l'image de toute la démonstration de l'auteur dans ce troisième volet de son enquête; et qu'il convient d'adopter avec la même circonspection.

C'est le prix d'une démarche originale, qui ouvre des perspectives comparatives larges avec d'autres régions de France, comme la Provence récemment étudiée par Michel Vovelle dans un remarquable petit cahier consacré à la *Vision de la mort et de l'au-delà en Provence, d'après les autels des âmes du purgatoire (XV^e-XX^e siècles).*

R. MANDROU.

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Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928.

RICHARD ALLEN. — *The Social Passion. Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928.* University of Toronto Press, 1971.

The Social Passion by Richard Allen shows that the Social Gospel provided much of the impetus for the post World War 1 English Canadian movement to make Canada a more humane society. The Social Gospel was the ideology of ardent Protestants who believed that God wished to prevent big industry and huge urban centres from polarizing society into the extremes of widespread poverty and concentrated wealth. It challenged the premise of liberal capitalism that a wealthy individual had an unlimited right to do as he pleased with his property if such action harmed the poor. As J. S. Woodsworth declared: "Christianity stood for social righteousness as well as personal righteousness." [1] Such highly optimistic ideology was permeated by the conviction that God himself was busily at work realizing His Kingdom. Under its influence many intelligent, educated and able Christian men and women happily committed themselves to changing the social relations which underpinned society from competitive individualism to co-operative brotherhood. This religious commitment, this "social passion" provided much of the energy for the building of farm organizations, the strengthening of trade unions and the campaigning for welfare legislation which marked that brief period of social unrest.

It is a pity that such an important book was not written with more care. Its structure is weak, while its ideas and characters are identified so vaguely with the main tendencies within the Social Gospel that the reader is in constant danger of becoming confused. Nor is the author precise in his use of terms. He employs the word "progressive" in three different senses: as a trend in the Social Gospel, as the commonly accepted name of the Western agrarian reformers and as the opposite to conservative as in "the language of the progressive of the farm and labor movement." [2] Only *after* one reads the chapter entitled the *Non-Politics of Progressivism*

[1] The book is a somewhat revised version of the authors Ph.D. dissertation "The crest and crisis of the Social Gospel in Canada 1916-1927" (Duke University, 1967).

[2] See Kenneth MCNAUGHT, *A Prophet in Politics* (Toronto, 1959), p. 26.

does one know in what sense he had used the term in that instance. He often makes observations on theology which are so unclear that in frustration a reader is tempted to shake the book so that the meaning tumbles out.

Professor Allen writes about Christian reformers as if they were all Social Gospellers. But this is not accurate. The expectation of the Social Gospel was that sin need not be a permanent feature of the world and that with God's help His Kingdom could be established on earth, now, in the palpable present. Anglican doctrine rejected the perfectibility of human nature and society. Yet Anglican spokesmen like Homfrey Michell, the editor of the *Bulletin of the Anglican Council of Social Service,* echoed much of the rhetoric on industrial reform put out by the progressive Social Gospel.

The author defines what he regards as the three trends in the movement as conservative, progressive and radical. He sees the conservatives as "closest to traditional evangelicalism, emphasizing personal-ethical issues, tending to identify sin with individual acts and taking as their social strategy legislative reform of the environment." [3] Such thinkers did not necessarily believe that the institutions of society must be refashioned to allow the replacement of aggression by co-operation. The legislative reform which counted for these conservatives was prohibition; the law was to be used to remove temptation from man. Inherent in their view of life was the idea that man is sinful. Fundamental to the Social Gospel was the belief that man was naturally good but that this goodness was being stunted because he lived under social conditions which made it necessary for him to selfish to survive. Is it not then a contradiction in terms to speak of a conservative Social Gospel?

Nor are his definitions of radical and progressive Social Gospel more satisfactory. He explains that the radicals had concluded that "there could be no personal salvation without social salvation" but that progressive "held the tensions" between the radicals and conservatives, "endorsing in considerable measure the platforms of the other two, but transmuting them somewhat in a broad ameliorative program of reform." [4] But surely progressive Social Gospellers also believed in social salvation? In 1917, one of their leading spokesmen W. B. Creighton, editor of the Methodist Christian Guardian, wrote that, "the old theory of the sacredness of property is bound to be shouldered aside by the new theory of the sacredness of life; and in the coming years, it seems assured that this new theory will work mighty changes in our social fabric . . . a square deal for every man will be the national motto." [5] In what way were the words of the radical Social Gospel different? The next year the committee on the Church, the

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] See M. Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I," in Carl Berger, editor, *Conscription 1917* (Toronto, 1969), p. 54.

War and Patriotism in reporting to the Methodist General Conference called for the "transference of the whole economic life from the basis of competition and profits to one of co-operation and service." [6] Further on it called for "a complete social reconstruction." [7] Yet this committee, as Professor Allen confirms, was speaking for the progressive as well as radicals.

Progressive and radical Social Gospellers both believed that to bring about the Kingdom of God it was necessary to reconstruct the social order but they differed on who was going to be the agent of that change. A progressive like Creighton relied on the enlightened businessman who, under the influence of the Social Gospel, would accept a limitation on his profits to pay for the necessary welfare measures and who would take the initiative in co-operating with labor to develop humane industrial relations. On the other hand, a radical like Woodsworth saw working people as the force which would christianize society. As another radical, Salem Bland, explained: Labour and Christianity were, in this age, bound together. "They [would] come into their kingdom together or not at all." [8]

These criticisms not withstanding, *The Social Passion* is an important book because it demonstrates two new propositions. The first is that the post-war movement to impose some controls on big business was not confined to farmers and workers but included important sections of the business community and those who spoke for them. Of course this upsurge in reform was not all due to the Social Gospel and the conviction of many people that a war fought to make the world safe for democracy ought to result in a more equitable social order at home, as Professor Allen implies. He fails to mention the increase in the militancy of labor during the war years; from 1915 to 1919 trade union membership almost trebled and there was a spectacular growth in the number of strikes. Early in 1919, Western delegates to the Trades and Labour congress of the previous year were so angry at the failure of that body to endorse the principle of industrial unionism that they set about creating a separate industrial union, the One Big Union, and endorsed the principle of the general strike. In the midst of all this Western turmoil came the shock of the Winnipeg General Strike. Thoughtful Canadians could not help seeing that class conflict had broken into the open.

Progressive Social Gospellers both sympathized with the hard lot of the worker and feared his violent reaction to his misery. They became convinced that capitalism must be reformed so that some of the wealth and power of the great financeers were transformed over to working people. In illustrating this, Professor Allen corrects an impression left by Professor McNaught in his biography of Woodsworth that the resignation of his hero

[6] *The Social Passion*, p. 74.
[7] BLISS, "Methodist Church," p. 55.
[8] *The Social Passion*, p. 153.

from the ministry signified the taking over of the Methodist Church by reaction. Woodsworth resigned in June, 1918. In October of that year the Methodist conference accepted resolutions which condemned profiteering, urged the nationalization of natural resources and public utilities, proposed social insurance schemes and called on employers to accept labor as a partner in management. The Methodist press was sympathetic to the Winnipeg strikers as was the Toronto Star published by that very ardent Methodist Joseph Atkinson. Another strong Methodist member of the unionist cabinet, Newton Rowell tried to persuade his colleagues to adopt a national housing scheme that would benefit working men along with schemes for old age, unemployment and sickness insurance. But the Progressive Social Gospel was not confined to the Methodists. The press of other Protestant denominations supported the cause of labour in Winnipeg and the new Liberal Party program of 1919, drafted by that leading Presbyteria personality, Mackenzie King, promised unemployment insurance, old age pensions and the encouragement of labor representation in industrial councils.

The hopes of the progressive Social Gospel focused on conciliating capital and labour through the system of industrial councils. In September, 1919, the government organized the National Industrial Conference, which included representatives from both employers and labour. But employers would not accept the right of workers to be represented in these councils through their unions. So little benefit did the employer see in industrial councils that the Canadian Manufacturers Association refused to send delegates to another conference that the government proposed to organize in 1921. This failure undermined the progressive Social Gospel confidence that Christian businessmen would take the lead in social reform. The need to find a solution to class conflict became less acute because after 1921 both the numbers of trade union members and those of strikes fell perceptibly. In 1922, the Cape Breton workers of the British Steel and Coal company went on strike against a 35 per cent wage cut. If ever a group of workers raised a question of Christian conscience it was these strikers whose plight was much more pitiful than those who participated in the Winnipeg General Strike. But with the exception of a handful of Christian leaders like Woodsworth and the Anglican clergyman, Canon Scott, the progressive Social Gospellers, in marked contrast to their absorbing interest in the events in Winnipeg, remained indifferent to this strike; their apathy symbolized their disillusionment with industrial reform in the twenties.

The other main value of the book is that it helps to explain how a minister of the Protestant church became the leading figure in the farm and labour movement by the beginning of the thirties. Of course Woodsworth had unusual personal qualities: an utter commitment to decency embodied in a strong persuasive personality, a powerful intellect able to explain complicated social phenomena in every day terms and an inner

toughness and even ruthlessness which made him a very efficient politician; it was no fumbling amateur who proposed the resolution on tariffs in 1924, which split the Progressive group in Parliament into those which later became the Ginger Group, the precursor of the C.C.F., and those who later drifted back to the Liberals. Lastly he was independent enough to turn his back on power and influence within the Methodist Church on a matter of principle; it was difficult for radical workers and farmers not to respect someone with such integrity.

Professor McNaught's biography illustrates these points very well. It also explains very clearly the crucial influence the Social Gospel had on Woodsworth. But just because it is a biographical study, it does not show, as does Professor Allen's book, what an impact the Social Gospel had on the whole farm and labor movements. Because radical Social Gospellers like Woodsworth, Bland, Ivens, Irvine and Smith believed that only through the common people would the Christianization of society take place. they began to work in these movements. But they did not start at the bottom. Since they were all educated and clever men, in time, they would have become leaders anyway. What enabled them to rise so quickly to prominence was that as ministers they furnished an aura of respectability welcome to these radical movements and as Social Gospellers they were able to justify, in the most eloquent of language, the aspirations of thousands of working people in social ferment. Woodsworth's own career illustrates this very well. The day after he arrived in Winnipeg during the General Strike, he spokes to a meeting of some ten thousand people. As a radical Social Gospeller he was the natural choice of the Labour Church which had sponsored the meeting. Again as secretary of the Labor Church in Winnipeg in the summer of 1921, he was in strategic position to become the standard bearer for the Independent Labour Party in Winnipeg Centre and win that riding in the federal election of that year.

If the Social Gospel helped Woodsworth attain a national rostrum, it also provided him with a stock of concepts on the basis of which he was able to offer direction to the Canadian Left, that group which believed that big business was the main enemy of an equitable society. One problem was whether working people needed a party of their own. Many radical syndicalists believed the party system to be immoral. Woodsworth, however, accepted the necessity of operating within its framework. His own experience had led him to reject the idea that the Church could persuade selfish capitalists to give up their privileges; they must be compelled to do so by laws passed by an anti- big business party commanding the majority in Parliament. The breaking of the Winnipeg General Strike by Meighen and the R.C.M.P. soon convinced some radical workers in the West that Woodsworth was right.

Another important segment of labor which opposed a separate party for itself was the leadership of the Trades and Labour Congress. Essentially

their position was that of Samuel Gompers: the trade unions ought to act only as a pressure group on the two old line parties. It was not that they were against labour men being in Parliament. A former T.L.C. president, Alphonse Verville, had been a member of the House for some fifteen years. Verville had accepted capitalism but tried to win as much for labor as was possible within the system and one way had to work closely with the Liberal party. In the twenties the political activities of the T.L.C. confined itself to that of being a labor lobby. It is true that at the crest of labor radicalism from 1917 to 1921 the T.L.C. had supported the Canadian Labour Party but as the militancy of the workers declined, it reverted back to "business unionism." Woodsworth, on the other hand, wished for not only an immediate reform, but also a complete transformation of the base of society from competition to co-operation, that is to say some form of socialism. Consequently he refused Mackenzie King's offer to become part of the Liberal government as Minister of Labour, a job that Verville would have believed it was the duty of every labour man to accept. Meanwhile there continued to exist many workers who wanted a party of their own; and in 1929 the remnants of various labour parties came together in the Western Conference of Labour Parties. But that Woodsworth had kept a separate labor identity in Parliament meant he was welcome at their conferences and that they would gradually look to him for leadership. In 1932, they accepted an invitation to meet with the United Farmers of Alberta and the United Farmers of Saskatchewan to set up a new farmer-labor party.

Through the Social Gospel Woodsworth was also able to influence the socialists. The Russian Revolution split the Canadian section of the movement. A number accepted the tenets of Leninism which, in Canadian terms held that socialism could only be achieved by a highly disciplined and ideologically coherent party leading the working class to the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoise state and its parliamentary system. Many Canadian socialists, however, especially those from the British Isles, were deeply attached to Parliament and to the tradition of bringing about political changes through elections. These democratic socialists found a natural leader in Woodsworth who saw the worker in a Christian light rather than a Marxist one. Rejecting force, believing in moral persuasion and law, he would achieve socialism not by overthrowing parliamentary institutions, but by using them. The revolutionary viewpoint in Canada was represented by the Communist party, a very small sect of some four thousand members, the mass of whom had come from Eastern Europe. The majority of socialists, born either in the Dominion or the British Isles, followed Woodsworth. Just because they were English speaking and not considered "alien," they enjoyed a certain legitimacy both within the trade union movement and the general public. Woodsworth's Christian socialism attracted more than workers. When intellectuals like Frank Scott and Frank Underhill began a Canadian counterpart to the British Fabian society, called the League

for Social Reconstruction, they asked Woodsworth to become the honorary president.

The last way in which the Social Gospel helped Woodsworth emerge as the leader of the Left was that it made him sympathetic towards farmers. Although the Communists advocated a farmer labour party, strictly speaking there was no place for farmers in the Marxist scheme because as petty bourgeoise they were doomed to be absorbed by the working class or rise up into the ranks of the capitalists. In so far as they continued to exist, they were destined to take leadership from the working class. Many labourites who were not Marxists were suspicious of farmers. Some resented the farm insistence on a law tariff which could only lead to more American Competition for the companies they worked for. On the other hand many farmers were apprehensive over radical labour's bias against private property. The attempts of elected labour and farm members in both the Manitoba and Ontario legislatures to work together had ended in failure and disappointment. Yet in a country like Canada where agriculture was so important, labour was much too weak to go it alone.

No doubt Woodsworth understood this fact. But as well his religion of labour applied to farmers as well as workers. Before his election he had sympathized enough with farmers to work for a radical farm organization, the Non-Partisan League. And in the twenties he emerged as a leading personality among radical farmers through his influence over their parliamentary spokesmen, the Ginger Group. But for many years they accepted the teachings of Henry Wise Wood that all parties were corrupt. It was only after a decade of futile moralizing and spurred on by the depression, that they decided to take up an active struggle for power by organizing a new "Commonwealth party," a step which was approved at the Calgary conference already referred to. No doubt Woodsworth did much to help them overcome their repugnance of taking part in the party system. By now because of his Social Gospel, Woodsworth had been able to act as a "catalyst in bringing farm and labour groups together in a single party." [9] He was the only possible choice for its leader. The C.C.F. was not only the instrument of left wing workers and farmers but also the political embodiment of the force of the radical Social Gospel operating in Canadian society. In presenting the material which shows how much the tone of the Canadian Left has been set by Christian thought and action, Professor Allen has rendered an extremely valuable service to the study of Canadian labour.

Joseph LEVITT,
University of Ottawa.

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[9] Walter YOUNG, *The Anatomy of a Party, the National C.C.F.* (Toronto, 1969), p. 17.