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Aaron S. Lecklider, Love's Next Meeting: The Forgotten History of Homosexuality and the Left in American Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021)

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toute façon, toucher le réel. Il n'empêche que l'ancrage dans le *hic et nunc* des journaux condamne à une vue partielle.

Au cours de la lecture, on perd aussi, parfois, le fil qui relie tous les événements. L'avant-propos et l'introduction apparaissent quelque peu précipités, comme si on avait plaqué sur l'ensemble les différentes acceptions du concept de dépossession, « importé » des ouvrages précédents d'Olivier Ducharme. Même dans le film de Groulx, certains commentaires lus par le réalisateur et le défunt politologue Jean-Marc Piotte permettent de rapiécer les bouts de film. La récurrence d'images filmées dans un zoo fait le même travail qui permet aux spectateurs et spectatrices de faire pour eux-mêmes les rapprochements. On aurait souhaité que l'auteur prenne le temps de mieux borner son parcours, çà et là.

Aussi, à braquer la lumière sur une seule année, en s'attachant à l'écume des jours dont rendent compte les journaux, il n'y a pas qu'un problème de perspective : il y a aussi un danger de fétichisation. En conclusion de son ouvrage, Olivier Ducharme écrit : « S'il faut tirer des leçons des critiques du système de l'époque, c'est qu'au contraire du mouvement socialiste d'il y a cinquante ans, la lutte actuelle anticapitaliste doit, en tout premier lieu, s'attaquer au mode de protection de l'économie capitaliste. C'est à l'industrialisation et à la croissance exponentielle qu'il faut s'attaquer. Aujourd'hui, l'anticapitalisme ne doit pas d'abord de fonder sur le monde syndical et ouvrier, mais bien davantage sur la lutte environnementale. Or cette lutte prend racine en partie en 1972. » Ce passage donne l'impression que le ratage et la solution future se trouvent au même endroit, au même moment. Que l'objectif de l'anticapitalisme se trouve déjà là où l'écrivain a précisément cherché. On veut bien parler d'ancrages pour les combats d'aujourd'hui, mais peut-être y a-t-il un danger à tout concentrer sur une même année.

Cela dit, l'exercice d'Olivier Ducharme, qui réclame son caractère essayistique, est tout à fait méritoire. Il se dégage de l'ensemble une réelle énergie narrative. Il y a même quelque chose là du chapitre d'une histoire dont on se prend à rêver, pour le Québec. Une histoire engagée et, surtout, capable de fournir son propre « roman national », bien différent de celui que plusieurs, plus près de la droite que la gauche, ont établi et continuent d'établir. Ce que Fernand Dumont écrivait, en 1958, est encore et toujours valable : « Il faut qu'on nous donne une autre histoire qui ne nous apprenne pas seulement que nos pères ont été vaincus en 1760 et n'ont plus fait ensuite que défendre leur langue ; une histoire qui nous les montre réclamant les libertés politiques en 1775 et 1837 ; une histoire qui ne masque plus la naissance du prolétariat à la fin du XIX^e^ siècle par un chapitre sur les écoles séparées. » De cette histoire, Olivier Ducharme vient d'écrire le chapitre consacré à l'année 1972.

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Aaron S. Lecklider, *Love's Next Meeting: The Forgotten History of Homosexuality and the Left in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021)

A peculiar dualism afflicts the history of sexuality and communism. While anti-communist propaganda has long associated leftists with sexual perversity, internal critiques fault the left for its sexual puritanism and outright hostility to same-sex sexuality in particular. Aaron S. Lecklider seeks to correct the latter misapprehension in *Love's Next Meeting*, his cultural history of homosexuality,

and the American left from the 1920s through the 1950s. The book takes the shape of a declension narrative. *Love's Next Meeting* starts with the promise that queer leftists, especially gay men, saw in communism and ends with the double excision of homosexuals from radical organizing and radicalism from homosexual organizing, under the pressures of McCarthyism. This two-pronged repudiation explains how the left acquired its reputation for being "homophobic, misogynist, and boring." (159)

It was not always thus. In the beginning, Lecklider argues, "a confluence of queer-left passion" (17) inspired many young idealists. He points for example to two pairs of lovers, John Malcolm Brinnin and Kimon Friar, and Grace Hutchins and Anna Rochester, who each combined their love for each other with a passion for radicalism. Discussions of same-sex sexuality could also be found taking place in leftist free-speech venues like the Dill Pickle Club and the Seven Arts Club. Borrowing from Kevin Mumford, Lecklider describes these sites as "political and erotic interzones that blurred the boundaries of deviant politics." (22) Not only did political and sexual dissidence overlap, some in the vanguard politicized sex as a strategy for "disrupting the status quo." (45) A radical print culture emerged to express such ideas.

Lecklider is less concerned with naming names or counting gay men and women in the movement than he is with analyzing the artistic productions produced by that vanguard. *Love's Next Meeting* analyzes dozens of novels, short stories, poems, and journal articles. Lecklider is especially attentive to the intersection of anti-racist, queer, and leftist politics in the works of writers like Willard Motley and H. T. Tsiang. His account of the "proletarian burlesque" in Tsiang's wonderfully weird, self-published novel *The Hanging on Union Square* (1935) is eye-opening. The book includes scenes that are "so shocking, so mind-bendingly filthy, it is difficult to even decipher what is going on," (221) all in the service of inciting readers to revolution. Other forgotten texts, like Harry Hay's unpublished 1938 short story "Little Jew-Boy," are probably best left forgotten.

Lecklider also analyzes the graphic productions of the queer left. The book makes great use of illustrations from journals like *New Masses*, *The Liberator*, and *The Working Woman*. Lecklider notes how artists' depictions of proletarian bodies at work opened opportunities for "a wide range of erotic sexual depictions." (118) The homoerotics of poster art celebrating manly workers may be familiar, but Paul Cadmus's painting *Herrin Massacre* (1940) presents a more surprising visual expression of queer-left aesthetics. The painting memorializes the 1922 mass murder of strikebreakers by union members outside Herrin, Illinois. In Cadmus's painting, the slaughtered strikebreakers are laid out in a line. Several are shirtless. One, still alive, has his pants unbuttoned. Another has been stripped of his pants entirely. All the strikebreakers are, in Lecklider's words, "depicted as highly idealized specimens of the male form." (135) In fact, he suggests, the painting "might be read as a depiction of sexual terror." (135) Does Cadmus use the visual idiom of social realism to raise concerns about the violence directed against gay men from within the left?

While seeking to correct narratives of the left's "unrelenting antipathy to homosexuality," (77) Lecklider does not deny that the Communist Party was hostile to gay men (if somewhat less so to lesbians). But he points out that homophobia was so widespread that the Party's hostility did not stand out as exceptional

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or even noteworthy. Gay men and lesbians who were drawn to the left ignored Party dictates. The "antigay policies of the Communist Party had little impact on the actual beliefs and practices of members." (124) Sexual dissidents drawn to radicalism overlooked official policies and organizational hostility and persisted in bringing homosexuality and radicalism into the conversation.

Much of *Love's Next Meeting* is devoted to analyses of specific texts, but Lecklider does bring in great examples of social history from the sources as well. I particularly loved a passage from a young lesbian's diary describing her visit to a gay club in 1934, where she witnessed a floor show featuring Adolph Hitler and his stormtroopers capturing a handsome spy. This campy burlesque, which predated Mel Brooks's *The Producers* by thirty-three years, illuminates the wondrous creativity of the queer left in the 1930s. Lecklider's discussion of same-sex romances among volunteers in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade is similarly enthralling. I would have enjoyed a whole chapter on the topic.

If the queer-left passions that inspired love between comrades in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade represent the high point of Lecklider's narrative, the low point came a little more than a decade later, ushered in by postwar anti-Communism. When McCarthyites attacked the American left as a secret homosexual cabal, both sides of that equation sought to disentangle themselves from the tarring influence of the other. The Communist Party became more assertively anti-homosexual, and the emerging gay rights movement became more assertively anti-communist. Individuals purged their personal archives, burning letters and cutting up diaries, creating the silences that would later drive historians like Lecklider to turn to published texts to tell the history of these forgotten connections.

In his final tragic chapter, Lecklider tells the story of how the communist founders of the Mattachine Society, the first sustained gay rights organization in the United States, were thrown out of the organization by liberals who wanted to make the organization more palatable to the anti-radical mainstream. Along with its communist founders came Mattachine's radical anti-capitalist and anti-racist principles. The homophile organization instead focused on "foregrounding homosexuality as an identity category that deserved to be woven into the American cultural fabric." (267) Class solidarity gave way to identity politics, at least until the late 1960s, when a new radical gay rights movement would arise.

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Hacène Belmessous, *Petite histoire politique des banlieues populaires* (Paris : les Éditions Syllepse, 2022)

Avec *Petite histoire politique des banlieues populaires*, Hacène Belmessous s'intéresse de nouveau à l'histoire politique du séparatisme socio-culturel qui gouverne l'espace public et l'impact des pratiques politiques de relégation et d'enclavement urbain sur la vie sociale et l'existence quotidienne des habitants de plusieurs quartiers français. Prolongement de ses travaux sur les logiques ségrégatives de la République développés dans *Mixité sociale, une imposture : retour sur un mythe français* (2006), *Opération banlieues. Comment l'État prépare la guerre urbaine dans les cités françaises* (2010) et *Les laboratoires de la haine. Enquête sur la face cachée du frontisme municipal (*2019), H. Belmessous illustre comment la société