

québécoise. Tout au plus regrettera-t-on l'un ou l'autre détail. Par exemple que les légendes du groupe de cartes des vaches laitières ne facilitent pas les comparaisons de la même manière que celles des cartes de fabriques de beurre et de fromage. L'atlas est moins riche au point de vue industriel et commercial, bien que les cartes établies dans ce domaine soient excellentes. Mais c'est le manque de sources statistiques qui en est la cause.

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### *Canadian Labour History, 1935-1968*

IRVING M. ABELLA. — *Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour: The C.I.O., the Communist Party, and the Canadian Congress of Labour, 1935-1956*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973.

DAVID KWAVNICK. — *Organized Labour and Pressure Politics: The Canadian Labour Congress 1956-1968*. Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972.

It seems difficult to generate academic interest in the development of the Canadian Labour movement. Topics relating to labour have been published sporadically at best. Yet labour organizations, like the Trades and Labour Congress, the All-Canadian Congress of Labour, the Canadian Congress of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress require scholarly investigation. One is therefore encouraged by the appearance of two books on Canadian Labour by Irving Abella, an historian at Glendon College, York University, and David Kwavnick, a political scientist at Carleton University. The studies are contiguous chronologically but differ in scope and approach. Abella analyses the vicious organizational and leadership struggles of Canadian labour outside the Trades and Labour Congress from 1935 to 1956 and Kwavnick considers the activities of the Canadian Labour Congress as a political pressure group from 1956 to 1968.

*Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour* contains a wealth of information in unravelling the contest between the Communist, and anti-Communist leaders for control of the Canadian Labour movement within the CIO and then the CCL. The main issue that affected the struggle involved the interaction of the communists and their adversaries in unionizing Canadian labour and the relationship with the international offices.

The importance of Communist labour activities of the Workers' Unity League and its successor the Young Communist League in organizing the unorganized worker has been ignored, belittled or denounced. Abella demonstrates that the Canadian Communists, during the harrowing and debilitating depression, provided energy, zeal and experience in organizing Canadian labour. Indeed the dedicated small band of Communists or Communist sympathizers, like C. S. Jackson, J. B. Salsberg, Harvey Murphy, Tommy Church, Dick Steele and Alex Welch, who, with more enthusiasm than finances, were able to establish successful union locals when few were willing or able to attempt this thankless task. Prominent unions, such as U.E., UAW, Textile, International Woodworkers, and Steel, are indebted to these men. Their ideology was abhorrent to Canadian political and business leaders, and labour organizers, like Charlie Millard, who, in part, because of the Communists success, worked to oust communist union officials. The Communists tergiversations in following the dictates of the Kremlin stains their record, yet the position of anti-Communist leaders, who owed their official position to American leaders and finances, seems little more commendable. Perhaps the Communist labour organizers merit even greater accolades than Abella suggests. The Communists were restricted and harassed by individuals who subscribed to the pre-and post-World War II anti-Communist hysteria.

The conflict with the Communist faction in the labour movement was intensified by a number of factors. Internecine struggles developed; the official attitude towards Communists during World War II fluctuated; the attitude of organized labour towards political

activity and the CCF which sought acceptability and the right to become labour's political arm; and American CIO officials who attempted to treat the CLC as just another state local rather than admitting its national autonomy.

Before 1940 and during the war years anti-Communist labour leaders experienced considerable difficulty in expelling Canadian Communist officers of CIO affiliates, in part, because American officials were unaware of their ideological beliefs. The formation of the CCL in 1940 was a response to Communist labour activity. Communist opponents like Aaron Mosher, President of the ACCL, Millard and Sol Spivak, encouraged the merger of the ACCL and CIO unions expelled from the TLC to form the CCL. Mosher was elected President of the fledgling body and Communists constantly battled for the right to become executives of the organization. Opposition to Communist labour leaders and their organizations heightened during the Cold War when Red-baiting and Red-hunting was in vogue. Pragmatic labour leaders, like George Burt of UAW, who was willing to accept the Communists, were few. In the United States, labour leaders such as Philip Murray, President of the CIO, were in the forefront extirpating the Communists and Canadian CIO officials followed suit with the moral and financial support of the international headquarters. By 1951 Communist leaders or their unions were effectively ousted from the CCL. The impact of this senseless power struggle on working class solidarity is unknown but Abella points out that a number of anti-Communist labour leaders involved in the expulsion admit they may have erred.

The question of political involvement for organized labour resulted in another dispute with the Communist labourites. Some CCF organizers, like David Lewis, courted labour officials for financial backing and political affiliation, and a degree of success was achieved as the CCL contributed to CCF coffers. The Communists objected since they had their political organization, and they preferred the flexible political stance of American unions. Circumstances changed for the CCF and the Communists after 1941 with the changed relationship between the Allies and Russia. The Communists were no longer *persona non grata* and the CCF increased in popularity. A Liberal-Communist *entente*, endorsed by Percy Bengough and Pat Sullivan, was formed to block CCF aspirations, a situation that Abella minimizes. The Gouzenko Affair, the Cold War and the decreased popular support for the CCF by 1949 produced another somersault. Liberals hastily repudiated the Communists, and worked with CCL leaders to oust the Communists. CCF sympathizers, however, were unable to obtain greater labour commitments for the CCF.

The CCL, while attempting to oust the Communists, also endeavoured to retain a Canadian identity within the CIO. Pat Conroy, Secretary of the CCL, was apparently the leading protagonist for a distinctive Canadian policy and it seems preferred a united Canadian labour front rather than a continental labour *bloc* dictated by American policy. The failure of the CCL to retain greater autonomy contributed to his resignation. The attitude of the AFL-CIO towards their Canadian affiliates is also evident in their refusal to support them in the Hal Banks Affair and in promoting the merger of the CCL and TLC. Two significant conclusions are made by Abella regarding the development of Canadian unions. Most organizing was conducted by Canadians with Canadian funds; American centrals benefitted from the inflow of Canadian union funds with little return to Canadian organizations. That Canadian unions needed American expertise and support in order to succeed is a myth that is laid to rest.

There are some weaknesses in the study. Virtually ignored is the attitude of rank-and-file workers towards unionization. The investigation is confined to the struggle of Canadian labour leaders for control of the union movement. An assessment of the labourers' views of the bickering and squabbling would be valuable. The rank-and-file may have been passive spectators but as an explanation it is inadequate. No attempt is made to consider whether class divisions had any effect on union organization. What was the social and economic background of the union activists? Similarly, it would be valuable to provide an estimate of

the number of Communist unionist leaders and members in this crucial period of union development.

*Organized Labour and Pressure Politics* is basically the chronicle of a number of case studies selected to illustrate the relationship of the CLC with other groups in the Canadian political spectrum and to demonstrate that the CLC is not really concerned with organized labour's demands but rather with establishing and maintaining its position as the authentic voice of labour. The interaction of the CLC with its charter affiliates, other associations, the public, and the federal government, particularly the Department of Labour, constitute the author's supportive thesis. The proposition is interesting but tenuous at best.

The book includes a theoretical framework defining legitimacy and mandate, a brief history of the CLC and the intermeshing of government, business and labour. The bulk of the study concentrates on the CLC's concern with protecting and exercising its legitimacy and mandate as the authoritative Labour representative. The conclusion assesses the achievements of the CLC in this function.

The major problem with a series of case studies is that the studies have limited value. Are the studies, in fact, representative of the history of the CLC or do they raise as many questions as they are supposed to answer? Three illustrations, although there are others, are considered. Kwavnick concludes that the CLC's participation in organizations, like the Canadian Welfare Council, the Duke of Edinburgh's Commonwealth Study Conference and the Canadian Conference on Education is a recognition of the status or legitimacy of the CLC. Yet this ignores a number of relevant factors. The right to approve representatives, like Senator Molson, for the Duke's Conference is only one side of the coin; did labour object to any of the business leaders, and more significantly how would the CLC's veto of one of the business moguls, like K. C. Irving, have been treated? To include Labour representatives in these conferences illustrates acceptability but the fact that they were outnumbered approximately three to one by businessmen more aptly depicts Labour's status. The claim too that the CLC "has little if any obvious or immediate concern with the activities of the Canadian Conference of Education" (p. 76), or with the Welfare Council demonstrates an ignorance of labour history. Labour unions formed in the 1820's and 1830's emphasized welfare benefits and this, as well as education, was reemphasized as a goal by the Canadian Labour Union formed in 1873, and in subsequent Labour organizations. The CLC's objection to the selection of A. F. MacArthur as Commissioner of the Unemployment Insurance Act was more than an attempt to maintain their mandate; it was an attempt to eliminate blatant patronage appointments (a point which the author eventually admits). Kwavnick is undecided about the CLC's relationship with the government. The CLC has unrestricted access to the Prime Minister but in the next paragraph it does not (p. 169). It is not surprising that the CLC favours a strong Department of Labour or retains a close relationship with the Department. The assertion that the CLC exerts "a great deal of influence" (p. 141) on day-to-day functions of the Department, however, is unsubstantiated. The actual position is evident in the conclusion that the CLC is only as important as the government allows.

Other questionable statements are also made. The inevitability of Canadian unions aligning with American international unions in order to survive is incorrect. Class differences between workers, unions and leaders and government and business leaders are eschewed by the author. It is questionable if the omission of the term "class" from CLC presentations to the government is proof that labour has abandoned its radical principles. This assumption ignores the ideological divisions in the labour movement and the radical element has frequently been ousted from labour organizations by the conservative faction. The radicalism of labour unions has never been studied but it can be suggested from their programmes that radicalism as a social force was very slight except as expressed by the socialist or communist element. Not all pressure groups are docile and subservient as

suggested. The “grosser forms of political pressure” (p. 220) such as tractor marches and public displays are employed by the National Farmers Union, who also present briefs to the federal government.

Both books provide an insight into the activities of organized labour and both suffer from concentrating on the upper echelon of the labour movement at the expense of the rank-and-file. Additional biographical information, even in footnotes, on labour leaders involved in the protracted struggles, and a consideration of the class lines that may have been reflected in these contests would have assisted both studies. Kwavnick’s work retains much of the thesis structure and academic jargon. It is not the final word on the CLC as a pressure group. Abella’s study is essential for understanding the struggles that punctuated the Canadian Labour scene, the evolution of the CLC’s relationship with the AFL-CIO, and the emasculation of a Canadian national union movement.

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GERALD L. CAPLAN. — *The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism: The CCF in Ontario*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972.

Ontarians have a deserved reputation as a politically staid kind of people. A reasonably stable prosperity has made them conservative reformers, complacently content to nibble at innovation. How, therefore, can one explain the fact that, in 1943, without significant prior warning, one Ontario voter in three supported an avowedly socialist party?

Except in fiction, politics is a relatively predictable business. The “first past the post” system may give some wild maldistributions of seats but voting percentages do not normally fluctuate wildly. Even the few exceptions in Ontario history — the United Farmers’ victory in 1919 or Mitchell Hepburn’s upset in 1934 — were due to political forces which represented, in somewhat exaggerated form, Ontario’s combination of progressivism and conservatism.

Whatever time might have done to the CCF, there was little apparent restraint in its demand for a radical transformation of the social and economic system or in its appeal to a class consciousness hitherto deemed alien to Canada. Not even in the depths of the depression had the CCF collected more than a derisory handful of votes: seven percent in 1934, five per cent in 1937. With wartime prosperity, it must have seemed inevitable that the socialists were on the road to oblivion, marching to the discordant tune of their own clamorous but tiny factions.

That did not happen. Instead, despite all the cruder assumptions about the politics of wartime and prosperity, socialism stormed back out of the shadows and to everyone’s astonishment, including its own, almost captured the government of Canada’s richest and most industrialized province. Ontario’s political history can be ransacked in vain for comparable examples of electoral turn-around. Almost certainly, the history of Canada as a whole would have been dramatically altered if the CCF under E. B. Jolliffe had managed to form a government in 1943. Yet the sole serious attempt to examine this strange episode has been a master’s thesis for the University of Toronto submitted in 1961.<sup>1</sup> Apart from two articles in academic journals,<sup>2</sup> Professor Caplan’s pioneering work has remained in-

<sup>1</sup> Gerald CAPLAN, “Socialism and Anti-Socialism in Ontario, 1932-45” (unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1961).

<sup>2</sup> ID., “The Failure of Canadian Socialism: The Ontario Experience, 1932-1945.” *Canadian Historical Review*, XLIV (June, 1963), and “The Ontario Gestapo Affair, 1943-1945,” *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*. XXIX (August, 1964).