

## Reviews / Comptes Rendus

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## REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

**Graphic History Collective, ed.,  
*Drawn to Change: Graphic Histories of  
Working-Class Struggle* (Toronto:  
Between the Lines 2016)**

COMICS AND THE LABOUR movement have a long and entwined history that could begin with 18th-century satiric and editorial cartoons. Even if we take the definition of comics to be multi-panel sequences rather than single panel images, there is still a century of material for contemporary cartoonists to cite. One branch of this tradition is strip cartoons that poke fun at those who have not yet come to class consciousness, such as the 1910s Industrial Workers of the World *Mr. Block* series by Ernest Riebe in *The Industrial Worker*. Another branch is orientation comics produced to teach new workers about their unions and workplace issues. A third important type of labour comic is devoted to commemorating important moments in labour history. No less educational than satiric or orientation comics, contemporary labour history comics tend to also have close aesthetic ties to the radical traditions in alternative, underground, and indie comics pioneered by Art Spiegelman and Robert Crumb in the 1960s. They often eschew the regular panel grids and realistic styles of mainstream comics for more fluid, disruptive layouts and expressionistic caricatures that echo the woodcut tradition of early-20th century proletarian art, pamphlets, and posters.

This is the context for the nine short Canadian labour history comics collected

in the Graphic History Collective's (GHC) anthology, *Drawn to Change: Graphic Histories of Working-Class Struggle*. As the editorial collective explain in the Introduction, in the early 2000s the GHC received Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada funding to create accessible materials to raise awareness of Canadian working-class history. The first collaborative work they published was *May Day: A Graphic History of Protest* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2012). Following its success, the GHC solicited proposals from new cartoonists for short comics for website and potentially print publication. To their credit, the GHC applied for all available funding to provide the artists with at least an honorarium, and there was clearly an effort to include female cartoonists in a field traditionally dominated by men. Guided by Paul Buhle's and Howard Zinn's commitments to popular history as a politically transformative tool, the GHC seeks to reclaim comics as a working-class art form that can inspire hope. The final product is this volume of Canadian labour history comics that tell inspiring, although not always politically successful, stories of 20th-century working-class organizing that includes Indigenous, feminist, and immigrant worker struggles.

Brief introductions by labour historians and organizers precede each of the comics, and Acknowledgements and Notes appear at the end of each chapter to cite sources and suggest further reading. Members of the GHC contributed to the writing of many of the chapters.

Various combinations of Sean Carleton, Julia Smith, and Robin Folvik co-wrote five of the nine comics, two are illustrated and written by a single artist, and two are based on the words of historical figures themselves. There is quite a lot of variation between these black-and-white comics. The first chapter, "Dreaming of What Might Be: The Knights of Labor in Canada, 1880–1900," uses Sam Bradd's sketchy cartooning style and plenty of typed text by Carleton, Smith, and Folvik to tell this story of a movement that, while flawed, is still inspiring. The same team collaborated on Chapter 6, "Madeleine Parent: A Life of Struggle and Solidarity." This comic reveals how Parent's lifelong commitment to labour and feminist issues charted some of the most important struggles of the 20th century.

One of the most visually interesting and lesser known stories appears in Chapter 2, "Working on the Water, Fighting for the Land: Indigenous Labour on Burrard Inlet." Illustrator Tania Willard (Secwapemc Nation) and co-writers Folvik and Carleton focus on the 1910s and 1920s struggles of Squamish longshoremen and the organization of Indigenous workers on Vancouver's waterfront, ending with today's fight by the Coast Salish to protect the land and sea. This sequence is less text-heavy and the arresting large-scale images, reminiscent of 1930s proletarian linocuts, challenge colonial portraits of Indigenous peoples in settler colonial painting and photography.

David Lester is the artist and writer of chapter three, "The Battle of Ballantyne Pier," a first person narrative about his grandfather's involvement in this 1935 strike by Vancouver longshoremen often overshadowed by that year's On-to-Ottawa Trek. Lester employs similar techniques to those in his graphic novel, *The Listener* (Winnipeg: ARP, 2011), alternating between pen, acrylic, and

watercolours to create evocative, expressionistic scenes interspersed with self-portraits as he recounts the story. The complex visuals and personal connection to the events make this one of the most affecting comics in the volume; others, while equally historically important, over-rely on narration to produce the feeling of reading an illustrated textbook rather than getting inside the events themselves. The one shortcoming of Lester's comic, which it shares with at least four others, is the use of typed text rather than hand lettering. This is another way some of the chapters seem overly academic and visibly anxious about allowing only the visuals to carry the story.

A good example of how hand lettering is a powerful expressive tool is illustrator Kara Sievewright's sequence based on the words of Bill Williamson, "Hobo, Wobbly, Communist, On-to-Ottawa Trekker, Spanish Civil War Veteran, Photographer." This is a fascinating life narrative conveyed in a variety of experiments with page layouts that has a suspenseful, cinematic feel. Equally bold in visual style is Nicole Marie Burton's "Coal Mountain: The 1935 Corbin Miner's Strike," which seeks a personal angle on the collective struggle by inventing a young female narrator, "Gracie." Ron Verzuh's introduction explains she is based in part on recollections of Grace Roe, a former Corbin resident. Burton's detailed illustrative style captures the setting exquisitely, and she plays with various angles of framing to bring us in close to the angry faces of strikers and pull us out for a bird's eye view of police violence.

The final three chapters jump ahead to more recent decades. Chapter 7, "An 'Entirely Different' Kind of Labour Union: The Service, Office, and Retail Workers' Union of Canada" highlights a new kind of organizing when, as Joan Sangster observes in her introduction, "socialism,

feminism, and democracy figured prominently.” (145) Co-written by Smith, Folvik, and Carleton and illustrated by Ethan Heitner, this comic has a playful visual style that echoes 1970s comics and social justice posters. Although it disbanded in 1986, SORWAC’s gains in higher wages and improved working conditions for white-collar women is only one of its achievements. The comic concludes that its alternative approach to unionization and especially its grassroots, democratic structure is a lasting legacy. David Camfield introduces Chapter 9, “The Days of Action: The Character of Class Struggle in 1990s Ontario” by noting the irony that recent struggles are often less familiar than older moments in working-class history. Illustrated by Orion Keresztesi and written by Doug Nesbitt and Carleton, this comic depicts the anti-Tory protests in Ontario between 1995 and 1998 as a form of mass direct action and fight for social justice that is “also a sobering story of working class defeat which contains important lessons for radical organizing today.” (164) Keresztesi illustrates this story of popular protest and union divisions in an appropriately kinetic and unruly style that belongs to the tradition of counter-cultural zines and comics. It ends on a hopeful note that workers must learn from past mistakes and “organize radical solutions from the bottom up.” (173) The title of the final chapter, “Kwentong Bayan,” translates literally to “community stories” and focuses on Filipina live-in caregivers in Toronto from 1971 to the present. Credited to a collective of Filipina Canadian artists, including Althea Balmes and Jo SiMalaya Alcampo, this is a fitting conclusion to a highly collaborative volume, as the comic not only emerges from community voices but depicts solidarity amongst Filipina and Jamaican domestic workers.

Worth noting is the volume’s high quality production in a large format on

thick glossy paper. This gives the visuals room to breathe and lends the collection a physical weight more common to art books than textbooks, suggesting that it belongs on the coffee table as much as on the bookshelf. Although no volume such as this could achieve full geographic coverage, it is a bit disappointing that the stories are all based in Ontario (apart from Parent’s early activism in Québec) and British Columbia. There are many more labour history comics to be drawn about Prairie, Atlantic, and Northern Canadian struggles, while several of these short comics could easily be expanded into full-length narratives. The care and quality of this collection sets a high benchmark for future Canadian labour comics and shows how a popular art form can invigorate working-class history.

CANDIDA RIFKIND

University of Winnipeg

**Kurt Korneski, *Race, Nation, and Reform Ideology in Winnipeg, 1880s–1920s* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press 2015)**

THIS IS A REMARKABLE little book. Although coming in at just slightly over 200 pages – including endnotes – it manages to pack a brief and theoretically sophisticated précis of Canadian and Winnipeg history, four *de facto* biographies, and much new analysis of seemingly well-known subjects into a coherent and eminently readable whole.

Korneski’s analysis is rooted in a keen appreciation of the ideologies and discourses related not just to reform but to reform within the context of 19th-century British Imperialism and white settler colonialism/nationalism. What many readers may find most striking is this: the author brings together a seemingly unlikely quartet of “reformers” who were operating out at the edge of

the Imperial frontier – Winnipeg – from the 1880s until the 1920s. Indeed, at first glance, the *dramatis personae* do not seem to mesh. First there is the deeply religious social gospel minister and best-selling novelist Charles Gordon (aka Ralph Connor). Then comes the doyen of Winnipeg's Tory establishment, an Anglophile of note and eventual head of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, Minnie Campbell. She is followed by the hard-headed and influential Liberal (and sometimes Progressive) newspaper editor, internationalist and western Canadian nationalist, John Dafoe. Finally, readers encounter the writer/editor, social feminist, suffrage campaigner, and sometimes pacifist, Francis Marion Beynon. All, of course, are well-known characters who have drawn the attention of scholars before, but other than this similarity, they would seem to have little in common. Campbell and Beynon, for example, although linked by gender, are a study in contrasts – separated as they were by social status, age, beliefs regarding suffrage, politics, pacifism, and many other “hot button” issues of the day. Indeed, to some it would seem that the differences between the four are as great, or greater, than the similarities. But this is precisely why the author has chosen these four to be representative of major trends in a loosely defined reform movement – actually “reform impulse” would be more accurate – that was firmly situated in a “British world” and the even broader context of a globalized capitalist economy. As for his choice of Winnipeg, while eschewing any simple-minded western exceptionalism or frontierism, Korneski views the city as the “child of the kind of state-building program that underpinned British and Canadian policy for the first fifty years or so of Canada's history.” (4) This being the case, Winnipeg was the almost perfect

microcosm for studying the “successes, failures, and central tensions” (4) that were at the heart of the larger Canadian project.

At the outset Korneski makes it clear that whatever their other differences might be, “dispossession [of Indigenous peoples] was a central precondition enabling Gordon, Campbell, Dafoe, and Beynon to imagine the west as an empty space on which various frontier myths could be projected.” (2) This “emptiness” was the backdrop against which they viewed the inequity, exploitation, and privation that they saw developing in their adopted home (none were born in Winnipeg or the West) and which each sought to ameliorate in different ways.

After setting the stage with a chapter-length summary of Canadian and western Canadian/Winnipeg history – and its place in the 19th century British Empire – Korneski turns to an in-depth examination of his “reformers,” offering chapter length biographies – primarily intellectual biographies – of his representative reformers. The first of these, the chapter on Charles Gordon, is particularly fascinating. Here Korneski situates Gordon's reform impulses in a quest to create the perfect Christian society out on the margins of Empire. In his case the ideal society would mirror all of the strengths represented by Highland crofters – a group from which Gordon was not only descended, but had long idealized. Transplanted to the *tabula rasa* that was the West, this society could flourish without all of the hardship and decay that Gordon believed had set in at the Imperial centre. When he saw people acting in a degenerate fashion out along the frontier during his early days in the West, or beset by poverty and a wide variety of social ills in the rapidly developing sub-metropole of Winnipeg (and the larger West) Gordon could not bring himself to

believe that these were the natural and inevitable results of the liberal democratic and capitalist order of which western Canada was now so firmly a part. Rather, he reasoned that the fault must lie in the people who had come west – particularly those who were further down the (social) evolutionary scale, such as the Ukrainians and other eastern Europeans. Thus Gordon's understanding of the social problems confronting Winnipeg and the West became racialized – an analysis that will surprise no one who has read some of Gordon's most famous novels, especially *The Foreigner*. However, for all of the Social Darwinism that might have been implied by this, Gordon remained optimistic – at least until after World War I – that a new British nation could be constructed and perhaps even perfected out of the raw material at hand. The immigrants could be assimilated and the promise of the West realized. Of course this racialized view allowed Gordon to completely ignore the class aspects of the divisions that were emerging and erupting in Winnipeg during the first two decades of the new century – an interesting consideration for a man who would play such a large role in Winnipeg's "industrial relations" scene!

Each of the subsequent chapters has particular strengths of its own. Korneski is careful to illustrate how his various subjects shared certain presuppositions. For example, Gordon and Minnie Campbell clearly shared many ideas on the respective roles of men and women in what they saw as the "good" society, even as they were poles apart on the issue of class in general and Britain's class system in particular. In the same way, the author shows how Campbell, Gordon, and Dafoe all shared a belief in the absolute necessity (and possibility) of assimilating immigrants into a properly British/Canadian culture. For his part, Dafoe emerges

as a reformer who, like many Anglo-Americans of the Progressive era, came to believe in a greatly enhanced role for the state in dealing with society's problems. (Korneski's analysis of Dafoe will be of some interest to scholars who are concerned with the Winnipeg General Strike. Following Reinhold Kramer and Tom Mitchell's *When the State Trembled* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010], he rejects the old explanation of Dafoe's intense and hostile response to the strike – the so-called anti-alien "hysteria of the times" argument – and points out that Dafoe had always viewed British workmen who subscribed to socialist and anarchist views as alien and antithetical to Britishness and Canadianness. Thus his visceral response to the strike was not evidence of momentary anti-alien hysteria, it was simply the logical extension of some long and consistently held beliefs concerning the English and Scottish "extremists" who led the strike). Finally, there is the chapter on Francis Beynon, the one true outlier in this quartet of reformers. While there is no question that as a social feminist of the first order and a crucial figure in the Political Equality League and the successful fight for suffrage in Manitoba, she is worthy of study. Yet on another level she just doesn't quite fit the mould of the other three subjects. Much younger than them and far less inclined to utilize British models – preferring American ones – she also did not see the West as being empty in the same way as the other three had. But, having said that, the biography which Korneski has crafted is excellent – and challenges some conventional wisdoms about Beynon's pacifism, her relationship with George Chipman and a number of other matters.

All in all, this is a book that makes a contribution to several fields all at once. It fits well with a host of new works that

study settler colonialism, certainly fits well with many of the newer approaches to British Imperial history and is valuable addition to the historiography of both western Canada and Winnipeg. It is well worth the read.

JIM MOCHORUK

University of North Dakota

**Brock Millman, *Polarity, Patriotism, and Dissent in Great War Canada, 1914–1919* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2016)**

I CONFESS I FIND IT jarring, well into the 21st century, to see a historian remark, as Brock Millman does in the Preface to *Polarity, Patriotism, and Dissent in Great War Canada, 1914–1919*, that “historians go to theory when they do not have facts.” (xiii) Surely historians have caught up with other scholars in the humanities and social sciences who recognize that theory is a useful and arguably a necessary instrument for observing facts and for making sense of them, not an alternative to observing. I was under the impression that the theory wars were over and, while I wouldn’t have wanted to make a big thing about it, I assumed that those of us who advocated for following other disciplines (like literature) in taking rhetoric seriously and (like anthropology) problematizing our authority – even if we, like our erstwhile opponents, have mellowed somewhat with age and experience – had won. But perhaps not. Maybe the history wars were a war of attrition, and the victory, such as it was, was to simply hang on and keep doing our work as long and as well as we could.

That’s certainly the crux of Millman’s argument about the repression of dissent in Canada during World War I. As war of attrition, the war offered victory to the powers that held on the longest; key to holding on the longest was managing

dissent on the home front. Being in it to win it, therefore, meant using the power of the state to enforce compliance with the war agenda. In this, Millman stakes out territory somewhat less idealistic than most apologists for the wartime excesses of the state, who seek to contextualize egregious violations of human rights and democracy and thereby reduce them to nothing, or insist that the government’s conduct of war is not relevant to the war itself, which was heroic. Millman insists, refreshingly, that the boot heel of the Borden government wasn’t an unfortunate footnote to World War I; it was the war.

For Millman, in fact, this argument seems almost to go without saying; what he explicitly argues, in fact, is a step further: that the government had to act not because opposition to the war was a serious threat, but because reactionary forces outside the state were so extreme that their actions had to be pre-empted by more moderate state action. Everything Borden and his government did to limit the rights of those opposing the war, to impose military service on the recalcitrant, even to rig the franchise to ensure their re-election, Millman argues, was really the necessary minimum they had to do in order to prevent an explosion of nativist violence on a national scale. Winning the war meant preserving the state from the excesses of its supporters.

This is an interesting thesis, and Millman makes some smart moves along the way. The book is full of interesting observations neatly phrased, many of them counter-intuitive and exciting to contemplate. And the end of the book in particular, in the discussion of the Winnipeg General Strike, Millman’s argument that authorities believed that vigilantes would, in the absence of concerted repression by the government, act to suppress socialism among New Canadians in a violent way, is powerfully drawn and supported by



very strong direct evidence. This chapter alone makes an important contribution to the historiography of state repression, and is well worth the effort of getting a copy of the book and reading it.

Too often, though, Millman's original arguments are not supported by direct evidence, but are developed from inference; the evidence he does have – direct quotations from people at the time – is marshalled into line, but the line is from Millman's imagination, not the evidence. For example, the discussion of the establishment of the Union government, Millman cites numerous examples of people who supported conscription voicing their support of conscription, which is evidence that people supported conscription. He then cites numerous politicians, Liberal and Conservative, saying that that it was imperative that the government introduce conscription, and worrying about what would happen if Laurier won the election. For Millman, all of this is somehow evidence that the Borden government's actual motive for using the Wartime Elections Act and the Military Voters Act to engineer its almost certain re-election was to prevent reactionary violence at home. Whatever its merits, the argument seems too convenient, and perhaps too much the product of a worldview that sides with the powerful against the powerless too comfortably.

The most torturously thought-up section of the book undoubtedly, though, is the part where Millman asserts that class was not a factor in wartime tensions. It should be said by way of preface that it's not clear why it's necessary to make the argument. It doesn't seem to make or break his larger claims. In disproving the role of class, Millman makes a classic broken-tea-kettle series of arguments (in which, in returning a tea kettle broken, you claim that first that it's not broken, then that it was broken when it was borrowed, and finally that it had never been

borrowed): that people self-identified by ethnicity, not by type of work; that British Canadians and French Catholics were conservative and lived in communities that were dominated by very powerful conservative institutions (the Loyal Orange Order and the Catholic Church, respectively); that almost nobody belonged to unions, and those who did were British Canadian skilled workers and would have enlisted in the war; and that such strikes as did happen during the war were about low pay and union recognition, not about class *per se*. (Other issues besides class divided people, Millman says – one of which was income inequality, which was exacerbated during the war by inflation.)

These aren't arguments so much as they're claims – some of them convincing claims in their limited way, but emphatically not convincing as arguments against the existence of class tensions, of which there is ample evidence (besides the evidence Millman himself cites ostensibly against the existence of class). Marshalling tediously tangential facts and observations, Millman makes his claim gleefully while citing examples of people thinking in class terms without seeming to notice it. ("Conscription of wealth?" Hello?) A sloppier thinker than me might ask, "Who needs facts when you can theorize?" It seems Millman can invoke a fact-theory dichotomy but, having invoked it, can't seem to stick to one side of it.

Overall, while Millman has evidence for many of his claims, many are only convincing if you are unfamiliar with other competing claims that have been better supported with evidence by other historians. Many of these claims are, like his bizarre exegesis on class, extremely peripheral to his central point. For example, Millman writes that support for temperance was all but complete, less than a sentence after citing Stephen Leacock,



who was an outspoken opponent of temperance. Millman also makes a relentless case that Ontario was deeply Tory, but fails to account for Edmund Blake or Oliver Mowat, Liberals who were premiers before the war, or Newton Rowell, who makes a cameo here as an architect of the Union government, but who was also a Liberal who was almost premier during the war – and lost because he ran against booze. Granted, Millman is making vast claims about many aspects of Canadian history and culture throughout the book; many will be as wrong as they are right, and that's okay. It's a good story in places, even when it's not convincing. A little humility and perspective from the author would have been welcome, though, and would have made for a much better book.

DAVID TOUGH

Trent University

**Stefan Epp-Koop, *We're Going to Run This City: Winnipeg's Political Left after the General Strike* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press 2015)**

IT OFTEN SEEMS that Winnipeg history ended in 1919, the year of the general strike. The most commonly cited scholars of Winnipeg's political and social history focus on the period between the city's incorporation and the beginning of its irrevocable "decline" circa 1913, with the General Strike as a sort of terminal point to the story of the city's potential. Stefan Epp-Koop's study of left municipal politics in the 1920s and 1930s is a welcome move out of this curtailed periodization. As well, an analysis of Winnipeg electoral politics is a worthwhile defiance of recent historiographical trends, which are largely allergic to the subject. I teach history of Winnipeg. One of my students recently asked why had I not discussed one single Winnipeg mayor in class? It's

a fair point. Epp-Koop's work focuses on two labour mayoralties – S.J. Farmer and John Queen – and highlights the political strengths that enabled their victories (especially the ground gained through campaigns for better municipal services and labour rights); as well as the challenges posed by internal divisions on the political left and a united and effectively organized political opposition, backed by Winnipeg's business class.

Still, the ghost of the strike lingers. The book's introduction weaves a narrative that begins in 1919 and reaches its conclusion with the political left "running this city" in 1934–36, when it controlled the mayoralty and city council for a short but sweet two years. The argument that 1919 was a point of rupture in electoral politics has always seemed more romantic than real to me, though it is oft-repeated. Class polarization at city hall was nothing new in the post-1919 world, although admittedly the pro-business Citizens' Committee upped its game while it still felt threatened. The author claims that after the strike political parties on the left were "far more successful" (8) than previously, but readers should be reminded that the municipal elections of 1919, 1920, and 1921 were not a success for the left, which was busy fighting its internal battles for the time being and could not beat a well-organized opponent with greater resources. Provincially, in 1922 the Independent Labour Party (ILP) won only six of 55 seats in the Legislature; by 1936 (when the ILP and Co-operative Commonwealth Federation – the CCF – ran under a common banner) it had five. To consider these successful years for the left is perhaps generous.

The book is not exactly an overview of municipal politics in the 1920s and 1930s. It is more a study of the Independent Labour Party and the party that became its main rival in its north end base: the Communist Party of Canada (CPC), which

had significant success in Winnipeg's city council races beginning with the election of William Kolisnyk to council in 1926. The CPC produced some talented politicians, who put considerable effort into local issues that affected working people. Particularly during the Communist "Third Period," relations between the CPC and ILP appear to have been on occasion vicious; during the "Popular Front" era, relations eased. Epp-Koop plays up the drama of division and conflict to tell a story, but he makes the important point that personality (not just the Comintern) mattered at the local level.

Whatever their limits and depressing capacity for turf wars, both parties gave poor European immigrants a political voice in the city. The ethnic politics of north end Winnipeg were complex and strongly felt. Tensions within the Ukrainian immigrant community and between Ukrainian and Jewish immigrants were reflected in party loyalties and voting habits, while the British-Canadian leadership of the ILP apparently struggled to navigate the waters. Understanding how ethnic and community ties shaped electoral struggles is a valuable project, since so many on the left still seem to understand "ethnic politics" solely as distasteful communalism.

*We're Going to Run This City* does miss some opportunities. As the author argues, Left politicians played a key role in advocating for stronger health and social welfare programs and investment in municipal services. Winnipeg's first ILP major was Seymour James Farmer, a clerk who had emigrated from Wales in 1900. Farmer played a key role in both the ILP and later the Manitoba CCF. In the early 1970s, Ed Rea revealed that John Dafeo, editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, saw Farmer as a "dangerous man" (J.E. Rea, "The Politics of Conscience: Winnipeg after the Strike," *Historical Papers*, 1971: 284). Without a voting majority on

council, however, and with mayoral terms of a single year, Farmer's ability to affect change from 1922 to 1924 was quite limited. One thing Farmer did achieve was to get rid of the city's pauper burial ground. Epp-Koop could have said more about why this issue mattered to Farmer and to his working-class constituents. The right to burial with dignity and respectability was a fundamental issue for poor working families. Unions and mutual aid associations made burial a priority. The fate of the body united material and symbolic elements of social inequality.

Politics in Epp-Koop's study is gendered male. There is little evidence in the book of either party's attempts to reach female voters and activists. Yet, there is plenty of literature out there that challenges that perspective. Women mattered – as party organizers, fund raisers, and even on occasion as candidates. Winnipeg had female politicians on the left during this period. Epp-Koop does not discuss school board politics, which was a key political terrain for women candidates; his study might look different if he had. For example, in the 1919 municipal election, the north end elected Rose Alcin to school board. Alcin was a radical, a member of the anarchist Arbeiter Ring. But the ILP's John Queen endorsed her publicly.

Similar cooperation contributed to a political "bombshell" in 1934 the left's (slim) majority control of the mayoralty and city council. John Queen, former leader of the Winnipeg General Strike, would govern for two years. The economic depression meant high levels of social need, and shrinking city revenues. According to Epp-Koop's analysis, during Queen's mayoralty, the city increased its expenditures on "hospitals, social welfare, child welfare, street maintenance, libraries, and the civic pension fund" by 11 per cent while balancing the city's budget (aside from annual loans for

unemployment relief). It did so in part by increasing business taxes. The book's sixth chapter gives a balanced assessment of the good Queen was – and was not – able to do as mayor, with the support of CPC and ILP councilors. This was not revolution by parliamentary means. Gains were modest, but meaningful.

*We're Going to Run This City* is more a starting point than a definitive study, but there is value in raising interesting questions. For example, the book pays almost no attention to the emergence of the CCF in Winnipeg, even though the party was formed in 1932. Perhaps someone will feel inspired to write this scholarly history of the early CCF in Manitoba – a province in which the New Democratic Party would eventually become not a third or marginal party, but the electoral alternative to conservatism.

ESYLLT JONES

University of Manitoba

**James Naylor, *The Fate of Labour Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Dream of a Working-Class Future* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2016)**

THE “RECEIVED” VERSION of the history of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), James Naylor argues, presents a misleading account of the origins of the party, the character of its early socialism, and the efforts of its members to meet the challenges of Depression, war, and fascism. Based on a “simple binary of reform and revolution” (169) – and too often written by non-historians lacking “critical distance” (7) from their sources – its “progressivist narrative” (9) is rooted in Cold War preoccupations and essentially offers teleological justification for the party of social democratic reform the CCF became *after* 1945. Thus, it presents

a “benign” (71) picture of those CCF pioneers who can be credibly cast as “pre-scient advocates” (7) of the liberal welfare state. It canonizes the saintly James Shaver Woodsworth and the pragmatic proto-social democrats of the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR) as the CCF’s “brain trust.” And it presents a harshly skewed picture of those who refused to surrender their revolutionary vision of a Canada *transformed* by socialism. Rather, the received history of the CCF dismisses this latter group of socialist stalwarts (“labour socialists,” as Naylor calls them) as “quixotically marginal and historically doomed.” (141)

In re-telling the story of (certain aspects of) the CCF in the 1930s and early 1940s, Naylor’s passionately combative *The Fate of Labour Socialism* does not deny that by 1945 labour socialists were barely hanging on to their “dream of a working-class future,” but it shows them – and their “current of Labour Socialism” – more respect and restores their agency. Labour socialists, Naylor insists, not only formed the CCF’s “activist core,” (8) but were influential – even at times, hegemonic – organic intellectuals (in a fairly typical intervention, he admonishes one political scientist for suggesting that the LSR gave the Manitoba CCF “intellectual content and leadership,” a notion, he points out, that would have “appalled” (95) the working-class autodidacts of the Winnipeg Independent Labour Party). Though the bulk of his coverage focuses, understandably, on the provinces where labour socialists were most numerous and carried most weight (Ontario, BC, and Manitoba), he attempts throughout to present a geographically comprehensive portrait. The only region to suffer notable and possibly avoidable neglect is the Maritimes.

The book is organized chronologically (by and large). Chapter 1, “The Legacy of Labour Socialism,” runs from

the mid-1920s until the CCF's formation in 1932. It shows how "a current of self-identified working-class socialists who had determined to build specifically socialist organizations, independent of the organized trade unions and the Communists" (63) emerged and developed, and spurred on by the social problems and political possibilities thrown up by the Great Depression, began to seek national expression. Most were members of local or provincial Independent Labour Parties (ILP) or, in Alberta, sections of the Canadian Labour Party (CLP); some were "Marxists of the Third Way" (as described by Peter Campbell) or moving in that direction by turning their ILPs, in Ontario and BC, into explicitly socialist parties; a few, Trotskyist and Lovestoneite exiles from the Communist Party of Canada (CPC), still had a foot in Leninism. They were united less by doctrine than by an intense class identity, sometimes reinforced by Marx and Engels' conception of the proletariat as a "universal" class with the unique power to create a classless society and sometimes simply by fear and loathing of the middle class; by ethnic identity (almost all were British or of British descent and highly attuned to British Labour politics, though inspired more by the British ILP than the "irredeemably reformist" (301) Labour Party); and by deep commitments to working-class political independence and to "making socialists" through independent working-class education. Naylor emphasizes that in their hands this important practice, inherited from pre-1914 socialism, went "far beyond the rote study of texts from a narrowly Marxist tradition." (40) Naylor stresses that labour socialists, even the members of the Manitoba ILP who generally limited their practice to "unimaginative" (59) municipal socialism, considered themselves "revolutionaries" rather than "reformists." While they spent little time

debating how "revolution" – socialism – might be achieved, they generally looked down on, but did not categorically rule out, the Communists' insurrectionary mode. They were not especially dogmatic or sectarian. Naylor points out the paradox that the most explicitly socialist of the labour socialists tended to accept most readily the need for a multi-class party and were most confident of exerting their hegemony over it.

Chapter 2, "The Road to Regina," describes that very road, detailing the convergence of labour socialists' plans for a national labour party with the parallel plans of J.S. Woodsworth and the League for Social Reconstruction. The small working-class posse that managed to find the funds to attend the Regina Convention had some unhappy experiences, such as the rejection of a ban on CCF participation in bourgeois-led coalition governments, the refusal to strike out the sentence: "We do not believe in change through violence," and above all, arriving to find that the drafting of the Manifesto was a *fait accompli*, having been outsourced to the LSR, which believed, so Bill Moriarty bitterly complained, that "the untrained masses are incompetent to pass judgment on the complicated problems of capitalism." (104) Yet while some socialist workers left Regina muttering darkly of a "middle-class putsch," (86) most were happy to accept the Manifesto – and its fundamental pledge that the CCF was committed to the ultimate *eradication* of capitalism – as a reasonable basis for continued membership of the new party.

As Chapter 3, "Class War in the CCF," demonstrates, the rapid development of a specific mechanism for middle-class recruitment, the "CCF Clubs," forced all labour socialists to realize that a class battle had been joined. Naylor makes good use of Frank Underhill's recollections in depicting the "cultural chasm"

that divided labour socialists from the progressive intelligentsia. Underhill admits that he had no idea of the existence of the "little" labour and socialist groups he encountered on entering the CCF orbit; that he preferred to be addressed as "Mr. Underhill" or "Professor" rather than as "comrade," and that he always feared ("probably not inaccurately," Naylor interjects) that anyone thus addressing him was "preparing to stab [him] in the back." (141) He also concedes that he and his fellow intellectuals tended to think of *themselves* as a "universal" class, especially trained and best fitted to run society. Labour socialists complained of the arrogance, "superior attitude," (201) and sense of entitlement of these "petit-bourgeois interlopers" (307) who returned from Oxford (where some were seduced by the champagne socialism of Sir Stafford Cripps and the Socialist League), slipped smoothly into leadership positions, and administered top-down discipline for political misdemeanours they could barely comprehend to socialist veterans whose names they didn't know. J.S. Woodsworth was especially eager to recruit and promote middle-class members such as Liberal defector Elmore Philpott. Described by one labour socialist as Woodsworth's "pet boy," (125) Philpott was undoubtedly his amanuensis in a purge of the Ontario party in 1934, prompted by CCF solidarity with Woodsworth's erstwhile Social Gospel comrade A.E. Smith, now national secretary of the Communist-controlled Canadian Labour Defence League (CLDL) and on trial for sedition. Woodsworth encouraged him to "follow the tactics of the Communists and have a 'cleansing,' forcing out ... individuals and groups that will not prove amenable to discipline." (135) The Ontario Labour Conference, "a broad and diverse movement ... generally quite unenamoured with the Communist Party," (142) was duly dissolved. Shortly

afterwards Philpott returned to the Liberals' bosom. Woodsworth also advocated a "second radical amputation" (199) in 1936 (described in Chapter 4, "Challenges at Mid-Decade"), when the Toronto regional council was dissolved and several CCF Clubs, notably the large, proletarian East York Workers' Association, and many individual activists, some of them middle-class and not "even slightly pink in colour," (199) were expelled for ignoring a provincial council ban on joining Communists (and others) in a single, united front May Day march. On this occasion some of Woodsworth's closest supporters questioned his judgment.

Naylor fails to explain Woodsworth's "rabid" (244) anti-Communism, but his refreshingly heretical account of these events is preferable to the silences of, for example, Kenneth McNaught's *A Prophet in Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959). Similarly, while Naylor's sympathy for his key subjects is clear, he doesn't shirk showing *their* warts. *Both* sides in the CCF's internal class war were prepared to use administrative measures against the class enemy. Chapter 3 contains an abridged version of "the Connell Affair" in BC (dealt with in detail in a recent article by Naylor in this journal), and mentions the BC CCF's refusal to place *Social Planning for Canada* (1935) on its approved reading list: W.W. Lefaux dismissing it as a manifesto for "organized capitalism." (178) Later, we discover that other LSR publications received similar treatment: King Gordon's pacifist tract *Why Armaments?* (1937) was proscribed by Saskatchewan leader George Williams, and the BC *Federationist* refused to review *Democracy Needs Socialism* (1938).

The "complex, indeed byzantine story" (175) of the CCF-CPC relationship dominates Chapter 5 "The Popular Front and the Meaning of Class," which makes a major contribution to knowledge on

the rise and fall of the Popular Front in Canada. The "notion [by yet another hapless political scientist] that one can draw a distinct line between the CPC and the CCF on the issue of revolutionary action," is, Naylor suggests, "deeply unhelpful." (32) Naylor acknowledges that Communists were not the easiest of collaborators and that the two parties had "real" differences. However, labour socialists' ingrained and principled propensity towards class unity, the CPC's gradual moderation of its sectarian class against class line, and shared commitments to class analysis, class struggle, and "class-based mass political action" made these differences "porous and shifting." (5–6) Communists and labour socialists believed that intervention in the "daily struggles" (245) of the working class, notably around unemployment and Anti-Fascism, was vital for party-building purposes. Even though the CCF leadership never deviated from its official line that there should be no formal unity between the two parties, grass roots interaction was unavoidable and almost unstoppable. Naylor speculates that Stewart Smith's *Socialism and the CCF*, published at the start of 1934 and usually seen as the last word in "social fascist" provocation, "potentially hit a nerve" among labour socialists when it charged that the CCF's electoral "fixation" (178) was demobilizing the masses. Appearing at almost the same moment, the cartoon (cleverly appropriated from recent Disney hit *The Three Little Pigs*) that forms the front cover of the paperback edition of *The Fate of Labour Socialism* illustrated how working-class unity – of the CCF, CPC, SPC, labour parties, and trade unions – could literally tie down the Big Bad Wolf of Fascism. Covering all the bases of the Popular Front, from the On-to-Ottawa Trek to Spain to the Canadian Youth Congress, the chapter throws up many possibilities for new research.

By 1937, though, Naylor suggests in Chapter 6 "The Problems and Consequences of War", the Popular Front was effectively over. While this was true at the top, where the CPC had accepted the impossibility of formal unity and moved on to other targets (such as Social Credit), I suspect it may have been less true at the bottom. In any event, the ending was ironic: on the one hand, we find the CCF tops envious of the CPC's success in recruiting middle-class members through an essentially humanitarian approach and striving to retain contact with the Aid to Spain movement (which they, especially Graham Spry, had done much to initiate); on the other hand, we find labour socialists accusing the CPC of masking the imperialist character of the drive to war, spreading illusions in the League of Nations as a supposedly classless vehicle of collective security, and marginalizing the "distinctively labour-socialist perspective that saw socialism as the best means to check fascism." (263) More ironically, in the fall of 1939 many labour socialists were sympathetic to the Communists' re-assertion (at Moscow's command and quite reluctantly) of an Imperialist War analysis – though the Defence of Canada Regulations and the second outlawing of the CPC persuaded almost all of them to keep their sympathies to themselves. In this fascinating chapter Naylor suddenly turns to the hitherto neglected industrial front, emphasizing how the Canadian working class underwent a thorough "re-making" in the war years and showing how the CCF capitalized on the pressing demand from the booming unions (especially the Congress of Industrial Organization unions) for a "Canadian Wagner Act" and clear plans for post-war reconstruction. Defined by these demands, the CCF enjoyed unprecedented levels of support, but in the process labour socialists' fuller vision of a socialist Canada was all but swept away.



Some criticisms are in order. Naylor's coverage of the labour socialists' autodidact culture is surprisingly and unnecessarily thin. While he correctly stresses the CCF's Britishness, it's disappointing that he says so very little about other ethnicities: were labour socialists doing nothing to loosen the CPC's weakening hold on the sympathies of class-conscious Ukrainians and Finns? Naylor reveals a great deal about the CCF's relations with the CPC, but after citing Woodsworth's view that a socialist party would lack "driving power" (39) if it did not maintain close contact with "existing labour organizations" (i.e. the unions), says nothing about any such contact until the Second World War arrives, and even then not very much. I'm surprised that neither United Mine Workers of America District 26, the first labour union to affiliate directly to the national CCF (1938), nor coalminer Clarence Gillis, the CCF's first member of Parliament east of the Prairies (Cape Breton South, 1940) is mentioned. Maybe Naylor is keeping something up his sleeve, holding back discussion of industrial cadres such as Charles Millard, Arthur Williams, Eileen Suffrin Tallman, Larry Sefton, and many more for a different venue? I feel obliged to point out that the book is marred by the absence of a bibliography (some photographs and cartoons would also have been welcome) and the presence of typos and, regrettably (in a work that demands respect for its historical subjects), inaccurately recorded proper names. Ernest Bevin, for example, is *persistently* rendered as Ernest "Bevan." Thankfully, his Labour Party colleague Aneurin Bevan suffers the reverse indignity just the once. But enough carping! A densely-written work of prodigious original research and scholarship, reflected in nearly 100 pages of end-notes and a huge *dramatis personae*, *The Fate of Labour Socialism* convincingly reasserts the foundational role of working-class socialists in the CCF, makes a significant contribution

to historiography, and will surely be a stimulant to research. I ended the book thinking there must be a sequel, maybe taking the story up to 1956 – quite an important year for Canada's two parties of socialism.

JOHN MANLEY

University of Central Lancashire  
(retired)

**Jessica Van Horssen, *A Town Called Asbestos: Environmental Contamination, Health, and Resilience in a Resource Community* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 2016)**

VAN HORSSSEN'S BOOK is an analysis of what happens when bodies – "bodies of land, human bodies, and the body politic" (8) – collide. The book, which focuses on the history of the asbestos mine located in Asbestos, Québec, is a combination of environmental, medical, and political history. Van Horssen argues that the local fluctuations within the town of Asbestos were intimately connected to the global asbestos market. She aims to show not only how humans in Asbestos shaped the natural world around them, but also how the interaction of the people of Asbestos with their environs shaped the community and relationships among the people in the town.

Overall, Van Horssen argues that the story of the Johns-Manville Company's (JM) action in Asbestos was one of duplicity and dishonesty. JM knowingly and willingly sacrificed the health and lives of asbestos miners and the wellbeing of the community in order to make a greater profit. The miners responded to this treatment with the 1949 strike, which Van Horssen argues was a local conflict, pushing back against previous narratives of the clash.

Van Horssen makes this argument chrono-thematically, with the 1949 strike



as a central point. There is one chapter that describes Asbestos before the arrival of JM, three chapters that narrate the history of Asbestos between 1918 and 1949, one chapter that closely follows the events of the 1949 strike, and then three chapters on the history of the town between 1949 and 1983. The three chapters that precede the 1949 strike and the three that follow each focus on the same timeline, but they are divided according to theme, with one chapter each devoted to environmental, political, and medical history. Van Horssen introduces every chapter with a short vignette about current-day Asbestos. This division allows for clarity of organization, though it sometimes confuses the intricacies of all the different ways the histories are intertwined.

The first chapter serves as a prologue for the rest of the book. In it, Van Horssen examines the origins of the asbestos deposit in Asbestos, as well as the founding of the Jeffrey Mine, the arrival of miners, and the evolution of the community surrounding the mine. What makes Asbestos an exceptional deposit, she notes, is that it is a "geological quirk" (17) that is entirely accessible through open-cast, as opposed to underground, mining. Furthermore, anglophones owned and operated the deposit from the start of its exploitation while francophones worked it, creating a linguistic division and hierarchy that would linger for decades.

Van Horssen's environmental history sections examine how the town continually and literally lost ground to JM's Jeffrey Mine, arguing that time and again those who lived in Asbestos chose to "sacrifice the community to the mine." (34) She describes the ways in which the mine expanded and consumed more land, and how the townspeople responded to the expansion. The constant choices that residents of Asbestos faced were "between forsaking their homes and living

in a ghost town." (124) Not surprisingly, they often chose the former.

Van Horssen's sections on the medical history of Asbestos are some of the most fascinating in the book. Perhaps the biggest question one might have about asbestos mining is how did the companies and government cover up the health effects for so long? Van Horssen argues that Johns-Manville was negligent and insidious in its intentions, noting "JM was using the community as a giant research laboratory, with workers and their families working as mice" (51). Though this strong conviction can sometimes cloud the motives and intricacies of the intent of the historical actors Van Horssen describes, she undoubtedly portrays the company as culpable in the workers' sickness. She shows how the workers ignored their own bodily experiences and trusted entirely the word of the company. Moreover, the language barrier prevented the workers from reading the often-damning studies of asbestos coming out of Britain. It was not until 1949, when French-American journalist Burton LeDoux published an expose in French that the miners truly understood the danger of their work. This realization, she shows, precipitated the 1949 strike. Still, misinformation about the dangers of asbestos continued into the 1980s, with Jeffrey Mine funding its own studies that contradicted international studies proving the fibre was dangerous. Even as awareness increased, however, Van Horssen shows that the miners stayed loyal to the industry and accepted the risk associated with their work.

Finally, Van Horssen looks at the political history of Asbestos. Here, she highlights some of the unique political characteristics of the region. As mentioned before, there was a linguistic class divide. All upper management was Anglophone and all workers Francophone. This divide created frustration and tension on both

ends, until the late 1930s when JM hired bilingual workers.

In the middle of the environmental, medical, and political histories, Van Horssen challenges and adds nuance to the existing historical narrative of the 1949 strike in Asbestos. Most notably, both future Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau and Pierre Vallières of the *Front de libération du Québec* referred to it. Van Horssen is able to add depth to the history of the strike by examining it in a thoroughly local way, uncoupling it from the intentions that were anachronistically attributed to it. Though scholars have long represented the strike as a turning point for Quebec nationalism and resource nationalization, Van Horssen argues that the people of Asbestos themselves did not conceive of their actions beyond the local sphere. According to Van Horssen, the workers in Asbestos were concerned with their own health and well-being as well as community relations; these were the main reasons for the strike. The strike as a local event, she argues, has been confused with Trudeau's narrative of it. She places it back within its local historical milieu showing how the strike arose in response to a confluence of grievances about local politics, health issues, and community relations.

At the heart of Van Horssen's book is a series of deeply entangled tensions. Some of the most intriguing tensions are the balance of life and livelihood, protest and economic stability, and community and company. Because of these deep enmeshments, some of Van Horssen's strict divides and portrayal of opposition are often superficial. For example, pitting the "community" against the "mine" is a false divide. As the author often shows, the two are deeply interconnected. The mine is at the heart of community decisions; the community depends on the mine and the mine depends on the community.

To sacrifice the mine to the community would be to sacrifice the community, too.

Similarly, the life and the livelihood of miners are closely connected, and Van Horssen raises important issues related to balancing work and risk – the tension between living and making a living – that she never fully explores. She notes that after the strike the miners decided to accept the risks related with their jobs, but she never shows how or why. What risks do miners face and accept in asbestos mines? In fact, I finished the book without knowing at all what happens in asbestos mines. More descriptions of the miners' actual interactions with their surroundings, the nature of their labour, and the daily risks they faced, rationalized, and accepted would have added crucial depth to the story of Asbestos.

ROBYNNE MELLOR

Georgetown University

**Janis Thiessen, *Not Talking Union: An Oral History of North American Mennonites and Labour* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 2016)**

SOCIAL HISTORIANS of the late-20th century have struggled to find sources articulating the North American rise in anti-union sentiment since the mid-20th century. A few scholars have addressed the decline in industrialization and the rise of an increasingly part-time, *ad hoc*, and service-oriented economy. Others have explored connections between the new service economy and the social pressures placed on Christian workers within Christian-branded businesses. However, this research has largely ignored the agricultural economy and debates over unions among Mennonites, a group historically united by principles of peace, justice, and non-resistance.

Yet, Mennonite attitudes toward unionization in the late-20th century are more complicated than denominational records indicate. The only Mennonite Brethren resolution on unionization passed in 1969, and it forbade "union-related violence" but not membership. (5) The fact is, as Janis Thiessen brilliantly observed at the outset of her project, tensions between those who have supported and refuted workers' needs for unions have paralyzed much meaningful discussion on the subject. Anti-union attitudes, she has observed, have grown within culturally-enforced silences.

In her brilliantly conceived labour history, *Not Talking Union*, Janis Thiessen addresses this silence head-on. The book is a rigorous, transnational, oral history of North American Mennonites within six centres: Winnipeg, Manitoba; Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario; Abbotsford, British Columbia; Bluffton, Ohio; Goshen, Indiana; and Fresno-Redley, California. Subjects were each asked to talk broadly about connections between their concept of God, faith or spirituality, and what that means for them within their workplace. Moreover, they were each asked to address how "their religious beliefs and their perspectives on labour issues had changed over time, if indeed they had," and asked in the end to compare their views on labour concerns with those of other interviewees. (9) The result is a richly analyzed account of silences and how they work within labour history.

The book is divided into two sections. In the first, Thiessen discusses Mennonite conceptions of God and how this diversity has given rise to a range of attitudes about unions. Here she emphasizes that "while many profess that their stance stems from their religious convictions, for the past sixty years there has not been unity in the Mennonite community on these issues." (15) Thiessen's next section addresses two cases of Mennonite

controversy regarding labour unions: the United Farm Workers' Strikes in California in the 1960s, and Manitoban Mennonites response to the Labour Relations Act (which allowed religious exemptions from union membership). In the first, Thiessen emphasizes the ways denomination, ethnicity, and class divided Mennonites. Not only did Mennonite Brethren (more often growers, and ethnically German) and General Conference Mennonites (more often urban, and supportive of the United Farm Workers) take different approaches to the farm workers' strike, undermining the claims to pure religious convictions among the other. But, sincere religious convictions on both sides led to an implicit agreement that the church itself should focus upon evangelism and not take sides.

In a chapter dedicated entirely to memory of the California controversy, Thiessen offers brilliant analysis on the cultural phenomenon of silence. The chapter is relevant to all curious about why so many social and political movements encounter resistance within close-knit communities (like churches). Thiessen found that communities of growers were reticent to talk about farm labour issues both publicly and privately, not because they harboured hate or anger, but because the community itself was so conflicted on the issues. The presumption within the Mennonite Brethren community of growers was not that Cesar Chavez was wrong, but that it was not growers' fault that they had to rely upon immigrant labour. They were reticent to talk about labour because they lacked the language, cultural context, and space to engage in the larger problem. As Thiessen puts it, this reticence suggested that, "these were not simply individuals making independent decisions about how to present their story," but victims of the silencing of real discussion upon labour concerns within their larger church community. (106)

Controversies in Manitoba elaborate upon Thiessen's argument about culturally-enforced silence. In 1972, an amendment to the Labour Relations Act, Section 68(3), allowed conscientious objectors to closed shop workplaces to apply to the Labour Board for a religious exemption. If granted, that employee's union dues would be donated to a mutually acceptable charity. Both Mennonites and some other Christians believed they were entitled to this exemption because unions enforced coercion. But, the exemption was for *religious bodies* which opposed unions overall. (112) There were no particular Mennonite resolutions prohibiting adherents from union membership and dues. It was not until much Mennonite-sponsored litigation that the law was interpreted to protect *private* conscience. Yet, soon after the Labour Board granted this concession, they proposed legislation to allow exemptions but to retain union dues. Manitoba's Peace and Justice Commission collaborated with other Christians in dramatically opposing this change as evidence for "increasing militancy and disregard for Christian standards of justice." According to this coalition, "a large portion of the broader Christian community" did not want to support, through dues or membership, "a union which will use force and intimidation against someone else." (121) However, Mennonites as a religious body were not universally against unions. In framing their public identity as citizens of the nation, with legal rights to "conscience," this fraction of Mennonites saw themselves acting primarily as members of the nation. Robust discussion on labour and employment ethics, including the value of unions, was subordinated to an alternative but ultimately personal and private, position.

Overall, the book illustrates the limitations of "private conscience" to serve

economic justice within the workplace. Indeed, the final chapter shows that many Mennonites working for specifically Mennonite enterprises felt cheated in their capacity as employees, especially since they thought they shared a set of ethics with their employers. Historians may find the book's lack of attention to linear, historical causality to limit the utility of the study. However, this critique is probably unfair. The book does not reach conclusions beyond what the body of data can suggest. The data suggests a pattern of silences within written and oral communication on the topic of unions over the last 50 years. This recent wave of Mennonite mistrust for unionization should not be read to indicate either a profound ideological shift or an insincere profession of faith. Rather, this plague of silence within the written historical record has mirrored that within communities and even families. Many Mennonites have simply not devoted much attention to discussing how their religious beliefs impact the way they conduct business. Thiessen shows that these silences have allowed the dominant culture, including other Christians, to play a larger role in shaping Mennonite beliefs and actions on work concerns than they might otherwise.

The book serves as a welcome reminder that anti-union sentiment does not always stem from conniving employers within big businesses. Moreover, gaps between one's stated faith and one's actions are not always evidence of outright hypocrisy. Rather, antiunion sentiment has thrived where communities have failed to discuss labour and employment justice within the context of their faith.

JANINE GIORDANO DRAKE  
University of Great Falls

**Shauna MacKinnon, *Decolonizing Employment: Aboriginal Inclusion in Canada's Labour Market* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press 2015)**

SHAUNA MACKINNON'S *Decolonizing Employment: Aboriginal Inclusion in Canada's Labour Market* is a timely publication, roughly coinciding with the release of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). Moreover, the TRC's Calls to Action include items which *Decolonizing Employment* directly speak: Aboriginal education, training, and employment. MacKinnon's book asks why training and education initiatives and economic policies have not led to significant improvement in the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people measuring poorly on social and economic indicators. She does so by analyzing the impacts of the neoliberal approach to labour market policy and a number of training initiatives in Winnipeg. MacKinnon comes to the conclusion that supply-side (neoliberal) strategies aiming to train individuals quickly to meet market demand are far less effective at – and can hinder – addressing labour inequities and responding to the needs of Aboriginal individuals and communities than demand-side strategies. MacKinnon continues that both strategies can “play an important role in expanding access to the workforce,” (182) but contends it will not be solely training programs that will end poverty and exclusion but other “factors that make a real difference in people's lives.”(182) Through its attention to multiple geographical scales – international, national, provincial, and municipal – *Decolonizing Employment* provides a valuable contribution to the existing dialogue on Aboriginal people, the market, education, training and, as the title aptly describes, decolonization.

The book is divided into two parts. Part One, “The Political Economy, Labour Market Policy, and Aboriginal People in Canada,” appraises the use and effectiveness of current economic and social policies as tools to address poverty, inequality, and social exclusion before turning to “the changing nature and effectiveness of labour market policy, and in particular training policy, as the primary tool currently being used by governments to address the poverty and social exclusion of Aboriginal people in Canada.”(3) MacKinnon is especially attentive to, and critical of, the rise of neoliberal policies in Canada, identifying their origin to the early 1980s and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (this a common misperception given some of the economic policies of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in the later years of his party's rule that were arguably neoliberal). MacKinnon then describes the ongoing economic disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

Part Two, “The Case of Manitoba,” comprises roughly three-quarters of the book's length. It describes “how the integration of decolonizing programming has shown to be effective but difficult to implement in a neoliberal policy environment.”(3–4) Chapter 3 is a poignant critical analysis of Manitoba's labour policy over the past couple of decades concerning social programming, intervention into the economy, and policy as it targets and affects Aboriginal people, while Chapter 4 provides a brief sketch of a decolonizing framework for training, including decolonizing the classroom and of course curriculum content. The next three chapters, which focus on case studies of training and education programs in inner-city Winnipeg, are the most compelling in the book. Using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data, they provide greater analysis of the

neoliberal training model and its limitations for Aboriginal people in action, demonstrating that the model's narrow focus on training individuals to meet the requirements of the private sector in a compressed timeline disregard the complicated effects of colonization, the lack of "good" jobs available, the inability of short-term training to prepare individuals for those jobs available, and systemic issues such as discrimination and racism.

MacKinnon divides the training institutions she uses for cases studies into three categories, each of which she critically appraises: neoliberal; supply-side initiative programs less aligned with neoliberalism because they are long-term and participants are awarded a university degree at the end of the program; and, initiatives that address both supply and demand. MacKinnon also analyzes the information she gleaned from 36 interviews with students, teachers, counselors, and program managers. Chapter 7 is arguably the most captivating as it is rich with the voices of those interviewed.

*Decolonizing Employment* successfully calls into question neoliberal policies as they shape Aboriginal education, training, and labour. However, MacKinnon's focus on neoliberalism and her relatively short temporal scope – since the 1980s – leads to the impression that neoliberalism is more responsible for entrenching colonialism than previous policies. As much as MacKinnon demonstrates the colonizing impact that neoliberalism has on Aboriginal people, and on progressive economic policy more broadly, it is only the most recent of settler-colonial policies structurally entrenching the economic and social marginalization of Aboriginal people. Those neoliberal policies MacKinnon describes – fast-tracking Aboriginal people into often short-term, low-skilled, low-paying jobs; employment discrimination; changing Aboriginal work ethics to suit employers

– are a continuation of, rather than novel, attempts by agents of the state and industry to do much the same with Aboriginal people for generations, and these have received ample attention from numerous scholars such as Sarah Carter, John Lutz, Frank Tough, and Hugh Shewell. In short, there is a long history of attempts by the Canadian state to integrate/assimilate Aboriginal people as economic units which failed to live up to their promises long before neoliberalism's rise.

*Decolonizing Employment* is nonetheless an important contribution to the field of Aboriginal labour, education, and employment. It adds more force to the already substantial critique of neoliberal solutions to the problems of wealth disparity and lack of opportunity for Aboriginal people, such as those outlined in the edited collection *Indigenous Encounters with Neoliberalism: Place, Women, and Environment in Canada and Mexico* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014). The use of numerous tables and charts throughout the book are appropriate, helping to clarify points and distinguish between different policies and trends; added to the accessible writing even when dealing with what is otherwise complicated economic policy, this book would be useful in undergraduate Economics or Indigenous Studies courses. Even more so, however, *Decolonizing Employment* needs to make its way into the hands of policy-makers and educators. MacKinnon's final chapter (aside from a short conclusion) provides policy suggestions and recommendations for training programs. Further, her call to redefine success – beyond the simple metrics of whether or not a person has completed a program and gained employment – is a lesson that policy analysts and economists would be well to heed. While not all of those MacKinnon interviewed who participated in training programs had full time jobs after (the majority did



not), all agreed that the training itself was beneficial, such as realizing greater self-esteem and being good role models for their children. Many said while jobs and careers were important, they were not the only – or the most important – goals of their enrollment in these programs. Until policy-makers, educators, and employers are able to base their decisions upon listening to such voices, they will perpetuate the long legacy of economic discrimination and colonization that has marked Canada's history.

JONATHAN CLAPPERTON

Memorial University of Newfoundland

**Paul Kellogg, *Escape from the Staples Trap: Canadian Political Economy After Left-Nationalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2016)**

THE FIELD OF CANADIAN political economy has changed a great deal over the last several decades along with Canadian political economy itself. Staples theory, once key theoretically and politically, as well as parts of the "New Political Economy" of the 1980s, have been replaced by a field with more powerful tools of analysis, drawn not only from institutionalism but also Marxian political economy. In spite of having a robust tradition, there are relatively few book length treatments of this history.

Paul Kellogg's *Escape from the Staples Trap: Canadian Political Economy After Left-Nationalism* is the first of a two volume contribution to the history of Canadian political economy from a Marxist perspective. The book's focus on the class nature of Canadian society and its relationship to the structure of the world market, makes it directly relevant to the fields of labour studies and industrial relations.

Although polemically written, Kellogg uses a combination of theoretical and

empirical material to challenge the claims of dependency theory. Against this point of view, Kellogg demonstrates that: 1) Canada developed a manufacturing sector; 2) Canadian capitalist firms compete globally; 3) that American-owned assets comprise a small share of total assets in Canada; and, 4) Canada's experience of de-industrialization has been similar to other advanced capitalist countries.

Amongst institutionalist and neo-Marxian economists, the notion of monopoly capitalism has for many decades been widely accepted. The underlying laws of motion Marx identified are overlaid with new institutional structures of cartelized capitals dominated by banks. Monopoly power causes economic stagnation as business enterprise reduces output and employment and adjusts prices to a new point of profit-maximization based on the monopolistic market structure. But, there are empirical and logical issues with this theory. First, competition is not static. The experience of the Asian Tigers and other late-developing countries attest to this reality. The corollary to monopoly theory is the theory of perfect competition, which suggests that capitalism could achieve an ideal state in which total social welfare is maximized. More importantly, however, the notions of "monopoly," and perfect competition as well as the causal relationship between market structure and market outcomes is an extension of the neoclassical quantity theory of competition.

Prior to Marx's time, the rise of neo-classical economics, classical political economy's labour theory of value had more purchase amongst intellectuals concerned with the nature and inner-workings of the capitalist system. Central to this approach were classes in capitalism and the relations between them. Many political economists emphasized class-based exploitation. Thus, the labour theory of value helped the labour



movement to develop its political strategy, one guided by a realistic understanding of the nature and boundaries of class struggle within the capitalist system. With the so-called marginal revolution in economics in the 1870s, and the introduction of a static theory of perfect competition, a new foundation was pursued by mainstream economists, one that from the outset rules out classes and exploitation, which was the core of the classical theory of income distribution.

In recent years, Anwar Shaikh and other writers have reinvigorated economics by introducing the theory of real capitalist competition as an alternative to the neoclassical quantity theory of competition, which creates a dichotomy between "perfect" and "imperfect" market structures. Although from the discipline of economics, this theory is highly relevant to the theoretical alternative needed to conduct Marxian political economy in terms independent of the mainstream theory of competition, as well as the mainstream economic categories that many Left analysts uncritically use in the place of Marxian measures. After the contents of the book are summarized in the next section, the last part returns to the question of theoretical alternatives.

*Escape from the Staples Trap* opens with a discussion of Left Nationalism. Kellogg argues that it emerged as both an intellectual and political force in Canada in the early 1980s. During this period, Left nationalists evoked Canada's early legacy as a staples economy to explain why Canadian capitalism is different from that of the United States. This resulted in notions associated with dependency theory and the national independence movements of the Global South, as well as the question of national sovereignty, dominating the Marxist debates inside Canada. Kellogg argues that Canada achieved sovereignty after the

1850s due to the development of an internal market. This internal market was related to the social process that clearly divided Canadian society into capitalists and high wage workers. Thus, Canada cannot be characterized as a staples economy.

Kellogg then explores Immanuel Wallerstein's theory of world systems. This framework construes the world market as composed of a set of core countries, alongside a semi-periphery, and the periphery countries. While Christopher Chase-Dunn has argued that Canada is a semi-peripheral country, Kellogg notes that the expectations related to a semi-periphery do not apply to the realities of Canadian capitalism and in particular its trade and investment flows.

This is followed with a critique of the Canadian Staples tradition associated with Mel Watkins, Karl Levitt, and others in which Kellogg presents comparative economic data on Canadian manufacturing and foreign direct investment. He concludes that the case that Canada's economic performance reflects dependent development is weak at best and that deindustrialization in Canada has been similar to the experience of other advanced capitalist nations. The problems Canadian workers face have more to do with the nature of Canada as a capitalist social formation, rather than Canada as a dependent staples economy.

Kellogg examines investment flows in the Canadian economy. Citing the work of William Carroll and Jerome Klassen, he argues that not only has US foreign direct investment declined as a percentage of the economy, but that the notion of hollowing-out has little basis. Foreign direct investment has had an entirely different meaning and set of consequences in Canada than for dependent economies since the capital intensity of the Staples production processes was relatively high.

As profits were reinvested domestically, and wages relatively high, capitalist development rather than underdevelopment was the dominant tendency.

Kellogg argues that the composition of trade and production is typical of advanced capitalist nations according to comparative economic data and that Canada's economic structure was gradually, yet significantly, diversified in ways typical of a "principal economy." Thus, while the Canadian economy has always featured high levels of staples production, it has developed capital-intensive methods of producing such commodities. He presents data from Statistics Canada to demonstrate that Canada did develop a manufacturing sector, comparable to other advanced capitalist nations. The importance of this is that the Staples theory does not apply to the Canadian political economy, and the continued commitment to its premises is unfounded.

In sum, Kellogg's book is well researched, reflecting a sophisticated grasp of a large body of theoretical and empirical literature. It is especially strong in the literatures of political science, and sociology. Although the book's argument is persuasive, the outlines of a theoretical alternative are somewhat lacking. Certainly, his development upon the work of William Carroll, Jerome Klassen, Stanley Ryerson, and others advances comparative and international political economy. However, the literature of economics in particular, which in the academic division of labour is in charge of the theory of value and crisis, is lacking.

Recent developments in the theory of real competition is highly relevant to an alternative theoretical framework that rejects the static conception of competition in Staples theory and its offshoots. This would put Kellogg's use of economic statistics on a more scientific foundation. It would also support an important front

in the struggle against neoliberal capitalism's theoretical foundations because a theoretical alternative is required.

ROBIN CHANG  
York University

**Mark A. Lause, *Free Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism, and Radicalism in the Civil War Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2016)**

*FREE SPIRITS* introduces us to American spiritualism by way of Maggie and Katie Fox, bored siblings who began popping and cracking their toe joints against the wooden floors of their house to create mysterious sounds. To their surprise, their parents eagerly bought the girls' claim that these were coded messages from a dead man and soon took their act to a much wider audience. While frank about the mundane origins of spiritualist phenomena, Lause is sympathetic to spiritualists themselves. He insightfully explains why the movement appealed to so many and demonstrates how spiritualist beliefs emerged organically from the hopes and fears of 19th-century Americans.

Lause's aim in *Free Spirits* is to trace connections between spiritualism and various currents of social and political radicalism. The first chapter begins with the buildup to the Civil War and the breakdown of the antebellum two-party system. Northern Democrats started organizing against pro-slavery domination of their party in the late 1840s, just as the Fox sisters went public. Spiritualism appears to have been a popular belief among early activists in what would become the Republican party. While the first two chapters look mainly at ordinary spiritualists, the third, entitled "Father Abraham," investigates the Lincolns' involvement in séances and

other spiritualist activities. Their connections with this milieu has typically been attributed to the influence of the emotionally volatile First Lady Mary Todd, while Abraham was usually seen as thoroughgoing skeptic. Lause argues that the President, while not a convinced spiritualist, was more curious about and open to the reality of spirit communication than has been previously believed. Doubting specific spiritualist claims did not necessarily translate into a rejection of the whole edifice. Indeed, many involved in the movement seem to have come from the ranks of free-thinking seekers who doubted conventional religion but who saw spiritualism as a type of scientific investigation of supernatural realities.

The fourth chapter, "Liberty," examines how spiritualists, along with many other Americans, seem to have become more radical over the course of the war. They wished the mass slaughter to have some higher, more noble meaning, beyond just preserving the Union, and thus were excited by the Emancipation Proclamation. The following chapter, "Equality" (perhaps the book's best) discusses the hope kindled in many spiritualists by Emancipation and the Union's victory. Did these momentous events portend a wholesale reconstruction of society? Perhaps changes were possible to the status of women, Native Americans, workers, and others. Chapter 6, "Fraternity," and the epilogue follow the story through the Reconstruction era and beyond. Some spiritualists retreated from their radical hopes while others moved eagerly into the burgeoning socialist and women's suffrage movements.

Spiritualism was a very loose, eclectic movement, akin to the New Age in our own time, which creates certain problem for the historian. It can be difficult to pin down majority opinions, social attitudes, or political inclinations when

involvement was fleeting, leaders were temporary, and groups were small and distributed widely across the country. These limitations mean that the narrative line of *Free Spirits* is rather amorphous, particularly in the first two chapters. We hear much about the activities of local organizations, and declarations from small-time local leaders: retired army officers, former judges, one-term state congressmen, and the like. We are told that (for example) some spiritualists supported strike action by unionized workers, while others disapproved. It can be difficult to tell the forest from the trees.

What can we know for certain? The great majority of spiritualists were from the North and the Midwest. There were very few Southerners involved, though this slowly began to change after the war. A majority were politically centrist or left of centre. Spiritualism overlapped with other heterodox currents: unsurprisingly, seekers skeptical of religious orthodoxy were also more likely to be skeptical of the conventional wisdom about women, politics, race, and so forth.

One intriguing example of this is the way that spiritualism's ideology affected practitioners' view of Indigenous peoples. If the locally deceased were most likely to be contacted by mediums, spiritualists quickly realized that most of the spirits available in places like New York State or Ohio would be Native Americans. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, Lause notes that "Indian guides" frequently appeared. Of course, the utterances of these guides was of course shaped more by what white spiritualists imagined "Indian wisdom" to be than anything else, but the spiritualist imagination does seem to have made room for Indigenous peoples and cultures, more room than that offered by the average American Christian. Lause goes on to explain that a small number of spiritualists were quite vocal in calling for

the United States government to exercise more fairness and justice in its dealings with Native Americans, though these calls were usually ignored.

Lause provides other interesting hints that spiritualism influenced people's thinking on social and political issues. It was a largely non-hierarchical movement, which claimed that anyone could encounter spirits. Almost anyone could "return" and become a spirit guide, though inevitably famous figures like Benjamin Franklin made frequent appearances. The fact that spiritualism rejected orthodox religious views of the afterlife seems to have made it appealing to social outsiders, and conversely may have encouraged followers to question societal norms. Lause argues that the American followers of the mystic utopian socialist Charles Fourier were almost all spiritualists. Certain well-known figures were enthusiasts: Robert Dale Owen, son of socialist visionary Robert Owen, combined radical politics with a devotion to spiritualism. Abolitionists like Sojourner Truth and Pascal Beverly Randolph moved in spiritualist circles (the latter went on to found an American branch of the Rosicrucian movement.)

Overall, though *Free Spirits* can only provide a vague sketch of probable connections, backed by anecdotes and isolated cases. The available evidence does not seem to support more robust arguments about what the majority of spiritualists thought about politics and society. Many seem to have been moderate middle-class centrists who followed broader social shifts. Nor did spiritualist beliefs lead inevitably to radical positions in any logical way. Lause's argument is also hindered by a disorganized text, with unexplained digressions and stray paragraphs irrelevant to the wider narrative. There are also numerous patches of rough prose which could have used another round

of revision. Ultimately *Free Spirits* offers many intriguing hints and speculative suggestions, but little in the way of hard evidence – not unlike spiritualism itself.

ELLIOT HANOWSKI  
Winnipeg, MB

**Benjamin F. Alexander, *Coxey's Army: Popular Protest in the Gilded Age* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 2015)**

BENJAMIN ALEXANDER's short, readable text does an excellent job placing Coxey's Army in the broader context of resistance to the problems created by industrial capitalism in the late-19th century. Then and since, Coxey and his followers have been dismissed, to the point that people used the term "Coxey's Army" to refer to any kind of fool's errand. Alexander does not entirely disagree: he illustrates the theater of the absurd that made up part of the march's appeal. Yet at the same time, Alexander argues that Coxey's Army gained wide support in towns across the country because it also embodied many of the discontents and ideas felt by people left behind by the economic developments of the Gilded Age. And however foolish Coxey's ideas might have seemed to his elite contemporaries, they actually foreshadowed many of the central concepts of progressivism, the New Deal, Keynesian economics, and even the Occupy movement.

Alexander spends considerable space in a short book giving a persuasive account of Gilded Age political economy and the crisis of the 1890s. This includes clear and well-drawn accounts of the various producerist and radical responses to the rise of industrial capitalism, including the Farmers' Alliance, the Populist Party and the Knights of Labor, and the development of the ideas of Edward Bellamy

and Henry Vincent. In short, Alexander argues, the debate came down to a simple question: what was the appropriate role of government in the economy? And for those on the reform side of the coin, what measures might prod the government to take action?

All of these questions were exacerbated by the economic crisis of the 1890s. By 1894 when Coxey and his army set out, various political currents from churches to moderate reformers like Samuel Gompers were all raising the issue of unemployment and calling into question the government's *laissez-faire* policies in various ways. Coxey's Army marched to Washington as part of this current to demand that the federal government address the problem of unemployment by launching a Good Roads program. Coxey argued that Congress should fund this by issuing paper money to state and county governments in return for non-interest bearing bonds. Coxey thus combined three issues: unemployment, the need to improve the country's infrastructure, and the demand to expand the currency. These were issues central to the labour movement and Populism. They were also issues that would all eventually receive a great deal of attention from the federal government, though not for many decades. Alexander thus argues that Coxey's march was emblematic and representative of the broad stream of Gilded Age opposition to *laissez-faire*.

At the same time, Coxey's Army itself was an eclectic mix of family members, unemployed men, and simple eccentrics. In addition to demanding Coxey's program be enacted by the federal government, many participants in the march acted out different elements of the Republican and Christian mythology of the country. The second most important organizer of the march, Carl Brown, named the organization that planned the march the "Commonweal of Christ" in

reference to a form of Theosophy which held that the souls of living people contained bits of the souls of those who had gone before, and that the march would assemble so many bits of the soul of Jesus in Washington D.C. that it would force Congress to pass the Good Roads bill. Coxey was himself such a believer in these ideas that just before the march commenced he named his newborn son Legal Tender Coxey. He brought another of his sons along, and wanted his 17-year-old daughter to march with him as the "Goddess of Peace," wearing white and riding a white horse, but her mother forbade her. It should come as no surprise that this group of eccentrics sometimes fought, divided among themselves, followed different leaders, accused each other of stealing, and competed for attention, and that Coxey himself was only half-engaged in the enterprise. Yet somehow the marchers made it to Washington, presented their demands despite arrest, and went down in history.

The press, of course, made much of the eccentricity of the marchers and used this to make fun of them, to which Brown responded by labeling the journalists "argus eyed demons," a sobriquet that the "demons" of the press embraced wholeheartedly. Yet the eccentricity of the marchers also attracted a lot of attention, and in some ways the fame of this small group of political activists is proof that sometimes any attention is good attention. The attention helped provoke an impressive response to the marchers wherever they went, sometimes in the form of donations of food and places to stay, and other times with threats of violence if they did not move on. Sometimes, these opposite responses occurred in the same town, revealing the class and political divisions that rent communities across the country.

The attention garnered by Coxey's Army also prompted many imitators,

especially in the West. Many of these other "battalions" were less eccentric and more determined, hijacking trains to make it all the way across the country, instead of just from Ohio to the capitol. These other groups did not necessarily endorse the Good Roads program, calling for different demands including a halt to immigration. Yet the existence and determination of other groups of unemployed men marching to Washington to demand that the government do something about unemployment and starvation gave Coxey's demands much more weight.

Alexander's central claim, that Coxey's Army was one branch of the broader Gilded Age opposition to *laissez-faire* policies and that many of its ideas would be taken up in later years, is incontestable. Yet Alexander's analysis falls short at points. He insists on the importance of Coxey's Army by downplaying the deep and important divisions among reformers and radicals over the policies to demand and the force required to get them. He mentions the Pullman Strike, which was brewing and then exploding at the same time, and nods to the fact that the strikers were fighting the same state apparatus as Coxey. In this light, it is not so clear that Coxey had an answer to the question – where is the force to change society? Is it in a march, a petition to Congress, or in the organized working class? Certainly, Debs and his compatriots who later formed the Socialist Party and the Industrial Workers of the World drew very different conclusions than Jane Addams and other Progressive reformers. Similarly, the New Deal, which Alexander persuasively argues embodied many of the ideas promoted by Coxey and his followers, looks much less like a triumphant solution to the problems of industrial capitalism today than it might have 50 years ago.

Nonetheless, this book is well worth reading and assigning to upper level

undergraduates. While Coxey's Army may have been the last gasp of nineteenth century republican producerism, it raised issues that are still at the centre of US politics today. And unfortunately, their solution remains just as elusive as it was in Coxey's time.

SAM MITRANI

College of DuPage

**Ronald D. Cohen, *Depression Folk: Grassroots Music and Left-Wing Politics in 1930's America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2016)**

I HAVE BEEN an admirer of Ronald Cohen's work for a good twenty years since I donated my 78 of Paul Robeson's "Spring Song" to the ten-CD Bear Family anthology, *Songs for Political Action* (Bear Family Records, 1996). The book that comes with this unique collection of left-wing Americana remains a brilliant contribution to the study of political music and Ronald Cohen is the co-author along with Dave Samuelson. Cohen's anthology of Alan Lomax' writings, the autobiographies of Sis Cunningham and Gordon Friesen, 1930s activists and founders of *Broadside Magazine*, which he edited, and his *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Music Revival & American Society 1940–1970* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002) are all in my library. The prospect of a new book on the Left and music in the 1930s by Cohen whetted my appetite. By and large I am not disappointed.

This short book – 158 pages from introduction to epilogue – covers a lot of ground. Its central theme is the creation, during the Depression years of the 1930s, of a style of popular music that came to be called folk music and the role of the political left, mainly members and sympathizers of the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA), in creating it. It



connects a lot of dots and identifies many of the key players who laid the foundations for what today is a mass popular music form. The book offers an immense amount of detail that links the early study of folk music with its support by agencies of the American government through the New Deal. It would be hard to find this elsewhere. Perhaps its strongest contribution is explaining how a group of folks had been assembled by the end of the 1930s who, after World War II, would make folk music the important part of American popular culture it remains today. With today's accolades for Lead Belly, Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, and Bob Dylan getting the 2016 Nobel Prize for Literature, Cohen fills in the story when folk music was seen as a curiosity rather than a vital, living musical form. He describes how this was a project of a handful of radicals, mainly Communists. Cohen follows the Lomaxes and Seegers, *pères et fils*, and the varied cast of characters, some well known and others lost in obscurity. This is a book that is made to order for anyone who wants to understand where folk music came from and what the 1930s sounded like. It is popular history in the best sense.

However, there is a big hole in the analysis and it shares this with many others writing about the American folk music revival in the 1930s and later. This is its failure to explain sufficiently the evolution of the left-wing politics it identifies in its title as being key to the project. One word that Cohen never uses is Stalinism. The fact that the policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, (CPSU), starting in the late 1920s, would be the template for the policies of the Communist movement in every country is never really described. The fact that the policy of the CPUSA was determined not by Americans but in Moscow is never clearly stated. From the mad sectarianism of the Third Period which would aid Hitler's rise to power, to the endorsement of the Moscow

Trials and mass purges of thousands of loyal Communists later on, to the defence of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the American Communists followed every twist and turn of Soviet policy. One aspect of this, one of the few positives in my view, was the embrace of folk music.

The role of the members of the CPUSA and the party itself in promoting folk music was not only the result of a genuine appreciation of the richness of the creation of American workers and farmers. It was also the "party line" of "socialist realism" adopted at the 1934 Soviet Writers' Congress. Cohen never mentions socialist realism or the congress. It is a major oversight. This is when and where folk culture in general and folk music especially came to be the favoured expression of the Communist movement around the world and the first time an official party line in culture was declared. Art would be "socialist in content and national in form." And what was the essential "national" form of this new model? Folklore! What could be more national? Maxim Gorky, the famous Soviet writer, elected the first president of the writers' union, gave a keynote address and celebrated folklore, "the unwritten compositions of toiling man." (Maxim Gorky, et al., *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism*, [London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977], 35–36). Writing at the time, Yuri Sokolov, the leading Soviet folklorist, described the tasks for Soviet song creators: "But, with all the artistic value of the new folk songs of the masses, the question arises, how may we direct the composition of new songs into the channel of utilization of the rich artistic heritage which has been left to us by the many centuries of folk song creation? At the present time many Soviet poets, working at the creation of songs for the masses, are attentively studying the traditional song culture of the people. A great deal is also



being done today to bring the folk-song heritage back to the toiling masses. ... It may be assumed that we shall have new songs, on a profoundly folk and national basis, with reference to their artistic form." (Y. M. Sokolov, *Russian Folklore*, [New York: Macmillan, 1950], 631).

Creating both an appreciation for traditional songs and creating new ones would become the task of American Communists and their allies. Inspired by socialist realism, this is what Alan Lomax, Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Lee Hays, and the others Cohen looks at, started to do in mid-decade. It would flower when, in 1935, the Seventh Congress of the Comintern adopted the tactic of the Popular Front against Fascism – an alliance between Communists and ‘anti-fascist’ bourgeois democratic forces that would lead to the statement that “Communism is twentieth century Americanism” by CPUSA leader Earl Browder. Embracing American tradition and American heroes from Jefferson to Lincoln, the American radicals came in from the cold to become part of the national family singing and creating folk music as America’s national musical form. The brief period of peace songs critical of Roosevelt and American and British imperialism during the period between the Hitler-Stalin pact of August 1939 and the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in late June of 1941, serves to illustrate how, at decade’s end, the American folkies’ nationalism was still trumped by their loyalty to the party line as determined in Moscow. Cohen does a great job of looking at the “what” of the origins of the folk music phenomenon in the 1930’s. Unfortunately, he does much less when it comes to the “why.” Read this book but look elsewhere for more depth on its context.

GARY CRISTALL

Capilano University

**Miranda J. Banks, *The Writers: A History of American Screenwriters and Their Guild* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press 2015)**

THIS BOOK ADDS to the growing scholarly attention paid to cultural labour, to understanding creative artistic work as work, as well as art. This history of one union over more than eight decades chronicles the Screenwriters Guild, later the Writers Guild of America, the union of the Hollywood screenwriters, and, through difficult ups and downs, still one of the most important unions in the American and global media industries. It is a dramatic, even tumultuous, story, with a leadership that was often courageous and daring but also strategically wrong repeatedly and, for a long period, politically compromised and threatening to its own members. That membership was often fractious and divided, its collective interests not always clear or achievable.

As workers, the writers have been continually faced with aggressive corporate antagonists, drastic corporate re-organization, and constant innovation in media technology. The terrain the union had to contest and occupy has been constantly changing and continues to do so. These features might be described for any category of worker in modern capitalism. But the writers’ status as both artists and employees leads Banks to find three themes that recur, unresolved, over the decades. First, under American copyright law, ownership of work for hire resides with the corporation, not the writer, unlike for the novelist or playwright. The control of the author’s work is continually a struggle. Second, this gives unusual importance to the credit on a film – who is named as author and who controls that naming is still an issue of complex negotiation. It remains as an indicator of the precarious status of the writer. Third, writers’ status

can constantly shift. Writers were sometimes well paid insiders, close to particular producers, or even became producers. Or writers could be victimized by power or, for women and minorities, marginalized almost completely.

Banks' historically ordered account covers the entire life of the union, drawing on scholarly sources on the diverse periods, the many memoirs, more than sixty new interviews, and the Guild's own History Project. In 1978, almost a hundred writers were recorded in extensive interviews about their lives as writers and the union. The project was largely forgotten and Banks uses this rich resource to great effect. Her narration is enlivened by the personal voices of writers – observant, articulate, and humorous – who lived this history.

The story begins in early Hollywood, marked by paternalism and the informal organization of labour in the so-called studios, ruled by despotic moguls. It is not until 1933, in the midst of the economic crisis of the Depression and a drastic drop in Hollywood theatrical revenues, that the Screenwriters Guild declared for unionization, moving beyond its role as a social club. It was prompted by the enhanced importance of writers as the studios adapted to talking pictures and provoked by an aggressive salary-cutting campaign by the studio heads. The key leaders, many leftists and radicals among them, also saw themselves as part of the vast wave of unionization sweeping the United States by the Congress of Industrial Organizations, organizing workers who had not been unionized or just beginning to see themselves as workers. Despite the overwhelming support of the writers, it took almost a decade for the union to achieve recognition and a first contract. The studio heads regarded unionization as betrayal and fought it tooth and nail with vicious anti-union and anti-Red propaganda in

the workplace and in the press. Company unions were formed. New Deal legislation that favoured unionization was challenged right up to the Supreme Court. It was only as the war began that the studios acquiesced and Hollywood became a union town. But the first contract only went so far – the writers secured jurisdiction, but failed to crack the owners' copyright control of the writers' work. Instead the union achieved minimum salaries, the Basic Minimum Agreement, and control and arbitration of on-screen credits, the key achievement for the leadership. But the failure to break through on copyright would be an ongoing issue.

Banks covers the war years, when all Hollywood mobilized for the war effort, and the Cold War blacklist, the most infamous of all inside Hollywood dramas, largely drawing on the outstanding work of recent historians. The account of the growth and strength of the Left in these Popular Front years is rather cursory, but her addition of the voices of writers in interviews, from the records of Guild meetings and from contributions to the Guild's magazine, all embellish the details of the struggle. It was a victory, eventually, of the right; the Guild and the studios bowed to the House Un-American Activities Committee and enforced the blacklist against hundreds. The anti-Communist loyalty oath was in the Guild's constitution until 1970. Banks calls this the most shameful and damaging period in the union's history.

The 1950s were the years of the blacklist but also a continual crisis of the studio system, with divestment from theatres, the drastic drop in contract employees, including writers, and the spectacular arrival of broadcast television. Despite a lingering cultural clash between screenwriters and writers for the new media, the Guild eventually merged with the Television Writers Association to form the Writers Guild of America.

The union was tested in a national strike in 1960 that secured minimal payments for television re-runs and broadcasting movies, but only going forward. Again, a minimum achievement.

Later chapters will follow the end of the studio system in the 1950s and 1960s and the constant changes in corporate structure of media as entertainment conglomerates came to dominate. While most writers become freelancers, others will become producers or writer-producers or showrunners as written work can migrate across diverse media – the union would have difficulty uniting the diverse interests at play amongst its members. Deregulation and relentless corporate mergers, consistent with contemporary neo-liberalism, is allowing control of all aspects of production and distribution that will rival that of the classic studios. In a series of weak strikes in the 1980s, the position of writers eroded. Banks' presentation of these changes in American media industries is valuable and lucid.

The Guild waged another more successful strike in 2007. Banks provides a compelling account of how this strike effectively united the membership on both coasts and stood up to the enormous power of the conglomerates. But again, the strike had a minimal achievement – a toehold in residual payments barely caught up to the great shifts in revenue begun with video recorders and digitalization. The ground continues to shift with new technology, new formats like games, changing genres, and the rapid globalization of production. There has been little jurisdictional or organizational success with writers for games, reality and animation, tv, or diverse internet production. In the multiple platform world of YouTube and streaming, writers are facing an exceptionally turbulent future.

Banks takes a close look at efforts to improve the position of women and minorities and finds change to be painfully

slow. Nonetheless, she argues that the Guild is now the most progressive union in the media industries.

As mentioned, Banks' narrative is enlivened with the voices of writers talking about their work and the union. This is often illuminating on writing as work. But, somewhat surprisingly, she shows little interest in the movies that they write. Other historians like Thom Anderson, Paul Buhle and James Naremore, focused on the Left in Hollywood and the impact of the blacklist, have followed the politics of these leftist writers into the films themselves with impressive textual criticism of some of the most famous of Hollywood movies. Clearly, this is not Banks' interest.

Overall, this is an important contribution to Hollywood history, to studies of the labour movement in the United States, and to explorations of cultural labour. It is an entertaining and compelling story of what is special about artists as workers and what is common to all workers faced with the volatile labour relations of modern neoliberal capitalism.

SCOTT FORSYTH

York University

**Premilla Nadasen, *Household Workers Unite: The Untold Story of African American Women Who Built a Movement* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015)**

WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD of time, Premilla Nadasen has established herself as one of the most important historians of the US labour movement writing today. In *Household Workers Unite: The Untold Story of African American Women Who Built a Movement* and her previous book *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2005), Nadasen explores how class, race, gender, culture, and the law constitute the meanings of the work

of social reproduction and the ways in which working-class women of colour have disrupted these meanings, defining this labour as work, the home as a workplace, and in the case of domestic workers, claiming a right to organize as workers. In doing so, Nadasen's scholarship centres a working-class Black feminism long marginalized in male-centric histories of the civil rights and labour movements, and in middle-class white women's histories of the women's movement.

*Household Workers Unite* is a narrative history of African-American domestic-worker organizing and activism. The book focuses in on the period between the early 1950s and late 1970s when "domestic workers established a national movement to transform the occupation." (3) While Nadasen draws on a range of sources, including government reports and journalistic exposes, it is the oral histories of African American women activists – brilliant organizers like Geraldine Roberts, Dorothy Bolden, and Josephine Hulett – that anchor the book. These women tell their own stories about the meaning of their labour, their desire to be viewed as a worker, and the fight to transform their occupation. As working-class African American women, their stories connect to the broader struggle for Black liberation, highlighting the racial exploitation of domestic labour, and are a form of activism, "a strategic way to make sense of the past as well as the present and to overturn assumptions about domestic workers." (3)

Anchoring the book in stories "not told about domestic workers, but stories that domestic workers articulated themselves" (3) serves a political purpose. As Nadasen notes in the book's introduction, mainstream media narratives around domestic work cast these workers as victims, disempowered and without agency. The narrative of victimization

denies domestic workers' agency and marginalizes not only contemporary domestic worker organizing but a rich history of collective action stemming all the way back to 1881 when African American laundresses in Atlanta formed a Washing Society and went on strike for better wages and working conditions, effectively shutting down the city.

While the 1930s witnessed another wave of domestic worker organizing, New Deal labour legislation failed to treat the home as a workplace and denied household workers coverage under basic labour protections, including the right to a minimum wage and the right to organize and bargain collectively. These gendered and racialized exclusions were mirrored in social policy, as the white male industrial worker and his caregiving wife became the model around which labour law and the welfare state were constructed, denying African American women and other women of colour full citizenship. This is the legal and historical backdrop for the rise of a national domestic workers' rights movement focused on ending the exclusion of domestic workers from employment protections institutionalized in the New Deal.

Yet prior to the emergence of a national movement, Nadasen tells us that organizers like Dorothy Bolden in Atlanta and Geraldine Roberts in Cleveland were cutting their political teeth in civil rights struggles. Unlike the middle-class, male leadership of that movement, the likes of Bolden and Roberts were working-class women with little formal education. They experienced the realities of white supremacy not only in public spaces, but also in the homes of their white employers. Yet domestic workers resisted, playing a pivotal role in some of the earliest civil rights campaigns, including the Montgomery bus boycott. They raised money by cooking and selling food, and

mobilized other household workers in support of the campaign. And they stood up to employers, insisting on being treated as full human beings not only on the bus but also in their workplace.

In the milieu of the Black freedom struggle, domestic workers increasingly came to understand their exploitation as a legacy of slavery. Rather than reject their identity as domestic workers, "they claimed it and sought to bring recognition and respect to the work they did." (57) As Nadasen writes, "Motivated by the civil rights movement, they came to believe that black freedom could best be achieved by mobilizing domestic workers to press for improvements in their occupation." (56)

As local domestic worker organizing efforts grew in number, leaders adopted the tactics of the civil rights movement to a nascent domestic worker rights movement. In the 1960s, the movement developed multiple and sometimes overlapping strategies, including professionalization and where possible, unionization. In the 1970s, domestic workers campaigned for full citizenship rights and forged a sometimes-uneasy alliance with middle-class women's organizations. While divides of colour and class were never truly overcome, organizations like the National Organization for Women and figures like Gloria Steinem supported a campaign for minimum wage legislation for domestic workers. The perseverance of movement organizers, and their ability to leverage the power of middle-class women's organizations, led to a series of victories. In 1974 and 1976, amendments to federal labour law extended protections, including the right to the minimum wage and unemployment insurance, to some categories of household workers. For the women at the heart of the movement, these victories meant they would be recognized as workers, not servants,

disassociating household work from the legacy of slavery.

Sadly, at the peak of its power, the movement atrophied. Whereas over one-third of employed African American women in the United States worked as domestics in the 1960s, Black women increasingly found opportunities in the growing service sector. The movement also lacked sustained sources of funding.

Yet since the late 1990s, there has been a rebirth of domestic worker organizing. Local organizations such as Domestic Workers United in New York City now form the backbone of the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA). The movement has fought for and won domestic worker bills of rights in a number of states. As the concluding chapters of the book make clear, immigration has changed the face of the movement and the question of immigration status has posed new barriers to organizing. Old battles need to be fought anew. As Nadasen states, "The shifting, contingent, and contested notions of work and citizenship suggest that this has been an important arena of political struggle for marginalized groups – a struggle that is still unfinished." (147)

Nadasen has done American labour history a great service. By recovering the voices of African American domestic workers and resurrecting a little known history, *Household Workers Unite* pushes the boundaries of the discipline, troubling those narratives of the labour movement that continue to centre the experiences and struggles of the white male factory worker. In the days I wrote this review, the leadership of the United Auto Workers union expressed its desire to sit down with newly minted President Trump to talk trade. Meanwhile, the folks in the domestic worker movement are gearing up for the fight of their lives as their undocumented sisters

are threatened with mass deportation. Maybe we should be looking less to the factory floor, and more to the kitchen, for the working class upsurge our historical moment so desperately needs.

SIMON BLACK  
Brock University

**Lou Martin, *Smokestacks in the Hills: Rural Industrial Workers in West Virginia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2015)**

HANCOCK COUNTY, sandwiched between the Ohio River and the Pennsylvania state line in northern West Virginia, provides the backdrop for Lou Martin's fascinating study of 20th century rural-industrial workers. Pottery and tinplate manufacturing firms were introduced into this Appalachian landscape in the 1890s as industrialists "searched for places where they could tap pools of low-wage first generation" workers. (5) The resulting interplay between industrial and preindustrial traditions and practices formed the basis of a distinct rural working-class culture, wherein a developed sense of localism worked against the establishment of more traditional forms of class consciousness. Unlike their urban counterparts, industrial workers in Hancock County remained largely opposed to the goals of the New Deal coalition, such as the expansion of the welfare state and national trade unionism. Martin traces the contours of their rural-industrial culture into the 1980s, when restructuring prompted crises for rural and urban industrial workers alike.

The international processes of capital mobility, industrialization, and deindustrialization feature prominently. While the reader is treated to a rich tableau of working-class life, movingly captured through a combination of oral history and archival research, Martin is clear:

we are witnessing but a brief moment in a much longer story of Schumpeterian creative destruction. Industries that once thrived in cities and towns throughout North America and Europe have moved to areas of the globe with depressed labour costs and lower rates of unionization. "Meanwhile, in places like Chengdu, China, a new generation of factory workers is emerging and developing a new rural-industrial culture." (12) Martin's work will be of particular interest to scholars examining the history of global capitalism.

Several factors influenced the rise of the "rural-industrial worker." Industrialization brought immigration; labourers from Europe, poor sharecroppers from the South, and dispossessed farmers from the Appalachian hollers streamed into Hancock County between the 1890s and 1930s. Importing their folkways, these rural migrants established practices for supplementing the necessities of life. Establishing small plots of arable "common land" (74) outside of the city limits offered some measure of self-sufficiency – and allowed for the development of a family economy model that contrasted with the breadwinner ideal exhibited by skilled craft workers.

Intra-union tensions during the 1930s set the stage for the entrenchment of anti-labour attitudes that marked a significant divergence from the radicalism of many urban workers. In 1933, shortly after the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act, ten thousand unorganized workers at the Weirton Steel Works walked out in protest of the company union and sought affiliation with the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers (AAISTW). Michael Tighe, AAISTW president, immediately denounced the strike – fearing rank-and-file militancy. Meanwhile, private security at Weirton enacted a campaign of systematic violence against



union organizers – supported in the courts by sympathetic judges. The failure of conservative unionism, the viciousness of private employers, and the apparent ineffectual legalities of the New Deal prompted the rural-industrial workers of Hancock County to turn inward and pursue non-confrontational “older strategies for improving their quality of life.” (91)

Martin’s comparative analysis of these strategies during the 1940s and 1950s is stark. While their urban counterparts sought collectively bargained contracts on a national level, pottery and steel workers in Hancock County relied on entrenched localism to shape labour negotiations through smaller independent organizations. At Weirton Steel, for example, workers used the threat of unionization as a pressure tactic against the company without having to participate in the national steel strikes of the United Steelworkers. In these ways, the rural-industrial steelworkers were able to achieve many of the benefits of their unionized brethren without facing the threat of personal fiscal insolvency, mortgage defaults, or blacklists. Within this argument, Martin probes at the contours of identity and class. Rather than the emergent class solidarities and labour politics evidenced within American industrial cities, rural-industrial workers in Hancock County drew upon pre-industrial, individualist habits of “making do.”

This self-sufficiency took many forms, as Martin reveals in his discussion of the gendered aspects of “making-do” in both the factory and the home. In the pottery industry, where women were increasingly employed during and after World War II, female employees banded together to protect their economic position from the downgrading and undervaluing that so frequently affects women workers. In the Weirton mills, the confluence of masculinity and occupational identity was reconstructed in the post-war years – when

women were pushed from positions they had occupied during wartime. Martin also describes the household production of food and other consumables. In Hancock County, it was not uncommon for rural-industrial workers to keep pigs, chickens, and other livestock well into the 1950s as a form of wage supplementation. Hunting, angling, and gardening are also examined as cultural manifestations of this rural-industrial culture. The continuation of these ideals, Martin argues, “put the steel and pottery workers in Hancock County out of step with labor liberals’ agenda of extending the welfare state” (151) through the mid-20th century.

The localism exhibited by these men and women was strained by the 1960s. National equality movements opened new avenues for economic independence among both African Americans and women in the pottery factories and steel mills, but these gains represented a cruel irony – as both industries soon entered periods of protracted crisis and downsizing. Increasingly faced with mechanization, automation, and offshoring, the workers of Hancock County suffered through the long decline experienced in many American cities since the 1970s. Despite a brief flirtation with employee ownership at Weirton during the 1990s, workers were stymied by a government that was hesitant to legislate to protect their livelihoods. Global forces may have played out differently in rural Appalachia than in urban industrial centres, but in the end they revealed the illusory nature of life under industrial capitalism. Martin quotes a Weirton steelworker who expresses a sentiment common to many throughout North America: “We downsized, we modernized, we made sacrifices. But none of that matters. It’s still not good enough.” (183)

This book is a timely intervention. The election of Donald J. Trump to the



presidency of the United States has revealed the extent to which the underlying assumptions of neoliberalism have been rejected in places like Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio. Labour historians have long articulated the inhumanity of a political discourse that has – rhetorically and economically – abandoned vast swathes of the country. In many ways, the 2016 election was a re-assertion of political power by residents of the so-called “Rust Belt.” The growth, development, and challenges of working-class cultures are important to understand if we are to begin coming to terms with the strong support in these regions for resurgent messages of economic nationalism and populism. These issues are certain to provide fertile ground for future discussions – both academic and popular – and Martin’s historical analysis of working life in Hancock County provides a perspective that is both relevant and illuminating.

LACHLAN MACKINNON  
Saint Mary’s University

**Stephen Meyer, *Manhood on the Line: Working-Class Masculinities in the American Heartland* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2016)**

STEPHEN MEYER WANTS to make labour historians squirm. He wants us to look hard at the male wage-earner and see beyond the heroic militant that we so often write into our accounts of working-class history. He points us to “the underside of labor and union history – the rough and sometimes regressive aspects of working-class and union culture.” (ix) Specifically he directs our attention to the deeply ambivalent place of working-class masculinities in labour history.

Meyer has spent a lifetime studying the US auto industry, and previously produced two highly influential monographs

and a collection of essays. Now he has turned back to look more closely at the masculine identities of autoworkers. He begins with the well-recognized dichotomy between the “respectable” and the “rough” that was still visible at the dawn of the 20th century: “If the laborer’s sense of crude manliness emerged from the roughness of physical strength and dangerous work, the respectable craftsman’s manhood arose from refined values of control, skill, autonomy, and independence.” (6) He argues that the rise of mass-production labour processes undermined both versions of masculinity and prompted men working in semi-skilled jobs in auto plants to “re-masculinize their work and male identities” (9) by a kind of amalgamation of the free-spirited rough culture and the respectable culture of reasonably well-paid occupational security. He adds that this “new working-class idea of manliness” also took on “more explicit sexual connotations.” (10) The consequences for women in particular were dire.

The book is divided into chapters that carry that story forward from the early 20th century to the 1980s, though most of the author’s attention is on the 1930s and 1940s, when the United Auto Workers (UAW) became a powerful force within the industry. He opens with a sketch of the impact of mass-production on the new workforce drawn into auto plants – the monotony, tedium, speed-up, humiliation, and physical dangers – that form the backdrop and the terrain on which the new masculinities of the auto plants were worked out. There were formal and informal versions of the new identity. The formal involved the struggles to get an industrial union established. Meyer highlights the two divergent directions of these campaigns: “fighting and providing.” One involved often violent physical battles between the company’s regime of industrial spies and swaggering goons

and the union's flying squadrons of tough-guy fighters. Winning a union was a fierce fight, and its bitter legacy cast a long shadow over workplace relations for years to come. The other strand in the unionization was the bridge between these wage-earners and their responsibilities outside the plants as breadwinners. Meyer emphasizes the gendered rhetoric of union organizing, which urged workers to defend their manhood by joining. In the end, the arrival of collective bargaining with the UAW "allowed them to regain and to reclaim some of their lost manhood that resulted from years of humiliation." (111)

Ultimately Meyer is less interested in the more respectable strand in auto-worker unionization and instead focuses most of his discussion of gender on the less public, informal practices of the shop floor. Long before unionization, autoworkers had found various ways to resist the degradation of their working lives and thus "reclaim" their manhood, including absenteeism, labour turnover, restriction of output, and "stealing a trade" (bluffing their way into more skilled jobs). But he pushes further to explore the kind of "bachelor culture" that operated among both the many young workers and the older, married men, which included pranks, profanity, drinking, fighting, and degradation of women, and which overflowed into disreputable leisure pursuits after work.

The era of unionization brought a new boldness in expressing this culture, despite the existence of strict work rules and managerial disciplinary procedures. This amounted to an attempt "to transform the workplace into a space of leisure, of hijinks and of fun and games, often at the expense of supervisors or workers lacking acculturation to unionism." (115) Such behaviour "connected with male oppositional and confrontational rituals and displays of power to challenge the

newly established Taylorist and Fordist industrial order." (116) The strength of the research in the book is the use of grievance files to cast a light on what was actually going on every day in auto plants, in spite of frequent disapproval from the union leadership. The stories he has extracted from these files are compelling and starkly revealing.

Using these informal tactics to confront supervisors fits the paradigms of existing labour history. But Meyer goes on to describe in detail how they were used against fellow workers, most particularly women and workers of colour. That became a central dynamic during World War II, when both those groups arrived in the auto plants in much larger numbers and, in the eyes of many autoworkers, threatened the white male domination of the workplace. The women fashioned a new workplace culture of their own that differed fundamentally from the men's, one that often highlighted dress and appearance. They faced sexual harassment from supervisors and from some male workmates. In this telling, Meyer adds colour to the familiar story that Ruth Milkman has also written about at greater length.

When more Blacks arrived among them, many white autoworkers pushed back even more aggressively. Those with roots in the rural south (the "hillbillies") brought their regressive attitudes to race relations with them, in some cases including their affiliation with the Ku Klux Klan, which had a significant following among Packard plant workers and influence within their union local in the early 1940s. "Hate strikes" broke out in some plants when Blacks were given jobs traditionally reserved for whites. For their part, Black men asserted their own version of manliness and insisted on their rights to be upgraded to better jobs. In some plants they staged wildcat strikes that Meyer appropriately dubs "pride"

strikes, to ensure that Black workers actually got those jobs. In Detroit an ugly race riot followed from these confrontations. Those tensions did not completely disappear in the postwar years.

Writers of the 1970s and 1980s who looked inside US auto plants found the shop-floor masculinity of the industry's male wage-earners alive and well. Indeed, the few women allowed to work there confronted even more vicious forms of hostility and harassment than the earlier generation of war workers had faced, and found the union's grievance system of little use in challenging such practices. The men were of course devastated as the jobs that undergirded their masculine identities began to disappear at the close of the 20th century.

Stephen Meyer has thus given us a fascinating picture of how masculinities among working men could be a powerful two-edged sword: on the one hand, stiffening solidarity and resistance to capitalist agendas; on the other, swinging nastily at fellow workers who seemed to threaten white male privilege in this workplace. It is a richly textured, highly readable study, which should have a significant impact on the writing of a more complicated history of the working class in all advanced capitalist societies.

CRAIG HERON

York University

**Samantha Majic, *Sex Work Politics: From Protest to Service Provision* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2014)**

AGAINST THE WELL-ESTABLISHED idea that social movement borne groups become less motivated and efficacious at fighting for radical change when they are funded by state institutions, Samantha Majic offers a refreshing case study of complex strategies deployed

by sex workers' rights organizations to challenge practices and policies in *Sex Work Politics: From Protests to Service Provision*. Through extensive ethnographic work with California Prostitute Education Project (CAL-PEP) and St. James Infirmary in the San Francisco Bay area the mid-2000s, this manuscript documents the struggles and successes of these organizations at negotiating between funding mandates, 501c3 non-profit laws, and their own political stances on decriminalization and human rights of sex workers within an often-hostile institutional environment.

Majic's precise use of vivid ethnographic descriptions, interview transcripts, and organizational documents weaves a thorough portrait of the subtle and important ways in which resistance to state control is achieved. The author takes a much-needed step back from conventional academic wisdom regarding the (im)possibilities for social change stemming from non-profits and instead reframes the question to look at the ways in which they are shaped and interact with their institutional environment.

The book centres on the work and struggles of CAL-PEP and St. James Infirmary, in many ways the institutionalized descendants of Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics (COYTE), the United States' first prostitutes' rights groups, and the collective within which the term "sex worker" was coined or at least brought to mainstream language. Both give direct services to the community they represent and are, on paper, textbook examples of non-profits who could surrender their radical commitment to militant work towards better working and legal conditions for sex workers in order to secure the money needed for organizational survival.

Majic argues and shows that there are ways for them "to retain or develop goals or features that engender oppositional

stances or reactions.” (26) They do this through what she calls *resistance maintenance*, a deliberate strategy of promoting politically contentious ideas that challenge state policy and pursue broader social-change goals within their organization as well as in wider social and political arenas. By carefully situating themselves as indispensable health and social service providers for the historically hard to reach community that are sex workers, they succeed in maintaining their opposition to dominant state policies and minimizing their co-optation. The fact that states, such as the United States, that enact criminalization and other forms of discrimination against sex workers are even less likely to be able to “reach” them certainly plays a part in creating a context in which the work of organizations like CAL-PEP and St. James Infirmary are indispensable.

Three properties of resistance maintenance are described and analysed to substantiate the main argument. The first to be addressed is *oppositional implementation*, which describes the ways in which activist organizations capitalize on certain trends in non-profit policy to develop missions and activities that enact radical political goals. These organizations carve out “habitats” (64) where organizers can meet, discuss, and plot for institutional changes. The members of CAL-PEP and St. James Infirmary capitalized on the trend of decentralized service delivery by local level agencies and community-based groups, coupled with the (real and imagined) acute concerns regarding sexually transmitted infections and HIV risks and prevention for sex workers.

The positions of CAL-PEP and St. James Infirmary as “civic organizations” (29) interested in gathering individuals sharing interests and experiences, and fostering civic socialization and professionalization allows them to engage in the second property of resistance maintenance:

*community engagement*. In other words, they act as “schools of citizenship” (29) by allowing the individuals who receives services to develop civic skills and social capital, in turn enabling them to better work together towards common goals. For sex workers, a group actively marginalized and spoken for by many health and social organizations, this creates a much-needed space for them to be involved in their own care, and to develop civic skills easily transferrable to radical political actions. In addition, Majic echoes the well-documented phenomenon that peer-delivered services challenges the ideas of sex workers as irresponsible with regards to their health and the health of the larger community.

Finally, Majic describes how CAL-PEP and St. James Infirmary engage in *claims-making activities*, the third property of resistance maintenance. Despite being largely funded and accountable to the government, these organizations continue to press oppositional claims inside and outside of their organizations. In fact, their necessary engagement and dynamic relationship with State actors and institutions may sometimes act as a facilitator to some of their views being heard than organizations who are removed from State influence. The organizations studied demonstrate this reciprocal relationship through knowledge production on non-partisan issues to inform both the public and policy makers about their constituents needs. They also engage in policy advocacy, defined as “individual actions, permitted lobbying, public awareness, and international (health) advocacy,” (95) which contribute to their engagement in politics outside of their organization, and thus to challenging the laws, policies, and broader sociocultural norms that marginalizes their clientele.

This historically heavy documentation of social movement borne non-profit organizations that serve marginalized

constituencies offer important insight about radical social change efforts outside of protests and purely voluntary work from activist communities. Stepping away from *en bloc* rejections of the possibility for non-profits to reflect broader political commitments because of their dependence on government patronage in the form of grants, it is refreshing to consider that non-profits can be spaces that allow and support community interaction and mobilization.

One of the book's strength is certainly to frame the struggles and political strategies of CAL-PEP and St. James Infirmary within the history of the sex workers' rights and political movement and other social movements. This is a significant contribution to the developing academic field in sex work politics that steps away from the all too often sterile discussions that exclude sex workers' voices and focus on the abstract value of sex work. This manuscript adequately places the onus on sex work politics as the social movement that it is, one that aims at producing lasting social change, with varying degrees of success. While making relevant connections to the LGBTQ\* rights (against police violence) and feminists movements (the emergence and development of rape crisis centres), it still considers sex work as independent and legitimate social movement. However, this book does not centre its narrative on sex workers' experiences within the organization, which may have been a strategy to account for the author's positionality and a result of the research methodology. While the focus on historical documents is necessary, and serves to independently assess the events as they occurred, more insight into the experiences of the social actors who were there would have added to the argument.

While the oppositional and dynamic relationship with the state is well represented and documented, the potentially more problematic and difficult

relationships with organizations, often extremely well-funded and influential, that hold prohibitionist perspectives on sex work is hinted at but not explored, except in the conclusion.

CLAUDYNE CHEVRIER

University of Manitoba

**Craig J. Peariso, *Radical Theatrics: Put-ons, Politics and the Sixties* (Seattle: University of Washington Press 2014)**

AT THE TIME I write this review, Donald Trump is bellowing his way along the campaign trail and edging closer to the presidency. As his campaign gained momentum over the fall, media pundits who had courted him – and fed his craving for publicity – publicly wondered if he was in fact serious. Speculations that the campaign was a stunt, that he was using it to inflate his “brand,” and that he would stage a last-minute exit, were fueled by the apparent delight he took in his extremist and reckless antics. But as the election nears, he shows no sign of anything except a lust for power. If he was a joke at first, he has manipulated the media brilliantly to put the joke back on them. Paradoxically, as his self-performance becomes more erratic and bellicose, the media falls in line to accept him as a legitimate and credible candidate. Is it because the media attention span is always fixed on the present moment and the latest soundbite, or is it because, even at its craziest, the performance of the radical self is functionally a legitimizing tactic? No matter what he does, Trump becomes more “real.”

The mediated performance of extremism in the cause of politics may be as old as mass media, and adaptive across its various forms, but as Craig Peariso argues persuasively, something changed in the 1960s when radical protest elevated the “put-on” (a phrase he borrows from

Jacob Brackman) into a political tactic. For Peariso, as an art historian, the radical theatrics of the Yippies, the Gay Liberation Front, and the Black Panthers (the three instantiations that form his case studies) can be understood as performances of the put-on through which we can read the limits and paradoxes of the political realities they disturb. The core problem, which he traces through the theories that work through the historical case studies (beginning with Herbert Marcuse and Susan Sontag), is that radical performance is necessarily subject to assimilation; performance becomes a commodity, and performances that strive to disrupt the system of signification and commodification ultimately falter; they appear to "fail" because they cannot disrupt their own representation.

Looking at Abbie Hoffman's self-performance as the trickster of the revolution, Peariso sees something more than the buffoonery that distressed the radical left. Hoffman, he suggests, embodied a sophisticated critique of the limits of radical action in the mediatized postmodern. Similarly, Peariso examines Eldridge Cleaver's hyper-sexualized self-staging as a put-on that replayed and reflected pervasive social anxiety about Black masculinity. In both cases, the "performers" were authors and captives of their performances. His other case study, dealing with the crisis in the New York queer community and the emergence of the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), questions whether the confrontational tactics of camp and drag constituted a sophisticated political critique of the ways in which the dominant culture absorbs and constrains all forms of expression. Peariso's analyses are grounded in a richly detailed art-historical materiality; in each of these case studies he situates the social performance in the contexts of its contemporary theory, effectively plumbing the relationship between radical action and

discourse to argue that theatricality can be both political resistance and critique.

Despite the title, this study is less about theatrics than it is about the historical moment of emergence of "new, more self-conscious and aesthetically complex forms of political resistance." (163) For Peariso, the put-on may mark the failure of signification, but he affirms the necessity of what he calls aestheticized resistance while pointing to the recurring dilemma of actions that attempt "to articulate dissent while brushing against the limits of historical possibility." (185)

The idea of failure provides the ground for his afterword, which addresses the contemporary dilemma of the put-on. Looking specifically at the Yes Men, who famously try to expose corporate crimes through provocative straight-faced but parodic interventions, he asks why their targets so often appear to take them literally, or worse, express agreement with them. The Yes Men necessarily fail, he suggests, because in the end what they are really exposing is the implicit consensus of neoliberalism; even when their targets know they are being lampooned, they know it won't make a difference.

The Yippies never did drop LSD into the Chicago reservoir; the GAA never actually transformed gender binaries, and Eldridge Cleaver never did launch a guerrilla war. In each case, the performance of radicalism was subsumed by the machinery of popular culture. The images superseded the activists. Abbie Hoffman became an environmental activist under an assumed name (and testified before a congressional committee about the water quality of the St. Lawrence River without being recognized); Cleaver was at the end of his life a Mormon and a Republican. But their performances of the radical self persist in the loop of popular culture. Peariso concludes with the point that the potential of aesthetic radicalism may only be actualized when we struggle with



our “desire to see utopia realized,” that is, when we stop expecting radical performance to produce measurable results, or ascribe the apparent absence of those results to the visual forms of radical action. (186)

The point is well taken, but then there’s Donald Trump, who is playing the put-on, and it may put him in the White House. The difference is that in his case the radical theatrics celebrate the ideological order (even as they shake up the Republican Party). The performance of the transgressive radical self can be an image of revolution but it is not in and of itself revolutionary work. Yet activism must have a visual field; it must make itself perceived in the world. Peariso’s study of “failed” sixties radicalism is an important contribution to our growing understanding of the complexities of radicalism in the postmodern, where performance is everywhere and manifold.

ALAN FILEWOD

University of Guelph

**Nick Mansfield, *Soldiers as Workers: Class, Employment, Conflict and the Nineteenth-Century Military* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2016)**

THIS BOOK MAKES an important contribution to the field of 19th-century British labour history. For too long, soldiers have been disregarded as workers. Rather, they have been seen as the agents of government imposition of order (often against unions and working people), and consequently, as separate from the working class from which most enlisted men and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) originally sprang. In this study, Mansfield intends to redress the balance. He argues that soldiers did not, for the most part, come from the poorest sector of the working class (the so-called “scum of the earth” in Wellington’s famous phrase),

but were drawn from a cross-section of the “respectable” working class. Soldiers shared much with their civilian contemporaries, according to Mansfield, and retained key features of working-class culture: its values, aspirations, practices and strategies, and tactics for dealing with authority. As such, soldiers constitute a huge occupational group that has largely been ignored by historians, and which Mansfield is determined, paraphrasing E.P. Thompson, to rescue from the “condescension of most military and labour history.” (25)

The structure of the book consists of an introduction, three long chapters, and a conclusion. The introduction sets out the historiography, and explains the somewhat convoluted structure of military service in 19th-century Britain. The men of the regular army, the militia, the East India Company army, and overseas military adventurers, are all Mansfield’s subjects of investigation. Chapter 2 focuses on class structure in the army, which Mansfield says closely paralleled that of civilian society. Although there were some middle-class officers, in most branches of the army officers came principally from the aristocracy and gentry, of whom roughly two-thirds purchased their commissions. Mansfield investigates the working-class backgrounds of enlisted men and NCOs, how they were treated by the military, and their very limited opportunities for social mobility. Few NCOs were ever made officers even though, as he points out, it was the former “rather than the leisured officers who were responsible for most of the daily work and management of the regiment.” (28) Mansfield concludes that soldiers “were not a separate semi-criminal caste, cut off from society, but a cross-section of working-class men, whose pre-enlistment backgrounds and outside links with family, friends and home localities influenced their behaviour in uniform.” (69)

Given the relative lack of mobility to the officer class, NCOs generally sided with the enlisted men in their companies during disputes, at times acting as "a combination of foremen and shop stewards," (157) and were part of a "rankers world" (69) impenetrable by officers.

In Chapter 3, Mansfield focuses on soldiers as workers, arguing that they "were proletarians with their military phase forming only part of their working lives." (70) Regiments required a wide range of skilled workers in order to function: schoolmasters, tailors, boot and shoemakers, butchers, musicians, clerks, cooks, blacksmiths, and armourers were all vitally necessary. The men who filled these roles often drew on pre-army training and experience. They were paid more than ordinary soldiers, and excused from most military duties. Whether tradesmen or not, soldiers often had a fair amount of leisure time, allowing them to turn handicraft or penny capitalist skills to their private financial advantage. Mansfield gives victualling, letter writing, and souvenir making as examples of the latter. Some soldiers also became officers' servants, which gave them access to various perks, tips, and exemptions from duty. Finally, in India various administrative posts either in public service or in the provision of utilities were on offer. Mansfield shows that a range of similar conditions and behaviours existed between army tradesmen and civilian artisans: soldier-tradesmen like artisans were better paid, and their workshops "became strongholds of the alternative opaque world of the rankers." (71) Both groups enjoyed similar perks, including waste materials they could use for private profit making endeavours. Mansfield does admit that there is little evidence that soldier-tradesmen formed unions or friendly societies, and certainly, they could be called upon to quell civilian strikes. Much of the chapter is given over

to a detailed and valuable description of the conditions and practices in the various military trades. Mansfield concludes the chapter by noting that soldiers "largely showed pre-enlistment working-class attitudes and demonstrated solidarity in numerous ways." (154)

This last claim becomes the focus of Chapter 4. Again, Mansfield argues that class conflict in the military has not been sufficiently examined, and in a number of ways it resembled that found in the civilian labour market. Both control over the pace of work and the preservation of customary perks were central concerns and like artisans, soldier-tradesmen engaged "in acts of resistance when their practices were challenged." (155) Finally, Mansfield insists that "a contract culture, with customary rates of pay and self-defined outputs" (159) existed in the military, just as it did in the civilian work world, and that it grew with the expansion "of the market economy, the decline of paternalism in their regional society and its relationship with dynamic British imperialism." (165) Mansfield says, moreover, that it was embraced by all rankers when they encountered official demands they thought violated customary practices, and he characterises it as "a combination of Thompsonian 'moral economy' and modern class conflict." (156) He finds evidence of this contract culture in a number of strikes and mutinies, in the assassination of unpopular or incompetent officers, in the commission of crimes to avoid being sent to unpopular or unhealthy destinations, and in forms of passive resistance like barracks grumbling, backchat to officers (when there were no witnesses), or graffiti critical of officers. Less convincingly, Mansfield also attempts to fit looting, desertion, and serving with the enemy into the contract framework. Perhaps this was so some of the time, but other factors, reasons, and pressures of a personal nature also accounted for such

actions. Similarly, feigned illness, drunkenness, self-harm, and suicide may have arisen from notions of violated rights as Mansfield argues, but they also resulted from many other causes as well. The chapter makes important claims, and one wishes the strikes and mutinies had been more fully discussed (evidence permitting, of course).

The chapter might also have benefitted had Mansfield considered his passive-resistance material within the kind of framework James C. Scott developed in his books *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) and *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Mansfield's arguments are important, and they warrant further study. His claims about contract culture do need to be situated more clearly within their 19th-century context, however. Was contract culture backward looking to the moral economy, or was its growth in the military a response to the pressures of industrialization and imperialism? *Soldiers as Workers* addresses a lacuna in labour history, and one hopes that Mansfield will pursue these questions more fully in future work.

LYNN MACKAY

Brandon University

**Greg Patmore, *Worker Voice: Employee Representation in the Workplace in Australia, Canada, Germany, the UK and the US, 1914–1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2016)**

GREG PATMORE HAS spent more than fifteen years working on this comparative history of employee representation practices in five countries. The result is an astonishing piece of research that is both wide-ranging and thorough. It covers both individual firms with particularly

important employee representation plans (or ERPs) as well as the broader political economies of each of these five countries between the two world wars. For this reason alone, it deserves to find a broad audience amongst readers from a wide variety of countries and disciplines.

Those readers should understand, though, what the book is and what it isn't. Patmore is a labour historian working in a business school. Therefore his approach is more in tune with the social sciences than it is with the humanities. For people who are familiar with the history of industrialization, his work is closer to the economist Bruce Kaufman or perhaps even John R. Commons than it is to the historian David Brody or any of the other practitioners of the "New" Labour History. This is not the place to go to read the author's denunciations of what the American labour movement has traditionally referred to as "company unions." This is the place to go to understand how and to lesser extent why all company unions were not the same.

Some countries, and some employee representation plans inside those countries, get more attention in the book than others. America, a pioneer in non-union employee representation plans, perhaps gets the most space in these pages. The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company of Pueblo, Colorado, a pioneer in its own right thanks to its primary stockholder John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (whose picture graces the cover of the book), gets the most attention among the many possible employee representation plans from which Patmore might have chosen. On the other hand, while British Whitley Works Committees are the primary subject of the sections devoted to ERPs in the United Kingdom, no one company is the particular focus of this analysis.

Potential Canadian readers should know that ERPs in their country get less space in the book than most (with the

possible exception of Patmore's native country of Australia). This section focuses primarily on the steelworks at Sydney, Nova Scotia and to a lesser extent upon the Canadian National Railway. Patmore rightfully points to the influence of the Rockefeller Plan and its primary author, William Lyon Mackenzie King, here, which may explain the relative lack of space devoted to the Canadian situation. Much of the underlying analysis of the motives of Canadian ERPs applies equally to those in the United States. What Patmore does offer here is a detailed analysis of Canadian political economy that includes the kinds of details that seldom appear in labour histories of any kind.

The influence of the Rockefeller Plan on Canada is but one instance of cross-cultural influence in the book. As Patmore notes, "There was general interest in looking at all these concepts, irrespective of their national origins." (88) Australians, for instance, tried to both import British Whitley Committees and visited the United States looking for ideas. This is the primary advantage of any transnational historical study, particularly a work as ambitious as this one: It serves as a welcome reminder that globalism has had an impact long before the tightly-connected economy of today ever took hold.

The most disappointing part of *Worker Voice* is its short conclusion. Patmore restricts himself to noting the cyclical rise and fall of ERPs, when so many different kinds of historical analysis could have been undertaken. For example, any cross-country approach to a historical subject like this practically begs for an examination of the effect of culture upon the object of analysis, but Patmore seems reluctant to leave the realm of traditional political economy. His subject matter is restricted mostly to companies, unions, government, and the laws that regulated the interactions between all three of these parties.

A more understandable problem with the book is the relative lack of worker voices in a book called *Worker Voice*. Too often, the text relies on the voices of unions engaged in competing with ERPs rather than those workers actually involved in employee representation plans whether or not they happened to be members of a trade union. Patmore is very forthcoming about the strengths and weaknesses of the archival sources upon which has depended. Every labour historian understands why there would be a relative paucity of worker voices in any archives; this goes double when considering worker representation efforts that weren't always interested in treating those workers as equals. Yet some worker voices are here, particularly in the section about the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. This disparity alone is testament to the usefulness of a multi-country analysis of ERPs all by itself.

Perhaps the reason for the limited scope of the book is Patmore's decision to concentrate historical analysis at the end of the book. The rest of the book is expertly organized, with the context of, and the concepts behind, employee representation methodically explained, followed by a chapter devoted to each of the five countries examined one chapter at a time. It is easy for readers to draw useful comparisons as they go, but those comparisons are nonetheless more implicit rather than explicit. Spreading more of the analysis across the book would have made the research achievement that makes a five country comparison possible even more useful.

How readers respond to this organization likely depends upon their disciplinary perspective. What cuts across disciplines is the quality of the research, the usefulness of the five country comparison, and the way in which the stories told here could impact upon modern industrial relations legislation of all kinds.

Patmore believes that understanding the past can and should influence the present and describing how a similar issue played out across five countries makes the stories he tells in *Worker Voice* much more important than had he chosen to describe the ERP situation in just one nation. This kind of ambition deserves to be applauded.

JONATHAN REES

Colorado State University – Pueblo

**Rafael Rojas, *Fighting over Fidel: The New York Intellectuals and the Cuban Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2016)**

RAFAEL ROJAS, a prominent Cuban intellectual who lives and works in Mexico, has written a weighty and prescient book. *Fighting Over Fidel: The New York Intellectuals the Cuban Revolution* (translated by Carl Good) is not a book to be digested in one sitting. My slow and extended reading turned out to be significant in ways I had not anticipated as I picked up and put down and picked up this book over several months. For during this time, the protagonist himself died, and the world offered up more fuel for the debate this book explores. Fighting over Fidel's death has proven just as controversial, and fascinating, as fighting over Fidel's life.

The book covers extensive empirical ground. While his chosen container, "The New York Intellectuals," is porous and in practice quite useless, the range of publications, thinkers, and public figures in this wide-ranging intellectual history makes this a fascinating study. From *The New York Times* to *Monthly Review* to a range of lesser known alternative publications, and similarly from Herbert Matthews to Amiri Baraka to Allen Ginsberg, this is a compendium of who thought what about Cuba, especially in the 1960s. Opinions

and debates about race in Cuba, within the African American Left, are given substantial coverage. Sadly, predictably, and frustratingly, opinions and debate by the feminist left about gender in Cuba are not. Margaret Randall, a huge figure in the history of US/Cuban relations, who lived in Cuba for years, wrote voluminously of her experiences, (and annoyed the US government so much they tried to revoke her citizenship) is unmentioned here. This is inexplicable, and far more than an oversight. The paucity of female voices among the mythical New York Left is bad enough; the inability to conceptualize women's liberation as part of this movement should make readers pause and consider whether some male leftists have heard *anything* feminists have said in the past 50 years.

In this book, New York is to the US as Toronto is to Canada; the intellectual and cultural community where the actual folds into the imagined, with the same annoying results. So rather than trying to figure out how, to take an example, the opinions of British historian E.P. Thompson about Cuba can be considered as part of the "New York Left," readers would be wise to simply ignore this problematic categorization and move on to the more interesting questions this book raises.

For me those questions are many, but I'll select two here. Rojas begins with an intriguing and insightful observation, pertaining to the larger issue of political and cultural translation. The study of debate over the Cuban Revolution during the 1960s in New York, he says, "must consider politics of the translation of Latin American experience" (6) that emerged since the 16th century. Translation, he says, referencing work such as Mary Louise Pratt, has been the centre of the historical confrontations and contacts among the cultures of Europe, the US, and Latin America.

How is knowledge about the Other produced across borders? This question is as relevant for leftist intellectuals as it was for earlier generations of colonial missionaries and travellers. This insight from postcolonial studies is extremely useful for cutting through sloganeering and sermonizing, but for this case study, there is an additional dimension, Rojas' second important theme. What was subject to translation in the case of the Cuban revolution, he argues, was not just a culture but also a political project that unfolded in the midst of the Cold War.

The book is far more weighted to this second theme. Despite the differences between his protagonists such as Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy, C. Wright Mills, and Eldridge Cleaver, the narrative arc of each example of US left opinion on Cuba has a similar trajectory. In sum: the closer Cuba moved to Moscow, the further it moved from New York. As Rojas puts it, "nearly all of these adventures that began with identification ended in disenchantment or criticism." (27) The gap between the New Left and the Old was just too wide to traverse, internationally as much as domestically. For Rojas, this was the fatal blow for the Cuba/North American left relationship: "The leftist libertarianism of the bohemian counter culture and New Leftist intellectual life in general clashed with the transfer of the institutions and ideas of real eastern European socialism to the Cuban context." (28)

Fascination with Cuba opened North American leftists to a range of issues they hadn't much considered before; "third world" issues and racism among them. But as Rojas points out, inside Cuba "the discourses and practices of the New Left were viewed negatively and even repressed." (66) Or, more simply, as an Afro Cuban friend who came of age in the 1960s explained to me once, "why was Angela Davis a hero, but my decision

to wear my hair like hers in an Afro was bourgeois deviation?"

Perhaps the strongest contribution of this book is to raise questions about the simplistic paradigm of "solidarity" that has dominated discussions about Cuba from outside. As Rojas illustrates, the ideology of the revolution included defence of armed struggle, alignment with the Soviet Union, third world decolonization, nationalism, anti-racism, socialism, and integrationism. That's a lot to come to grips with, which is why the solidarity paradigm, which "subordinates intellectual processes to concrete political alliances" (193), insists on a consensus that is simply a fantasy. That fantasy Cuba continues in the polarized debates that continue in the wake of Fidel Castro's death. Liberator of Black Africa? Guardian of a tropical prison? Third world humanitarian? Visitors in the 1960s, such as C. Wright Mills, believed that the national collective will was represented directly through revolutionary leaders. Who and where is "the voice" of Cuba now? We would do well to recall Rojas injunction about the translation of experiences between Latin America and the West. Cuba-watching remains popular, and will no doubt continue post-Castro. Just don't be so quick to think we understand what's going on.

KAREN DUBINSKY  
Queen's University

**Sujani Reddy, *Nursing and Empire: Gendered Labor and Migration from India to the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2015)**

SUJANI REDDY'S *Nursing and Empire* traces the Anglo-American imperial origins of Indian nurse migration to the United States. Placing the US, rather than Britain, at the centre of her analysis of empire, Reddy complicates how colonialism



operated in India. She outlines over a century of US involvement in Indian public health and health care labour, exploring the United States' important role in the broader history of colonialism, decolonization, and global health philanthropy. She outlines how the work of American health professionals and philanthropic organizations, most significantly the Rockefeller Foundation, not only developed nursing as a profession in India, but in the process, also created a transnational Indian nurse labour market. Reddy bases her argument on archival research and life-history interviews with migrant Indian nurses working and living in New York City. She situates these migrant nurses' experiences within a broader historical political-economic context, to draw out the transnational constitution of the nursing profession.

Reddy powerfully complicates the feminization of nursing. Contrary to the case in the Anglo West, where nursing was seen as a suitable profession for white women because it relied on women's "natural" nurturing qualities, nursing in India was associated with lower classes and castes of women because of the intimate body work and cleaning involved in the everyday labour on the job. Over time, feminization brought changes, shifting it from a job of "dirty work" for lower class women into a respected profession and mode of upward mobility for many women in India – while, importantly, still dependent upon its stigmatized legacy.

The first half of *Nursing and Empire* pulls apart the stigmatized feminization of nursing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in India. Focusing primarily on the role of the Rockefeller Foundation, Reddy demonstrates how nursing evolved in tandem with mission work and then with the development of public health. In this process the back-and-forth of nursing labour migration between the US and India began as missionary nurses and

Rockefeller Foundation nurses came to establish nursing training programs in India, and Indian nurses travelled temporarily to the US for training and experience, via Rockefeller Foundation support.

*Nursing and Empire*, thus, adds depth and nuance to the history of American nursing, helping to situate it as part and parcel of the *global* history of nursing. In the second half of the book, Reddy shows how women used nursing to assert new class positions and were active agents, not passive migrants, in the development of nursing in India as well as in the nursing workforce in the US over the 20th century. Chapters 5 through 8 draw on life-histories of nurses who immigrated to the US during the Cold War. The chapters examine how changes to immigration law and a series of nurse shortages in the US both opened the door for nurse *immigration* and established the distinctly foreign nurse as an integral part of the American nurse workforce.

Overall, Reddy's text is a powerful one. This book is a valuable resource for many scholars in different fields, touching on health, gender, labour, and imperialism. Given its focus on nursing labour migration, feminist scholars – and especially those with an interest in labour and care – will find *Nursing and Empire* to be quite useful. The book adds nuance to the broader literature on the feminization of migration and on care work with its attention to the details and influences of place, race, gender, class, and caste with a transnational lens. This is an important work contributing to an intersectional analysis of gender, migration, and care, as well as the history of nursing. The book brings a specifically global intimate lens to the study of nursing and migration, demonstrating that the global workings of the nursing profession and health philanthropy are mutually constituted with the intimacies of Kerala society and nurses' personal and work lives.

Focusing on the heavy hand of American philanthropy alongside the development of nursing in the US, Reddy shows how no history of American nursing can be complete without understanding the American development of nursing abroad. Such an analysis spatially stretches analyses of borders and nations, labour markets, and gender. Furthermore, Reddy's focus on the US as an imperial force in nursing and in India is innovative and useful. It adds to analyses of British imperialism by focusing on how complementary relationships between Western states can work in tandem in support of colonialism. Reddy's discussion of what she refers to as Anglo-American capitalist imperialism is a useful label for the evolving partnership between the US and UK from the Age of Empire through the Cold War.

Importantly, Reddy reminds readers that the US is not only a global imperial force in India, but also a settler colony in the US. This fact deepens her analysis of the US as a multi-faceted imperial power and is critical for reconsidering the imperial foundations to nursing. The implications of the American settler colonialism in this particular context, however, could have been fleshed out much more. Similarly, while Reddy offers a fulsome and detailed engagement with open door immigration policy of the mid-20th century (what she refers to as "Open Door Nursing"), the connections between this new phase of American immigration policy and specifically decolonization in India could be more developed. While the connections are made, more detailed engagement with settler colonialism and decolonization could both strengthen the text and add to broader debates on empire.

These rather minor issues aside, the book is a thorough, thoughtful, and creative engagement with the imperial production of global health and the nursing

labour market. Reddy's rich study would produce a vibrant discussion in a graduate seminar. It is a must-read for any scholar of care work, and I highly recommend it to for those interested in rethinking the constitution of global and local labour markets and the gendering of work.

CAITLIN HENRY

University of Toronto

**Jukka Grunow, *On the Formation of Marxism: Karl Kautsky's Theory of Capitalism, the Marxism of the Second International and Karl Marx's Critique of Political Economy* (Leiden: Brill, 2016)**

BEGINNING IN the 1860s and continuing into the final decade of the century, the working-class movement revived in Europe and spread in areas of the continent and European settler-colonial territories in which it had not previously emerged. Although the crushing of the Paris Commune, repressive legislation in Germany, and other attacks by state authorities and employers dealt the movement setbacks, and the long Great Depression of the late-19th century worsened the lives of many of those it sought to organize, proletarian organizers succeeded in uniting a significant minority of their expanding class into new parties, unions, and a range of community-based workers' organizations.

This movement was ideologically heterogeneous. However, by the time most of its parties came together to form the Socialist International in 1889 the school of thought dubbed Marxism by its principal exponents was increasingly influential. The foremost of these theorists was Karl Kautsky (1854–1938), whose eminence after the death of Karl Marx's collaborator Frederick Engels in 1895 led some to call him "the Pope of Marxism." Kautsky played an important role in creating and popularizing what came to be

called Marxism (a name he deliberately used, in emulation of Darwinism) and in engaging in a battle of ideas against other theories within the Social Democratic Party in Germany and beyond. In debates within the Socialist International between the closing years of the 19th century and the outbreak of World War I, he was the leading figure of the orthodox "centre," pitted against the avowedly reformist "revisionists" and later also against the revolutionary "left." It is this contribution to shaping the ideological dimension of the working-class movement of his time that makes Kautsky significant; unlike Marx, there is no reason why people interested in social and political thought for our times would turn to Kautsky. That said, Kautsky's hand in creating the "Marxism – a system that must not be equated with Marx's thought, from which it differed in fundamental ways – that was diffused through the Socialist International and, indirectly, through the Communist International and its dissident offshoots is insufficiently appreciated (although the 21st century scholarship of Lars Lih has highlighted Kautsky's influence on Lenin).

In this light, the reappearance of Jukka Grunow's study of Kautsky's thought is noteworthy. Originally published in 1986 as a dissertation in sociology, it has been republished by Brill in a slightly different form, with an introduction that discusses more recent scholarship, as a volume of its Historical Materialism series (edited by editors of the journal of the same name). The book is organized in two parts: "Kautsky's Marxism" (some seven-tenths of the main body of the text) and "Marx's Marxism." Part One is focused on Kautsky's theory of capitalism, including imperialism, although it also contains chapters on Kautsky's politics and Lenin's polemics against them in 1917–1918. Part Two is made up of four chapters that discuss aspects of Marx's thought in relation

to that of John Locke, Adam Smith, and other political economists, in dialogue with a number of German Marxist writers of the 1970s and early 1980s, with only occasional references to Kautsky.

Grunow argues that Kautsky's "interpretation of Marx's *Capital* fails to pay attention to the specific character of Marx's theory as a critique of political economy." (288) This led Kautsky to offer a theory of capitalism that criticized it for "violating the right of the worker to the products of her or his own labour," (24) which Marx did not. Kautsky misread the first volume of *Capital* as a theoretical account of the historical evolution from one mode of production, simple commodity production, to another, capitalism, and of capitalism's "developmental laws." (289) Unlike Marx, Kautsky argued that "the basic contradiction of capitalism" (91) was that production was socialized while appropriated remained private. Also contrary to Marx, he envisaged socialism as "a single big firm or co-operative factory with a conscious and planned organization of production by the state." (92) This interpretation was influenced by Engels, as well as by ambiguities in Marx.

Kautsky believed that the concentration and centralization of capital would swell the ranks of the proletariat, leading inevitably to the strengthening of the socialist workers' movement and thence to the election of a socialist government and revolution. Although he, like other Second International theorists, wrote about the cartels and monopolies that were an undeniable feature of their era of capitalism, he had no systematic theory of them and their relationship to capitalist competition. He saw disproportionality between industry and agriculture, where production cannot expand economically as quickly as in industry, as a major problem for capitalism. Imperialism was one possible response to this, one that was only in the interests of finance capital;

free trade along with international economic and political agreements, was another. Grunow notes that Kautsky came to argue that the working class should fight for the latter in a broad alliance that could even include industrial capitalists, as a prelude to socialism.

The main contribution to the literature on Kautsky made by Grunow's study lies in its treatment of his writings on capitalism, which have received less attention than Kautsky's politics. It does not deepen the understanding of his political thought offered by Massimo Salvadori in *Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution, 1880–1938* (London: New Left Books, 1979), and its discussion of the important but confusing debate after the Russian Revolution about the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in which Kautsky participated is distinctly inferior to that in Hal Draper's *The "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" from Marx to Lenin* (New York: Monthly Review, 1987).

Unfortunately, Grunow's presentation of Kautsky's thought is less than clear, and sometimes repetitive. His important critical assessment of the relationship of Kautsky's ideas to Marx's critique of political economy would have been much more effective if it had clearly explained their divergence; readers without an advanced understanding of Marx will have a hard time grasping the issues. Those not already familiar with Second International Marxism are unlikely to appreciate other elements of this work. The title is to some extent misleading, since the book offers no discussion of the intellectual environment or social-historical context in which what Kautsky called "Marxism" developed. The text of *On the Formation of Marxism* makes for hard slogging for even highly motivated readers well-versed in the subject and is littered with peculiar wording (e.g. "alien labour," [246] "civilisatoric" [286]) and awkward formulations. It is regrettable

that the preparation of this revised version of Grunow's work did not involve considerably more revision and editing.

DAVID CAMFIELD

University of Manitoba

**Nick Dyer-Witheford, *Cyber-Proletariat: Global Labour in the Digital Vortex* (Toronto: Between the Lines 2015)**

IN HIS LATEST BOOK, Nick Dyer-Witheford advances theories of digital capitalism, the political economy of production chains, as well as understandings of how systems of oppression have shaped the development of a global proletariat. Furthermore, the regime of austerity that followed the great recession of 2008 plays a central role in his account of uneven economic and social transformation. "Some areas fell into economic decline," writes Dyer-Witherford, "others stagnated, yet others grew even faster than before but with increased social polarization." (4) It is here that new cycles of struggle began.

*Cyber-Proletariat* invokes the autonomous Marxist convention of using the working class as a point of departure, demonstrated by the focus on resistance and the role of technology in shaping the contours of social mobilization. In the United Kingdom, Dyer-Witheford illustrates, smartphones were used to outwit police during the riots of 2011. Anti-government protests in Egypt were similarly coordinated by these digital platforms. Meanwhile, outside of the Foxconn factories that produce our mobile technology, anti-suicide nets were being installed in an effort to counter labour's response to nightmarish working conditions: self-harm.

Most importantly, Dyer-Witheford avoids the utopian aspirations often associated with technological innovation. In fact, *Cyber-Proletariat* confronts this

tendency by problematizing assumptions that revolutionary objectives can simply be achieved through social media self-organization and on-line collectivism. To this conversation he adds advances in cybernetics and the promises this development held for the world of work. Indeed, revolutions in computerization and cybernetic systems maintain a prominent position throughout the book: specifically, inventor Norbert Wiener's predictions about the impact robotization would have on manufacturing in the United States. And, by invoking the work of Karl Roth and Marcel van der Linden, the book acknowledges that the process of proletarianization is constructed through mutual determination, whereby gender, race, and other intersections of oppression play a pivotal role in shaping the face of the global working class.

Chapter 2 invokes a characterization of capitalism as a vortex, "a whirlwind, hurricane or tornado, made up by the triple processes of production, circulation and financialization." (15) In other words, a reformulation of Marx and Engels' famous edict about markets, "all that is solid melts into air." Indeed, metaphoric language is featured throughout Dyer-Witthford's book and shapes the trajectory of each chapter. The so-called "whirlwind machine" is really that of turbulent financial markets, systems, and algorithms powered by developments in artificial intelligence. His analogy is also deployed to provide a conceptualization of technological innovation within capitalism, from James Watt's steam engine to modern mass production systems.

From here *Cyber-Proletariat* examines the effect such advances have had on the macro-economic reality, particularly Marx's predictions about the tendency towards a falling rate of profit. In an aptly titled section called "The Rate of Struggle", *operaismo* is subsequently invoked to critique consumptionist

perspectives on reform. (29) Theories of the social factory as well as the circulation and cycles of struggle, which provide a foundation for the analysis found in this chapter, truly are signature features of the autonomist tradition. Chapter 2 ends with a conversation about how cybernetics has radically changed the game. He goes on to illustrate this by pointing to an exchange between MIT professor and cybernetics pioneer, Norbert Wiener, to then-United Auto Workers president, Walter Reuther. In that 1949 letter, Wiener informed Reuther that the world of the (middle class) mass worker was to be threatened by "cybernetic automata." (41)

In getting to this point, Dyer-Witthford charts the history of cybernetics in Chapter 3. From a school of scientific thought that emerged throughout the 1930s and 1940s as part of the war effort, *Cyber-Proletariat* embraces the ideas of cybernetic thought as a "guide to how computers have altered the technological processes of capital." (42) Of course, this conversation cannot take place outside of the Cold War context, as well as the creation of super computers like MANIAC (Mathematical Analyzer, Numeric Integration and Computer) and the global nuclear arms race.

Although adoption of these technologies in manufacturing was slow, by the 1970s robotization was wedded to systems of workplace control, ushering in new managerial regimes. Toyota's lean or just-in-time production methods were emblematic of such developments. Japan's response to Fordism intensified work while enabling workforce reductions; it also changed the relationship between production and circulation. The chapter on cybernetics fittingly ends by revealing how utopian concepts about innovations in science and technology had allowed for the catastrophic fall of Detroit, both symbolically and economically, by the 1990s.

Dyer-Witheford proceeds to discuss Silicon Valley's role in enabling the ascendance of cyber capitalism. From the hacker culture that surfaced when computers and the Internet were released from military supervision to the rise of tech-geniuses, *Cyber-Proletariat* contrasts popular conceptions of "IT" with the harsh realities of manufacturing and other occupations that populate the factories and consumer outlets of advanced capitalism. Now, the battleground for labour has extended to include the "sharing economy."

Perhaps one of the most engaging parts of the book, Chapter 6 brilliantly dissects the moments of exploitation that characterizes the life span of a mobile phone. Dyer-Witheford demonstrates this by walking the reader through the five phases of this technology's cradle-to-crave existence: extraction, assembly, sale, service, and disassembly. In many ways this section functions as a microcosm of the book itself. From here he captures moments of appropriation deployed by the global proletariat once the phone is on-line, from employment to migration, money, and crime. Socially chaotic conditions, Dyer-Witheford insists, "require further everyday use of cybernetics for people to survive proletarianization." (121)

Chapter 7 advances the appropriation thesis further by reflecting on the radical changes in the labour force that have transpired over the last 100 years. Dyer-Witheford's insistence on keeping resistance at the forefront comes to a head in Chapter 8, as he showcases historic junctures where technology and working class mobilization meet. He starts by discussing the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, and the uprisings that ultimately swept the Arab-speaking world. Staying true to the autonomist tradition, the author recognizes that "proletarian movements" must "make use

of cybernetic communication" in their struggles against capital, but only if it is at the same time against the technologies as well. (167)

*Cyber-Proletariat* concludes by returning to theoretical ruminations about class, technology, and crises, before digging into some strategies of resistance. Unfortunately, the resolutions are less tangible than other elements of the book, which is often the case of literature seeking revolutionary, not reformist, outcomes.

Still, the book is an excellent primer for students of the autonomist Marxist tradition. It is rich with historical references, discussion of theory, and active, on-the-ground accounts of struggle. To accomplish this, Dyer-Witheford canvasses the work of labour scholars, Marxists, political economists, and theorists of post-industrialism in an effort to enable an understanding of the function of cybernetics in the circuits of capital and resistance. In this sense the book advances critical readings of information and communication technologies and the prospects for cyber-proletarian mobilizations.

ANDREW STEVENS  
University of Regina

**Kendra Coulter, *Animals, Work, and the Promise of Interspecies Solidarity* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2016)**

*ANIMALS, WORK, and the Promise of Interspecies Solidarity* covers a vast intellectual terrain by bringing contemporary work and labour issues together with thinking about animals, nature, and social relations. In this compact and innovative work, Kendra Coulter makes a unique contribution to a subfield that is only just emerging. The book challenges us to question the separation of the human and natural world, and through the



lens of work and labour processes, to begin to think about how animals' lives are interwoven with various forms of human social relations. *Animals, Work, and the Promise of Interspecies Solidarity* employs a range of research methods, ranging from policy analysis to ethnographical participant observation to make an argument for the importance of conceptualizing interspecies labour. Coulter proposes "a multifaceted and contextual approach to understanding work involving animals, one that is genuinely multispecies and that takes both human and animal well-being seriously." (2) Coulter's work, and the broader field of critical animal studies, seeks to extend the scholarship of social justice and "engaged theory" beyond the realm of humans. This book is an ambitious effort toward that objective.

The book begins with an impressive introduction that will be helpful to readers unfamiliar with research in animal studies. Coulter makes a convincing case for broadening the approach of labour studies to include animal work and human-nonhuman relations, and outlines how she will pursue this throughout the book. She divides the three chapters of the book into "The Work Done With/For Animals" (Chapters 1 and 3), and "The Work Done By Animals" (Chapter 2).

Chapter 1 deals with "Daily Work and Labor Processes." Here Coulter reviews literature from the tradition of symbolic interactionism that focuses on ethnographically observing animal-human relations in the context of work, as well as labour process theory that includes animals in discussions of how work is organized and structured. She seeks to connect the insights drawn from these two influences to better understand labour processes involving animals. The strongest portion of this chapter, however, is its treatment of the political and economic dynamics shaping work with or for animals. For example, Coulter points

out that because much work with animals falls within the realm of agriculture, the lack of labour rights and protections which negatively affect human working conditions have a further deleterious impact on animals. Coulter highlights throughout the book the relationship between the quality and pay of labour and the treatment that animals receive under the care or supervision of workers. In short, the better the conditions and pay, the more likely animals are to be better treated and cared for. This argument forms part of her case for the shared interests of humans and animals at work, for "interspecies solidarity."

Coulter also discusses the industrialization of animal food production, noting the centralization and rationalization of the labour process and production system that accompanied it. Here, she further links the violence and mistreatment done to animals to the drive for profit, pointing out the contradictions this often generates for farmers and farm workers when the commodity being raised for market is in fact a sentient being. When labour-saving technologies are introduced or speed up on the shop floor takes place, it is not only workers who experience the effects; more animals are killed, and the pain and suffering they endure may be increased, or the conditions and time required for workers to attend to their needs prior to death is limited. As she points out, care requires time, the very thing that businesses processing animals' flesh wish to shrink in the drive to increase production.

Chapter 2 moves to a discussion of "The Work Done By Animals." Coulter pursues her conceptualization of animals' work by way of a post-humanist (or as she puts it "beyond humans") framework. She seeks to not only explore the work that animals perform in its historical and contemporary relationships to human society, but, in keeping with

the overall project of the book, to make inseparable the connections between animal and human labour and thus the well-being of all species involved in labour processes. In this chapter, Coulter uses a feminist political economy framework to begin thinking about the unacknowledged or unvalued labour of animals. Moreover, she shows interspecies connections by pointing out, for example, that animals' subsistence work is impacted by human-made changes to the natural environment which alter, and in many cases make more difficult, animals' life-sustaining activities.

She also puts forward a helpful taxonomy for mapping the conceptual categories of animals' work, which includes subsistence work, voluntary work, and work mandated by humans (either for profit or in non-profit workplaces). It is in the latter category where animals have the most labour contact with humans and can most convincingly be described as types of workers in such examples as law enforcement, tourism, or service work.

In the final chapter, Coulter returns to work done with or for animals, focusing on "Political Labor and the Work of Advocacy." As throughout the book, she uses an expanded definition of work which encompasses care, protection, and advocacy work, i.e. activity that is both waged and non-waged and has to do with the reproduction of human and non-human life. She also outlines what she calls the "praxis" of animal advocacy, discussing approaches to this work that are motivated by animal welfare and animal rights. Also interesting in this chapter is Coulter's analysis of workplace issues such as "compassion fatigue" (114) that often arise from the difficult emotional labour and undervaluation of protection and advocacy work. Noting the moral commitment of many who choose work in this field, she highlights

the demanding working conditions that sometimes result when political action becomes waged labour. This chapter also contains a lively historical discussion of the class dynamics at work in animal advocacy work, and some of the contradictions that arise when political action on behalf of animals threatens the livelihood or power of human workers. For example, Coulter argues that early animal advocates and organizations often disproportionately focused on abuses committed by the poor and working classes. And in her subsection on "Animals and Unions," while noting the fairly strong confluence of interests on the part of workers and the animals with which they work, she points out that animal advocates have at times pushed for certain animal work to be abolished and thus threatened the jobs of some workers (for example, Teamster-driven horse carriages). This tension between the at times confluent and at times contradictory interests of workers and animals runs throughout the work, but it never resolved in any systematic way.

*Animals, Work, and the Promise of Interspecies Solidarity* ends with an "Anifesto," wherein Coulter puts forward her strongest statement on what she envisions as interspecies solidarity. She does not advocate seeing animals as workers in the same sense that we speak of human workers, but rather to recognize their work as another dimension of their lives as individuals and members of communities. Against the position commonly referred to as "abolitionism," which seeks the complete end to humans' use and abuse of animals, Coulter asks us to use the prism of work to complicate our thinking about human-nonhuman relations, and to consider what it would mean to promote the care and wellbeing of both. As she writes: "Work does not automatically mean pain and coercion, nor does it mean pure joy and voluntary involvement. This applies equally

to work done with, by, and for animals.” (148) What is most compelling about this argument, and indeed about the entire work itself, is the way it speaks to two audiences who may not be speaking to one another all that often. While encouraging animal advocates and activists to use the lens of work and labour to think more deeply about the complexities of interspecies relations, the book also prods labour scholars, unionists, and the left more broadly to recognize the work that animals do for and with humans and the abuses that they often suffer in the process. This is a timely and important work, which will hopefully generate much discussion and further research.

ADAM D.K. KING  
York University

**Adrián Sotelo Valencia, *The Future of Work: Super-Exploitation and Social Precariousness in the 21st Century* (Leiden: Brill 2016)**

THE FINANCIAL CRISIS and recession of 2007–2009, together with the ongoing malaise of the global economy that ensued, has unleashed a torrent of conflicting analyses concerning the root causes and future course of what Anwar Shaikh has called the First Great Depression of the 21st Century. Shaikh belongs to a growing current of radical political economists who regard the “law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall” (LTRPF) as central to Marx’s theory of capitalist crisis and as indispensable to explaining long-term trends within an increasingly crisis-ridden and debt-burdened global economy. Despite the many differences separating them, proponents of the LTRPF – among them, Shaikh, Guglielmo Carchedi, Andrew Kliman, Fred Moseley, Michael Roberts, and this writer – have converged around several major propositions: that the current global crisis is rooted in the persistent

profitability problems of productive capital; that these problems stem in good part from technological innovations that diminish the role of living wage-labour in the processes of commodity production; that the growing prominence of “finance” and credit/debt in the advanced capitalist and global economies is a manifestation of an unprecedented proliferation of “fictitious capital” in recent decades; and that the problem of *insufficient production of surplus value*, which underlies all of these issues, can only be overcome through a massive devaluation of capital stocks, a major increase in the rate of exploitation of wage labourers, and draconian measures to reduce systemic “overhead” costs.

To the literature supporting these fundamental propositions Adrián Sotelo Valencia’s book adds a number of very distinct theoretical hypotheses as well as several well-aimed polemics against recent critiques of Marx’s theory of labour value, the major postulates of which constitute the foundation of the LTRPF. A prominent Mexican sociologist, Sotelo brings to the analysis of what he calls the “structural crisis” of global capitalism a perspective heavily informed by the “advanced dependency theory” of the Brazilian Marxist Ruy Mauro Marini. He seeks to establish, both through theoretical argument and empirical illustration, that the phenomenon of “super-exploitation” – once mostly confined to the “dependent” capitalist economies of the Global South – is now evincing a tendency to “generalize ... as a category that can be seen throughout the system.” According to Sotelo, this development flows inexorably from capital’s need to “maximize surplus value extraction in order to restore the conditions for its own reproduction and to elevate the rate of profit throughout the system.” (5)

Sotelo’s book is divided into two parts. Part I is devoted to establishing the validity and contemporary relevance of Marx’s

theorization of capital and labour as “antipodes” (whose conflict is fundamental to social change under capitalism) as well as the Marxian postulate that living labour is the sole source of value and surplus value (and therefore of profit). Not only has a crisis in the production of surplus value “facilitated the deviation of capital reproduction towards the unproductive, speculative spheres of fictitious capital” (5), but a “crisis of relative surplus value is the essence of the structural crisis of capital in advanced capitalism.” (42)

In Marx’s theory, the category of relative surplus value refers to surplus value resulting from increases in the productivity of labour brought about by labour-saving and labour-displacing technological innovation. It depends, therefore, on a diminution in the time devoted during the working day to the creation of the new value that constitutes the wage fund of the productive workforce. Relative surplus value must be distinguished from “absolute surplus value,” which depends on a prolongation of the working day in order to increase the amount of time devoted to the “unpaid” labour that creates surplus value. As Sotelo emphasizes, growing reliance on relative surplus value leads over time to a falling average rate of profit, motivating capital to mobilize what Marx calls the “counteracting” factors to falling profitability. Among the latter are such measures as prolonging the workday, intensifying the labour process (for example, through speed-up and lean production techniques), and the reduction of wages below the value of labour power. To say that “advanced capitalism” has reached a stage of “crisis of relative surplus value” is therefore to assert that capital must rely increasingly on measures that amount to “super-exploitation” of the workforce. This is precisely the central thesis of Sotelo’s book: “it has become possible for labour super-exploitation to become generalised throughout

the system (with specific modalities to be sure) as the counterpart both of the crisis of surplus value and of the tendentious [sic] fall in the average rate of profit.” (42)

Part II of the book explores the ways in which the tendency for super-exploitation to become generalized has manifested itself (unevenly and differentially) in recent decades – in the traditional “peripheries” of the world system, in the “new peripheries” of the former countries of “real socialism,” and in the “hegemonic” capitalist countries. In this connection, and drawing on the work of Marini, Sotelo reviews earlier debates surrounding the existence of “two patterns of capital accumulation: the dominant mode based on relative surplus value and the productivity of labour and, second, capital accumulation at work in dependent economies based on the greater exploitation of the worker.” (5) While these two distinctive patterns still characterize the new international division of labour, the declining rate of profit in the advanced capitalist world has opened the door to significant penetration of “elements of super-exploitation” into even the richest capitalist countries.

This is a theoretically dense and often confusing work, made all the more difficult to read by a prolixity of style and a disappointingly poor translation of the original Spanish edition (witness, for example, how “the tendential fall in the rate of profit” is rendered as “the tendentious fall” in the passage cited above). Although Sotelo provides interesting arguments that lend general support to the LTRPF-informed theses outlined at the beginning of this review and offers valuable new insights regarding the phenomenon of labour super-exploitation, his book will be accessible and useful only to readers with a solid command of Marxist economic theory and a good deal of patience for his sometimes problematic treatment of a series of controversial issues. I was

especially disappointed by his theoretical treatment of the productive-unproductive labour distinction in Chapter 2, which presaged his uncritical endorsement in Chapter 5 of an empirical study of the US economy that treats the Marxian category of variable capital as equivalent to the total wage bill. Furthermore, his reliance on the flawed Martin Nicolaus English-language translation of Marx's *Grundrisse* (which mistakenly represents Marx's concept of *Verwertung* as the "realization" rather than the "valorization" of capital) often confuses his discussion and serves to undermine his core thesis regarding the crisis of relative surplus value. All the same, for those well versed in the literature, Sotelo's book can be recommended as a stimulating refutation of the "end of work" thesis of bourgeois futurists like Jeremy Rifkin as well as the "immaterial labour" theses of post-Marxists like Andre Gorz and Antonio Negri, and as a path-breaking effort to show that a "phenomenon as complex as super-exploitation cannot be reduced to the simple violation of the value of labour-power" (98) as originally posited by Marx.

MURRAY E.G. SMITH  
Brock University

**George S. Rigakos, *Security/Capital: A General Theory of Pacification* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2016)**

IN THIS SUCCINCT yet highly informative book, George Rigakos relies on the oftentimes prophetic work of Karl Marx to critically analyze the relationship between security and capitalism. He theorizes that pacification produced capitalism, as the dispossession of feudal peasants and Indigenous peoples from their lands, along with the exploitation of workers so that they conform to wage labour relations, was enforced through security

mechanisms and policing. Additionally, he argues that through the commodification of security through its valorization, prudentialization, and fetishization, we have become insecure and accustomed to buying security commodities, resulting in a security-industrial complex that sustains global capitalism and leads to the further pacification of workers. Thus, Rigakos contends that security is hegemonic under capitalism since it reproduces and resuscitates capitalism time and time again.

Rigakos strengthens his theoretical claims by providing examples to show how pervasive pacification, and by extension the security-industrial complex, is within our everyday lives. For instance, when he discusses the fetishization of security and how we as risk-averse consumers buy products to fit a security lifestyle; he gives an example where his wife was enticed to buy expensive running shoes to secure herself against injury. He then connects this to global capitalism, as the buying of this security commodity enforces the pacification of workers through security mechanisms, like CCTV, in order to further produce these commodities for profit. By taking these mundane interactions, like buying a pair of running shoes, to demonstrate how security has been commodified and how security fuels capitalism's growth and revitalization, Rigakos forces the reader to acknowledge that there is a security-industrial complex that operates in the background of our everyday lives. Furthermore, by seamlessly using historical and contemporary examples, like how modern CCTV cameras exploit workers similarly to how 18th-century police reformer Patrick Colquhoun's police did, he demonstrates how security continues to produce capitalism in the present. In turn, the reader is invited to reflect on how they too have been pacified and even supportive of pacification within

this centuries-old, ongoing relationship between the security-industrial complex and global capitalism.

After making its readers cognizant of the relationship between security and capitalism, Rigakos is then able to make a case for why critical scholars need to understand how security enforces capitalism. He notes that previous influential Marxist theorists, like Althusser and Gramsci, disregarded the relationship between capitalism and security and as such, there has been no radical theorization of security, with the consequence being that a social order based on continuous dispossession and exploitation has remained in place. Through historical and contemporary examples of the security-industrial complex, Rigakos thus makes critical scholars aware of how they *must* theorize policing and security reform if they want to transform exploitative capitalist relations. In doing so, he is able to both show Marxists and other critical theorists why they should be familiar with pacification as they are with concepts like Gramsci's cultural hegemony while also cutting out future work for pacification theorists.

Yet, although Rigakos makes the case for the importance of examining pacification, it is towards the end where I find that he stumbles. Almost out of nowhere, he concludes about how the Left's academics and politicians must develop an alternative police science in order to use policing and security to make a transition from capitalism to socialism. Although this does fit with his overall argument, it also feels too much like a retread of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" Marxist answer to capitalism rather than a practical solution. Over the course of the book, he had argued about how there is a feedback loop with security and capitalism, as people consume security commodities to feel secure but since security commodities inadvertently broadcast insecurity,

people continuously buy more security commodities to try to attain a security status, which fuels the security-industrial complex and sustains capitalism. In his conclusion, he does mention that to change this structure and break this loop, we need to continue to identify and analyze the human drives and activities that condition us to seek out security commodities and that security must be socialized by undermining capitalist enterprises. However, this is an ambitious yet ambiguous strategy and given how he highlighted how buying simple commodities in our everyday lives, like running shoes, supports the ubiquitous security-industrial complex and reinforces the security/insecurity loop, the reader is left wondering how resistance is supposed to materialize if every commodity they buy ends up supporting the omnipresent security-industrial complex. Furthermore, since Rigakos predicts a future where individuals are too busy perpetually managing their security profiles through commodities and thus remaking capitalism through security, it seems that breaking this security/insecurity loop will be necessary in order to garner support for the Left's alternative police science. I only wished that Rigakos had theorized individual acts of resistance that can break this security/insecurity loop so as to show both how the security-industrial complex can be challenged and how support for the Left and its alternative police science can be mobilized.

Another real weakness that emanates from his book is that Rigakos hardly takes into consideration other social relations, like race and gender. For example, in his chapter on dispossession, he simply explains that in order to fabricate capitalism in Europe, pacification involved the displacement of serfs from communal lands and that similarly, to produce a capitalist order in the colonies, Indigenous peoples were also displaced. As a postcolonial



scholar, I find it troubling that Rigakos did not account for how the racialization of Indigenous bodies and civilizing discourses intersected with pacification since it universalizes the pacification experience instead of making the reader aware of how pacification often operates through racism. A similar critique could probably also be made in regards to other social relations. Since Rigakos argues that the Left must theorize an alternative police science to fabricate a socialist social order, it would have been helpful for Rigakos to emphasize the intersection of these social relations with security so that the reader could be aware of how the Left must engage with these social relations when theorizing how an alternative police science would operate.

However, despite these criticisms, as a general theory on pacification, Rigakos' book is a highly recommended read, especially as an introductory text for students and academics who are learning about pacification theory, anti-security, and the criminalization of dissent. Moreover, given my criticisms, other theorists may find this book as a useful starting point for understanding the machinations of the security-industrial complex before continuing this type of work and either theorizing how resistance can be effectively materialized or building a conceptual model for an alternative police science.

MATHEW MONTEVIRGEN  
University of Toronto

**Branko Milanovic, *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2016)**

IN THE LAST SEVERAL years there has been an explosion of mainstream economics literature on inequality including writings by Branko Milanovic who spent decades at the World Bank and is author of the

*The Haves and the Have-Nots: A Brief and Idiosyncratic History of Global Inequality* (New York: Basic Books, 2012). His new book, *Global Inequality* is an excellent complement to Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), a work which has boosted the momentum for a focus on inequality. Milanovic's timely short book examines changes in inequality focusing on the period since 1988, a period he refers to as a "high globalization" era. He explains the evolution of inequality within advanced economies, an income convergence among nations, and the interaction between them using concepts such as global inequality, Kuznets waves, the elephant curve, the global middle class, global plutocrats, and citizenship premium in five concise chapters.

The analysis focuses on three social classes: the global middle class (urban residents of China and other emerging economies), global plutocrats, and the middle class of advanced economies. "High globalization" benefited the first two classes, and harmed the last group. Key developments include: the high growth rate in Asian economies which boosted convergence and helped the rise of the "global middle class," the weakening of the middle class in advanced economies, the rise of the share of the top 1% in global income and wealth, and the associated rise of inequality in advanced economies. These trends are captured by the "elephant curve" (Figure 1.1: 11) showing the cumulative percentage income gain of the three classes. Using household surveys of income of nations the figure shows that between 1988 and 2008 the real income of the global middle income rose the most, followed by the global plutocrats, while the income of the global upper middle class (the advanced world's middle class) remained stagnant.

Milanovic captures this reversal of fortune for the middle class of advanced

countries by the novel concept of Kuznets waves. Historically, inequality rose in the West during the industrialization decades, and started declining in the first half of the 20th century. Kuznets claimed that industrialization caused both income and inequality to increase initially, but eventually increases in income accompanied reduced inequality. This relationship, the Kuznets curve, became the conventional wisdom in economics until inequality started rising in the last quarter of the 20th century. This development led Piketty to reject the claim that the Kuznets curve captured some natural tendency of capitalism, and posited that the decline in inequality experienced by the West was caused by exogenous shocks of the two world wars and the economic policies shaped by them.

Milanovic's comment on Piketty is twofold. Firstly, he contends that the causes of World War I were not exogenous to the economy, and instead the war can be explained by rising inequality and class conflict. He refers to Hobson, Lenin, and Luxemburg to explain how increased inequality within industrialized countries led to imperialism and war. The war unleashed the forces of "the socialist movement, the Russian revolution" and caused the destruction of capital. (98) Consequently, inequality began declining in the 20th century as captured by the original Kuznets curve. Once these conditions reversed, inequality started to rise again undergirded by globalization and technological revolution. Secondly, this means that increased inequality at present could generate political forces that would bring about another decline in inequality, i.e., a new Kuznets curve, hence the idea of Kuznets waves. Milanovic argues that inequality can decline for both malign (war, civil conflict, epidemics) and benign (labour movement, education, demographic and technological changes) reasons. The second wave

of decline in inequality can be caused by any combination of these forces. He summarizes long-term data on changes in income and inequality and the movement of Kuznets waves for six advanced economies in an illuminating manner. (Table 2.2: 88) Unlike Piketty who avoids the use of Gini coefficient as a measure of inequality, Milanovic employs it to explain his innovative idea that inequality moves in cycles.

Global inequality is measured by a combination of inequality within nations and inequality among nations. The first industrial revolution increased both components of global inequality by creating disparity between urban and rural incomes within industrialized countries, and divergence between the Western world and the rest. Beginning in the 1970s, developing economies experienced high growth rates and the convergence phenomenon began that became vigorous during the high globalization period. Global inequality declined even as inequality within nations rose. In other words, the relative loss of the advanced countries' middle class was more than compensated for by the rise in income of the global middle class. But this change is relative, and absolute average income in emerging economies remained significantly lower than the average income of advanced economies. Milanovic asserts that for individuals both family (class) and country (location) to which they are born mattered. Hence, he puts forward the idea of location premium or citizenship rent, and the associated pull-push factors for economic migration.

Milanovic discusses the tensions created by illegal migration and suggests possible solutions by replacing the binary character of citizenship with an intermediate level of citizenship in the form of an expanding temporary workers class and creating a legal migrant status that does not confer all citizenship rights. He does

not address the forced mass migration created by American and NATO wars in the Middle East and thus does not call for an end to imperialism. He discusses the dangers that the combination of plutocracy, populism, and nativism pose in European countries, but is less concerned about it in America. Since the book went to press before Brexit and the rise of Donald Trump as the Republican nominee, Milanovic's predictions seem right on for Europe, but rather off the mark with regard to developments in the US.

The last chapter of the book includes predictions on future trends in inequality and an agenda for change. To reduce inequality in rich countries he argues against the usual tax and transfer system because taxing mobile capital is difficult due to globalization, tax havens, and difficulties in forging international concerted action. Unlike Anthony B. Atkinson (*Inequality: What Can be Done?* [Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2015], 264–265) who does not consider globalization necessarily incompatible with the welfare state and is moderately optimistic about international cooperation, Milanovic considers such cooperation improbable. He therefore hesitantly suggests the redistribution of endowments as an alternative. The two main endowments for redistribution are wealth and education: wealth

redistribution in the form of inheritance tax and distribution of corporate shares to workers; and redistribution of education in the form of equal access to the best schools and the equalization of the quality of education across schools.

Another issue addressed is the impact of global warming on growth and what a fair burden sharing might be between high and low income countries. However he does not discuss the impact of global warming on different classes, and thus its direct impact on inequality within nations. Finally, while he is critical about the recent focus on identity based equality and the neglect of income inequality, he does not sufficiently reflect on what the labour movement may become. He underlines the negative impact of the new technology on labour organizing, but ignores the legal and institutional setting that make organizing difficult. He could have for example discussed the likely impact of enforcing the International Labour Organization's core labour standards on the global labour movement and the global labour market. Despite these omissions the book provides key concepts and a robust framework for a better understanding of the political economy determinants of global inequality and some policy suggestions to reduce such inequality.

ABDELLA ABDULKADIR ABDOU  
Brandon University