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*Remember Kirkland Lake: The Gold Miners' Strike of 1941-42, revised edition* by Laurel Sefton MACDOWELL, Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2001, 292 pp., ISBN 1-551-30-159-8.

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of capitalism. Each principle is illustrated by concrete tactics and policies, some of which show considerable practical political imagination, and many of which are already being pursued through globalization from below.

To an important degree, this program centres on Keynesian remedies. However, in contrast to orthodox Keynesianism, which stabilized the postwar order through class compromises that left capitalism intact, the authors' prescriptions are based on democratic and implicitly anti-capitalist politics. Unlike many global justice activists, the authors do not call for the abolition of the major postwar international economic institutions, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. Instead they call for the reconstruction of their functions under

U.N. and civil society auspices, arguing that these regulatory functions are critical to providing a global alternative to U.S. hegemony, and an antidote to the decentralism of the nationalist U.S. right which leaves communities at the mercy of corporations and financiers. Without such regulatory functions, it is hard to imagine how to prevent disintegration of the global trading system along the lines of the 1930s. It is debates about issues such as these, and the ways politics around these debates shape the interplay between globalization "from above" and "from below," that will determine the future of us all. *Globalization from Below* is an accessible, thoughtful, and well informed introduction to these issues and to the new politics of global justice.

**DON WELLS**

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***Remember Kirkland Lake: The Gold Miners' Strike of 1941-42, revised edition***

by Laurel Sefton MACDOWELL, Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2001, 292 pp., ISBN 1-551-30-159-8.

Aptly, *Remember Kirkland Lake* is the title of both this endearing book and, also, the February 1942 union leaflet acknowledging the defeat of the three months' strike involving four thousand gold miners. Endearing, this book is dedicated to the author's father, Larry Sefton, then a twenty-four years' miner in Kirkland Lake, who later assumed a leading role in the 1946 strike at Stelco Hamilton, and in the Ontario and Canada labour movements. Most informative as well, this book chronicles the suspense of this strike at the local, corporate and government levels. Above all analytical, this book surveys the differing American and Canadian landscapes of union recognition from 1933 in the U.S.A., to 1944 in Canada with P.C. 1003. Obviously and skilfully, these informative and analytical aspects are intertwined, since the issue of union recognition was central to the strike. This review will

attempt to deal first with the chronicle of the strike and secondly with the excellent analytical survey of the American and Canadian legislative and political issues involved.

The early chronicle of the Kirkland Lake mining camp opens at the start of the century. Involved are the discovery of gold deposits in Northern Ontario, the opposition of North American mine operators to any form of unionism beyond local representation committees, the ethnic make-up of these hard-rock miners, and the rising price of gold until the entry of the United States in World War II, triggered by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, several years after its invasion of China. The price of gold then collapsed. Locally, twenty months before the strike started, forty-seven employees were fired in January 1940 at the Teck-Hughes mine

during an attempt at union recognition and collective bargaining. The union was too weak to respond. It was also beset by internal divisions involving the influential presence of Communist activists or sympathizers, a frequent feature of industrial unions during the 30s and 40s in all of North America. The existing federal labour legislation was impotent to overcome the mine operators' refusal to recognize and bargain with the union, despite a government-supervised strike vote and a conciliation board report.

Such impotence in the face of employers' refusal to recognize a union, was again illustrated during the five months, namely July to November 1941, preceding the strike. A newly-formed Industrial Disputes Inquiry Commission (IDIC) suggested, as an alternative to unionization, the formation of employees' committees at each of the twelve mines involved in Kirkland Lake. A strike vote to reject this suggestion was held during a one-day "holiday" in August. Then a conciliation board was established. Its report unanimously recommended recognition of the union by the mine operators. These employers rejected the report. The employees approved it in a government-held strike vote on November 7, by 63% of those eligible to vote. A subsequent government mediation effort utterly failed. Not even a meeting between the mine operators and the union was achieved.

On the evening of 18 November 1941, the night shift in eight of the mines failed to report for work. The author's narration of the strike is excellent. This review makes no attempt to summarize it. It should be mentioned however that both the federal and Ontario governments refused to intervene in a strike centered on union recognition, in spite of many requests to do so. By 12 February 1942, the Kirkland strike was lost and the humiliated miners returned to work. The leaflet entitled *Remember Kirkland Lake* is dated 16 February

1942. The return to work was not easy. The price of gold had crashed. The workforce was reduced by twenty-five percent. Any re-hiring was at the discretion of the mine operators, who were then actively engaged in establishing employer-dominated employees' committees.

Why, then, would any one of us even wish to remember Kirkland Lake? The author's four answers to this question are analytical and convincing. One such answer is the tremendous vitality and confusion of the emergence of industrial unionism in North America, also feeding intra- and inter-union struggles, partly ideological. This emergence was partly due to the U.S. legislations of 1933 and 1935 and a U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1937. Employers were compelled to recognize a union supported by a majority of employees, albeit on a potential plant-by-plant basis. Thus, legislated employer recognition fueled the CIO and industrial unionism wave in the U.S.A. Imperfect as it was, and remains to this day, this complex amalgam of union recognition in the U.S. also invalidated employer-dominated employees' committees, and thus the Rockefeller Plan of employee representation pioneered in Colorado during World War I, and inspired by one W.L. Mackenzie King, later Prime Minister of Canada. Such employees' committees were the mine operators' alternative to union recognition in Kirkland Lake, as we have seen.

A second reason to remember Kirkland Lake is the tremendous gap between the U.S. Wagner Act of 1935 and Canadian legislation previous to the Canadian P.C. 1003 of 1944, with respect to legislated employer recognition of a majority union. During the war years, legislative authority was delegated to the Privy Council, which means the Federal Cabinet of Ministers. Its interventions were all aimed at achieving two goals dear to the Prime Minister: solving conflicts and favouring non-conflictual

employees' committees of representation, thus avoiding the issue of union recognition. The author's list and analysis of wartime orders-in-council are impressive: P.C. 3495, 2685, 2686, 5972, 7440, 4020, 4844, 7307, 10802; and finally, P.C. 1003 in February 1944, which adapted to Canada the U.S. Wagner Act on union recognition. Nine long years! And during these years, the federal government studiously skirted the issue of union recognition in important disputes such as those in National Steel Car in Ontario, and Peck Rolling Mills and Arvida in Quebec.

A third reason to remember Kirkland Lake is its subsequent political impact, particularly in Ontario. The notoriety of the Kirkland Lake strike drew the industrial unions and the CCF Party much closer than previously. The 1943 Ontario elections results showed thirty-four CCF members, nineteen of them were trade unionists. Also in 1943, the Ontario Legislature adopted a Collective Bargaining Act, modelled on the 1935 Wagner

Act of the U.S., and a forerunner of P.C. 1003 in February 1944. A few days before this latter date, Quebec had followed Ontario's lead and adopted a similar legislation. Thus, in 1943-44 and in the aftermath of the Kirkland Strike for union recognition, provincial initiatives on this issue have meant that today, ninety percent of Canadian workers are under provincial rather than federal jurisdiction.

A fourth reason to remember Kirkland Lake, as says the author, is that a strike was lost, but a battle was won. Government-enforced, employer recognition of a majority union dated 1935 in the U.S., was legislated in 1944 in Canada. Does this mean the end of the issue of union representation in its present form? Obviously not, in this reviewer's opinion. But it does strengthen the need to remember Kirkland Lake.

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***A Very Red Life: The Story of Bill Walsh***

by Cy GONICK, St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 2001, 300 pp., ISBN 1-894000-05-6.

Bill Walsh has had a very long and colourful career as a Communist labour organizer from the 1930s to the 1960s, and subsequent to his expulsion from the party in the late 1960s, as a successful labour arbitrator. Although not as well known as some, Walsh is an important figure in both Communist and labour history. Those who have been privileged to know him over the years cherish his insights, his dedication, and above all, his endless store of anecdotes that illuminate the story of the Canadian labour left in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Walsh is a fit subject for a biography, and the challenge has been taken up by Cy Gonick, retired academic economist, founder of *Canadian Dimension*, and left activist since the 1960s.

*A Very Red Life* has had a lengthy and checkered career of its own. Gonick, as he notes in his introduction, is not a biographer by profession. Earlier draft versions had yet to find an authentic voice. These difficulties have been largely overcome, and the Canadian Committee on Labour History have provided an attractive format for a story that is engaging on a personal level—as biographies should be—but of wider interest as well: the life, and the times, of Bill Walsh.

Walsh was converted to Communism when he and his best friend, Dick Steele, traveling in Germany in the early 1930s, arrived almost accidentally in Russia, where they worked in Minsk and