

Shubert's book, behind an anodyne cover and unpretentious printed format, constitutes a major work which should initiate a new era of scholarship — post ideology, post historic eras defined by power relations at all levels and before a new one begins. For Spain, there now exists a firm foundation of fact and process as studied by economists, anthropologists and historians. The neutrality and objectivity of Shubert's synthesis can lead both to a new conceptualization of this complex nation as a whole and of the problems still to be explored.

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Max Swerdlow — *Brother Max: Labour Organizer and Educator*. St. John's, Newfoundland: Committee on Canadian Labour History, 1990. Pp. xv, 129.

Memoirs (often ghost-written) of politicians, industrialist, film and sport stars have become commercialized commonplace. However, when a memoir of a union leader makes its appearance, it is truly an event, and the Committee on Canadian Labour History is to be congratulated for its involvement in this venture.

Brother Max traces the life of a highly pragmatic labour bureaucrat who is quoted as saying: "You can't organize successfully without educating: you can't educate effectively without organizing." And it is this underlying duality around which Max Swerdlow articulates his twelve chapter testament.

Born in Odessa of a family of Jewish theatre performers, the Swerdlow's would "almost by accident" make their way to Winnipeg in the mid 1920's where young Max would soon find himself fashioned by the crucible of the Great Depression. It was poverty, it was the end of school at grade 8, it was riding the rails, it was the Young Communist League, it was attendance at the Regina Convention of the CCF..., it was, in essence, an apprenticeship in activism that would instruct his future.

By the mid 1930's, Max had found his way to Montreal where his nascent career as an union official became closely alligned with the unionization of that city's needle trades. After landing a job as a clocker in a ladies hat factory that had recently been organized by the United Hatters, he made his way through the ranks: shop steward, local secretary, recording secretary, and at the ripe old age of 20, representative on the Montreal Trades and Labour Council and the recently established Quebec Provincial Federation of Labour. From here, and under the mentorship of such legendary union figures as Maurice Silcoff and Robert Haddow, Brother Max really came into his own. Special assignments with the hatters' union led to organizational work under the banner of the International Association of Machinists that was in full expansion due to the war effort. Next, Max found himself appointed the first full-time Trades and Labour Congress organizer in Quebec, a post he would hold until 1955; he was 27 years old at the time.

For two decades, Brother Max was a privileged observer of the Quebec union scene, and his memoir is exceptionally valuable in this respect since it covers a period of time that is only now starting to obtain the attention of historians. It fleshes-out, so to say, many of the major developments affecting the international and pan-Canadian

labour scene of the time. We have his agonizing observations on the split within the House of Labour with the eventual expulsion of the CIO unions from the TLC. There is valuable information on organizational activities that took place in the munition, rubber, meat packing, textile and mining industries, including unedited commentary on union raiding that was endemic at the time. And, finally, Max provides the reader with a gallery of portraits of key union actors of the day including Raoul Trepannier, Arthur Martel, Phil Cutler, Roger Provost and Alphage Bodoïn.

As for Brother Max himself, it is interesting to see how a Jewish, English-speaking labour leader was able to navigate in the cross and counter current of the unique Quebec union scene. He was flexible to say the least. If it meant dealing with plant managers or the local parish *curé*, then so be it. Principles were important, but they seemed not to get in the way of either his action or his humanity. In tight squeezes, he was ready to play hard ball, and he was an astute practitioner of many of the tactics popularized in the early 1970's by Saul Alinsky. Yet a sense of perspective was always present. Brother Max did his work during an era where hostility between labour and management was particularly virulent in the province. What is interesting, however, is that his memoir does not depict the commonly ascribed union-busting image of the Duplessis period, nor does *le Chef* emerge as the ogre that contemporary scholarship presents. In saying so little on the subject, the memoir seems to implore the need for historical re-questioning.

In 1952, Max's career took on expanded scope. By then a close *protégé* to TLC president Percy Bengough (who also receives intimate coverage in the memoir), Max was "called" to Ottawa to become National Director of Organization. From this vantage point, Max lived the proceedings that were consummated in 1956 with the establishment of the Canadian Labour Congress, and his chapter entitled "The Merger" is most interesting, especially when it comes to depicting the climate of the period and the role played by Claude Jodoin in bringing about union re-unification.

Just as the emergence of the CLC heralded a new era for organized labour, so too it meant a fresh start for Max Swerdlow. With the establishment of 45 federally-chartered unions embracing 10,000 workers under his belt, Max was ready for a new challenge. The sorting out that followed the merger offered opportunity for change. The legacy of the Workmen's Circle School of his Winnipeg youth had always been close to the surface, so when Max was offered the directorship of the CLC's Political Education Department, he readily grasped it. To him a "union's educational programme reflect[ed] not only its conception of the labour movement, but also its attitude towards society and life itself."

Close to half of the memoir focuses on Max's labour education mission with the CLC and the International Labour Organization, and it is obvious that this constitutes what Max himself considers his lasting legacy to the workingman/woman. Here, we see the tremendous influence of J. "Roby" Kidd, the father of contemporary Canadian adult education, on the educational strategy that Max would promote. The institutes, summer schools, staff seminars that emerged sought to provide union officials with a spectrum of abilities that would enable them to effectively discharge their responsibilities. Moreover, this bread-and-butter focus was complemented by a philosophy of liberal education that made sure that broad social, economic, and international issues found their way into the curriculum. The culmination of this educational effort came in 1963 with the founding of the Labour College of Canada, and Max leaves us

with a very interesting glimpse of the political waltzing that took place between the CLC and the university establishment on this outwardly harmless issue.

As time went on, Max found himself drawn into the orbit of the ILO, and in 1966, came a request for him to undertake a short-term assignment in the Caribbean. Cipriani Labour College in Port-of-Spain and Critchlow Labour College in Georgetown were the result of this Canadian connection. Brother Max's career then found expression within the ranks of the international labour movement; when he retired in 1975, he was ILO Regional Advisor on Worker's Education in Asia.

Max Swerdlow's memoir evidences the sense of unity and direction that characterized his involvement in the union movement. It provides a fine image of his public life, well supported by a collection of photographs that accompany the text. Unfortunately, however, with the exception of his initial chapter that presents a snapshot of his youth and a few comments here and there on his wife, the private side of Brother Max does not surface. This absence does not spoil the undertaking, but it removes part of its zest. The humanistic tendencies that pierce through his narrative here and there leaves one convinced that there must have been more to his life than the imperatives of his calling as a labour bureaucrat.

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Laurier Turgeon, dir. — *Les productions symboliques du pouvoir, XVI^e-XX^e siècles*. Sillery (Québec) : Les éditions du Septentrion, 1990, 214 p.

Depuis plus d'une quinzaine d'années, le/la politique sourd à nouveau du territoire de l'historien. Au confluent d'une anthropologie sociale et culturelle et d'une sociologie politique, l'histoire politique, entendue comme histoire du pouvoir ou des pouvoirs, s'est d'abord concentrée sur les modalités de constitution des États, institution politique par excellence, et sur les mécanismes de pouvoir activés par les différentes institutions avant de s'intéresser davantage à la politisation des pratiques culturelles. C'est à ce point de jonction entre politique et culture que l'ouvrage dirigé par Laurier Turgeon jette l'ancre. Collection de dix études présentées lors d'un atelier de travail du Centre d'études sur la langue, les arts et les traditions populaires des francophones en Amérique du Nord (CELAT), en mars 1988, cet ouvrage s'inscrit dans la nouvelle problématique définie par le Centre d'études, à la fin des années 1980, qui vise à appréhender dans une perspective comparative les différentes contextualités des pratiques et des espaces culturels. *Les productions symboliques du pouvoir* entreprend ainsi, à travers l'étude de cas échelonnés sur une ligne de temps fragmentée, l'exploration de différents lieux, formes et mécanismes de production symbolique du pouvoir. Donc, ici, pas de « récit historique unifiant et homogène », mais plutôt un dialogue éclaté, par textes interposés, entre différentes approches méthodologiques et différents objets de recherches momentanément réunis pour mieux saisir la diversité des productions symboliques. Celles-ci sont posées d'entrée de jeu par L. Turgeon comme une « activité humaine concrète », manifestations visibles mais toujours mouvantes, derrière lesquelles le pouvoir, pour être efficace, doit continuellement se masquer.