

The main limitation of the work is its rigid adherence to its introductory stand to be “descriptive in nature”. The wealth of information contained in the study could be greatly enhanced by some analytical work. For instance, the role of provincial, federal and imperial governments is constantly mentioned throughout the study and a four-page appendix lists the titles of forty-nine major pieces of legislation affecting sailors. Yet there is no general discussion of the prevailing ideas on the value of sailors’ labour in society and what these legislative changes meant for the sailor, captain and shipping company.

Similarly, the contrasts between Quebec City, St. John and Halifax are often noted, but no concluding synthesis is present which might raise some larger questions and theories about urban development and sailortowns, or about the economic life of the three cities and its response to the labour supply problem. Given Fingard’s previous studies of those at the margin of urban society, one would have hoped for some more attention to these larger questions.

Jack in Port, as Fingard notes in her concluding bibliographical essay, is a pioneering work. It is also a book that will encourage further study of this worthwhile area.

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GREGORY S. KEALEY and BRYAN D. PALMER — *Dreaming of What Might Be: The Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1900*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982. Pp. xiv, 487.

This study is a spirited and persuasive reinterpretation of the significance of the Knights of Labor in the history of Ontario’s working men and women. Rooted in a thorough examination of the available archival sources and reflecting upon much of the recent labour history in North America and abroad, *Dreaming of What Might Be* argues that the Knights of Labor, for the first time, forged a “movement culture of alternative, opposition and potential” (p. 17) among its members where common class interests overcame, at least briefly, conflicts of religion, sex and ethnicity. In addition to this qualitative difference, Kealey and Palmer also argue that the Knights’ strength during the 1880s resulted in a higher percentage of organized workers in Ontario than at any time until the CIO years in the late 1930s. For the authors, the great upheaval of the 1880s should rank with the labour confrontations of 1919, the late 1930s and the years between 1943 and 1946. While overall a work of strength, the book is marred by some minor organizational problems and a weakness for pushing a solid argument just a bit too far.

Rejecting much of the previous work on the Knights of Labor, which portrayed the Holy and Noble Order as an anachronistic, fuzzy-minded, ill-led organization responsible for its own collapse, the authors demonstrate that at the height of its power in Ontario, the Knights encompassed a wide range of skilled and unskilled workers, in the major cities and several small towns across the province, in manufacturing, commercial and transportation sectors, among women, the Irish, Franco-Ontarians, Roman Catholics and Protestants. In doing so, the Knights were the only organization which attempted to organize from the entire working class. Building on the varied history of strikes, collective action and resistance by Ontario workers before the 1880s, the Knights were able to forge these diverse and often conflicting traditions of opposition into a “culture of solidarity and resistance” (p. 278). Adopting Lawrence Goodwyn’s concept of a “movement culture” presented in his *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America* (New York, 1976) to describe this phenomenon, Kealey and Palmer argue that with the intellectual leadership of the labour press, and men like Phillips Thompson, and through their secret ritual and various social activities, the Knights of Labor were able to form an alternative to the dominant nineteenth-century ideals of competition and materialism.

In doing this, the Knights helped to establish a “tradition of dissent that continues to this day” (p. 22).

This strength manifested itself in their willingness to combat manufacturers’ attempts to reduce wages and workers’ control in the factory, in the independent political stance the Knights tried to maintain in the face of the machinations of Tory and Grit machines, and in numerous efforts in co-operative ventures.

The authors begin their study with an enlightening review of the historiography of the Knights of Labor, and then proceed to outline the industrial development of Ontario from the 1850s to the 1890s, an important aspect since Kealey and Palmer suggest that the Knights’ failure was in part due to the shift from industrial to monopoly capitalism beginning in the 1880s. The size and the structure of the Knights in Ontario is then explored in great detail and with several tables of geographical and occupational breakdowns of the Knights’ membership. The Toronto and Hamilton experiences of the Knights are treated separately and are drawn from the authors’ previous work on these two cities. The midsection of the study concentrates (with much candor) on the “underside” of the Knights — from the outright criminality of Harvey and Morgan to the opportunism of A. W. Wright, to the bitter, internal feuding of the Knights in decline during the 1890s. The limited success in provincial and federal politics is documented at length, as well as the Knights’ more successful forays into the municipal arena. Finally, the book concludes with two strong chapters — the first on the importance of culture to understanding the Knights’ contribution, and the second on the Knights’ experience with strikes.

In their enthusiasm to overturn misconceptions and errors of previous historians, Kealey and Palmer sometimes rush into areas where more cautious scholars fear to tread. Their chapter on the Knights’ numerical strength in Ontario has already been questioned by Michael Piva in the May 1983 issue of *Histoire sociale* — *Social History*, forcing some revisions. Anyone who has tried to collect nineteenth-century statistics will sympathize with the authors’ dilemma of building arguments on “at risk” figures, knowing that historians dealing with more ample twentieth-century sources will cast a doubtful eye on their efforts. Clearly, Kealey and Palmer have searched high and low for membership figures and demonstrated their main argument on the previous underestimation of the Knights’ strength — particularly in the smaller manufacturing centres of Ontario. Whether 1919 edges out the 1880s for the highest percentage of organized workers, either total non-agricultural workforce or total workforce engaged in manufacturing, is a secondary matter.

While most of the perils of co-authorship have been avoided, *Dreaming of What Might Be* does suffer from some organizational problems in presenting its argument, often resulting in overlapping and repetitive sections. The importance of the Knights’ secret ritual, for example, is discussed fully in Chapter 8, but appears earlier in the discussion of Toronto. Women in the Knights are discussed as well in the chapter on culture, but Katie McVicar, one of the more prominent female Knights, is more fully dealt with in the earlier chapter on Hamilton. Similarly, strike activity is left to the final chapter except for those strikes occurring in Toronto and Hamilton.

The study’s strengths, however, clearly outweigh any of its weaknesses. The sympathetic and insightful section on the importance of the Knights’ secret ritual and code of secrecy, obedience and mutual assistance, as well as the cultural aspects of the Knights, is excellent. The bringing to light of the Knights’ remarkable strength in small town Ontario adds significantly to an understanding of this still dark aspect of Ontario history. The constant striving to bring out the “human forces behind the doctrines, practices and campaigns of the 1880s and 1890s” (pp. 17-18) provides much-needed insight into the lives and aspirations of the men and women caught up in the upheaval of the 1880s, like Belleville poet Marie Jossaye, London Knight Joseph Marks, or Hamilton’s Katie McVicar.

One cannot expect everything from a single book and there are several questions which the study raises. While an alternative culture may have emerged during the Knights’ brief period of strength, what does the volatility of the Knights’ membership suggest about the depth of such a cultural resource? Do the traditions of solidarity and co-operation vanish as quickly as the Knights’ strength, or endure within smaller confines? While certain prominent Knights moved into craft unionism,

farmers' organizations or socialism, what became of the anonymous Knights of small-town Ontario? The importance of culture and class to this will hopefully be pursued by students of the Knights in Quebec, where their history is quite different from that of the rest of Canada.

Kealey and Palmer's identification with the Holy and Noble Order is made perfectly clear in their introduction, and throughout their work they are more than ready to defend the Knights against those historians who would write the Knights out of the history of nineteenth-century Ontario, or out of Canadian labour history. *Dreaming of What Might Be*, I believe, ensures that this will not be the case.

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RIANNE MAHON — *The Politics of Industrial Restructuring: Canadian Textiles*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984. Pp xii, 204.

Joseph Schumpeter likened capitalism to a process of "creative destruction." In *The Theory of Economic Development*, the Austrian economist argued that capitalism's strength lay in its ability to remake itself through a constant cycle of obsolescence and re-creation. Today's factories and capital stock are superseded by tomorrow's technology and markets. The shrewd capitalist therefore takes today's profits and reshapes them to meet tomorrow's opportunities. Those who fail to obey this logic, perish. In practice, capitalism is not, of course, this straightforward. Any number of social, political and economic circumstances intervene to skew the process. Schumpeter recognized this. "The real tragedy," he wrote in 1942, "is not unemployment *per se*, but unemployment plus the impossibility of providing adequately for the unemployed without impairing the conditions of further economic development." It is because Canadian politicians have largely been unable to face the social and economic consequences of creative destruction that industries such as textiles have survived in Canada.

Throughout the 1970s, the architects of federal economic policy wrestled with the complexities of industrial policy-making. Bluntly stated, they were striving to systematize, in a technocratic way, the process of creative destruction. For some, the most dire threat to the Canadian economy was posed by the spectre of "de-industrialization." Capital once profitably invested in Canadian manufacturing was being seduced away by the lure of countries with low wages and compliant governments. Canadian manufacturing jobs would be transformed into Korean, Singaporean or Brazilian jobs. In the face of low-cost imports, economic growth in Canada would redirect itself into capital-intensive or services functions. Canada would, in effect, become "a nation of hamburger stands" and high-tech companies. Prominent among the victims of this transformation would be Canada's clothing and textile workers, employees in an industry whose time, as Schumpeter might put it, had passed.

By the late 1970s, it was clear that Canada's textile and clothing industries had not been totally supplanted by McDonald's and Mitel. The fast food and high-tech sectors had experienced phenomenal growth but the textile industry had persevered at home, however grimly, and even appeared to be experiencing some degree of reorganization. Dominion Textiles, for instance, had even expanded abroad, boasting by 1984 plants in the United States, Europe, South America and Asia. An industry which employed 190,000 people in 1970 — roughly 12 percent of total Canadian manufacturing employment — still employed 185,000 Canadians in 1978. Schumpeter, it would seem, was not much heeded in Ottawa and in certain boardrooms in the 1970s. In *The Politics of Industrial Restructuring*, Rianne Mahon addresses the question of why capital did not totally abandon the ailing textile industry in pursuit of more lucrative prospects, both within Canada and beyond its shores.