

Patryk Polec, *Hurrah Revolutionaries: The Polish Canadian Communist Movement, 1918-1948* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015). 336pp. Paperback \$34.95.

Polish Canadian Communists (PCC), for the most part, have been forgotten by history. Besides a passing mention here or there within Polish Canadian historiography, left-leaning Polish people in Canada and their movement have been written off as small, one-dimensional and inconsequential—nowhere near the breadth and scope of their Finnish or Ukrainian counterparts. Yet, Polish people have been consistently arriving on the shores of Canada from the late nineteenth century, with one of the larger migratory groups coming during the interwar years. It is this group that became involved in the Communist movement.

Patryk Polec's, *Hurrah Revolutionaries: The Polish Canadian Communist Movement 1918-1948*, is the first monograph to begin to fill this gap within the Canadian and ethnic historiography on Polish-Canadian Communists. Despite grappling with limited primary sources, Polec examines the rise, development, transformation, and eventually the decline of the Polish Canadian Communist Party from the interwar years to the 1950s. The author considers the PCCP to be a top-down organization that did not represent a cross-section of workers, run by a handful of leaders such as Albert Morski, Władysław Dutkiewicz, Tadeusz Lewandowski, Zygmunt Majtczak, and Michał Malisz. Morski, who was “imported” from Poland, really gave impetus to the Polish People's Association (PTL)—turning the Polish communist party into an effective organization that was able to garner large membership.

Polec effectively identifies various factors that contributed to the party's growth in popularity and membership. The two wars—the Great War and the Polish-Soviet War—created a paradigm shift within the larger Polish community. The former resulted in increasing class-consciousness among Polish workers, while the latter witnessed increased activity amongst Polish Communists. Polec argues that communism was perceived to be an alternative vision to the conservatives. This alternative was stimulated by the Great Depression and the accompanying nativism, racism, and discrimination faced by Polish people. However, it was the PTL's shift in focus from advocating political agitation to cultural-educational work (framed by the Comintern's famous Popular Front strategy) in the 1930s that really solidified the Party's legitimacy amongst the Polish peoples. The cultural-educational work included an emphasis on sport, Polish language classes, and theatrical performances. Accordingly, the PTL became just one of a number of Polish organizations that could be joined. And here lies one of the strengths of the book—an examination of the PTL's use of cultural-nationalist rhetoric, along with the evocation of historical memory, to gain legitimacy and acceptance within the community. The Red Culture, as Polec labels it, brought together national interests with class interests.

Another of the book's strengths is a discussion of the relations between the PTL and the Communist Party of Canada (CPC). Polec argues that the two

(along with the Comintern) had a very close relationship, with the CPC overseeing and directing the PTL's general policy. Essentially, the PTL functioned as a Polish division of the CPC. It also had very good relations with other ethnic groups within the broader Canadian Communist movement. This leads Polec to contend that the CPC was a truly multicultural organization where class interests overcame established Old World ethnic tensions. It also meant that Polish people were fighting on two fronts—bringing about a utopian society in Poland and in Canada. This inevitably meant that Polish Communists would experience contentious relations with the broader Polish community. Choosing communism meant ostracization and isolation from the “established” Polish organizations and institutions.

Despite Polec's contributions to the history of Poles in Canada, the monograph fails to deliver in a number of areas. First, a significant weakness of the book is Polec's persistence in making sweeping statements that are not rooted in adequate evidence. One of Polec's main claims is that nineteenth century Polish peasants were exposed to radicalism and communist ideology in partitioned Poland, and that they brought these leftist ideas with them to Canada. This claim is never supported by any evidence. The Left certainly had powerful roots amongst Polish people at the turn of the 20th century, but this certainly did not amount to a mass worker consciousness. This is why the PTL was a latecomer to the landscape of the Polish community's organizational life.

Equally questionable is Polec's interpretation of data. In one instance, he demonstrates Polish workers' support for the Communist cause by the large sum of money collected despite the fact that these were the years of the Depression. However, the same type of evidence, which illustrates continued support for the Communist movement in the post-war years, is questioned and disregarded by Polec as an exaggeration because these were “poor workers” who were unable to make “substantial contributions.” The same evidence cannot be interpreted in two different ways just to fit distinct conclusions.

The book would have benefited from a more systematic questioning of existing literature. This would have prevented Polec from misidentifying and dismissing one of the four federations that existed within the Polish community. This also highlights a broader problem for any scholar working on Polish-Canadian history, since the existing scholarship is very outdated and written by amateur historians. This reality, however, means that no scholar can take at face value information in the existing scholarship. Completely omitted is the work, for instance, of Anna Reczynska, one of the foremost specialists in the area.

Lastly, the book finishes off with a discussion of the decline of the Polish communist movement in Canada. According to Polec, as a result of the post-war situation in Poland and the influx of Polish refugees and displaced persons to Canada, the Polish Communist movement began to lose support. Though these two factors did have an influence on the movement, Polec's evidence does not convincingly demonstrate this. Instead, it shows that despite a lack of community sup-

port, Polish Communists and their newspaper surprisingly continued to thrive. Polec even states that it is Morski's departure for Poland that brings about a decline in the movement. Notwithstanding the weaknesses of the work, the monograph lays a good foundation for further scholarship on the Polish Canadian Left. It also advances the Polish Canadian historiography and that of the larger communist movement in Canada.

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Brian Massumi, *Ontopower: War, Powers and the State of Perception* (Duke University Press, 2015). 306pp. Paperback \$24.95.

The preface to Massumi's book invites the reader to consider starting at the end. It is a fitting exhortation in a book that examines a temporal twist coined 'ontopower'. Temporal tautologies are used as headings throughout the book including 'futures past' (190), 'fast forward on rewind' (197) and, my favourite, 'smoke of future fires' (202). I am particularly partial to the latter because it points to Massumi's 'unabashedly metaphysical' approach (205). Massumi situates ontopower "in a field of action with other regimes of power", arguing that "it is necessary to adopt an ecological approach to threat's environmental power" (200).

The newly consolidated mode of power that is ontopower pivots on the 'singular time signature' (200) of preemption, which "denotes acting on the time before: before it has emerged as a clear and present danger" (vii). The first chapter begins with former US President George W. Bush's oft quoted rationale for the invasion of Iraq: "[i]f we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge" (3). Massumi maintains, however, that "although the exemplary events through which this operative logic [of preemption] is evaluated in the book are, for the most part, historically moored in the Bush administration, the power curve they express exceeds it" (221). He argues that preemption "is an *operative logic* of power defining a political epoch in as infinitely space-filling and insidiously infiltrating way as the logic of the 'deterrence' defined as the Cold War era" (5).

From the outset the vast scope and challenge of Massumi's project are clear. The first hint at how we might understand the operative logic of this new entrant into the ecology of powers is the word 'ontopower' itself. 'Onto' means being. Preemption is productive. It brings the future into being as it "trace[s] itself out as a self-propelling *tendency*" (5). One related proposition is that "The security that preemption is explicitly meant to produce is predicated on its tacitly producing what it is meant to avoid: preemptive security is predicted on a production of insecurity to which it itself contributes" (196). Writing about a temporal tautology that asks us