

Annual Meeting: Canadian Committee on Labour History Saskatoon, 29 May 2007

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MINUTES / PROCÈS-VERBAL

Annual Meeting Canadian Committee on Labour History Saskatoon, 29 May 2007

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12.15 p.m.

Present:

Joan Sangster
Carol Ferguson
Alvin Finkel
Bryan Palmer
Jeff Taylor
Dominique Clement
Jim Naylor
Michel Beaulieu
James Muir
Georgie Taylor
Ben Isitt
Veronica Strong-Boag
Gene Homel
Craig Heron
Greg Kealey
Janis Thiessen

OPENING

In the absence of the President and Vice-President, the meeting was called to order and chaired by Greg Kealey.

M/S (Bryan Palmer, Jim Naylor):

That the CCLH extend condolences to David Frank, CCLH president, on the passing of his father. Carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

M/S (Alvin Finkel, Jeff Taylor):

That the agenda be approved. Carried.

MINUTES OF 2006 MEETING

M/S (Bryan Palmer, James Muir):

That the minutes of the 2006 Annual Meeting, as published in *Labour/Le Travail*, 58 (Fall/automne 2006), 303-7, be approved. Carried.

EDITOR'S REPORT

Bryan Palmer reported that *Labour/Le Travail* will be moving to Athabasca University. The reasons for leaving Memorial University have been discussed at the last two or three CCLH meetings. The Director of the Faculty of Arts publication unit at MUN resigned May 1. The journal has been paying a fee for service recently. In October, that fee was increased to \$45 000 effective 1 April 2007. Bryan Palmer had last year's fee for service reduced by \$5 000 to \$20 000 and began looking for a new location for the journal. The impact on staff at MUN was a consideration: Irene and Josephine have seniority and will not be affected by the departure of *Labour/Le Travail*. Had the journal stayed at MUN, CCLH would have been paying \$70,000 to \$80 000 per year. Given our finances (which, compared to similar journals, are in very good shape), CCLH would be bankrupt in 3 to 5 years, particularly given the decline in SSHRC grants due to the emergence of online journals. Athabasca University is positive and enthusiastic. They have made a concession to L/LT in that their policy with respect to journals is that they be strictly online and open access. Expenses at Athabasca are estimated at \$40 000 per year. Royalties, copyright, SSHRC grants, and subscriptions will sustain this expense. The editor has signed a two year agreement (the basis of which will extend beyond two years, though the details may change): Athabasca will provide (unionized) printing and copyediting. There will be a new process for submissions, reviews, and editing, all of which will be done online. There will be a six month transition as work is moved from MUN to AU. It is unclear what the fee for service at MUN will be until the departure for AU in October – at worst, the \$45 000/year will be pro-rated. *Labour/Le Travail* flyers prepared by Athabasca University Press were distributed at the meeting.

The spring 2007 issue of *Labour/Le Travail* is completed and at the printer, somewhat later than usual due to the circumstances outlined above. The next issue will be produced at Athabasca. Jeff Taylor and Alvin Finkel will provide assistance at Athabasca. If any contributors have difficulties regarding the

new process, they should contact the editor, Bryan Palmer, at bpalmer@trentu.ca.

CCLH book publications will be stocked, orders processed, and assistance with SSHRC applications will be provided by Athabasca. Fee for this service will be assessed on an ad hoc basis. This situation should not be problematic, as CCLH publications usually pay for themselves.

The decision to move to Athabasca was made with the advice and input of CCLH executive and the *Labour/Le Travail* editorial board. There is some sadness in leaving MUN, in light of a 26 year relationship that often has been good and productive.

A recent workshop of editors of international labour journals revealed that *Labour/Le Travail* has a good profile internationally.

Question: Will there be open access to *Labour/Le Travail*?

Answer: *Labour/Le Travail* wanted a two-year firewall. Athabasca agreed to make an exception to their policy, and granted a one-year firewall. All back issues will be online and searchable.

Question: Will the current issue be available online to subscribers?

Answer: Past issues since the 1990s are available for free online on History Coop. Bryan will discuss with Athabasca the possibility of password-protected access to the current issue for journal subscribers.

M/S (Bryan Palmer, Veronica Strong-Boag):

That the CCLH president write a letter of thanks to the Dean at MUN for a productive relationship that has lasted more than a quarter century. Carried.

SSHRC CLUSTER

Joan Sangster reported that the SSHRC labour history cluster's goals of popularization, internationalization, and the creation of a better international network are being achieved. A workshop was held with the editors of eight labour history journals in an effort to create a greater network of editors. Simon Fraser University's Mark Leier, with the assistance of graduate students, is producing a graphic novel on the history of May Day in Canada. The graphic novel is scheduled to be released next year, and copies will be given to the Canadian Labour Congress and others. The Labor and Working Class History Association is hosting next year's meeting of their organization in Vancouver in cooperation with the Pacific-North West Labour History Association. Their meeting is scheduled for 6-8 June 2008 (immediately after the Canadian Historical Association) at Simon Fraser University.

Jeff Taylor reported that he is developing a website (www.workinghistories.ca) which will provide labour history links and information. He would appreciate material be sent to him at jefft@athabascau.ca. The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union has sent much valuable material for this website.

Carol Ferguson reported that the New Brunswick Labour History Project (website at www.lhtnb.ca) is in the second year of its five year mandate. The project is provincial and bilingual. Ninety-two interviews with labour leaders have been completed, most have already been transcribed, and they will be deposited in archives. The New Brunswick Federation of Labour delivered much of their historical record to the archives, including many annual proceedings. The CCLH book by George Vair, *The Struggle Against Wage Controls: The Saint John Story, 1975-1976* has been published, and there are articles on New Brunswick labour history in upcoming issues of *Acadiensis*. Four M.A. and one Ph.D. fellowships have been provided, and students have been employed to research, interview and transcribe.

Question: Can information regarding future CCLH workshops at Congress be posted on the working histories website?

Answer: Issue will be maintenance (no funding for that). The CCLH website will have to leave MUN and it is unclear what will happen next.

M/S (Bryan Palmer, Alvin Finkel):

That a committee (composed of Greg Kealey, Jeff Taylor, and Jim Naylor) decide where and how to establish a new CCLH website. Carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Greg Kealey reported a healthy financial state, but warned of the need to be prudent with respect to spending in light of our move to Athabasca and possible unanticipated costs to the journal and the CCLH in the immediate future.

CCLH will produce one book this year, a history of the St. Catharines Trades and Labour Council. Half of the back issues of *Labour/Le Travail* have been digitized by the Electronic Text Centre at UNB; the rest will be done by fall, and will be searchable. Together with Marcel van der Linden, Greg has established the International Social History Association, which will sponsor sessions at upcoming conferences of the European Social Sciences Association.

Question: What will happen with CCLH archival deposits?

Answer: When the CCLH deposits at Dalhousie were forwarded to MUN, MUN paid the costs on the condition that the collection stay at MUN. The collection is probably too vast to contemplate moving it again, but we must decide what

to do with future deposits. Bryan Palmer will discuss the issue with MUN.

Question: The Historic Sites and Monuments Board has received no input from labour unions or academics. Could the CCLH write a letter asking the Historic Sites and Monuments Board to take greater notice of labour history?

M/S (Joan Sangster, Alvin Finkel):

That the CCLH president write a letter to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board decrying the lack of representation of labour history and requesting that it be addressed. Carried.

CCLH WORKSHOP 2007 AND 2008

The attendance at this year's CCLH workshop was approximately 50. Thank you to the organizers, Lorne Brown and Don Kossick, for arranging a great event. Next year there will be no CCLH workshop due to the Pacific Northwest-LAWCHA event.

FORSEY PRIZES

The Forsey Prizes are announced in the Spring 2007 issue of *Labour/Le Travail* and are also being announced by the Canadian Historical Association.

ELECTIONS

M/S (Kate McPherson, James Muir):

That we acclaim the current executive and, in the event that David Frank does not wish to continue as President, that we nominate Alvin Finkel as President. Carried.

Following the meeting and reference to the 2006 minutes, it was clarified that the President's term continues to the Annual Meeting in 2008 and that he is prepared to complete his term.

OTHER DISCUSSION

Craig Heron, as the new CHA president, would like CHA committees to be more active. The CCLH should sponsor at least one panel at next year's CHA Meetings, preferably on transnational themes.

Michel Beaulieu noted that Thunder Bay's Finnish Labour Temple, built in 1909, is undergoing restoration. A committee is attempting to get provincial and national heritage designations for the building. Details are available at www.hoito.ca.

ADJOURNMENT

Members present adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR 2008

(David Frank, Alvin Finkel):

To amend the CCLH Constitution, Article VI, b.

Current reading: “Vice-President: The Vice-President assists the President in her/his duties and substitutes for the President if she/he is unable to perform the duties of the presidency”, to read:

Proposed amendment: “Vice-Presidents: Two Vice-Presidents shall assist the President in her/his duties and substitute for the President if she/he is unable to perform the duties of the presidency”.

The rationale for this amendment is to provide further back-up at the time of annual meetings and, especially, to enlarge the executive to better allow for linguistic and regional representation.

ADDENDUM

Pursuant to the instructions of the meeting, the following letter was sent on 1 July 2007:

1 July 2007

Dr. Richard Alway
Chair, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada
Room 62, 5th Floor, 25 Eddy Street
Gatineau, Québec
K1A 0M5

Dear Dr. Alway,

I am writing in my capacity as President of Canadian Committee on Labour History, a body of educators and researchers who work within the Canadian Historical Association and other professional organizations to promote an understanding of the history of Canadian workers. We publish a bilingual academic journal, *Labour/Le Travail*, and we hold regular workshops in connection with the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities.

At our recent annual meeting in Saskatoon, members expressed concern about the limited recognition of labour unions and workers in general by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. I was instructed to write to

you on behalf of the Committee to express this concern and to inquire what the Board is prepared to do to address this shortcoming in Canada's official programme of public commemoration.

Our members applaud the Board's recent efforts to recognize the historical contributions of Aboriginal peoples, women and ethno-cultural communities. We believe that the contributions of working women and men to the development of Canadian society also require increased attention. There is a significant body of research documenting the role of working people in the Canadian success story. Their role in economic development has been accompanied by efforts to build organizations and support reforms that recognize and protect the rights of working people within Canadian society. Our observation is that this history has received little sustained attention from the Board and that only a few sites acknowledge the role of individuals and events within this part of our heritage.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding the Board's strategy in this area. Of course, we would be pleased to assist in all appropriate ways to ensure that the Board's efforts address this important theme in the development of the Canadian identity.

Sincerely,

David Frank

President
Canadian Committee on Labour History

Professor of History
University of New Brunswick



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