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Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

Rose, Albert. *Canadian Housing Policies (1935-1980)*. Toronto: Butterworth and Company (Canada), 1980. Pp. vii, 216. \$19.95.

For four decades Albert Rose, a University of Toronto professor of social work, has served as a keen analyst of Canadian urban trends. Over this period his attention has shifted from highly particular and localized issues to much broader political and spatial considerations. While his earlier works dealt with a single Toronto public housing project and the evolution of a federated system of government for Metropolitan Toronto, his latest book examines housing policies in Canada between 1935 and 1980 at national, provincial and municipal levels.¹ As he notes, "my objective has been to clarify the nature of Canadian housing policies, formulated by government and emerging from the struggle for hegemony between various levels of government, primarily by tracing the history of legislation and its implementation" (p.v). His assembly and analysis of the vast array of federal, provincial and municipal housing legislation provides an extremely valuable compendium for future researchers.

The book is divided into nine chapters on the following subjects: the political, economic and social contexts for housing policies; the elements of Canadian housing policy; Canadian housing policy, 1940-68; Canadian housing policy in the 1970s; provincial and local initiatives in housing; housing policy in Ontario; constraints upon the development of housing policy in Canada; attitudes towards housing policy; and Canada's housing problems for the future. Two appendices chronicle provincial housing legislation and the development of the National Housing Act. Only five tables are included in the volume, a reflection no doubt of Rose's contention that his concern is not primarily statistical but is to give "a description of the role of governments and the changing shifts and currents in policy which are a congruence of political, economic, and social forces" (p.v).

While some might be tempted to argue that Canada has no housing policy, Rose suggests that from a purely legislative viewpoint there has been no lack of policy effort. Moreover, policy has changed direction many times, especially since the end of World War II. For example, legislative interest has shifted from urban renewal to neighbourhood rehabilitation to co-operative housing for the needy. The view of those to be assisted by housing policies has it-

self changed over time. As Rose notes: "the best conclusion we can arrive at concerning national housing policy from 1945 through 1964 is that the Government of Canada was strongly in favour of the attainment of home ownership by every family" (p.35). By the late 1970s, however, "the family, and particularly the low-income family, had lost its position of highest priority within public and private housing policies" (p.167). Senior citizens are now the chief target for much Canadian and provincial housing policy, a clear reflection of Canada's changing demographic structure. Finally, changes in housing policy have had ramifications for the spatial structure of Canadian cities. Early public housing ventures created ghettos for the poor. More recent efforts, such as rent subsidization schemes, have produced more heterogeneous neighbourhoods. All these changes are quite well documented in this book. In addition, the author draws several useful distinctions between Canadian and U.S. attitudes and policies, such as the lack of significant anti-public housing lobbies in Ottawa in the 1930s (p.30).

Canadian Housing Policies is not without problems. The dates in the title, 1935-80, are a bit misleading. About three-quarters of the book is devoted to the period from about 1964 to 1977; there are few references to the post-1977 period and not nearly enough attention is paid to the early years. The whole question of the need for government policy in the housing field receives scant attention. It is not sufficient to argue that "in Canada, the intervention of government in the 1930s was fundamentally a response to economic problems which spawned very significant political problems" (p.3). We need to know much more about the nature of Canadian housing problems in the early 1930s. It is my feeling that changes in house-building technology also deserve special consideration here. Sometime between 1880 and 1920 the construction industry in Canadian cities changed from one dominated by firms capable of erecting a handful of houses each year to one in which large-scale builders able to build several hundred houses in a year were supreme. Such firms were oriented towards the middle class and the ideal of home ownership. Mass marketing developed with the increased scale of construction, with very different urban tenure patterns a direct consequence. In Hamilton, for example, home ownership levels hovered around one-third throughout the second half of the nineteenth century but had risen to almost one-half by 1931. Few builders were left by that time to cater to the needs of the poor, and as new houses became more technologically sophisticated (water, sewage, and electrical systems) fewer people were capable of building their own dwellings. Rose provides almost no insight into these issues.

1. Albert Rose, *Regent Park: A Study in Slum Clearance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), and *Governing Metropolitan Toronto: A Social and Political Analysis, 1953-1971* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

Other problems with the book include several of an editorial nature. This is one of the most poorly edited volumes that I have ever encountered. Typographical and grammatical errors are numerous enough to be an embarrassment to the author. Some lines are so garbled (for example on p. 126), that they are meaningless. The table of contents includes reference to a phantom tenth chapter, and Newfoundland is referred to as a Maritime Province (it is an Atlantic Province). Furthermore, the index is not nearly full enough for a volume of this complexity.

In spite of more than four decades of housing legislation in Canada, one must agree with Professor Rose that "the crisis has worsened and the plight of the low-income groups has become increasingly worse. The group unable to take care of its housing requirements within its own resources has widened substantially to include a significant proportion of all those families and individual who fall within the lowest half of the Canadian income distribution" (p. 195). *Canadian Housing Policies* makes a useful contribution to our comprehension of this dilemma. Professor Rose displays an enviable sensitivity to the plight of needy Canadians. He is correct in suggesting that only a change in attitude on the part of Canadians, whereby housing comes to be viewed as a service rather than a good, will ensure adequate housing for all citizens. I only wish that Albert Rose had delved more deeply into the roots and nature of Canadian attitudes toward land and housing. Clearly, much research remains to be done in this area.

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Morton, Desmond, with Copp, Terry. *Working People: An Illustrated History of Canadian Labour*. Ottawa: Deneau and Greenberg, 1980. Pp. xviii, 349. Illustrations. \$14.95.

Heron, C.; Hoffmitz, S.; Roberts, W., and Storey, R. *All that Our hands Have Done: A Pictorial History of the Hamilton Workers*. Hamilton: Mosaic Press in association with the Office of Labour Studies, McMaster University, 1981. Pp. vii, 181. Illustrations. \$14.95.

Labour studies are today enjoying an unprecedented popularity in Canada. The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and its regional affiliates are devoting increasing resources to labour education, within which working-class history is recognized as an essential element. Over the last decade, labour history has also begun to make inroads into university curricula, and teaching and research in the area have been fostered by the Committee on Labour History

through its journal, *Labour/Le Travailleur*. The two books under review are recent products of this interest in working-class history.

Desmond Morton's *Working People: An Illustrated History of Canadian Labour* is the first attempt to produce a popularly written synthesis of Canadian working-class history since the 1967 publication of Charles Lipton's *Trade Union Movement of Canada*, a more nationalist and leftist interpretation of labour than *Working People*. Morton is one of Canada's most distinguished and versatile historians, whose accomplishments in labour, military and political history are well known to Canadian scholars. Terry Copp, who assisted Morton in the writing of *Working People*, has published widely in the field of Canadian labour history and is best known for his monograph, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929*. In the introduction to *Working People*, Morton calls for "a view of Canadian labour history that struggles to bring together the old institutional approach and the new awareness of region and localism, and that respects the radical and the pragmatist." These are difficult standards to fulfil, and Morton is only partly successful in bringing the new concepts of working-class history to his survey of the Canadian labour movement. *Working People* does offer the most comprehensive study to date of most of the major and many of the minor strikes, organizing campaigns and political activities of Canadian unionists. The story is told chronologically, beginning with a brief description of craft unionism before Confederation. It is carried forward to the present through studies of the Knights of Labour in the 1880s, working-class militancy in the early twentieth century, the organizing of workers in the country's mass production industries during the Depression and World War II, the formation of the CLC in 1956 and, finally, the relationship between organized labour and the New Democratic Party (NDP) after 1961. As this brief outline of *Working People's* contents suggests, the survey seldom escapes the institutional boundaries of the trade union movement and its leadership. This is a rather surprising feature of the book considering Morton's introductory comments and the inclusion in his useful bibliography of many of the more recent writings on working-class history. *Working People* has little to say on the contributions made by women to the Canadian labour movement or on the importance of the workplace control questions that influenced the institutional and ideological responses of Canadian workers to industrial capitalism.

After reading *Working People* one is left with the impression that the author's objective is to convince Canadian workers that the NDP is their only legitimate political option. With the formation of the NDP in 1961, Morton asserts, finally "Canadian labour had a winner." Throughout the study, socialists and conservatives in the labour movement who stood outside the mainstream social