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# Heron, Craig, and Steve Penfold. *The Workers' Festival: A History of Labour Day in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. Pp. xviii, 340, illustrations, index. $39.95 (paper)

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Aller au sommaire du numéro

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ways. Despite urban revitalization and incorporation by cities of an urban festivity into their development plans in the 1980s and 1990s, Beauregard argues that social disparities and urban decline continues to characterize the American city.

While the empirical part of the revised book is very similar to the original one published in 1993, the sections at the beginning ('Framing the Discourse") and end ('Reading the Discourse') of the book have been extensively rewritten. Shorter in length, the postmodern musings of the original have been "stripped way" (p. 249) so as to make the new version a traditional urban "history book" (p. xiii) rather than a cultural text. The result is a much more successful book. Meanwhile, the strengths of the substantive sections of the original book remain, namely a fascinating account of popular writings on the American city, the linking of postwar America urban development to themes and issues of the prewar period, the elucidation of suburban space as a 'spatial fix' to the endemic problems of the city, and the elaboration of discourse as legitimatizing capitalist inequalities.

The central organizing concept of the study is discourse, which he defines in one place as "a collection of contentious interpretations" (p. 21). Surprisingly, and despite the idea that ideas are fought over, Beauregard has little to say about those responsible for manufacturing the discourse describing and driving urban development. Everyone it seems, from those living in the suburbs to those writing in academic papers and business meetings, is equally responsible for the manufacture of urban discourse. Regardless of expertise, the commentators' voices appear to be equal. But was this the case? Should we, as Beauregard does, accept as equal the musings of the President of the College of Idaho on the supposed universal desire of all Americans for wide-open space, the exhalations of Lewis Mumford on urban decline, and the precision of George Sternlieb's calculation of central city and suburban growth? I found myself wanting Beauregard to make sense of the cacophony and diversity of the voices that jostled for credibility and power. Similarly, I looked for some discussion of the interests (class, racial, etc.) that underpinned the voices. What is missing from the story that Beauregard tells is some sense of how the voices, all of which came from a thin slice of (white) middle-class America, were linked to a broader political economy.

The emphasis on the opinions of a select yet influential set of writers leads Beauregard to round out the jagged actualities of American cities and to overemphasis the uniqueness of the postwar period. Two examples illustrate this point. First, a central focus of the book is the rise of white fear about African Americans after 1945, especially from the 1960s. In his opinion, black migration to northern cities was only a "cause for alarm" (p. 79) in the postwar period. But how does this account for such episodes as the 1919 Chicago race riots, the development of ghettos in all northern cities by the 1920s, and relentless discrimination that forced blacks into the lowest echelons of the urban labour market? Second, he makes the point in several places that population and economic growth in central cities continued through the interwar period and only stopped after World War Two. But was this the case? There is good evidence to show that the history of the central-city is more nuanced than that. In the first place, annexations, such as those taking place in New York in 1898, Chicago in 1889, and Philadelphia in 1850, provided both the material and discursive space for much of the city's growth before World War One. Secondly, the onset of central-city decline can be identified from as early as the 1920s, once the major wave of annexation had finished. Decline was central to the prewar city.

What are the book's lessons for the historian of Canadian cities? Certainly, the issues that so trouble the American city—most notably race and the peculiar and contradictory relationship Americans have to the state—are not so sharply delineated and work themselves out in quite different ways in the Canadian scene. That said, there are important parallels. There can be little doubt that the tensions between urban, suburban and non-urban ideals have shaped the specific types of spaces constructed on the expanding peripheries of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver as much as they have in New York, Chicago and San Francisco. It is a truism that Canadian cities have experienced and continue to experience, among other things, damaging social and economic effects of uneven flows of capital investment and disinvestment in similar ways as in the United States. Indeed, the central cities of Hamilton and Winnipeg are not that indistinguishable from those south of the border; they are not immune to the ills plaguing the capitalist city—capital disinvestment, the loss of decent-paying manufacturing jobs, deteriorating infrastructures, poor housing and high rents. Similarly, even in Canada's prosperous cities, such as Toronto and Vancouver, neighbourhoods of the poor, drugged and disabled stand cheek by jowl with revitalized residential and commercial landscapes. Urban decline takes many forms.

More than a decade after the first edition was released, *Voices of Decline* remains an important and impressive book. Beauregard raises issues and questions that continue to be central to our understanding of the city. He has much to tell us about how middle-class, professional commentators viewed and fought over the American city and, in the process, the Canadian city as well.

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**Heron, Craig, and Steve Penfold. *The Workers' Festival: A History of Labour Day in Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. Pp. xviii, 340, illustrations, index. $39.95 (paper).**

In *The Workers' Festival: A History of Labour Day in Canada*, Craig Heron and Steve Penfold take us into the vibrant life of a holiday that is at once culturally familiar and historically obscure. It is the story of "labour's day" that never entirely belonged to labour; and a story of the frustrations of the modern labour

movement—and labour historians. Labour Day organizers never resolved the degree to which this was a holiday for asserting worker solidarity or for courting public support; nor did they prevent the day from being appropriated by commercial, civic, and recreational agendas. Not surprisingly, the authors concede that "workers' festival" is "a term we use both descriptively and somewhat ironically" (xvii).

*The Workers' Festival* begins by plunging us into the street parades of Victorian Canada, where costumes, choreography and signage were designed to convey that quintessential Victorian quality, respectability. Heron and Penfold do an outstanding job of parade culture as a performance designed to deliver a political message and assert a claim to public space. They also make a convincing argument that this represented "the most visible, persistent, and widespread form of collectively created working-class cultural production that Canada has ever seen"– yet one overlooked by historians (xv) and now unfamiliar to us in an age of mass media. But this new mobilization of an increasingly militant working-class conformed to the sober and dignified processional culture of the age. There is an appealing sense of optimism here, a sincere desire to promote workers' contributions to society; yet Labour Day was also inherently exclusive. To highlight the importance of skilled trades, organizers relied on orderly formations, craft floats, and formal costumes to distinguish marcher from spectator; and on a masculine, Anglo-Saxon membership. This was a statement of the elitism of craft, not a universal rhetoric of "the worker."

The authors then examine how others, from the press to the Catholic Church, reacted to this new holiday. Once stripped of any connotation of protest, the term "labour" slipped easily—perhaps too easily—into the Victorian vocabulary. It affirmed a Protestant work ethic that could be appropriated by a variety of interests, from those touting the civic values of their municipalities to those seeking to minimize labour-management differences (as the *Peterborough Examiner* wrote, "we all work…and we all have our share in Labour Day" (89)). Here was the crux of labour's dilemma: to court a public and risk diluting their own cause. What is not clear is if workers themselves saw Labour Day as an opportunity to underscore class difference; the authors rather suggest that the prevalent concerns were a sense of respectability, public approval, and recreation. The latter quickly threatened to undermine the "respectable" atmosphere of the day—and the seriousness of the labour cause

By the First World War, the early optimism was quickly evaporating. The movement splintered between factions and ideologies: the rise of a more aggressive socialism; nationalists opposed to affiliations with American labour; and Quebec Catholic unions. Meanwhile the climate grew considerably colder toward labour, forcing a more a defensive posture (146). From this point *The Workers' Festival* reads largely as the decline and fall of labour's day, by 1939 "a shadow of its former self" (188). But the problems were not new: the consumer culture of the 1950s merely bolstered the commercial and recreational activities of the day; and just as "order, sobriety and respectability" were the watchwords of Victorian parade culture (220), unions seeking popular support in the post-war era learned that they had to include clowns, beauty queens and "ethnic" costumes to meet public expectations.

Although the authors suggest that parading was essentially local in nature, they also argue that Labour Day remained "remarkably consistent across time and space" (77). Did ideas of parade culture, craft respectability, or class unity flatten differences in regional economies, industrial workplaces, and local politics? (*The Workers' Festival* leans heavily toward southern Ontario, not surprising in the age of craft parades, but one wonders if the Maritimes or the West warrant more). And how did the marchers think of themselves? As heads of household, as municipal citizens, or as local representatives of national—even international –trades, if not as "workers of the world"? Could one belong to the local of a continental union, the Empire, and "the working class" simultaneously and without contradiction? If the local tie was strongest, at the expense of a wider class consciousness, the authors may be loath to emphasize it. Indeed, they focus on May Day as the Labour Day that should have been: a day of protest and class struggle rather than celebration and search for acceptance (37). Given that May Day never approached the popularity of Labour Day—and was potentially far more damaging to labour's cause—this theme is somewhat off-putting.

While one of the central arguments of the book is that Labour Day's social and recreational activities often eclipsed its political message, ironically the politics surrounding Labour Day are noticeably muted. There is only a brief mention of its legislative origins in 1894, and no sense of dialogue between union leaders, federal or provincial politicians, or management; apparently it was sanctioned as merely the least controversial of the numerous recommendations by the Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour (1889). On the other hand, the authors do demonstrate how the holiday became infused with other political concerns by the 1970s. The book does an excellent job of tracing the changing roles of women, from "fragile and symbolic femininity" (207) in Victorian parading to stunning examples of sexual objectification in the postwar era, to the distinctive participation of feminists by the 1970s. In Quebec, the increasingly militant parades adopted the language of self-determination, though the authors make no reference to the circumstances of the Quiet Revolution.

The wonderful collection of photographs and illustrations lend an enormous amount to the book; the richly symbolic iconography of nineteenth-century parade art is particularly striking. *The Workers' Festival* is nicely written, lively and engaging, but makes no effort to hide its disappointment that Labour Day was never fully labour's day. Such is the paradox of a public holiday: labour won recognition but never universal allegiance, and to the authors' chagrin, even workers might choose "private pleasures rather than cultural solidarity" (xvi). *The Worker's Festival* is a valuable contribution to the growing literature on public spaces and urban life, but more importantly, to our sparse understanding of holidays and public festivals. Heron and Penfold

are to be commended for reminding us that our calendar—like the facades of our streetscapes—hides a wealth of history.

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**Gidney, Catherine. *A Long Eclipse: The Liberal Protestant Establishment and the Canadian University, 1920–1970.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004. Pp. 272, $70.00 (hardcover).**

In 1967, University of Toronto's third teach-in, organized by Michael Ingantieff and Jeffrey Rose was titled "Religion and International Affairs." This emphasis on religion might seem surprising for the countercultural 1960s, but in this carefully argued and important book, Gidney demonstrates that religion continued to be an important force in Canada's universities, even as late as the 1960s. At the same time, she explains the increased secularization of the universities between 1920 and 1970, paying particular attention to how liberal Protestantism, with its emphasis on tolerance, diversity, and seeking God on earth, essentially contained the seeds of its own demise.

Gidney focuses on several universities: the non-denominational Dalhousie University, University of King's College (Anglican), McMaster University (Baptist), Victoria College (Methodist), University College (non-denominational) and finally, the non-denominational University of British Columbia. Despite their formal diversity, these were all fundamentally Protestant institutions—Protestants composed over 70% of the student body through the 1950s. In the interwar period, Gidney argues, the university could be seen as "moral community, with liberal Protestantism as its animating force." (p.144) presidents, faculty and students believed that education had a moral purpose, and believed that the study of classics, history and literature, provided the moral grounding necessary for future leaders. Administrators quizzed prospective faculty on their religious beliefs, and faculty members were fired for offences such as playing poker on campus and adultery. Anti-semitism meant that Jewish students were made to feel unwelcome in residences, and were excluded from sororities and fraternities. There were few Jewish faculty. In residence, students, especially female students, had their behaviour monitored—women were forbidden from smoking and at University and Victoria Colleges, women were expected to be home by 10:30 on weeknights. At Dalhousie, skating and tennis were forbidden on Sundays through the 1950s.

Gidney pays careful attention not just to the Presidents, deans, chaplains, and faculty, but also to the students and their organizations. There is a chapter on the Student Christian Movement—formed in Guelph in 1920—as a result of student discontent with the more evangelically-oriented YMCA and YWCA. At its height, between 1920–1965, approximately 4–8% of all university students participated in the SCM or in SCM activities, such as receptions, dinner parties, talks and charity work. Students also participated in bible study using the Sharman method, which encouraged students to interpret the Bible for themselves, leading many to emphasize Jesus' social activism. Membership in the SCM was open to all. There were close links between the SCM and the later development of the New Left, especially Combined University Committee on Nuclear Disarmament, and later the Student Union for Peace Action. Students also participated in the resident councils that sprang up in the interwar years, and played a key role in enforcing rules against drinking, gambling, and violating curfews. After World War II, students also helped to organize 66 "University Missions" which took place across university campuses. The well-attended missions were a series of talks and discussions, designed to explore the role of religion, science and politics in the post-war world.

While religion continued to play a major role in campus life in the 1950s, and 60s, the university was changing rapidly. Professional programs increased in number and size, there was more emphasis on science, the curriculum expanded, and there were huge increases in enrolment. The universities began to diversify, hiring more Jewish faculty, while more of the students were Jewish, Catholic, or from less mainstream Protestant denominations. Some Protestant students, dissatisfied with the socially-activist SCM, turned towards the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) in the 1940s. The IVCF was a more conservative, more evangelical organization than the SMC, foreshadowing the rise of organizations like the Campus Crusade for Christ. Overall though, students were becoming less overtly religious—after a brief spurt of religiosity in the late 1940s and early 1950s, chapel attendance fell quite dramatically in the 1950s and 1960s. Gradually, the university abandoned its role of "in loco parentis"—curfews for women loosened, and then disappeared, there were more liberal rules surrounding the visits of women to men's dorms, and men to women's dorms, and universities turned a blind eye to drinking in residences.

One of the most impressive aspects of the book is Gidney's command of the historiography. This might make the book less approachable for undergraduates (although the chapters on the moral regulation of undergraduate life are lively and appealing), but a joy for the scholar. She discusses how her argument differs from, and connects to arguments made by McKillop, Christie, Gauvreau, Owram, Van Die, Horn, Litt and Massolin (just to name a few), as well as American scholars of religion George Marsden and Douglas Sloan.

Finally, Gidney kept the book admirably short, making it a good choice for classes, but it left me wanting more. I was delighted that she covered universities from across the country, but I wanted more about the regional differences. Did it matter that UBC was in a province where religious participation has always been lower? Did secularization take place faster in Ontario universities than in the Maritimes? On a similar note, although this was a book about Protestantism, I wanted more about Catholics and their place in the Protestant university, and more about how the Protestant and non-denominational universities compared to Catholic universities. Finally, all of these