

# Labour/Le Travailleur



## Notebook / Carnet

Andrew Parnaby and Todd McCallum

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[See table of contents](#)

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# NOTEBOOK / CARNET

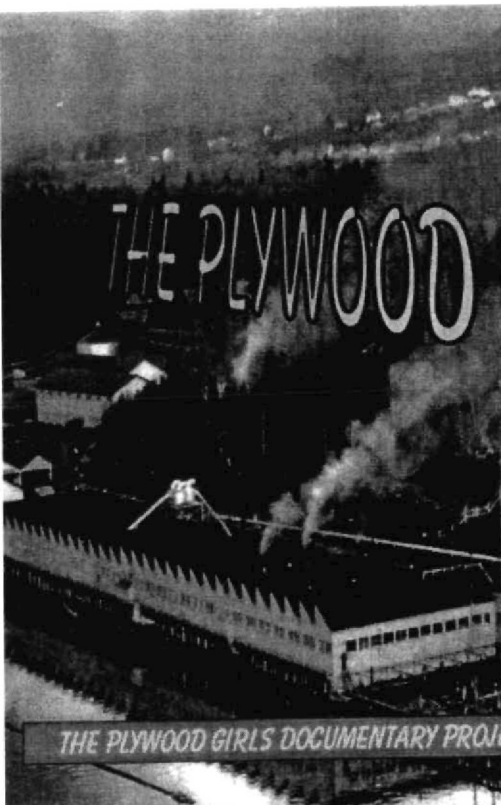
Andrew Parnaby and Todd McCallum

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## Off the Page and Onto the Screen

Susanne Klausen

BETWEEN 1994 AND 1999, I represented the history of the "Plywood Girls" — the hundreds of women who worked at the Alberni Plywoods Limited (ALPLY) mill in Port Alberni, British Columbia between 1942 and 1991 — in a variety of media. An academic article, based on oral interviews with many former employees, came first. It was followed by a photographic exhibit mounted at the Alberni Valley Museum, several popular history pieces written for local newspapers in Port Alberni and Victoria, and, finally, a video documentary, co-produced with artist-photographer Don Gill, which was completed in 1999. Each new medium was fraught with specific challenges, but it was the documentary that was the most difficult yet gratifying to produce. It is also the version of the Plywood Girls that has elicited by far the largest and most interesting response.




# THE PLYWOOD GIRLS

**THE PLYWOOD GIRLS DOCUMENTARY PROJECT**

"The Plywood Girls" is a documentary about the women who worked at the Port Alberni plywood mill from its establishment in 1942 until its closure in 1991. Women are interviewed about their experiences as women and as workers in one branch of the male-dominated forest industry. Former union representatives and mill managers discuss their perceptions of the "plywood girls" from World War II and after. In addition to interviews, the film contains vintage photographs, aerial shots of the mill and footage of its demolition in 1997. The film's running time is 50 minutes and is available on Beta up and VHS.

**TO ORDER CONTACT:**  
**SUSANNE KLAUSEN**  
(250) 656-0068

2177 Malaview Avenue,  
Sidney, BC V8L 2E6  
sklausen@islandnet.com  
dgill@direct.ca



**PRODUCERS:**  
**DON GILL**  
**SUSANNE KLAUSEN**

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Poster by Don Gill.

The visual media are probably the chief carriers of historical messages in western industrialized societies. For this reason alone I believe that history needs to be represented on film and video, in the form of documentary, traditional drama, and more innovative formats. As commentators have long pointed out, today's professional historians are talking more and more about narrower historical topics to an ever-shrinking portion of the general public. As a consequence of co-producing the video and participating in many public screenings, I am now completely convinced that historians need to utilize visual media, not only to produce tools for the classroom for students who are steeped in visual culture, but also to reach beyond the academy to foster greater public knowledge and deeper understanding of the connections between the past and present in our society. Complex analyses of history need to break out of the confines of the written word and find their way into the visual media that have established a firm, indeed dominant grip on our culture. Doing so could help foster a more sophisticated, nuanced public memory. And who better to participate in this process than historians? After all it is we who take most seriously the craft of interpreting traces of the past.<sup>1</sup>

The process of collaboration was a new experience. Not only did it prompt me to think about the links between video production, documentary theory, and history, but it forced me to share the Plywood Girls' history — its authorship, interpretation, and representation — with someone else. No mean feat for someone used to the solitary work of academic writing. Collaboration, especially across disciplines, can be difficult in a society that glorifies work produced by individuals. But there is no doubt that its benefits — the broader perspective inherent in two peoples' vision, the sense of solidarity forged out of commitment to a common goal, and the reassurance found in shared responsibility — enhanced my first foray into video.

I knew that translating the story of the Plywood Girls onto video would enable the women's experiences to reach a wider audience. But the process of co-producing the video taught me that this medium can communicate many elements of history that the written word cannot, or at least not nearly so well. For example, it enabled subjects to present their stories in their own voices, including the vocabulary, inflections, accents, and styles of speaking unique to them — elements of their identity that are lost during the process of translation into written history. For the sake of brevity, historians writing an article or book are forced to condense and distill the information passed along to them by their subjects; I certainly had to do so in my academic article, "The Plywood Girls: Women and Gender Ideology

<sup>1</sup> The issues associated with history and film are taken up at length in Robert A. Rosenstone, *Revising History: Film and the Construction of a New Past* (Princeton 1995) and a special edition of the *American Historical Review*, 93 (December 1988), 1173-85. On the marginalization of class in Canadian documentaries see John McCullough, "Rude: Or the Elision of Class in Canadian Movies," *CineAction*, 49 (June 1999), 19-25.

at the Port Alberni Plywood Plant, 1942-1991."<sup>2</sup> In the video, although fewer subjects can be presented, the women are speaking for themselves in passages that are left unedited for as long as possible — an innovative style of editing, in the age of MTV, that Don convinced me was ideally suited to our subject. He was right. After participating in many public screenings, I realize that this more direct, less mediated encounter with human sources can be a powerful experience for empathetic viewers, especially for those women who used to work at ALPLY.

In many respects, the moving image is much more effective at conveying the ambiguity inherent in the process of constructing history. In my academic article, I constructed coherent arguments that were designed to convince readers that my conclusions were plausible in light of the evidence I offered. In spite of ritual acknowledgements that history is constructed, I suspect that this coherent, confident style of representing history carries an implicit promise that a perfectly complete version of the past is actually attainable if we could just dig for long enough and argue well enough. Film and video are certainly suitable for representing change over time in a conventional fashion. In our documentary, for example, Don and I explore changes in work and worker consciousness at ALPLY over a period of 50 years by interviewing women who represented successive generations of workers.

But film and video are more flexible media that lend themselves easily to the task of conveying the contested nature of history. In our video, barring one exception, all interviewees are questioned in groups of at least two. By presenting our subjects in this way, the viewer *sees* in the faces and *hears* in the voices how people who had worked in the same mill during the same period of time can have very different recollections of events that can no longer be verified "objectively." Not surprisingly, these segments also demonstrate the malleability of memory and the ways in which memory can adapt to contemporary emotional needs and interests. Most television documentaries dealing with history choose to ignore evidence of ambiguity — watch almost any big budget production on the History Channel or the CBC and you will discover that through vigorous editing, ambiguity has been totally suppressed in the director's quest to present a definitive view of the past. But when documentaries wish to include it, as we did, film and video are exquisitely suited to capturing the grey that often shades our interpretation of historical evidence.

There is yet one more important reason to present subjects in groups of siblings, friends, or co-workers: these scenes, like the ALPLY reunion presented at the end of the video, illustrate the collective nature of much of human beings' experience. Images of friends whose lives today are intimately intertwined as a result of working together 55 years ago can convey this point more simply and effectively than words discussing faceless, nameless abstractions like "crowds," "groups," or "classes."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>This article appeared in *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998), 199-235.

<sup>3</sup>This point is explored in depth by Rosenstone.

When I embarked on this project, I wanted to represent the history of the Plywood Girls in ways that would touch the lives of the women themselves. I presented the video, projected onto a large screen, at the Alberni Valley Museum in October 1999. The audience was a standing-room-only group of 350 people consisting of former Plywood Girls and their spouses, children, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, former male co-workers, and other members of this tight-knit community. While they watched the video, I watched them, and their response was powerful and emotional. They clapped, laughed, pointed, whispered, and nodded; in short, they were completely engaged throughout the video's running time of 50 minutes. Just how this shared viewing experience shaped their interpretation of the historical information presented about the female plywood workers, I do not know for certain, but I sense that it matters. If nothing else, their response convinced me of the desperate need for documentaries that represent the history of working-class experience in Canada and that ask class-based questions about our society. In particular, the positive response to the video clearly demonstrates the necessity to produce documentaries that focus the lens on those workers — women, immigrants, piece workers, non-unionized workers — who were never included in the dominant, often romanticized histories of unionized white men in Canadian resource industries.

After the screening ended, many relatives of the women who had worked at ALPLY commented how much it meant to them to have their mothers'/wives'/grandmothers' story captured in this way. Someone from the audience asked, "When will it be on TV?" and I replied that it was extremely unlikely that the video would be broadcast on television. Rejections from public television stations were already arriving, underscoring the fact that working in film and video is prohibitively expensive and capital intensive. Unable to raise the minimum \$100,000 to produce a slick, broadcast-quality video, Don and I decided to proceed anyway using a Hi-8 video camcorder. The content was vitally important to capture as the once-strong public memory of the Plywood Girls had largely faded. Still, some former female employees asked when we planned to expand the video since, as they said, there was obviously so much more to show. They offered themselves as new subjects to include in the hoped-for feature-length version. I was sorry to tell them that no such plans exist, yet I marvelled at their palpably urgent desire to participate in the construction of their own history.

*Thanks to Darrell Varga for suggesting helpful sources on class and documentary film and to Don Gill for his insightful comments on an earlier draft of this essay.*

## Report From Cannes 2000

Lawrin Armstrong

*Bread and Roses*. UK. Director: Ken Loach. Screenplay: Paul Laverty. Production: Rebecca O'Brien, Parallax Pictures. 110 minutes.

*Takhté Siah (Blackboards)*. Iran. Director: Amira Makhmalbaf. Screenplay: Mohsen Makhmalbaf and Samira Makhmalbaf. Production: Makhmalbaf Film House (Iran), Fabrica Cinema, RAI (Italy) and RTSI (Switzerland). 85 minutes.

*Lista de Espera (Waiting List)*. Spain/Cuba. Director: Juan Carlos Tabio. Screenplay: Arturo Arango and Juan Carlos Tabio. Production: Tornosol Films (Spain) and DMVB (France). 102 minutes.

*Capitães de Abril (Captains of April)*. Portugal. Director: Maria de Medeiros. Screenplay: Maria de Medeiros and Eve Deboise. Production: Mutante Films (France). 123 minutes.

FORGET WHAT *Time* and *Newsweek* have to say: the real theme of the first Cannes festival of the new millennium was the resurgence of political film. Thanks to Allen Grieco, colleague, cinephile, and veteran of Paris '68, who steered me through accreditation and the cinema topography of Cannes, I was able to see several new films of interest to labour and the left.

*Bread and Roses*, the only British entry in official competition and Ken Loach's first feature set in the US, attacks the exploitation of illegal immigrants. It tells the story of Maya (played by Pilar Padilla), a young Mexican woman who joins her sister Rosa (Elpidia Carrillo) in Los Angeles. After an opening sequence evincing the terror of an illicit crossing of the US-Mexico border, Maya finds work as a janitor in one of the city's high-rise office towers. Her employer, the ironically-named "Angel Services," trades on the fact that illegals are too scared of deportation to protest long hours, rotten pay, and lack of benefits. It takes the arbitrary firing of a middle-aged woman cleaner and the commitment of Sam Shapiro (Adrien Brody), an unorthodox union organizer, to convince Maya and her co-workers to fight back in a campaign of direct action that escalates into a bitter contest with management and the police. Based on the real "Justice for Janitors" battle of the early 1990s, *Bread and Roses* reveals the American Dream for what it is: affluence based on the exploitation of the powerless. The point is driven home in a wrenching confrontation between Rosa, the stoic breadwinner of her family back in Mexico, and the idealistic but naive Maya that locates the abuse of cleaners on a continuum with prostitution in Tijuana and LA. Prostitutes, janitors, and sweat-shop workers are the invisible, disposable people on whom the neo-liberal "miracle" depends not only in America but — as Loach emphasized at the film's premier in Cannes — in

Europe and elsewhere in the First World. This is Loach at his best and a must for labour and minority rights activists.

Like Loach, twenty-year-old Iranian director Amira Makhmalbaf uses mainly non-professional actors in *Takhté Siah* (*Blackboards*), her second feature and winner of the third prize in the main competition. *Blackboards* is about two itinerant teachers who wander the war-ravaged mountains of Iranian Kurdistan, blackboards on their backs, looking for pupils. Said (Said Mohmadi) joins a group of Iraqi Kurds returning to their ancestral village to die; Reeboir (Bahman Ghobadi) meets a band of children smuggling contraband across the frontier. Neither group shows much interest in learning to read or write; a comic theme in this otherwise bleak film is how a blackboard can be used for anything but its real purpose: as camouflage, stretcher, drying rack, even a dowry. Said marries the only woman in the Kurdish band (Bhenaz Jafari), but she is cold to his romantic declarations. They divorce when the teacher succeeds in guiding the group through minefields and the debris of chemical warfare to a safe crossing. Reeboir finds a boy whose only ambition is to write his own name, but lessons are constantly disrupted by brushes with frontier patrols. In a sequence reminiscent of Homer's *Odyssey*, the children, burdened with heavy packs, cross the border hiding in a flock of sheep. The moment of victory that follows as Reeboir's pupil painfully traces his name on the blackboard is shattered when the children are ambushed by a patrol. Though a constant and ominous presence, helicopters and troops never appear on screen so that the film is transformed into a powerful metaphor for the faceless, technologized conflicts of the last decade — from Iran-Iraq to the Gulf and Kosovo — that force children into a premature battle for survival and dispossess their elders. Made without government approval, *Blackboards* was smuggled out of Iran by European backers, and Makhmalbaf took advantage of the award ceremony to call for solidarity with the struggle of students for democratic reforms in her country.

*Lista de Espera* (*Waiting List*) is a gentle comedy about contemporary Cuba. Based on a story by Colombian writer Arturo Arango, it is directed by Juan Carlos Tabío, co-director of the 1993 award-winning Cuban production *Strawberry and Chocolate*. Set in a bus station somewhere in central Cuba, *Waiting List* tells the story of Emilio (Vladimir Cruz), who has given up a good job as an engineer to return home and help his father on his farm allotment. Waiting with him in the bus queue is the beautiful Jacqueline (Thaimi Alvaríño), on her way to meet her Spanish fiancé in Havana, and a blind man (Jorge Perugorria) as well as several students, an aging intellectual, and half a dozen others. Three buses pass, all of them full. When the station's own bus breaks down, the manager orders everybody to leave and try tomorrow. Instead, led by Emilio, the stranded travelers occupy the station. What follows is a utopian vision of what people can do when they choose to stay put, cooperate, and pool their resources rather than run away. The metaphor is pretty obvious and even if the film sometimes verges on the mawkish, particularly in its conclusion, the basic theme of solidarity is a welcome one.



Early in the morning of 25 April 1974 Lisbon radio broadcast *Grândola*, a revolutionary song banned by the dictator Salazar. It was the signal for a military rising that changed the history of Portugal and its immense colonial possessions in Africa. Maria de Medeiros' *Capitães de Abril* (*Captains of April*) recreates the 24 hours in which insurgent troops led by left-wing junior officers overthrew the fascist regime that had controlled Portugal for 40 years. We experience the revolution through the eyes of three people: a young professor of journalism (played by Medeiros) and two army officers, her estranged husband (Joachim de Almeida) and tank commander Maia (Stefano Accorsi). As Medeiros' character intercedes with a government minister on behalf of a student activist arrested by the secret police, her husband and three comrades seize a radio station. At a conscript barracks, Maia appeals for support in ending the dictatorship and its dirty war against independence movements in the colonies. The insurgents march on Lisbon at three in the morning in what would be called the "carnation revolution" because of the flowers the people tied to soldiers' rifles. There is a comic moment when tanks insist on obeying red lights in rush hour traffic, and moving ones as non-insurgent troops guarding the defence ministry disobey orders to fire on their fellow conscripts and civilians storm the government prison to free political prisoners. The Portuguese revolution was the reverse of Pinochet's coup in Chile: the objective of the *Movimento das Forças Armadas* (*Armed Forces Movement*) was not to seize power but to restore it to the people, after which the troops retired to their barracks. Portugal pulled out of Angola and Mozambique within months, but an underlying theme of the film is how civilian politicians and senior military officers would soon betray the revolutionary hopes raised by the coup and the mass movement it inspired in the streets. The film has provoked controversy in Portugal since Medeiros' declared purpose is to keep alive the ideals of a moment that is already being erased from popular memory.

I unfortunately missed three films that by all reports are worth watching for. Philippe Diaz's documentary *New World Order: Somewhere in Africa* exposes the hypocrisy of British and UN intervention in Sierra Leone, where civil war and famine have killed 70,000 in the last 4 years. Not only did the "world community" quash a potential peace agreement between the government and rebels but, as Diaz and his collaborator Soious Samura show in harrowing detail, UN-backed Nigerian troops collaborate with government militias in the murder and mutilation of dissidents, while British cluster bombs are routinely deployed against civilians in rebel territory. *Buenaventura Durruti, Anarchiste*, directed by Jean-Louis Comolli and produced by the German-French television consortium ARTE, chronicles the extraordinary life-history of Buenaventura Durruti, an iconic figure of twentieth-century Spanish anarchism, who was killed in 1936 defending Madrid against Franco. Clocking in at 345 minutes, exiled British director Peter Watkins' *La Commune* is an epic on the Paris workers' rising of 1871. Filmed in the working-class district of Montreuil with an entirely local, amateur cast of over 200, *La Commune* is more

than a historical recreation: it is also a commentary on the abuse of power by the media, a theme that has engaged Watkins ever since the BBC suppressed his 1966 anti-nukes film *The War Game*. In Watkin's new film, the Paris revolution is "covered" by television and radio and interpreted by academic talking heads who instruct the public in what they should think about the events unfolding on the barricades. The contemporary relevance of the Communards' struggle is underlined by parallels with the problems of the very workers and unemployed people who made the film.

All told, a promising start for radical cinema's second century.

## Presentation of the Canadian Industrial Relations Association's Gérard Dion Award to Professor Shirley Goldenberg

Gregor Murray

The Canadian Industrial Relations Association (CIRA-ACRI) bestows an annual award — the Gérard Dion award, named in honour of one of the founders of the study of industrial relations in Canada — to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to the understanding of work and employment in Canada. At its annual conference at the University of Edmonton on 26 May 2000, Gregor Murray of Université Laval presented the 2000 Gérard Dion Award to Professor Shirley Goldenberg.

IT IS A GREAT PRIVILEGE today to introduce to you Professor Shirley Goldenberg, formerly of McGill University and undoubtedly the pioneer in terms of establishing the legitimacy of women's presence in academic industrial relations in Canada. Her career parallels those of a number of the first women in the field, such as Alice Cooke in the United States, inasmuch as the labour market opportunities for women were bounded by their role in the home. Indeed, it is difficult for many of us today to imagine the obstacles that Shirley Goldenberg has had to overcome in her many remarkable accomplishments.

By way of introduction, permit me to enumerate just a few facts that highlight the accomplishments of this wonderful woman. Shirley graduated from high school in 1940, first in the province of Québec in the standardized matriculation exams. She then spent four years in sociology at McGill University, always with distinction as a "University Scholar." She was awarded a graduate fellowship at the University of Chicago in sociology in 1944-45. Not only was Shirley one very bright young woman, but she was attracted to the social inspirations of the Chicago reform movement at a time when the University of Chicago was still better known for the innovative traditions of Jane Adams, the pioneer social worker and suffragette, than the neo-liberal penchant of its economics department. A number of other young Canadians had preceded her there, not least of whom was Mackenzie King, who had also sought his own brand of inspiration in this tradition of liberal social change.

It was scarcely surprising that Carl Goldenberg, an already distinguished Montréal labour lawyer at the time and soon to become Canada's premier labour mediator, arbitrator, and counsel, fell for this dashing young intellect. Indeed, to add to the intrigue, he had long been a confidant of one of those other Canadians who had also been much influenced by the Chicago reform movement, none other than Mackenzie King. The feelings were, of course, mutual between these two young intellectuals, and Shirley and Carl began a life-long partnership with their marriage in 1945. It was not a time of commuter marriages and Shirley cut short her graduate studies to begin her career as a homemaker, mother of two remarkable children — Eddie and Ann — and soul mate for Carl. It should be stressed that theirs was quite an unusual home because it was a meeting place for intellectuals, union leaders, and many others interested in the reform of social policy, nationally of course, but especially in the many struggles prior to Québec's Quiet Revolution. To draw this award full circle, it is especially fitting to note that the Abbé Gérard Dion, founder and pillar of the *Département des relations industrielles* at Université Laval, was a regular visitor to the Goldenberg home. Indeed, the visitor's bedroom was often known as the Abbé's room.

However exceptional hitherto, the unusual part of this story for us at the Canadian Industrial Relations Association only begins in the 1960s when this mother of two teenaged children returned to her studies at McGill University to complete an MA in sociology. Her interest in pursuing a career in industrial relations then brought her under the tutelage of H.D. "Buzz" Woods. There followed an extremely rapid ascension. She began teaching industrial relations at McGill in 1967. The four-person Task Force on Labour Relations in Canada under the chairmanship of H.D. Woods, which included Abbé Gérard Dion among its members, was then at work. Shirley Goldenberg was commissioned to write a report on "Professional Workers and Collective Bargaining." To signal to what degree industrial relations was still a man's world at that time, it should be stressed that of the 88 studies done under the auspices of the Task Force, only one other was

done by a woman academic, her then contemporary co-lecturer at McGill, Frances Bairstow.

It would be nice to think that life chances were simply so "meritorious" for a scholar like Shirley. In fact, it was more difficult than that, and it would not be unreasonable to link her successive term appointments, just like those of the other woman in the field such as Frances Bairstow, to prevailing forms of sexism. Indeed, it was Buzz Woods who made it a condition of accepting his appointment as professor of industrial relations to the newly created Faculty of Management at McGill in 1972 that there be an industrial relations section and that it include his two women "protégées," Shirley Goldenberg and Frances Bairstow, as tenure-track assistant professors.

It is certainly important to acknowledge the contribution of her colleagues and family in her professional achievements. First, and above all, was the support of her husband Carl who believed in her capacities and strongly supported her scholarship. Then, of course, there was Buzz Woods, who recognized this outstanding talent and sought every opportunity to give her a stage to show those talents. There were many others, of course, not least Abbé Gérard Dion, but it would be remiss not to mention the contribution of Shirley's female colleague, Frances Bairstow, who had followed a similar career path. Although their scholarship was quite different and their interests naturally divergent, there was undoubtedly a gender complicity that helped them to suffer through the occasional and, above all, preposterously unfounded intellectual arrogance of younger male colleagues whose intellectual worldview did not go much beyond the particular model, econometric or otherwise, that informed their doctoral thesis. But Shirley did so with her customary grace and dignity while continuing to make a number of wonderful achievements.

Over the course of the next decade after her appointment at the Faculty of Management at McGill, she went from assistant to associate to full professor. If you have not read the 1970s Goldenberg and Woods overview of the state of industrial relations research in Canada, you should since it remains a remarkable achievement.<sup>1</sup> Shirley was certainly one of the pioneers in the study of public sector industrial relations in Canada; the most tangible proof of this is her landmark two-volume study of the federal public service co-authored with Jacob Finkelman.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as one glances over Shirley Goldenberg's list of publications, it is readily apparent how she was always ready to embark on new themes and issues, be they the role of staffers at the Confederation of National Trade Unions (Confédération des syndicats nationaux), the unionization of professional workers, women and the law, or whatever other topic sparked her intellectual curiosity and commanded the

<sup>1</sup>"Industrial Relations Research in Canada," in Peter B. Doeringer, ed., *Industrial Relations in International Perspective* (London 1981), 22-75.

<sup>2</sup>J. Finkelman and S. Goldenberg, *Collective Bargaining in the Public Service: The Federal Experience in Canada* Volumes 1 and 2 (Montréal 1983).

attention of public policy. Given that this award is made by CIRA, it should also be noted that Shirley was both the secretary-treasurer of CIRA in 1972-73 and its president in 1973-1974. To complete the picture, it is also important to mention her premature withdrawal from academic scholarship to be with her daughter Ann all through her tragic illness as well as helping with Ann's young children, and then to care for her beloved husband Carl, who was so seriously incapacitated in the last few years of his life.

What I have tried to highlight here is a different kind of career marked by the movement between wonderful scholarship and a commitment, as a woman, to caring. These were dual priorities where the second most often took precedence over the first, which makes her outstanding achievements as an industrial relations scholar all the more remarkable. For selfish reasons related to the development of our own field of study, as industrial relations analysts, scholars, and practitioners, we are no doubt entitled to regret that Shirley Goldenberg did not spend even more time in the so-called active labour force. We would be wrong not to draw another important lesson from her experience. Indeed, we should all celebrate the fact that she demonstrated for us all — men and women alike — the possibility of remarkable public achievement in a quite different blend between home and work than we normally anticipate. Indeed, her many achievements — public and private — suggest that such a blend is possible for us all.

Messieurs et mesdames, il me fait grand plaisir, au nom de l'Association canadienne des relations industrielles, de présenter ce prix Gérard Dion à la première femme des relations industrielles dans les universités canadiennes — madame la professeure Shirley Goldenberg.

It is with great pleasure that the Canadian Industrial Relations Association presents this Gérard Dion Award to Canada's first woman of academic industrial relations — Professor Shirley Goldenberg.

## Pierre Elliot Trudeau, 1919-2000: The Death of Canadian Liberalism

Alicia Barsallo

I HAD YET to live a year in Canada when, working as a secretary for the Habitat Conference in Vancouver in the mid-1970s, I saw a slim, elegant figure come up a flight of stairs to shake the hand of every worker on the floor. It was Pierre Elliott Trudeau — the prime minister of Canada. He took my hand and simultaneously did what almost seemed to be a slight bow. His gesture made me smile, but at the same time impressed me and left me wondering why I, a leftist, would find the greeting of a definitely pro-capitalist prime minister refreshing and welcome. I would find the answer later. It had been my first lesson in Canadian liberalism.

Trudeau's greeting was a token gesture to be sure, but it carried with it an element of true feeling. One could describe Trudeau's interactive style as a small part of a liberal project to dress capitalism with shades of egalitarianism — the liberal atonement for considering economic equality an impossibility. One could also describe it as part of a project to rule not just by fear or the force of power, but by exacting conviction. Trudeau, the liberal, could be ruthless (The War Measures Act/Wage Controls), but he seemed truly worried about the legitimacy of Liberal governments in the long run. He seemed to work hard trying to link capitalism with broadly upheld values. His confidence that he could philosophically defend his position in a public debate could be respected, in that he did not have to rely on a plethora of mainstream media misinformation. Though enclosed in a capitalist framework, he seemed to search not for the next narrow profitable move, but for a philosophy — a subtlety missed now in the age of crass politics.

Amidst the emergence of the new capitalism which all over the world ushers into power absurdly short-sighted profit agendas, Trudeau, the classical liberal of days gone by, leaves as a symbol of days we might have thought of as imperfect but which we could long for now. Trudeau's passion for the Charter shines brightly now that our society descends to depths unknown and new political elites unapologetically equate "quicker" with "better" and "lie" with "truth"; now that "equality under the law" sounds subversive; and now that there is little possibility of a fair, public, and logical debate. That Trudeau is a figure of gigantic proportions in the Canadian scene is indisputable, but his figure is endearing to us more than anything else because of the bleakness of our current political landscape. The making of a giant requires the existence of dwarves (not that I have anything against cute little elves), and we have got plenty of them now, in politics and in the media — masterful in the creation of phobias, prejudices, and artificial crises; artful in minimizing the

tragedy of others; manipulators of information ... without a saving grace, without a human side to hang on to, ... no decent challenge for those of us who fought Trudeau from the left.

Now, after more than a quarter of a century in Canada, I do mourn the death of Pierre Elliot Trudeau and wonder if at the same time I am mourning the death of Canadian liberalism.

## Labour on Line

STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS will be pleased to know that the comprehensive bibliography of labour and working-class history that routinely appears in this journal is now on line at <[www.mun.ca/library/colldev/labour](http://www.mun.ca/library/colldev/labour)>. Created by social sciences librarian Michael Lonardo at Memorial University of Newfoundland, the on-line version of this indispensable resource includes a sophisticated search engine and will be updated regularly.

As part of its ongoing efforts to reach out to young workers, the United Food and Commercial Workers has recently released a CD containing two hip-hop versions of traditional labour standards "What Side Are You On?" and "Solidarity Forever." To order your free copy of this disk or to listen to these "rump-shaking tunes" in MP3 format, visit the union's web site at <[www.ufcw.ca](http://www.ufcw.ca)>.

Interested in rank-and-file activism in North America? Want to know more about union battles in Argentina? Keen on "putting the movement back in the labor movement"? If so, then bookmark <[www.labornotes.org](http://www.labornotes.org)>, the online edition of the Detroit-based *Labor Notes*. This well-designed web site features a "Labor Newswire" which posts labour-related stories from around the world (updated every fifteen minutes), portraits of notable rank-and-file "troublemakers," on-line material for activists and shop stewards, and links to other labour and left-wing resources.