

## Book Notes / Références Bibliographiques

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# BOOKNOTES / RÉFÉRENCES BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

Kalli Beck, Chris Bowes, Gary Kinsmen, Mercedes Steedman, and Peter Suschnigg, eds., *Mine Mill Fights Back: Mine Mill/CAW Local 598 Strike 2000-2001* (Sudbury: Mine Mill n.d.)

THIS IS AN EFFORT to provide a readable history of a key strike with the strikers themselves and trade unionists more generally as the target audience. It's a coffee-table book and it may be uncharitable (or too obvious) to point out that it is predictable propaganda from the side of the good guys: this is a book about heroics. But you have the impression that if any of the strikers had any criticism of how the strike was conducted or its outcome that the authors would have expunged such criticism from their account. The academic essays provide a mix of the political and economic background to the strike, and strikers' recollections of their reasons for striking, their assessment of strike strategy, and their views on the outcome of the strike. Strikers' poems, cartoons, and photographs, along with reprinted newspaper articles, bring the book to life. Though the book attempts gently to put the strike in the context of the fight against neo-liberalism in Ontario, it is mainly a chronology of the events of a single strike, and a tribute to both the strikers and to other workers who demonstrated solidarity with Local 598.

Katie Pickles and Myra Ruthford, eds., *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 2005)

THIS IS A SET of readings that explores women's historical experiences under colonialism, both as colonized and colonizer. Several articles demonstrate the limitations and problems of self-identity that colonialism placed upon Aboriginal women such as E. Pauline Johnson, Bernice Loft, and Ethel Brant, who became Aboriginal celebrities in Canada. Other articles trace efforts to control Aboriginal marriage practices, sexuality, and women's labour. Yet another makes a link between beauty pageants and old-fashioned imperialism in inter-war Victoria. This is an excellent collection of well-written, provocative pieces by leading historians of women and Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Cheryl Krasnick Warsh and Veronica Strong-Boag, eds., *Children's Health Issues in Historical Perspective* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press 2005)

THIS IS AN ambitious collection of essays on the evolution of child public health programs in a variety of nations, from Canada to French-occupied Vietnam, New Zealand, and the United States. It examines the roles of race, ethnicity, class,

and gender in child-saving movements and the development of children's hospitals. Among essay topics are child sexual abuse, frontier health services for children, and children's health camps.

Michael D. Mehta, *Risky Business: Nuclear Power and Public Protest in Canada* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books 2005)

THE DURHAM Nuclear Awareness [DNA] was a grassroots movement that mobilized opposition to the relicensing of the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station in 1994 by the Atomic Energy Control Board [AECB]. This book focuses on its challenge to the AECB's approach to risk assessment, an approach that relied on a narrow band of scientific and "expert" testimony, and minimized concerns regarding nuclear power posed by community and environmental groups. While the DNA demystified the arguments made by the nuclear industry, it lacked the political muscle to convince the AECB to withhold the license from Pickering. The book also summarizes the successes and failures of the international anti-nuclear movement, and provides an update on the fate of nuclear power in Ontario since 1994.

John W. Warnock, *Saskatchewan: The Roots of Discontent and Protest* (Montreal: Black Rose Books 2004)

WARNOCK IS perhaps the most perceptive political economist of Saskatchewan, but some will find the focus of his latest book too narrowly environmentalist, with only slight attention given to the implications for labour of his various proposals. Warnock accuses the current NDP administration in Saskatchewan of locking the province into a strategy for resource development that follows the models set by big capital and transnational corporations and ignores the environment. Corporate-style farming, uranium mining,

coal-fired generation plants, and the oil industry are front and centre. Warnock, supporting the province's New Green Alliance, calls instead for biomass energy development, wind power, solar energy, and conservation. He notes that in the Blakeney years an NDP government took on the big potash companies but suggests that today's social democratic parties have made their peace with capital to too great an extent to develop alternative economic strategies for environmental reasons or to create greater democratic control over the economy.

Jonathan Cutler, *Labor's Time: Shorter Hours, the UAW, and the Struggle for American Unionism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 2004)

THIS BOOK focuses on Local 6000 of the UAW, a Ford local with 60,000 members of whom over a quarter were African American. It was a post-war battleground of Communist and anti-Communist forces. In their efforts to win over rank-and-file workers, both sides, at one time or another, embraced calls for a shorter work week without pay reductions (the "30-40 movement"). Eventually, according to Cutler, the Communists abandoned the rank-and-file for a power-sharing arrangement with Walter Reuther. Cutler's evidence that Communist unionists could be as opportunist as their opponents and as uncaring about rank-and-file interests makes the book worth a read, though some will not be convinced that Cutler's evidence is strong enough to justify his conclusion about Communist conservatism or its sources.

Jerome P. Bjelopara, *City of Clerks: Office and Sales Workers in Philadelphia, 1870-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2005)

THIS IS AN effort to investigate both employer strategies and worker choices that created the expanding occupations of clerks and salespeople. The book examines how clerical workers were educated to their jobs, how they entertained themselves after work, and the neighbourhoods and accommodations that they chose to live in within their limited financial means. Gender and race are part of the story, but seem under-played in this book. The issue of social class is even less satisfactorily handled. Limited unionism among these new white-collar workers deserves close exploration. But instead we get a naïveté about the social structures in which such workers operated, underlined by statements such as "The paltry amount of union activity among lower-level white-collar workers before 1920 suggests that the vast majority of office and sales employees identified with their employers. Clerks aligned themselves more clearly to management than did their white-collar counterparts." (122)

Zillah Eisenstein, *Against Empire: Feminisms, Racism and the West* (London: Zed Books 2004)

THIS IS AN effort by a leading US political philosopher to link both anti-imperialism and opposition to misogynistic regimes that the US claims to be combating. Eisenstein demonstrates the hypocrisy of US claims to be defending women's rights via their invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. She argues that women in Islamic countries, as elsewhere in the world, are struggling to create their own lives and not to be crushed by either fundamentalist patriarchs at home or capitalist crusaders from abroad. Western women have to demonstrate solidarity with Islamic

women but not impose their own view of feminism or give support to regimes that use women's rights as a pretext to impose control by transnational corporations. It is a book equally filled with anti-racist insights and undeveloped generalizations but with enough of the former to repay reading, particularly, for example, in conjunction with a book such as the Rutherford and Pickles collection mentioned above that deals more concretely with collisions of the perspectives of colonial and colonized women.

Alastair J. Ross, *United We Stand: A History of Britain's Trade Unions* (London: Penguin 2004)

THIS IS A comprehensive institutional history of trade unions in Britain from the period of medieval guilds, through informal unionism, and then the formation of lasting and sometimes quite bureaucratic unions of workers of various types. This text focuses on shop-floor bargaining and on labour's role in politics. There is little here about workers' lives but the text provides a good place to look for basic information about the formation of various unions, key strikes, and key labour legislation.

Marc Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor: The East End of London, 1885-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004)

BRODIE ENTERS the long-running debate about Tory workers, that is working-class people who preferred to vote Conservative over Labour or the Liberals. Conservative victories before World War I in the east end of London suggested to many scholars that the very poor were either apathetic towards politics or won over by the Tories' jingoism. Brodie, by contrast, suggests that the franchise laws enfranchised only the most prosperous of east-end workers and that a variety of social, economic, and circumstantial factors

determined voting behaviour. Sometimes workers who qualified to vote were motivated less by partisan factors than by an assessment of the morals or religiosity of competing local candidates.

Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1856-1937* (Vancouver: UBC Press 2004)

REED ARGUES that traditional Chinese print culture and commerce played a role in the print industry's technological

choices but that the technologies chosen then dictated various decisions about how to organize the print industry. He studies the pre-Republic publishing houses and the contrary pulls of the imperial service ethic and Western notions of compensation for intellectual labour. The book then explores the transformation of intellectual labour in the period after the Republic was established in 1912 until the Japanese conquest of Shanghai in 1937.

A.F.