

Alan Whitehorn — *Canadian Socialism. Essays on the CCF-NDP*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992. Pp. viii, 296.

While some might argue that the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the New Democratic Party have had more than their fair share of academic attention, Alan Whitehorn's *Canadian Socialism* serves to remind readers of the wealth of questions still posed by Canadian social democracy. The nine articles examine aspects of CCF-NDP history, current practice, and prospects from quite distinct vantage points. After introductory and general historiographical chapters, Whitehorn presents an overview of the party's electoral fortunes, a content analysis of CCF and NDP manifestos, opinion survey results from recent NDP conventions, critical biographical sketches of Tommy Douglas, David Lewis and Ed Broadbent, an assessment of what is possibly one of the NDP's more important debacles (the "free trade" election of 1988) and, finally, attempts to chart the challenges the NDP will confront in the 1990s. Together, the studies are much more than the sum of their parts; themes that might be subsumed in a single narrative are allowed to develop and Whitehorn's broad knowledge of sources as well as his experience with related projects such as Lewis' autobiography, *The Good Fight*, is readily apparent. This is an interesting book.

It also contains a conception of the development of the CCF-NDP at variance with what Whitehorn identifies as the dominant historiographical paradigm: "The 'Protest Movement Becalmed' Tradition" associated with Leo Zakuta and Walter Young and dating from the 1960s. Its adherents argued that the CCF underwent a metamorphosis from a decentralized "movement" seeking a thorough-going transformation of society to a bureaucratized "party" inordinately interested in electoral power. Whitehorn rightly argues that such a rigid model establishes an unlikely and ultimately untenable dichotomy between movements and parties. And, the language of the CCF clubroom with its ringing accusation of bureaucratic betrayal that resonates in histories of the party is indeed better suited to a "morality play" (28). The Zakuta/Young interpretation, however, is not universal. In aiming their barbs at the "True Believers" on the left of the CCF, Gerald Caplan and Terry Morely are reading others roles but, I would suggest, from the same script. The historiography of the CCF-NDP is tired and in need of re-evaluation.

It is a leap, however, from a recognition of the inadequacy of an ill-fitting schema of political change to the emphasis on continuity in the CCF-NDP that characterizes Whitehorn's analysis. To suggest that both the early and later CCF shared features of "movement" and "party" and that commentators have examined "style" at the expense of "substance" (29) evades important issues. The early CCF was a federation in fact as well as in name and attracted different streams of radicalism nourished in the union hall, the street corner, the manse, the Jewish Workmen's Circle, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the university common room, the Socialist Party branch and the rural co-op. Each had their own, evolving, set of assumptions about political processes and socialist goals. And the struggle among them was quite real. To say, for instance, that the CCF "opted for" (246) the elitism of the League for Social Reconstruction hardly describes this process. While the "Protest Movement Becalmed" model attempts to stuff all these currents into a Michelsian mould, there clearly was a process of relative homogenization and (Whitehorn presents little evidence to the contrary) a view of social transformation increasingly limited to Keynesian fiscal policy and the establishment of the welfare

state. While many CCFers never envisaged much more than this, it was more common for them to insist that they were not out to “reform” capitalism, but to end it. In their own perception expressed in both public and private forums, this fundamentally differentiated the CCF from the peddlars of “panaceas” to save capitalism: Social Credit, Steven’s Reconstruction Party, Technocracy, Herridge’s New Democracy, “Little New Dealers”, and King’s war-time conversion to reform liberalism. While Whitehorn effectively points to the ideological distance that lay between the NDP on the one hand and the Liberals and Conservatives on the other, it would be difficult not to see a clear trajectory in the vanishing image of the “new social order” promised — however vaguely — in the 1930s.

Whitehorn’s view of the party’s history is similarly reflected in what is, in many ways, a very useful discussion of CCF and NDP manifestos. Anyone aware of CCF debates cannot help but be struck by the enormous symbolic role played by the Regina Manifesto. Whatever compromises had been made in its adoption in 1933, the document came to be seen as a set of first principles against which to measure the party’s subsequent political integrity. Whitehorn’s contention that the “principle of a mixed economy remained constant, although the mix varied...” (65) from the Regina Manifesto, through the Winnipeg Declaration of 1956, to the present is perhaps formally accurate, but complicated by his own content analysis. The disappearance of references to “class” and specifically to “capitalism” and “capitalists” (the Regina Manifesto contained a total of twenty references, the Winnipeg Declaration, one, and the New Party Declaration of 1961 — 168 paragraphs long — contained no such references) clearly suggests a growing disinclination to counterpose capitalism and socialism as distinct social orders. Few 1930s CCFers spoke explicitly about a mixed economy; by the 1950s, it became a broad social expectation that could not, in itself, distinguish the CCF from the Liberals and Conservatives.

As troubling, is the tendency to impose meaning onto words and documents. For instance, was the term “socialization” chosen over “nationalization” in the Regina Manifesto because it was “less threatening” (43) or because it better reflected a less statist and centralized socialism that had supporters in the CCF? This obviously requires a different kind of evidence than Whitehorn presents here. Also, despite his claims, the Calgary Declaration of 1932 does not explicitly call for “a peaceful and evolutionary path” (37) to socialism; it is silent on the question. This is not to suggest that Whitehorn is necessarily wrong about the sentiment of the delegates; he probably is not. But he presents no evidence for his claim. This is important because the distinctive features of the 1930s are weakly drawn here. With the rise of international fascism and the left’s general willingness to view, for instance, Bennett’s “iron fist” as somehow analogous, were CCFers so complacent about how social change might occur? By contrast, the defeat of fascism and the attainment of significant reforms in social welfare in the 1950s and 1960s meant that peaceful gradualism had few doubters. In each of these cases, these are assumptions that should properly spur further investigation aimed at uncovering the social world from which the manifestos emerged.

In some ways, Whitehorn’s final chapter on the future of the NDP is the most interesting. In contrast to those who argue that social democracy has met an impasse with increased globalization and domestic fiscal crises, he confronts the various challenges facing the party and the possibilities of building “a cooperative commonwealth in a global community”(260). Central to this vision is the ability of social

democracy to respond to social movements such as feminism and environmentalism in reconstructing social-democratic ideology. The CCF was born, or course, out of a previous generation of social movements and Whitehorn's guide to the future might also prove a key to the past.

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John E. Zucchi — *The Little Slaves of the Harp. Italian Street Musicians in Nineteenth-Century Paris, London, and New York*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. Pp. vii, 205.

Children as victims of economic crisis, unstable family situations, and opportunistic adults are no new themes in social history. But John Zucchi's examination of the lives of young itinerant street musicians in three major nineteenth-century cities illuminates a neglected area of the history of nineteenth-century childhood. The street musicians were sometimes orphans, but usually they were indentured to a *padroni* by an Italian peasant family who would have known little about the nature of the promised employment. Once in a large foreign city, the children were hurriedly taught to play the street organ, violin, or harp or to display trained animals for whatever tips they could earn. Their *padroni* managed a dozen or so children each and thus earned comfortable livings for themselves, if not their charges. Information about these child musicians is sparse and Zucchi has carefully mined the court records, newspapers, parliamentary reports and diplomatic messages to ferret out the history of this form of child labor.

After tracing the emigration patterns from Italian villages (complete with maps), Zucchi then describes in detail how the children were treated by their *padroni*, how and where they worked, and the types of local ordinances passed to inhibit them. He devotes a chapter to the street musicians in each of the cities under study. Toward the end of the century, society became increasingly concerned over the health and welfare of these immigrant children, and reform groups in New York and London sought to remove these children from the streets, get them into school, or send them back to Italy.

In a separate chapter, Zucchi traces the growing concern within (newly unified) Italy that the national image was being tarnished by the inflammatory accounts of child exploitation found in the London and New York presses. Working in cooperation with municipal authorities, Italian officials attempted to stop the flow of children out of the country and to repatriate those who were being sent back. In the end, the author concludes that Italian legislation was not nearly as important in stopping the practice as events within the cities where the itinerants performed.

What this cross-cultural study reveals is that the late-century Victorian sentimentalizing of childhood that fuelled both the American and British campaigns against child labor does not translate to the French and Italian experience where economic conditions were vastly different and the acceptance of child labor was much greater. Zucchi finds that even though the Italian government spent considerable energy trying to stop children from being taken to other cities to work, the decline in