

## Reviews / Comptes Rendus

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## REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

**John Clarke, *The Ordinary People of Essex: Environment, Culture, and Economy on the Frontier of Upper Canada*** (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 2010)

*THE ORDINARY PEOPLE OF ESSEX* is an exhaustive study of the ways in which people shaped the land and the land shaped settlement in Essex County from the early to the mid-19th century. Author John Clarke, Distinguished Research Professor of historical geography at Carleton University, has written a successful follow-up to his *Land, Power, and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada* (2002). With 738 pages, including 470 pages of text, 141 pages of notes, dozens of tables and maps, and 34 pages of appendices, *The Ordinary People of Essex* represents the scholarly mastery of relevant works on agriculture, ethnicity, culture, and settlement in North America and Europe as well as intimate study and knowledge of census returns and numerous other manuscript sources. By focusing on one locale in great depth, the author demonstrates the ways in which settlement proceeded and people adapted to local conditions. Clarke has made a singular contribution to the study of frontier culture and agriculture that will be of interest to historians in many different sub-disciplines, including social, ethnic, rural, and environmental history.

In Clarke's telling, the people who came to Essex were not profit maximizers. Instead, they first looked to family

needs, which reflected their interest in continuity and stability even as they built new homes in a sometimes strange country. Bound by religious and ethnic ties, they attempted to cluster together and, if there were a critical mass of population (as there was for French and English Canadians, Americans, and Germans), married within their own ethnic and religious groups. As Clarke points out, the best land was not always the most productive land. Settlers preferred land in proximity to settlements, kin, or those who shared cultural or ethnic roots to provide maximum support for their families. Most settlers found that land was affordable and obtained a patent in approximately eight years.

The role of origins (defined broadly as ethnic, social, and distinct cultural group) is central to the book. Clarke goes to great lengths to demonstrate that "culture is dynamic and not static" and that immigrants from Europe as well as British and French North Americans made important adjustments to local conditions. (324) The author reveals the truth behind the stereotypes of origins as they related to land tenure, farm production, and income. Did the Americans favour corn and hogs? Were the French Canadians most likely to have horses? Did Irish farmers grow more potatoes than other groups? While there may be some truth in these stereotypes in some settings, members of each of these groups accepted change in Essex County and charted their own course. Irish Protestants adopted corn, all farmers favoured horses, and the Irish

appeared to be no different than their fellow settlers in terms of acreage devoted to potatoes. Most foreign-born settlers pursued a balanced production scheme while native-born farmers tended to prefer a degree of market wheat production.

Clarke engages numerous debates among historians and historical geographers about the nature of frontier society, most notably the role of “king wheat” in the economy of Upper Canada. While wheat was the “dominant cereal” grain in Essex due to the fact that it was a commodity with a ready market, it was less important in Essex than it was in other parts of Ontario. (170) Corn was better suited to conditions of settlement and was grown on more farms than wheat, but the overall acreage devoted to wheat was greater than that to corn. King wheat, according to Clarke, was apparently a much less significant monarch than scholars previously supposed.

A significant portion of the book (much of Chapters 7 and 8) is dedicated to defining and advancing our understanding of mobility and material success in the period under study. To that end, Clarke deals with tenancy and persistence, another longstanding issue for social, rural, and agricultural historians. Tenancy was a common institution in Essex County, with members of all ethnic and cultural groups renting at some point in the first half of the 19th century. Clarke’s study indicates that tenancy rates for Essex were similar to elsewhere in the province, ranging from approximately 37 per cent in 1825 to 40 per cent in 1851/52. To assess the role of mobility (physical and socioeconomic), agricultural systems, and the relationship between origins and tenure, the author examines land clearance rates and changes in the size of landholdings. Farm families tended to clear the most land in the first few years of settlement. Clearing slowed once farming began in earnest. Based on a

particularly complete set of records from Malden Township, the author concludes that tenants were most likely to leave Essex but it was not always the poorest of tenants who left for greener pastures. African Americans, most likely former slaves from the United States, tended to persist at higher rates than other groups, even though African Americans had the smallest holdings of real and personal property. Tenants, however, managed to produce yields that were comparable to owners’. Scots managed to outperform other groups, possibly due to the fact that they arrived comparatively early and managed to secure some of the most favourable land for cultivation.

*The Ordinary People of Essex* is a demanding and sometimes difficult book. One of the principal difficulties is that the author often foregrounds the methodology and moves the land and people of Essex, the true subjects of the research, to the background. The author actually recognizes that his technique does “not always make for elegant text, and may actually frighten some of the readership.” (xxxii) All too often the text is about chi-squares and coefficients, stepwise regression, and bivariate analysis. Clarke is, of course, within his rights to do this, but by tailoring the writing toward those who are most interested in the method of statistical analysis, readers who want to know about the people and the land will be left wanting a clearer, jargon-free statement of the author’s findings.

That said, Clarke has made a noteworthy contribution to the study of the history of settlement, cultural origins, agriculture, and environment in North America. The author simultaneously synthesizes the scholarship on the physical settlement landscape of Upper Canada and provides extensive documentation of the social background of settlers, land use, and the economy of farming in Essex County. He does not, however, presume

that the final word has been written on the subject. In the conclusion of Chapter 8 as well as the conclusion of the book, Clarke suggests that additional work may provide more context and firmer explanations for the changes he documents. If there are difficult aspects of the book, there is much more to gain from the incredible amount of data and analysis and from Clarke's thoughtful questions and suggestions for future research. Patient readers will be rewarded.

JOE L. ANDERSON

Mount Royal University

**Roland Viau, *La sueur des autres. Les fils d'Érin et le canal Beauharnois* (Valleyfield: Triskèle 2010)**

LA PLACE DES travailleurs irlandais engagés dans la construction des canaux de l'axe laurentien au cours de la première moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle dans le développement de la classe ouvrière au Canada-Uni est bien connue. Dans un article classique publié en 1948, H. C. Pentland, un des fondateurs de l'histoire ouvrière canadienne, les appela même le premier prolétariat au Canada. L'interprétation de Pentland est maintenant dépassée – nous savons aujourd'hui qu'une classe ouvrière indigène était déjà en formation avant et en même temps que l'arrivée de l'immigration irlandaise – mais l'importance des travailleurs qui construisirent avec pelle et pic les grands canaux demeure primordiale. C'est pourquoi il y a matière à réjouir dans la publication d'une nouvelle étude portant sur les travailleurs du canal Beauharnois.

La monographie de Roland Viau, intitulé *La sueur des autres*, est étalée sur deux temps. En première partie, il introduit le projet de canalisation à Beauharnois, construit entre 1840 et 1844, et trace un bilan ethnographique des

ouvriers (« *canaliers* ») qui s'y trouvaient. Ici Viau s'appuie principalement sur des sources secondaires, ce qui lui sert parfaitement bien pour son introduction du projet et de l'organisation du chantier, mais moins bien quand il se tourne vers les travailleurs eux-mêmes. Faute de sources touchant explicitement les ouvriers du canal Beauharnois, l'auteur extrapole par des généralisations tirées d'études portant sur d'autres canaux, tels ceux de Welland et d'Érié. Des généralisations informées par d'autres études sont nécessaires considérant la pauvreté de la documentation primaire sur les travailleurs de cette époque, mais les ouvrages que Viau choisit d'utiliser ne sont pas toujours les meilleurs. Une de ses principales sources par exemple est le livre de Freidrich Engels sur la condition de la classe ouvrière en Angleterre, un classique, certes, mais comme il fut publié en 1844 une étude plus récente aurait peut-être été préférable.

Après avoir dressé un bilan du chantier de Beauharnois et des travailleurs y œuvrant, Viau se tourne vers la grève qui éclata en juin 1843, et la lutte acharnée que mena les *canaliers* pour l'obtention d'une augmentation de salaire et pour fixer une limite des heures de travail (137), le tout culminant avec la journée sanglante du 12 juin 1843, le « lundi rouge » (162–163). Viau constate que le déclenchement de la grève n'était pas un acte spontané, mais démontre plutôt un impressionnant niveau d'organisation de la part des travailleurs. L'auteur voit dans ce pouvoir organisationnel la preuve de l'existence de sociétés secrètes qui opéraient parmi les travailleurs irlandais du chantier. Pour élucider les événements entourant la grève, Viau fait principalement appel à la commission d'enquête mise sur pied par la suite pour tenter d'expliquer la violente conflagration, et l'auteur fait un travail colossal pour tout sortir les détails de cet excellent document. De plus, il

fait preuve de grande créativité pour tenter de réviser le nombre de victimes du « lundi rouge », calculant qu'il y avait au moins 21 travailleurs qui sont tombés et non cinq comme le propose la version officielle. (181)

Par contre, en suggérant que la grève fut l'œuvre d'une société secrète à Beauharnois, Viau trébuche quelque peu. C'est bien possible, voire probable, qu'il eût de telles sociétés au canal, les émigrants irlandais les amenant fréquemment avec eux quand ils quittaient l'île émeraude. Mais, comme Viau admet, il n'y a absolument aucune preuve, aucun document, démontrant leur existence au chantier de Beauharnois. Comme unique indice, Viau cite un article du *Montreal Gazette* parlant d'une femme qui a tenté d'amener des soldats britanniques vers une embuscade. Il constate que les *Molly Maguires*, une société secrète nationaliste irlandaise bien connue, utilisait souvent des hommes habillés en femme comme tactique dans leurs conflits en Irlande, et donc que l'anecdote du journal montréalais indique l'existence des *Molly Maguires* durant la grève à Beauharnois (207–208). Encore une fois, ce n'est pas impossible, mais il aurait fallu des traces beaucoup plus concrètes pour affirmer comme il le fait que cette société était au centre des événements de juin 1843. Être organisé par une société secrète n'était pas une condition nécessaire pour mener une lutte de la sorte à cette époque, et Viau aurait probablement tiré profit d'un regard plus large sur les autres grèves qui ont marqué la période au Canada-Uni, par exemple celle des charpentiers navals de Québec qui ont mené un débrayage victorieux en hiver 1840–41 sans organisation clandestine pour les encadrer.

Même avec ses lacunes, *La sueur des autres* demeure une importante étude portant sur une période souvent négligée par les historiens du travail au Canada.

Viau démontre persuasivement qu'il avait au sein des travailleurs irlandais une conscience ouvrière en développement bien avant les années 1850, et même si nous croyons qu'il a tort à invoquer un rôle déterminant des sociétés secrètes irlandaises, son travail sur la grève de juin 1843 demeure une fascinante contribution dans l'histoire de cette première génération de travailleurs.

JEAN-PHILIP MATHIEU

Université du Québec à Montréal

**Carole Gerson, *Canadian Women in Print, 1750–1918*** (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press 2010)

CAROLE GERSON established her authority on early Canadian literature with *A Purer Taste: The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (1989). Around that time, she took a feminist stance in two important articles: in “Anthologies and the Canon of Early Canadian Women Writers,” from *Re(dis)covering Our Foremothers: Nineteenth-Century Canadian Women Writers*, ed. Lorraine McMullen (1990), she demonstrates that the representation of women in the first anthologies of Canadian literature was diminished by the “decanonization” of subsequent editors; in “The Canon Between the Wars: Field-notes of a Feminist Literary Archaeologist,” from *Canadian Canons: Essays in Literary Value*, ed. Robert Lecker (1991), she argues that “one formative dimension in the construction of the Canadian canon has been the valorization of national themes (e.g., man against the land) which implicitly exclude the work of many women writers active before the current era.” (46) After much other work, including collaborations with Veronica Strong-Boag in a critical study (2000) and an edition (2002) of Pauline Johnson, Gerson was involved with the

*History of the Book in Canada* project, which "situates literary and other writing within the larger cycles of authorship, production, dissemination and reception in print." (xii) All of these interests inform Canadian *Women in Print 1750–1918*, which won the Gabrielle Roy Prize in 2010.

The book is a meticulous survey of all aspects of the subject, from the role of women in early Canadian publishing to the interest in the New Woman at the end of the 19th century. Gerson focuses on writing in English, but she is careful to refer to writing in French as appropriate. She provides comparisons with women writers in England and the United States, and a late chapter, "Addressing the Margins of Race," moves away from the assumptions of most of the writers she celebrates in the rest of the book. She discusses both general trends and such surprising details as Marshall Saunders' *Beautiful Joe* (1894), the "first Canadian novel reputed to sell over a million copies" (98), and *Tried! Tested! Proven: the Home Cook Book* (1877), "selling over 100,000 copies by 1885." (74) As before, she challenges the idea that women writers have flourished in Canada: "Canada takes pride in the prominence of its women authors, noting the first Canadian-born author was a woman (Marie Morin), the first novel set in Canada was written by a woman (Frances Brooke), and the first native-born author of a novel was likewise female (Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart). Yet other data belie the notion that the country's print culture has particularly favoured women." (43)

Often using statistics to prove that women succeeded as printers, binders, librarians, teachers, and writers of many kinds, Gerson emphasizes the resistance they faced. Active in Canadian publishing from the beginning, women were often paid less, since they "were not seen as family breadwinners." (7) By the end of

the 19th century, women were prominent among librarians, but "James Bain, the Toronto Public Library's first chief librarian, earned an annual salary of \$2,000, while the women's salaries ranged from \$300 to \$600." (14) Most of the volunteers in Methodist Sunday schools were women, yet "women remained in subordinate positions within the schools' management." (141) The very idea of writing for money was in part determined by a lack of other options: "Chronically undereducated, barred from professional training, and conditioned to remain within the home circle, middle-class women who needed to earn money or desired relatively respectable self-expression exercised their pens, whether in Europe or North America." (91) For Gerson, however, publication is itself suspect, since "presenting her work in the shape of a book both valorizes an author and violates her, simultaneously giving her an enduring identity and subjecting her to discomfiting public scrutiny." (68) The word "violation" seems extreme for such indomitable writers as Susanna Moodie and Margaret Atwood, both mentioned at this point. Gerson's understanding of gender is similarly one-dimensional in her account of the animal story: "Male writers such as Charles G.D. Roberts and Earnest [sic] Thompson Seton, who focused on adventures in the wilderness, were welcomed into the Canadian literary canon, whereas female writers, who stressed children's humanitarian treatment of domestic animals, were sidelined as sentimentalists." (79) More than nationalism was involved in the international success of Roberts and Seton, as Theodore Roosevelt recognized when he debated Roberts at the White House. Returning to the issue of the status of women's writing in Canada, Gerson concludes that "the correct question is not why Canada produces so many women writers, but why writing remains the area in which women have most

commonly achieved recognition,” adding that the “recognition has been partial and limited.” (198)

Gerson contrasts her book with *Silenced Sextet* (1992) by Carrie MacMillan, Lorraine McMullen, and Elizabeth Waterston, and *The Woman's Page* (2007), by Janice Fiamengo: “their authors chose to approach a collective situation through chapter-length studies of individual writers. In a sense, I have done the opposite, with my chapters providing studies of collective situations in which individuals operated and which they helped to shape.” (xiii) Her claim is fulfilled, though the book needs more of the compelling analysis that she provides for such major figures as Pauline Johnson and Sara Jeannette Duncan. It is good to read that the “Patty Pry” letters in the *Halifax Novascotian* in 1826 are “delightfully ironic” (31), but the point would be more compelling with supporting quotations. Gerson states that Agnes Maule Machar was “Victorian Canada’s outstanding female public intellectual” (154), and her “scores of thoughtful and often lengthy articles dealt with topics ranging from higher education for women to addressing the needs of the poor” (153), but no quotations follow. Furthermore, Gerson is vague on the relation of aesthetic value to literary history. She argues that the interests of American readers “encouraged most professional Canadian literary women active after 1880 to aim their sights at the popular market rather than the loftier realms of high modernism” (98–99), but whatever she understands by “high modernism,” it would not have been available in 1880. The point is more than a slip, for the last paragraph of the introduction suggests that women writers would have flourished in Canada if it were not for “high modernism.”

By 1918, women writing in both French and English had drawn the blueprints for the rooms they would occupy in the

nation’s cultural edifices through the 20th century. These structures would undergo frequent renovation as tastes altered; during the mid-20th century era of high modernism, the hegemony of the men’s smoking room would relegate most women to the hallways and closets from which they would burst forth in second-wave feminist writing in the 1960s. But their grandmothers had staked their right of occupancy to the parlour and the study as well as to the kitchen and the nursery, and would not be evicted. (xvi) Recent studies by Brian Trehearne, Ann Martin, Sandra Djwa, Dean Irvine, and others suggest that modernism in Canada was always more conflicted than Gerson implies. Nonetheless, this book will be a useful resource for years to come.

TRACY WARE

Queen’s University

**Barbara Lorezkowski, *Sounds of Ethnicity: Listening to German North America, 1850–1914*** (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press 2010)

THIS FIRST BOOK by Concordia University (Montreal) historian Barbara Lorezkowski offers a new and creative model for thinking about the creation of ethnic identity in North America. Based on an award-winning doctoral dissertation, the study’s innovation lies mainly in the author’s use of “sound” – specifically language usage and music – as a category of analysis, rather than written or spoken ideas about ethnicity itself. The study focuses on two different communities – rural Waterloo County, Ontario, and urban Buffalo, New York – both of which are in the Great Lakes region and thus in the “borderland” between Canada and the US. Both locales saw significant migrations from Germany during the 19th century that resulted in vibrant and self-assured German ethnic communities,



whose culture and identity was publicly displayed at least until World War I.

The book is divided nicely into two parts: Part I on "Language Matters" and Part II on "Music Matters." The three chapters in the first part analyze language usage in the popular press and in public schools. Both arenas were characterized by an ongoing dynamic between the language purism espoused by ethnic élites who wished to reinforce "proper" German vocabulary and grammar, and the "rank-and-file" German immigrants who gradually adopted an idiom that freely mixed German and English vocabulary and syntax in their resultant hybridized speech. Lorenzkowski argues against an interpretation that would equate the decline of a standardized language with the loss of ethnic identity. Rather, she proposes that fluidity characterized both the evolution of the German language in the Great Lakes region and also the ethnic identities that emerged as Germans hovered between the old and new worlds and also across the border between the US and Canada.

The four chapters in Part II discuss music making in the context of large local and cross-border music spectacles. Large-scale singers' festivals were common in both Waterloo and Buffalo from about 1860 through to about 1912, attended by hundreds of Germans from across North America but also enjoyed by local non-Germans. Some of the festivals discussed by the author were called "peace jubilees," which celebrated the 1871 military victory of Germany over France and were thus imbued with nationalist rhetoric. To the extent that German newspapers reported on the jubilee festivals, print and performance came together in the construction and dissemination of ethnic symbols and myth making via music. The sounds of music-making in the context of shared experience as performers and audience also worked to bridge cultural difference

between Germans and Anglo-Saxons; inter-ethnic harmony emerged from their shared enthusiasm for the music. Interestingly, the singers' festivals simultaneously reinforced an identification with the German "fatherland" even while they helped Germans in North America affirm their new hyphenated identities and attachment to Waterloo and Buffalo.

Overall, Lorenzkowski shows that language and music were not just by-products, or "echoes" of ethnicity but were the actual voices with which Germans in North America expressed their identity, as it existed in the imaginary and real spaces between the old and new homelands. Both vehicles of expression allowed immigrants and their descendants to retain their loyalty to and affinity with their German origins, while also allowing their speech and song to evolve as they became Canadian and American. Scholars of migration, ethnicity, and transnational identities have much to learn by considering the novel approach offered here: Lorenzkowski posits ethnicity, not as something defined according to boundaries of group belonging but rather as something that happens, that is performed. Drawing on the growing body of research on performativity and spectacle, the author's interest is directed at the "aural" – what was sounded out and heard – more so than what was "visual." While she utilizes a case study approach based on research in two specific locales, the analysis that ensues is transnational in that the "soundscapes" created by writers, speakers, and musicians went well beyond the local and the national. The international border was a porous one that witnessed visits and exchanges in both directions; the aural culture that arises was shaped by this cross-border interaction.

What emerges in the book is the "sound" of a new and ever-changing German North American ethnicity



that isn't exclusively German, nor is it Canadian or American. While notions about ethnic or cultural "fusion" are increasingly commonplace in considering the development of immigrant identities in both Canada and the US, Lorenzkowski has creatively demonstrated how this fusion occurs through the medium of "sound," resulting in a "symphony of overlapping, harmonious, cacophonous sounds and melodies." (18)

My only critique of the book is that it makes minimal mention of the varieties of German-ness in both communities, in particular the quite different religious affiliations present amongst German immigrants in North America. Were the "sounds" of Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Mennonitism the same? The culturally German Mennonites of Waterloo County, who were the first European settlers to arrive in the area from Pennsylvania at the outset of the 19th century, receive scant attention. Although they were largely eclipsed in numbers by the end of the century by continental German immigrants, their expressions and understanding of both language and music were notably different.

Lorenzkowski's book has many more strengths than weaknesses. The book is beautifully written; the author's prose is as lyrical as the sounds of ethnicity that she describes. It is neatly organized, drawing from a wealth of primary sources, and accompanied by some engaging early photographs.

MARLENE EPP

Conrad Grebel University College  
University of Waterloo

**Alison Marshall, *The Way of the Bachelor: Early Chinese Settlement in Manitoba***  
(Vancouver: UBC Press 2011)

ALISON MARSHALL'S *The Way of the Bachelor* provides the richest and most

well researched study of Chinese settlement in Manitoba to date. Marshall's work moves beyond traditional approaches to studying the Chinese in Canada, which have tended to focus solely on the Chinese experience in British Columbia or in large urban areas. It also moves beyond exploring labour patterns in restaurants and laundries and the development of Chinatowns to explore the private lives of early Chinese settlers. To do this, Marshall explores the everyday practices and rituals that these "bachelor" immigrants used to shape their relationships with each other and with non-Chinese. These practices and rituals were also crucial to identity formation. Marshall maintains that the influence of the Chinese Nationalist League or Kuomintang (KMT) and the spaces provided by Chinese laundries and restaurants were instrumental in shaping and redefining Chinese religious practices and identities. The result of a multi-year study that relied on personal interviews, archival research, and personal participation in community events and rituals, *The Way of the Bachelor* is profoundly insightful.

In her ethnographic and historical study, Marshall suggests that KMT leaders such as Sun Yat-sen became Chinese Canadian gods in a new form of religious practice that linked religiosity to Chinese and Canadian patriotism, morality, and citizenship. Marshall is quick to point out, however, that these new practices did not displace or reject other Chinese religions. Rather, with few public places of worship, other forms of Chinese religious practices moved into the private sphere. The worship of Chinese gods such as Guanggong or the Guanyin Pusa took place in private in the back rooms of cafés, restaurants, and boarding houses. In Manitoba the Chinese did not become less religious as they managed to eke out an existence. Rather, their religiosity

shifted and changed as the circumstances they found themselves in changed. This denotes agency on the part of Manitoba's early Chinese settlers and works to dismantle the stereotype that early settlers were victims of circumstance rather than active participants in the new communities they settled in.

Marshall explains this change through her use of efficacy as a lens of analysis. She asserts that ritual actions performed sincerely and according to established patterns by both human and divine agents have efficacious results. These rituals, however, can be adjusted and changed when they no longer meet human needs. This is important in understanding the religious practices of early Chinese immigrants. Without temples or other public places of worship and without women, who often maintained and practiced religious traditions, early male Chinese settlers to Manitoba were left struggling to make their religious practices fit their everyday needs in a new land. Traditional deities could do little for Chinese settlers in Canada. To fill this gap, men like Sun Yat-sen and early Chinese immigrants to Manitoba were transformed into god-like figures that could be worshipped by Chinese settlers. Gradually, KMT offices came to function as Chinese religious institutions. Marshall's work is the first of its kind to make such a connection in the Canadian context.

Marshall's exploration of Sun Yat-sen as a deity is particularly interesting. According to Marshall, Sun became an important figure in the lives of early Chinese settlers in Manitoba because his life patterns were similar to those of Manitoba's early Chinese. While scholars have explored the importance of the KMT in early Canadian Chinese communities, few have gone as far as Marshall in examining the relationship between Sun and the religious practices of Chinese immigrants in Canada. Sun, argues Marshall,

appealed to many Chinese men in Manitoba because he had also lived outside of China and away from his family. He also came from a small southern village, as did the vast majority of Manitoba's Chinese community. Additionally, Sun was also baptized and could identify himself as a nominal Christian, as would many of the research participants in Marshall's study. Sun's ability to function as a Christian and as a non-Christian, as the situation depended, was copied by Chinese settlers in Manitoba. As nominal Christians, many Chinese men were able to gain limited entrée into white society and enhance their status within the community. As Marshall adroitly points out, being known in this way was efficacious. Marshall's findings in this regard ring true for other Chinese communities outside large urban centres. Her use of efficacy to explain and understand the religious lives of early Chinese settlers to Manitoba demonstrates the adeptness of these settlers in not only making lives for themselves in a foreign land but also making these lives meaningful as well.

Prior to the opening of KMT organizations and buildings, it was Manitoba's Chinese laundries that served to connect Chinese settlers to a homosocial network that would give them the support and resources they needed to make a living. Aside from the obvious harsh living and working conditions, these laundries provided private spaces where traditional events could be hosted and organized. Marshall argues that this would have an important impact on the function of Chinese religious practices, since private altars could be erected in back rooms behind screens and away from the prying eyes of white customers. While white community members assumed that the lack of Chinese public places of worship was further evidence of the supposed heathen nature of the Chinese, the Chinese were quietly practicing

traditional religious rituals and adapting these rituals to fit their new lives. Marshall's discussion of the laundry as a place where religious practices were developed and transformed is an important contribution to the historiography of Chinese laundries in Canada. While Marshall does spend more time discussing the everyday rituals that took place in laundries as opposed to discussing the development of religious rituals, her work is nonetheless impressive for the attention it pays to the function of the laundry as a religious space.

Marshall's analysis of Manitoba's Chinese restaurants and the function of food in the lives of early Chinese settlers also links back to both religious practices and rituals and the development of homosocial relationships. Once again, Marshall peels back the layers of mystery surrounding the private lives of Manitoba's early Chinese to shed light on how religious practices functioned in Chinese communities that did not have public paces of worship. As Marshall correctly argues, meals and food offerings provided opportunities to establish vertical connections between human and divine agents and horizontal connections with fellow settlers. Comparing food to efficacy or ling, Marshall shows that food for early Chinese settlers to Manitoba carried with it important global, religious, and social meanings.

The findings presented in *The Way of the Bachelor* will undoubtedly have important implications for future researchers interested in the history of Chinese settlement in smaller and less urban Canadian towns and cities. Her superb analysis of the functions of Chinese religious practices and their impacts on the lives of early Chinese settlers does Canadian history a great service. Through Marshall's discussion of these practices, we are able to navigate the complex lives led by early Chinese bachelors and gain

valuable insight into the personal experiences of these men. What is more, Marshall's clear passion for the subject she has spent so many years researching is bound to inspire anyone interested in this area of Canadian history. Beautifully written, *The Way of the Bachelor* is also a portrait of Marshall's personal journey as a researcher and academic. Her voice is often heard as she guides the reader through the material and the tone of the book is conversational. Although it is not without faults – such as the elongated discussion of Chinese restaurants, which seems to stray away from the main premise of the book and become bogged down in interesting facts and personalities, or the book's limited contextualization – *The Way of the Bachelor* is an important text that is easily accessible for academics and general readers alike.

KRISTA LI

University of Alberta

**Frances Swyripa, *Storied Landscapes: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Canadian Prairies*** (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press 2010)

*STORIED LANDSCAPES* is an elegantly written, intricately researched study about identity and belonging among major late 19th- and early 20th-century European immigrant groups, and their descendants' "quest for roots" (244), in the so-called Canadian West. This book is inspired by the author's rural Western Canadian childhood, during which she developed a keen curiosity about her "own backyard." (4) Her study is based on the "return" to her rural roots, where she conducted extensive fieldwork in selected localities in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Historian Frances Swyripa, who has written extensively on immigration and ethnicity in Canada, here offers a comprehensive,

comparative introduction to the settlement experiences and prairie heritages of Ukrainians, Mennonites, Icelanders and Doukhobors, as well as Germans, Romanians, Jews, Poles, Swedes, Danes, Finns and Norwegians. Specifically, Swyripa's study contributes a fresh assessment of the construction of regional and national consciousness by analyzing the complex interplay of immigration, rural settlement, heritage, religious faith, material and emotional ties to place, community growth, and collective memory.

One of the book's major strengths is its nuanced engagement with historian Gerald Friesen, who has famously asserted that the idea of a distinct Canadian West may no longer be a useful tool for analyzing contemporary Canadian identities, politics or culture. Swyripa's book counters that the traditional prairie West remains a vital framework for understanding the evolution and expression of ethno-religious identity among pioneers and their descendants in the area. With its thorough examination of the inextricable roles of religion and ethnicity in processes of migration and settlement, family, home, community, and institution building, Swyripa's study raises important questions about the centrality of two key features of European immigrant life in the shaping of a distinctive, collective prairie and Canadian Western identity.

The author opens her study by relaying the memory of a formative childhood pastime – one quite feasibly held in common with all sorts of longtime Canadian prairie dwellers – involving lengthy, countryside drives along dirt roads on Sunday afternoons, interspersed with brief stops at country stores for ice cream, visits to old churches and cemeteries, walks through expansive grain fields, and curiously timid explorations of old, abandoned houses and barns. Swyripa

attests that on such drives the historical existence and lasting visual impression of diverse ethnic and religious groups (by way of distinct place names and building structures) on the countryside became especially clear. The vastness and strangeness of the land somehow became familiar and comforting and fostered a sense of rootedness, of returning to one's own backyard.

Notwithstanding the diversity of people who have historically made their home in this prairie place, and despite the ever-increasing ability of the many urban descendants of the European settler generation to become lost in this rural landscape, a sentimental attachment to the land remains prominent in the ethno-religious identity of immigrants and their descendants to the area. This sense of belonging, at once real and imagined, seems to transcend group boundaries and time, informing the regional self-identity of groups and individuals in the prairie provinces. The remainder of Swyripa's study traces the beginnings and evolution of this persistent and collective sense of rootedness and the meaning of "place" through the lens of pioneer ethno-religiosity. She ends by commenting on the relationship between this local, "physical and emotional intimacy with the land" (74) and the formation of identity among immigrants in the larger Canadian nation state.

Chapter 1 lays the foundation for the study by providing an overview of the prairie homesteading experience during the formative years of large-scale European immigration to western Canada at the turn of the 20th century. Swyripa demonstrates not only that the Canadian West has long been characterized by multiculturalism, but also that the groups of varying ethnic and religious backgrounds shared experiences of migration and settlement and thus came to imagine themselves as part of

one, broader community, with a common heritage and future goal. The second and third chapters consider the multiplicity of ways the immigrant generation “configured” (29) the prairie west with the naming of places after homeland heroes and founding fathers. Early settlers also “Christianized the landscape” (44) by erecting churches and cemeteries. Together, these actions fostered both the physical and the emotional intermingling of old traditions in and on the new land. Chapter 4 contrasts regional and national self-identities, as well as inter-ethno-religious group narratives, to demonstrate that ethnicity and religion played a distinctive role in the way these groups imagined their participation in the building of a larger Canadian society. Chapter 5 adopts a transnational angle showing how diaspora consciousness and cross-border North American religious, economic, and institutional bonds influenced the ways immigrant settler peoples on the prairies developed a sense of “otherness” that informed ethno-religious identity in the Canadian West. (157) The sixth chapter considers the important role of symbols – those transplanted to the prairies from the homeland and those adopted in western Canada – in the building of a distinctive ethno-religious identity. Especially intriguing is Swyripa’s discussion of wheat as both a sacred and a secular symbol, used on a variety of occasions, to express a growing rootedness in the prairies. Finally, Chapters 7 and 8 consider the many ways Canadian-born descendants of the immigrant generation “mobilized their pioneers in intimate and symbolic ways.” (191) Swyripa suggests that the building of museums, efforts to conserve historic sites, the erection of monuments, and participation in religious pilgrimages helped later generations to identify with their beginnings in the Canadian West. She understands these actions as a “return to the land,”

which worked to unite different immigrants and generations and to preserve a particular collective memory and national identity.

Swyripa’s chief finding is that ethnicity and religion, jointly central in the North American lives of European settler peoples, in turn uniquely shaped the prairie region. She also finds that the enduring relevance of the land, by way of an ever-evolving physical and emotional attachment to soil and place common in each group’s narrative, was equally influential in shaping the construction of a collective ethno-religious and specific Canadian identity. The study as a whole might have benefited from greater analytical attention to the central categories of religion and ethnicity and the nature and extent of their inseparability in subsequent, urbanized generations. A fuller engagement with the growing literature on the relationship between secularization, multiculturalism, and a contemporary rupture of ethnic and religious identities would also have been welcomed.

Nonetheless, Swyripa’s sound “storied” approach eloquently and insightfully demonstrates the centrality of both religion and ethnicity in the creation of the Canadian prairie West and peoplehood. The study’s focus on an assortment of group narratives, myths, actors, symbols and memorials, landmarks and rituals, as well as its transnational reach, intergenerational attentiveness, and sentimental, perceptive underpinnings make it a valuable contribution to the ongoing discussion of identity, immigration and culture in Canada.

SUSIE FISHER STOEZ  
University of Manitoba

**Reinhold Kramer and Tom Mitchell, *When the State Trembled: How A. J. Andrews and the Citizens' Committee Broke the Winnipeg General Strike*** (Toronto: University of Toronto 2010)

IT IS DIFFICULT to say something new about the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, that high-water mark of working-class unrest so many scholars of Canadian labour and the left have interrogated. In *When The State Trembled*, Reinhold Kramer and Tom Mitchell deftly and elegantly exceed this objective.

Challenging a prevailing historiography focused on the role of the *state* in crushing the militant and radical moment of 1919, Kramer and Mitchell illuminate the opaque entity known as the Citizens' Committee of One Thousand and its leader, Winnipeg lawyer and one-time "boy mayor" A. J. Andrews, who for nine decades has lurked in the shadows of the historiography of the strike.

Through meticulous use of previously untapped correspondence between Andrews and acting justice minister (and future prime minister) Arthur Meighen, Kramer and Mitchell depart from the usual protagonists of labour and working-class history: the workers, their unions, and their political parties. Their 322-page interpretive narrative, illustrated with photographs and a selection of printed material, is structured chronologically, offering a day-to-day, play-by-play account of a city where class relations had been turned upside down. This detailed narrative illuminates the actions and motivations of both the Citizens and the strikers, augmented by frequent and valuable analytical forays on the role of Andrews and the Citizens during and after the strike.

What emerges is a compelling case study of a local bourgeoisie in a state of crisis, and how it mobilized closely knit

associations and an array of ideological and legal tools to respond to a defiant and mobilized working class. The book provides a powerful, critical, and long-overdue contribution to the fields of labour and working-class history, legal history, and the political history of Winnipeg, Canada, and beyond.

Initially organized to restore the distribution of bread, milk, and petroleum in the strike-bound city (and informed by earlier "Citizens" movements in Winnipeg, Minneapolis, and other North American cities), the Citizens' Committee of One Thousand deployed the universalist language of citizenship to restore prevailing property and labour relations and defeat the potential of the widest sympathetic strike Canada had ever known. Andrews and his cohesive group of three dozen businesspeople challenged the language and logic of class in their newspaper the *Winnipeg Citizen*, appealing to middle-class sympathies in favour of law, order, and "constituted authority," as well as racist stereotypes against Eastern Europeans and "enemy aliens."

As the strike unfolded, Andrews and the Citizens expanded their ambitions and operations, entering into a private correspondence with Meighen that deftly presented and shaped information on the unstable events in Winnipeg. Warning of a Bolshevik conspiracy (at times amplified into an apprehended "insurrection"), which threatened to descend Canada into the red ruin the country was combating militarily in nascent Soviet Russia, Andrews was appointed as Meighen's personal "representative" in Winnipeg. This amorphous role remained ill defined from the middle of the strike to the conclusion of the privately initiated but publicly financed prosecution of the leaders (which cost the federal government nearly a quarter million dollars [in 1919 currency] in legal fees for Andrews, Isaac



Pitblado, and other Citizen-affiliated lawyers).

Rather than Meighen, provincial Attorney General T. H. Johnson, or Winnipeg Mayor Charles Gray directing the state's response to the strike and the alleged seditious conspiracy of its leaders, Andrews and his class-tinged Citizens (note the capitalization) effectively filled the legal and political vacuum occasioned by the strike, delicately positioning themselves as the legitimate custodians of law and order in Canada's third-largest city.

Navigating the distinct interests and responsibilities of local, provincial, and federal authorities, Andrews and his private organization came to wield important state powers (if not entirely in fact, then crucially in appearance). From the decision to deputize special police constables to replace Winnipeg's labour-friendly police force, to persuading federal and provincial authorities against brokering a mediated settlement, to the preparation of warrants for the arrest of the strike's British-born and Eastern European leaders, to the conduct of Immigration Act deportation hearings and Criminal Code sedition trials (based on legislative amendments they had helped to draft), Andrews and the Citizens shaped – at times conducted – the state's response to the Winnipeg General Strike. “When the state trembled in 1919, the Citizens stepped forward to become the principal “subject” shaping the response to the Strike,” Kramer and Mitchell suggest. (180)

Though concealing their aims in the language of citizenship and law and order, Andrews and the Citizens were motivated by distinctly class goals: first, to prevent a negotiated settlement, and, once this objective had been achieved with the leaders' arrests and the Bloody Saturday violence, to mount ideologically charged immigration and criminal proceedings to ensure that Winnipeg's

working class never again found itself in the saddle.

As Kramer and Mitchell note, “the Winnipeg General Strike would determine how large a union could be, and whether general strikes would now become a regular weapon in the arms race between labour and capital.” (25) Like citizens' committees elsewhere in North America, appeals to law and order and “constituted authority” were contradicted by elite-led actions that contributed to violence and disorder.

Kramer and Mitchell write in a provocative and engaging – at times almost colloquial – style, which keeps their narrative accessible and vibrant. While their sympathies are clearly with the workers, they strive to problematize our perception of this famous moment in Canadian history, conceding that R. B. Russell, Sam Blumenberg, and other strike leaders were motivated by a revolutionary intent, even if this did not translate into explicitly insurrectionary acts. They suggest the decision to issue an ultimatum to regular police, who remained on duty under the authority of the strike committee rather than the mayor, and to deputize special constables was a reasonable response to a situation where the legitimacy of law's violence was in flux.

Further challenging the historiography, Kramer and Mitchell reject the either/or dichotomy characterizing many previous studies of the strike, which sought to cast the dispute either in terms of the innocent pursuit of free collective bargaining or alternatively as part of a world-wide revolutionary plot. Their evidence and analysis point to the events in Winnipeg as being located somewhere in the middle, drawing from accuracies and distortions in the Citizens' claims against the strikers.

Touching on the dynamics of gender, which are otherwise absent from the study, the authors suggest that



the Citizens' legal crusade against the British-born strike leaders represented a wider ideological goal: "to defeat these men would be to defeat British radical masculinity." (237)

Could the book be improved? Certainly. Kramer and Mitchell's sources, though largely untouched by previous researchers, are fairly conventional, consisting primarily of correspondence, newspaper reports, and court records. The authors' day-by-day, play-by-play narrative could have been enriched by oral historical accounts and other less common sources to illuminate the social life of Winnipeg, its elite, and its working class during the strike. Moreover, key elements in the prosecution of the strike leaders, such as Bill Pritchard's address to the jury, are not mentioned. But this criticism does not detract from an otherwise meticulously researched and fluidly written and argued book.

Kramer and Mitchell have provided the most comprehensive and original account of the Winnipeg General Strike to date. Boldly departing from the method and accepted wisdoms of Masters, Bercuson, and others, they tell this labour story from the perspective of Winnipeg's ruling class. In the process, Kramer and Mitchell have inverted the methodology – and raised the bar – for the practice of labour and working-class history and legal history in Canada and beyond.

BENJAMIN ISITT

University of Victoria

**Jean Gaudette, *L'émergence de la modernité urbaine au Québec. Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, 1880–1930*** (Québec: Septentrion 2011)

DANS L'ÉDITION du 4 décembre 1903 du *Canada Français* de Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, un journaliste écrit : « Nous sommes dans un siècle de progrès ... ».

(167) Les hommes et les femmes habitant cette municipalité sont en effet témoins et acteurs au tournant du xx<sup>e</sup> siècle, comme ailleurs au Québec, d'une série de transformations de l'espace urbain et de la vie urbaine sur lesquelles porte l'ouvrage de Jean Gaudette. L'auteur se fait ici ethnographe en décrivant les « ... conditions matérielles de la vie des citoyens d'autrefois ... ». (7) Soucieux de rapporter « ce qui a existé » plutôt que « ce qui s'est passé » (8) entre 1880 et 1930, Gaudette offre des chroniques d'une urbanité en évolution. Cette période est marquée par diverses avancées technologiques et de nombreux changements de pratiques, de normes et de représentations, bref par l'émergence d'une « modernité urbaine » sur laquelle, par ailleurs, l'auteur ne s'étend pas au plan conceptuel. Le choix des thématiques abordées est issu des préférences personnelles de Gaudette. Le dépouillement systématique des journaux de Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu est au cœur de sa démarche méthodologique. Il porte sur la presse le regard critique nécessaire afin d'en tirer une interprétation juste. Les procès-verbaux des délibérations du conseil municipal et des annuaires sont également mis à profit, tout comme un grand nombre d'études rassemblées dans une bibliographie touffue.

Dans une introduction aux allures de chapitre contextuel – l'avant-propos constituant sa véritable introduction –, Gaudette présente un historique de Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu et dépeint son évolution sociodémographique durant la période 1880–1930. Il s'attarde également à démontrer son statut de ville par l'analyse des différentes fonctions urbaines en présence. Cet examen lui permet d'annoncer la teneur des douze chapitres composant cet ouvrage de 273 pages fort agréable à lire et fruit d'un élégant travail d'édition. Les trois premiers chapitres sont consacrés à la mobilité de déplacement et aux infrastructures

qui y sont associées. Les questions de l'état et de l'entretien des artères de la municipalité, de l'accroissement de la circulation automobile et des aléas des déplacements pédestres (rues, trottoirs, traverses) sont successivement abordées. L'approvisionnement alimentaire de même que les lieux centraux où il est réalisé, la halle et la place du marché, sont l'objet du quatrième chapitre. L'auteur ouvre, par la suite, une fenêtre sur les services de santé et d'assistance en se penchant sur les œuvres des Sœurs de la Charité à Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (hôpital, hospice, jardin d'enfance, patronage). Les eaux structurent les sixième et septième chapitres, qui portent notamment sur les activités ludiques et commerciales reliées à la rivière Richelieu et sur l'approvisionnement des citadins en eau potable. Des considérations entourant la qualité de l'eau fournie par l'aqueduc, l'auteur passe à celles portant sur l'arrivée de l'électricité au huitième chapitre en traitant, entre autres, des compagnies impliquées et de l'utilisation de l'énergie électrique par la municipalité et ses résidents. Gaudette porte ensuite son regard sur l'aménagement des parcs, leur gestion et leur investissement par les citadins (ch. 9), sur la cohabitation urbaine des Johannais avec les animaux et sur leur rapport à ceux-ci (ch. 10), ainsi que sur la gestion des déchets (ch. 11). Le douzième chapitre est consacré, pour sa part, aux lieux d'inhumation et aux pratiques funéraires.

Cinq chapitres débutent par un survol de l'origine et du développement du sujet abordé durant la période, deux autres, par des « considérations générales ». Bien que cette volonté de mise en contexte soit louable, la frontière est souvent mince entre cet exposé et le corps du chapitre, certains éléments pouvant aisément être échangés. De même, des chapitres ne comptent pas de telle introduction alors qu'elle aurait été pertinente afin de bien ancrer le sujet.

Les chapitres sont divisés en diverses sections thématiques où sont exposés changements, continuités et anecdotes les illustrant. La place occupée par certains sujets apparaît disproportionnée par rapport à leur pertinence. La récolte de la glace sur la rivière Richelieu, abordée au sixième chapitre, en est un exemple. À l'inverse, certaines dimensions d'ordres divers utiles à la compréhension de l'évolution du quotidien urbain, comme l'utilisation domestique des glaciers et la vie paroissiale, sont peu approfondies, résultat d'un choix de l'auteur ou de leur faible présence dans les journaux de Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu.

Grâce à une plume assurée et claire, un appareil iconographique intéressant et pertinent, de même qu'un lexique expliquant les canadianismes et les anglicismes présents dans les nombreuses citations ponctuant l'ouvrage, l'auteur dépeint un portrait détaillé de la vie à Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu entre 1880 et 1930. Le lecteur se représente aisément l'animation des rues, les bruits et les odeurs de la ville, ainsi que les vicissitudes des hommes et des femmes, de tous statuts socioéconomiques, qui l'habitent. Les thématiques abordées ne sont certes pas nouvelles. Gaudette a néanmoins désiré « [...] les explorer d'une façon originale et plus détaillée » (8). Ce désir mène bien, comme il le voulait, à une « [...] reconstitution à petite échelle, minutieuse, «terre à terre», des faits et gestes des citadins d'autrefois et du milieu dans lequel ils évoluaient » (251). Ceci l'amène parfois à des considérations techniques plutôt arides. Certains citoyens illustres reviennent ici et là au fil des chapitres, témoignant de l'implication multiforme des élites locales dans la vie urbaine. Le propos bénéficie de quelques comparaisons régionales, peu à l'échelle québécoise. Il apparaît que la ville de Montréal, dont la sphère d'influence couvre Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, constitue la principale

référence d'acteurs johannais soucieux que leur cité suive le rythme des divers progrès technologiques et changements d'habitudes de vie, bref qu'elle ne reste pas en plan sur le chemin de cette nouvelle modernité.

L'auteur souligne que les sujets abordés dans son ouvrage ont été négligés par les historiens du point de vue qu'il les traite (8), voire qu'ils les mépriseraient (9). L'historiographie de plusieurs d'entre eux, comme la voirie, l'assistance, l'aqueduc ou les parcs par exemple, est relativement dense, et il est vrai que les perspectives adoptées sont, pour la plupart, différentes de celles des ethnographes. Cela ne relève pas du mépris, car dans le but d'étudier les dynamiques du changement social, l'historien ne peut se limiter aux faits divers et aux anecdotes. Les transformations de l'espace urbain et de la vie urbaine dans les petites villes québécoises gagneraient à être étudiées à travers les tensions politiques ou la négociation entre divers groupes d'acteurs, perspectives en marge ou absentes de cet ouvrage. Cela tient en partie à l'objectif initial de l'auteur, en partie aux sources utilisées. Cet ouvrage constitue néanmoins un apport appréciable à la littérature sur la vie urbaine québécoise de la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et du début du XX<sup>e</sup>. On viendra avec profit y puiser des illustrations du quotidien et des informations sur la genèse et l'évolution d'infrastructures et de services publics et privés dans les villes de petite taille, de la médicalisation des soins de santé aux habitudes pour se débarrasser des déchets, des réseaux d'approvisionnement alimentaire à l'impact de l'utilisation de la radio sur les relations de voisinage, et des difficultés des débuts de l'aqueduc à la longue marche vers une cité plus sûre et plus verte.

DALE GILBERT

Centre Urbanisation Culture Société  
Institut national de la recherche  
scientifique

**Peter Campbell, *Rose Henderson: A Woman for the People* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 2010)**

IN *ROSE HENDERSON: A Woman for the People*, Peter Campbell examines the life, politics, and activism of Rose Henderson (1871–1937). Henderson was a prominent advocate for the rights of women, children, and workers, and a woman of whom Campbell himself admits, “the vast majority of Canadians have never heard.” (3) Indeed, Campbell’s desire to reclaim Henderson’s life and legacy from the proverbial dustbin of history fundamentally shapes his study. As he states in the introduction, “The task at hand is to demonstrate that there was something compelling about Henderson, to convincingly argue that she is worth remembering after all this time.” (3) To achieve his goal, Campbell sets out to recount Henderson’s life in a way that allows her “to speak to us in our own day and age, to bring meaning to our lives across the intervening decades since her death.” (3) In the process, Campbell not only details Henderson’s life of public activism but also sheds light on many facets of Canadian history, including feminism, the left, labour and the working class, francophone and anglophone Montreal, and Depression-era Toronto. By examining the particulars of Henderson’s life in relation to such broad historical moments and movements, Rose Henderson highlights the connections, tensions, and contradictions of everyday activist life, and thus makes an important contribution to the historiography on feminism, labour, and the left in Canada.

Campbell divides his study of Henderson into nine chapters, bookended by an introduction and conclusion. He begins by situating his work in relation to previous histories of feminism and socialism in Canada, arguing that Henderson’s life does not fit easily into the existing

historiography, divided as the latter often is into movement-specific studies. In contrast, Campbell argues that Henderson can only be fully understood by linking what he considers to be the disconnected historiographies of Canadian feminism and labour and the left. Specifically, drawing on Barbara Taylor's argument that until 1845 utopian thinkers in England viewed feminism and socialism as fundamentally connected, Campbell's thesis is that Henderson's "life of social activism was a powerful evocation of the 'ideological tie' between the liberation of women and the liberation of the working class." (5)

The book examines this central theme in relation to Henderson's public activism in Quebec and Ontario. Chapters 1 through 4 discuss Henderson's early life and activities in Montreal in the first two decades of the 20th century. Campbell explains how Henderson quickly became known as a prominent activist for the rights of women, children, and workers, through her work as a volunteer with the Children's Aid Society and as a paid probation officer with the Juvenile Court. Campbell maintains that it is difficult to categorize Henderson's politics in this period as exclusively feminist or socialist, as she consistently linked women's and children's issues to a broader critique of capitalism. Chapters 5 and 6 examine Henderson's life in the interwar period, including her activities outside Canada and her participation in the peace movement. Campbell argues that during this period, Henderson's activism was shaped by the notion that "war was capitalism's evil offspring and the inevitable outcome of a male-dominated world. Peace would come when the immorality of militarism was replaced by the morality of international motherhood." (128) Chapters 7 through 9 look at Henderson's life in Depression-era Toronto and her involvement in leftist politics and the municipal school system.

Henderson moved to Toronto in the late 1920s and soon became known as "a lecturer on women, children, drama, and the peace movement, and ... as a Quaker." (152) However, Campbell explains that by the mid-1930s, "Henderson's life of public activism increasingly centred on the Toronto public school system and the lives of disadvantaged children in it," work that put her into contact with a variety of prominent leftist organizations, most notably the Community Party and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. (187) Though her life as a middle-class educational reformer seems a far cry from her early days as a passionate lecturer on the evils of capitalism, Campbell contends that Henderson nevertheless "left an indelible mark on the political culture of her adopted city, as she continued to expose the hypocrisy of the better offs and shone as bright a light as she could on the dark corners of Toronto the Good." (188) Campbell concludes his study by highlighting the legacy of Henderson's life for the cities of Toronto and Montreal in particular and our understanding of the complexities and contradictions of a life of activism on the Canadian left in the early decades of the 20th century in general.

One of the strengths of Campbell's analysis is his careful reading of sources. In addition to incorporating an impressive amount of secondary source material on the many subjects with which Henderson's life intertwined, Campbell uses municipal, federal, and provincial archives, archival collections of various feminist and socialist groups, and numerous women's, labour, and leftist newspapers. Despite the numerous sources he analyzes, Campbell consistently emphasizes the many mysteries and gaps that still exist in our understanding of Henderson's life due to silences or inconsistencies in the historical records. Indeed, in several cases Campbell is careful to point out that without private papers or, in some cases,

accurate historical records, “only speculation is possible.” (11)

Campbell’s work does have some shortcomings. At the book’s conclusion, the reader is left with little sense of who Henderson was as a person beneath her public persona as an impassioned activist. As Campbell explains, this is largely due to a lack of personal papers; however, the limited discussion of Henderson on a more personal level detracts from the strength of the book as a biography. In addition, at times Campbell overstates the case for his study of Henderson, repeatedly stressing that, “few Canadians of her generation so insistently, so insightfully, and so intelligently laid bare the contradictions of patriarchy and the capitalist system.” (127) Campbell’s insistence that Henderson “had few, if any, equals” comes across as somewhat heavy-handed and, ultimately, unnecessary, as Henderson’s life of activism makes for an interesting study in and of itself, regardless of whether it is unique. (5) Moreover, Campbell also argues that the historiographical divide between women’s history and labour history “has made it difficult, if not impossible, to bring to light a life dedicated to the ideological ties between feminism and working-class protest.” (5) Specifically, Campbell claims that “the scorn that many male Marxists had for ‘bourgeois’ women reformers in Henderson’s own day has its echoes in the writing of Canadian labour history, and Canadian women’s history is replete with condemnations of the sexism and misogyny of male-dominated socialist and labour movements that marginalized women and their concerns” (5); however, he does not provide any specific citations to support this assertion. Given that Campbell is attempting to fill what he argues is a gap in the literature, a more thorough historiographical discussion would strengthen his claim. Nevertheless, like its namesake, *Rose Henderson* highlights

the connections and tensions between these movements and thus broadens our understanding of the history of activism, feminism, and labour and the left in Canada.

JULIA SMITH  
Trent University

**Françoise Noël, *Family and Community Life in Northeastern Ontario: The Interwar Years*** (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press 2009)

FRANÇOISE NOËL’S *Family and Community Life in Northeastern Ontario: The Interwar Years* creates a comprehensive history of the city of North Bay, its environs, and its population base. Noël not only creates a solid contextual geography and history, but also delves into several major themes about community life, such as population demographics, unemployment, family constructs, and community development. Noël’s in-depth analysis of the District of Nipissing transforms her micro-history into a bold statement about rural and urban life in Ontario’s northern frontier during the early 20th century.

The inclusion of maps and charts to break down statistics is one of the book’s strongest features as Noël establishes the text’s historical context. The maps and charts are not only strategically placed, but also clearly disseminate complex information, such as population increases and several demographic statistics: country of origin, ethnic origin, and religious background. Through visual aids, Noël tracks trends in population changes as migrant workers from Ontario and Quebec settled along the Ottawa and Mattawa Rivers. As the District of Nipissing experienced a population boom due to industrial expansion, the city of North Bay quickly emerged as the region’s largest community and became

a major northern Ontario economic centre. Accordingly, North Bay's larger population led to greater diversity and higher numbers of immigrant workers.

Even though Noël offers a thorough and comprehensive history of North Bay and its surroundings, her text is not without fault. Noël provides several stories through interviews with North Bay and area residents. However, in the process, Noël's mention of the Dionne family gets lost amidst a flurry of other anecdotes. Noël mentions the Dionne family briefly throughout her text, beginning with an introduction and alluding to several milestones in their history. Because the Dionne family, famous for having living quintuplets, quickly became a symbol of family life in Northern Ontario during the interwar period, Noël could have turned her discussion of the Dionne family into a major case study of larger families during the interwar era, the social support they needed and received, and their legacy for the community of North Bay.

Noël's analysis of community life in North Bay discusses several major themes: ethnicity, unemployment, religion, education, and leisure. Outside of the city of North Bay, the region's population base lacked major diversity due to the available unskilled jobs in natural resource-based industries. As Noël states, a striking majority of the population was of Western European descent, particularly French and English, and belonged to a Christian-based religion. Within the city, however, significantly more immigrant workers resided, including Asians, Italians, and Scandinavians. Regardless of ethnic diversity, the majority of North Bay's population spoke only English or French. The growing rift between French- and English-speaking residents undoubtedly dominated community life during the interwar years.

Contrary to traditional stereotypes about the Canadian North, the lumber industry, rather than the fur trade, was this region's main attraction for migrant workers during the late 19th century. Accordingly, because of the region's economic dependence on natural resource-based industries, unemployment rates soared during the interwar era due to decreasing market values and demands. Noël explains thoroughly how English-speaking residents seemed the least affected by the Depression, as they held more educated, skilled positions. However, unskilled working-class French, Italian, and immigrant workers were often uneducated and felt the brunt of the nation's economic downturn of the 1930s. In addition to her analysis of unemployment rates, Noël spends a great deal of time explaining how unique neighbourhoods grew because of ethnic and economic bonds, and how family constructs and community life differed between neighbourhoods.

One of the major influences in the District of Nipissing's development was the Church and its role in developing strong family values and personal virtues. As commonly seen in early 20th-century rural towns, the Church played a significant role in the community. Rite of passage rituals educated the region's residents about virtues, religions, and living a good life. These rituals had an air of extravagance and brought numerous members of the community together to celebrate personal milestones, including baptism, communion, and marriage. Due to the significance of faith and the Church in community life, the Dioceses of Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, and Thunder Bay spent thousands of dollars building new places of worship and support in communities throughout Northern Ontario. As seen with the workforce, churches were often segregated by ethnicity and



language. The education system differed little.

While Noël's overview of the Church during the interwar period does not thoroughly differentiate between urban and rural examples, her analysis of the education system not only describes both French and English separate and public schools, but also creates a clear image of the role of education in rural and urban communities. One of Noël's most compelling arguments is her analysis of *delayed responsibility*. Delayed responsibility refers to the increase in secondary and post-secondary school enrolment. Education became a significant priority for employment. Negatively, however, as Noël reveals through interviews with locals, seeking a post-secondary education distanced families and changed the way family members interacted with one another.

One of the final aspects of community life and development that Noël addresses is the role of sport and leisure. She first mentions how extra-curricular activities became an increasingly important aspect of the daily lives of North Bay's youth. The region's youth were not the only ones to enjoy leisure activities. Various church parishes and social clubs across the region hosted events throughout the year: Women's Auxiliary thanksgiving dinners in October, the Knights of Columbus father and son dinners in March, and so on. Movies and community dances also became prominent in North Bay during the interwar years. Team sports were another addition to daily life and also allowed women to participate. Bicycling, softball, and baseball were prominent in the summer, while hockey was a winter pastime. Arenas were built in several communities, amateur teams received local funding, and teachers volunteered to coach and referee school games. Sports, as well as other leisure activities, quickly

became an integral part of community life and brought all members of the community together.

Noël's *Family and Community Life in Northeastern Ontario*, therefore, touches on several major themes about community and family life in Northern Ontario, including population demographics, unemployment, religion, education, and leisure. Through her use of illustrations, interviews, and primary research, Noël creates a fully comprehensive history of North Bay's infancy and its development. Noël's text is a fantastic addition to the library on Northern Ontario history, not only because of her thorough analysis of community life, but also because the themes she presents provide insight into life across Northern Ontario.

DAVID ALPHONSE BLANCHARD  
Lakehead University

**Benjamin Isitt, *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948–1972*** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2011)

BENJAMIN ISITT'S *Militant Minority* takes its title from the work of the late labour historian David Montgomery. The term describes those workers who have historically "endeavoured to weld their workmates and neighbours into a self-aware and purposeful working class." (3) Isitt combines political economy, labour, regional, and a good dose of 1960s history in telling the story of those men and women who provided "the bridge between the 'Old Left' and the 'New Left' in Cold War BC." (4)

Isitt begins by outlining the political economy of post-war British Columbia (BC). Resource extraction constituted the bulk of economic activity. The state served capital by providing infrastructure, enacting management-friendly



labour laws, and granting a social wage in the form of healthcare, education, and social services to an increasingly mobilized working class. BC's Communist Party greatly contributed to this mobilization. The Party exercised influence far beyond its numbers in shaping the province's labour movement. It also built the province's first post-war peace movement, garnering thousands of signatures for the 1950 Stockholm Peace Appeal, and was the first to draw attention to the war in Vietnam. But the Party's failure to apply the same antimilitarist criteria to the Soviet Union as it did to the United States led to "ideological and organizational crises." (66) While Conservatives and Liberals had dominated the province prior to the war, an increasingly popular Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) moved them to form coalition governments until traditional party support imploded in 1952. But instead of electing the CCF, voters opted for the conservative populism of Social Credit, which ruled without interruption for two decades.

Other left formations emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Prominent were those collectively referred to as the new peace movement. These included the Voice of Women, the Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards, and its campus counterpart, the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (as well as the latter two's successor organizations). In 1961 the League for Socialist Action (LSA) resulted from the merger of pre-existing Trotskyist groups. All of these organizations participated in growing anti-Vietnam War protest, which in turn generated other social movements.

Throughout the 1960s breakaway industrial unions and growing public sector unions characterized much of BC's labour movement. Increasing numbers of BC locals seceded from internationals, forming militant independent organizations

such as the Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers, the Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers, and the Pulp, Paper, and Woodworkers of Canada. Burgeoning public sector unions representing healthcare workers, teachers, and others added to this new militancy. Working-class mobilization and the new social movements played a vital role in BC's 1972 New Democratic Party (NDP) electoral victory.

Isitt credits structural changes in BC's economy and its working class for the brief interruption in Social Credit rule. (196) But the NDP victory can be as evenly accredited to a split in bourgeois political formation as to the efforts of a militant minority. Isitt acknowledges that a revived Conservative Party took nearly thirteen per cent of the vote in 1972, allowing the NDP to achieve victory with almost 40 per cent. (194) But between 1949 and 1972 CCF/NDP support remained fairly constant, neither dropping below 30 per cent nor breaking its 40 per cent ceiling. The increase in NDP support between the 1969 and 1972 elections constituted less than six per cent yet was enough to win. Sixty per cent of British Columbians voted for parties to the right of the NDP, over 40 per cent for parties to the right of the Liberals. Even at the head of a majority government, the NDP still represented a militant minority.

The book's greatest strength lies in its analysis of the contributions of the Communist Party to BC's labour movement. The Party's role cannot be understated. Throughout the 1950s communists led the province's second and third largest unions, Mine Mill and the United Fishermen respectively, as well as several smaller unions. (197) While acknowledging these contributions, Isitt refutes the mythology of rank-and-file democracy, indicating how the Party routinely meddled in internal union

affairs, especially regarding the hiring of staff. (55) But ultimately, says Isitt, “the Communist Party, warts and all, helped sustain an oppositional working-class culture in Cold War BC.” (83)

One of the primary challenges of this book lies in its use of the terms Old and New Left. Often such terms confuse more than explain ideological formation and development. Where and how they are used often determines their meaning. For instance, how E. P. Thompson might have defined a new left after departing the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1956 likely differed from how Tom Hayden employed the term at Port Huron, Michigan, in 1962. While acknowledging the work of Ian McKay and Maurice Isserman, Isitt never defines or identifies the characteristics that constitute old or new left. Nor does he cite the above historians in offering their interpretations. The author merely agrees with them that old and new left exist on a continuum, that they are not divided by an ideological rupture. (6) But it remains worthwhile to locate these groups on this continuum. For instance, no one would disagree that the Communist Party was and remains an old left party. But what about the CCF/NDP? Despite its 1961 name change it is still old. The Trotskyist movement presents a more interesting challenge. Having existed in various manifestations since the Stalin-Trotsky split, the movement still shares many characteristics with its Stalinist rival, and yet made tremendous contributions to the antiwar movement, a phenomenon largely (and often inaccurately) associated with the new left. Absent is an indication as to where on this continuum the left has moved. Did it become more democratic, or democratic in a different way? Did it become less socialist, or simply more pragmatic?

Similarly, Isitt’s chapter on “Other Lefts” is perhaps his most rewarding and at the same time most frustrating,

especially his treatment of Trotskyism and its relationship with the NDP and the antiwar movement. Given the dearth of published material on post-war Canadian Trotskyism, *Militant Minority* is invaluable in revealing some of the intricacies of Canada’s other historic communist movement. But Isitt merely whets the appetite, leaving the reader hungry for a more sufficient examination of the Trotskyist movement’s contributions to BC’s political landscape, especially in the 1960s. More critically, given the foundational role of anti-Vietnam War protest in paving the way for later social movements, more attention could be given to this subject. Much of what Isitt offers on the antiwar movement is convoluted and sometimes inaccurate. For instance, Isitt argues that Canadian opposition to the war emanated from opposition to Canadian complicity in America’s war effort. Evidence, however, suggests the opposite. While Isitt cites a 1963 Communist Party document condemning Canadian support for America’s war, such statements remained secondary in mobilizing Canadians compared to the napalming of South Vietnamese villages and the bombing of cities in the North. Similarly, the author inaccurately states that the Gulf of Tonkin Incident – America’s rationale for escalating its war – took place in 1965. (129) (It was 1964.) Isitt also credits the NDP for opposing the war earlier than it actually did, referring to “a resolution opposing the war” passed at the party’s July 1965 federal convention. (185) But one of the sources that Isitt cites, a 1971 article in the Trotskyist journal *Labor Challenge*, indicates that the resolution meekly called for negotiations rather than the withdrawal of US troops, and that as late as September 1965 NDP Deputy Leader David Lewis still defended the presence of US troops in Vietnam, equally blaming Hanoi for the continuing conflict. Isitt also ignores the tremendous

influence of American antiwar organizations on the Canadian movement. He is, however, absolutely correct in placing the Trotskyists at the centre of BC's antiwar movement. He quotes the late Hilda Thomas, one-time leader of the Vancouver Vietnam Action Committee: "I was the token non-Trotskyist chair of that committee." (129)

This is a relatively short book, despite its bulk. Only 203 of its 458 pages constitute text. The rest is consumed with appendices, notes, bibliography and index. The work is certainly well documented, as 146 pages of notes and a 36-page bibliography attest to. In addition to oral history interviews, Isitt has consulted numerous archival collections, government documents, and union and radical newspapers. He also uses several on-line tools, including the Socialist History Project from which he has accessed valuable sources. The book also features 24 pages of photos, though without credits.

*Militant Minority* is an important contribution to Canadian labour, social, and regional history. Those interested in the post-war history of British Columbia, labour unions, radicalism, and the growing literature on Canada's 1960s will benefit from this book. It is written in accessible language and would be appropriate for both the undergraduate and graduate classroom.

CHRISTOPHER POWELL  
Edmonton, AB

**Louis Delagrave, *Histoire des relations du travail dans la construction au Québec*** (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval 2009)

L'AUTEUR EST ÉCONOMISTE de formation et occupe un poste de direction en recherche à la Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ) où il oeuvre depuis de nombreuses années.

La publication de cette recherche est une initiative de cette institution et elle vise à souligner le 40<sup>e</sup> anniversaire du fameux Bill 290 (*Loi sur les relations du travail dans l'industrie de la construction*, 1968).

L'ouvrage expose l'évolution de ce régime particulier (sectoriel) de relations de travail et de conditions de travail et d'emploi (i.e. main-d'œuvre) en intégrant ses dimensions économiques, sociales et politiques depuis ses origines lointaines (début XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle) jusqu'en 2008.

La présentation matérielle de cette publication est très réussie. On y retrouve nombre de photographies d'archives et de reproductions de documents d'époques qui agrémentent la lecture du texte par ailleurs jalonné de sous-titres qui soutiennent l'intérêt. En outre, l'ouvrage est parsemé de 44 tableaux statistiques et d'encadrés thématiques, tous fort pertinents. Précédé d'une table des matières très détaillée, l'ouvrage se termine par une bibliographie assez exhaustive et un index des noms cités.

Fondamentalement, l'exposé adopte une structure chronologique qui donne lieu à une périodisation conforme aux grands tournants de l'évolution du régime. Le premier chapitre intitulé « Retour aux sources », remonte à l'apparition des premières associations syndicales puis met en évidence l'élaboration du régime fondateur que fut celui des décrets de convention collective (1934). L'analyse est pénétrante et doit beaucoup aux travaux de Gérard Hébert. On aborde ensuite le phénomène de la rivalité syndicale CSN-FTQ des années 1960, reflétant une concurrence pour l'emploi et une rivalité Montréal-régions, qui aboutit à l'adoption du Bill 290, une formule originale reconnaissant le pluralisme syndical et la négociation sectorielle.

Le second chapitre, « 1969–1975 : le Bill 290 à l'épreuve », nous fait revivre les premiers pas du régime marqués

par l'enjeu du placement syndical, la provincialisation des négociations, la « sentence Gold » (reconnaissant une forme d'ancienneté, sans lendemain), la création de la Commission de l'industrie de la construction (CIC, organisme paritaire), la scission CSN-CSD, le célèbre Bill 9 (validation rétroactive d'une convention collective non conforme à la loi), l'exacerbation des luttes intersyndicales avec, comme point d'orgue, le saccage de la Baie James. Le tout se termine avec la création de la Commission Cliche, le dépôt de son rapport et les suites législatives qui lui furent données [étatisation de la CIC qui devient l'Office de la construction du Québec (OCQ) ; création par voie législative d'une association patronale unique, l'Association des entrepreneurs en construction du Québec, un précédent qui, aujourd'hui, serait questionnable au plan des Chartes; tutelles syndicales; encadrement du délégué de chantier; etc.].

Le troisième chapitre s'intitule opportunément « 1975–1985 : une industrie sous tutelle ». Cette période est notamment marquée par le blocage des négociations et, en conséquence, par des interventions gouvernementales répétées (décrets), par l'adoption d'un règlement de placement, par la scission Conseil provincial du Québec des métiers de la construction-FTQ et par les problématiques du travail au noir et de l'artisan.

Le quatrième chapitre, « 1986–1992 : le pari de la maturité », moins dense et visant une période plus difficile à définir, s'intéresse à des projets qui, tout en mobilisant des énergies, ne connaîtront pas de résultats concluants, à savoir la déréglementation et la revendication d'un régime de sécurité du revenu. On note cependant une rentrée en grâce progressive du paritarisme avec la création de la CCQ succédant à l'OCQ.

Le cinquième et dernier chapitre, « 1993–2008 : place aux conventions collectives », s'ouvre sur le Sommet sur l'industrie de la construction amenant, inexplicablement, le Projet de loi 142 (déréglementation d'une partie substantielle du secteur résidentiel qui sera rapidement abolie par le gouvernement suivant, et, surtout, instauration d'un régime de négociations de conventions collectives par secteurs qui, lui, demeurera). Il se poursuit avec l'analyse de la singularisation du secteur résidentiel. Le reste de la période, dite de consolidation, est caractérisé par des problématiques récurrentes telles que l'assujettissement de la machinerie de production et les querelles Québec-Ontario en matière de mobilité de main-d'oeuvre. On rappelle la passation avec succès du test des Chartes par le régime (adhésion syndicale obligatoire).

Parallèlement à l'exposé chronologique, l'ouvrage est jalonné de tableaux et d'encadrés s'intéressant à divers thèmes qui transcendent la vie du régime. Ces insertions regroupent des informations relatives aux problématiques les plus importantes du régime dans une perspective qui fait bien voir les ruptures et les continuités. Ces compléments expliquent de façon accessible des questions parfois complexes. Ainsi, simplement à titre d'illustration, on retrouvera sous ces formats l'évolution du champ d'application de la loi, celle de la réglementation sur le contrôle quantitatif de la main-d'oeuvre, sur le placement et sur les certificats de compétence, celle des négociations Québec-Ontario sur la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre, etc. D'autres tableaux récapitulent la chronologie, entre autres, de la représentativité syndicale, des nombreuses rondes de négociations et de l'activité législative et de l'intervention gouvernementale par ministre du Travail en titre (synthèse particulièrement réussie). Enfin, chaque

période étudiée fait l'objet d'une mise en contexte économique, ce qui, souvent, explique bien des événements ou comportements.

L'ouvrage se termine sur un « Bilan » intitulé « La réalité derrière les clichés » qui s'attache à réhabiliter le régime souvent stigmatisé par des préjugés (violence, intervention gouvernementale systématique, coûts des salaires, inaccessibilité à l'emploi, etc.).

Dans l'ensemble, cet ouvrage est une réussite et un apport précieux. Il est accessible autant au profane qui désire comprendre qu'à l'initié qui désire se remémorer ou rassembler des informations souvent éparées.

L'ouvrage se mérite cependant quelques critiques. Je m'en tiendrai à trois.

Pour avoir été impliqué dans le milieu des relations de travail de cette industrie, je puis dire que l'index des noms cités (plus de 200) est particulièrement exhaustif. J'ai toutefois constaté l'absence de toute référence à Michel Bourdon qui, président de la CSN-Construction de 1973 à 1979, fut un des protagonistes les plus médiatisés de cette époque turbulente et le principal démarcheur syndical amenant le gouvernement à adopter un règlement sur le placement. La thèse de l'omission involontaire serait tout simplement incroyable. À ma connaissance, pour l'époque concernée, un seul nom d'acteur de premier plan a été oublié et c'est le sien. Inexplicable et gênant...

Sur un plan général, la dimension politique de l'analyse me semble incomplète. L'industrie de la construction est radicalement politisée, à bien des égards, et ne pas le faire ressortir, c'est se priver d'un éclairage essentiel. Il fallait dire que l'État est un investisseur majeur de l'industrie, qu'il est directement et indirectement une partie intéressée (routes, hydro-électricité, construction

institutionnelle). Il l'est également comme subventionnaire de grands projets confiés à l'entreprise privée ou lorsqu'il cherche à attirer des investisseurs. Il y a aussi le gouvernement et le parti politique au pouvoir qui n'est pas indifférent aux doléances des députés (frontaliers par exemple lorsqu'il s'agit de la mobilité interprovinciale de la main-d'œuvre), non plus qu'au support électoral que certains acteurs de relations du travail peuvent lui apporter (il en fut question devant la Commission Cliche et il en sera peut-être question devant la Commission Charbonneau). Cela aussi permet de comprendre pourquoi il est intervenu dans les relations du travail en plusieurs occasions.

Enfin, à une vingtaine de reprises au moins, on fait référence à l'intervention des tribunaux en certaines circonstances. On permettra à un juriste de souligner qu'il aurait été appréciable que les références aux jugements, les plus marquants du moins, figurent en notes de bas de page.

CAROL JOBIN

Université du Québec à Montréal

**Diane Crocker and Val Marie Johnson, eds., *Poverty, Regulation & Social Justice: Readings on the Criminalization of Poverty* (Winnipeg and Black Point: Fernwood Publishing 2010)**

WITH THE DEMISE of the National Council of Welfare and the long form census it is even more critical that we have books that document the lives of the marginalized. This is precisely what *Poverty, Regulation & Social Justice: Readings on the Criminalization of Poverty* attempts to do. And for the most the authors admirably succeed. In four important ways this edited collection moves forward debates about poverty.

First, this collection is vital because it links poverty with criminalization in a way that much of the literature on welfare, retraining, and inequality does not. This is particularly important in the shadow of the Harper Government's crime agenda when increasing numbers of our citizens are deemed criminal and severely punished. We see how neo-liberal policies support market capitalism and ensure that those who remain outside the labour market (as squatters, beggars and welfare recipients) are excessively punished. Through case studies of the homeless in Vancouver, the squatters in Ottawa, and the squeegee kids in Toronto we see a growing pattern of how local police forces harass, charge and imprison those who are not in the workforce. Through case studies of welfare fraud in Alberta and single-mom welfare recipients in Nova Scotia we also see how state administrators investigate and punish, often in similar ways to the police. We also see how the public discourse is shaped to ensure that those who are marginalized from the workforce are blamed for this marginalization, thus justifying any heightened state coercion.

Second, this collection appreciates how racism accounts for who amongst the poor are criminalized. In particular, Grace-Edward Galabuzi's chapter "The Intersecting Experience of Racialized Poverty and the Criminalization of the Poor" is a must-read for all scholars of social work, sociology, politics and gender studies. Too often we have ignored the profound ways race and poverty merge, and specific racialized groups, i.e. African Canadian and First Nations citizens, have been discriminated against in the labour market, on welfare, and on our streets. Galabuzi attempts to rectify this glaring omission.

A third strength of this collection is that it includes the voices of the

marginalized. We hear from Wayne MacNaughton who recounts his experiences of homelessness in Halifax and how the bus station has established new rules that prevent the homeless from using the station's lockers. And we also hear from Greg X, a homeless youth, who provides an important class analysis of how the wealthy can drink alcohol in public but the poor cannot. These are important contributions that enhance our understanding of how poverty and criminalization are experienced in the everyday.

Lastly, the collection addresses some complexities that occur when gender, race and class privileges and oppressions interweave. Galabuzi addresses how race and masculinity come together so that low-income African Canadian men experience gender privilege at the same time as race and class oppression. Amanda Glasbeek appreciates how women's anxieties about public safety can justify further demonization and criminalization of poor people eking out a living in the streets. These are important contributions that dispel the myth that all are equally criminalized in their poverty and encourage social justice leaders to think carefully about how to frame campaigns that may promote safety for some people at the expense of others.

Of course with any book on poverty I want even more. I would like to see the important critical race analysis developed in Galabuzi's chapter to be central to many of the other authors in this collection. Except for Galabuzi there is no mention of the legacy and current practices of colonialism that deeply affect the degree that First Nations peoples experience poverty. Surely we need to do better than make a passing reference to those who are most impoverished. And I'm still waiting for a book, and a social justice movement, that entwines issues of sexuality with poverty. When will we address



the fact that there are a number of queer citizens who do not fit the DINK stereotype but are part of the working poor as sex workers, shelter workers, and otherwise impoverished?

I'd like to see more of the sophisticated analysis of both Galabuzi and Glasbeek in their unpacking of gender, class, and race privilege as well as oppression to provide a more nuanced understanding of how identities of privilege and oppression complicate social justice politics.

So I'm hopeful that this is the beginning of a new conversation about the criminalization of poverty – a conversation that needs to grow to more fully encompass the lives of all those impoverished by race, class, gender and sexual identities. And I'll do my part to promote this conversation by using this collection as a central text in my courses about inequality.

MARGARET HILLYARD LITTLE  
Queen's University

**David Hood, *Down But Not Out: Community and the Upper Streets of Halifax, 1880–1914* (Winnipeg and Black Point: Fernwood Publishing 2010)**

DESPITE HALIFAX'S historical importance as a regional centre of economic and political activity, the city has received relatively little attention from social and urban historians in the last decade. David Hood's *Down but Not Out* is one of the few recent works to attempt to remedy this paucity of scholarship. The book is a study of poverty and community in Halifax in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and is organized loosely around the lives of five Haligonians who consistently were in conflict with the law. Rather than being a detached academic history of Halifax at the turn of the century, *Down but Not Out* is a defence of the dignity of the poor and a call for

compassionate tolerance and inclusion of the destitute in the 21st century.

Hood opens with a discussion of Judith Fingard's 1989 *The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax*. In a book aimed at a general audience, the emphasis on historiography so early in the work is a welcome surprise, though I wish the author had engaged with a wider variety of Canadian scholarship instead of concentrating so heavily on a single book written twenty years ago. Hood takes exception to Fingard's suggestion that the poor were culturally and socially different from their respectable working-class neighbours. He argues that Fingard "ascribed agency to her underclass subjects, but she seems to see them as striving to operate outside of prevailing morality rather than attempting to fit in the best they could." (9) Yet, much of Hood's evidence actually supports Fingard's argument, particularly his documentation of his subjects' long-term and sustained involvement in the informal and illicit economies of urban Halifax. While there is much to be critiqued in Fingard's interpretation of the character of the culture of the urban poor – particularly her use of the now-out-of-vogue sociological category of "underclass" – her suggestion that many of the city's poor did not share an identical moral and political outlook with their middle-class neighbours does not deserve Hood's outright dismissal. Certainly, her work would have benefited from more nuance, but nothing in the work of either Fingard or Hood constitutes evidence that most of Halifax's poorest residents simply wanted to be culturally middle-class and Hood's own account obscures the culture of the very people he is hoping to rescue from the condescension of history.

Hood's insistence on attacking Fingard's interpretation of the values of Halifax's destitute is as much a political and ethical concern as it is a



historiographical one. He argues that it is important to “recognize [the extremely poor’s] efforts to follow prevailing norms and to empathize with their plight and in doing so generate at least the possibility of recognition and empathy in the present.” (14) What Hood leaves unsaid is his problematic assumption that the reader’s empathy for the turn-of-the-century poor is predicated on a sharing of values and goals, ignoring entirely the possibility of seeking solidarity despite the radical differences between the reader and the book’s subjects.

Central to Hood’s argument is the assumption that the residents of Halifax’s upper streets constituted a coherent community, but the author never provides a clear definition of what is meant by “community.” On an empirical level *Down But Not Out* lacks the geographic, demographic and economic details that one would expect from a book about a single Halifax neighbourhood, and the social and physical boundaries of the upper streets are never clear. More fundamentally, Hood never interrogates the historical and theoretical meanings of “community.” Similarly, the question of spatial differentiation and slum formation – all theoretical territory well mapped by critical geographers – is not at all discussed. The reader is left to guess at how one part of the city became home to so many brothels, bars and derelict buildings. While it is unfair to expect popular histories to delve into theoretical problems concerning spatiality and community, it would have been beneficial to jettison much of the historiographical detail and instead include at least some explanation of what was meant by terms like community, exclusion and, even, upper streets.

Hood’s prose is accessible, engaging, and passionate. This is not a book meant to be read with cold objectivity or academic detachment, and the author’s

commitment to humanizing his subjects is obvious and effective. Unfortunately, the structure and organization of *Down but Not Out* makes it difficult to trace the actual narrative of the individual lives that Hood sets out to document. The book bounces between narrative and analysis, with the narrative itself split across too many subjects. As a result, the years and events in the lives of Hood’s subjects never coalesce into a coherent whole. Much of this problem is the result of the limited sources available on the lives of the extreme poor, and Hood’s attempt to recover the stories of people like Thomas Berrigan and Sarah Shepherd is commendable. However fractured, the anecdotes about the lives of the poor fill in many of the gaps concerning daily life in Halifax’s poorest neighbourhoods, and Hood does succeed in providing the reader with a visceral understanding of turn-of-the-century poverty.

*Down but Not Out* is a book that rightly will find enthusiastic readership among Halifaxians with an interest in reading about the city’s less famous residents and events. The reasonable length of the book and its quick prose and clear style will also make Hood’s text a solid addition to the syllabus of undergraduate courses on Atlantic Canadian history.

CHRISTOPHER L. PARSONS

Trent University and  
Dalhousie University

**Joan Sangster, *Through Feminist Eyes: Essays on Canadian Women’s History*** (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press 2011)

JOAN SANGSTER’S new volume of her collected essays is a rich and thoughtful addition to women’s history. It includes substantial original material as well as ten previously published articles, carefully chosen to reflect “the changing

concerns and debates in women's history." (2) Organized chronologically and grouped into five thematic sections, the articles span over three decades of historical scholarship from the late 1970s to the present. In a long and amply annotated introductory essay written expressly for the collection, Sangster offers a sweeping interpretative overview of the shifting course of Canadian women's history since the 1960s. She also prefaces each of the book's five sections with an extended critical commentary on her own essays and the intellectual and political moment in which they were written.

The subjects Sangster engages with range broadly. There are essays on strikes and women's labour activism in turn-of-the-century Toronto; the Canadian Communist Party and the woman question in the 1920s; corporate paternalism and female wage-earner consciousness in mid-20th-century Peterborough; cross-cultural encounters between white and Inuit women in the Canadian North in the 1940s and 1950s; women's letters to Canada's Royal Commission on the Status of Women in the late 1960s; the "labouring bodies" of Indigenous and white women "skinning, sewing, and selling" in the fur industry in the 1950s; and women, criminalization, and the law in Ontario.

Yet despite the varied subject matter, Sangster's consistent concern in these essays is with unequal relations of power and how such relations are experienced and sustained. These are the "feminist eyes" through which history is viewed. As she elucidates in the introduction, what matters is not the distinction between "women's history" and "gender history" but whether what we practice is "feminist history." For Sangster, feminist history means, among other things, "understanding the 'why' of women's agency, analyzing women's inequality where it existed, and probing the multiple power

relations that have created and sustained social inequalities." (4)

Sangster's deep engagement with the theoretical debates within women's history since the 1960s is evident throughout the collection. In many of the essays Sangster passionately defends her "theoretical proclivities favouring feminist historical materialism." (392) Her general framework is thus a co-mingling of Thompsonian cultural Marxism (with its appreciation for the particularities of time and place and the agency of individuals) and feminism (with its attention to multiple sites of exploitation and the differentially situated positions of men and women). She can be quite critical of post-structuralism, particularly the writings of Joan Scott, but she also draws fruitfully on Foucault and a wide range of other postmodern theorists in analyzing the meaning and significance of historical sources.

The essays themselves skillfully combine her theoretical and political concerns with empirically grounded history. Each essay opens with a broad and pointed critical review of the relevant theoretical and historical literature. A thickly researched historical case study follows. Regardless of her evidentiary base – whether the dozens of interviews she conducted in Peterborough, the legal records underpinning her tales of female criminal defendants, or the travel diaries of sojourning white women in Northern Canada – Sangster scrutinizes her sources with keen intelligence, ever attentive to their limits and possibilities. Indeed, her commentary on the process of writing and researching history, its joys as well as its frustrations, is a kind of metanarrative accompanying the historical tales she constructs. Many of the essays would be excellent for teaching precisely because of their critical engagement with a wide range of scholarly literature and their astute commentary on historical method and craft.

Sangster closes the volume with one of her most impressive recent articles, "Making a Fur Coat: Women, the Labouring Body, and Working-Class History," first published in 2007. The essay is a superb theoretical addition to "body studies," rightly noting the need for attention to the labouring body as well as the erotic body; the producer as well as the consumer. It also manages to convey three distinct worlds of female labour. We are taken first to the Subarctic and Arctic North where Sangster uncovers the hidden history of Aboriginal and Inuit women's labour in fur extraction. The essay then travels to the urban manufacturing firms filled with fur sewing women, largely Eastern European Jewish immigrants, and lastly to the retail spaces where women engage in the "bodily performance" of fur selling. (408) Sangster is masterful in capturing the distinct materialist dynamics of each of these labour exchanges and the ways in which gender, class, and other ideologies structure the work and social relations.

Another standout essay for this reader was "The Softball Solution: Female Workers, Male Managers, and the Operation of Paternalism at Westclox, 1923–1960," published originally in 1993. By the late 1980s, Sangster notes, she had moved "from writing about the hope of socialist opposition" to writing about "class incorporation" (127), and, not surprisingly, she looks to Gramsci and theories of hegemony to frame her study. Yet she never lets the theory dominate or flatten the voices of the many women she interviews. She listens to what they have to say and presents their political consciousness without condescension or idealization. She sees the larger power structures in which they operate and thus can appreciate the constraints shaping their ideas and their choices. In this essay, as in many others, she adroitly balances the theoretical and the empirical

and finds a way of recognizing both individual agency and structural constraint. The women "consent" to paternalism but that consent has limits, and paternalism itself changes in response to their subtle and not-so-subtle resistances.

Sangster's introductory essay nicely lays out the aims of the volume and provides a helpful historiographical context in which to situate the articles. Sangster does not shy away from debate; indeed, she makes a case for how it is a positive force in historical scholarship. She ends the introduction by calling for more debate and for scholars to move beyond the "debatophobia" (30) she judges as all-too-characteristic of historical exchange. Her introductory essay may help do just that. In it, she makes many provocative and pointed claims worth serious consideration and debate.

Most refreshing for me as a US women's and labour historian, was her bold assertion that "I see no reason to privilege transnational history as far superior to those histories bounded by the nation, since good transnational histories must ultimately be built on accounts of the relationships, entanglements, and conflicts between the local, regional, national, and global." (17) In the US the "transnational turn" has been intellectually invigorating, but it may not be a medicine that can or should be universally applied. As Sangster rightly notes, Canadian history, unlike US history, has always been transnational simply by virtue of the dominance of the US market and the necessity to be in dialogue with US scholars.

Sangster's introductory essay offers other comparative insights into the trajectories of US and Canadian scholarship. But most of it is devoted to the twists and turns of Canadian women's history. Here too Sangster does not shy away from controversy. She rejects what she sees as the Whiggish version of Canadian women's history with its narrative of ever

“onward-and-upward progress.” (20) In this version of women’s history, “a more naïve, celebratory form of women’s history” was displaced by a “more complex one” (23); “gender history” improved upon “women’s history”; and a superior poststructuralist-inflected cultural history triumphed over an earlier, outmoded materialist social history. In contrast, Sangster offers an overview of Canadian women’s history since the 1960s that is as attentive to what has been lost as to what has been gained.

*Through Feminist Eyes* is autobiographical and self-reflexive. Sangster has been involved in history making as well as history writing, and she meditates in interesting ways throughout the book on how her life experiences and political involvement shaped her own historical scholarship. Sangster turns her critical feminist lens on herself as well as others. *Through Feminist Eyes* allows us to see how we are all made by our histories and how the historical actors we seek to recreate can only be retrieved encased in the historical moments in which they lived. Sangster is a gifted historian whose many decades-long contributions to the making of feminist history can be savoured in this gem of a book. We are all in her debt.

DOROTHY SUE COBBLE  
Rutgers University

**Jonathan F. Vance, *A History of Canadian Culture*** (Don Mills: Oxford University Press 2009)

JONATHAN F. VANCE’S *A History of Canadian Culture* is an ambitious project to account for the emergence, consolidation, and sponsorship of the arts in Canada from pre-Confederation to the present. In his introduction, Vance defines “culture” as a “synonym for the arts” and acknowledges that this is a limited definition, albeit one that allows him to

cover a lot of ground. This book extends beyond the arts as they are usually understood – the literary, visual, and performing arts – to also study architecture and its patronage in Canada. This interest in state-sponsored buildings and architectural styles as part of larger governmental arts programs and policies adds a richness to the discussion that also highlights the differences between ephemeral artistic performances and the solid endurance of buildings. Another way that Vance restricts this vast topic to reasonable proportions is to focus more on the institutions of culture, and particularly on cultural funding by various state and arms-length institutions, than on the cultural production or artists themselves. As a result, the overarching thrust of this book is that Canadian culture should be understood as part of nation-building projects as defined by various state institutions and governments. While the author acknowledges that such a study will have to leave out some iconic and much-loved cultural producers (Neil Young, Mr. Dress-Up), Vance’s focus on the history of institutions of nationalist culture rather than cultural history itself means that whole segments of independent, internationalist, radical, and dissident Canadian culture do not make it in to this study, and neither does the role of the arts in contesting the state or offering alternate visions of the nation.

The first two chapters cover pre-contact Aboriginal culture and European contact respectively, and Vance is particularly strong in detailing the artistic and artisanal practices of First Peoples across what is now Canada. While there is not necessarily new material here, these opening chapters offer a balance between detail and concision to suggest a larger picture of the diversity of artistic endeavours from the Northwest Coast to the Arctic. The second chapter argues that, in the contact period, religion and

culture went hand-in-hand such that there were possibilities for the intermingling of Aboriginal and European cultural practices, such as music, to form a new hybridized culture. As this chapter concludes, however, European colonizers were less interested in adaptive cultural forms than in expanding their cultural and political dominance across the continent. Regrettably, Vance leaves Aboriginal artists and culture behind at this point and proceeds to tell the story of non-Aboriginal Canadian culture for another two hundred years before returning to contemporary Aboriginal artists in the final chapter, "Towards the Future." What happened to Aboriginal, Inuit, and Métis culture and artists between the early 18th century and today? By following an all-too-predictable narrative of the pre-contact fertility of Aboriginal cultures and their dormancy until the end of the 20th century, Vance writes out two centuries of cultural resistance, adaptation, and survival. Instead of integrating this cultural history into the rest of the book, Vance backtracks chronologically in the final chapter to mention the 1950s federal government sponsorship of Arctic artistic cooperatives rather than including this discussion in the long chapter on "The Cultural Flowering" of the 1950s. His comment in the final chapter that a continuity worth noting today is "a revived interest in Aboriginal art that echoes the fascination expressed by the first Europeans to encounter Canada's natives centuries earlier" assumes that Aboriginal artists only ever produce for non-Aboriginal audiences, that this work only occurs under government sponsorship, and that it is not part of the mainstream history of Canadian culture that takes up the rest of the book.

Vance is strongest, in terms of detailing actual cultural production as well as its institutional sponsorship, in the chapters on the primarily Anglo-Saxon cultures of the

18th and 19th centuries. He offers some lively descriptions of theatre productions in the military and religious institutions of the 18th century and pays attention to francophone culture and the efforts to forge a distinctive French-Canadian cultural identity in literature and painting. He also considers the role of 19th-century popular culture in the chapter "Common Showmen and Mountebanks," artistic and craft practices in settler societies in "Culture on the Frontier," and the reformist impulses of literary societies and the early library movement in "Dreams of Useful Knowledge." These sections on the highs and lows (in all senses of this term) of Victorian culture in Canada point to the diversity of cultural pursuits, hodgepodge of cultural institutions, and spectrum of amateur to professional artistic productions available to those living in both rural and urban Canada. The pattern of the book starts to change in Chapter 7, however, when Vance's discussion of "Streaks on the Horizon" establishes his underlying argument that Canadian culture has overwhelmingly been articulated to cultural and political nationalism and used to forge official narratives of the nation. The next two chapters, on imported and exported Canadian culture, focus on debates about whether an imbalance between foreign and domestic cultural production is a sign of national inferiority in the international marketplace. While it is certainly the case that liberal nationalism, and the desire to create a national culture through the arts, has given shape to the field of Canadian cultural production and determined many of its internal systems (e.g. funding, awards, commemoration, and so on), this section could also acknowledge the long history of resistance to such an articulation of culture and state and the many Canadian artists who have long challenged the role of the state in determining the cultural life of the nation.

Vance spends the rest of the book studying Canadian culture in the 20th century from the position of official national culture with primary attention to programs and policies. In the chapters on World Wars I and II, he takes the dominant position that World War I both created new cultural consumers and showed that “their culture was derivative rather than distinctly Canadian” (241), which would then motivate the modernists of the interwar years to seek a Canadian culture of their own. There is no mention here of the lively pacifist and socialist arts that World War I and domestic events such as the Winnipeg General Strike also inspired, nor is there any recognition of the internationalism to which some Canadian artists subscribed in their enthusiasm for the League of Nations and, subsequently, for the Popular Front in Spain. Vance’s nationalist paradigm thus obscures a range of positions in the field of Canadian cultural production and a more radical, cosmopolitan cultural heritage than that promoted by the state and boosterist organizations such as the Canadian Authors Association. Equally disappointing is the writing out of immigrant contributions, which of course often developed without any state sponsorship or nationalist commitments, but which sustained a diverse range of literary, visual, and performing arts and even architecture that are also part of the story of Canadian culture. There are times when Vance’s conflict model, as in his assertion of struggles between 19th-century elite and popular cultures, or interwar traditionalists and modernists, seems both too simplistic and out of step with a scholarly field long influenced by more complicated models of cultural development, most notably Raymond Williams’ theory of the coexistence of residual, dominant, and emergent cultures.

Vance’s tight focus on official government culture shapes the rest of the book,

which moves somewhat predictably through the important role of propaganda in World War II, the post-war debates leading into and arising from the Massey Commission, the consolidation of culture through the Canada Council, and the regulatory role of the state on such issues as Canadian content. This is not necessarily new ground, but Vance does synthesize a great deal of policy debate and connect it to developments in official Canadian arts and architecture. Ultimately, however, it is this focus on state and official cultural institutions that constrains this book from seeing and analyzing how the unofficial has always stood beside the official in the field of Canadian culture. Thus, perhaps my disappointment with this book lies in a misleading title: this is less a history of Canadian culture than it is a history of Canadian cultural institutions and state policy.

CANDIDA RIFKIND

University of Winnipeg

**Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada***  
(Vancouver: UBC Press 2010)

WILL CONTEMPORARY Canadian settler society eventually recognize its immense privilege, inherited as a by-product of the brutal colonization of Indigenous people? Will it wake up from the cultural amnesia that has so successfully erased that history from its collective consciousness? Will non-Indigenous citizens who do come to terms with their past learn how to become allies of Native activists? Will that be possible, given the poisonous legacy of the Indian residential schools and its effect on Indigenous communities today? Will settlers ultimately arrive at a space of healing where we resist stereotyping Native people as ill, but instead learn that the sickness exists in our society not



theirs? These uncomfortable questions, and many more like them, act as a persistent refrain in *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada*. Its author, Paulette Regan, is a “white settler” who writes specifically to a non-Native audience. Her main agenda is to provoke Canadians, even a few, to such an extent that they undertake the long, destabilizing journey towards critical self-reflexivity, the necessary first step to decolonization and one she describes as “unsettling the settler within.” Only then, she argues, can they participate with Indigenous people in “restorying” their past. This dialogue holds the potential for reconciliation between Indigenous and settler societies; however, it also involves truth telling on both sides. Unfortunately, most Canadians have proved themselves unwilling participants.

Regan is director of research for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). While noting she does not write from that position, she recognizes that her unsettling questions come from her involvement with the TRC and as an alternative dispute manager with its precursor, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program (ADRP). Her work in both arenas initiated an examination of her own complicity in the failed but still destructive assimilationist policies of the residential school system. Such knowledge has had a transformative effect, teaching her the importance of compassion and humility in her often-futile attempts to establish trust with residential school survivors. Her focus in the book, then, is to bring that experience to bear in formulating a critical, decolonizing pedagogy, one she names Critical Hope after *Pedagogy of Hope*, Paulo Freire’s groundbreaking book advocating radical education as central to the struggle for freedom and justice. Strategies incorporated into Regan’s project begin with truth telling

and reconciliation. According to Regan, a key goal of the TRC is educating the non-Native majority in Canada about the devastating effects of residential schools and, in the process, to insist that they and not its survivors take personal responsibility for it. Only then can the journey towards reconciliation begin. As a result of her focus on the TRC, Regan places it in context for the first time, discussing not only the problems with the ADRP that led to the founding of the TRC but also the current difficulties and criticism it now faces. Her important contribution to the field also includes both a critical analysis of other forms of restorative justice, including an in-depth account of Australia’s Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, and the nature and effectiveness of official apologies to Indigenous peoples in Canada and elsewhere.

Educating the public on both the history of residential schools and their legacy, which includes the cycle of dysfunction and despair suffered by Indigenous communities throughout Canada, is a key recommendation made by the TRC in its interim report released in February 2012. Teaching students in schools and universities this history as well as the Indigenous counter-narrative to traditional Canadian history is also a vital aspect of Regan’s Critical Hope pedagogy. Another important goal is to destabilize the mainstream myth of tolerance, which allows the non-Native majority to engage in what Regan calls “selective forgetting”; as a result, we live in denial over the injustices imposed on minorities by successive Canadian governments. Such denial also permits systemic racism to go, for the most part, unchecked. Other important aims include learning to represent Indigenous people differently, as survivors and not victims; resisting scholarly practices that attempt to “know” Natives by researching and analyzing their lives and cultures; and beginning to engage



in a different, potentially transformative, Indigenous and settler relationship by moving to a space of “not knowing.” Situated here, as Regan suggests, we are taught to listen “differently – with a decolonizing ear” to Indigenous counter-narratives. (15) Here, too, we give voice to our own truths, specifically acknowledging the role of bureaucrats, policies makers, and ordinary citizens like us in supporting oppressive Canadian government regimes. Such reciprocity involves turning our liberal notion of benevolent charity on its head; instead, we must learn to work with Native people, making ourselves vulnerable by humbly asking for permission to do so and, therefore, taking the necessary risk that we may well be rebuffed, ignored or, indeed, humiliated. Only then can the pernicious duality between settlers and Indigenous people, one that identifies the colonizer as superior to the colonized, begin to be dismantled. Regan outlines here an innovative politics and pedagogy of resistance within the Canadian context, one that involves a dedication to non-violent activism and struggle by allies of Indigenous peoples. Key here is the role she envisions for non-Native Canadians in the Indigenous fight to overturn centuries of colonial abuse and betrayal. No excuse exists for their non-engagement.

Combining Indigenous and western knowledge is also key to Regan’s project. Regan incorporates traditional teaching into her cross-cultural courses at the University of Victoria. By appropriating the pan-Indian concept of the circle, she creates spaces for First Nations, Métis, and non-Indigenous students to come together. Despite tensions and the inevitable play of western power dynamics in each group, she argues that eventually this pedagogical format allows her students to take risks and share their stories. While Regan may have found success with her circle work, I’m wary of

it, concerned that when deployed by inexperienced teachers, it may exacerbate those power struggles and lead to the recycling of traumatic experiences for Indigenous students, certainly further silencing them. After years of teaching in similar contexts, I understand the difficulties and peril inherent in facilitating such courses; however, like Regan, I’ve also witnessed the joy of those students who feel actively heard and are, therefore, finally free to tell their stories.

Storytelling is also central to *Unsettling the Settler Within*. Brief passages of reflections on her personal experiences not only teaching but also working with the ADR and the TRC are interwoven with theoretical sections. As a result, Regan has created an innovative, bi-cultural text informed by Indigenous and western knowledge, one reflecting reconciliation and truth telling on which her project of Critical Hope is centred. Her project, however, may seem pointless for those with expectations of the TRC. Certainly its work to date exists under the radar for the non-Native majority. Regan recognizes, however, that “critically hoping” begins in the moment, in the everyday forms of activism that eventually change our world. Reading her book has been an act of “critical hope.” It will be required reading for my third-year course on Canadian culture, history and politics.

MOLLY BLYTH  
Trent University

**Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, ed., *Gender, Health, and Popular Culture: Historical Perspectives* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press 2011)**

CULTURAL AND GENDER historians in this collection have seized upon health issues as the context for exploring public perceptions and representations of femininity and masculinity. Although

the essays are heavily weighted towards women's health, the articles convincingly show how gender has influenced various aspects of health experiences, including the flow of information, the availability of services, and displays of healthfulness. Editor Cheryl Krasnick Warsh points out that "viewed through the lens of popular culture," material, print and celluloid culture help to show how gender and health combine to produce dominant, normative ideologies that reinforce the image of health and perfection among women who are "white, young, slim, prosperous, and free of disabilities." (vii) The contributing authors build upon this notion with studies aimed at reinforcing this central theme.

This collection contains twelve essays, which are separated into two sections: the transmission of health information and popular representations of the body in sickness and health. The seven articles in the first section centre on advice literature, women's activism, and programs designed specifically for women's health. The authors are careful to tease apart the public health discourse from the patterns of behaviour and advice set by women themselves as they encounter different sets of experts claiming to know what is best for women's bodies. The majority of these articles zero in on issues related to reproduction, from childbirth to motherhood, menstruation to contraception and abortion, to cervical cancer programs. Together these essays reinforce the historical pattern that relegates women's health to the domain of reproduction, and they show how women's health and feminism have worked together to create space for women's programs and services. For example, Christabelle Sethna's article on abortion tourism explores how the feminist movement coalesced with the decriminalization of abortion and Sethna exposes some of the practical obstacles and impediments to providing ample

abortion services for Canadian women. Sethna effectively demonstrates how women, in spite of the rhetoric of choice and even liberation, mobilized to lobby the federal government for service provisions that matched the legal decision to make abortions legal. She explains that in spite of the change in the federal law, women continued to rely on "health tourism," meaning that they travelled outside of Canada in order to secure medically sanctioned therapeutic abortions, which thus limited the access to women with sufficient means. Pointing out the discrepancy between the law and the practice, Sethna effectively argues that through an examination of popular cultural products such as novels and travel literature, in combination with contemporary legal statutes and the Commission of Inquiry into the Status of Women, it becomes clear that abortion emerged as a contested site for both feminism and the status of women in the 1970s.

Heather Molyneaux's article complements this argument by drawing attention to the advertisements for the birth control pill and the changing faces of women used to represent and sell contraception. Molyneaux argues that information about the pill arrived hand-in-hand with somewhat more subtle moral undertones directing the advertisements at married, heterosexual women. The prominent placement of wedding rings and staged facial expressions set amidst images of flowers or natural surroundings reinforced a specific set of values associated with pill consumption. Regardless of the commercial opportunities beyond this segment of the population, the moral discourse surrounding contraception constrained advertisers in their depiction of contraception for approximately a decade. By the early 1970s, Molyneaux suggests, those images slowly gave way to a more heterogeneous community of pill-consuming women,

who did not readily present a married or even responsible character. Like Sethna, Molyneaux's article exposes some of the ways consumers influenced the shape of the advertising campaigns.

The second part of the book explores some of the ways in which men and women have been represented through popular culture, beginning, somewhat differently, with an essay from Ric N. Caric on delirium tremens in antebellum Philadelphia. This article provides some content for discussion about masculine health, but is otherwise a bit of an outlier in a collection of articles primarily about women in 20th-century North America (with one on Australia). Caric's study considers how delirium tremens and the popular culture of drinking shaped masculine identities in the mid-19th century. Taken together with articles on anatomy, which consider a long history culminating in the popular though controversial Body Worlds exhibits, the 1980s aerobics craze as it applied to "fat women," Jamie Lee Curtis' body politics, and parents dealing with their gay sons in the wake of AIDS, Caric's essay seems somewhat out of place.

The remaining articles on bodily representations highlight some of the innovative work being done in this field by exploring more recent manifestations of gendered identities and creatively challenging the idea of women as a collective. In the studies focused on the 1980s, the collusion of feminism and health assumes different ends. For instance, Jenny Ellison's provocative study of "Aerobics for Fat Women Only" problematizes the idea that all women subscribed to common ideals of beauty or even fitness. Drawing from a larger study of fitness and body politics, Ellison shows in this article that the 1980s aerobics craze had reinforced particular ideas about thinness, but that women challenged those ideas and produced fitness communities

for fat women, playing on similar goals of self-esteem, beauty and health.

Body politics play out differently in Christina Burr's article about Jamie Lee Curtis, whose celebrated and sexualized body became the source of her personal insecurities and led to her public revelation about the realities of aging women and body image. Burr cleverly walks readers through Curtis' career as a heterosexual sex symbol and her later public defiance of this characterization, which encouraged Curtis to reflect openly on the representation and infatuation of particular kinds of women's bodies. Merging film studies with popular culture and Curtis' own candid reflections, Burr unpacks some of the discourse about allegedly "perfect" bodies to bring to light some of the inherent insecurities and unrealistic portrayals that persist in popular culture.

Taken together, these essays provide sophisticated models for exploring the interplay between health and gender as represented in popular culture. The book might have been strengthened with more strategic attention to the ways in which some of these themes run across femininity and masculinity, or how healthful discourses play into heterosexual ideals (with the exception of Murray's article on parents of gay men, which raises this issue somewhat indirectly). Those themes lie behind some of these contributions and the overall arrangement but are not directly confronted. Although the majority of the articles focus on Canadian developments, the North American breadth creates space for comparative studies, such as the one explored in the side-by-side articles on cervical cancer screening programs in the US and Canada. The book will likely appeal to a wide variety of readers with interests in health, feminism, reproduction, and body politics and offers a provocative collection of

historically engaging and historiographically rich articles.

ERIKA DYCK

University of Saskatchewan

**Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson and Marian Bredin, eds., *Indigenous Screen Cultures in Canada* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press 2010)**

THE STUDY OF indigenous media is a relatively recent development, bridging visual anthropology, cultural studies, cinema, communication and media studies, among other area studies. In Canada, the field has emerged mainly from communication and media scholars. The recent publication of anthologies such as *Indigenous Screen Cultures in Canada* attests to the richness and relevance of this field. The main goal of this collection of essays was to generate a volume that would express the development of policies and practices that have led to diverse forms of cultural expression and representation of Aboriginal peoples in the Canadian territory, with a particular emphasis on the development of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). In this sense, it's the first publication to bring together interdisciplinary scholarship that situates the current production and circulation of Aboriginal media throughout Canada, and that specifically addresses "contemporary programming practices and content emerging from Aboriginal media organizations." (Introduction, 7)

The starting point of *Indigenous Screen Cultures in Canada* was a conference panel on APTN at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies convened by Hafsteinsson in 2006. Following the notions of Indigenous media scholar Faye Ginsburg on how aboriginally controlled media production enables cultural

activism and transformative action, the book aims to deliver concrete examples of how these media "permit increasing cultural and social agency among indigenous groups, and how aboriginal media producers conceive of traditional knowledge." (Introduction, 7) The volume is structured in three parts and features recent case studies in Aboriginal film and communication projects. Several articles focus on APTN and its audience reception, and three essays are by scholars of Aboriginal descent.

The first part, "The Cultural History of Aboriginal Media in Canada," draws from established scholarship and independent research to provide a necessary framework to the development of APTN and other Aboriginal media projects. Chapter 1 reprises and updates Lorna Roth's exhaustive research on the creation of APTN, previously published in 2005. Roth traces a succinct historical overview of Aboriginal television in six phases, placing emphasis on media policy, infrastructure and territorial considerations. She explains the challenges of moving from a grounded localized community television project to a national network and values the thrust towards internationalization of APTN's programming. She also comments on the relative marginality of APTN despite having secured an important renewal on Canada's major cable carriers. Chapter 2 by Jennifer David (Chapleau Cree) veers toward the more specific questions of the actual possibilities of Aboriginal language preservation and revitalization offered by broadcast media, and points out the limited data available on actual reception of such outlets.

Part II, APTN and Indigenous Screen Cultures, opens with a chapter by the volume's co-editor Sigurjón Hafsteinsson, who argues that APTN journalism practices exercise "deep democracy,"

delving into the policies and best practices innovated by APTN journalists, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. From program content and reporting styles to the ethics of giving voice and showing images of sacred moments, the essay lucidly establishes the differences between the APTN news teams and mainstream news agencies. Aspects of cultural and linguistic sensitivity, first person and community storytelling, staffing, training, and mentorship are taken into account, as they contribute to “foster practices that are deeply local but simultaneously transnational.” (53) More broadly, they also forge new possibilities in the historically contested relationship between Aboriginal communities and the media.

Marian Bredin’s chapter in this section on APTN and its audiences evidences the challenges in attempting to satisfy an extremely diverse viewership – northern/southern, urban/rural, Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal – offering a model of analysis that triangulates an ideal, an active and an actual viewer from the perspective of both producers and stakeholders of the network. Kerstin Knopf’s essay on APTN’s programming and acquisitions policy becomes one of the most interesting interventions when laying out the discursive strategies of APTN. Knopf also points out the potential contradictions and ambivalences that such a network must confront in balancing real economic needs (such as attracting commercial sponsors) and maintaining a firm decolonizing stance against historic Aboriginal misrepresentation.

Programming content is also explored in film scholar Christine Ramsay’s illuminating article on the Regina-produced series *Moccasin Flats*, “the first dramatic television series in North America to be created, written, produced and performed by Aboriginal people.” (105) Ramsay analyzes this successful series as a ripe site for rethinking Aboriginal

youth identity, where American ‘hood and global hip-hop aesthetics engage local cultural responses to the economic and racist legacies of colonialism in disenfranchised urban communities.

Part III of the book, “Transforming Technologies and Emerging Media Circuits,” opens with a study by Doris Baltruschat on the co-production of the film *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, by Zacharias Kunuk and Norman Cohn, the second feature film by the Iglolik Isuma Productions. Baltruschat explores the possibilities that new digital media such as HD video and web-based platforms have brought independent producers, especially those from a long-standing oral storytelling tradition like the Inuit, as well as the implications international co-production can have for such a film project.

The last two essays in the volume address research on Aboriginal media from an insider-outsider perspective, that of the Aboriginal researcher. Mike Patterson (Métis) complements the more academic studies with a glimpse from within, charting some of the early productive uses of the Internet at the hands of Native artists and Aboriginal online communities that inserted themselves into the public sphere by engaging in activism, creating educational tools to serve future generations and dispersed communities, or starting online businesses to become self-reliant, while keeping issues of access to these technologies in the foreground. With a refreshing dose of humour and actual postings from chat rooms and discussion threads, Patterson brings his own view alongside other Native voices that recognize the need to use these technologies critically and in a timely way.

The final chapter, “Taking a Stance, Aboriginal Media Research as an Act of Empowerment,” by Métis scholar Yvonne Poitras Pratt is more about the search

for methodologies that a Native scholar might find useful in doing research in Aboriginal communities. Pratt's journey reveals the dual and often uncomfortable "insider dynamics" (175) Aboriginal research brings, but also signals the importance of engaging in active research that can generate the committed involvement of community members, particularly in the design of local media projects, which are still often viewed as double-edged swords. Her election to carry out a critical and active ethnography may serve as an important model for other Aboriginal scholars that have to satisfy multiple demands within their research. Her chapter builds on the critical work of Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, known for *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books 1999).

Written in accessible prose, which may attract wide readership, this book will be of particular interest to communication media scholars as well as to those interested in Aboriginal self-representation and decolonization processes. Readers unfamiliar with Canada's media policy or its Aboriginal nations will find the introductory texts helpful, and the volume succeeds in opening up internal debates on Aboriginal issues within the Canadian mediascape that may very well serve as models for critical media studies elsewhere.

AMALIA CORDOVA  
Smithsonian National Museum  
of the American Indian/  
New York University

**Lina Sunseri, *Being Again of One Mind: Oneida Women and the Struggle for Decolonization*** (British Columbia: UBC Press 2011)

THIS BOOK DISCUSSES Oneida women, nationalism and decolonization. While

Oneida women's voices – based on interviews with twenty women from the Oneida territory in Ontario – are central to the narrative, so are crucial aspects of Onyota:aka epistemology, particularly the Creation Story and the formation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Perhaps the most unique aspect of the book, however, is its rigorous attention to theories of nationalism, and the appropriateness of nationalism for decolonizing the Oneida nation and as a process of liberation for Oneida women.

Sunseri, who is Turtle Clan from Oneida of the Thames and an active participant in the Longhouse at Oneida, began her research at Oneida in a respectful manner, by discussing it first with her Clan mother and other Oneida women, and refining the research topic in that manner. Her research also involved participating in traditional ceremonies, teachings, workshops and conferences, in particular a weekend workshop at Oneida territory in New York State where the land claim dispute between Oneida and New York State was addressed. Her concerns in writing the book were twofold: on the one hand, to include Oneida women's perspectives as knowledgeable contributors to Indigenous discourse and, on the other, to engage with postcolonial and feminist theories of nationalism and to explore their relevance to Oneida women's struggle for decolonization.

Sunseri grounds the work in two formative narratives of Haudenosaunee peoples: the Creation story and the formation of the Haudenosaunee League (otherwise known as the Iroquois Confederacy). Indeed, the Creation story is analyzed a number of times, in order to exemplify the healthy relationships Oneida women seek to build in order to "Be of One Mind," to address the women-centredness of Oneida cosmology, and to introduce a history of the Oneida nation. Similarly the foundation of the



Haudenosaunee League is addressed as part of Oneida history, as are the principles of the League and their relevance to contemporary decolonization. In doing this, Sunseri reflects a circular process of building knowledge, rather than more typical linear academic models. The effects of colonial wars on the Haudenosaunee League, the splitting of the confederacy and Oneida's experience as allies of the United States, their loss of land and the fragmenting of the nation into three communities (New York, Wisconsin and London, Ontario), as well as the imposition of a colonial order within Canada are all addressed in order to frame the issues the community faces.

It is Sunseri's analysis of nationalism, however, which makes this book truly unique. While a number of Indigenous scholars have addressed aspects of Indigenous nationalism, Sunseri tackles this issue front and centre. She focuses first on mainstream theorists who view nations as social constructions irrevocably tied to modernity and the state, including Ernest Gellner, E. J. Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson and Anthony Smith. In carefully articulating the different approaches utilized by these theorists it becomes clear that through their profound Eurocentrism they cannot address the existence of pre-colonial Indigenous nations. Turning to postcolonial theorists next, Sunseri articulates the important contributions of Homi Bhabha, Stewart Hall, Edward Said, and, of course, Franz Fanon in connecting colonialism to questions of nationalism, race, culture, identity, and hybridity. While she notes that these theorists provide important questions that Indigenous peoples engaged in decolonization struggles need to consider, she challenges the pervasive assumption of many of the writers that colonialism inevitably eradicates pre-colonial cultures and identities or that the nation is always a modern phenomenon.

She then turns to Indigenous theorists such as Kiera Ladner, Taiaiake Alfred, Audra Simpson, and Dale Turner. In examining their writings she expounds on the different ways in which they address the relevance of nationalism to different Indigenous communities; ultimately these theorists create space whereby different frameworks of Indigenous self-determination can be understood.

While Sunseri's rigorous exploration of nationalism clarifies its relevance for Indigenous communities, her discussions with Oneida women reveal that the women are struggling with the downgrading of their roles under colonialism. Noting that for Oneida women the concept of "Mothers of the Nation" has always been about claiming the power that was traditionally inherent to women in Haudenosaunee societies, Sunseri questions whether the process of reclaiming tradition could potentially empty this concept of its empowering traditional meanings, so that it becomes a tool to oppress women. Because of this, she focuses extensively on questions of gender and nationalism. Through the writings of Floya Anthias, Nera Yuval-Davis, Nahla Abdo, Kumari Jayawardena, Neloufer de Mel, Cherifa Boutta, Neluka Silva, Anne McClintock, Cynthia Enloe, Himani Bannerji, Mariana Valverde, and Enakshi Dua, Sunseri addresses women's roles in national liberation struggles ranging from the Algerian War of Independence to Palestinian and Tamil resistance, to the decolonization of India, Indonesia, Turkey, and Egypt. She also focuses on the ways in which newly invented forms of cultural nationalism can be revolutionary or reactionary and can particularly be used to subordinate women, as well as the particular manner in which women have been affected by different nation-building projects. Sunseri uses this information as a backdrop through which to view Oneida women's perspectives

on nationalism, cultural identity, and tradition.

Sunseri is the first Indigenous scholar to have focused so extensively on nationalism. Undoubtedly this is the strongest feature of the book, and these chapters alone make this book well worth reading. The chapters expressing the voices of Oneida women are a good backdrop to these theories, as we hear the women's perspectives, which voice local concerns mirroring the theories explored above. Hearing the women talk about their hopes for rebuilding the Oneida nation and the strength tradition offers them, and yet the struggles needed to overcome male dominance in the community and the rewriting of tradition in ways that erase women's centrality, highlights the relevance of this work for Indigenous women. Indeed, Sunseri's final chapters address a number of concepts that Indigenous women in Canada (as well as in the United States) are struggling with, including how Canada has successfully bifurcated "Indigenous women's rights" and "Indigenous rights," the relevance of feminism to Indigenous women, and the reality that different Indigenous communities have experienced colonialism differently and therefore may have different priorities. Sunseri concludes with a call for Indigenous women and men to engage in struggles to decolonize. She addresses the power of dreaming, which will be a necessary part of envisioning a decolonized future for all of us.

I enjoyed reading this book immensely. Scholars who primarily seek a linear history of Oneida may struggle somewhat with the traditional and more circular focus Sunseri utilizes, however her analysis of nationalism and its centrality to Indigenous decolonization is a powerful contribution to contemporary Indigenous discourse. It is also an extremely valuable contribution to a growing body of Indigenous writing that "talks

back" to postcolonial, transnational feminist and anti-racist theorists, who for too long have premised their works on Indigenous absence.

BONITA LAWRENCE  
York University

**Christopher N. Matthews, *The Archaeology of American Capitalism: The American Experience in an Archaeological Perspective*** (Gainesville: University Press of Florida 2010)

THIS BOOK IS an essential contribution to Social Archaeology and American Historical Archaeology. It primarily refers to the United States of America but the implications of its discourse are not limited to that nation, and could be highly relevant to any scholar interested in the processes of *materialization* in other capitalist systems. The author presents an analysis of archaeological evidence attesting to the social transformations caused by the advent of the capitalist system, from a theoretical point of view mostly inspired by Marx and Weber. This book comes as a necessary addition to some key recent publications largely focused on the transformative effects of the introduction of a capitalist framework in society, but it also looks at the conception, uses and misuses, practice and interpretations of present-day archaeology (Yannis Hamilakis and Philip Duke, *Archaeology and Capitalism: From Ethics to Politics*; Randall McGuire, *Archaeology as Political Action*), as well as concentrating on specific colonial or post-colonial contexts (Sarah Croucher and Lindsay Weiss, eds., *The Archaeology of Capitalism in Colonial Contexts*).

In his book, Matthews supports the idea that a new archaeological praxis should be defined to support non-capitalist alternatives within archaeological interpretations. The main purpose of this

book is then to explore how archaeology can facilitate an understanding of the processes that lead to people accepting their own commodification as individuals. The central interpretative tool presented in Chapter 1 is drawn from the idea that the material properties of daily living embedded in capitalism can be interpreted through three different levels of understanding of the objects: their use, the mechanisms of exchange they involve, and their fetishization (i.e. when the social value attributed to an object is endowed not by the maker but by its owner).

In Chapter 2, the author presents the simultaneous mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion involved in the capitalist system that might be traceable in archaeological records. To do so, Matthews scrutinizes the archaeology and history of the Narragansett and the Mohawk peoples in the 18th century. The integration of First Nations people into a capitalist system was firmly established in the fur trade, and in several food and crafts exchanges. In turn, this system afforded a specialized function for colonized groups, maintaining trade within them for as long as they were economically viable. Meanwhile, the colonial structure established a definition for the group as "Indians," ensuring their distinction from the rest of society and disallowing their integration. This process of exclusion was completed as soon as the First Nations groups could no longer participate in the capitalist system as "Indians," that is when their functional viability for trade and value came to an end. At the end of the American Revolution, colonizers considered "Indianity" useless or even threatening. It was then declared incompatible with the new white capitalist society, leading to a quasi-total exclusion.

Through Chapters 4 and 5, Matthews develops his argument by examining the later changes in 19th-century American

history within the metropolis of the Northeast, and the underdeveloped periphery of the Midwest. Archaeological remains show the acceleration of capitalist domination over all aspects of life, notably by exhibiting qualities of the capitalist ideals of the private home and the nuclear family. This new domination contributed to drastic change of the urban landscape: the separation of work structures from those domestic, men from women (while subordinating the latter), and separating classes into a hierarchy. Similarly, in the Midwest the new mining towns reproduced the new capitalist social order and imposed the corporate company's rules and policies on its population. The rapid development of competitive individualism against united and cohesive social, political and ethnic communities generated isolation and a pressure to conform. This conformity required following middle-class capitalist ideals, and embracing all its material attributes. The material culture associated with ideal urban life was thus primarily recognized for what value objects were endowed with and represented in the capitalist system rather than for their intended function.

The subsequent two chapters are dedicated to the recognition of archaeological material associated with any form of resistance against capitalism in American history. According to Matthews, during the 19th century, women's attempts to break their isolation in the home, regain independence from men, and establish community solidarity were generally not successful. Additionally, the author recalls that most utopian self-sufficient American communities were systematically dissolved, with the exception of the Shakers. However, archaeological records revealed that this success was in fact due to an active and close, although hidden, collaboration with the market, rendering the community not so different from

the rest of the American middle class. Finally, one of the rare testimonies of resistance against capitalism is to be found in African American assemblages from the 17th and 18th centuries, although not through the objects themselves or their primary use, but rather through the alternative significance these objects had taken on in the lives of enslaved peoples. African Americans achieved this through various means of spatial appropriation and the re-appropriation of objects. They did so by adopting, for example, European ceramics standards, while according objects their proper use and symbolic meaning. These processes, which can be observed in archaeological records, contributed to the development of a sense of belonging in a divergent community, which subsequently affirmed their position within mainstream society and challenged the justifications of racial segregation. Such processes restored some dignity and relations to a system that had commodified the entirety of African American existence.

Finally, in the last chapter, the author challenges current archaeologists to work outside the influences of a capitalist logic. Matthews points out that archaeologists generally tolerate or have even assumed the fundamental ideas of capitalism. Despite this, he suggests that various ethical issues should be addressed: first, archaeologists should urgently take into consideration the modern political-economy framework in which archaeology is produced to ensure a critical distance from an archaeology serving market interests and logic. Second, he proposes that it is necessary to integrate questions concerning past and present exclusion and oppression of people from the very start of discourse. Third, while he appears to see some hope in the development of "collaborative archaeology," he stresses the scarcity of that type of project and the occasionally

unconvincing archaeologists that profess to be collaborative. Ultimately, Matthews strongly recommends that archaeologists reconsider their motivations for practicing archaeology, and do so by shifting their focus away from preserving and controlling archaeological resources to direct engagement with communities, so as to reconnect them to the remains of the past.

This book will be particularly useful for American scholars and professionals specialized in history and historical archaeology and who intend to practice an ethical archaeology derived from strong critical thinking. My sole criticism would be that the connection between some archaeological evidence discussed in this book and its re-interpretation can appear somewhat detached from the original set of data. However, the diversity of the case studies as well as the originality and provocative quality found in the latter part of this book render it a fundamental contribution for anyone interested in building a theoretical background for archaeological practice and who wishes to counteract such capitalist manifestations in archaeology as so-called Cultural Resource Management. This book will help to develop a critical voice within the current prescriptive and normative capitalist structures in which archaeology evolves.

NICOLAS ZORZIN

University of Melbourne, Australia

**David Lee McMullen, *Strike! The Radical Insurrections of Ellen Dawson* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida 2010)**

IN HIS CONCLUDING chapter to *Strike!*, entitled "My Personal Observations," author David Lee McMullen describes one of the tasks of the biographer as making connections "between scholarship and imagination." (185) Indeed, it is

imagination that made possible the writing of *Strike!* because the entirety of Ellen Dawson's life for which McMullen has convincing evidence would fit nicely in an article of twenty to twenty-five pages. On this basis, readers will likely have one of two responses to *Strike!*; either they will question its publication as a book, or they will understandably admire McMullen's determination, resourcefulness, and dogged refusal to allow the memory of Ellen Dawson to be erased from the historical record.

Ellen Dawson was born into working-class poverty on 14 December 1900 in Barrhead, Scotland, one of the country's early industrial towns. Part of the metropolitan area of Glasgow, Barrhead's single largest industry was textiles, and in 1901 slightly more than half the textile workforce was female. (13–14) McMullen provides compelling evidence of overcrowded housing, primitive sanitary conditions and the high infant mortality rate, but little of it directly related to women in the textile industry that was to become Ellen's Dawson's life. He provides more information about wages and working conditions in the foundries than in the textile mills, focusing on Dawson's father Patrick.

Following a chapter on Barrhead's industry, workforce and living conditions McMullen details the associational life of Barrhead's working class. Next, a chapter on co-operation gives us a revealing look at the Barrhead Co-operative Society and the local Women's Guild. By now the main characteristic of the first half of the book has been established: a well-researched and evocative look at the working-class world in which Ellen Dawson was raised, accompanied by a problematic attempt to locate Ellen Dawson within that world. Lacking membership rolls for either the Co-operative Society or the Women's Guild, McMullen can only suggest that the evidence "seems to indicate" (23) that

members of Dawson's family belonged to the Co-operative Society, and that the Dawson women "may well have been" (25) members of the Women's Guild.

McMullen's chapter on labour radicalism and the "Red Clydeside" is crucial to his claim that Dawson became a left-wing labour organizer in the American textile industry as a result of being radicalized as a youth. The impact of World War I and the labour radicalism of 1919 are described, but in the words of other women activists such as Mary Macarthur and Mary Brooksbank. Ellen Dawson remains silent, although this does not restrain McMullen from claiming that she was "a disciple of Red Clydeside." (50) The strength of McMullen's chapter is his short biographies of John Maclean, James Maxton and Mary Macarthur, not what he has to tell us about Ellen Dawson's radicalization. The problem is that McMullen has no real evidence of this process of radicalization. Once again, almost everything he argues is based on inference. For example, McMullen follows his biography of Macarthur with the claim that there is "every reason to believe" (35) that a young Dawson saw Macarthur speak and was inspired by her.

In fact, there is every reason to believe that as a young girl Ellen Dawson was more influenced by and involved in the Catholic Church than she was involved in and influenced by labour radicalism. In his introduction, McMullen observes that Dawson was born and died a Catholic, and "lived most of her life as a devout Catholic." (xxiv) McMullen does not even consider the possibility that Ellen Dawson spent her youth involved with the Catholic Church, not being radicalized by the working-class culture in which she lived. McMullen may be right, but he does not convince the reader that he has ruled out being wrong.

In 1919 Dawson moved with her family to Lancashire. McMullen is unable to

explain why such an impoverished working-class family was able to rent not one, but two dwellings there. (52) Nonetheless, the author is able to provide evidence of Dawson's employment as a spinner and weaver between December 1919 and April 1921, at which point Dawson and her brother set sail for America. As the scene shifts to America there is the expectation that we will begin to hear Dawson's own voice; instead we are given the words of another young Scottish immigrant, Agnes Schilling, explaining why she left Scotland. (59)

Ellen Dawson came into her own in the textile strike in Passaic, New Jersey, when some 16,000 woollen mill workers went on strike between October 1925 and February 1927. Driven to militant action by unsafe working conditions, low wages, brutal foremen, and uncaring owners, the largely immigrant workforce fought a compelling struggle against great odds. Ellen Dawson was a significant figure, first as secretary of the communist-directed United Front Committee of Passaic Textile Workers, then as secretary of Local 1603 of the United Textile Workers of America when control of the strike passed to the American Federation of Labor. While McMullen does convince us that Dawson has been unfairly overshadowed by better-known strike leaders such as Albert Weisbord, doubts remain. James Cannon, writing in the June 1926 issue of the *Labor Defender*, identifies Lena Chernenko and Nancy Sandowsky as the "moving spirits of the picket line" in the Passaic strike, while McMullen writes that Dawson "walked on picket lines." (75) Chernenko and Sandowsky are nowhere to be seen in *Strike!* Nonetheless, newspaper coverage, notably in the *New York Times*, does reveal that Dawson toured and spoke on behalf of the relief effort in the company of legendary labour leaders such as "Mother Bloor." McMullen insightfully observes

that Dawson had a higher profile outside Passaic than in Passaic itself, where she was "less uniquely newsworthy than when she was in another community organizing the workers." (77)

In 1928 Ellen Dawson was involved in the New Bedford, Massachusetts strike, when 30,000 cotton mill workers protested a ten per cent wage cut. McMullen focuses on the 60 per cent of the workers who were women, quite understandably dealing with the challenges of organizing women workers in "male-dominated immigrant communities." (116) All of the actual comments McMullen provides on organizing women workers in New Bedford, however, come from Sophie Melvin, Ann Craton and Elizabeth Donneley, not Dawson herself. Consequently, McMullen inadvertently pushes Dawson even further into the background. McMullen does, however, make a convincing case for Dawson's importance; she was arrested several times and sentenced to three months in prison, and then to an additional twelve months. (125)

In his account of Ellen Dawson's work in the 1929 Gastonia strike McMullen is finally able to bring her into focus and put some flesh on the bones of the heroic image he has attempted to portray thus far. The issue is race, and McMullen provides convincing evidence that Dawson's commitment to racial equality was genuine, a genuineness testified to by Black communist John H. Owen. (160) Here, at last, after 160 pages, we meet the Ellen Dawson that McMullen told us we would find at the beginning of the book. Yet even here we are presented with a conundrum. McMullen notes that Dawson spoke at the first public rally held in Gastonia by the communist-led National Textile Workers' Union on 30 March 1929. On page 138 he comments that she was the "first speaker," and on page 145 says she was "preaching a message of worker



solidarity.” Neither description does justice to the power of Dawson’s speaking evoked in a quotation to be found in John Salmond’s 1995 book *Gastonia 1929*. This quotation is not in McMullen’s book, but it is on *Wikipedia*. Literally starved for direct evidence of Dawson’s impact, why does McMullen not provide this most compelling example?

In October 1929 Ellen Dawson was embroiled in a deportation trial in Trenton, New Jersey. Judge William Clark ruled in Dawson’s favour, stating that she could not be prosecuted for her opinions. Dawson was not so lucky where her position in the Communist Party was concerned. Following her expulsion from the United Textile Workers of America, she had joined other communist militants to organize the National Textile Workers’ Union of America. (133) Dawson became the first vice president and, according to McMullen, “the first woman to be elected to a national leadership position in an American textile union.” (134) In February 1929 Dawson attended the Sixth Annual Convention of the Workers (Communist) Party of America, the organization headed by Jay Lovestone, and was named to the party’s Central Executive Committee. (137)

Jay Lovestone went to the Soviet Union in March 1929, where he angered Joseph Stalin. By the time he returned to the United States in June he had been expelled from the Communist Party as a “right deviationist.” As a supporter of Lovestone Ellen Dawson suffered a similar fate; she lost her position on the Executive Committee of the Communist Party and was expelled from the National Textile Workers’ Union. Here McMullen provides a compelling account of the way in which individuals with little or no experience in the mills replaced working-class activists like Dawson, who had actually worked in textile mills for many years. In the end it was the workers who

suffered, an old story that has still not gotten old.

Jay Lovestone and some 200 of his followers created their own Communist Party organization, and Ellen Dawson remained active in it until 1931. At that point, however, she appears to have ceased her radical activities for reasons that remain unclear. McMullen then deals with the remaining half of her life in a chapter of six pages. She married in 1935, and retired in 1966. The next year, on 17 April 1967, she died.

*Strike!* has much to commend it. It brings to life a long-neglected working-class organizer who deserves to be remembered and respected. In the process of writing it the author has brought alive the history of working-class Scottish immigrants, the immigrant communities of Passaic and New Bedford, and the poverty and struggles of textile workers in the American south. That said, McMullen has pushed to the limit the possibilities of working-class biography, and alerted us to the fact that there may be a point beyond which we should not be willing to go. At some point the inferences we need to make, the choices we must impose on our subjects, and the assumptions we have to make in and of themselves become the kind of condescension that Edward Thompson warned us against. In attempting to rescue working-class women like Ellen Dawson from the condescension of later generations we risk doing the same thing ourselves. On balance David Lee McMullen has made the right choice, but perhaps there are other working-class activists who, their contributions notwithstanding, are best left to rest in peace.

PETER CAMPBELL  
Queen’s University

**Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism*** (Durham and London: Duke University Press 2011)

IT IS SURPRISING how little we know about the history of African American women and communism, on the one hand, and, on the other, their contribution to Black feminism. Erik S. McDuffie provides a pioneering excavation of some important burial grounds, where obscure histories have rested undisturbed for decades. The result is an engrossing book, and one that makes a wide interdisciplinary contribution to the study of women, African Americans, and the revolutionary left.

If you can not judge a book by its cover, you most emphatically can get a sense of this study's approach and subject by its index. Four women have lengthy, complex, cross-referenced entries: Claudia Jones, Louise Thompson Patterson, Esther Cooper Jackson, and Audley "Queen Mother" Moore. Jones, the subject of an existing scholarly monograph, joined the Communist Party in the US in 1936 out of a commitment to anti-fascism, a cause that also attracted Jackson to the Party. Patterson and Moore, who were drawn to the Communist Party in the early 1930s through mobilizations to free the Scottsboro Boys, preceded Jackson and Jones in their enlistment. McDuffie's focus on these four women and their recruitment to the Communist Party in the 1930s structures his book in particular ways.

The early years of communism and Black women's involvement in the Party, for instance, are suggestive, if sketchy. McDuffie alludes to the importance of a significant and little-appreciated cohort of African American Harlem women who were centrally involved in the African Blood Brotherhood and

communist street speaking, introducing figures such as Grace P. Campbell, Williana Burroughs, Maude White, Helen Holman, and Hermina Dumont Huiswood. If such women tended to be overshadowed in Black radical circles by their counterparts in the nationalist Garveyite movement, they nevertheless clearly emerged as a forceful presence in New York African American circles. McDuffie reconstructs their intense internationalism and concern with the global place of women, as well as their community activism in organizations like the Harlem Tenants League, by piecing together accounts of speeches, sifting through rare articles in the Black and communist press, and outlining the meanings African American women drew from their trips to the Soviet Union.

As the Communist Party developed its Black Belt Nation thesis in 1928 and upped the level of its anti-racist agitation in the Third Period (1929–1934), "the Negro Question" assumed a place of increasing prominence for all Party members. Black women were more likely to be featured in Party activities, especially as leaders and writers, and this nurtured the important second generation of African American women that figure so decisively in McDuffie's account. Weaned on Scottsboro agitations, the Soviet Union's commitment to expose the American cancer of racism in its creation of a propaganda film, *Black and White*, Harlem's League of Struggle for Negro Rights, Depression-era rent strikes, unemployed councils, and tenants' movements, and the post-1935 Popular Front campaigns associated with anti-fascist mobilizations relating to Ethiopia and Spain, Black women of the first and second generations of American communism figured forcefully in a broad range of activities.

McDuffie outlines how this period saw the politics of a particular Black feminism cohere, one of its most articulate

statements being Louise Thompson's [Patterson] groundbreaking 1936 article, "Toward a Brighter Dawn," which appeared in the official voice of the CP's National Women's Commission, *Woman Today*. Thompson's critical contribution was to elaborate an understanding of the "triple exploitation" Black women workers confronted on a daily basis, "as workers, as women, and as Negroes." (112) McDuffie suggests that this may well have been the first time that this phrase, "triple exploitation," so pivotal in the emergence of Black feminism, appeared in print. Thompson also wrote a 1937 article, "Negro Women in the Party," suggesting that communist promotion of interracialism had the detrimental effect of leaving Black women isolated and alone as African American movement men had access to white women while Black females were reduced to being "wallflowers" at Party social events. (119) One year later a group of Black communist women unsuccessfully petitioned the Communist International in Moscow and Party officials in the Harlem branch to ban Black-white marriage. Audley Moore, arguably the single figure in McDuffie's account who gravitated away from communism to a more vociferous Black nationalist politics, later insisted that African American women were guarded about taking their men to Party-organized events for fear that aggressive Jewish women would put sexual moves on them: "they all had black men.... A black woman, if she took her husband in there, he wouldn't last long. 'cause the white women would grab him." (120)

By the 1940s and 1950s, with the struggle against Jim Crow accelerating and moving into the modern civil rights era, new generations of African American women linked arms with their predecessors. Schooled in bodies like the Southern Negro Youth Congress, but scarred by McCarthyism and the

Cold War, Black women continued to play vitally important roles in ongoing struggles for social justice. For women like Esther Cooper [Jackson], travels to the Soviet Union and the 1945 London, England World Youth Conference were linked to anti-colonialism and support for Third World independence movements, which received strong endorsement from Popular Front organizations like the World Federation of Democratic Youth. Non-communist Black women like Birmingham, Alabama's Sallye Bell Davis (mother of Angela Davis, arguably the most well-known Black feminist in the modern communist movement) crossed paths with Cooper and others in civil rights struggles, churches, women's clubs, and trade unions. In Los Angeles Charlotta Bass, the septuagenarian publisher of the influential African American newspaper, the *California Eagle*, linked up with these increasingly vocal women.

This expanding and now generationally complex milieu of Black women pioneered a radical and underappreciated early 1950s African American feminist opposition to racism, from the Jim Crow South to the battlefields of the Korean war, the Sojourners for Truth and Justice. McDuffie sees this short-lived body as "a black women's international." This may be overstated, but it suggests the undeniable importance of pivotal women like Jones, Jackson, and Thompson Patterson, who lived through the repressive travails of the Cold War (Jones was deported) and linked the communist-led struggles of the 1930s to the activism of the 1960s, when Jackson edited the lauded African American literary and political journal, *Freedomways*. Not only did this magazine publish the writings of Black male luminaries of the left such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, and Langston Hughes, its pages were the initial outlets for the work of African American feminists such as Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Audre

Lorde. It was in *Freedomways* that Angela Davis published articles after her release from prison in the 1970s. And it would be Davis who would insist on the ongoing relevance of Thompson Patterson's understanding of the burdens an intersectionality of class, race and gender imposed on Black womanhood in her resurrection of what she now called "triple oppression."

McDuffie has thus provided an insightful and illuminating cartography of the continuity of Black feminist thought from the 1920s to the present. To be sure, there are quibbles that can be raised about this reading of history. The strength of *Sojourning for Freedom*, for instance, lies in its attention to the experience of African American women who happened to be affiliated with the Communist Party, rather than to the Party and its politics. On the one hand this is understandable; on the other it inevitably places McDuffie's account under some question marks. Obviously somewhat distanced from the revolutionary left that is the background of this study of Black feminism, McDuffie refers to the International, as opposed to Industrial, Workers of the World, within which some of his first generation communist women learned the art of soapboxing. Interpretation of Communist Party politics is a minefield, and the issues raised in the contemporary historiography are not ones easily sidestepped. Yet McDuffie never adequately addresses the often contentious politics of the Party that attracted Jones, Thompson Patterson, Jackson, and Moore, whether it be on the particular ground of programmatic stands like the Black Belt Nation thesis, which certainly demands critical scrutiny, or on the more generalized, overarching issue of Stalinism, which can hardly be ignored. The periodization of the 1930s, so central to understanding how communists conducted their anti-racist work, be

it in the sectarian and ultraleftist context of the Third Period or the cross-class collaborations of the Popular Front, does not really factor into McDuffie's book. And yet this shifting ground, and the further moves to right, left, and centre that would unfold over the course of the 1940s, actually played into the ways in which the Communist Party ended up handcuffed in its capacity to resist the tide of reaction that swept it repressively into particular corners in the 1950s. All of this registered negatively with the women McDuffie is studying, who were necessarily constrained and, as he usefully shows, often driven to battle with one another under the pressures of the state's anti-communism.

One part of this process emerges in McDuffie's outline of the transformation of Audley Moore. She moved from the dynamic, dedicated, and indefatigable campaign manager of communist Benjamin J. Davis Jr's election to New York's City Council in 1943 to something quite different by the late 1950s. In her own "conversion" narrative, Moore recounted how she came to be "reborn" when Communists dropped their political position that African Americans constituted a nation. "And then it struck me that we weren't Negroes, but actually Negroes were made out of us.... Oh my God – I nearly died. Bile began to pile up in me. And one day that bile came out – Oh! I was vomiting from my mouth, on the walls – shooting back and forth, I went out like a light." (134) Following this epiphany, Moore's identity was no longer that of the "red" Negro. She had become African, her "Queen Mother" self-identity harkening back to the royal genealogist of the 19th-century Asante Empire.

This political shift also smacked of opportunistic political accommodation, as McDuffie suggests gently. As much as he sees Moore as a "savvy activist" who grasped that communism's "heyday was

coming to an end," a new political alignment in African American circles being inevitable, McDuffie also argues that the red scare drove her into retreat. (190) The nature of Moore's changing politics, however, are somewhat fudged in McDuffie's telling. The eclectic, eccentric, and at times contradictory melding of the politics of feminism, Marxism-Leninism, Garveyism, and much else that came together in the Black nationalism of "Queen Mother" Moore was, at times, a bizarre fusion, but it is presented by McDuffie as a "creative weave." (207) At the same time, McDuffie has to acknowledge that Moore ended up dismissing feminism as nothing more than an "alien ideology," a promotion of middle-class white womanhood. Women, she thought, should subordinate themselves to men unless, presumably, they managed to attain royal stature. Moore also opposed abortion as a form of Black genocide (not unlike the Nation of Islam), and abhorred interracial unions. This contradictory trajectory appears to be rationalized by recourse to academic suggestion that "black nationalism is often progressive in relation to white supremacy and conservative in relation to the internal organization of black communities." (210)

Nonetheless, *Sojourning for Freedom* takes scholarship into important regions of the communist past, where Black women and their struggles have too often been *cul-de-saced*. Like most rich scholarship it is at its best as a suggestion of where new researches can begin, providing a baseline from which future study advances.

BRYAN D. PALMER  
Trent University

Erik S. Gellman and Jarod Roll, *The Gospel of the Working Class: Labor's Southern Prophets in New Deal America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2011)

*SOUTHERN PROPHETS* begins with an account of the early lives, and the social, intellectual, and religious formation of its two protagonists, framed in a sweeping narrative of the post-bellum Southern United States. The emergence and contours of Jim Crow society – caste, distress, exploitation, transience, and poverty – that kept men like Whitfield and Williams apart is built up through these separate biographical narratives. Both were born into poverty; both eventually found a religious calling. Mississippi born, Owen Whitfield became a Black sharecropper and itinerant Baptist preacher. Early on, Whitfield had been a Garveyite distrustful of whites. Whitfield's Depression-era introduction to the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union convinced him that racial division was a bar to economic and social justice.

Claude Williams, a white native of Tennessee, began life as a conventional Cumberland Presbyterian. He was taught to view Blacks with disdain. After military service during World War I (he did no fighting), he became an innovative and unorthodox Presbyterian minister. A turn to social Christianity began with Harry Fosdick's *Modern Use of the Bible* that led Williams away from the white supremacist milieu in which he had been raised. At a summer institute at Vanderbilt University under Alva Taylor in 1929, Williams began the cultivation of an idiom of radical social Christianity. He developed an association with Lucien Koch and others at Commonwealth College located at Mena, Arkansas. He began studying Marx and sought out collaborations with organized labour and the Arkansas Socialist Party. All of this,

almost predictably, culminated in his departure from the Presbyterian Church in the spring of 1934. Relocated to Little Rock, Arkansas, Williams created The New Era School of Social Action and Prophetic Religion in 1935 “to train prospective leaders in social and economic thought and action.” (65) Funds for the project came from Williams’ network of Popular Front associates.

Williams became deeply involved with the fledgling Southern Tenant Farmers’ Union (STFU), founded in 1934. Here the biographies of Whitfield and Williams intersect. E. B. McKinny, a Black Baptist preacher and tenant farmer organizer who was associated with Williams in the STFU, brought Williams and Whitfield together. Williams reordered Whitfield’s religiosity: he embraced Williams’ radical social Christianity; he stopped “whoopin and hollerin at God and started preaching the gospel of ... economic and spiritual renewal through collective action.” (74) An account of the declining arc of the lives of Whitfield and Williams as activists in the Williams’ inspired Peoples’ Institute of Applied Religion, the declension of radicalism with the advent of the Cold War, and the resurgence of the civil rights movement in the 1960s completes the text.

The title of *Southern Prophets* suggests a broad focus on southern radicals during the New Deal Era, but, while the cast of characters here is diverse – Lucien Koch, Alva Taylor, Myles Horton, Norman Thomas, Howard Kester, Harry Ward, James Dombrowski, Lee Hays, among others, all make appearances – Gellman and Roll place Claude Williams and Owen Whitfield centre stage with others only in supporting roles. They have built on the work of Cedric Belfrage, Anthony Dunbar, Donald Grubbs, Robert Craig and others by extending the foundation of their study through extensive research

in a wide range of manuscript collections (including FBI records), oral histories, and personal interviews.

The central premise of this meticulously researched and compelling book is that a joint biographical account of the interrelated lives of Whitfield and Williams would illuminate “an unstable world of social protest that entangles and blurs neat conventional historical categories: white, black, rural, urban, secular, religious, North, South.” (4) The story of Williams and Whitfield – Joyce Williams and Zella Whitfield suffered and sacrificed with their families for the work of their husbands – should, they assert, challenge historians “to rethink the dominant narratives of American history in the 1930s and 1940s.” (4) In particular, Gellman and Roll challenge historians of the “southern working class to take seriously the dynamic power and centrality of religious ideas in social and political movements.” (2)

Men make their own history, but they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, Marx tells us, and this was certainly the case for Williams and Whitfield. *Southern Prophets* opens the door to what it meant to grow up sharecropper poor (white and Black) in the Jim Crow South and discloses how the Great Depression propelled both Williams and Whitfield to the left and, eventually, to national attention as leaders of dispossessed agricultural workers in the southern United States. Drought, government-sponsored recovery programs, and greed displaced farm labourers, tenant farmers, and sharecroppers across the southern United States. Some responded with apathy and passivity. Not so in the Black Belt of Alabama and the Arkansas delta where dispossession ignited widespread unrest among those who suffered sudden and drastic deterioration in economic status. Here, union membership



and collective bargaining became bulwarks of resistance and self-defence through the (STFU) organized under the leadership of H. L. Mitchell. STFU activists – including Williams and Whitfield – and members met violence, illegality, and infringement of civil liberties.

The dramatic and convoluted story of the involvement of Whitfield and Williams and their fractious associates in this turmoil is related in detail; Gellman and Roll give us an insider's account of these developments with Williams and Whitfield taking on organizing and executive roles in the STFU and the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America. The narrative is thorough, detailed, and dramatic: though Gellman and Roll are loath to criticize or to judge too harshly they don't ignore charges of duplicity and demagoguery levelled at their protagonists. They also disclose how Williams, in his role in the demise of Commonwealth College, and Whitfield, in his involvement in the Bootheel crisis in 1939, contributed to the destruction of organizations for which they had some responsibility. Though matters of affiliation and intent are sometimes difficult to sort out definitively, Gellman and Roll leave their account of Williams' murky relationship with the Communist Party – a significant theme in Williams' association with both Commonwealth College and the STFU – at rather loose ends.

As promised, religion emerges as a central theme of *Southern Prophets*. Williams and Whitfield were powerful evangelists for social justice. Whitfield had a particular talent for vernacular forms of social Christianity; Williams espoused a radical social gospel. We hear their voices in the pages of *Southern Prophets*. The creation of an earthly "kingdom of God" was at the centre of their discourse, a discourse "that

combined strands of fundamentalism, liberalism, and Marxism in a potent mix catalyzed by the symbols, language, and folk traditions that already existed in American working-class communities."(3–4) Have they demonstrated that religion was a dynamic force shaping southern protest in New Deal America? There is no doubt that religion was central to the lives of their protagonists, Whitfield and Williams. However, by their failure to probe the rich body of data they have assembled, Gellman and Roll may have missed an opportunity to clinch their thesis. Did the deep social crisis of the late 1930s in the American South evoke different responses among the dispossessed? Were tenant farmers and workers – Black and white – who responded to Whitfield and White more likely to come from regions of relatively greater affluence, from regions in which crisis was more sudden and dramatic? This appears to be the case. If so, it would suggest that it was the suddenness and degree of dispossession that triggered resistance. Surely a religious discourse could shape and propel protest but equally the appearance of ostensibly religious or faith-based social protest might simply disclose how literacy, moral outrage, and boldness made Whitfield and Williams effective organizers and leaders of protest. Readers are told that Whitfield and Williams worked out a model for tapping the religious faith of workers so that the Congress of Industrial Organizations became a moral cause that demanded the destruction of Jim Crow, but the evidence to sustain this claim is rather thin. (116) Similarly, the assertion that Williams' approach to allied religion through the People's Institute of Applied Religion "stuck like pine tar to southern workers" (119) has to be taken largely on faith.

Notwithstanding these analytical reservations, *Southern Prophets* tells a

compelling story and is a fine and powerful addition to the literature on New Deal America.

TOM MITCHELL

Brandon University (retired)

**Susan Marks, *In the Mood for Munsingwear: Minnesota's Claim to Underwear Fame*** (Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press 2011)

*IN THE MOOD for Munsingwear: Minnesota's Claim to Underwear Fame* is a brief and lively history of the Minnesota-based underwear manufacturer Munsingwear told largely from the company's point of view. Author Susan Marks mines the rich materials Munsingwear donated to the Minnesota Historical Society to provide an overview of the company, from its founding in Minneapolis as the Northwest Knitting Company in 1886 by George Munsing and two associates, to its 1923 incorporation as the dominant manufacturer in the trade, to its nadir in 1981 when what was touted earlier in the century to be the world's largest underwear factory closed its doors. However, this did not mean the end of the Munsingwear brand; its trademarks and logos are currently owned by fashion giant Perry Ellis International, Inc. Written as a catalogue to accompany a museum exhibition at the Minnesota History Center, the 116-page book is lavishly illustrated with black and white and colour images of factory buildings, conditions and amenities, notable individuals, workers on the job, company social functions, promotional materials, and advertisements.

George Munsing's distinctive and profitable 19th-century innovation was in creating a fabric incorporating silk and wool from which one-piece undergarments for men and women that

combined undershirt and underpants, known as union suits, were produced. The blended fabric made these union suits more comfortable than the notoriously itchy all-wool variety Americans living in cold climates commonly wore. In fact the improved garments proved so popular that the Northwest Knitting Company was almost a victim of its early success. Orders went unfilled because the company couldn't handle the demand, and disgruntled customers wrote letters complaining they had not received promised goods and cancelling orders. An infusion of capital in 1887 by three wealthy businessmen who joined the board of directors, including Charles A. Pillsbury of flour mill fame, provided the needed funds to expand output. The 650,000 square foot Minneapolis factory was built between 1904 and 1915; workers produced 10,000 garments a day there by 1917.

Like other American companies, Munsingwear benefitted from government contracts during both world wars. Between the wars, the company had expanded production beyond multiple styles of union suits to include a range of fashionable women's body-shaping garments and hosiery. Thus, Munsingwear was well positioned to profit further during the post-war economic boom. To take fuller advantage of such possibilities, Munsingwear acquired two brands known for their alluring intimate apparel, Vassar of Chicago and Hollywood-Maxwell of Los Angeles, and manufactured brassieres, sleep wear, lingerie, and delicate undergarments in addition to supplying contemporary corsetry revived by post-war fashion trends for waist cinching. These garments were produced in a range of colours, prints, and styles and marketed under their own labels and for the risqué Frederick's of Hollywood. In the

mid-1950s, Munsingwear expanded production of menswear with its Penguin line of golf and bowling shirts. The shirts proved popular and were worn by athletes and celebrities. However, despite these successes, Munsingwear's sales slipped in the 1970s as management struggled to respond to the changing strategies of competitors, such as offshore production and the emphasis on designer branding.

Relying on sparse secondary texts cited in source notes provided at the end of the book, Marks touches on significant historical concerns, such as working conditions, the company's efforts to fend off labour unions, and changing advertising strategies. For example, Marks describes how local labour activist and journalist Eva McDonald Valesh infiltrated the Northwest Knitting Company factory in 1888 and published an article in the *St. Paul Globe* about abuses, including the stealing of workers' lunches by a supervisor, unfair distribution of piece work, and prohibitions against talking, singing, or laughing while working. Marks relates these problems to the nationwide exploitation of garment workers evidenced by the 1909 "Uprising of the 20,000" in New York City and subsequent organizing drives by the nascent International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) in other urban garment centres. She also mentions the Triangle Waist Factory fire of 1911.

Such historical contextualization could be more fully brought to bear in analyzing subsequent events. For example, Marks describes reports made by an undercover Burns Agency detective hired in 1915 to catch workers stealing union suits to supplement meagre wages. The detective also identified union organizers, and discovered that workers knew they laboured among informants. Intriguingly, one worker caught stealing complained that he had never been paid as promised for playing baseball on the

company team. Yet Marks, relying primarily on the in-house monthly newsletter, *The Munsingwear News*, lauds as progressive and singular the company's extensive welfare capitalism (a term she doesn't employ) instituted in the 1910s and 1920s. Though the company's medical care, cultural activities, picnics, and sports teams undoubtedly provided some benefits and were successful in fending off unionization at Munsingwear until 1936, as the baseball player's complaint indicates, paternalistic programs could also provoke additional grievances and were not necessarily viewed as leisure activities. Similarly, fascinating photographs of the factory floor and amenities like the kitchen that provided employee meals beg for analysis of how such images depicted an idealized view of working conditions the owners may have disseminated to rebut union appeals. A quote regarding the factory's closing, "No one was left to wrinkle a nose at fumes from the bleach vats," suggests the tidy factory tended by improbably well-dressed workers depicted in company photographs was not the full story.

Marks does question the management perspective at times. She doubts the claims of air quality inside the factory, recounts incidents of workers whose fingers were punctured by sewing machine needles, and points out that the company medical staff didn't just tend to injuries and provide preventive care, but also visited workers who had called in sick to ensure they were not faking illness. Overall, however, Marks portrays labour unions as contrary to the best interests of the company without considering how unionization and the labour codes instituted during the New Deal benefitted the garment industry by limiting work stoppages and creating a more level and stable playing field for competing firms. Moreover, the newsletters produced by ILGWU locals and those distributed by other

companies included similar personal stories of life transitions enjoyed by workers, reports from employees who left the factory for the army during World War II, and descriptions of after-work union-sponsored cultural activities. In other words, Munsingwear was not as unique as Marks claims. Consulting additional historical literature might also have clarified Marks' account of contending mid-1930s claims made by the ILGWU and the Textile Workers Organizing Committee for Minneapolis Munsingwear workers' membership. In addition, though she describes the impact of the neighbouring Strutwear Knitting Company strike in 1935, the wider contexts of trade union and progressive efforts for economic justice undertaken in Minnesota are not addressed.

In regard to advertising, Marks raises gender issues, with attention to homoerotic sub-texts in men's undergarment advertisements and displays of female sexuality in women's. More than a corporate history undertaken for promotional purposes and not intended as a rigorously researched study, *In the Mood for Munsingwear* provides a helpful narrative of this important underwear manufacturer's history and an illuminating look at the company's archival collection, which will undoubtedly be of further use to scholars on a range of related topics.

JILL FIELDS

California State University, Fresno

**William J. Mello, *New York Longshoremens: Class and Power on the Docks*** (Gainesville: University Press of Florida 2010)

WITH THIS BOOK, William J. Mello offers a fascinating account of rank-and-file rebellion among East Coast dockworkers in the post-war era. The docks of Manhattan might be overrun by condominiums and

urban parks today, but Mello's account brings to life a very different portside world, one where tens of thousands of longshoremens struggled to make a living and to gain some measure of control over their working conditions. As Mello's detailed historical work makes clear, these struggles led rank-and-file workers into confrontations not only with their employers and political élites, but also with corrupt officials in their own union, the International Longshoremens's Association (ILA).

Drawing on the archives of rank-and-file newsletters, oral histories of waterfront activists, several interviews, and a range of secondary sources, Mello homes in on the three decades following the end of World War II. The book asks two questions: "First, what were the limits imposed by business elites and political authorities against rebellious dockworkers? Second, what was the longshoremens's political capacity to succeed given the limits to class action?" (1)

In responding to these questions, the book moves gingerly between the distant and the local. Mello describes the ways in which the general climate of anti-communist McCarthyism pervading the United States in the post-war era created challenges for dockworkers fighting for greater control over their working lives, not least by provoking employers' use of investigative agencies and loyalty programs aimed at disarming rank-and-file activists. He speaks in particular about the barriers thrown up by the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 and the Landrum-Griffin Act in 1959, both of which ushered in new institutional constraints for unionists. Along the way, the Bi-State Waterfront Commission was created, altering historically entrenched hiring procedures and shifting decisions about the waterfront labour process away from the employer-union nexus, thereby reducing workers' capacity to intervene.

To this we can add the host of difficulties workers encountered in their own organization, where union officials often worked hand-in-hand with employers and politicians to silence rank-and-file militancy. This was the case in 1939, for example, when union thugs murdered Pete Panto, an outspoken leader of the Brooklyn Rank and File Committee, which was demanding changes to corrupt hiring procedures. It was also the case when the American Federation of Labor (AFL) cooperated with government officials to spearhead a campaign to replace the ILA with an equally conservative and violent AFL-affiliated union.

Amidst all of these challenges, rank-and-file activists were hardly docile. Though gangsters took the life of Pete Panto for his activism on the docks, their threats had not stopped the formation and growth of the Brooklyn Rank and File Committee, nor that of similar groups. Between 1945 and 1947, these efforts contributed to an explosion of wildcat strikes as longshoremen challenged their lack of control over working conditions and their union. Mello's excellent documentation of these wildcats and the rank-and-file organizing that underlay them puts to rest the notion that East Coast dockworkers were a conservative lot.

This activism led to some important victories for East Coast longshoremen, including the establishment of a Guaranteed Annual Income for workers. However, the overarching story revealed in this book is one of evaporating space for rank-and-file militancy. In the first phase of this history, immediately following World War II, workers responded to high levels of coercion emanating from informal alliances between union officials, political élites, and employers by engaging in highly disruptive wildcat strikes. As it became clear that the ILA was incapable of keeping the rank-and-file in line, these alliances broke down.

Beginning in 1947, with the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act, the second phase of this history saw employers and political élites work to introduce regulatory measures that limited worker and union involvement in decision-making over the waterfront labour process. By the end of the period considered by Mello, rank-and-file activism on the East Coast docks was but a shadow of what it had been in the 1940s.

This book is at its best when it delves deep into the dynamics of rebellion on the docks. Mello brings us close to the activists who struggled to build militancy among the ranks. The history of the labour movement is too often hidden from mainstream view, yet it is the stories of rank-and-file activists fighting for democracy – in the economy, but also in their own unions – that rarely see the light of day. Mello does us all a service by bringing these stories out into the open.

This book is also valuable for what it reveals about the decline of labour power in the immediate post-war period. Often, accounts of the American labour movement suggest that union power rose and fell alongside the rise and fall of membership numbers, with the apex of power occurring in the 1960s. Yet, as Mello's account makes clear, the capacity of workers to make gains was seriously undermined by interventions stretching back to the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, even as membership continued to grow. This is not a new finding, yet the historical detail offered here sheds light on how this process occurred in one important sector of the economy.

Nevertheless, the book also has several weaknesses. To begin with, it is uneven in its treatment of detail. For example, Mello dedicates eight pages (33–41) to a discussion of the murder of Peter Panto, and a further seven pages to a discussion of a single wildcat strike in 1945 (45–52), yet the book has no sustained discussion

of the ongoing organizing and educational strategies of rank-and-file activists. It also contains far too little detail on the evolving economic climate that shipping companies and dockworkers confronted – from the competitiveness of the New York port, to concentration of ownership in the industry, to fluctuations of unemployment and wage levels in the New York and American economy. More generally, the book relies on too few sources – for example, large swathes of the text are drawn overwhelmingly from articles published in the *New York Times*.

A more substantial shortcoming lies in the book's analytical weakness. One of Mello's central goals is to assess the political capacity of dockworkers to achieve their goals, yet his research strategy makes an estimation of political capacity virtually impossible. In large part, this is because Mello fails to make better use of comparison in his research. The book considers one failed case (East Coast dockworkers who wanted more control but failed to achieve it), pointing to a long list of factors that likely contributed to its failure. Such a strategy leaves readers wondering which factors were most important in limiting workers' political capacity and why other cases not considered here, such as the West Coast longshoremen, experienced greater success in expanding political capacity despite exposure to many of the same forces. These are difficult questions that demand a more rigorous research design than Mello offers in this book.

Overall, the strengths of the book outweigh its weaknesses. This is a text that students of the American labour movement should read and build upon.

JASON STANLEY

New York University

**Joseph McCartin, *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers, and the Strike that Changed America***  
(New York: Oxford University Press 2011)

ON A FOGGY morning in mid-December, 1960, two jet airliners collided over Staten Island, New York, sending one fatally crippled plane hurtling toward Brooklyn while the other showered passengers and debris onto shocked onlookers below. The crash killed 134 people and became, for a time, the worst air disaster in American history.

In the opening pages of *Collision Course*, Georgetown University historian Joseph McCartin recounts this tragedy from the perspective of air traffic controllers who would later remember it as a transformative event in their lives. Convinced that the crash could have been avoided, and appalled by the Federal Aviation Administration's ability to dodge responsibility, controllers demanded changes that would allow them to cope with the four-fold increase in air traffic that had occurred over the previous decade. These demands eventually gained them allies around the country and put them on their own collision course with President Ronald Reagan.

Most readers will be at least somewhat familiar with the ill-fated 1981 strike by the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO). President Ronald Reagan's decision to fire and permanently replace more than eleven thousand striking PATCO members has taken on near-mythical proportions in American political lore, usually confirming pre-existing opinions of Reagan as either saint or scoundrel. But McCartin breaks out of this familiar cast, recounting a story of institutional failure rather than moral turpitude. The absence of a workable labour law for federal employees, he suggests, ensured an outcome with



deleterious consequences for workers and the broader public alike.

The book's narrative begins by tracing controllers' evolving strategies for influencing the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Collective efforts began during the mid 1950s, when controllers formed a professional association to enhance their status and give them respectability and authority within the FAA. Ten years later, after the apparent failure of these tactics to induce change in the air traffic control system, many controllers adopted a more adversarial stance toward their employer. The National Association of Government Employees (NAGE) attracted nationwide support during the mid-1960s by declaring that it would "not play dummy or 'yes man'" to the FAA. (45) But the organization failed to follow through on its adversarial rhetoric. By 1966, controllers in Chicago, New York, and other high-traffic locations lost faith in NAGE and began to assert leadership on their own.

McCartin does an excellent job fleshing out the individual characters who sensed this widespread dissatisfaction and channelled it into support for the organization that would become PATCO. Jack Maher, a mild-mannered Korean War veteran from Queens, initiated a series of weekly after-work meetings that popularized the idea of an independent air traffic controllers' union. One attendee of these meetings was Mike Rock, an outspoken, Bronx-born son of a police officer who would later become known to his colleagues as "Mike Strike." In early 1968, Rock managed to recruit the nationally renowned trial lawyer F. Lee Bailey to serve as the public face of the new union, launching what McCartin aptly describes as "one of the most unusual collaborations in American labor history." (65) Offbeat characters were essential to PATCO's early development, and McCartin draws on numerous oral

history interviews to give his narrative a vibrancy that is rare in academic historical writing.

Broader social and cultural trends helped make PATCO into one of the most militant public sector unions in the nation by the early 1970s. Despite controllers' professional aspirations and indifference toward less-skilled workers, they "shared in common with other disaffected Americans of those years a distaste for hypocritical, inflexible authority structures," McCartin explains. Their willingness to challenge authority indicates "a different sort of rebellion" that was brewing alongside more familiar movements of student radicals, civil rights activists, and second wave feminists. (60)

During the second half of the 1970s, however, the public sector union movement diverged from contemporaneous rebellions. Federal civil rights laws provided many of these movements with effective (though imperfect) institutional mechanisms through which they could seek redress. Federal workers, by contrast, failed to win legislation that would grant them collective bargaining rights. Unions like PATCO thus lacked legal authority to bargain over salaries, benefits, and staffing issues at a time when public sector workers bore the brunt of austerity measures at all levels of government. This reinforced many controllers' aversion to the compromises their moderate leadership could legally negotiate on their behalf.

The absence of an effective labour law for federal workers put PATCO on a collision course with the federal government. In 1978, a "fifth column" movement of disaffected PATCO members successfully ousted the union's president and began planning for a nationwide strike to dramatize controllers' predicament. Two years later, this cadre turned their back on the broader labour movement and

endorsed Ronald Reagan's presidential candidacy, hoping that Reagan would repay them for their support. This proved a fatal miscalculation on the union's part. Though the Reagan Administration initially offered controllers' unprecedented concessions – "never before had the federal government offered so much in a negotiation with a federal employees' union," McCartin notes (262) – the President refused to tolerate an illegal strike. White House political aides concluded, accurately, that a hardline stance against the strikers would be a boon to Reagan's domestic approval rating; policy advisers believed that an uncompromising image would increase the President's personal leverage with the Soviet Union and other Cold War adversaries. PATCO's strike, it seems, was doomed before it began.

McCartin neither romanticizes nor condemns the actors on any side of this story, emphasizing instead the institutional and environmental constraints in which they operated. He makes a convincing case that the shape of the law was a crucial factor in (if not completely determinative of) PATCO's fate. Finally, he suggests an important takeaway point for contemporary policymakers considering the merits of collective bargaining in the public sector: "It cost more to break the PATCO walkout than any other labor conflict in American history." (332) A more effective labour law – one that gave controllers the opportunity to bargain over the issues they cared about most, and that diminished Reagan's political incentives to break the strike at any cost – might have produced an outcome more advantageous to both controllers and the broader public.

Some labour scholars may object to the significance McCartin ascribes to the PATCO strike as a catalyst for the long-term decline of the American labour movement. Reagan "loosen[ed] the moral

restraints that had kept private-sector anti-unionism in check," he asserts. (13) These "moral restraints" were rather weak in the first place, and Reagan's broader assault on the regulatory state deserves prominent billing in any account of the changing balance of power between workers and their employers. But McCartin acknowledges these other sources of labour's decline, and he should be lauded for weaving into his lively, character-driven narrative a discussion of how PATCO both resulted from and altered long-term trends in American political and economic development. His success in this endeavour just might lead his readers to view recent attacks on public sector unions in a new light.

ALEXANDER GOURSE  
Northwestern University

**Dana Cloud with Keith Thomas, *We Are the Union: Democratic Unionism and Dissent at Boeing*** (Urbana and Champaign: University of Illinois Press 2011)

DANA CLOUD's new study of democratic unionism at Boeing is another valuable contribution to the growing literature on the conflict between union officials and the workers they purport to represent that has plagued organized labour since its inception and continues to this day. For this reason alone it comes highly recommended. But it is also a sensitive examination of an important recent attempt to overcome this issue through rank-and-file initiative, incorporating and in dialogue with the voices of the workers involved in this struggle.

*We Are the Union* centres on the 69-day strike Boeing workers in the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW) conducted in 1995. They won wage increases, preserved health benefits, and gained a number of

guarantees against future subcontracting. Perhaps the most significant thing about the 1995 strike, though, was the way that a simmering conflict between the union and its membership going back a number of years burst to the surface when workers rejected a second, union-recommended contract from Boeing and stayed on strike another three-and-a-half weeks. This second contract was not substantially different from the first, and the union's recommendation of it suggested a conciliatory attitude on its part that had increasingly bred mistrust among workers. Their gamble paid off, as the contract they finally ratified contained numerous important gains, and avoided the concessions the company sought and the union recommended. In *We Are the Union* Cloud dramatizes this conflict, and suggests that it holds important lessons for the labour movement today.

The seeds of democratic unionism at Boeing were sown in 1989. After a lengthy but successful strike, the union touted as a benefit of the new contract a series of joint initiatives between company and union meant to erode protections on health and safety as well as production standards. Givebacks on health and safety may have particularly rankled a Boeing worker in Wichita, Kansas, named Keith Thomas. Thomas had recently lost a close friend at a young age due to Boeing's negligence on health issues. This willingness to compromise with management on these important issues alienated many workers from their union, and gave rise to caucuses around the country. Cloud uses the experience of Unionists for Democratic Change (UDC) and Thomas, its presumptive leader, as a foil to discuss her ideas about democratic unionism.

These caucuses gave dissident workers an institutional home and, through elections, educational leaflets, and their many campaigns, a chance to participate in union politics in a way they never had

before. Coming from a background in communication studies, Cloud stresses the important role constructing a coherent narrative played in shaping this rank-and-file alternative. A newsletter Thomas created called *Floormikes* did just that. This combination of ideas and action provided a viable alternative to the official union, and many workers gravitated to it.

But the 1995 victory, and the decisive role the caucuses played in securing it, was not enough to maintain their influence or sustain them as organizations. In the aftermath, the UDC disbanded. The decision to disband comes in for sustained criticism from Cloud, representing, in her view, a tendency to view the rank-and-file as "unwilling or unable to fight in their own interests." (128) As a result, she says, the UDC focused on elections and, after the 1995 strike, on individual lawsuits against the IAMAW using McCarthy-era labour laws.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Cloud's work is that she provides space for a dialogue between herself and Thomas on these issues, allowing him to speak in his own words and defend his actions himself. This suggests a remarkable sensitivity to the sometimes fraught and always delicate relationship between a historian and her subjects. Thomas is his own best advocate on these matters, and this conversation is one of the book's highlights. It raises important questions for the direction of the labour movement today in an accessible way.

If Cloud spends an inordinate amount of time discussing and criticizing the UDC, and allowing Thomas to respond, this reflects the importance of its experience to her understanding of democratic unionism. Democratic unionism originates in the militant struggles that created the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Hence it prioritizes rank-and-file action over "administrative, legalistic, and consumer-oriented strategies." (13)

Struggles that relied on these kinds of top-down actions, such as at Hormel and International Paper in the mid-1980s and in the Decatur “War Zone” in 1994–95, all failed. Alongside these failures, democratic unionism struggled to establish itself as a legitimate alternative. Its successes, according to Cloud, included John Sweeney winning the presidency of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1995 and the growing influence of his New Voices coalition; the successful Teamster strike against UPS in 1997; and the United Auto Workers victory against automakers in 1998. Institutions like Teamsters for a Democratic Union, the Association for Union Democracy, the popular journal *Labor Notes*, and, by extension, revolutionary political organizations Solidarity and the International Socialist Organization (ISO) continue this legacy today.

The struggle at Boeing, then, is an uncomfortable fit with democratic unionism. Relying on rank-and-file initiatives but at times cynical about the ranks themselves, the UDC and other caucuses still succeeded for a time in democratizing their union and stemming the tide of concessions many other workers had grown accustomed to.

A similar ambivalence characterizes Cloud’s own sense of whether she envisions democratic unionism as an alternative or a corrective to the business unionism decried on the pages of *Labor Notes* and by organizations such as the ISO and Solidarity. Her apparent sympathies suggest the former, while the evidence suggests the latter. Thus, while pointing to the inclusiveness of the CIO and its rank-and-file militancy, she says nothing about its role in shifting unions from their once closely guarded independence and toward their current status as government-sanctioned legal monopolies. Nor does she mention the role the

CIO played in championing what David Brody called “workplace contractualism,” which exchanged unruly direct action for legal status through no-strike policies, management prerogatives, and dues check-offs. Without these criticisms, democratic unionism comes off not as a major alternative to business unionism but as a tepid corrective, able, through rank-and-file initiatives, to win some measure of temporary democracy within unions, but unable to address the divide between union officials and the workers they so often misrepresent.

The limitations of this approach are clear. The gains workers achieved through their militancy in 1995 were lost in subsequent years through unremitting attacks by the company. As a result, by the time of the successful strikes at Boeing in 2005 and 2008, the company had already won what it sought but failed to achieve in 1995 – offloading, outsourcing, “team”-based lean production methods throughout the company, all the standard trappings of capitalism in our era, often called neo-liberalism. This is a sad coda to the remarkable battles fought by caucuses at Boeing against company and union. At the same time, the limitations of democratic unionism at Boeing are the limitations of the labour movement as a whole. Business unionism has exchanged class war for labour peace, erecting a massive bureaucracy against the democratic impulses of rank-and-file rebels. How we might overcome this conflict remains an open question. As ever, rank-and-file initiatives like those at Boeing are the only reasonable place to start.

Michael Stauch

Duke University

**Cal Winslow, *Labor's Civil War in California: The NUHW Healthcare Workers' Rebellion* (Oakland: PM Press 2010)**

IN THE PAST THREE decades North American workers and their unions have increasingly come under attack from neoliberal governments that serve corporate interests. With the recent economic crisis these attacks have intensified, as highly paid unionized workers in the private and public sector have been blamed for corporate bailouts and municipal budget shortfalls. Rarely do these attacks come from within unions. In *Labor's Civil War in California: The NUHW Healthcare Workers' Rebellion* historian Cal Winslow recounts such a story – the tragic destruction of United Healthcare Workers-West (UHW) by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the struggle to rebuild the union as the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW). Throughout the narrative Winslow challenges the reader to question the way forward: corporate unionism or social justice unionism? Organizing from the top-down or the bottom-up? Which approach will help rebuild the labour movement workers so desperately need? And which side are you on?

As SEIU's third largest affiliate and California's second largest SEIU local, Winslow describes UHW as "the most powerful labor organization in the state" in 2007. (22) By trade union standards UHW was democratic and "prided itself on workplace organization and member involvement." (25) UHW was deeply rooted in Northern California where in 1938 it became the first hospital union in the United States, the result of an organizing drive led by hospital porters at San Francisco's General Hospital, a drive Winslow explains as organized "from the bottom up." UHW was considered progressive in its opposition to the war in Iraq and its support of social

justice issues, such as universal healthcare, same-sex marriage, and its aid to striking UNITE-HERE workers in 2004–2006. In an industry Winslow describes as being dominated by anti-union corporations, UHW hospital members (mostly women, people of colour and immigrants) received full healthcare, defined pension plans, and employment and income security, as well as the highest wages in the healthcare industry in 2008. With nearly 150,000 members, UHW was the fastest growing local within the SEIU, no doubt due in part to its successful strikes and willingness to place "organizing rights for the unorganized" and the right of caregivers to have a voice in hospital staffing matters on the bargaining table. Thus it is not surprising that UHW contracts, especially those with Kaiser Permanente, were "referred to as the 'gold standard,' the best acute-care agreements in the United States" (24–25) and that UHW was highly regarded as a "model" union. "Wrecking UHW," Winslow argues, "would be no cake-walk." (24) But why would SEIU want to "wreck" its most powerful and successful local, a union that had nearly doubled in size in less than eight years and at a time when trade union membership in the US private sector had fallen to around 7.6 per cent? (13)

Winslow offers several explanations, but only two issues have substance. SEIU charged that the UHW was guilty of "financial malfeasance" when it established a \$6 million healthcare education fund for the purpose of campaigning on healthcare issues. Though UHW disbanded the fund when SEIU feared the entity might become a "union within the union," the charge later became the basis for placing UHW in trusteeship, but it was a charge difficult to prove. A district court judge found nothing amiss and dismissed all charges. More complex, however, was the charge that UHW was "obstructing the forced transfer of

65,000 long-term care workers” to Local 6434 in Southern California. (27) While the transfer of these workers seemed to be a fairly straightforward “organizational issue,” Winslow contends that UHW was in violation of SEIU president Andy Stern’s “top-down” corporate approach to unionism.

At the heart of this battle was unwillingness, on UHW’s behalf, to abandon decades of struggle and the vision of building the union “from the bottom up,” in favour of SEIU’s Alliance agreement – “an agreement on the part of the employers not to oppose, within highly specific parameters, union organizing.” (32) The SEIU also agreed to relinquish control over which healthcare facilities could be organized, banned strikes, limited collective bargaining, prohibited worker organizing and agreed not to place employers “at an economic disadvantage” by demanding pay rates or benefits for healthcare workers. In 2007, when the Alliance contract expired the employers proposed, among new restrictions, a 50-year agreement – SEIU and Local 6434 supported a revised 20-year agreement instead. When UHW opposed the renewed Alliance agreement on the grounds that it “prevents workers from engaging in struggle to improve their working conditions,” adversely affects “our mission and goal to advance and defend the interests of our members” and comes too close to being a “company union,” Stern threatened to place UHW in trusteeship. (34–36) UHW’s fight for workers’ rights, however, was far from over.

In summer 2008, SEIU began monitoring UHW activity and when it announced that trusteeship hearings were scheduled for September, the union bombarded UHW members with mailings, robo-calls, personal visits and threats. UHW fought back by organizing. “Tens of thousands of UHW members and supporters,” Winslow explains, “took to the streets, packed meetings,

petitioned, wrote letters, sent emails, and made phone calls – all in defense not just of UHW but demanding membership participation in democratic unions, membership participation in bargaining, membership rule in the union. They opposed the SEIU’s mindless centralism, its sweetheart contracts with employers and its backroom deals with politicians.” (53) The response was spectacular and the rank-and-file mobilization unparalleled. The subsequent Marshall Report found no basis for trusteeship: not malfeasance; not conspiring with other unions; not neglecting contracts; nor restricting free speech – there were no grounds for SEIU trusteeship. Despite the rift in the union UHW remained loyal to SEIU and in a last ditch effort to reconcile, UHW President Sal Rosselli proposed that UHW’s 65,000 long-term care workers be given the opportunity to vote on the transfer sought by Stern. But before the vote took place, Rosselli requested a guarantee from Stern that the new statewide local the workers were transferring to would be “democratically structured and responsive” (57) to its membership. If this guarantee was not made, Rosselli threatened to resist trusteeship and decertify from SEIU. No guarantee was made.

Occupation of UHW local offices by SEIU officials followed, assets were seized, and UHW’s elected executive board and staff members replaced. UHW began the long decertification process under the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and in the process began organizing to build NUHW. Without access to offices, computers, an organizing budget or paid staff, NUHW set out to build, or as Winslow argues, “rebuild the union” in the workplace, “by denying SEIU the right to represent Kaiser workers.” (67) NUHW also began the process of organizing non-unionized home healthcare workers in Fresno, California, but found it difficult to compete with the SEIU’s army of staff



members and \$10 million organizing budget. And while SEIU claimed victory in the Fresno organizing drive allegations of misconduct abound. SEIU considers itself the victim in this battle, and NUHW the raider.

Though Winslow studied at Warwick University under the direction of the late E. P. Thompson, *Labor's Civil War in California* is not an academic study of the SEIU attack of the UHW, but rather an informal attempt to recount the story of California healthcare workers and the destruction of UHW from the workers' point of view. According to Winslow this story needs to be told, and he does so quite passionately. Therein lies the only fault of *Labor's Civil War in California*. Winslow and his daughter Samantha, an organizer for UHW from 2004 to 2009 and a founding member of NUHW (122), are actively involved in the NUHW struggle against SEIU and the narrative, at times, reflects Winslow's frustration. Sarcastic remarks and insider humour can be found throughout his writing. In its current format the book works better as a memoir of Winslow's and his daughter's struggle and experience in founding NUHW. Winslow's research notes and extensive collection of interviews, as well as statements in the introduction about "having more to tell" suggest, however, that a formal academic study may be in the works.

The approach to *Labor's Civil War in California* is but one small flaw. The book does an excellent job of highlighting the precarious nature of work in the healthcare industry, an industry Winslow argues not only "produces poverty" for its workers and "barriers to decent conditions" (32) for those that live in long-term care facilities but also silences its workers from reporting instances of abuse for fear of job reprisal. Workers' rights to free speech – the ability to openly discuss and

report poor facility conditions to state regulators – are integral to the healthcare industry, patients, families, and nursing home reform advocates. Unionization of the industry by social justice oriented unions like NUHW can ensure that both workers' and patients' rights are protected.

The real lesson in this struggle is whether or not workers have the right to choose their union. Or are they, as Winslow questions, "the property of a labor organization – to be organized and reorganized as its leaders see fit?" (101) Currently in the United States workers have difficulty decertifying under the NLRB; the process, as described by Winslow, is "cumbersome and time-consuming," often reflecting "the politics of the party in power." (71) It is a system hindered by delays, postponements, and appeals, and in which employers are free to intimidate, harass and terminate workers while they await resolution. The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), since defeated, was an attempt to try and remedy these failings by amending the NLRB "making it easier for workers to form, join or assist labor organizations and to provide for penalties for unfair labor practices, particularly in organizing efforts." (71–72) But freedom of choice, as Winslow argues, is also an internal union matter.

In the case of SEIU "leaders preside over huge, consolidated locals with few structures for membership accountability or control," they are appointed rather than elected by the rank-and-file, and local by-laws have been fixed to ensure they are not easily replaced. (56) SEIU leaders like Stern are "union bosses" who practice corporate/business unionism. There is little participatory democracy or "social movement unionism" in the way SEIU operates. When workers form or join unions, they do so with the expectation

that through collective participation and struggle they will gain a voice in the union, the workplace, and the community. UHW was built on this democratic foundation and NUHW rebuilt from the bottom up by the rank-and-file at a time, Winslow describes, “when much of labor remained silent, cowed by SEIU triumphalism and its ever handy checkbook.” (103) *Labor’s Civil War in California* is a testament to the struggle of workers’ rights in an age of increasing corporate/business unionism. It is a must read for any union activist, as the struggle to keep NUHW democratic is not the first of its kind in American history, nor will it be the last.

BRANDI LUCIER

University of Windsor

**Daniel R. Kerr, *Derelict Paradise: Homelessness and Urban Development in Cleveland, Ohio*** (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press 2011)

THE AUTHOR OF *Derelict Paradise*, Daniel Kerr, begins his examination of the links between homelessness and urban development in Cleveland, Ohio by explaining why he decided to use historical and archival evidence: his interest was to shed light on the reasons that so many of the hundreds of unhoused persons that he had encountered over a seven-year period, beginning in 1996, were long-time Cleveland residents who had worked in a wide variety of jobs. His many conversations and formal interviews “radically changed my understanding of ‘homelessness.’ Rather than seeing the phenomenon as a condition faced by individuals without access to housing, I came to understand ‘homelessness’ as a set of institutionalized relationships that benefit some at the expense of others.” (3) Furthermore, “over and over again, my

interviewees presented a fundamental paradox: homelessness is profitable.” (3)

From this starting point, Kerr’s goal in *Derelict Paradise* is to shed light on how homelessness became so entrenched in the city of Cleveland. The book is a rich compendium of stories, incidents and activities that highlight links among racism, poverty, power and urban development in ways that seldom resulted in good news for those with less privilege. Kerr argues for the benefits of engaging deeply with a local perspective. Only through this lens, he argues, is it possible to link structural change and everyday social relations.

Kerr details the manner in which, historically, two elite initiatives – the scientific charity movement and for-profit day labour services – operated in conjunction with one another to narrow the range of options for poor individuals who needed (and wanted) to work and have access to decent shelter. He couples this story with that of elite interest in transforming downtown Cleveland into a “playground for the wealthy” and how urban planning and redevelopment initiatives by local and state politicians tried to support this goal. Although not all of these élites were self-serving, those that were not tended to find their progressive efforts undercut by their more ruthless peers. Moreover, he notes that more recently, the marginalization of those with a criminal record has forced such individuals to accept the most marginal of jobs and shelter options in ways that closely parallel earlier interactions between élites and those who are marginalized.

Kerr has organized his examination historically as a series of “spotlights” on particular events and social interactions, with the greatest level of detail being given to the period before World War II. Each chapter’s title is meant to entice the interest of the reader. For example,

Chapter 1, "Employment Sharks and Spying Organizations," examines the period between the late 1870s and the 1930s. He begins with a story of labour disputes centred on the railroads but the focus soon turns to how Cleveland business leaders "grew determined never again to leave their fate in the hands of even well-behaved workers ... 'a committee of prominent citizens' announced the formation of the First City Troop and the Cleveland Gatling Gun Battery." (14) Closely following the details of this initiative, he notes that "city business leaders turned their attention to revamping the ways the city provided aid to the poor" (15), and so introduced Cleveland's engagement with the scientific charity movement. He further makes links between these activities and urban redevelopment: "City elites moved seamlessly from their fixation on maintaining control of the lives of the unemployed and unhoused to their grander visions of resculpting the city's landscape in a more orderly fashion." (15) This overview is followed by a series of detailed vignettes drawing upon in-depth archival evidence. Thus, the reader learns about how the Charity Organization Society in Cleveland was formed, its proponents, its philosophy, and its links to other such organizations across the United States. Further details are also provided, including the names of the organizations that became involved and those that were shut down as a result of an inability to successfully provide an alternative to this orientation to welfare. In the course of each vignette, Kerr also highlights the contestation that did take place to challenge such initiatives, such as the Unemployed Council, which was formed in 1927. (37)

In Chapter 2, "A City with a Smile," the focus is on the period of the 1930s Depression, told both from the perspective of local élites and that of workers. Kerr continues the themes introduced

in Chapter 1 including the role of private charity organizations. As well he reiterates the extent of disconnect between élites and marginalized workers: "Although the desires of Cleveland's elite may seem to have little to do with the reality of the unhoused and unemployed, their plans shaped and at times sought to eradicate the independent survival networks of the homeless and the unemployed and their alternative visions for a more equitable society." (39) Whereas the élite looked to tourism, and thus a city with an attractive appearance, as a way to turn around Cleveland's declining economic circumstances, the marginalized sought recognition as individuals in need but worthy of fair treatment and respect. The growing number of panhandlers on the streets therefore was an unsurprising catalyst for clashes between these two orientations.

Subsequent chapters similarly address the themes introduced in the two opening chapters, albeit in a manner that certainly acknowledges the broader economic and political contexts and timing of key events (Chapter 3 "The Nation's Housing Laboratory," on the early 1930s; Chapter 4, "Businessmen Gone Berserk," on the 1940s and 1950s; Chapter 5, "The Urban Renewal Doldrums," covering the 1950s and 1960s; Chapter 6, "A Bombing Run," on the 1960s and 1970s; and Chapter 7, "Open Penitentiaries," on the 1980s and 1990s). While the author makes an effort to balance the details of Cleveland-based events, activities and personalities and the broader contexts, the details often seem to overwhelm the contexts. For readers without knowledge of how Cleveland's land uses and neighbourhoods are arranged, the references to streets and districts are difficult to follow and absorb. Kerr provides little in the way of aids for these readers. There are only two maps of Cleveland's streets (one from 1933 and the other from 1965) in the

entire text, both located on the same page at the very beginning of Chapter 1 and never explicitly referred to in the text. While this book does make an important contribution to American urban history in detailing the ways in which homelessness has been institutionalized, and identifying the many groups who benefit from this phenomenon, his potentially powerful conclusion is lost in the level of detail he contributes. Nonetheless, his conclusions should provoke soul searching among the many different groups he includes as beneficiaries of institutionalized homelessness.

FRAN KŁODAWSKY  
Carleton University

**Patricia Zavella, *I'm Neither Here nor There: Mexicans' Quotidian Struggles with Migration and Poverty*** (Durham and London: Duke University Press 2011)

PATRICIA ZAVELLA'S book is the result of thirteen years of research in the Santa Cruz area of northern California. Drawing on transnational, assimilation, queer, feminist, and border theories, Zavella tracks the trajectories, in terms of time and mobility, of differently situated Mexicans. Her respondents include undocumented migrants, migrants who have received permanent residence and Mexican-Americans or Chicana/os who grew up in the US. In addition to migration, both internal and international, Zavella's respondents have another factor in common: they come from working-class communities and encounter day-to-day struggles to make ends meet. This is one of the strengths of the book. The diversity in respondents disrupts the image of undocumented migrants living apart from those who are documented and the idea that their struggles are diametrically different. In fact, Zavella demonstrates the tensions among Mexican Americans

and Mexican migrants *as* well as their ties. For instance, many Mexicans in California are part of mixed-status families where some are undocumented and some are documented.

The book makes other important contributions. The first is that it focuses on one site, Santa Cruz County, and follows the lives of migrants as well as the changing politics, economics, population and infrastructure. For instance, in Chapter 3, "The Working Poor," Zavella takes time to describe the living conditions of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Santa Cruz county, with its high housing costs, large number of temporary residents who work in the agricultural sector, and networks of people who come from the same town in Mexico. She also discusses the work opportunities available to the working poor, migrants, and undocumented in the region (of course these are not mutually exclusive categories), which she argues are organized along racial and gender lines. Finally, she links the context of Santa Cruz county with transnational processes, particularly with the implementation of the NAFTA and the subsequent moving of agricultural and canning operations abroad. Zavella demonstrates how workers, specifically in the canning industry, mobilized both modes of resistance to restructuring and solidarity with workers in Mexico where their employment moved.

The second strength of the book is conceptual. Zavella develops "peripheral vision" as a way to describe the transnational subjectivity of many of her respondents. She proposes peripheral vision as a response to arguments that migrants experience a "social death" when they migrate to a new place. Echoing the work of transnational migration scholars, Zavella demonstrates that migrants are not uprooted; they produce ties with "home" and "host" countries, however tenuous. This peripheral lens demonstrates how

the Mexican diaspora in the US is invested in what happens in Mexico, even if they were not born there. It also demonstrates that people experience transnational ties and peripheral vision even if they have not migrated. Put differently, peripheral vision, as a transnational subjectivity, is not unidirectional. Like other sites in the US, Santa Cruz County has a large number of migrants from specific towns in Mexico due to the extensive networks that have been produced through continuous migration. Residents of those small towns experience peripheral vision through their interests in US politics and current events, which affect their family members and co-nationals abroad. Finally, Zavella argues that the ties produced through peripheral vision extend beyond family affiliations to also include political and cultural connections.

One of the drawbacks of the book is the large amount of interview data that appears in early chapters, which in my opinion the author could have engaged more extensively. This approach changes in the last two chapters, which for me were the most nuanced and developed. Chapter 5, "The divided home," delves into the family lives of Zavella's respondents, focusing on how "the family often becomes [both] a site where surveillance and struggles for social control take place and is also viewed as a refuge from the vicissitudes of a cruel world." (157) The chapter does not offer a romanticized notion of family. Instead, it demonstrates the cracks or borderlands that develop in some families due to migration, poverty and other social and personal issues. In describing families as "borderlands" (159), Zavella draws our attention to how borders extend beyond those produced by states. Borders also include those created by violence, distance and resentment. Zavella also delves into another borderland, that of being queer in this context of migration and poverty. In analyzing gendered,

familial and other interlocking processes, Zavella therefore produces a rich and nuanced account of how different families navigate the borders that divide them.

Chapter 6, "Transnational Cultural Memory," analyzes popular music as a site of political and cultural production. Drawing on the work of cultural theorists, Zavella describes her case studies as "archives of feelings," that is sites that produce meaning not only through their production, but also their reception. One example is the role and the power of Spanish-language radio both in the US, where the industry has grown at a time when radio in general is less popular, and rural Southern Mexico, where it allows Indigenous and marginalized communities to produce and consume information and culture. These archives of feelings, Zavella demonstrates, are transnational and also embody peripheral vision. The chapter focuses on three musicians/musical groups – *Los Tigres del Norte*, Lila Downs and *Quezal* – looking at their history and how their music genre and body of work have been taken up in Mexico and the US. *Los Tigres del Norte* play norteño music, a genre "influenced by German and Czech settlers" in northern Mexico featuring "the accordion and polka-style dancing." (193) Their music discusses varied topics including migration stories, deportations, the femicides in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, and the drug trade. Although *Los Tigres* do not identify themselves as political, despite their role in migrant rights marches in the US since 2006, Zavella demonstrates the transnational political links *Los Tigres* create in the US and Mexico through their music. The work of Lila Downs and *Quezal* is also transnationally political, taking up a "peripheral vision." Both try to disrupt static representations of Mexicans, Mexican-ness and being Chicana/o. Particularly important is how the group *Quezal* discusses its political

influences and decision-making process to making music, which is influenced by Chicana feminists.

Zavella's book is an important read for scholars of migration, transnationalism, citizenship, and political economy, as well as those whose work engages gender, sexuality and race. While set in the US, Zavella's conceptual frame and analysis can be a useful tool for Canadian scholars, particularly those working in the areas of migrant integration, immigration status and racialized poverty.

PALOMA E. VILLEGAS  
OISE/University of Toronto

**Enobong Hannah Branch, *Opportunity Denied: Limiting Black Women to Devalued Work*** (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press 2011)

A HISTORICAL COMPARISON of Black women's labour force experience with white and Black men as well as with white women reveals that each group has held very different types of jobs. Using intersectional analysis in conjunction with census and other empirical data, Branch judiciously maps how race and gender coalesced over a 100-year period to restrict Black women to undesirable positions. Branch begins chronologically in 1860 and carries her analysis through 2008, focusing on Black women as farm labourers; as domestic, clerical and factory workers (which includes meatpacking and slaughtering); and as professional workers. The author begins from the premise that the work Black women performed during slavery subsequently laid the foundation for their exploitation post-emancipation. Confining Black women to devalued work was systematically supported by state and federal laws, individual employers, employees, and local communities who mounted resistance when Black women attempted to

enter into more desirable occupations that were defined as "white" jobs. (61) Branch aptly illustrates that when race and gender are taken into account and linked to privileges and disadvantages in the world of work, the story of US labour radically changes. It becomes less about self-determination and meritocracy and more about how opportunities are given to some and withheld from others. As Branch's evidence clearly reveals, "The history of the U.S. labor market is fundamentally the story of who people were rather than what they did." (21)

The labour market then is far from a neutral site in that it privileges and confers benefits and disadvantages based on race and gender. While at different historical moments white men and Black men (because of their maleness) and white women (because of their gender and whiteness) had access to desirable jobs (with white men dominating all desirable occupational categories), Branch maintains that Black women experience virtually absolute disadvantage. Moreover, unlike white women, Black women's gender offered no protection against exploitation. Following emancipation, Black women worked in the fields alongside men performing gruelling, backbreaking work just as they did during slavery. Branch asserts that, "Black women's compulsory performance of men's work in the field appears at odd in a society that crystallized gender roles, but their field work reinforced racial roles." (27) Deeply entrenched ideas about racial and gender roles born in slavery were also reproduced in domestic work and on the factory floor. For Black women, domestic work was essentially a permanent, life-long occupation, which did not lead to new occupational activity. In contrast, for white immigrant women, domestic work was a "bridging occupation." It allowed them work to acquire new skills, resources and values, which helped with



their social mobility. For white immigrant women, their whiteness rather than domestic work itself then became the vehicle for upward mobility.

Race as opposed to skill determined the jobs workers were assigned, and when gender is accounted for, Black women were further disadvantaged particularly in meatpacking and slaughtering which was considered a men's industry. Excluded from handling finished food products based supposedly on the public's fear of their hands on meat, Black women were relegated to the most unattractive and disagreeable tasks in the meat factories where the work conditions were distasteful and unpleasant. A similar argument about public concerns was also used to virtually exclude Black women from clerical work. While the opening of new clerical occupations changed the work landscape for white women, it was not until 1950 that discernible effects were seen for Black women. Branch is reluctant to attribute Black women's entrance into clerical work as a sign of changing attitudes on the part of employers. She maintains that white women were unable to keep up with the unprecedented growth of clerical work. She also adds that Black women eventually became overrepresented in clerical work due to employers' investment in the supposed innate differences between men and women. Branch also insists, "employers did it as they always have always done in periods of labor shortage. They turned to workers lower in the labor queue." (140) Notwithstanding employment opportunities created as a result of both world wars, Black women continued to experience the debilitating effects of their dual subordinate status: "Black women were universally recognized as laborers of the last resort, a reserve labor pool available when the economy expands or labor is for short-term projects." (88) Regardless of which war, type of factory, or geographic

location, Branch pointed out that "no job was too hard, too dirty, or too demeaning" for Black women. (89) The racist and sexist practices that produced a labour force segregated by race and gender had important consequences for Blacks. The existence and perpetuation of a racial and gendered hierarchy "justified the unequal distribution of social goods (in this case, occupational opportunities) among races reflected by their place in the hierarchical structure." (98) As a result, Blacks' ability to improve their quality of life was severely impacted.

From the mid-1960s to the 1970s, the racial hierarchy and job segregation that was typical of the earlier decades slowly eroded. The marked improvement in the occupational distribution was reflected in Black women's salaries. By the 1980s, Black women saw a four-fold increase in their wages. Branch, however, cautions against ignoring Black women's artificially low wages in 1940 and 1960 suggesting that Black women were simply catching up. When attempting to account for the dramatic transformation in relation to Black women's work in the late 20th century, Branch points mostly to the revolutionary Civil Rights Act of 1964, specifically Title VII, as opposed to World War II or Affirmative Action, the latter of which was hardly enforceable. While Black women made inroads in the world of work in the 1970s and early 1980s, Branch concludes that regardless of how progress is measured (wage equality, occupational distribution, or authority in the workplace), "Black women's quest for definitive progress has been illusory." (149)

Overall, this is a wonderful, well-written and carefully argued book. Branch does an excellent job of demonstrating how historical inequalities can take hundreds of years to remedy. This book will be useful to both general and specific audiences (graduate and undergraduates)

and anyone interested in women's work and labour.

KAREN FLYNN  
University of Illinois,  
Urbana-Champaign

**Jamie Swift, Brice Balmer and Mira Dineen, *Persistent Poverty: Voices from the Margins* (Toronto: Between the Lines 2010)**

*PERSISTENT POVERTY: Voices from the Margins* presents the reader with a prime *example* of the delicate balance between scholarship and activism and the ways in which academic scholarship can challenge traditional ways of investigating and reporting. Methodologically this work is valuable for minimizing researcher-researched power imbalances. It allows for a sharing and collaboration of knowledge between the "researchers" and the "community" or the "researchers" and "researching assistants." This collaboration ultimately produces a work much more rich in qualitative knowledge and understanding, and allows for the reader to identify the ways in which her/his life is affected by poverty. This book is extremely important in situating the poverty that occurs "out there" and "outside of us" directly within our lives and our experiences with fellow Canadians. As stated by Dave Bindi, quoted in this text, "when you live in a big city, homeless people start to become like pigeons ... because they're so ubiquitous, they seem part of the city's wallpaper, which the citizenry largely moves past, rarely pausing to consider how near we are to their condition." (15) Jamie Swift, Mira Dineen and the dedicated folks at the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) contribute to the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse of poverty that, more than ever, is desperately needed in Ontario.

Jamie Swift's nuanced historical political-economic analysis and the reflexivity of the people he worked with maintain a balance to be appreciated, one that all researchers in the social sciences should strive to achieve. The methodology appears to be a morphing Community-Based Research methods, where collaboration between the investigator and the community organization – in this case, ISARC – occurs to produce a more rounded and grounded knowledge. It is also important to recognize the extremely important work ISARC engaged in by collecting the data for the 2010 social audit. In a country where less and less attention is paid to understanding and improving the social welfare of Canadians, it is important that documents and research like this continue to exist in order to counter Canadians' dominant understandings of poverty with not only quantitative but also qualitative data. With little popular resistance to the government's recent slashing of funding for critical poverty organizations like Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, it is clear that not only policy needs to be changed, but also our communities' understandings of it. As such this study provides the Canadian public, but also those interested in social policy, with a way of understanding the ways in which poverty has been actively *maintained* by our governments through intentional privileging of business and private interests. As the authors argue, "Two decades of stripping back income supports and putting more emphasis on market-based solutions repurposed the role of the state and left ordinary Canadians, suddenly faced with the most brutal recession since the Second World War, more exposed to the economic risks associated with joblessness than at any time since those earlier years." (21)

In short, the statistics provided, for example that Canadian food banks serve

more than 700,000 Canadians/month (77), combined with statements like “I thought that garbage-picking was only needed in the Philippines, Africa or other third world countries” (76) contribute to the destruction of the myth that Canada is a resource-rich nation, a “first-world” nation.

The authors have collaborated with their colleagues to produce a piece of work that highlights the systemic and unrelenting economic violence imposed on those sectors “left behind” by Canadian social policy. The study does an excellent job of demystifying and de-individualizing constructions of poverty in Ontario, which, as the authors rightly point out, underpin the very hegemonic understandings of poverty that were constructed during the neo-liberal common sense revolution. Welfare bashing and criminalization of poverty are all direct results of the ways in which our understandings of a collective well-being were dismantled, justifying the slashing of public services (particularly during the Harris regime) and the deconstruction of the welfare state.

Beyond identifying the systematic constraints that restrain and reproduce poverty, the authors provide countless examples of the ways in which people experience those structural impediments. In particular, the authors identify the ways in which those living in poverty, particularly women (who more frequently occupy levels of poverty), *feel* and *experience* poverty in their daily lives. The most powerful sections of the book are those allotted to testimonials, which, more than anything, elicit feelings of anger, frustration, and despair, feelings clearly expressed by those sharing their experiences. For example, a mother in North Bay reveals the difficult but necessary decisions she is forced to make on a daily basis to care for her children. She claims, “If my husband and I want

our kids to eat healthy ... I have to give up my heart medicine, stomach medication, and migraine medication, and I do it because our kids come first.” (80) Stories like these are common throughout the book, which not only gives poverty a “human face” but also supports the statistics provided and complicates our understandings of poverty beyond simply “welfare.” These stories revealed the ways in which services beyond social assistance are critical to one’s experience of poverty and one’s emergence from it. Accessible and affordable transportation, healthy and affordable food, job opportunities, and sufficient funding for public service workers all figured into the narrators’ daily experiences with “the system,” a system which often left them feeling left behind, victimized, or guilty.

But beyond eliciting feelings of frustration or anger for the reader, and beyond portraying these people as victims, the book also provides the reader with a sense of the unrelenting agency and will of those experiencing what appear as insurmountable barriers to their survival. The book provides us with examples of the energy required to continue looking for work when you live away from centres of work and there is no public transit or money for it. It provides us of examples of just how inaccessible our public services are. It provides us with countless examples of the barriers assembled in order to ensure that there is a healthy supply of poverty, and thus people forced to “choose” to work for less, and longer, in order to meet their basic necessities, or even not meet them at all.

Although the authors do address poverty and trace its exacerbation to neo-liberalism’s roll-backs the book fails to provide a more radical alternative, that is to say an alternative that does not justify the continued existence of capitalism. For example, the tone throughout the book is that the solution to these problems is a

quasi-reinstatement of the welfare policies of the past. There is the assumption that building a social democratic government like those in Scandinavia will allow for cushion and alleviate some of the extreme poverty we are facing in Ontario and in Canada at present. The authors make reference to the Scandinavian's governments' successes with unionization and nearly eliminating mortality rates and, as is common with most Canadian social policy research, the Scandinavian north is put on somewhat of a pedestal, a goal to be attained, a goal Canada once closely knew. For example, we could expand their analysis in particular ways to anticipate the criticism that naturally is made of work demanding more social investment: "Where do we get the money?" Fear of debt and national debt accumulation was strategically planted with the Mulroney government and is continuously re-enforced within all of the current political and opposition parties.

Firstly, the political-economic analysis lacking in, or which could be added to, this work is the question of natural resource ownership. It is no secret that national management of strategic resources the Canadian government once owned has been sold off to foreign interests. It is also commonly known that our ownership of Canadian oil reserves is minimal which, when combined with neo-liberal offloading to the provinces, leaves Canadians fighting for the scraps of some of the largest oil reserves in the world. Nationalization is not the ultimate goal of a politic that tends to adequately redistribute wealth, but it is one that is certainly important now, in terms of regional fragmentation, in order to not only re-unite Canadians, but also enable a richening of our public services, which are in desperate need of national investment.

Second, Canadians need to speak out about the priorities of the Harper

government. Despite the debt-fear that they are creating, their economic priorities are securitized. That is to say, there is massive federal investment going into military and prison spending. Instead of dealing with poverty as a systemic issue that can be rehabilitated and eliminated by making other aspects of one's life livable, poverty is (1) criminalized or (2) taken advantage of by sending to fight in foreign countries young Canadians who are either drowning in university debt or who jump at the opportunity to have a decently paid job with benefits and pension, one of the few existing today.

Although the strategies the authors provide for a more social democratic welfare state may be effective in the short term and are very important for the immediate experiences of those presently living in poverty, the problem with these solutions is that they enable the continued existence of capitalism, which necessarily requires poverty and exploitation for its survival. Ideally what I would have liked to see from the authors is more short-term and long-term goal structure regarding policy. The long-term "how we want to live discourse," which is "we want to live better," was lacking here. The book is missing ways of imagining how Canada could emerge as a nation that truly lives up to the reputation of the people it houses.

Overall, this work is an extremely important example of the kinds of academic work Canadian scholars should be producing in order to make their work accessible and readable, and thus effective for the Canadian public at large.

KIRSTEN FRANCESONE  
Carleton University

**Geoffrey Baker, *Buena Vista in the Club: Rap, Reggaetón, and Revolution in Havana*** (Durham and London: Duke University Press 2011)

THE LATEST ADDITION to Duke University Press's Refiguring American Music series, *Buena Vista in the Club* offers a compelling analysis of the effects that the transnational circulation of music, scholarship, and capital have had on Cuban popular music. In doing so, Geoffrey Baker captures both musical and social life in contemporary Cuba and highlights the role of scholars in the global flow of cultural production.

Baker is an early music scholar who previously wrote about colonial Latin America. While some may view *Buena Vista in the Club* as a new and surprising direction in his research, it actually is the culmination of nearly seven years of research on rap and reggaetón in Havana, stretching from 2003 to 2010. Baker acknowledges that being white and British made him an outsider to the music. However, rather than being a hindrance, Baker's position enables him to propose a critical, and at times revisionist, approach to the study of global hip hop.

No single thesis emerges from *Buena Vista in the Club*. Instead, the four main chapters function as nearly independent essays, each addressing a distinct problematic and contributing a different perspective to the study of urban beat-based musics in Cuba and their position in a global hip hop network. Baker's greatest contribution to hip hop studies is his expansion of this network to encompass not only the circulation of musicians and recordings, but also the work of international scholars, journalists, and activists. Indeed, Baker argues that the many documents produced by foreigners do more than record the local manifestation of a cultural expression; rather, they have played an integral role in turning

what started as dance music for a racially mixed crowd into a movement imbued with pro-Black, Marxist ideology.

A large portion of *Buena Vista in the Club* is devoted to an analysis of the transnational three-way dance among Cuban officials, rappers, and activists that shaped the sound and position of Cuban rap in the last decade of the 20th century. Insisting that the Cuban bureaucracy is too fragmented to produce an effective state policy, Baker explains how the nationalization of rap in Cuba has been the product of key Cuban and North American intermediaries with a strong knowledge of hip hop culture and a deep understanding of the practical workings of Cuban politics. These intermediaries built on longstanding ideological connections between North American Black Nationalist thought and Cuban revolutionary discourse in order to shore up official support for a potentially subversive music.

Baker's analysis of hip hop as urban practice allows him to reveal the complex interplay between state support, government control, and artists' resistance that is an integral part of the Cuban rap scene. Analyzing the many aspects of rap performance in the city, from stage appearances to the interplay between audience and artists, to the impromptu freestyle battles that occasionally break out in public spaces, Baker is able to reveal complex dialectics between elements that are too often presented as simply oppositional: the local and the global, hustling and moralizing attitudes, or "keeping it real" versus "selling out."

Likewise, Baker challenges the dichotomy between rap and reggaetón, a new musical genre that emerged from the localizing of rap in Spanish-speaking Panama and Puerto Rico and took Cuba by storm starting in 2002. Although Cuban rappers, along with activists and scholars on both sides of the Florida

Strait, have been quick to denounce reggaetón's overt hedonism and supposed "lexical violence," Baker demonstrates that the new music and its associated dance actually represent "a statement of liberation from social, political, and even economic constraints." (137) Thus even reggaetón's lyrics – with their focus on girls, sex, and dancing – express a political stance that resonates with many young male Cubans caught between a struggling socialist state and increased capitalist pressure.

*Buena Vista in the Club* is a fascinating read. By mixing ethnographic observations, personal interviews, secondary sources, and analysis of song lyrics, Baker is able to convey the complexity of both the music scene and everyday life in contemporary Havana. His description of a marathon meeting between Harry Belafonte and Fidel Castro during which the two men discussed the political merits of hip hop is fascinating and all the more effective because Baker balances this view from the top with many descriptions of musical practices at street level. In fact, Baker contributes to the study of music and nationalism by challenging both top-down and bottom-up models of the nationalization of music, substituting instead a focus on institutions and individuals.

While the book offers a compelling portrait of contemporary Cuban musical life, I would have liked a deeper engagement with the music itself. Baker focuses his analysis on lyrics and, although he does touch on the sound of the music, a more thorough examination of musical aesthetics would have been welcome. It is interesting to read that rap does not have to rely on musical markers of Cubaness to sound Cuban and that, in spite of its grounding in the *habanera* rhythm, many Cubans consider reggaetón to be a foreign style. Yet one wonders what role aesthetics have played in shaping the

international reception of Cuban rap or the commercial success of reggaetón in Cuba. I would have liked to see Baker address how rap and reggaetón may in fact appeal to different taste communities. It should be noted, too, that most of the recordings discussed throughout the book are fairly difficult to acquire outside of Cuba.

Analyzing how nostalgia has shaped the reception of rap and reggaetón in Cuba, Baker writes that rap's fascination with its past is "evidence of a modernist worldview." (145) In contrast, he argues that reggaetón's lack of reference to national musical traditions is symptomatic of postmodernist cultural expressions. On the surface, this analysis runs contrary to the common distinction between modernity and postmodernity in music scholarship. Shouldn't reggaetón's supposed break with its musical past mark it as modern? Conversely, doesn't rap's constant recycling and re-contextualizing of past musical creations through sampling make it an essentially postmodern form? Delving more deeply into these significant questions would allow Baker to consider the intersection of socialism, capitalism, and aesthetics to a greater degree than he does. Indeed, criticism of modernism has figured prominently in aesthetic debates under socialist regimes. Conversely, scholars such as Fredric Jameson have posited postmodernity as the cultural expression of late capitalism. Thus, these categories are important tools with which to theorize the position of music that exists at the articulation of the two economic systems.

Overall, *Buena Vista in the Club* is an essential addition to the growing scholarship on global hip hop. Baker adds to this scholarship in two significant ways. First, unlike his predecessors, he refuses to isolate the study of rap from reggaetón, preferring instead to analyze the interplay between the two genres. Second, he



takes reflexivity to a new level by revealing the ways in which the works of foreign journalists and scholars have shaped the representation of Cuban rap and facilitated its success. Although a large portion of this material is available as individual articles or essays in other volumes, taken together, the four chapters in this book offer a level of analysis whose depth, insight, and contemporaneity are remarkable.

JEROME CAMAL

University of California Los Angeles

**Emir Sader, *The New Mole: Paths of the Latin American Left*** (New York: Verso 2011)

THE “HEGEMONY” of neo-liberalism in Latin America did not last long. By the end of the 1990s, the left began a return to power across the region. However, the series of electoral victories that brought leftists to power in diverse settings such as Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, El Salvador or Venezuela did not mean a definitive rejection of market-oriented models either. In fact, the shifts in political power revealed a range of alternative approaches based on differing configurations of public support. In some countries, such as Bolivia, Ecuador or Venezuela, elected leaders embraced more aggressive changes, backed by long-neglected or excluded constituencies. In other countries, such as Brazil, Chile or Uruguay, newly elected leaders developed economic models that sought to develop a balance between state and market, supported by large swaths of voters neither enamoured of nor hostile to markets.

This shift to the left and the emergence of competing models of political economy has been, quite appropriately, the subject of a good deal of work in recent years. The prevailing conclusion is that there are two basic alternatives – one

more moderate and the other more radical. While the many studies have differing points of emphasis, arguably the most important difference is the conclusion analysts reach about them. Ideologically centrist or conservative analysts view the more radical version skeptically. By contrast, leftists are deeply disappointed with the acceptance of neo-liberal ideas and policies by moderate governments, especially in the case of Brazil and Lula. Emir Sader’s *The New Mole* falls squarely in this latter category. Sader is a well-known and important figure on the left in Brazil – both as an analyst and as a political figure. His perspective on the rise and apparent fall of neo-liberal hegemony is particularly welcome. But, given the many outstanding studies (including Sader’s already published critique of Lula and the Worker’s Party), the question then is what, if anything, does this new work add to our understanding of the phenomenon?

Unfortunately, the answer is not that much. Sader is at his best on the “enigma” of Lula’s program. Under Lula and Dilma, the Workers’ Party’s (PT) blending of policies that primarily benefit both financial capital and the poor defies easy classification as either neo-liberal or “post-neo-liberal.” But, Sader’s argument here echoes his earlier published work and does not differ substantially from a large number of analyses of the PT of various ideological persuasions. Sader’s main concern is how to build a genuinely “post-neo-liberal” alliance that joins Brazil and other quasi-reformist governments with the real post-liberal efforts of Hugo Chavez’ Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) bloc. Sader’s argumentation about the larger trend in the region largely eschews social science standards of evidence and argumentation and instead is written more like a Marxist pamphlet. It features grand sweeping statements and frequent references to

social forces without any effort to specify them. Paragraph after paragraph makes enormous assertions, any one of which merits close consideration of evidence. Yet, none is offered. In short, the volume does not meet the expectations of empirical social science.

So, the many weaknesses of the ALBA bloc economies and the questions about the viability of the Venezuelan or Bolivian growth model go unexamined. Brazil's implementation of an extreme and violent neo-liberal program under Cardoso is not analyzed in any detail whatsoever and the perception of virtually any non-ideologue that Brazil never fully or deeply embraced the program is not considered. The corruption charges levied against the Lula government, for example under the mensalão, are evidence of the resistance of the right and its allies in the US. Of course, we don't know who these conspirators are, nor do we have any consideration of the possibility that the charges had a valid basis.

One can write effective social science work that presents powerful critiques of neo-liberalism. For example, James Petras' *The Left Strikes Back* offers a very well supported analysis of the many variants of leftist resistance to market-oriented reforms across the region. Alternatively, David Harvey's *Neoliberalism* examines the efforts of financial élites and economic conservatives to advance an agenda of reforms across both the developed and developing worlds. Javier Santiso's *The Political Economy of Emerging Markets* details the inner workings of the financial world and the ways it constrains choices, although Santiso is not a leftist. Jorge Castañeda has been criticized on the left for being too accepting of neo-liberal principles, but both *Utopia Unarmed* and *Leftovers* are excellent empirical accounts supporting powerful arguments. In fact, all of these works rest on rich bases of

evidence that force careful consideration of their arguments, regardless of whether they conform to the reader's ideological preferences. Thus, given the vast array of important and powerful critiques of neo-liberalism and the rise of alternative lefts in the region, it is hard to see what this thin volume adds to the discussion.

PETER KINGSTONE

King's College London

**Mary Gabriel, *Love and Capital, Karl and Jenny Marx and the Birth of Revolution*** (New York: Little, Brown and Company 2011)

MARY GABRIEL informs us that when Marx's first volume of *Capital* was finally published after years of torturous research, rewrites, and frustrating delays, during which he physically and emotionally drove himself into the ground, with dire effects on his family through years of poverty, the great revolutionary critique unveiling the capitalist system and bourgeois political economy fell on deaf ears. One young Marx sympathizer who often visited the London home (in part to court one of the daughters) stated that, when delivered the book he felt as if an elephant had been delivered to him and that he didn't know what to do with it. Another ally delivered to the household an enormous statue of the head of Zeus as a form of congratulations. The flabbergasted Marxes did not know what to make of it. Perhaps that bust was an anticipation of what was to become of Marx's legacy, artistically expressed in the enormous granite head erected in the 1950s at the family grave site in Highgate cemetery. The symbol stares down almost godlike, celebrating the man's powerful intellect and reflecting a 20th-century Marxism considering itself monolithic, unmoving, orthodox. The names of the members of his family and household buried with

him are hardly noticeable. The former grave was simple and unadorned.

The central figure of Gabriel's well researched book still remains Karl Marx, but more than any other work it has placed him alongside the influence of his lifelong partner, lover, spouse, Jenny Westphalen, too often given side mention in Marx biographies. It also places their lives within a grand narrative sweep of revolutionary history from the philosophical stirrings of German's Young Hegelians through Europe's national and class rebellions of 1848, years of counter-revolution, the rise and dissolution of the International Workingman's Association, the US Civil War, Fenian uprisings, and the Paris Commune. Great attention is paid to the political community that participated.

What is particularly important in Gabriel's work is her ability to cast events in the light of human characters in their richness, foibles, and folly, detailing the struggling conditions of daily lives just to survive while attempting to build a movement and hopefully a different society. Reading the intimate details of the Marx household one would almost think one is reading a Dickensian novel. Karl Marx, plagued like Wilkins Micawber in David Copperfield, forced to disguise himself to avoid a host of creditors at the door so that he can slip out and visit the library to continue his writings in peace; Jenny, often deserted, trying to keep up Victorian bourgeois appearances while forced to pawn clothes, silver, her children's toys; the riotous calamity of boisterous, artistic and intellectual daughters forced into the situation of many young women of the Victorian era to find husbands in order to survive economically. Their home is invaded with the wildest array of flamboyant revolutionaries, utopians, self-serving politicians, the occasional police spy, and starving emigrés from failed rebellions. The dust, mire and smells of London's slums, the emotional stresses of

such poverty, the constant appeals both Karl and Jenny made for money to pay for medicines, and burial of children at the very moments when Marx is plagued by both illness and the seemingly unending bitter personal attacks made upon him by opponents of both left and right often make for difficult reading.

Gabriel's history is just as much the story of the building of a revolutionary socialist movement as it is an intimate examination of one man's key role. It is an insight into the difficulties of holding together divergent groups, associations and rival factions of those who spoke in the name of the working class, the petty jealousies and backbiting within the movement, intellectual debates, the endless hours spent in meetings, raising monies, propagandizing, and publishing tracts, and the enormous toll taken in the process.

Gabriel's account is sympathetic, but not uncritical. The history presented is not a history of ideas and dogma. It is placed in the context of real human relationships and the difficult personal decisions made in the context of momentous human and historical events. The reader is better able to honestly judge the accusations often hurled at Marx that he was either a personal scoundrel, a closeted intellectual, at times too revolutionary, too moderate, too bourgeois, an intellectual elitist given to a form of "scientism" having an authoritarian personality reflected into an authoritarian theory, a petty dictator, or an economic determinist who simply did not understand the working class. Gabriel uses the extensive materials of Marx's personal letters alongside those of Jenny and their daughters to disparage the invective.

If there is any flaw in Gabriel's book it is that she has misinterpreted Marx's argument in *Capital* concerning the exploitative relationship between capitalist and worker. She has made the error that,

according to Marx, the worker sells to the capitalist his/her "labour" and then is overworked, from which the capitalist then appropriates the surplus value. This then becomes a matter of moral injustice. Rather, Marx's discovery was that the worker sold "labour power" in the original wage bargain and the capitalist gained by the real labour output. Gabriel's error is indeed surprising considering her otherwise positive and sympathetic understanding of Marx's theoretical and philosophical work, but it can for the moment be viewed as a minor distraction that does not detract from the overall excellence of a highly recommended book.

The history presented by Gabriel is indeed a story of love between two people, often heart breaking, seen through each other's eyes and the eyes of their children. It is also full of the dialectic of both love and hate that transpires within a movement wracked by fratricide and betrayal and yet capable of being inspired by individual and collective heroism. It is indeed a history of communities and nations at a time of incredible ferment and provides greater insights into how they functioned, changed our ideas, and changed the world.

LEN WALLACE

University of Windsor

**David R. Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790–1870***  
(Burlington: Ashgate 2010)

THE POOR LAW system touched the lives of almost everyone living in 18th- and 19th-century England, whether as ratepayers or recipients. It cut to the heart of social relations and for that reason has been the focus of considerable socio-historical analysis since the Webbs' pioneering work. It would seem difficult to enhance so deep a historiography but David Green's new book has done

so admirably. It is one of few studies to cross the divide of 1834, analyzing the system across the shift from Old Poor Law to New. This by itself is not altogether novel, as Lynn Hollen Lees' excellent *The Solidarities of Strangers* (1998) shows. However, Green takes on a second challenge just as daunting by analyzing this system across the oceanic terrain of London. Because the system was administered at the parish level, and because London had well over 100 parishes, scholars hoping to generalize about poor relief in the city face a bewildering array of policies and practices. How typical it is for scholars to execute case studies of single parishes punctuated by disclaimers confessing ignorance about their typicality for the rest of the city. Rather than try to force generalizations on this sea of variety Green explores how London's unique realities presented problems for poor relief and how these concerns influenced national developments.

Green starts by exploring the situation prior to 1834, linking up his work with that of scholars exploring regional distinctions in poor law expenditure, notably Steve King. *Pauper Capital* enhances their findings showing that London saw much higher costs of per capita poor relief mainly because of its heavy use of workhouses. Green, a historical geographer, demonstrates how population shift impacted relief in different parishes. The availability of affordable housing, for example, changed over time, resulting in increasing class segregation, with some parishes housing growing numbers of the working poor and fewer well-to-do ratepayers and therefore facing rising demands for relief but dwindling tax resources.

Addressing such inequities proved difficult because of local recalcitrance to centralization. The politics of reform form the core of Chapter 3 where Green shows that opposition to the 1834

reforms centred more on protecting local governing autonomy than on critiques of the reforms themselves. Radicals and reform-minded Whigs linked their criticism to issues of larger national importance, such as taxation, representation, and the franchise. Green successfully shows how London poor law agitation helped drive national political discussions. About a third of London poor law authorities did not adapt the 1834 statute, but in one of the more surprising discoveries in the book, Green shows that this distinction mattered little, as these jurisdictions ended up following similar policies anyway.

The 1834 reforms focused relief even more heavily than before on workhouses. Chapter 4 explores London's workhouse system, showing that London lagged behind other jurisdictions in building new workhouses, in part because construction was expensive but also because numerous specialist institutions like charity schools and lunatic asylums helped free up spaces in the workhouses. The chapter enhances our understanding of the growth of specialist institutions in the city. However, one quibble concerns Green's decision not to explore more fully the history of London workhouses before his starting point of 1790. Green notes that the workhouse system that would eventually be codified by the New Poor Law was already in place in the capital well before 1834. The proliferation of workhouses in the capital from the 1720s marks one of the ways that London was unlike any other English city. There were 80 workhouses in London by the time of a parliamentary enquiry of 1776. It is unfair to criticize a book as ambitious and successful as this one for not tackling another seventy years of complex history. However, for certain discussions London's longer history of workhouse provision may matter. When, for example, London parishes did not rush

to build new workhouses in 1834 it may have been because they were already relatively well served, a speculation that finds support in Green's evidence that more parishes chose to enlarge existing workhouses rather than build new ones in the period before 1860. (131–33)

In a chapter on how paupers negotiated relief Green joins Tim Hitchcock, Robert Sokoll and others who have explored pauper agency within welfare exchanges. London's uniqueness again shines through as Green analyzes paupers' opportunities to seek relief in multiple parishes simultaneously, a scheme rural paupers could hardly dream of pulling off. Readers of *Labour/Le Travail* may well sympathize with the poor when reading about such exchanges. However, it is possible to feel sympathy, even if fleeting, for the overseers of crowded London parishes, who Green shows often stayed late into the night to listen to the stories of hundreds of relief applicants each day, tales they could do little to verify and that evidence suggests were frequently bogus. For example, one parish made relief contingent on home visits only to find that more than half the applicants gave phony addresses. London paupers were also more inclined to make use of the courts when refused relief, again because of London's special status as a massive, anonymous cityscape.

Green also breaks ground by exploring negotiations inside the workhouse, analyzing how paupers might use workhouses creatively, entering them too late to be put to work, and resisting labour once they had eaten breakfast. Green wants to see these "pauper protests" as more than just attempts to squeeze resources from parish paymasters, but as politically motivated critiques of the New Poor Law. A sense of moral legitimacy was embedded in these claims for social justice, which were frequently couched in the terms of customary rights and

reciprocal responsibilities. Such concepts dated back centuries, and Green suggests that they still had purchase even after the New Poor Law tried to erode these early modern social bonds.

Green closes his book with two chapters exploring how London's welfare system faced a crisis by the 1860s that drove reforms at the national level. Poor migrants continued to flood in, taking up residence – though frequently not poor law settlement – in poor suburbs offering cheap housing. Such parishes faced growing relief demands and diminishing tax bases. Two solutions presented themselves: moving people or moving money. Green explores removals, by which paupers could be passed to their home parishes. Such procedures could be time consuming and expensive, so officials focused on low cost, high reward removals, like those of single mothers and their children who only needed shifting to another parish within the city. Removal, however, could never solve the basic growing inequity; too many propertied Londoners inhabited parishes with low relief demands, effectively immune from shouldering London's booming poor relief burden. The jealously guarded local system, in which another parish's poor were seen as someone else's responsibility, had to be overcome. Green's final chapter shows how the crisis in London drove a series of parliamentary acts that recast parochial citizenship by reforming residency requirements and, potentially even more important, the Metropolitan Poor Act (1870), which redistributed relief costs across the city by creating a central fund. Poor sections of the city quickly built new workhouses they could not previously afford, helping to sustain London's unique pauper experiences. By the 1890s London paupers were more than twice as likely as other Englishmen to be relieved in a workhouse. It is ironic that a book that charts such a seismic

policy shift ends with a point of continuity, for this was essentially already the case in the 18th century. One can only hope that a scholar of Green's daring and talent will someday soon undertake a similar study for 18th-century London. *Pauper Capital* is a major achievement.

KEVIN SIENA

Trent University

**Hester Barron, *The 1926 Miners' Lockout: Meanings of Community in the Durham Coalfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010)**

SHOULD WE CALL the labour action that convulsed Britain's coalfields in 1926 a lockout or a strike? According to Hester Barron, even participants in that event disagreed on the terminology to use, and that divisiveness is foregrounded in her excellent study of community in the locked-out Durham coalfield. Although "community" itself is a vague and contested term, Barron subjects to scrutiny the Durham colliers' community, using thematic chapters to illustrate many ways in which miners' identities could divide as well as unite them.

Lest occupational solidarity seem obvious, Barron notes that miners were significantly divided on the basis of skill level and mining region. The term "miners" encompassed putters, mule drivers, labourers and topmen, as well as the most skilled hewers at the coal-face. Different levels of skill merited different levels of pay within the mine. Occupational pride may have predisposed some workers to support the strike more than others, but, as Barron shows, the Durham Miners' Association locally helped to squelch dissent as much as class consciousness may have inspired cooperation. Moreover, occupational solidarity did not mean industry-wide solidarity: although owners contributed to charities benefiting



miners' children and refused to evict striking workers from tied housing during the strike, the striking miners resented the owners immensely.

The evidence is mixed about whether or not the isolation of mine communities built solidarity. Barron shows that strike-breakers were often new arrivals to a locale. Conversely, mining families moved often, which eroded relationships or prevented them from forming. Loyalties between miners and members of other occupational groups remained unpredictable. Shopkeepers who depended on mine families' custom often supported the miners' decision to stay out. In contrast, some non-mining manual workers who participated in the General Strike of 1926 resented the fact that miners were better paid than they were.

Family relationships could cut both ways in the coalfield. Boys often followed their fathers into the pits, and married miners' daughters, which strengthened their loyalty to the cause. But during a strike, the masculinity of the solid union brother conflicted with the masculinity of the successful breadwinner. This explains why men would publicly refuse to blackleg, but would privately steal coal and food, even from each other. Women particularly suffered in times of male unemployment; rigidly gendered tasks like cooking and cleaning could not stop just because women now lacked the needed resources. Despite these hardships, women did not uniformly oppose the strike; some gleefully participated in demonstrations, smuggled labour newspapers to each other under their aprons, looted coal from coal cars, or threw potatoes at strikebreakers.

Political, religious, and educational affiliations were more likely to unite than to divide colliery communities. Barron shows that striking miners generally voted alike, supporting Labour without being attracted to communist principles.

Similarly, while most colliers were more nominally Christian than professedly religious, strike leaders were more likely to emerge from Primitive Methodist chapels than from Anglican churches. Intriguingly, Barron notes that, for the sake of their long-term success in the field, clergymen remained publicly neutral on the strike even when pushed one way or another by their personal political inclinations. Schoolteachers, many of whom were the children of miners, were much more likely than were the clergy to support the strike outright. Schools became a centre for community, by providing free meals to strikers' children; public libraries and workers' institutes helped fill miners' suddenly expansive leisure time with books and educational opportunities.

In her final chapter, Barron compares the collective memory of the 1926 strike, what actually happened, and the way in which the popular narrative of the strike helped to condition miners' behaviour into the 1970s and 1980s. Individual narratives of the strike cover a wide spectrum, illustrating the variety of possible experiences. Some children and young male miners experienced the strike as a wonderful moment of leisure, in a year of winning local football clubs and impromptu dances. Other witnesses recounted the hardships of malnutrition and disease incurred while trying to support families. Many described the strike as just one more example of the long oppression that miners faced, conflating the 1926 strike with the 1921 strike or the Depression years. The strike entered collective memory as a heroic and tragic event, a fact Barron attributes to mining being a familial occupation, and the Durham coalfield a place with a culture of storytelling. Having entered public consciousness in this reified way, the 1926 strike became a pattern for promoting solidarity in other strikes, particularly in 1984.

Although the book has very few shortcomings, Barron's attempt to position herself within the literature is awkward. She describes her book as a response to a hegemonic narrative, which has asserted that class consciousness kept the miners united during the lockout. Unfortunately, she associates that interpretation with only a single book, published in 1956, before local social history had become a common labour history method. Furthermore, even after her chapters have delved deeply into other possibly competing sources of worker identity, she concludes that union culture, or "occupational consciousness," was extremely important in holding the miners together during their months of unemployment. Unless class consciousness is defined in a straw-man way as a static, Marxist analysis of the problems of labour and capital that necessarily binds together workers in different occupational groups, then what Barron is describing is in fact class formation. To point out the many ways in which miners identified themselves – through politics, religion, occupational roles, and levels of education – complicates the picture but does not change the fact that they were willing or forced to subsume these identities for seven months, usually at great personal cost, in the hopes that they and other miners would benefit.

An assiduous researcher, Barron has drawn widely from previously unused oral histories, published memoirs, local record office documents, church records, parliamentary reports, and an array of newspapers. Her willingness to quote the miners and their families at length provides the reader not only with their impressions in their own words, but also with a sense of the local dialect and sense of humour. *The 1926 Miners' Lockout* is firmly rooted in the best tradition of "history from below." It has the potential to appeal not only to the labour historian,

for whom it ought to be required reading, but also to the general reader interested in the way in which ordinary people coped with a time of great social and economic stress.

Jamie L. Bronstein  
New Mexico State University

**Owen Jones, *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class* (London: Verso 2011)**

THE WORKING CLASS has gradually disappeared from social discourse in North America. Referring to the middle class is much more politically acceptable. In *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class*, Owen Jones shows that the working class must still be at the forefront of social, political, and cultural analysis. His analysis of the contemporary working class in the United Kingdom, principally de-industrialized northern England, is a cautionary tale that should make North American policy makers pause and realize that class matters as much as it ever did.

The English middle class has traditionally been associated with professional employment, public schools that are really private schools, and deliberately cultivated patterns of social behaviour. Jones opens his narrative by recounting an incident at a typical middle-class social event: a dinner party. A guest made a joke about the imminent closure of venerable British retailer Woolworths, and speculated about where chavs would be able to shop after the firm had closed. It is around this term – chavs – that Jones organizes his discussion. It is a derogatory term used by the media, politicians, and average citizens to describe much of what remains of the British working class.

Jones devotes considerable, and justified, attention to the period from the late 1970s to the early 1990s when the Conservative Party governed Britain.

The British left has long argued that the Conservative government, as the political committee of the capitalist class, had a clear plan for shifting wealth away from workers and otherwise promoting moneyed interests at the expense of everyone else in the country. Jones appears to have gained remarkable access to major policy makers from the Conservative era – such as former Conservative minister Geoffrey Howe – and confirmed that the left was correct. The rich were idolized, and Britain gradually deindustrialized.

The Conservative and Labour parties in Britain used to have distinct policy platforms, and were led by people with clearly different socioeconomic backgrounds. Moving from a boarding school such as Eton or Harrow to either Oxford or Cambridge, then on to a well-connected profession and into a safety seat as a Tory member of parliament was a common career path for Conservative Party leaders. Labour, at least prior to the last fifteen years of the 20th century, was led by people from much humbler roots. Leadership in both parties changed as the Blair era followed the Thatcher era. Jones reveals current British Prime Minister David Cameron to be even more of a child of privilege than the media has shown. Having flown to a birthday party in New York City on the supersonic Concorde jet (a premier conveyance of the rich and famous) at age 11, Cameron is a quintessential product of the British aristocracy. (75) Tony Blair came from somewhat less exalted roots, but there was ultimately little social difference between him and the Conservative politicians he faced across the aisle in the House of Commons.

Jones spends a lot of time discussing the infamous British tabloid media, and uses notable cases of working-class people being particularly vilified for no other reason than their social status. One particularly tragic episode involved an under-paid dental assistant named Jade

Goody. From a mixed-race background, she recalled seeing parts of her own upbringing in the film *Trainspotting* – a film based on Irvine Welsh's book about drug use in inner-city Scotland. (122) Goody, speaking in her working-class midlands accent, went on the television program *Big Brother* and was quickly referred to as a pig by the popular press. (123) The working class, as personified by Goody, was an object of derision and ridicule.

The working class has also disappeared from other forms of popular entertainment in Britain. A country that created the music of white working-class alienation – heavy metal – now produces pop bands with middle-class pedigrees. Professional sports, which were once marketed to working-class consumers, are now more of a middle-class leisure outlet. Professional football (soccer) in England is dominated by the Premier League and features highly paid players and costly ticket prices. Football is not accessible to working-class sports fans, who used to support it, but there is still a popular fixation in the British press on so-called working-class football hooligans.

Jones correctly identifies the loss of well-paid industrial employment as the cause for much of the working class's current condition. He describes Birmingham, once the home of Rover's enormous Longbridge automotive assembly plant, as an example of the impact of deindustrialization. The plant closed during the Blair years, and 6000 workers became unemployed. The community around the plant gradually slid into a morass of social and economic despair. Right-wing politicians and reactionary media outlets respond to such conditions by attempting to root out suspected abusers of social assistance, and otherwise blame communities and workers for job losses.

This is not an academic volume, and it would have been helpful if Jones had

offered some solutions for the genuinely bad socioeconomic policies that both Conservative and Labour governments promoted in Britain for the past 35 years. Race appears in his discussion, such as in his analysis of reactionary political movements like the British National Party, but including more analysis of race would have made this book even more timely. Jones' narrative is nonetheless compelling and raises many important questions.

The working class in Canada and the United States has also suffered in the past 35 years, especially from deindustrialization. It is not yet socially acceptable to publicly demonize working-class people to the extent that is done in Britain, but Canadians and Americans are getting close to that point. Unemployed blue-collar workers, people who reside in dilapidated inner-city neighbourhoods, and low-income single parents are humiliated and patronized on television programs like *Maury Povich* and *Dr. Phil*. Popular media commentators like Don Cherry, who are generally ignored by middle-class media consumers, attempt to stoke working-class biases against progressive social and cultural policies. Canadian and American readers of *Chavs* should thus see the cautionary themes found in its pages. Britain was a country that, although it was historically divided by clear class differences, was a manufacturing power whose wealth was based on working-class labour. Manufacturing industry is now gone, and the working class is marginalized and ridiculed. Canadians and Americans will hopefully not continue to go down the same path.

JASON RUSSELL

State University of New York,  
Empire State College

**Mark Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque*** (Durham: Duke University Press 2010)

IN THIS SELF-CONSCIOUSLY revisionist study of Japanese imperialism, Mark Driscoll takes up the old question of "how Japan came to be a world power in a few short decades" from a subalternist, Marxist perspective. (ix) Criticizing the traditional focus on the metropolitan, Euro-American inspired core of Japanese élite leaders and institutions, he concentrates on the "peripheral marginalia" of Chinese labourers, Japanese pimps and forced female sex workers, and Korean tenant farmers, who he sees as the driving forces of empire. By examining Japanese imperialism at its outer edges, far away from the centres of power, he seeks to reveal Japanese imperialism's true logic, mechanisms of power, and horrific, exploitative nature.

Driscoll's *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque* is informed by an elaborate theoretical framework which he lays out in his preface and introduction. Synthesizing a number of perspectives, including Marx's theory of capital, Foucault's biopolitics, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's critique of capitalism, Japanese modernist discourse of erotic-grotesque (ero-guro), Tanabe Hajime's absolute dialectics, and the bio-philosophy of Minakata Kumagusu, he argues that Japanese imperialism was characterized by a central, unresolvable struggle between two forces: the erotic – "the vital productivity of desire" – and the grotesque – "the violent usurpation of this desire by hegemonic power" (Marx's "capital"). (10) For the modern, biopolitical, capitalist Meiji state, the motor force of profits (surplus) and hegemonic power was human life and its erotic, creative, life-producing energy. In its colonies, the state condoned and expropriated ("grotesqued") it, and in the process became

deformed by it, especially from the 1930s. At the base of this weighty theoretical structure is the Marxist view of Japanese imperialism as an advanced stage of capitalism, by which capital searches overseas for new markets and resources (labour) to exploit and “subsume.”

The book is divided into three parts which examine the successive stages of Japanese imperialism: biopolitics (1895–1914), neuropolitics (1920–1936), and necropolitics. Part I examines Japanese imperialism in its biopolitical form in the first two decades of colonizing Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria. The first chapter examines Chinese migrant workers and their pivotal role in making Japanese imperialism possible. Driscoll portrays Gotō Shinpei as the consummate “biopolitician” who endeavoured to both improve life in Taiwan by promoting better hygiene and skim off profits from opium consumption by placing it under government regulation. Chapter 2 relates the accounts of Japanese pimps such as Muraoka Iheiji in squeezing out Chinese traffickers from the profitable trade in abducted Japanese female sex workers, the subject of the third chapter. Japanese pimps and prostitutes had been left to fend for themselves or “liberated” from the biopolitical Meiji state (as well as their families) to make a better life on the continent and send back profits. In Chapter 4, we see how Korean tenant farmers stepped in to perform the labour originally intended for Japanese settlers and pay exorbitantly high rents to absentee Japanese landlords.

As Japan entered the neuropolitical stage, a more advanced level of consumer capitalism was made possible by colonial profits. During this stage, we see the “real subsumption of living labor becoming dead, objectified labor” (17) as a result of its commodification and consumption. Chapter 5 examines Japanese sexologists and their creation of an

oversexed Japanese masculinity. Chapter 6 introduces some of the representative *ero-guro* literature and shows how military officers consumed it in increasingly sensationalist, morbid ways, especially on the battlefield.

In the final stage, beginning with the occupation of Manchuria in 1931, Japanese imperialism took on a necropolitical form characterized by the “deformal subsumption” of capital as the biopolitical life-sustaining, regenerative aspects of rule were abandoned in favour of the consumption and disposal of the “living dead” through forced labour policies, drugs, rape, pillage, and murder. Chapter 7 analyzes Manchukuo’s drug trade, money-laundering schemes, and forced labour policies under the “new bureaucrat” Kishi Nobusuke, the gangster Amakasu Masahiko, and Nissan president and Mangyō chief Ayukawa Giisuke. The last chapter covers old ground on Manchukuo, but highlights the corruption, sexual escapades, and forced labour policies of Kishi and the self-serving business strategies of Ayukawa.

Driscoll’s work offers an interesting spatio-structural approach toward Japanese capitalism. Beginning at its outer circle, he examines the various vital resources from which capital sought to draw surplus. Clearly, the essential resource, before all other material resources, was the lowly paid, hardworking Chinese labourer, who physically built much of the infrastructure of Japanese imperialism, worked its fields and factories, and made it a self-supporting venture. He then considers the other “resources” including Japanese prostitutes, pimps, drugs, and Korean tenants. Working inward, he then shows how these strands are tightly wound together under the “new bureaucrats” (reform bureaucrats is the more accurate term) and their partners in Manchukuo, first under Hoshino Naoki and Furumi Tadayuki

and subsequently under Kishi, Ayukawa, and Amakasu. The central figure operating at the heart of Manchuria's capitalist factory of death is Kishi. Drawing heavily upon Ōta Naoki's study, he argues that Kishi's low opinion of the Chinese, authorization of the forced labour policy in 1937, frequent trips to the brothels, and extensive money laundering made him the personification of necropolitics.

Kishi is undoubtedly one of the most hated and controversial politicians in pre-war and post-war Japan. His shady dealings with the underworld, however, do not suffice to explain Japanese imperialism, Manchukuo, and ultimately, Japan's road to Pearl Harbor. Kishi was hated not only for his brutal labour policies, sexual escapades, and drug money laundering, but also for his socialistic ideas about planned economy and his criticism of big business in the early 1940s. He was one member, albeit a very powerful and corrupt one, within a broader group of middle-class professionals with interests and strategies that did not necessarily align with Japan's ruling class of "rich capitalists, powerful militarists, and the emperor's family." (229) Driscoll's book treats the state, for the most part, as a faceless, monolithic entity. It represents an abstract concept of power that plays a fixed role within the capitalist-bio/neuro/necropolitical system. While I commend his efforts to examine the periphery, I do not think that he has given sufficient consideration to the metropolitan centre and its relations to the periphery.

Although Driscoll occasionally refers to "fascism" at times, I would have liked to see more systematic discussion about the relationship between fascism and necropolitics. Why does Japan adopt the necropolitical form of imperialism and not other imperialist countries? How does Japan's necropolitics compare with other forms of fascist/authoritarian regimes during the 1930s and early 1940s?

These criticisms should not detract from the important contributions of this book. Driscoll squarely confronts the real human costs of Japanese imperialism. He rightly demands that the problem of colonial labour be placed at the centre of abstract discussions of "resources," modernization, and late development. He also skillfully exposes the "ideological fantasy" of Japan's wartime leaders and the ways in which "civilizer/looter" represented two sides of the same imperialist coin.

JANIS MIMURA

State University of New York,  
Stony Brook

**Jayeeta Sharma, *Empire's Garden: Assam and the Making of India*** (Durham and London: Duke University Press 2011)

COLONIAL ASSAM was a product of the British Indian Government's territorial organization of its conquests in the northeastern parts of the South Asian subcontinent from 1826 onwards. As this new region came under its control, the colonial government concentrated on extracting surpluses from the new province to finance its administrative expenses. The British inherited a province in disarray where economic activities were disrupted owing to Burmese invasions. After much experimentation, the British introduced tea plantation in order to defray its costs of conquests and administration, as well as to generate further wealth for British business houses in India.

In the 19th century tea was an item of pleasure and social consumption and thus was presumed to be a source of super profit. The tea trade, however, depended on the permission of the Chinese government as the plant grew in the interior of China. In Assam after the discovery of local wild tea bushes, the colonial state



acquired land and encouraged investment by Calcutta-based British business houses in the province. The colonial state also granted British planters extra-judicial control over their workers who were recruited through an indentured system. Ironically tea, an integral item of global commodity circulation under conditions of imperial capitalism, also signified pre-capitalist forms of extra-economic coercion and inhuman labour regime. For local élites in the Bramhaputra Valley in Assam, tea came to represent economic progress and social improvement, but as time passed it also signified political oppression, demographic upheaval, and colonial exploitation.

Jayeeta Sharma's recent monograph brilliantly explores how the contradiction inherent in the integration of Assam with global capitalist modernity through the quasi-feudal agency of colonial capitalism transformed social and economic life in Bramhaputra Valley, one of the core regions of colonial Assam's territories. Though she scrupulously eschews any reference to Surma Valley, where the majority of colonial Assam's population resided after the formation of the province of Assam in 1874, she has produced a superb analysis of the impact of colonial capitalism and modernity on the social and intellectual life of Bramhaputra Valley and the adjacent hill regions.

The strength of Sharma's analysis lies in explaining how the encounter with colonial capitalist modernity, and the associated rhetoric of progress, transformed material and intellectual life in Bramhaputra Valley and changed the emergent Asomiya-speaking literati's self-perception, as well as their relationship with India and the local subaltern classes. Sharma explores the thread of this argument through *Empire's Garden* in a systematic fashion. In the first part of her book, Sharma demonstrates how the discovery of tea in Assam led to the colonial

state's massive land-grab and building up of plantation complexes, which in turn unleashed a demographic upheaval in the province. In depicting this transformation, the author develops an original approach, demonstrating that colonial race theories were neither static nor given. According to Sharma these theories also changed in dialogue with capital's search for labour, and in response to resistance from the subaltern social classes.

For instance, Sharma shows how the resistance of Kachari workers against their forcible incorporation into the harsh labour regimes of tea gardens led to their demotion from "industrious" race to "savages" in the worldview of colonial racial theories. Indeed, it was the resistance of local subaltern classes that led to the introduction of the indentured system in Assam, which recruited workers from the Chotanagpur Plateau. In colonial racial theories the people of this region were presumed to be the non-Aryan, autochthonous inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent. Colonial élites premised their ethnographic theories on discrepancies between the so-called industrious tribes and the indolent Hindu castes, claiming that the former were better suited for the hard work required in tea plantations. Sharma thus traces the relationship between the making of the labour regime of tea plantations – notorious for inhuman treatment of labourers – and shifts within colonial racial theories. She presents it as a dialogue between diverse and shifting intellectual strands in colonial ethnography and the logic of political-economic transformations within the industry. This is a significant and refreshing break from the monotony of discourse fetishism among a segment of scholars who readily exclude political-economic factors in their analyses of the colonialism in South Asia and elsewhere.

Sharma does not stop at explaining the making of labour regimes in tea

plantations in the Bramhaputra Valley. She also shows how colonial attempts to transform Assam into a surplus-generating and economically viable province attracted peasants from the adjacent and densely populated East Bengal countryside. Economic opportunities offered by tea plantations also attracted merchants from northwestern India and grazers from Nepal. These immigrants, particularly merchants from northwestern India, adopted the local language with some of them becoming cultural pioneers of the Bramhaputra Valley-based Asomiya society. The Bengali Muslims who settled in colonial Assam were dubbed the new Asomiya, their sophisticated farming techniques appreciated by the British as well as the local landholding élites. Nepali grazers introduced new varieties in local dietary habits, and travelled all over Assam in search of pastures. Such processes of assimilation were, however, not free from conflicts. As new immigrants became involved in various levels of economic activities their material interests occasionally clashed with different local interest groups and the colonial state. Sharma demonstrates that despite shared cultural ties neither new settlers nor earlier inhabitants were homogeneous in terms of their material interests. Rather, as Sharma shows, the process of community formation was fluid and conditioned by colonial intervention both at ideological and economic levels. This obviously stands in contradistinction to a strand in the extant critical corpus on South Asia that posits, and privileges, the existence of a mysterious pristine pure pre-capitalist notion of “community” in South Asia during pre-colonial times.

The second part of book deals with notions of “progress” and “improvement,” two key locutions that dominated the rhetoric of colonial policy. Colonial rulers claimed for themselves the role of “social emancipator” who released the

locals from the “medieval primitivism” of the previous Ahom regime dependent on “slave labour.” This rhetoric deeply influenced the perception of Indigenous élites in Bramhaputra Valley. As colonial rule transformed the valley into an economy that absorbed migrant labour, British rule also changed the composition of dominant élites. The British had little use for the earlier non-literate military élites of the Ahoms, and the revenue clerks and accountants of previous regimes now assumed the position of subordinate élites. Following the trend of Calcutta-based British colonial authorities and their allies absorbing the surplus from Assam, new élites from Bramhaputra Valley also came to Calcutta and entered British-style educational institutions of the city. This new élite engaged into a project of “modernizing” and standardizing Assam’s language and fought against the marginality ascribed to them by the Bengali comprador élites. In Assam, too, the earlier erroneous assumption among colonial élites that Asomiya was a dialect of Bengali was now corrected due to the vigorous efforts of the Asomiya literati.

However, even as the educated high caste Hindu male population engaged in creating and standardizing a new literary language – Asomyia – from among diverse languages spoken by locals, they unleashed a new process of marginalization based on class, gender and ethnicity. Educated élites from Bramhaputra Valley thus entered into a process that was similar to the making of Bengali, Telugu or Tamil élites and their investment in cultural identities as markers of social superiority. While Asomiya élites embarked on a journey of establishing a new language and literature in standardized Asomiya prose, they also drew upon the colonial racial-linguistic notion of Aryan origins of Indo-European languages and claimed their status as Aryans as distinct from the “mongoloid” tribes residing in

Bramhaputra Valley and adjacent hill regions and posited them as socially and culturally inferior. This sowed the seeds for future discontent among the various non-Asomiya speakers and new settler migrants to the Bramhaputra Valley. Sharma locates this search for a standardized prose and a hegemonic “mother tongue” in relation to the colonial élite’s penchant for linguistic ethnography. Moreover, she correctly traces the appropriation of British racial theories by different Indian élites. Jayeeta Sharma thus offers us a picture of how the pattern of class formation in Assam, and the concomitant notion of cultural superiority, created conditions for exclusions along ethnic, gender and class lines.

Sharma also traces the social transformations from below. In a brilliant exposition of what otherwise would have been called the process of Sanskritization, she traces the societal rise of *doms*, a low status group, as a segment of them acquired wealth from the fish trade. They adopted the name Nadiyal and demanded their inclusion as such in the British census. In a similar attempt, the former Kachari hill people claimed the status of Bodo and adopted the title Bramha following a particular religious reform movement. The Ahoms, former ruling élites, also used history to claim a new social status. Nagas, Khasis and Garos underwent a different transformation, as the British excluded them from the socioeconomic processes of the Bramhaputra Valley, and missionaries converted them to various Christian denominations. These newly empowered social reform movements distanced themselves from resurgent Asomiya traditions. On the eve of independence, the hill people held their own conventions and demanded autonomy but were dismissed by Indian authorities as well as by the local Asomiya nationalist leadership. This neglect of the diverse aspirations of the local population

became the source of discontent, and Assam was repartitioned several times after Independence.

There is no doubt that Sharma offers us a brilliant kaleidoscope of transformations of Assam under colonial rule. She offers readers a critical insight into the relationship between colonial capitalism’s rhetoric of improvement and its multifaceted impact on people of Assam. However it is somewhat surprising that while the author painstakingly analyzes the social transformation of the Naga, Garo and Mizo hills, she pays scant attention to the Barak Valley, a region that constitutes a critical part of Assam today. Moreover, Sharma’s book also gives the impression of very sharp disjuncture between pre-colonial and colonial Assam. Was there no notion of “patria” in pre-colonial Assam? If such a notion of homeland did exist, then the author could have investigated in some detail the relationship between it and the new colonial territorial entity of Assam that included the Barak Valley, the Brahamputra Valley, and the adjoining hill regions. This, unfortunately, remains a minor point in the book. Sharma could have provided a sustained historical investigation into the relationship between space, territory, and ethno-demographic identities of the people in India’s northeast, an effort that could have shed light on the structures behind some of the oldest struggles and conflicts in South Asia. Despite this missed opportunity, *Empire’s Garden* remains a truly great contribution to recent historiography on South Asia, both theoretically and empirically. After Yasmin Saikia’s book on the Ahoms, this monograph is a major contribution towards understanding the history of the region. Moreover, the book demonstrates how the interaction between material transformations in production, organization of society, and shifting strands of diverse colonial racial theories created

the conditions for radical social and cultural transformations of a major region of India. It therefore speaks to diverse processes of producing India in the late 19th century.

SUBHO BASU

Syracuse University

**John Murphy, *A Decent Provision: Australian Welfare Policy, 1870 to 1949***  
(Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing 2011)

AUSTRALIA'S SOCIAL welfare provision is often categorized as occupying a special stratum outside the usual categorization of welfare states as either social-democratic, corporatist, or residual. The country's social insurance programs lack sufficient universality or breadth for Australia to be grouped with the Scandinavian welfare states, and they are not based on corporatist social stratification as in Germany. But, while the modest social insurance provisions of Australia resemble North American programs in their reliance on means-tested help for those whom the state consider the deserving poor, social provision in Australia differs in important ways from American and Canadian provision.

In the early 20th century, in response to a labour movement with growing social and political influence, Australia set up a system of wage arbitration that encouraged unionism while dampening strikes and other forms of militancy. By the 1920s, wage tribunals were tasked with insuring that most full-time, continuously working semi-skilled and unskilled male wage workers received incomes sufficient to support a family without falling into poverty. This patriarchal model not only ignored women workers but also made no distinctions between single males, married males without children, and married males with children, and inherently privileged the childless.

The introduction of a "child endowment" in 1941, much like the family allowance system introduced in Canada three years later, was meant as much to reduce inflationary demands for across-the-board wage increases as to help families. It also took for granted the morality and permanence of a family wage model.

Apart from its patriarchal assumptions, which it shared with all models of social provision in operation before the 1960s, Australia's social model was an improvement upon the standard residual model of provision in that it gave a near-guarantee of an above-poverty income to households with a male income-earner with a continuous full-time job. But like all residual models, Australia's did not work for individuals and households when physical or mental health issues for the working members of the household resulted in inability to work, at least full-time and continuously. Similarly if working members of the household had to care for non-working members, the model did not work for them. When the workings of the capitalist economy made it difficult for workers in a household to find or maintain full-time employment, poverty loomed. Comparisons of Australia's "Gini coefficient" – drawn from the CIA *Factbook* of 2011 – with countries with residual and social-democratic social provision tell the story. The Gini is a measure of the distribution of wealth in countries. The higher the Gini, the greater the deviation of the incomes of the richest and the poorest from the median income (the scores are from 0 to 100, with 0 meaning perfect equality and 100 meaning that one individual holds all the income). In the United States, the Gini was 40.8 in 1997 when the economy performed sluggishly but actually fell to 45 in 2007 when the economy was, in macroeconomic terms, booming. Sweden had a Gini of 25 in 1992 during a period of economic recession and conservative

government, and 23 in 2005 when the economy performed well and the Social Democrats governed. Australia was in the middle, with an unimpressive Gini of 35.2 when unemployment was high in 1994 but distributing wealth somewhat better in 2006, when employment opportunities were greater. The Gini improved to 30.5 because of a continuing model of provision that assumed an always elusive full employment.

Murphy does an able job of tracing the introduction of various social programs. His analysis of resistance to universal programs focuses heavily on claims regarding popular opposition to the Poor Law, with its forced institutionalization of paupers. Workers and trade unions argued that decent wages were the best antidote to pauperization and pushed for mechanisms that would produce such wages. A frontier society mentality prevented them from examining more closely the many reasons why people might become jobless and destitute, and from proposing a socialist or social-democratic framework for social policy that would deal with all of them. Nonetheless, Australia introduced old-age pensions before Britain as well as introducing mothers' pensions (but just for white widows) before World War I. Afterwards, though, the country was a laggard in the area of social programs, particularly universal programs.

While Murphy does a reasonable job of presenting the abstract debates on various social policies, his book does not adequately explain Labor's and labour's cave-in to pre-Keynesian ideas during the Depression, its opposition to a social democratic model in the 1940s, or its embrace of neo-liberalism during its periods in government from the 1980s onwards. His materials on the Depression period are especially slight. In 1930, with Australian workers reeling from Depression unemployment, the

national Labor government considered an expansionist policy based on public works since, as Murphy argues, notions of "the dole" remained taboo within the Labor movement. But in fact it quickly abandoned any notion of an ambitious program of public works, taking advice from the Bank of England to stick with economic orthodoxy and make deep cuts in spending and services, placing the burden of state fiscal policy on the working class. While this caused huge dissension within both the Labor Party and the trade unions, the latter were unwilling to force ideas of spending or state ownership and control of the economy on the former. They stood idly by when Jack Lang, the Labor premier of New South Wales, was dismissed by the state's lieutenant-governor for running up debts to invest in public infrastructure and maintain wages. The Labor Party expelled Lang from party membership for his heresy, while a section of the Labor Party leadership actually joined with the country's conservatives to create a party called United Australia, led by the former Labor treasurer Hugh Scullin. United Australia won the Commonwealth election in December 1931 with promises to go even further than Labor had already done to decimate government programs, including social spending.

Murphy ignores all this, not really dealing much with the Labor Party until its more reformist period, which began during World War II. But he is clear that while Labor in the 1940s had adopted Keynesian notions of fiscal policy, this conversion away from sound finance had little impact on that party's many pieces of social legislation. "None of it was contributory, and all but maternity allowances and child endowment were means-tested.... It had the male breadwinner at its centre, both in the presumption it made about the adequacy of the arbitrated family wage, which made

income support for those in work barely necessary, as well as the ways in which support for the cost of 'dependants' also positioned the recipients of pensions and benefits as themselves 'breadwinners.'" (226)

All of this seems puzzling in the light of the degree of suffering Australian workers experienced during the Depression as the "arbitrated family wage" proved almost useless in providing income for those made redundant by the breakdown in capitalism as well as those who suffered from no or insufficient employment even at the best of times. Murphy's explanation of Labor's conservatism with reference to lingering effects of the old frontierism and antipathy to Poor Law notions is not unhelpful, and he follows many other social policy scholars in making something of a fetish regarding "path dependencies" that privilege certain ways of looking at policy issues in a particular polity based on past decisions that allegedly blinker participants' understanding of possible frameworks for solving problems. But "path dependency" requires humans to determine the path. How various social groups in Australia, and particularly the labour movement and working people more broadly, viewed their options in various periods is unfortunately not very evident in Murphy's otherwise careful and incisive narrative.

ALVIN FINKEL

Athabasca University

**Steven Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt, eds., *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870–1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution*** (Boston and Leiden: Brill 2010)

THIS COLLECTION is the sixth volume in Brill's "Global Social History Series," inaugurated in 2008 by Marcel van der

Linden's *Workers of the World: Essays toward a Global Labor History*. A groundbreaking work, it illustrates just how fruitful the cross-national approach can be for the renewal of labour history.

As stated by the editors in their stimulating introduction ("Rethinking anarchism and syndicalism: the colonial and postcolonial experience, 1870–1940"), the book asks a number of questions that had been left aside by previous historians of the international anarchist movement, such as George Woodcock or Daniel Guérin: "Which social groups formed the base of support for anarchist and syndicalist movements in the colonial and postcolonial world between 1870 and 1940? What were the doctrinal tenets, programmatic goals, and organisational structures of these movements? What methods of struggle did they employ? How did these movements grapple with colonialism, national liberation, imperialism, state formation, and social revolution?" (lxviii) Not only is the object under study – the libertarian movement in the countries dominated by imperialism from the beginning of the first globalisation to the start of World War II – an original one *per se*, but it is studied through an equally original lens, focusing on "how anarchism and syndicalism developed as *transnational* movements" and paying unprecedented attention to the "supranational connections and multidirectional flows" (across the Mediterranean, the Gulf of Mexico, the Sea of Japan, and the East China Sea) that were so essential in their growth. (xxxii)

The starting-point for Steven Hirsch, associate professor of history at the University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg (USA), and Lucien van der Walt, associate professor of sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa), is the conviction that the study of anarchism in the late 19th and early 20th century has long suffered from what



one might call “the Spanish fixation”, i.e. the vision of anarchism as a movement that attracted mass support in Spain and Spain only. Hence their attempt at “provincialising Spanish anarchism” (xlvi) by demonstrating that anarchism and syndicalism did achieve some impact outside of the Iberian Peninsula, notably in what came to be known after the period covered by the volume as the Third World or, later still, as the Global South. The collection can be read as a welcome sequel to Dave Berry and Constance Bantman’s *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational* (2010), which had already broadened the view by embracing the whole of Europe from an interconnected perspective.

The volume is twofold, with Part I focusing on “Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial World” while Part II examines their fate “in the Postcolonial World.” The “colonial/postcolonial” partition chosen here is somewhat misleading. The “postcolonial” part is solely about Latin America (the book was indeed born from a panel on “Anarchism and Anarcho-syndicalism in the Global South: Latin America in Comparative Perspective” at the European Social Science History Conference in Amsterdam in 2006). As for the “colonial” half, it brings together six countries from three different continents (Africa, Asia and Europe) which were “colonial” in senses so different that their juxtaposition under a single heading – in particular the inclusion of the cases of Ireland and the Ukraine – may seem a little artificial.

That said, the chapters taken individually are compelling and united by several fundamental qualities. First one might mention the sheer sense of discovery with which they overwhelm the reader as he or she moves from chapter to chapter. The authors should all be congratulated for bringing to life neglected

geographical spaces that Western readers would not naturally classify as hotbeds of anarchism alongside the Black and red capitals of Chicago or Barcelona – Dongyoun Hwang’s and Arkif Dirlik’s Tokyo, Edilene Toldeo and Luigi Biondi’s Sao Paulo are cases in point. Another reason for praise is the way the contributors undermine the cliché of a unanimously imperialist and racist labour movement. The efforts made in colonial Egypt by Italian activists to reach out to Greek, Arab and Jewish workers are unforgettable (Anthony Gorman), as are those made by Spanish-speaking militants in Peru (Steven Hirsch) or English-speaking ones in South Africa (Lucien van der Walt) towards the organisation of Native toilers. Finally, the authors do not shy away from confronting the inner contradictions of the movement, underlining for example the occasional conflicts between anarchist and syndicalist groupings, or the compromises made here or there with bourgeois nationalism.

Two twin aspects of the book that call for qualification are its sometimes simplistic rejection of Marxism (equated in Benedict Anderson’s preface with its Stalinist caricatures) and its possible overestimation of anarchist influence past and present (as in the co-editors’ “Final Reflections”). The papers in this volume certainly demonstrate that “anarchism and syndicalism were important currents in anti-imperial ... struggles in the late 19th and early to mid-20th centuries.” (xxxii) But whether they really were “more important” and “more seriously internationalist” than their “Marxist rivals” (xv), or indeed than other currents inside the labour movement, remains a contentious point. Neville Kirk has argued quite convincingly that, in the age of empire, revolutionary socialists throughout the British world were more often than not internationalists at heart, committed both to antiracism and anti-imperialism

in the name of class solidarity – and that many socialists of the reformist kind, the builders of trade-unions and Labour Parties, followed roughly the same creed (*Comrades and Cousins: Globalization, Workers and Labour Movements in Britain, the USA and Australia from the 1880s to 1914*, Merlin, 2003). Marxism from the methodological point of view might also have deserved a fairer treatment: could an exciting work like Hirsch and van der Walt's have existed if E. J. Hobsbawm and E. P. Thompson had not paved the way?

All in all, the collection is remarkable. "Taking a global view of anarchist and syndicalist history," Hirsch and van der Walt's volume is a thrilling invitation to follow a similar path in the exploration of social history at large. The essays they have gathered and carefully knitted together fill a major gap in the historiography and form an impressive and challenging scholarly achievement.

YANN BÉLIARD

Université Sorbonne Nouvelle –  
Paris 3

**Michael A Lebowitz, *The Socialist Alternative: Real Human Development***  
(New York: Monthly Review Press 2010)

INSPIRED BY Venezuela's Bolivarian revolution, Lebowitz advocates a kind of socialism less focused on the development of the material forces of production than on real human development. His starting point is the "socialist triangle" that Venezuela's president Chavez began promoting after his re-election in 2006. This triangle represents "the combination of social property, social production, and (the) satisfaction of social needs." (24) Lebowitz discusses the three sides of this triangle in the first part of his book and concludes that their implementation would lead to conditions where the

"simultaneous process of the changing of circumstances and self-change creates rich human beings as the joint product of productive activity." (81) It is important to note that Lebowitz doesn't equate "rich" with individuals amassing plenty of stuff or money but with a society in which, in the words of the *Communist Manifesto*, the "free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." In the second part of the book, "Building the Socialist Triangle," Lebowitz makes it clear that the "Socialist Alternative" he suggests is not only an alternative to capitalism but also to the actually existing socialisms of the 20th century.

Drawing on Marx's early work in the *Grundrisse* on alienation and the critique of the capitalist division of labour, Lebowitz explains that human development is not about individuals pursuing their self-interest but about the development of human capacities, in which individuals self-organize the collective production of their lives. He distinguishes this concept of human development from the well-known concepts of Amartya Sen. For Sen, human development is all about creating a level playing field without transcending the focus on individual self-interest. Self-interest, together with the division of labour between "thinking and doing," or, for that matter, "manual and mental labour," lies at the core of alienation and passivity of the vast majority of workers who are subjected to the rule of a small group of owners of the means of production who, as owners, also decide what workers have to do and how they must do it. Following Marx, Lebowitz succinctly shows how capitalist relations of production lead to a degradation of labour and alienation among workers, which ultimately produce a sense of powerlessness, passivity, and cynicism.

He extends this critique to the Soviet Union where private ownership was

replaced by state ownership without giving workers a say in planning and managing the production processes, so that the capitalist division between thinking and doing, with all its detrimental effects on workers' engagement, was reproduced in the name of socialism and workers' power. Under these conditions, Soviet leaders used material incentives to increase productivity. Yet, as Lebowitz argues, "material self-interest points backwards! It points back toward capitalism." (109) From this angle, it is quite understandable why Soviet communism eventually collapsed and why workers did nothing to defend a system claiming to represent their interests. He extends this line of critique to Yugoslavia, whose worker-managed firms were sometimes seen as an alternative to the Soviet dictatorship of the politburo. And while it is undeniably true that socialism in Yugoslavia was less heavy-handed than its Soviet counterpart, it also suffered from a focus on self-interest because capitalism's private property was replaced by some kind of group property, in which the workers owning one firm would compete against those owning another firm. Individual competition in the marketplace was thus replaced by competition among groups of workers. In the face of these competitive struggles, the state proved increasingly unable to articulate and pursue any interests going beyond income maximization of individual firms, for example redistributing resources from richer to poorer regions.

Lebowitz uses the Soviet and Yugoslavian experiences to support his theoretical argument that socialism requires a complete overhaul of the division of labour inherited from capitalism. In order to do this, it is key to connect workplaces and communities, and to expand the commons that include public health care, education, and utilities. To acquire the economic resources

needed for an expansion of the commons, Lebowitz suggests the taxation of property and profits. This, to be sure, is an old social democratic policy tool different from revolutionaries conquering state power, as happened in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Lebowitz' critique of the actually existing socialisms in these two countries has shown that state power held by revolutionaries, if not complemented by substantive changes in the way economic planning and management are carried out, will eventually lead back to capitalism.

Yet, is a return to social democratic strategies of a gradual transition from capitalism to socialism more promising? Lebowitz doesn't discuss this question in any detail but mentions in passing that any serious step towards socialist reform would meet fierce resistance from capitalists. Social democracy, Lebowitz reminds his readers, never confronted such resistance, but he also suggests "there is a socialist alternative to a capital strike ... and that is to move in." (136) In other words, when capitalists go on strike, the means of production they withdraw from the collective production process have to be taken over by the workers, who then have to learn to work not only collectively under capitalist management but also on their own terms. This is the point where learning and the transformation of alienated workers into "self-managing citizens" and "self-governing producers" (109) become crucial. In this respect, Lebowitz refers to Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed in his introduction and picks these ideas up in his last chapter on "developing a socialist mode of regulation." Theoretically, this is a compelling argument. Historically, though, readers may wonder why the socialist alternative to actually existing socialism and social democracy Lebowitz advocates will be more successful in the future than it was in the past. After all,

his theoretical arguments, convincing as they are, were powerfully articulated by the New Left of the 1960s, of which Lebowitz was a part, and can be traced back even further to dissident Marxists like Rosa Luxemburg, Antonio Gramsci, Karl Korsch, council communists like Anton Pannekoek, and the “Workers Opposition” in the Bolshevik Party. In other words, Lebowitz’ socialist alternative reiterates arguments developed on the fringes of 20th-century communism for a very long time. That doesn’t mean this alternative isn’t worth pursuing, but it does mean that anyone who does so has to explain why it never garnered much support in the past. The answer to that question may hint at how chances to build a socialist alternative today can be improved. The New Left actually raised exactly these kind of issues and aimed to build an alternative to Eastern communism and Western welfare states in the 1960s and 1970s. However, New Left enthusiasm for theoretical debate and political mobilization was short-lived and ushered in a period of neo-liberal globalization during which communism and social democracy ceased to exist and any kind of alternative seemed unthinkable. From this angle, Lebowitz’ book indicates a return of the search for alternatives. The theoretical arguments he advances can serve as a framework to make sense of the history of communism, social democracy, and the New Left. Understanding these histories, then, can help to further develop the strategies and goals of socialist transformations in the 21st century.

INGO SCHMIDT

Athabasca University

**Leo Panitch, Greg Albo, and Vivek Chibber, eds., *Socialist Register 2011: The Crisis This Time* (London: Merlin Press 2010)**

SINCE 1964, the *Socialist Register* has published incisive analyses of global capitalism from the world’s leading radical intellectuals. The 2011 edition lives up to this reputation. Its opening line, “Crises have a way of clarifying things,” encapsulates both the goal and the main achievement of this excellent volume. Because economic crises are destabilizing events of enormous magnitude they inevitably prompt a search for causes. Such causes are always to be found in the dynamics of the previous period of capital accumulation. Yet how far back does one go in search of causes, and how does one sort out the drivers of the economic crisis from its symptoms? Moreover, how does one cut through the myths that arise as different groups compete to impose their narrative of the nature and origins of the crisis?

This volume aims to clear the decks of the dominant narratives – of both mainstream and progressive commentators – of the neo-liberal era and provide a clearer understanding of the global financial crisis from a Marxist perspective. Rather than focusing on the sub-prime implosion, the immediate trigger for the global financial crisis, the contributions to this edited collection recognize that probing the deeper, underlying processes of class conflict and capital accumulation offers more satisfying explanations for the causes of the current economic malaise. Yet, this year’s title, *The Crisis This Time*, also reflects the view that, while capitalism is an inherently crisis-prone system, each particular crisis is born of unique circumstances, and is characterized by distinct features.

When delving into an edited collection one expects a degree of unevenness

in the quality and relevance of its various chapters. While such unevenness is certainly present in *The Crisis This Time*, what stands out even more strongly is the degree of thematic coherence across the chapters. Most chapters, for example, produce varied empirical evidence to show that the institutions and economic relationships underpinning the neo-liberal era also contributed to the crisis. On the one hand, the weakening of organized labour and the flexibilization of work led to a stagnation of real wages, particularly in the US. Effective demand was sustained by the extension of credit to working-class households, fuelling the asset-price bubble. This in turn fed the growth of finance capital, partly through the ability to sell more products, partly through the ability to securitize the debt repayments being made by workers. At the global level, an entrenched pattern of external balances, such as that between the US and many Asian economies, facilitated this financial expansion.

States, many contributors point out, played a vital role in these processes. They were active in suppressing organized labour and enabled the expansion and transformation of finance capital through both regulatory change and monetary policy. Such a recognition helps to demythologize the neo-liberal era. As Hugo Radice points out in his cogent chapter, to view the central economic variable as being “the balance between the public and private ... between the market and state as regulating mechanisms” is out of step with the reality of neo-liberalism and, indeed, of capitalist economies more generally.

There are many fine contributions to this volume, the best of which clearly and precisely link theoretical concepts to concrete economic processes and data to illuminate the key dynamics of the current crisis. The opening chapter, for example, by Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, which

effectively frames the volume, takes issue with mechanistic Marxist approaches that seek evidence of a falling rate of profit as the perennial cause of capitalist economic crises. In contrast, Panitch and Gindin view the crisis through the lens of historically specific class struggle and institutional change. The key to understanding the current crisis, they argue, is the weakness of the working class, a recognition that offers a window into both the dominance and transformation of the finance sector during the last four decades, and why the costs of the crisis are being forced disproportionately onto workers.

Dick Bryan and Mike Rafferty also have a compelling and original contribution. The chapter focuses on derivatives, most particularly on how their growth has integrated the every-day lives of working-class households more fully with finance capital. As workers take on credit and the income streams thereby created are securitized, so do they become caught up, in ways they might only be vaguely aware of, in financial circuits. For Bryan and Rafferty, this integration makes problematic the commonplace distinction between the “real” and “speculative” economies, with the implication being not that finance needs to be more heavily regulated, but that working-class living standards should be quarantined from market dependence.

The penultimate chapter by Greg Albo and Bryan Evans also stands out for its clarity and penetrating insights. It offers a political economy of public sector spending during the crisis, and details the responses to this, from above and below, across four countries, as well as the prospects for progressive “exit strategies.”

Johanna Brenner details the variegated patterns of inequality resulting from the intersections of class, race and gender within working-class households, before and since the onset of the crisis.

The title of this chapter, "Caught in the Whirlwind," captures the sense of violent external forces that buffet working-class families from one crisis to another.

Alfredo Saad-Filho argues in his chapter that we are experiencing a "crisis in neoliberalism" rather than a "crisis of neoliberalism." (249) The former refers to a crisis brought about by the contradictions of the neo-liberal era but where neo-liberal strategies of crisis management continue to be used to impose the costs of capitalist crisis onto the working class. A crisis of neo-liberalism, on the other hand, can only occur if workers mobilize to force the costs of the crisis into capital, decommodifying social relations in the process through measures such as the socialization of finance, a strategy Saad-Filho advocates.

There is also an excellent chapter by Anwar Shaikh fusing Marxist and Post-Keynesian analysis to situate the current crisis within broader, long-term patterns of capitalist economic expansion and contraction. He argues that the only just way out of the crisis is through a social mobilization to force states to employ directly those left without work or underemployed by the crisis. He also recognizes, however, that this strategy is likely to be resisted by the owning class which would view such moves as encroaching on the prerogatives of capital.

While the volume's strength is its diagnosis of the crisis, and an identification that the balance of class forces will significantly determine whether or not the exit strategies from the crisis inflict further pain on workers, its shortcoming is the paucity of detailed consideration of progressive ways out of the crisis. Perhaps this simply reflects the editors' assessment that "the Left today is the weakest it has been since the defeat of the Paris Commune" and therefore that until left-wing forces gather strength, speculation on progressive futures remains somewhat

utopian. Perhaps more concrete alternatives will be better represented in the 2012 Register, which is a companion volume to its predecessor. Such criticisms notwithstanding, *The Crisis This Time* is a fine volume and continues a proud tradition of radical scholarship by the *Socialist Register*.

DAMIEN CAHILL

University of Sydney

**John Marsh, *Class Dismissed: Why We Cannot Teach or Learn Our Way Out of Inequality*** (New York: Monthly Review Press 2011)

THE NEXUS OF EDUCATION, (un)employment, poverty and inequality is well-explored in studies emanating from many fields. Activists and scholars alike have argued for at least a century that the best cure for unemployment is employment, not more education. Unions commonly demand good, well-paying, stable jobs with benefits precisely because they are a bulwark against poverty and mitigate social inequality. In this regard, John Marsh is simply reiterating what is already known, namely that poverty and unemployment are a policy and jobs problem and not issues of education or training. But he does it well and with welcome wit. In the process he demonstrates how politically helpful academic labour can be when it produces an empirically grounded and accessibly written study that addresses the flaws of dominant discourses and offers credible alternatives. Indeed, *Class Dismissed* models good argumentation both by giving fair coverage to a range of perspectives and by demonstrating how to adequately critique positions that are not supported by the evidence. For this reason, among others, it would make an excellent text for students in sociology of work, sociology of education, labour studies and related courses.



After beginning with the story of his own personal disillusionment around a community-based university education program for low-income earners and the questions his work in that project raised for him about employment and education, Marsh launches into an examination of the costs of poverty and social inequality in the United States. In narrative and graph formats, he explores the statistical and quantitative data on poverty and unpacks most of the usual, mainstream explanations offered for the existence of social inequality. Because he often references the Gini coefficient in this discussion, a short explanatory appendix on that topic is included. In this first chapter, Marsh also addresses the costs of poverty and draws on research from health, neuroscience and social science to explain why social inequality is damaging to any society.

Marsh then turns to exploring why and how education came to be seen as the way to alleviate poverty and hence social inequality. He is frank in his discussion of the personal benefits that can be found in the education solution, noting that increased education does offer some people a route out of poverty and that increased levels of schooling do tend to pay a dividend to individuals taking that route. Ultimately, however, he illustrates how education is a supply-side solution that does little to attack poverty or social inequality. He argues that the real issue is the failure of political will and suggests that “redistributive tax rates, massive public works projects, a living wage law, or a renaissance of labor unions” (91) would do more to alleviate poverty and hence inequality than any scheme to provide even more educational opportunities.

How then did education come to assume the prominent place it has as the prime answer to questions of economic inequality and unemployment? In two

substantive chapters, Marsh traces the development of the education and employment discourse in the United States, showing how key documents shaped political consciousness and policy over time. Noting that educational purpose shifted from the religious to citizenship preparation and then quickly to job readiness and employment, Marsh adopts the position that powerful interests encouraged and supported the educational solution because it did not challenge existing social and economic structures. Indeed, the emphasis on education shifted the blame for poverty and social problems onto individual failings, and reinforced the view that the United States was a meritocratic nation that offered equality of opportunity, primarily through schooling. Through this line of reasoning, unemployment, low wages, and poverty all became attributable to a lack of the right kind of education or to insufficient education.

In his final chapter, Marsh argues that policy levers and approaches other than education should be used to combat poverty. His recommendations include one for a more progressive taxation regime and another for a legislative and regulatory environment more supportive of unionization. The former would provide revenues for stronger social programs which work to alleviate poverty through income and social service supports, and the latter would enable stronger negotiating positions and force wage levels up to ensure a better standard of living for working people. Through such strategies social inequalities would be reduced and, in fact, through the reduction of social disadvantage, educational outcomes would almost certainly be improved since social class and family income are strong predictors of educational attainment. Ultimately, however, Marsh is not optimistic about the possibilities for the implementation of his recommendations and he appears resigned to a further long

history where education serves as a proxy for the economy.

While Marsh recognizes that education is not the answer to the social inequalities created by a capitalist economy, he is not anti-education or even anti-schooling. He earns his living as a professor of English, a fact that likely contributes to the readability of this book, and he understands the pleasures of learning. Nonetheless, by focusing his work on the education-employment nexus, however critically that is done, Marsh does rather narrow the discussion to terms set elsewhere and he closes debate on the ways in which critical, transformative pedagogies might produce activist-citizens who would contribute to a more just and equal world. In this regard, a deeper consideration of the extensive literature on education, politics and class consciousness would have offered Marsh, and therefore his readers, some other possibilities to contemplate with at least a modicum of optimism. Education may

not be the whole solution, but it can be a practice with revolutionary potential.

This book also would have been strengthened through a more open perspective on political agency. Here and there one gets the sense that blame for the sorry state of the economy must be shared across the population because it too easily accepted an education solution for economic woes. However, for at least a century, key social movements, youth and student organizations, and unions have provided good examples of resistance to glib job training and education-based answers to unemployment questions and have challenged corporate leaders and politicians who engaged in victim-blaming. Workers are not cultural dopes. There was, and is, a counter-discourse that challenges the dominant narrative line and some attention to the fight back on the abuse of education and its purposes would have strengthened this book and demonstrated that class is never wholly dismissed.

REBECCA PRIEGERT COULTER  
University of Western Ontario