; "fees for taking, 60"; "length of terms of, 55-6"; "marriage of, 59"; "place of origin of, 53-4"; "premiums of, 60"; "probation of, 56-7"; "restriction of numbers of, 62-3"; "status of fathers of, 54-5"; "termination of terms of, 57-8"; "training of, 57"; "turnover of, 58-9"; "wages of, 60-1"; and "work of, 61-2." At first glance at least two of these notations — "training of, 57" and "work of, 61-2" — seem promising. But the first mostly deals with moral instruction, not technical training, that was concerned to teach the apprentice his place "in the fear of God," while the second refers to the rates at which apprentices were paid rather than the work they were doing. Yet, surely, the acquisition and ownership of skill was the most important badge of respectability for the craftsman and the primary way in which he separated himself from the proles around him.

Or, I wonder, am I being anachronistic in expecting a 19th-century proletarian's vision of the worker's property in skill to be identifiable among the craftsmen of this earlier period. Perhaps, for most of the masters studied by Woodward, the primary way in which they differentiated themselves from their apprentices, labourers, and journeymen was by their superior position in the great chain

of subordination. Master craftsmen were usually married household heads and in the early modern world in which some patriarchs governed other men as well as all women and children this was perhaps the crucial divide and not the later proletarians' way of defining themselves in relation to those above and below them in the world of work. Putting Woodward's book down did not leave me with a sense of closure on this subject; indeed, if anything, it heightened my consciousness of my ignorance and that, to paraphrase Doctor Johnson, is the good of learning.

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Francoise Barret-Ducrocq, *Love in the Time of Victoria: Sexuality and Desire Among Working-Class Men and Women in Nineteenth-Century London*, trans. John Howe (New York: Penguin Books 1991).

TARGETING A POPULAR, preconceived notion of Victorian working-class morality, Francoise Barret-Ducrocq's *Love in the Time of Victoria* takes a socio-historical approach to exacting an accurate image of working-class morality. Examining the details of the documents in an archive of the Thomas Coram Foundling Hospital, a collection of more than one thousand files consisting of applications from women seeking help due to unplanned and unfortunate pregnancies, Ducrocq attempts to contradict the image of the 19th-century working class as "barbarians" emerging from "festered dens of filth, crime and debauchery." (6) Ducrocq insists that the files of the Foundling Hospital present a clear and altogether different image from that of convention. By providing a substantial amount of detail from the files, and by corroborating evidence from newspapers, journals, and contemporary writings, among other pertinent primary and secondary sources, Ducrocq maintains that

"[what] differs from the conventional picture is the motivation and logic of the transgressions described, the evident perception of a specific moral code." (4)

The first thirty-five pages, a section under the heading of "Labouring Classes, Depraved Classes," provides a glimpse at the 19th-century's view of the working class. The observations recorded as evidence supporting the Victorian view of the working class were penned by social analysts and philanthropists, namely people from the upper class looking in on the labouring class. Ducrocq points out the popularity and general acceptance of the dominant Victorian view by citing examples of the attitude in popular literature, songs, and ballads. In effect, the first section of the book provides readers with a summary of preconceived notions of the working class. Ducrocq, in an attempt to emphasize the strength of her evidence, notes how Victorian contemporaries detected immorality by watching people in the street, by analysing places of amusement, by scrutinizing living conditions, and by interpreting behavioural characteristics as connoting sexual licence. Ducrocq focuses on the source of evidence as the weakness in the Victorian perspective. Rather than presenting unbiased or objective views, if that is at all possible, Ducrocq argues that because of the "dominant system of values" held by the observers, it was "impossible to discern anything other than a universe ruled by intemperance and disorder." (33) The lower classes posed a threat to the observers and provoked a fear which made such descriptions not only possible, but highly necessary.

Ducrocq's strength in approaching her subject is built on the significant shift in perspective of those recording the evidence. Instead of looking in on the labouring class, the "depraved class," Ducrocq's main source of evidence, the Foundling Hospital files, allows her to look out from within her subject. The Foundling Hospital's files are essentially records directly from the source, unbi-

ased by the dominant value system of the Victorian era. Unlike the 19th-century's sculpted observations, the documents from the Foundling Hospital are direct statements laced with the emotions of young women in turmoil. Thus, the second of three main divisions in the book is entitled "The Foundling Hospital" and is presented in direct apposition to the conclusions of the 19th-century's commentators'.

Finally, the third division of Ducrocq's text, entitled "Love and Marriage," contains the crux of her argument. It is in this final section that Ducrocq draws conclusions by interpreting the details of the files. For instance, a hypothesis is put forth in an attempt to account for a seemingly low value placed on virginity by young women of the 19th century. (64) Ducrocq extracts from the files a detail which accounts for the possibility of young women being so complaisant: the prospect of a secure life through marriage. As well, Ducrocq sharpens her argument by referring to letters from family members and friends of the applicants which stated their ignorance of the applicants' sexual experiences. Ducrocq points out that the protested ignorance of the family and friends are protests emerging from their knowledge of a specific moral code, or more accurately, their failure to enforce it.

While the documents are specifically intended to find accommodations for children of unwed mothers, Ducrocq concentrates not so much on the plea for help as she does on the description of the events and conditions young women find themselves in. From the description of the criminal act (for example, pre- or extra-marital sexual intercourse), Ducrocq extracts the attitudes and even the personalities of some of the applicants. Since her intention is to prove the working class was aware of a moral code, Ducrocq suggests that for an applicant to detail her hesitation, when complying with the sexual advances, clearly evidences her knowledge of the responsibility associ-

ated with the acts. By isolating records of protests, stories of being tricked, trapped, or coerced, and records of promised marriages, Ducrocq shows that even if these allegations are false, they obviously suggest an awareness of moral sensibility. Hence, she successfully contradicts the working-class image of being vile barbarians and victims of an uncontrollable, predetermined fate.

Since the title of the book suggests Ducrocq will be talking about love among the London working-class of the 19th century, some commentary is needed on the subject. Ducrocq admits that when talking about specific emotions she must use "the unreliable channel of extrapolation." (113) In other words, she must interpret certain words, phrases, and correspondence, as endearments and expressions of love without having concrete proof of an actual loving relationship. However, Ducrocq does not have to twist the evidence to make loving relationships appear genuine — some of the documents reek of sentimentality. Furthermore, the obvious expressions of love from both the applicants and the applicants' lovers help reinforce Ducrocq's idea of an accepted morality. The need for lovers to justify themselves and their actions assumes a knowledge of responsibility and an acceptance of a social decorum.

Of course, the frankness of some of the applicants' reports cannot suggest even a remote sense of romance but do support the idea of individual weaknesses and the immoral intentions of some young ladies. It is in those letters that the stereotype of the victim is partially erased. Because Ducrocq does not ignore the elements of the files which do not fit her hypothesis, readers feel confident that Ducrocq is not a narrow-minded historian who is trimming evidence to fit a perfectly tailored conclusion. For instance, the section dealing with the cases in which there were no promises of marriage, clearly do not support her thesis. However, even these documents have something to offer the passionate histo-

rian; they often reveal details concerning relationships between the classes and the position of the unmarried woman in Victorian working-class society. While Ducrocq hints at the Victorian era epitomizing the ideas on which feminists build their attacks, she is clear in her opinion of the stagnation created by dwelling on the obviously limited position of women in the 19th century. (183-4)

*Love in the Time of Victoria* presents a fuller, or at least a more realistic, image of working-class morality than what was traditionally accepted as truth by the Victorian middle and upper classes. The cover of John Howe's translation of Ducrocq's text is a reproduction of Ford Maddox Brown's *Work*. The painting, created in the mid-19th century, gives us an example of what work was probably like for the working classes: strenuous, hot, crowded, noisy — in short, uncomfortably laborious. Brown's painting seems to echo the opinions of the Victorian observers with its loudness, its boldness, suggesting physical intimacy in a cramped and congested atmosphere. However, within the covers of the book, Ducrocq does not limit her perception of the working classes by exclusively considering their "work"; Ducrocq exposes the "lives" of the working classes, lives with defined moralities. In her Epilogue, Ducrocq says that upon examining the evidence, one "discovers an astonishing and contradictory history, a history made up of contrasts: of impudence and morality, cynicism and tenderness, cruelty and generosity; a history, in short, amazingly like real life." (183) It is the recognition of the possibility of existing dichotomies and the allowance for deviation from "black and white" explanations which makes Ducrocq's argument strong and convincing argument.

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Thomas F. Reed and Karen Brandow, *The Sky Never Changes: Testimonies from the Guatemalan Labor Movement* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 1996).

ON 29 DECEMBER 1996, a peace accord that is supposed to be "firm and lasting" was signed in Guatemala, formally ending one of Latin America's longest and most brutal civil wars. Armed confrontation between government security forces and guerrilla insurgents began in the 1960s, lulled somewhat in the 1970s, and reached unprecedented levels in the 1980s. Numerical indicators, by any standards, are chilling: some 150,000 killed, 35,000 to 40,000 "disappeared" (the highest number in all Latin America), 75,000 widowed, 125,000 orphaned, and a million or so people (one in eight of the population when the fighting was at its peak) internally displaced. In human terms, however, the immense costs of civil war in Guatemala, and the vicious social and economic inequalities that are the root cause of it, lie beyond the cold reach of statistics. To the credit of Thomas F. Reed and Karen Brandow, it is in human terms that *The Sky Never Changes* is poignantly cast, offering the reader a series of moving, often harrowing, accounts of how the lives of ten individuals associated with the labour movement were affected by the events and circumstances surrounding more than three decades of state terror.

In a crisp, succinct introduction, Reed and Brandow situate the labour movement in the overall scheme of things, from its beginnings in the 1920s "among craft-people and railroad, banana, and port workers" through its repression during the strong-arm presidency of General Jorge Ubico (1930-1944) to its flourishing under the democratically elected governments of Juan José Arévalo and Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán between 1944 and 1954. Advances made under Arévalo and Arbenz involved the establishment of "an eight-hour workday, minimum wages, regulation of child and women's labour,

paid vacations, the right to organize, collective bargaining and strike power, labour courts for settling disputes, and a national social security system." Some ten per cent of the work-force were then registered in over five hundred government approved unions, "a figure that exceeds the number of active unions today," (2)

President Arbenz championed an agrarian reform program that, among other initiatives, expropriated unused property belonging to the United Fruit Company. In return, United Fruit was offered the \$1.2 million its own tax records declared the land in question to be worth, not the \$16 million the Boston-based operation demanded. Communist paranoia and Cold War politics in the United States soon had their way. A coup backed by, and to a considerable degree funded by, the Central Intelligence Agency saw Arbenz removed from power. In the wake of the coup "all recognized union were disbanded, leaders were jailed and executed, and peasant organizing was outlawed." By 1961, seven years after the pivotal episode from which, as a modern nation, Guatemala has yet to recover, "only fifty unions were registered," less than one-tenth the number that existed during the "ten years of Guatemalan spring." It is in the context of this repressive, interventionist legacy, thirty-six long years of war later, that the testimonies superbly voiced in print by Reed and Brandow must be heard. (2-3)

"Violence against the labor movement is a permanent issue," Angel states plainly, "and one lives with repression." (40) Violence and repression inevitably create a climate of fear, fear not just that involvement in the labour movement might bring harm to oneself but that it could also spell danger for others—friends, relatives, and especially close family members, mothers and fathers, wives and husbands, daughters and sons. A striking feature of all ten testimonies is the extent to which fear and apprehension make "normal" family life impossible, for

"terrorism is the main tool used by the oppressors," as Angel puts it. (45) Reginaldo Paredes, formerly a worker in a car battery factory, tells of constant quarrels at home with his wife, who was always dead set against his union activities. He laments: "She said to me, 'You are getting involved in problems, and people who get involved in those problems get kidnapped and killed! They do bad things to them!' I told her I was doing it for our children. Although I wouldn't reap the benefit of my actions, the children would reap the benefit of our struggle. But my wife said that if I were really doing it for the children, it would be better *not* to be active in the movement." (21)

Paredes felt alienated because he could no longer "talk to anyone in my family, not with my father, or my mother, or with my wife." His feelings are echoed by Rodolfo Robles, who believes that "99 percent of the people who have worked at the leadership level never communicate to their family what they are doing because, logically, the family is going to say, 'No, don't get involved in that because they're going to kill you. They have killed so many.'" Robles goes so far as to claim that union involvement "requires that you act in a clandestine way with regard to your family." (99)

Other people interviewed by Reed and Brandow, including Ernesto and Norma, had the quite opposite experience, for they make it clear that, without the support of their families, the predicaments they faced would have been impossible to deal with. Norma's is a particularly compelling testimony. Her husband was assassinated because he sought to expose corruption in the union ranks he belonged to, which had been penetrated and subsequently manipulated by "people who really were agents of management." (157) Norma responded to her husband's murder, and the need to provide for her children, not only taking a job in the same company for which her husband worked but also by getting involved in union activities herself.

One of the most piercing testimonies comes from Clara. Her husband was among the twenty-seven union leaders abducted on 21 June 1980 from the *Central Nacional de Trabajadores*, the National Workers' Headquarters in the capital city, which Reed and Brandow inform us was "the largest mass disappearance in Guatemalan history." The case has never been investigated and none of the twenty-seven has ever "reappeared," alive or dead. Clara recalls: "It was a Saturday, and all our relatives were waiting for him at my mother's house. He had told me, 'Go to your mother's. I'm coming home early. I'll be there around five o'clock. The meeting will be about two hours long.'

But he didn't come to my mother's house. Five o'clock passed, and he didn't come. 'Perhaps there was some delay,' I thought. At that moment I didn't foresee what was happening.

However, on the six o'clock news they said that the CNT had been broken into by government security forces. It felt alright even then, because if the security forces had detained them, then the next day, or on Monday, when the relatives arrived at the detention center, the unionists would be let go.

That was not the case. We went on Monday to the CNT office, all the relatives, and we saw a scene of terror there. Everything was chaotic. Chairs had been thrown around, as if used in self-defense. Who knew what had happened? There were pools of blood ..." (50, 54)

Clara's search for her missing husband took her to detention centres, army barracks, hospital morgues, and sites of massacres all over Guatemala. She walked around "with cotton and alcohol," for "it was nearly impossible to be there because of the small making us sick, the stench of dead bodies." (60) Once, accompanied by her mother, Clara thought she recognized the body of her husband, but her mother said, "No, it's not him. His hair wasn't so curly. Look, this body has curlier hair; control yourself!" Eventually

Clara's mother counselled: "'I think you should stop looking for your husband, because you are doing harm to yourself. Resign yourself to it. I am sure that they killed him, but what can you do? The only thing we can do is to pray for him, because that is what's best. If they are alive, our prayers will reach them: and if they are dead, the same.' My mother said, 'Let's not find out anymore,' because she saw what was happening to me."

For fear of reprisal, five of the people interviewed by Reed and Brandow requested anonymity, Clara among them, hence the decision to attribute these testimonies to a single, one supposes fictional name. Another five testimonies are presented by individuals who prefer "to be publicly identified" and whose names, as chapter titles, appear in full. (xii) Of the latter, perhaps the most inspiring testimony belongs to Rodolfo Robles, who led a successful, now celebrated occupation of the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Guatemala City between February 1984 and March 1985 in protest of an illegal closure. Robles reflects: "Hope never dies. And as long as there is hope, there are going to be objectives to struggle for. In the worker's movement, they say as long as people are subjected to this level of injustice there will be only one option: to challenge the oppression, to change the structure completely so that people develop themselves and live in a real democracy. Such a democracy doesn't exist for us. What we have now isn't a popular democracy.

So we have to maintain hope to live, not only to live but to live *well*. To live just for the sake of living doesn't make sense." (182)

*The Sky Never Changes* has much to commend it and can be profitably read by several different constituencies. Reed and Brandow are to be congratulated for piecing together, with flair and sensitivity, an engaging narrative that not only affords nuanced insight into the lives of people caught up in the Guatemalan labour movement but also serves, methodologi-

cally and textually, as a model endeavour in the often elusive art of creative oral history.

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Philip McMichael, *Development and Social Change, A Global Perspective* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press 1996).

THE LITERATURE on globalization has grown enormously in the last several years, but not a lot of it is easily accessible in style or content to the university student. This book by Philip McMichael was written to be used as a text for university teaching; it is uncommonly rich in illustration, comprehensive in its reach, and eminently readable.

The book is framed by the idea of the "development project" and its transformation into the "globalization project." Beginning in the post-World War II era, McMichael traces economic development within the nation-state and its emergence into the present supra-national economy. The multi-dimensional picture that he draws happily takes the text out of the traditional restrictions of the disciplines and makes an interdisciplinary approach an important strength of the book.

In the first chapter, McMichael outlines in general terms the "rise of the development project" in the period from the 1940s to the 1970s, which he described as the spread of capitalism in the form of national economic growth. Not only does national capitalism consolidate itself in the industrial nations, but also it encourages postwar decolonization, and thereby lays the foundation for global restructuring in this period.

This same subject is addressed more specifically in the second chapter, where the author examines the role of Marshall Aid, the Bretton Woods System, and GATT in the emergence of the "development project." His description of the "re-

making of the international division of labor" is not dissimilar from what has been said elsewhere many times, but the strength of this chapter lies in the author's insightful and significant work on the growth of the "international food regime." The construction of global food interdependency, centred on US agriculture production and technology, reveals a side to postwar economic development that is often overlooked.

The next two chapters describe how the global system of production grew out of "national programs of economic development." If Chapter 3 outlines the broad shape of the disintegrating national and the emerging global system, Chapter 4 details the economic structure and mechanisms of a transnational political economy. The author's focus, however, is more or less restricted to the financial side of global subordination to transnational corporations. The rise of global banking, the so-called "debt regime," and the consequent "structural adjustment programs" are all effectively described as the underpinnings of the global system.

Chapters 5 and 6 define the rise and structure and effects of the "globalization project" respectively. This "project" is defined principally by the shift from public policy to corporate management, by the implementation of "global market rules" by the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO, by the concentration of market and financial power in the transnational corporations and banks. The effects include the destruction of traditional ways of life, urbanization, structural unemployment and increased poverty, the "informalization" of the economy, and a growing crisis in political legitimacy everywhere.

The next chapter takes up the question of the "social responses to globalization" and it covers a range of topics from religious fundamentalism, to environmentalism, to the "new social movements," to feminism, to "cosmopolitan localism" as typified by the Chiapas movement.



This notion of "cosmopolitan localism" is carried over into the final chapter entitled, "Whither Development?" Here McMichael reviews the present state of global affairs and points to the new questioning of "the idea of the development project" in light of what it has meant to the world. Local participation and empowerment in local communities, the promise embodied in the Chiapas revolt, is the response that he sees as possessing "some answers" to the present dilemmas.

This good and comprehensive description of the roots and rise of the post-war global political economy is replete with detailed, well-documented, examples and it is written with clarity and purpose. Although the ideas, arguments and breadth of the material outweigh the problems, the book is not without its shortcomings. Principal amongst these is the fact that the book remains on the level of description and does not attempt to give an explanation of the expansion of the national to the global economy and the social and political consequences. The reason the author appears unable to leave this level is most likely the choice of organizational categories, namely, the "development project" and the "global project." They are self-limiting concepts in that they are purely descriptive; they contain no explanatory mechanisms. As a consequence, the reader is left without a sense of unifying argument in the book and with no idea of what driving force lay behind the national consolidation and international expansion of "economic development." The limited focus on the transnational corporation simply does not suffice as explanation.

Had McMichael placed more emphasis on the mode of production and its changes from the prewar to the postwar era and in the 1970s, he would have been able to provide a rationale for the developments that he so well describes. But discussion of advanced Fordism and then the computer technology that created the foundation for these changes is very much undeveloped. As a university text, how-

ever, the value of the book overshadows this shortcoming with its rich illustrative material and comprehensive survey of a complex and dramatic period of changes that we are still experiencing.

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M.P. Cowen and R.W. Shenton, *Doctrines of Development* (London and New York: Routledge 1996).

IN A LATE-20TH century conjuncture in which the theory and practice of development has proved increasingly illusory, it is timely that a book such as *Doctrines of Development* should come along and put some perspective on the matter. The perspective is historical, and traces the roots of development, as a goal, to the period of the birth pangs of the English factory system. This was a time when development was understood, and institutionalized as state practice, to remedy the violence of the market, and "progress." Indeed the value of this study is the reconstruction of development ideals as articulated by philosophers and social scientists from Malthus, J.S. Mill, and Comte through to Schumpeter, Keynes, and Sen, and as pursued in Britain, through Australia and Canada, to Kenya. The point of this story is to correct a mistaken assumption that the development enterprise was established in the mid-20th century decolonization era, addressing the Third World alone. And the moral of the story is to caution promoters of the "alternative development" movement, such as Banuri and Marglin, against seeking to recover an abstracted or ideal, past.

The authors argue that just as most purveyors of development (as absolute ideal and practice) abstract their conception from its historical origins in ameliorating the violence of primitive accumulation (separation of producers from the means of production and subsistence), so alternative conceptions abstract it by try-

ing to restore what capitalist development inevitably corrupts, namely pre-capitalist culture and community. The fallacy of the former position is to forget the normative political economy of state-centric development initiatives in response to the historical processes of capitalism. The fallacy of the latter, "malcontents," position is that empowering non-European communities to pursue their own "development" condemns them to repeat the original, European development problem, as the authors put it: "... of how to contain the chaos of progress ... within the confines of a traditional social order." (456) Since primitive accumulation is a continuous process, there is no authentic, or traditional social order to frame the alternative. It can only be framed in development doctrine terms, that is in terms of limiting the destructive consequences of progress. In short, the development intention derives from the development process itself, offering "... a truly corrupted vision of the future." (476)

This perspective is both the strength and a shortcoming of this account. The authors' account of the historical, and logical, straitjacket of developmentalism is a powerful epistemological device to emphasize the relativism of development knowledge. Capitalist development informs developmentalism, to be sure. The authors, however, appear to be unable to recover the entrance to the ideological maze themselves. Arguably, the global elaboration of an institutionalized development project, via decolonization, followed Marx's maxim that historical tragedies recur as farce, insofar as the social content of developmentalism disappeared from view with the economic fetishism of the development establishment. And in pursuing development alternatives, the so-called "development malcontents" may be trapped in the logic of an *episteme* rooted in European history, but that does not necessitate paralysis. There are other histories, and they are relational histories. There are other *epistemes*, and they are relational *episte-*

*mes*. Alternatives emerge dialectically: precisely through resistance to the institutions, practices and culture of (state-centric) developmentalism — such as we have seen in the culture of the Zapatista rebellion, whose impact derives from its ability to situate its struggle in world-historical terms rather than simply in a romantic appeal to pre-capitalist Mayan community. However immature, these alternatives cannot simply be reduced to productivist (developmentalist initiatives, where they seek to subordinate markets to sustainable social and ecological arrangements. The recognition that development is an ideology that threatens planetary survival is already in the air, and draws its power from the marginalizing dynamic of an increasingly predatory capitalism.

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Ronald Aronson, *After Marxism* (New York: The Guilford Press 1995).

RONALD ARONSON, with his latest book, *After Marxism*, joins the ranks of those who have announced the death of Marxism. It is an important book for the left to consider because it retains a radical perspective, raises a number of significant issues, and also because it reflects a widespread demoralization among radicals. It is a rambling discourse through many (but not all) intellectual tendencies of the left and presumably parallels Aronson's own journey through Marxism.

Aronson, a professor of Humanities at Wayne State University in Detroit, came into Marxism through the New Left in the 1960s, by way of Herbert Marcuse and Jean-Paul Sartre. That he calls the New Left Marxist indicates one of the problems of the book. Stalinists, social democrats, Scandinavian welfare states, peasant nationalists, independence fighters of various kinds — all come under the Marxist label. I am not suggesting that we

adopt the sectarian attitude that there is only one true Marxism and everything else is suspect. But I am suggesting that accepting self-definition uncritically is not enough. And the inclusion of people and groups who do not particularly call themselves Marxist makes for a problem. Aronson's Marxism tends to be only vaguely recognizable.

The death of Marxism is dated from the destruction of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union, although Aronson indicates that he considered both Soviet Communism and the Berlin Wall barriers to the development of socialism. The reason? These events did not release new energies but resulted in a widespread silence on the left. The failure of Marxism, according to Aronson, derives from the failure of the proletariat to challenge capitalism because of its growing enrichment and conservatism. "Marxism no longer exists in the peculiar way it itself always claimed as decisive: not as theory or idea or analysis, but as *project of transformation from capitalism to socialism*." (41-2, emphasis in original) What is the "it" which made such a claim? Like much else in the book, it remains a vague abstraction and no attempt is made to document or justify it. But by calling Marxism a "project," Aronson is dealing, not with theories and analyses, but with movements — any and all movements — and measures them with one yardstick, success. "But if that movement, the project of change, no longer exists in practice, then Marxism no longer exists. Marxian theory that is 'just' a theory is not Marxist, but something else." (42)

The idea that Marxism is a project that can be measured by successes needs to be confronted because it has acceptance far beyond Aronson's own viewpoint. And it needs to be contrasted to a real, historical Marxism, beginning with the nature of the proletariat in Marxian theory and in real life. Aronson's rejection of the proletariat as a force for social change is especially interesting because there is no sign that he ever accepted the

working class as a revolutionary force. He quotes an article of his from *New Left Review* in 1967 in which he is saying virtually the same thing about workers that he is saying now. (20) In other words, in the period that he became a Marxist, he adopted a Marxism without the proletariat. And now he complains that the proletariat has provided no successes. This is a misunderstanding of Marx that is deep-rooted. It also ignores that in the period of the heyday of the New Left more war production bound for Vietnam was interfered with by American workers going about their class business than all of the anti-war demonstrations put together.

Aronson charges that Marx's "prediction" of proletarian "immiseration" has not been born out by events. But the mistake is Aronson's. Marx wrote a whole pamphlet, *Value, Price and Profit*, to prove the opposite. It was directed against a Citizen Weston who claimed that there was no point in fighting for higher wages because there was a sort of iron law of wages which kept workers' income at the poverty level. Marx destroyed that argument and pointed out that workers had won improvements in their standard of living. In the powerful paragraph which forms a kind of climax to Volume 1 of *Capital*, Marx wrote, "It follows therefore that in proportion as capital accumulates, the lot of the labourer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse." It was exploitation and alienation that would move the working class, not absolute poverty. There is much more in Marx, but we need to turn to how Marxists historically viewed working-class revolution.

The first proletarian revolution was the Paris Commune of 1871. By most standards it did not accomplish very much and it did not last very long. But Marx made it the basis for his view of the workers' state. It was over a generation and a half until the next revolutionary explosion when Russian workers created soviets in 1905. Aronson is impatient for successes, but Lenin, talking in exile to Swiss

students in January 1917, remarked that those present in the room might not live to see the new society — but then proceeded with his revolutionary analysis. The next month the Russian Revolution was triggered by a strike of factory women against the advice of their (male) union leaders.

This points up another misconception in Aronson which colours his view of the proletariat. He cites Lenin's *What Is To Be Done* where "Lenin calls for a vanguard party to bring political consciousness to the workers *from without*." (111, Aronson's emphasis) Here again, of course, Aronson is not alone. Most leftists believe that these were Lenin's final words on the question when, in fact, they were only his first words. He modified his views the year after *What Is To Be Done* was published and changed them substantially after Russian workers created soviets in 1905 without the leadership of Bolsheviks or Mensheviks. The problem is that his early views served the interests of the Soviet Communist Party and so that pamphlet was produced in millions of copies, while his retraction of those views is buried in Volumes 8, 9, and 10 of his *Collected Works*.

During and just after World War I there were working-class revolts in Germany, Hungary, and elsewhere. Representative of a Marxist view of proletarian uprisings was Lenin's calling his comrades together, when the Soviet Union had lasted one day longer than the Commune, to toast victory. But what about our world, the post-World War II world? Here we find an interesting blind spot in Aronson. He simply cannot see working-class revolt. "For the worldwide New Left 1968 was our 1917. Nothing was more appropriate, in this great year of the New Left, than its variety of political expression: from the Tet Offensive to ghetto rebellions, from the Prague Spring to the Red Guards, from the Columbia University sit-ins to May in Paris." (23) May in Paris! There is no sign that after a couple of weeks of street fighting between stu-

dents and police in Paris, a sit-in strike in a small aircraft factory in Nantes led, in 48 hours, to 10 million French workers occupying all the factories of France and coming within a hair's breadth of overthrowing the DeGaulle government. And nowhere in this book about revolution is there a mention of Hungary in 1956 where the entire working class created workers councils, forced the ruling Communist Party to reorganize under another name, and exercised dual power until crushed by an invasion of Soviet tanks. Of course, here too, Aronson's silence is not unique. In the case of Hungary, the largest and most powerful numbers on the so-called Left, the Communist Parties, defined the Hungarian Revolution as a counter-revolution — end of discussion. And the rest of the Left, on both Hungary in 1956 and France in 1968, where all the parties and organizations of the working class, Communist and Socialist, opposed what the workers were doing, found that the revolts violated their party lines that only vanguard parties could lead the proletariat. So discussion was avoided like the plague. What is missed in all this is the contribution that workers' revolts, beginning with the East German revolt of 1953, made to the ultimate collapse of the Soviet dictatorship, by making the East European Soviet satellites essentially ungovernable.

The crisis in and demise of Marxism is simply announced by Aronson, with no attempt at analysis or explanation or search for causes. It would be useful to compare that with some real crises in international socialism. In 1914 the organization of world socialism collapsed when the major parties of the Second International supported their own governments in what everyone recognized as an imperialist war. Lenin's response to that development was classic Marxism. He studied Hegel and the Marxian dialectic and the tried to find the objective source in society for the destruction of the Second International as a revolutionary force. He found it in a new stage of capitalism,

which he called imperialism, in which the exploitation of the colonies enabled the major powers to earn the extra profits with which to bribe a select minority of the working class which, in turn, sustained a bureaucratic social democracy.

Another major crisis took place in 1939. The Stalinist show trials of the 1930s culminating in the Stalin-Hitler Pact, the beginning of World War II, the Soviet invasion of Poland and Finland, all meant a crisis much more significant than the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Trotskyist movement suffered major splits. The Communist Parties had significant losses (except, of course, where they held state power). One response to that crisis was by the late West Indian Marxist, C.L.R. James. He formed a group which also returned to its Marxist roots, studied Hegel and the dialectic, *Capital*, etc., and produced the document, later a book, *State Capitalism and World Revolution*. The view was presented that the Soviet Union was state capitalist and that this reflected a new, statist, stage of world capitalism. Lenin had called the Soviet Union state capitalist but under workers' control. The Stalinist counter-revolution had murdered the entire leadership of the Bolshevik Party that had made the revolution and had killed millions of Russians besides. If there was no element of workers control left, what remained but state capitalism? Aronson thinks that there was a natural progression from Leninism to Stalinism. In this he mimics, no doubt unintentionally, the most right wing bourgeoisie. He thinks that collective or socialized property indicates the remnants of socialism. Reagan could not have said it better — nationalization equals socialism. It is based on a distortion of language. What makes nationalized property collective or social? If there is no popular control, there is no social or collective control. Soviet property was no more collective than the Philadelphia Navy Yard or the US Post Office. As Engels put it, "The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine,

the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of the productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit." The fact that very often Communist bureaucrats are the ones who rush to control a partly privatized economy should tell us that the collapse of the Soviet Union was not a bourgeois counter-revolution. The counter-revolution had been made long before. But Aronson tells us that the Stalinist regime industrialized the country and created a working class. Which, of course, is exactly what the British, the Japanese, and the Americans, also did, without thereby becoming even remotely socialist. And Aronson also thinks that Stalinism belongs somewhere in a Marxist framework because, "Trotskyism, for example, has always presented itself as the rational alternative to Stalinism, and makes no sense without it." (295) If Stalinism achieves some justification because without it there would be no Trotskyism (which is a bit of an exaggeration), then surely capitalism can be justified because without it there can be no socialism!

I would suggest, then, that the socialist revolution is not a "project." We need to learn what it is in the same way that Marx and Lenin did — by examining what the working class does when it reaches peaks of revolutionary activity. It does not depend on the existence of a vanguard party and it does not depend on some abstract consciousness. Marx wrote in *The German Ideology*, "Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution*; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the *ruling* class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck

of ages and become fitted to found society anew." Who were the workers who created the Commune in Paris, soviets in Russia, and workers councils in Hungary? The same workers that we see around us (presuming, of course, that we look). Men and women who have suffered the barbarities of capitalism, who are sexist, racist, anti-semitic, and chauvinist. In the case of the Russian Revolution, they were in large numbers illiterate. But they began to be transformed by their own revolutionary activity. Aronson cannot see this because he is imbued with the idea that workers need to be led and that middle-class intellectuals have to lead them.

What is Aronson's conclusion? Five hundred years of hope! Marx's "prophecy" of an inevitable socialism has failed us. There have been no "successes." But we have to be prepared to wait as much as 500 years for a new society! He thinks we need a new movement, a kind of comradely federation of different groups and causes which should learn to respect each other. Feminist struggles, struggles for racial equality, and other such "projects" should ultimately come together to create a new movement which will ultimately create a new society. The problems and contradictions abound. First, the basic discussion is a discussion of discourse on the left. There is no analysis of the stage of capitalist society, of the reasons for the destruction of the Soviet Union, of what the supposed contemporary crisis of Marxism consists of. There is discussion of a whole range of points of view from the Frankfurt School to Sartre to Ernst Bloch and so on. The result is that a Marxist analysis which, if lacking, can be corrected or modified by an examination of the real world, is replaced by a purely idealist construction — hope. Hope in defeat and destruction and hope in minor successes. And a new revolutionary movement is to be created by an amalgam of specific struggles — with the working class essentially left out.

Aronson has a whole chapter announcing that feminism killed Marxism.

That is nonsense. He assumes that Marxism defines all struggles as being subordinate to the struggles of the working class. But, as C.L.R. James has pointed out, black struggles, women's struggles, anti-war struggles, whatever, have an independent validity that does not depend on their being acceptable to workers, or to some vanguard party. A Marxist organization has its own validity, contributing its own understanding and participation to other movements. Can it be doubted that African-American struggles or women's struggles can benefit from a class analysis of their own communities? The fight to break the glass ceiling is legitimate but it is not necessarily the only fight of masses of working-class women. And, surely, the arrival of a fair number of women in executive suites will not weaken capitalism. Ignored entirely is the reality of struggles among women or among African-Americans.

Peasant armies led by radical intellectuals do not make proletarian revolutions no matter how important their accomplishments. Soviet armies conquering the nations of Eastern Europe do not make proletarian revolutions, no matter how much property they nationalize. And there can be no socialist revolution without the transfer of the means of production, distribution, and services to the control of those who work. There can be radical reform, but there can be no socialist revolution without the working class, a working class acting for itself. Aronson complains that Marx prophesied the inevitability of socialism and that has not happened. Marx also said, "socialism or barbarism." The inevitability of socialism was not a prophecy but a methodological tool, a way of saying that capitalism was finite and would come to an end and that end is something we call socialism. But if barbarism engulfs us first, then all bets are off. I don't believe it will take 500 years to find out.

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Kent Worcester, *CLR James: A Political Biography* (Albany: State University of New York Press 1996).

SINCE THE DEATH of the talented Trinidadian-born Marxist CLR James (1901-1989), there has been something of a "James renaissance." James' remarkable 1950 manuscript on American culture has been published for the first time as *American Civilization* (1993). The *CLR James Reader* (1992) brings together a sampling of his writing for a new audience. Selected articles written for Trotskyist journals have been reprinted in *CLR James and Revolutionary Marxism* (1994). Works of secondary scholarship such as *CLR James: His Intellectual Legacies* (1995) have illuminated various aspects of his work. However, in spite of Paul Buhle's initial effort in *CLR James: The Artist as Revolutionary* (1988), until recently we have been awaiting an accessible study that provides an introduction to James' life and work as a whole. Kent Worcester's book is precisely such a study.

James was involved in an unusually wide range of political and intellectual fields. As a result, much writing on James has a tendency to downplay aspects of his theory and practice which do not fit neatly into the primary aspect through which he is being interpreted. Worcester writes that "No one problematic — Marxism, black nationalism, West Indian history and Culture, and so on — can be used by itself to explain the totality of his life and work. His personal development and intellectual contributions are complex and multifaceted, and I have endeavoured throughout this book to accentuate, rather than occlude, their complexity." (xv-xvi) Worcester does so successfully, without detracting from a clear presentation of James' life and work.

*CLR James: A Political Biography* covers the full scope of its subject's remarkable life. Moving to England in 1932, James, a teacher, writer, and moderate proponent of West Indian self-gov-

ernment trained at Queen's Royal College in the traditions of the English public school, encountered working-class militants of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) while living in Lancashire with the expatriate Trinidadian cricketer Learie Constantine. It was not long before James became a convinced Marxist and opponent of Stalinism. He joined the tiny band of Trotsky's supporters in the ILP and was soon a leading British Trotskyist. His simultaneous involvement in Pan-Africanist circles at the time of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia marked the start of his lifelong commitment to linking support for anti-imperialist struggles with the cause of workers in the imperialist heartlands. *The Black Jacobin* (1938), his history of the San Domingo slave rebellion of the 1790s, translated this internationalist commitment into brilliant historical writing.

A speaking tour for the American Trotskyist Socialist Workers' Party turned into a fifteen year sojourn. It was in the USA that James developed his distinctive Marxism. As Worcester emphasizes, this was not an individual accomplishment but the product of the collective intellectual efforts of the faction known as the Johnson-Forest Tendency (James' party name was Johnson, while his comrade Raya Dunayevskaya was known as Forest) and its successor after its final organizational break from Trotskyism, the Correspondence group. Combining an orientation on workers' shop-floor self-activity with intensive study of Hegel and Marx (three of Marx's 1844 Manuscripts were translated into English for the first time in this process) and efforts to "Americanize Bolshevism," Johnson-Forest aimed at nothing less than a Marxism for the age its members believed was poised on the brink of an imminent crisis whose outcome would be socialism or barbarism. They analyzed the USSR as a state capitalist society, renounced the need for a mass vanguard party and upheld the independent validity of the movements of African-Americans

and other oppressed groups. At this time James also developed his optimistic perspective on mid-century American popular culture. In Hollywood movies and comic strips he saw reflected the desires of working people to live integrated and happy lives.

Interned and forced to return to Britain in 1953, James kept in close contact with his shrinking band of American co-thinkers but increasingly devoted his political energies to "Third World" struggles. In 1958 he returned to Trinidad and entered into a period of participation in the work of the governing People's National Party that culminated in a falling-out with its leader, his former pupil Eric Williams, and the expulsion of James from the party. James' relationship with the post-independence regime in Ghana was less direct, but, as Worcester documents, he had embarrassingly inflated expectations of Kwame Nkrumah. Worcester suggests that the older James was never able to recreate with the same success the synthesis of Marxism and Pan-Africanism he had achieved in the 1930s. Nevertheless, he continued to produce interesting writings on cricket and other artistic and political questions and influence a variety of "First World" and "Third World" radicals including Walter Rodney.

*CLR James: A Political Biography* ably presents this life's work, including its socio-political contexts and summaries of many of James' major and minor writings. One failing is the scant attention paid to *Notes on Dialectics* (1948), in which James sets out the philosophical underpinnings of Johnson-Forest Marxism. A tedious work, its contents suggest that Worcester's judgement that Johnson-Forest's perspectives were "under-theorized and somewhat preposterous" (99) is only partially correct. Preposterous they were, along with the expectations of most Trotskyists in the late 1940s. However, they were highly theorized in a philosophical manner, positing

the inevitable advance of a proletariat modelled on Hegel's doctrine of essence.

Worcester also errs in claiming that James "remained committed to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution." (168) *Notes on Dialectics* makes it clear that James dismissed this central element of Trotsky's Marxism. James' consequent rejection of a political strategy aimed at establishing in imperialized nations the kind of socialist democracy that he advocated in the advanced capitalist countries helps explain his support for various undemocratic post-colonial states.

These flaws and a few very minor errors aside, this book fills the need for a sympathetic introduction to the wide-ranging thought of a passionate thinker who possessed "a cool revolutionary ardor, a seriousness about ideas, a wry sense of humor, a friendly disposition, and a deeply internalized code of honor." (176) Appendices containing a list of abbreviations, biographical sketches for over forty individuals connected to James and an annotated selected bibliography of secondary works on James round out the book.

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Fiona Nelson, *Lesbian Motherhood: An Exploration of Canadian Lesbian Families* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1996).

OVER THE PAST few years, as I have been trying to figure out whether I should have a child, I sometimes have envied straight friends who have found themselves pregnant "by accident." While they faced a choice of whether to proceed to term with the pregnancy, this seemed to me to be an "after the fact" decision and not the same as having to decide to get pregnant in the first place. Lesbians do not become pregnant by accident. They do, however, become pregnant. And it is the process of their reproductive decision-making that is



the primary focus of Fiona Nelson's *Lesbian Motherhood*.

It is the deliberateness with which lesbians must approach the decision to have a child that makes a study of lesbian mothers an excellent opportunity to explore how and why women enter into motherhood. Nelson says that the increasing numbers of lesbians having children reflects an ideology of reproductive choice that has been evolving since the legalization of contraception. Whereas choice originally referred to the ability to limit pregnancy, it now points to practices that make pregnancy possible. Choice, as Nelson rightly points out, has come to "refer to the right to choose when and if to have children, by whatever methods and for whatever reasons one sees fit." (4) Lesbian mothers make this point particularly evident.

Nelson's study is based on a sample of Alberta lesbians who are raising children. The sample is divided into two main groups. The first group includes: each partner of five couples who conceived their children through donor insemination within the context of a lesbian relationship; one woman from another couple who used donor insemination; and, one woman who, in the past, had been in such a couple. The comparison group includes women in "blended families": each partner of six couples in which one woman had conceived and given birth to children in the context of a previous heterosexual relationship; and, three single women who had been in such relationships.

From Nelson's admittedly very small sample, she found that women who had used donor insemination shared the decision to become pregnant, the process of conceiving (as much as possible), and the mothering role that followed. In those couples where a woman who already had children took a new partner, Nelson found, not surprisingly, that the partner adopted more of a "step-parent" role. The two women did not share the mothering role equally. Throughout the book it becomes clear that Nelson is more attracted

ideologically to the former arrangement, to "equal mothering." We get the sense that it is this that she is thinking of when she says that lesbian families are a "revolutionary force in our understanding of motherhood and the family." (137) Certainly there is not that much that is revolutionary about the mothering in lesbian "blended families" where the woman who moves in with a mother and her children plays a secondary parenting role. Women and children in these families seem to experience many of the same challenges as their counterparts in the blended families of heterosexual partners.

Nelson claims that by sharing equally in childraising, the non-biological mothers in her sample are changing the rules of mothering, they are forcing the development of a "new mothering reality." (135) But, I am not convinced. Certainly non-biological lesbian mothers are not challenging the gender expectations of who nurtures in our society. And, surely, adoptive mothers are already challenging notions of mothering as a biological bond that only birth mothers can experience. Extended families in women-headed households have challenged ideas that a child can only bond with one female caregiver. Non-biological lesbian mothers are not so much creating a new mothering reality as they are providing one more piece of evidence that there are many ways for children to be mothered. That said, in a context where the right of even single heterosexual women to call themselves "real mothers" is constantly being threatened, any public legitimacy to which lesbian mothers can lay claim is a hard-won political achievement. Perhaps it is not notions of who can mother that lesbian couples are challenging but notions of homosexuals as incapable of being parents.

One of the primary assumptions behind this study is that lesbian couples go to a lot of trouble both to decide to become mothers and then to arrange conception. It is ironic, then, that Nelson found, among the women who used donor in-

semination, that "the question of whether or not to pursue motherhood was seldom raised." Nelson continues: "for many of the women, there was no real decision-making about *whether* to have children; they always knew they would." (26) To be frank, I find this shocking. What does it suggest to us about the cultural imperative to be a mother? About the maturity of a lesbian community where women do not immediately assume their coming out precludes kids? About one of the few distinctions routinely made between lesbians and heterosexual women? Unfortunately it is not a point that Nelson pursues. She says the women in her study were more concerned with the logistics of how to get pregnant, the timing, their financial situations — the same things straight couples worry about in a different context.

What heterosexual couples do not share with the women in this study are their experiences with *homophobia*, which all of the participants in this project said increased when they became mothers. These women cannot count on emotional or logistical support from the state, from family or, even sometimes, from friends. Some said they have never felt more invisible as lesbians as when pregnant or out walking with their children. Still, Nelson says repeatedly, that many of the concerns of lesbian mothers are the same as those of heterosexual mothers. And I think she makes clear, that in the end, this is a book more about mothering

than about lesbianism, a fact that suggests first, the enormity of the identity of mother and second, the difficulty of defining what makes an experience a lesbian one, or of determining how much of our identity is tied to our sexual orientation.

A final point: Despite a considerable bibliography, there are few references in this book and very little contextualization. We have no sense how Nelson sees her work in relation to that done by others. How does she relate it to the growing literature on lesbian mothers in Canada, the United States and Britain? How does she relate her concerns about lesbians and reproductive choice to the literature on infertility and women's decisions to pursue new reproductive technologies? How does she see the ability of lesbians to pursue motherhood in relation to recent lesbian and gay politics? Is there anything unique about the experiences of lesbians in Alberta? Surely this latter question deserves a brief consideration given that Alberta remains one of the few provinces still holding out on providing human rights legislation for lesbians and gay men. Without attention to questions such as these, *Lesbian Motherhood* floats, detached from the politics and prior research that helped to make the study and its subject matter possible.

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