REVIEWS

Prometheus Research Library, ed., *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism: Selected Writings and Speeches, 1920-1928* (New York: Spartacist Publishing Company 1992).

At a sixtieth birthday party held for Jim Cannon in 1950 in New York he commented that, "The mark of a man's life is his capacity to march to the music of his youth." Cannon saw many around him stumble away from the radicalism of their formative years, dancing to the increasingly popular tunes of anti-Sovietism and anti-Marxism, ending their days in the slow waltz of postured defence of American capital and imperialist aggression. Cannon, in contrast, remained a revolutionary, with a fine ear for the lyrics of political program and organizational direction.

An early recruit to Eugene Debs' Socialist Party of America, Cannon was an expression of the fusion of Irish republicanism, midwestern populism, and working-class socialism that made his home state of Kansas receptive to projects such as the *Appeal to Reason* or the 1919 communist paper (edited by Cannon and Earl Browder), *Worker's World*. For Cannon, the Socialist Party was more of a conduit to the communist movement, which he helped to inaugurate with a speech to the founding convention of the United Communist Party in 1920 and chairmanship of the Workers Party in 1921. More telling was his time spent as an organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which he joined in 1911. There be became a protégé of Vincent St. John, honed his rhetorical skills as a soapbox agitator, landed himself in jail for his role in supporting strikers, stood fast against working-class participation in World War I, and worked closely with the IWW martyr, Frank Little. The music of Cannon's youth played in these IWW halls, organizing drives, strikes, and personal victimizations by the state and vigilante repression. From this he would forge a lifelong commitment to labour defence, evident in his launching of the International Labor Defense (ILD) organization in 1925, as well as an uncompromising sense of the priority of the trade union question for communism. But if there was a song that broke through this concert to rise above it and direct Cannon's life it was the *Internationale*. Nothing in the history of the workers' movement could ever surpass, for Cannon, the importance of 1917 and the Russian Revolution.

This world historic event of the creation of a workers' state brought Cannon — and many others — decisively out of the reformist socialist milieu at the same time that it challenged him to move beyond the syndicalist, dual unionist tendencies of the IWW. He would spend the rest of his days struggling to create a Bolshevik Party, a proletarian vanguard capable of actually making a revolution, winning and keeping state power. Throughout the 1920s Cannon's battles for this end took place within the American Communist Party which, in the process of emerging from the revolutionary chaos of 1917-1920, became an understandable hothouse of contending views, throwing native-born radicals and immigrant revolutionaries into a confusing swirl of political debate and strategic discussion.

As this process of political and party formation unfolded, the material context of the workers' movement worsened as trade unionism and the left suffered large defeats domestically and internationally. Not the least of these setbacks was the increasing Stalinization of the Communist International and its affiliated organizations. To counter this process Cannon led a "faction against factionalism" in the American party, but eventually, in 1928, embraced the Left Opposition, for which he and some 100 supporters were summarily expelled. Cannon then dedicated himself to establishing and leading a Trotskyist organization, culminating in the creation in 1938 of the Socialist Workers Party, to which Cannon was elected national secretary. Jailed on occasion throughout the 1930s, and incarcerated under the infamous Smith Act for his outspoken opposition to American involvement in World War II, Cannon could not even count on the ILD, which he initiated and led from 1925-1928, for support: the American Stalinist party viewed Trotsky'ites' as ex-

pendable refuse to be tossed to the bourgeois state and its courts and jails.

Cannon's central importance in the history of the American left is thus the living embodiment of the struggle for political program and the corresponding issue of organization and party formation. These are not features in which there is currently a great deal of academic or political interest. Cannon has received an exceedingly negative press, the notable exception being Alan Wald's account of Cannon's importance in *The New York Intellectuals* (1987). Within the Trotsyist milieu itself, George Breitman (1916-1986) worked diligently to publish Cannon's speeches and writings from the 1928-1947 period. The Prometheus Research Library, associated politically with the international Spartacist tendency, has continued this project with an important collection of Cannon's interventions in the politics of early American communism.

Organized chronologically, Cannon's speeches and writings from 1920-1928 are prefaced by a useful 70-page account of Cannon and the political issues of the period; each document is then introduced briefly and there are helpful editorial notes as well as a lengthy glossary, identifying individuals, organizations, and important terms. Much of Cannon's comment focuses on four themes: (1) the Party's orientation to the united front and the labour party, especially in terms of the farmer-labour movement and the 1924 Presidential candidacy of the "progressive" Robert M. La Follette; (2) the importance of communist practice in the trade unions, where opposition to the American Federation of Labor, the Industrial Workers of the World, and rising bureaucrats such as John L. Lewis, necessitated specific tactics; (3) the critical importance of a politically uncompromising but contextually sensitive communist orchestration of labour defence, especially as this related to the campaign against the execution of the anarchists, Sacco and Vanzetti; (4) the factionalization of the American Communist Party in the aftermath of Lenin's death in 1924 and Cannon's challenges to an entrenched Communist Party leadership that saw the solution to all problems of political program and party unity not in the liquidation of factions but in the combination of factions.

These documents can therefore be read to gain essential insight into the making and meaning of left-wing politics in the 1920s. There is little in them, to be sure, to draw a contemporary left uninterested in, if not opposed to the very idea of, *the* party. For Cannon this *was* the question of politics: "We fight for the idea that factions are to be replaced by party, that faction loyalty is to be replaced by party loyalty, that political fights are to be carried to conclusions and settled, and not resolved into permanent groups and cliques." (426) His history, and the publication of these documents, will allow historians to re-evaluate the political alignments of these years, coming to grips with the respective roles of C.E. Ruthenberg (a straight-laced, aloof German immigrant drawn to theoretical orthodoxy and slightly out-of-touch with American conditions), William Z. Foster (the party's life-line to the trade unions who was not adverse to putting himself and his quest for party control in opposition to the Communist International), and Jay Lovestone (a thorough-going opportunist whose penchant for intrigue was characterized by one leading party figure as 'ruthless, unscrupulous, and iron-fisted') in the making of early American communism. Cannon was later to sum up this process, in a pithy evaluation that linked the degeneration of the Comintern and the factionalization of communist politics: "Stalin makes shit out of leaders and leaders out of shit." (61)

Cannon was not always right, but he was rare in his willingness to both admit mistakes and allow others to move beyond those they had committed in the past. Theodore Draper, an anti-communist whose years in the communist movement nevertheless prepared him well to write what remains the most useful overall history of American communism, recalled that Cannon, unlike so many others, was an invaluable source on the 1920s: "For a long time, I wondered why Jim Cannon's memory of events in the Nineteen-Twenties was so superior to that of all the others. Was it simply some inherent trait of mind? ...I came to the conclusion that it was something more. Unlike other communist leaders of his generation, Jim Cannon *wanted* to remember. This portion of his life still lives for him because he has not killed it within himself." (4) Draper discovered in Cannon what Cannon himself conveyed to his grandson, Mathew Ross, who remembered that a recurring theme in all discussions with his grandfather was "the impor-

tance of a sense of history." To repress this, for Cannon, was tantamount to turning off the music of one's own youth. This collection of Cannon's writings confirms this and contributes to our ability to recover the lost history of the American left. In that history James Patrick Cannon, marginalized by Stalinists and scholars alike, will figure centrally.

Bryan D. Palmer
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Dan S. White, *Lost Comrades: Socialists of the Front Generation, 1918-1945* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press 1992).

There is little doubt this is an ambitious and compelling work which delves into an area few historians have dared to venture. Propelled into new ideological territory by their experiences in the First World War, the young men[1] who struggled to create a new political practice are certainly a worthy subject for discussion. In this clearly written and wonderfully researched volume, Dan S. White deals with their complexities with skill and a great deal of sympathy. His study revolves around the political careers of those he deems the most significant spokesmen of the "Front Generation" — Sir Oswald Mosley (Britain), Macel Deat (France), Hendrick de Man (Belgium), Theodor Haubach and Carlo Mierendorff (Germany).

While the art of history is never a neutral or value free science, there is particular difficulty, for this reviewer at least, to esteem these men as White does. Many, if not most, ultimately justified Nazism. Sympathy for those who went over to fascism as misguided individuals is one thing. To excuse a political current which left so many of its followers as worshipers at the feet of the Nazi gods is a sentiment this writer can not share. Thus, in all fairness, this critique may well be colored by this lack of empathy. Beyond political or ideological differences, however, there are other less subjective flaws which call into question White's evaluation of the "Front Generation."

To begin with, accepting White's judgement requires one to accept the great wisdom of seeking to push socialism beyond Marxism or the working class. This may well be true. Yet, White does not so much as attempt to prove this contention. He simply asserts his conviction as if it were self-evident fact. If true, one could not determine it from the lives examined in this work. After all, the individuals of the "Front Generation" left precious little lasting legacy to those who followed.

Furthermore, one has to accept the proposition that a generation as complex and diverse as that which fought in the First World War may be understood by an examination of a selected few individuals. This is, at best, the stuff of the "Great Man" theory of history. When discussing the "Front Generation", this is especially difficult, because one is dealing with a group whose "greatness" is far from self evident. None of the individuals discussed ever achieved preeminent positions either politically or intellectually.

Take the case of England's Sir Oswald Mosley, for example. Mosley may well have represented little more than his own ambition (6) or, at best, a tiny section of his generation. Beyond doubt, there is no indication he represented a mass defection of upper class war veterans to radical politics of any sort. Yet, the reader is expected to accept the rather atypical story of this Labour M.P. turned fascist as somehow typical of an entire generation.

By way of contrast, Kurt Schumacher was the singular member of the "Front Generation" to achieve influence after the Second World War. Still, by his own account, this one armed Social Democratic war veteran contradicts rather than confirms White's theories. Schumacher, elected leader of the reconstituted Social Democrats, is dismissed as a man who "utilized Marxist categories more than they [Front Generation] had done." (190) Schumacher, who *did* achieve a position of importance, would have been a fascinating addition to this book but unfortunately is largely missing.

Moreover, to accept White's views, the reader must accept that Socialism would have been better off rejecting the materialism of Marx for emphasis on what "might be labelled spiritual or psychological." (40) Attempts to enrich the Socialist tradition with the new insights of psychology such as the early work

1 "men" is used throughout this review since this work includes no discussion of women, whatsoever.

of Wilhelm Reich are not considered. Rather, a false dichotomy is set up as the choice is between those "Marxists who blindly spew out the most decayed theorems" (39) and the ill defined "Beyond Marxism" of the Front Generation. All the same, if an innovative and coherent world view was ever worked out by this "Front Generation", it either is not clarified in this work or eluded this reader.

Although few would deny the obvious pitfalls of the "orthodox Marxism" of either the Social Democratic or Comintern varieties, this book fails to make a convincing case for the rather muddled beliefs of the men examined. This is not a failure of the author alone but more an inherent limitation of his subjects. By virtually rejecting democracy and losing faith in the common people while embracing nationalism and mysticism if not fascism, these individuals burst the fetters, not of an outdated Marxism, but of basic human decency.

By undue sympathy and a lack of a critical analysis, White paints the subjects of *Lost Comrades* as tragic heros whereas other historians would see them as merely pathetic if not venial. Using the same evidence amassed by White, one could easily draw completely different conclusions. For instance, the acceptance of nationalism as a valid component of European socialism could be recognized as a step upon the road to the "National Socialism" of Hitler. Likewise, the attempt to overcome dogma by rejecting materialist analysis might be seen as a rejection not just of class-based inquiry but also the goal of working class emancipation.

Further, in attempting to explain the failure of the "Front Generation", the author retreats into the very same deterministic attitude he so often condemns in others. Consequently, their failure is not due to their shortcomings, but because of an era "in which the forces and comforts of stalemate are sufficient to obstruct the energies of change, even when it is clear that the status quo holds no promise in the long run." (196) This explanation rings as hollow as corresponding excuses given by more "orthodox" socialists to justify their failures. What White overlooks is that people make their own history, even if not in conditions of their own choosing.

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Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, ed.,*British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women*, (Vancouver: Press Gang 1992).

British Columbia Reconsidered is an interdisciplinary collection about women intended to redress a gender imbalance within existing scholarship. The volume's interesting mix of historical, sociological, and contemporary essays by both academic and non-academic authors address five primary themes. In the non-academic articles, the subjects — native, Chinese Canadian, and poor women — speak for themselves, either through the first person or the extensive use of oral histories. Regardless of the type of article, the primary focus of the work is the important role gender has played, and continues to play, within society. The book also provides an informative bibliographic essay by Theresa Healy which supplies useful hints on non-traditional and previously untapped sources that students of women's studies and women's history must consult to pursue their research.

The first section deals with pioneer life in the nineteenth century. Sylvia van Kirk's excellent article on women and the Cariboo Gold rush of 1862-1875 demonstrates that women played a vital economic role in boom towns. The gold rush offered business opportunities to both men and women willing to brave the frontier. Van Kirk demonstrates that many successful women entrepreneurs conducted business within the service industry — operating saloons, hotels, and restaurants — or capitalized on the high demand for domestic services among the predominantly single male mining population by offering boarding houses and laundry services.

The next theme explored, politics, includes articles on: the campaign for suffrage, sketches of two prominent women in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in the 1930s, party activism among women delegates to the three major political parties in the 1980s, and women's role within the movement for native self-government. Theresa M. Jeffries' article on the Sechelt women and self-government is the most intriguing in this otherwise uninspired section, as she describes the central cultural and political roles that women have played, and continue to play, among the Sechelt people.

Domestic life, the subject of the third section, includes articles that tackle the subject of women and the "private sphere" from new angles. The most absorbing piece in this outstanding section is Strong-Boag's and McPherson's article on childbirth and hospitalization in Vancouver. As women lost control over the birth process, instrumental intervention within the birth procedure increased as did incidents of hospitalization, each of which in turn facilitated the dominance of the male medical expert. At the same time, midwives and family members who traditionally assisted women during childbirth were increasingly dismissed for their "unscientific" methods by doctors protecting their recently established professional interests. Strong-Boag and McPherson do demonstrate that, despite this trend, poor women continued to rely on their traditional sources of support because of inability to pay.

Section four deals with women and culture and includes articles on Chinese Canadian women and their childhood experiences of racism, working-class girls and their course choices in high school, immigrant women and health, and the role of language in the presentation of native experiences and in women's writings. Work and poverty is the subject of the final section. Sheila Baxter's article on poor women and May Lee's article on Chinese Canadian women in the previous section provide an interesting contrast to other, formal-scholarly articles in that, in both cases, the women themselves describe their circumstances and perceptions of what poverty and racism have meant to them. These sections demonstrate clearly the necessity and value of utilizing oral histories and other non-traditional approaches to women centred research.

As Creese and Strong-Boag point out in their introduction, the collection reflects the different approaches and perspectives used by feminists in their attempts to correct the gender imbalance within many academic disciplines. They assert that feminist scholarship over the last twenty years has witnessed a transformation

> from the early add-women-in approach that added women to existing malestream accounts, to woman-centred research that refocused questions from the vantage point of women, and finally towards non-sexist research that problematizes gender relations for women and men. (5)

This transformation is illustrated by considering the articles in the book which have adopted the "add-women-in" approach, a problem which plagues the politics section. For example, Susan Walsh's article on Dorothy Gretchen Steeves and Grace MacInnis, replaces "great men" with "great women" whose prominence resulted from their "unwomanly" behaviour. In fairness, this particular article was originally published in 1984, and represents important groundwork which other feminist writers have built upon. Given the "cutting edge" nature of other articles, any comparison is bound to reflect less favourably on the more traditional type of work in this section. One wonders if Creese and Strong-Boag included these articles to illustrate their point.

Given the centrality of gender within the collection and in women's lives, the inclusion of an article which downplays its significance seems somewhat curious. Jane Gaskell's article on working-class girls and high school courses seeks to examine the predominance of these women in business courses. While Gaskell maintains class and gender play a role in course selection, she argues that these students believed they had exercised a choice and were not, therefore, the passive recipients of a dominant ideology. However, her argument is fundamentally flawed in asserting that believing one has a choice and actually having one are not the same thing. Her thesis does not invalidate the fact that dominant gender ideologies have a fundamental impact on course selection, whether students are consciously aware of it or not.

While focusing on British Columbia, these themes apply in other regions and, of course, on a national level. Many of these same themes have been dealt with in other contexts, like Britain, which places them firmly within a genre that is well established outside of Canada. This, however, does not negate the fact that this work is vitally important in understanding Canadian women's experiences, and serves to illustrate the exciting potential of women's history within Canada.

Kathy Sutherland-Huard
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bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Toronto: Between the Lines 1992).

When Gloria Watkins, a professor of English at Yale University, sought a pseudonym under which to publish her cultural criticism, she chose that of her maternal grandmother, Bell Blair Hooks, because Watkins wished to "keep alive" her memory. This anecdote, related in the twelfth and last essay of *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, her sixth book, is crucial: hooks (Watkins uses the minuscule "h") sees memory as a vital ally in her project of deconstructing "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy." Indeed, hooks asserts that this ruling class encourages "forgetfulness" of its crimes and of the resistant coalitions that its subjects have sometimes formed. Yet, though the oppressive "culture of forgetfulness" declares memory to have "no value," hooks insists that "Memory sustains a spirit of resistance."

Whether dealing with white depictions of "the Other" ("Eating the Other"), the Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas fiasco ("A Feminist Challenge"), or the bonding of African-Americans and Native Americans ("Revolutionary 'Renegades'"), hooks roots her critiques in the soil of her memories and experiences. Thus, the political is always shown to impinge upon the personal; hooks's anecdotes always offer aphorisms. One sees that ideology has consequences: from white college men discussing "their plans to fuck as many girls from other racial/ethnic groups they can 'catch' before graduation" ("Eating the Other") to black academic women refusing to grant each other audience ("Revolutionary Black Women").

hooks's critique is informed by the segregated, Kentucky black community in which she was raised. In her memory, African-Americans were able to resist white racism in the years prior to integration, which she reads as having occurred solely on white terms — with negative results for black community and identity. For example, integration "has helped to promote a climate wherein most black women and men accept sexist notions of gender roles" ("Reconstructing Black Masculinity"). In opposition to this colonizing and assimilating "whiteness," hooks proffers the notion of, as the first essay states, "Loving Blackness as Political Resistance." If blacks pursue this project, they will be able to "move against the forces of domination and death and reclaim black life."

Though hooks criticizes "essentialist-based black separatism" and "traditional leftist insistence on the primacy of class over race" as potential theories for black liberation, her own position veers toward black socio-cultural nationalism. Her way of seeing (which does recall John Berger) produces provocative insights — such as her view that Madonna is always "in competition with men to see who has the biggest penis" ("Madonna") or her equation of Tina Turner with "the lead character in the novel *Story of O*" ("Selling Hot Pussy"). At times, her vision fails: for instance, how can she know that Clarence Thomas married a white woman merely to express his "allegiance to the ruling class ("A Feminist Challenge")?

hooks's writing enacts a kind of Maoist cultural revolution, a perpetual critique of all forms of art —books, films, catalogues, records, videos, etc. — to assess how far they diverge from or how close they approach the depiction of a just society. Indeed, hooks's proviso that black feminists "must be ever vigilant, critiquing and resisting all forms of sexism" is applicable to those engaged in similar struggles. Her work, blending academic diction and down-to-the-bone Black English, affirms the empowering necessity of memory — and informed criticism — as tools for resistance. Still, as Adolphus Reed warns in his essay, "The Allure of Malcolm X and the Changing Character of Black ' Politics" (included in *Malcolm X: In Our Own Image* [1992]), the danger of a programme of cultural politics is that it may limit itself "to celebrating moments of resistance supposedly identifiable within fundamental acquiescence."

George Elliott Clarke
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Christopher Norris. *Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals, and the Gulf War* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press 1992).

Christopher Norris is nothing if not a rigorous thinker. Along with this rigour comes a talent

for rapid composition. *Uncritical Theory*, Norris informs us, "was written during a period (January to June 1991) when world events and the political climate in this country [England] were hardly conducive to sustained intellectual effort." Given the intellectual paralysis the Gulf War inflicted on most of the dissident "Left," we can appreciate Norris's accomplishment.

In the subtitle, *Postmodernism, Intellectuals, and the Gulf War*, Norris indicates that the main subject of his book is the general condition of social and cultural life in "Late Capitalism" (Fredric Jameson) designated postmodernism. But the fact that using the American-led Gulf War, ostensibly waged to safegaurd "democracy" in the "Free World," may be considered an indulgent and frivolous intellectual exercise does not escape him. Rather than make lame excuses, he justifies himself by pointing out that, given its often radical agnostic stance toward "truth" and knowledge of Reality and its "mood of widespread cynical acquiescence," postmodernism may be complicit in fostering the sense many had of being helpless onlookers and passive consumers of electronically transmitted images of the conflict.

Providing evidence of this complicity takes seven, carefully argued, chapters: "Baudrillard And The War That Never Happened," "Deconstruction *Versus* Postmodernism," "How The Real World Became a Fable," "From the Sublime to The Absurd (Lyotard)," "Alternative Resources: Against Postmodernism," "The 'End of Ideology' Revisited," "Consensus Reality and Manufactured Truth: The Politics of Postmodernism."

Chapter 1, "Baudrillard And The War That Never Happened," opens with a reference to 'The Reality Gulf,' an article Jean Baudrillard published in *The Gaurdian* days before the Gulf War began. In this article, Baudrillard argues that the impending war (or, to use its fancy name, 'Operation Desert Storm') could not happen. Nuclear deterrence had been very effective, and with it in place war "had become unthinkable except as a rhetorical phenomenon. . . ." Furthermore, not only is the thing (war) itself now unthinkable, but it had been supplanted by "talk of war." War and "talk of war" are no longer distinguishable. And, as another "example . . . of postmodern 'hyperreality'," War has become another event for whose "truth" or knowledge we cannot expect reliable answers from methods of scholarly inquiry derived from the epistemologies of Enlightenment Rationalism.

Chapter 2, "Deconstruction *Versus* Postmodernism," salvages deconstruction from the "widespread postmodern-irrationalist drift" into which Richard Rorty, Jurgen Habermas and John Searle had consigned it. Drawing from Derrida's writings, Norris realigns deconstruction with the "critical realism" outlined in the contemporary analytic philosophy of Gottlob Frege, Saul Kripke, Roy Bhaskar, Hilary Putnam and Ian Hacking. It now emerges that, contrary to his detractors, Derrida has all along not been the chief proponent of the notion of undecidability of meaning. In "the structural logic" of his arguments and "numerous passages" Norris quotes, Derrida emerges as a defender of "the protocols, standards, or validity-conditions of reasoned philosophical debate." For some, this chapter's brief for deconstruction, which effectively diassociates it from poststructuralism, may come as a surprise.

Chapter 3, "How the Real World Became a Fable," engages American neo-pragmatism. In its first generation, proponents of American pragmatism (William James, John Dewey and C.S. Pierce) had held "on to some ultimate, regulative notion of 'truth at the end of the enquiry'." But neo-pragmatists, drawing upon "post-structuralist ideas of language, discourse or representation that deny any access to reality and truth except by way of signifying systems," contend "that truth is *always and only* what counts as such within a given 'interpretive community' (Fish) or at a given stage in the ongoing cultural 'conversation of mankind' (Rorty)." With this reference to Saussurean linguistics, Norris pries American neo-pragmatism loose from its generative moorings in the work of James, Dewey and Pierce, binding it instead with postmodernism, a theory of knowledge with which it is contemporaneous.

In the next three chapters, "From the Sublime to the Absurd (Lyotard)," "Alternative Resources" and "The 'End of Ideology' Revisited," Norris applies to the writings of Jean-Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, and Francis Fukuyama the critical gaze he had brought to bear on Baudrillard, Rorty and Fish. In its general outlines, much of his comments here

are similar in tone and substance to those described earlier. However, the clearest outline of what Norris would consider an alternative to the anti-referential stance of postmodernism begins to emerge in "Alternative Resources" and is more fully sketched out in the last chapter, "Consensus Reality and Manufactured Truth."

If Norris were asked to name this "alternative," he would probably call it Noam Chomsky. Other figures — J. Fisher Solomon, Peter Sloterdijk, Terry Eagleton, Thomas Nagel — are influential in its formulation. But Chomsky stands as the "most striking counter-example" of the "postmodern-irrationalist drift" from which, earlier on, he disassociated Derridean deconstruction. It is not hard to see why. Chomsky, in a now famous debate, had defended the Kantian "rationalist philosophy of mind and language" against Foucault's poststructuralism. He had also insisted upon the efficacy of the "critical-realist position" which admits that, with the rigorous application of the principles of rational intellectual inquiry, we may discern "truths" and facts about an event, a situation, or an object which are not reducible to "a mere disagreement between rival viewpoints, language-games or discourses . . . ." In this Chomsky joins Kenneth Burke. Writing in the preface of his *Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke observes: "as regards the realm of the empirical, one cannot live by the *word* for bread alone..And though the *thing* bread is tinged by the realm of symbolic *action*, its empirical nature is grounded in the realm of non-symbolic, or extra-symbolic motion."

Just as, in Chapter 1, Baudrillard provides *Uncritical Theory* with a point of departure, in "Postscript" he also furnishes Norris with a point of closure. In "The Gulf War Has Not Taken Place," an essay written after the Gulf War ended, Baudrillard admits that the war had not been merely a product of the mass media but rules out any possibility of acquiring a "practical knowledge" of it. Though Norris admits to being tempted to be dismissive of such argument, he rightly recommends a Kantian *Ideologiekritik* as being a far more "effective response...."

Uncritical Theory is a powerful polemic, an antidote to political inertia and epistemological doubt. Like many polemics written under stress, it is repetitive. However, whatever minor flaws it contains are more than compensated for by Norris's rigorous argumentation and refreshing partisanship.

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Betsy Warland (ed.), *InVersions: Writing by Dykes, Queers & Lesbians* (Vancouver: Press Gang 1991).

Jane Rule says of her early novels, "I was writing about what was ardent, dangerous and secret, which is what lesbian experience still is for a great number of people." (93) InVersions offers the reader a complex look into the ardent nature of lesbian, dyke and queer identities. "To be a lesbian is to become aware of your difference," says Daphne Marlatt, "no matter how you come to it or whether you've felt you've always been one." (132) The thread that unites the 24 contributions to this diverse collection of essays is each writer's insistence on articulating her difference, and her determination to resist the attempts of others to define the terms of that difference.

"I've come to think that defiance is the only answer a lesbian writer can make to the exigences of *all* expectations," (114) asserts Mary Meigs. The overall tone of this collection is one of defiance, a defiance which manifests itself in the act of self-naming. Anne Cameron labels herself "the mother-grandmother-dyke-who-curses." (147) Gloria Andzaldúa refers to herself as "*una de las otras*," a term which she says situates her in "a South Texas Chicano/*mexicano* culture." (250) This concern with naming and situating the self appears again and again throughout the text. Each woman perceives herself as living and writing in resistance to the expectations and demands of others, whether they be those of a patriarchal, capitalist and heterosexist culture or those of "white middle-class lesbian theorists in the academy." (250)

The book is divided into four sections which offer various perspectives on many of the same preoccupations and arguments. The statements made in one part are often supported or contradicted in another. The first section "Embodying Our Words" focuses on the voice that speaks from a lesbian body. These writers, all poets, insist on the interconnectiveness of lesbian creativity, lesbian sexu-

ality and lesbian politics. While Western literature has emphasized the link between creativity and sexuality, it has usually worked to obscure the political implications of such a connection. Women's sexuality has been portrayed as exclusively heterosexual, and the existence of both lesbian life and art has been denied. For the writers in this section the assertion of the lesbian body challenges not only the cultural and literary conventions that construct the figure of "woman," but also the aesthetic conventions surrounding the production of "art." Minnie Bruce Pratt outlines the paradox she faces as a lesbian poet: "Unless I write explicitly of how I am a lesbian I will be denied my identity, my reality. When I do write explicitly, I am denied art." (31) "As long as my freedom to be sexual with women is endangered and under attack," says Cheryl Clarke, "as long as lesbian sexuality is the most invisible sexuality, politically, my poetry must be a medium for the sexual politics of lesbianism." (41)

In the second section "Headwind" the contributors focus more specifically on the struggle between the individual lesbian writer and the expectations of a lesbian community. Jane Rule, Eve Zaremba, Mary Meigs and Luz María Umpierre all explore the extent to which lesbian writers can begin to feel boxed in by the particular demands of lesbian politics. Daphne Marlatt articulates the difficult connection between identity politics and collective action when she acknowledges both a need to "name ourselves collectively" and the realization that "we aren't a unified collectivity but only a loose coalition of women with very different cultural, racial, and class backgrounds, and very different bodies." (130)

In the third section "Site Reading," the writers discuss the various ways in which they must continually negotiate and renegotiate their relationship to social institutions. Elana Dykewomon and Judith McDaniel discuss their experiences with the publishing industry. "Writing may be a question of what you name yourself," says Dykewomon, "but publishing is a social contract." (158) Betsy Warland, Nicole Brossard and Gloria Escomel analyze the power of language in a patriarchal and heterosexist culture to lure a writer into saying things she does not mean. For these writers, working on language and form is not experimentation for its own sake; it is a strategy for survival. "I owe it to myself to not erase the memory of my path," says Brossard, "to not erase the stategies and rituals of writing that I had to invent in order to survive the customs and phallic events of life." (200)

The final section, "Questions Beyond Queer," offers the most powerful challenge to any notion of a unified lesbian identity or perspective. There is a consistent attempt by many of these contributors to challenge what they see as the elitism of academic or institutionalized lesbianism. Gloria Andzaldúa charges: "'lesbian' is a cerebral word, white and middle class, representing an English-only dominant culture." (249) The theories produced by lesbian academics, she believes "limit the ways we think about being queer." (251) "I am sick of the Lesbian Cultural Ghetto," says Chrystos, "which idolizes certain performers who are slick and mediocre rather than passionate & politically astute." (240) Barbara Wilson cautions against focusing on literary form at the expense of examining the day-to-day work that lesbians do. "Extremely experimental lesbian writing avoids the question of making a living completely," she argues, "and is much more focused on criticizing patriarchal language than the patriarchal workplace." (234) Yet, Irena Klepfisz emphasizes the necessity for working on literary form as she traces her own process of developing a voice which brings together her sense of herself as a Jewish woman, a socialist and a lesbian. She observes that "new content frequently demands new genres, definitions and boundaries." (210)

What connects the 24 contributions to this book is that each contributor outlines her particular strategy for survival in a world which perceives her as alien. "The heterosexual tradition has no use for us," warns Sumiti Namjoshi. "For lesbians to continue to exist is to defy its essence." (46) "I use writing, quite consciously, to survive," says Chrystos. All of these writers display the complex intermingling of arrogance and vulnerability which characterizes a good deal of the writing by lesbians, dykes and queers — the arrogance of those who have survived and the vulnerability of those who know how tenuous that survival can be at times.

Betsy Warland has set herself a difficult task in putting this text together. While she confines herself to North American writers of

fiction and poetry, she attempts to be as representative of this group as possible by soliciting manuscripts from writers who differ in "age, class, cultural background, race, publishing experience, political/literary beliefs and practices." (xii) Overall, she seems to have been quite successful in this enterprise. However, there are voices whose absence I regret, in particular that of Dorothy Allison, who has referred to her own writing as a "deep abiding desire to live fleshed and strenghtened on the page, a way to tell the truth as a kind of magic not distorted by a need to please any damn body at all." (*Trash* 12) A similar desire informs the writings in Warland's collection.

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E. San Juan, Jr. *Racial Formations/Critical Transformations: Articulations of Power in Ethnic and Racial Studies in the United States* (New Jersey: Humanities Press 1992).

In *Racial Formations/Critical Transformations* E. San Juan attempts to construct or rather reconstruct a theory of racism through a critique of various schools and disciplines. He begins by exposing the inherent problems of literary theory pointing out the limitations of the "reconstructionist" model that emphasises difference rather than contradictions as a form of identity recognition. He criticises "ethnicity theory" as well as multiculturalism arguing that both forms of ideological constructs and policies are intended to weaken and elide the deep conflicts and contradictions that characterize the heterogeneous cultural construct of the United States. While accepting the concept of racism as a socially constructed phenomenon, the author links racism with capitalist class structure and argues that the *Others* in the US are not just different ethnicities and cultures but systematically positioned in the lower echelons of the class hierarchy.

This book, or rather theoretical project, challenges the liberal bourgeois ideology of pluralism and market values of individual consumerist freedoms as being obscurantist and deceptive. As the ideology of commodity economy, pluralism like commodities has become fetishized. The transition from the "melting pot" paradigm of the pre-1960s into the "cultural pluralism" model of the 1970s-1980s is no more than a liberal-pluralistic attempt at conflating racism with "diversity." It is also a liberal hegemonic plan at silencing, pacifying or quieting the *Other* through consent. This point may be particularly troubling for feminist politics as it casts doubt on the celebratory slogan "Unity in Diversity."

I found San Juan's critique of the Marxist theory or project of theorizing race most refreshing, albeit very problematic. The author is correct to argue that racial antagonisms must not be reduced to political class relations and that race and class — later in his project gender is introduced a another important element — should be seen as dialectically intertwined. He conquers with other social scientists who maintain that racism is not a unitary social category general and generalizable to all histories and circumstances. For San Juan, racism is a concrete happening and, for most people concerned, is a matter of life and death. Therefore, the proper approach to deal with racism is to analyze its historical specificity.

It is refreshing to see the study of racism go beyond identity politics and localized concerns. The author links racism with various stages of capitalist development and accumulation at both the national and the international levels. It is also refreshing to see the links made to gender — though not with equal analytical weight — by a male author.

Most problematic in this study, however, is trying to figure out what methodology San Juan recommends for students of race and ethnic relations. On the one hand, the reader is led to believe that a proper methodology is a multi-faceted one. That is, one that combines elements of various neo-Marxist models, including dependency theory, Wallerstein's model, the "internal colonialism" model, and so on. In fact, elements from non-Marxist and post-structuralist discursive and deconstructionist models are also deployed in this process. At times textology — preoccupation with a particular text — appears to predominate the social science approach.

Yet, what is not clear in this multi-faceted methodology is the form and nature of the relationship between the different elements he chooses to place together. For example, despite the emphasis on class, at various in-

stances class is sacrificed for other ideological/political constructs. His uncritical use of the paradigm of "internal colonialism" is but one instance here. At this instance, the reader gets the impression that all Blacks and all Asians are equally "colonized" as one class, the *other class*. The absence of a relationship between say, race, class, gender and the state — components of the theory of racism — lies in the author's implicit rejection of a structuralist Marxist framework. The post-structuralist method adopted in this project can also partly explain this problem.

A careful examination of San Juan's project reveals some major theoretical inconsistencies. In the first part of the book the author cautions against privileging class over race or vice versa and argues for the articulation of the social, gender, the economic, the political...etc. Later in the book we find that class, economic relations and the whole level of relations of production were undercut and subsumed under various ideological/political formulations. For example, the author adopts the "articulation of modes of production" approach but without say Bradbury's production relations or Wolpe's modes of productions. Instead San Juan's analysis focuses on the sphere of circulation and "mode of rule."

Some confusion is also apparent in the author's privileging of the concept of hegemony. Hegemony, defined as the "rulers ability to win the voluntary consent of the ruled," (114) is not confined to the subordination of the other alone. U.S. hegemony which "manufactures consent," to borrow Noam Chomsky's phrase, is operative on "all American masses." In fact, it is more explicable at the economic-class sphere than on the political-ideological sphere.

The final point I would like to raise is that the relationship between theory and practice, despite the author's claim otherwise, is rather weak. The reason is not because of lack of concern for social change nor because of lack of concern for people's resistance. To the contrary, San Juan demonstrates genuine concern for people's real history at the level of the individual agent as well as collective memory and organization. The weakness in the link between theory and practice is, rather, the product of the unstructured "high" literary discursive post-structuralist language the author often brings into the analysis with the consequences of making the reader lose focus. The lack of communication between literary critics like the author himself and a group of Filipino writers, eluded to in the symposium referred to in the text, illustrates this point. (105-108)

In conclusion I share the authors concern that identity politics that express the individual response to racism and other forms of oppression are not a solution since in the process history and collective resistance are sacrificed. But neither elitist academia nor academic elitism are the solution or the alternative either. Writing on issues of concern for the majority, yet using the language that can only be deciphered by a very small minority, will not contribute to social change nor will it make theory accessible to the real agents of social change.

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Mark O. Dickerson, *Whose North?: Political Change, Political Development, and Self-Government in the Northwest Territories* (Vancouver: UBC Press, Arctic Institute of North America 1992).

After near-endless wrangling about the federal constitution, it is good to be reminded that the "shape" of government also remains unsettled on regional footings. In *Whose North?*, Mark Dickerson reviews the reshaping of government in the Northwest Territories (NWT). He raises a crucial question: do "southern" political models best reflect either the needs or wants of the Territorial population?

Dickerson, a Political Scientist at the University of Calgary, answers both questions with a resounding NO. Pointing to the work of Samuel Huntington and others, Dickerson argues that political change "is not deterministic — that it is not a unilinear but a multilinear process." (7) In short, political change may lead to decay rather than development. Especially important, he argues, is the issue of political legitimacy: successful political development must combine structural and attitudinal elements. This, he argues:

> is precisely the problem of political development in the NWT. To date, many of the structural characteristics of the institutional arrangement follow the southern model of a conventional, provincial government ... Nevertheless, this rather conventional, southern structure of government is not accepted as legitimate by certain Native groups in the NWT. (9)

Dickerson begins with a discussion of multi-faceted physical and human setting that is the NWT. First comes the economic setting — the renewable and non-renewable resources — both in terms of history and potential. Brief overviews of Territorial demographics, and the complex cultural mix (Dene, Metis, Inuit and Non-native), provide an additional "backdrop" for the discussions that follow; the brevity is understandable but will surely leave the curious non-specialist eager for more detail.

Dickerson, however, moves to the heart of his analysis. Though familiar to the Northern specialist, other readers will benefit from the straightforward discussion of the NWT's administrative evolution. The account begins with the years 1920 through 1950, an era marked by the overbearing influence of a handful of Ottawa civil servants who "ran the region as if is was their own bureaucratic feifdom [sic]." (28) As Dickerson notes, pressures brought on by World War II, and the more nationalist notions of younger bureaucrats, brought new pressures to bear.

Calls for change, from within Ottawa and without, saw successive postwar governments launch "Northern Visions" of one sort or another. But, as *Whose North?* points out, an ever-growing number of northern "experts" left little room for local say. Indeed, Dickerson argues that growing federal interventionism (1950-67) marked the true period of Northern colonization:

> If, by colonialism, one means state control through a bureaucratic apparatus on the ground, the 1950s represent the period when it started. Certainly one could hardly call the 1920-50 period 'colonial'. It had been more government by default than government in the sense of running a colony. (62)

"Colonial" or administrative, the Ottawa bureaucrats inevitably gathered more data on the NWT setting, revealing a population living at standards far different ("below") that of the south; the result was a greater concern for that population, as distinct from "development" of the NWT. Instead of the previous notion of maintaining the old ways (hence the tiny education budgets of the pre-war era), it became increasingly important to "integrate" Northerners into the industrial economy. (79) Soon it became apparent that such integration (ie. assimilation) was not going to occur quickly, if at all; but by now the federal presence (both in terms of funding and the establishment of permanent communities, housing and the like) was part and parcel of the Territory. Unable to meet earlier expectations yet playing an ever-more costly role, Ottawa looked for new "answers." Thus the Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories under the chairmanship of A.W.R. Carrothers was established. The Commission travelled widely in the NWT, finding "strong desire for some degree of local control of public decisions." (84)

As a result, the seat of government was moved to Yellowknife, sparking an exodus of northern bureaucracy from Ottawa to that northern centre. This shift, argues Dickerson, was fundamental:

> After 1967, politics in the Northwest Territories changed considerably. ... The territorial government was moved to Yellowknife and immediately began to free itself of Ottawa's domination. At the same time, Native people in the region were politicized, organizing into effective interest groups. This new process was analogous to a triangle, one corner being the federal government and DIAND, one the GNWT, and the third the Native organizations. The interaction of these three forces created a new political dynamic in the policy process of the NWT. (88)

Though rather cluttered with charts and tables, Dickerson's account provides a convenient source for those interested in the fast-growing Government of the NWT (GNWT), the parallel emergence of more politicized Native organizations, or the rise of "consensus" politics in the Territorial Assembly. Again, some may find the summary frustratingly brief. Yet there are pleasant finds like a solid assessment of the Drury Report. (109-114).

The consolidation of power in Yellowknife notwithstanding, so long as Ottawa remains the source of most funds for the GNWT, some element of colonialism remains. Dickerson suggests that a fuller sharing of resource-based revenues may be a partial solution. He also raises the question of "devolution":

> The central question is, now that the GNWT has power, can it engender a sense of legitimacy and support from the residents of the NWT? Or will residents of the region reject the present territorial government and opt for division of the region into smaller constitutional jurisdictions? (117)

Is it possible that the hard-won gains of the GNWT will be spread about the length and breadth of the NWT? Moreover, would such a process be a "good" thing? Dickerson leaves no doubt where he stands on the issue: in response to the writings of Gurston Dacks and Graham White, he writes:

> For many residents of the NWT, political legitimacy will come only after devolution or some form of decentralization has occurred within the GNWT.... From the evidence marshalled here, it would not appear that the territorial government with its existing power arrangement will become legitimate. (189)

Nunavut was clearly on Dickerson's mind as he wrote these words; in contemporary Northern Canada change occurs more quickly than books can be brought to print. Indeed, the reader senses Dickerson's frustration that the Nunavut issue had not been further resolved by publication date. The sheer volume of material also invites reaction: brevity "necessitates" generalizations sure to draw a specialist's ire. Similarly, repetition and minor editing flaws (the inconsistent use of Dene Metis / Dene-Metis), can be annoying. But instead of dwelling upon "slips", let us applaud Dickerson. *Whose North?* provides both good, crisp summary of developments in the NWT in this century and a thought-provoking, accessible assessment of important contemporary issues.

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David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1992).

Secularizing the Faith, by David Marshall of the University of Calgary, is a recent effort in a well-mined, contentious field of inquiry. The turn of the 19th century has attracted dogged attention and issues related to secularization currently dominate the historiography of religion in English Canada. Marshall attempts to reorient this literature, challenging recent work by Ramsay Cook, William Westfall, Michael Gauvreau, Phyllis Airhart, Marguerite Van Die, and John Webster Grant as well as older work by Richard Allen and A. B. McKillop (all of whom by no means agree with each other).

Marshall views secularization as a longer-term process than other historians have allowed and assesses it as a spiritual as well as an intellectual problem. To that end, his book begins with a useful introduction that surveys the Canadian historiography and addresses secularization in an international framework. In it, Marshall points out difficulties with pinpointing Protestant decline too suddenly and too late and criticizes studies that neglect popular culture.

The body of the book, through the clergy's eyes, examines the institutional and spiritual challenges that modernity posed for evangelical Protestantism. Faced with personal doubts and failed revivals, ministers laboured to produce a "preachable gospel." In the process, Marshall contends, they down-played traditional images of a transcendant God and the other-worldly ends of Christianity. Intellectual challenges to the faith became unusually troublesome, moreover, because institutional competitors (the welfare state, print media, organized leisure and sport, etc.) appeared that threatened to displace the churches and overwhelm their standing in English Canada. Here, Marshall points out the importance of connecting Protestantism's spiritual encounter with modernity to material concerns — state formation, urbanization, and consumer capitalism.

To appeal to the working class and to educated elites, Marshall continues, preachers watered-down evangelical theology by emphasizing social justice, accommodating orthodoxy to bourgeois morality, and adjusting the work of the church to the needs of a consumer society. Mystery and the supernatural held little place in these new gospels. The lacklustre response of liberal Protestantism to the barbarity of World War I and to the Great Depression completes the story during the interwar years. An enduring naive faith in material and spiritual progress left liberal Protestantism ever more irrelevant, despite

the vibrant intellectual resources available in the neo-orthodoxy of Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr and the Christian socialism of the LSR.

Secularizing the Faith's weaknesses begin with its narrow range of historical context. This is hard to pin down, but in Marshall's analysis all theological change and social Christianity seem to indicate secularization. Such a near-sighted approach belies long traditions of social Christianity, presupposes a static past for the churches, and does not put the rise of evangelicalism in its modern setting. Particularly, Marshall does not describe the developments that allowed evangelical Protestantism to become an unofficial establishment in 19th century English Canada. Without some recognition of this background, Protestant decline in the 20th century makes little sense.

Other issues are left under-developed. Marshall depicts the churches as fragmenting and undergoing crisis as early as the 1850s. While no doubt true for individuals, this general description disregards Canadian Protestantism's growth, faith in progress, and cultural and social influence into the 20th century. His treatment of church union in the 1920s is a good case in point. Certainly a practical response to organizational problems and declining influence, particularly in the West, union also built on the evangelical culture of the 19th century and fulfilled long-held ecumenical hopes. For many social gospellers and traditional evangelicals, the United Church was a sign of the Kingdom of God. On these issues, Marshall does not make use of the historiography he capably discusses in the introduction.

The book also suffers from its exclusive focus on the Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches. Marshall carefully notes these limits, but his study's widespread implications demand some consideration of the Anglican Church and the multitude of Protestant sects forming during this era. Similarly, Marshall fails to examine secularization rigorously at a popular level — his own criticism of earlier studies. Though his evidence and analysis rely on the clergy, he overlooks the problems associated with using and interpreting elite sources to examine popular culture.

All told, *Secularizing the Faith* does not live up to the promise of the introduction. The long-term "crisis" model of secularization that Marshall develops is not convincing, though it works better from the 1910s onward. Herein lies a paradox. The naive confidence he ascribes to these years can perhaps best be understood as a result of the Protestant clergy's optimism throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Comfortable success at accommodating intellectual change and emergent consumer capitalism, not crisis, led to evangelical Protestantism's undoing later in the 20th century. Marshall misses this point. The Protestant churches nurtured and sacralized the society and culture that undermined their influence.

With many of these issues, Marshall's book reflects the general contours of the English Canadian historiography on secularization. It resembles studies by Cook, McKillop and Allen in interpretation and makes advances only in some of the new ground it covers. As in these studies, Protestant decline appears to be inevitable. Efforts to deal with intellectual, institutional and material change seem quixotic and temporary at best, and theological developents invariably slip towards secularization. Criticism of this interpretation — by Gauvreau, Van Die, and Airhart, among others — has little impact. Though Marshall comments in his introduction on recent arguments that Canadian evangelicals generally adjusted to Darwinism and biblical criticism with success and confidence, he fails to deal with them in the body of the book.

Secularizing the Faith can thus be read profitably in its parts, but not as a whole. The introduction and the chapters on the 1920s and 1930s are useful, but the book's secularization model misfires. Studies by Westfall, Gauvreau, Van Die, and Airhart still offer better over-all interpretations, despite the problems Marshall accurately points to in his introduction.

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Rob Knight, *Stalinism in Crisis* (London: Pluto Press 1991).

It is a shame that, despite enormous technological changes that should have revolutionized the publishing business, books still do not find their way to market very quickly. Though

its introduction is dated March 1991, this book appears to have been "put to bed" in early 1990 (the most recent citation is a January 1990 newspaper article). Thus, this examination of the failures of Perestroika seems at times to be beating a long-dead horse.

Still, Knight's book may interest readers still engaged by the long-running debate on the nature of the Soviet Union and its relation to Marxian socialism. For Knight, the issue is quite clear for all who are not wilfully blind: "It is now universally apparent that Soviet society is the product, not of the Russian Revolution, but of its defeat" (4).

A central argument of the book, and one that gives one a sense of the work as a whole, is that

> Gorbachev's 'new thinking' is not so much a critique of Stalinism as an attack on Marxism itself. This is necessary because the project of capitalist restoration demands that Marxism and its devastating critique of society based on the market and exploitation, and its insistence on the necessity for world revolution, must be discounted. In this sense, Gorbachev is the authentic inheritor of the Stalinist tradition. Just as Stalin attacked Marxism through the campaign against Trotskyism, Gorbachev carries on the onslaught on Marxism through the medium of a critique of Stalinism. (6)

The only thing socialist about Stalinism, Knight suggests, was its rhetoric, and Gorbachev is prepared to jettison even this.

Nevertheless, the clarity of Knight's central argument is marred by various mutually contradicting statements. Knight argues in his introduction that "the Soviet Union has no deepseated ideological commitments." (1) (Incidentally, Knight holds that the "Western establishment" was "well aware" of this fact, which he proves with a single quote from an unnamed British official during World War II.) Later on, however, Knight states that until the late 1980s "the Soviet bureaucracy has always had a distinct and coherent ideology." (129)

Similarly, Knight asserts that "It is not the case that the bureaucracy is divided between reformers and conservatives as it is often presented by Western commentators. Every Soviet bureaucrat is both a reformer and a conservative." (22) After having offered this interesting view of the bureaucrat as Faust, Knight tells us that "The events of the late 1980s have intensified conflicts within the bureaucracy, particularly between reformers who favour accelerating the pace of capitalist restoration and more conservative elements who fear the destabilizing consequences for the elite as a whole." (45)

These contradictions are not minor flaws, but indications of the lengths to which Knight must go to avoid confronting the difficulties in his position. He needs both a bureaucracy with no ideological commitments in order to demonstrate the "universally apparent" non-socialist nature of the USSR, and a bureaucracy that once had commitments, in order to be able to argue that the abandonment of those commitments led to the "betrayal" of various Third World revolutions.

Lest one think that these contradictions can be justified by an appeal to "dialectics," let me stress that a dialectical approach is part of what this book lacks: the USSR appears at almost every turn as that most undialectical of phenomena, a Bad Thing. Any negative effects arising from the disappearance of this Bad Thing, such as the crisis for leftist forces throughout the Third World, must be dismissed as purely transitory:

> In the short term these developments have strengthened the forces of reaction in the Third World. In the longer term the declining ability of the Soviet Union to contain conflicts can only be beneficial. (140)

The *"can only be"* here, and the earlier cited *"universally apparent,"* also indicate the tenor of the book: Knight is expounding truths which are self-evident, to him at least. This may explain the curious lack of evidence for many assertions. On at least three occasions, Knight declares that "the Soviet working class has no particular ideological hostility to the market," or "no objection to the market in principle." (25, 35, 44) Given the repetition, this must be an important point, but Knight offers not a shred of evidence for the assertion.

Though the USSR was unquestionably a Bad Thing, Knight dismisses most Soviet commentators who have tried to analyze the failings of the system. Thus, Gorbachev's declaration that "we have abandoned the claim to have a monopoly of truth" constitutes for Knight evidence of extreme "moral collapse." (129) The argument of Kozyrev and Shumikhin that some Soviet actions provided fodder for the Western Cold War propaganda machine is dismissed contemptuously as

"breast-beating confessions." (128) Criticism by foreign observers, it appears, is the order of the day, but self-criticism is forbidden.

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Nicholas Fillmore, *The Life & Times of Roscoe Fillmore* (Toronto: Between the Lines 1992).

National histories of the socialist movement, according to Nicholas Fillmore, have neglected the Maritimes. *The Life & Times of Roscoe Fillmore* (*TLTRF*) is an attempt "to dispel the myth of the Maritimes as a conservative monolith where no one had the courage to offer resistance to capitalist exploitation."(xi) *TLTRF* is a fascinating look at a pioneer socialist who offered that resistance, lived life to the fullest, and left an enduring legacy to the Maritimes, Canada, and radicals everywhere.

Roscoe Fillmore, the grandfather of journalist Nicholas Fillmore, was born on 10 July 1887 in the backwoods of Albert County, in south-central New Brunswick. His father farmed, worked as a labourer in Albert, and spent winters in the lumber camps. His mother tended to home, garden, and children. The Fillmores were Baptists, and Roscoe's grandmother Elizabeth attempted, unsuccessfully, to influence her grandson to conform to her very strict Protestant morality.

Roscoe Fillmore's socialism began as a reaction against his religious upbringing and a sense of outrage at the poverty and disease of his youth. His actual socialist education followed a move to Portland, Maine in 1904. While there he worked as a stove-pipe fitter, on construction, and in the locomotive repair shop of the Maine Central Railroad as a machinist's helper and electric crane operator. He joined the Socialist Party of America and distributed literature for it.

Off and on during this period Fillmore also helped his father and his uncle Willard, who had bought the Albert Nursery. At the nursery he learned the skills that would one day make him one of Canada's leading horticulturalists. In August 1906 he went on a harvest excursion, and worked on a farm south of Regina. The early winter of 1907 found him working as a mucker in a railway construction camp in Field, British Columbia. Leaving Field, he almost froze to death in a railway car on the way to Calgary. There he met Jack Leheney, a leading member of the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC), who took him to the first annual convention of the Alberta Trades and Labour Congress. While in Calgary Fillmore helped Fred Hyatt, a recent British immigrant, organize the unemployed.

When he returned home Fillmore and his cousin Clarence Hoar started a SPC local in Albert. The townspeople were openly hostile — stones were thrown at the new headquarters and a window broken. During Big Bill Haywood's tour of the Maritimes in 1909 Fillmore was arrested for speaking in public. In the face of such hostility the little band of Albert socialists fought valiantly, but were unable to keep the local functioning.

In the years 1909-11 Fillmore's political activities focused on the Springhill miners's strike. He saw the strike as a radicalizing process for the miners, and hoped that they would see the futility of trade unions and embrace revolutionary socialism. His rhetorical attacks on trade unionism notwithstanding, Fillmore spoke at socialist rallies and union meetings, and walked the picket line while being menaced by company thugs carrying guns and clubs. When the strike ended in defeat in May 1911 both union militance and the momentum of the SPC suffered a severe blow.

Roscoe Fillmore was depressed by the decline of the socialist movement in the Maritimes, and felt further betrayed when the German Social Democratic Party did little to oppose Germany's entry into World War One. Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who did oppose the war, became his heroes. His spirits were buoyed by the Russian Revolution. He supported affiliation with the Third International, and by 1922 was working toward the creation of a Workers' Party local in New Brunswick. In 1923, with the help of Big Bill Haywood, he became head gardener in the Autonomous Industrial Colony of Kuzbas, in the Kuznetsk Basin.

By 1924 he was back in Canada. In May 1924 the Fillmores moved to Centreville, near Kentville, in the Annapolis Valley. An attempt to get into the apple export business fell apart when the British market collapsed in 1926-27,

and the Fillmores switched to vegetable seedlings, perennials, and annuals.

Horticulture came before politics in these years, but in 1929 Fillmore went to the national convention of the Communist Party in Toronto. It was a fateful decision. Fillmore witnessed the in-fighting and factionalism that was part of the purge of right and left 'deviationists', which resulted in the victory of the Buck-Smith faction of the party. He left the convention "somewhat disillusioned," and afterwards became less active in supporting the Communist Party. (163)

From the 1930s on Fillmore's involvement with Communist politics was sporadic. He spoke out against fascism, campaigned for J. B. McLachlan in the federal election of 1935, and dismissed reports about Stalin's atrocities as western propaganda. Late in the depression he got a good job as head gardener with the Dominion Atlantic Railways, which allowed him to become more involved in politics. Fillmore was in Toronto in August 1943 when the Communist Party became the Labour Progressive Party, a name party leader Tim Buck claimed was suggested by Fillmore. In the federal election of 1945 he ran in the riding of Digby-Annapolis-Kings on a Farmer-Labor ticket. He fared badly, receiving 362 votes.

Around 1950 Roscoe Fillmore gave up his membership in the Labor-Progressive Party and began to concentrate on his business. In the early 1950s the Fillmore Valley nurseries became the largest Canadian nursery east of Montreal. In 1953 Fillmore published *Green Thumbs: The Canadian Gardening Book*, which was an immediate success. *Green Thumbs* outsold all other gardening books in Canada. He published three others: *The Growing Question* in 1957, *Roses for Canadian Gardens* in 1959, and *The Perennial Border and Rock Garden* in 1961.

In 1961 the nursery went bankrupt. By this time Fillmore also realized the bankruptcy of his defence of Stalin, and in 1964 he publicly criticized the Soviet Union for the first time. Like so many other disillusioned communists, he now looked to China and Cuba as socialist role models. In the 1968 federal election he voted NDP, but not with any enthusiasm. Roscoe Fillmore died on 20 November 1968.

TLTRF is a marvelous book, full of love, respect, humour, and larger than life people. Wilfred Gribble, who toured the Maritimes in 1909 and almost single-handedly kick-started Maritime socialism, is here. So is Big Bill Haywood. There is Communist Joe Wallace, poet and advertising agency manager who gave away all his possessions and chose to live in poverty. We meet Pat Roddy the bootlegger, whose potent home-brew fueled many a Marxist debate among Halifax communists in the 1930s. Overshadowed admittedly, but strong and influential nevertheless, are the indefatigable Sophie Mushkat; Roscoe's grandmother Elizabeth, who shaped him more than he ever cared to admit; and Margaret (Munroe) Fillmore, who more than anyone else made her husband's life as a radical possible.

While the book focuses on labor and socialism, it also contains interesting discussions of race and gender. Fillmore championed the rights of black unionists in Amherst, New Brunswick prior to World War One, helped break the colour barrier in Nova Scotia by hiring black workers in the early 1950s, and corresponded with Martin Luther King Jr. In his relations with his wife Margaret and other women, he was a typical socialist of his day, espousing a traditional role for women while speaking out against their exploitation in both the private and public spheres. There is even a rumoured affair in the Soviet Union with a revolutionary named, of course, Olga. Roscoe Fillmore was a complex and contradictory man, never more so than in his relationships with women and writings on race. Regrettably, Nicholas Fillmore skirts these issues, leaving us with the sense that there is much more to the story than he is revealing. We want to know so much more.

TLTRF also fails to answer questions that are of interest to Canadian labor historians. Why, if Roscoe Fillmore was so passionate about what was going on in the Soviet Union, did he not return in 1924? The author's observation that "the prospect of returning to Russia began to slip away" strikes the reader as rather unsatisfactory. (150) Exactly what was his relationship to the Communist Party? We are told that he was on the Central Committee, but we are given no evidence of activity carried out as a member of that Committee. Why does one get the sense that he never quite gave himself to the Communist Party the way he went full out for the SPC? On these questions and several others, it would be difficult to give

Nicholas Fillmore a passing grade for investigative journalism.

Roscoe Fillmore was a Maritime radical, but how typical was he? The Maritimes' leading Communist, J. B. McLachlan, was born in Scotland. Fred Hyatt, who worked with Fillmore in the Maritimes, was born in Britain and, like Fillmore, radicalized in Calgary. In Centreville, Fillmore's closest comrades in the Communist Party were James Sim and Charles MacDonald. Sim was born in Scotland, had lived in British Columbia, and was a member of the SPC. MacDonald had also lived in BC. Nicholas Fillmore does not address the key question: just how 'Maritime' was Maritime radicalism?

Nicholas Fillmore demonstrates with great conviction and convincing evidence that his grandfather did wage a courageous and lasting battle against the forces of Maritime conservatism. But what about his grandfather's internationalism? The most surprising aspect of *TLTRF* is that the author seriously underestimates his grandfather's importance as a political writer. He takes Fillmore at his word when the latter claims not to be a serious writer. Roscoe Fillmore, like all his SPC comrades who made this claim, was lying. He was nothing if not a serious writer. As a result, Fillmore's many theoretical articles in the *Western Clarion* are almost completely ignored. The significance of his many contributions to the American-based *International Socialist Review* is passed over in silence. Nicholas Fillmore notes that when Roscoe Fillmore wrote for the *The Steelworker* most of the articles were on "international political issues," yet we are told very little about them. (173)

Roscoe Fillmore worked with hand and brain, loved life and the people who were a part of it. Few persons of his generation were more connected to the world around them. Yet his generation of socialists remains perceived as irrelevant to the political culture and material world of their time. Would that we could all be so irrelevant. Roscoe Fillmore said it best in a letter to grandson Nicholas in 1953: "To learn about things is what we are here for." (x) It was the guiding principle of the Marxian socialists of his age. Roscoe Fillmore overcame the parochialism of a rural youth to become a student of natural and social organisms, local and international events. *The Life & Times of Roscoe Fillmore* provides us with a wonderful look at the budding of a Maritime radical, but the international socialist has yet to flower.

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James Naylor, *The New Democracy: Challenging the Social Order in Industrial Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1991).

No event has captured the attention of Canadian labour historians more than the general strikes of 1919. Yet comparatively little has been written on the immediate aftermath of that dramatic year, as workers came to grips with the limits of direct industrial action. Historians have been content to describe the 1920s in general terms of a retreat from industrial conflict, the emergence of welfare capitalism, and employers' efforts to roll back earlier wage gains and to enforce the open shop. While there is obviously much truth in this picture there is more that needs to be told, as it tends to minimise the active participation of labour in these events. In *New Democracy*, James Naylor provides an account of southern Ontario labour which underlines the fact that the class struggle did not reach its denouement in 1919 but continued into the 1920s and beyond.

Naylor's account covers the years 1914-25 and describes labours parallel battles on the industrial and political fronts to articulate and secure its own vision of a society. *Parallel* battles, Naylor argues, because the industrial and political struggles were waged by "two seemingly autonomous working-class movements" which "operated in quite distinct realms." (6-7) Accordingly, Naylor attributes Ontario workers' ultimate failure to realise their vision of a 'new democracy' to the fact that they were unable to bring these two struggles together within the limited framework of labourism.

New Democracy's structure reflects this interpretation. Part one examines the impact of the war on workers and their craft unions, focusing on the accelerated de-skilling of various industries, the renewed fear of unemployment at war's end, and the increasingly one-sided and repressive nature of state

intervention in the workplace. This section concludes with a convincing summary of the limitations of direct economic resistance, as Naylor considers labour's ambivalent support for the 1919 strikes and the One Big Union.

Part two switches attention to labour's political activities during and after the war. Here Naylor supplies an excellent discussion of labourism, an aspect of labour history to which historians have continued to pay little serious attention. Naylor also traces the origins and emergence of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) as the organisational expression of that ideology. Here he offers a more generous interpretation of the ILP's failure in the 1917 federal election than that provided by the likes of Martin Robin. Although the party gained no seats it had nevertheless identified and mobilised significant working-class support for "an alternative to the old political order." (100) And in so doing, the ILP had paved the way for its provincial success in 1919 when it joined with the United Farmers of Ontario in forming the new government.

In part three, Naylor moves firmly into the post-war era and looks at labour's and capital's competing visions of democracy in the 1920s. For Naylor, proposals made under welfare capitalism and industrial democracy schemes were little more than attempts by employers and governments to contain labour militancy — actual or potential. Far from promoting any semblance of tripartite equality between labour, capital and the state, the National Industrial Conference of September 1919 and the Canadian Reconstruction Association emphasised the resurgent hegemonic status of capitalism. Thus as industrial unions failed to win the 'new democracy' on the industrial front, workers turned increasingly to the legislature to secure their vision. Yet, as Naylor amply demonstrates, the ILP was unable to translate unity in opposition into effective and radical measures once in government. The fragile coalition with the farmers never evolved into a real working relationship and few of labour's basic concerns were addressed by this hybrid government. As a result, Ontario labourism experienced the same limitations and fate of progressivism on the federal stage. By the mid-1920s, labour's moment had passed and the promise of a 'new democracy' remained unfulfilled. As Naylor concludes, "The opportunity to impose its concepts of democracy had been lost, as a demoralized and demobilized working class lost faith in its own transforming power." (252) One need only compare *New Democracy* with, say, Robin's account of the 1920s in his 1968 *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour* to appreciate the impact made by the 'new labour history' of the 1970s and 1980s. Although the two authors cover much the same ground, Naylor's account provides dimensions and perspectives on the class struggle unconsidered by Robin. The impact of technological and managerial innovations, attempts to create a 'movement culture', and the vibrant and vital activities of working-class women all give Naylor's work a depth absent from Robin's. In this sense, *New Democracy* marks a significant advance in Canadian labour history.

Having said this, however, Naylor's work is not without its own problems. For example, were the working-class economic and political struggles really as separate as he argues? After all, as Naylor himself notes, 80 per cent of the Greater Toronto Labor Party were also active trade unionists, and it is unclear if and how such men and women divorced the two elements of their common struggle.

On a related point, too often Naylor perpetuates the equation of the 'working class' with the 'labour movement'. In doing so, he often infers a class radicalism, activism, and unity that remains unproven. By his own admission Naylor pays little attention to the "home, community, fraternal club, school, and street," all of which provide the essential context for class relations. This omission obviously does not undermine Naylor's account of labour's economic and political struggle, but it does throw into question his choice of subtitle, *Challenging the Social Order in Industrial Ontario*. *New Democracy* may be a very good political history of labour, but it rarely descends below the level of union and party workers.

Finally, Naylor's interpretation of the printed sources is at times a little uncritical. For example, he accepts as reality the rhetoric of Fred Flatman's radical labour paper, the *New Democracy*. Thus the first edition's editorial advocating 'absolute sex equality' is interpreted as "a substantial break with the dominant working-class ideology." (151) This may have been so, but Naylor fails to

produce evidence of a connection between one editor's reflections and a whole class's aspirations. How many Ontario workers actually bought, and read, *New Democracy* during its brief five-year existence remains a matter for speculation, but we have no reason to believe that Flatman spoke for a majority.

However, it would be ungenerous to end on what may be little more than a minor quibble. Any such shortcomings simply serve to underline the difficulties inherent in the reconstruction of the history of those who left little direct evidence. James Naylor has provided an intelligent and attractive fusion of the old and new approaches to studying Canada's working class. For this reason if no other (and there are many others), *New Democracy* deserves to be read.

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Allan Mills, *Fool for Christ: The Political Thought of J.S. Woodsworth* (Toront: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

Allen Mills's revision of J.S. Woodsworth's thought is, as he points out, a long overdue undertaking. It has been over thirty years since the publication of Kenneth McNaught's *A Prophet in Politics*, and much of the work in the interim has been overtly hagiographic. As with many other Canadian political leaders, Woodsworth has been on a pedestal that has resisted necessary critical analysis.

Mills sets out to provide that critical edge, analyzing Woodsworth's political theory not because of "the old fashioned notion that ideas matter, but because the importance of ideas was indeed Woodsworth's own perspective on his life and politics." (xii) As his title suggests, Mills purports to demonstrate the influence Woodsworth's Methodism, especially in his early years, had on his later social activist and political career. In this treatment, although Woodsworth left the church and abandoned his faith, his "Christianity also provided [him] with his most persistent self-images, those of the crusader and the martyr." (57)

This book is extensively researched, and it is clear that Mills immersed himself in Woodsworth's thought. At the same time, he does not let his self-professed regard for Woodsworth interfere with the critical nature of the work. Unlike McNaught, who glossed over Woodsworth's early nativism and thoughts on eugenics, Mills takes great care to treat these questions critically and thoroughly. While there is a somewhat whiggish and judgemental tone to some of this critique, it is an important contribution to understanding Woodsworth's early intellectual development.

Similarly, Mills offers a perceptive appraisal of Woodsworth's thoughts on class and political economy. In the strongest section of the book, Mills argues persuasively that Woodsworth moulded three aspects of his "economic doctrine — monopolies, underconsumption, and the quantity theory of money — into a case for statist socialism." (184) At the same time however, Woodsworth was ready, if not always willing, to compromise with existing monopoly capitalism by supporting parliamentary reforms aimed at ameliorating its most damaging effects. Mills explains these, and other, apparent inconsistencies, by arguing that on the one hand Woodsworth viewed the world with the "distant eye of the revolutionary, but he always behaved with the stoical immediacy of a gradualist and reformer." (184)

While this insight into Woodsworth's apparent inconsistencies is welcome, one cannot help but feel that the work could have been greatly strengthened on a number of counts. Perhaps the most obvious is in Mills's treatment of Woodsworth's Christian beliefs. The title of the work suggests that they were central to much of Woodsworth's thought, and his foibles. However, while Mills offers the standard biographical review of Woodsworth's early Methodism, he essentially abandons the theme after the first chapter. Indeed, his reference to "the increasingly dead hand of [Woodsworth's] childhood Methodism" (20) reflects Mills' reliance on the crisis-rupture thesis popularized by Ramsay Cook and Richard Allen. In this conception, Christianity found itself unable to cope with the twin challenges of Darwinism and higher criticism. In its futile attempts to reconcile these new ideas, Christianity developed a social gospel ethic which paradoxically undermined the evangelical consensus and ushered in the secularism of the twentieth century.

Mills's reliance on this model, with its whiggish bias and rigid teleological certainty of Christianity's demise, leads him to abandon any rigorous analysis of how Woodsworth's personal journey reflected a larger shift in Canadian society. Recent work by Marguerite van Die, Michael Gauvreau and Phyllis Airhart has suggested that Methodism "survived" the twin challenges of Darwinism and higher criticism, adapting much more successfully than first thought. Airhart's work in particular offers a fascinating thesis which traces Methodism's attempts to reconcile its evangelical, pietistic tradition with the challenges of the progressive age. Methodism's acquiescence to the tenets of progressivism — personal service, the cause of social reform, and the development of character — all replaced the emphasis on the personal conversion experience. Since Mills's own work points out the importance of progressivist thought on Woodsworth, a more rigorous development of this theme could have only been worthwhile.

Mills's abandonment of any rigorous analysis of the influences of Woodsworth's Methodism is made all the more frustrating since he insists on returning to the theme in his conclusion, offering a confused array of choices concerning Woodworth's beliefs, calling him at the same time a "personal deist", a "pantheist" and, somewhat surprisingly, an atheist. (254) Not only are these terms undefined and apparently contradictory, but they are essentially unsubstantiated by any of the preceding text.

Similarly, Mills's treatment of Woodsworth's "pacifism" could only have been clarified by more rigorous definition. On one particularly frustrating page, Woodsworth is labelled a "pacifist", a "realist", and "not always a systematic pacifist." (213) More attention to the variety of ideologies surrounding questions of war and peace in the inter-war period, which ran the gamut from Christian internationalism to non-violence to outright pacifism, would have been fruitful here. At the same time, while it is clear that Woodsworth had many conflicting ideas on how peace could be achieved, he was not alone. Peace activists struggled with internal splits among a whole range of positions, including outright pacifism, Christian internationalism and collective security. At the same time, the loosely based non-sectarian peace movement was faced with the rise of fascism and the fundamental inability of the western democracies to respond to it. The whiggish tone of Mills text tends to gloss over the difficult choices faced by Woodsworth and others during a complex and confused period, confounding subtle analysis with often unduly harsh critical overtones.

In the final analysis, *Fool for Christ* demonstrates clearly the need to re-evaluate Woodsworth, and leaves us with a valuable resource to begin this work. However, it is equally clear that more work needs to be done, particularly in placing Woodsworth more firmly in the context of his time and place, in order to understand the legacy of his social and political thought.

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The Architecture of Doom (1992), Peter Cohen, Director.

The *Architrcture of Doom* is a film that truly makes one wonder at the variety of possible interpretations of any given subject. At first the film seems to posit a ludicrous theory: that the rise of the Third Reich was not so much a political movement, but solely an attempt to fulfill an aesthetic ideal. As the film develops, however, director Peter Cohen manages to steadfastly guide you down a garden path that leads straight to the film's conclusion.

There has been a host of documentaries, dramatizations and docu-dramas that deal with the rise of the Third Reich. Most of these films attempt to analyse the Germany of the 1930's from a purely political viewpoint — bogging themselves down in historical interpretations that are as standardized as they are obvious. *The Architecture of Doom*, surfaces from this morasse as a wholly original and brilliantly argued film. Through a dynamic use of archival footage, much of which has never been seen before, Cohen has constructed an entirely new standard by which to judge one of the twentieth century's most infamous periods.

Cohen's personal history of Adolf Hitler — expelled from his Viennese art school at the age of 18, befriended by frustrated novelist Joseph Goebbels, obsessed with the grandeur

of Wagnerian opera, and suffering from a kind of xenophobic angst — paints an entirely different picture of the father of National Socialism than the one we have come to know. This new viewpoint also creates a plausible foundation on which to lay Cohen's analysis and, thus, the rest of the film. It is a short step, according to Cohen, from a penchant for Teutonic opera and all its majesty, to the massive Nuremberg rallies and the installation of a Wagnerian artist/prince.

What then does an artist/prince do? He systematically begins to purge 'un-culture' from the world around him. Beginning with artists who's work was considered to be a function of 'cultural bolshevism' — mostly the work of modernist jewish painters, — art in Nazi Germany was rapidly brought into line with the Greco-Roman aesthetics of classic purity and form; athletic marble statues, bucolic family scenes and, mostly because they were Hitler's favoured means of expression, many...many garish landscapes.

The beauty ideal then begins to spill over into all strata of society; plans are drawn up, entire cities are to be razed to the ground and re-designed, factories are scrubbed clean, and string quartets perform for the workers on the assembly line.

The momentum of this 'cleansing' movement, following a pattern endemic to all totalitarian systems, soon takes over the world of science and medicine. Doctors are now charged with the task of keeping the 'Volk' as pure as their surroundings, they are no longer to work for the good of the individual, but rather for the furthering of the state and its future generations.

In Cohen's estimation it was this leap from an artistic aesthetic to the aesthetic of the body that led to the sterilization of the insane, victimization of Jew and Gypsy, and finally the downfall of an impossible system.

The film ultimately touches on many smaller pools of fact that serve Cohen's argument, and it is these minutely researched supporting arguments that keep the film engaging. If there is one fault here, it is that in making a film about the insidiousness of single-minded thinking, Cohen has excluded a great deal of historical fact to serve his own purposes. For example there is no mention of Germany's squalid post WWI existence, nor the economic crisis that led to the collapse of the Weimar republic. This represents a glaring omission, and one that could have easily been tied in to Cohen's argument; a wisp of irony in an otherwise fascinating film.

The film's only other shortcoming is that one has no sense of moral weight within the choices that Cohen has made to construct the film. The argument is played out brilliantly, but Cohen does not state his own larger view of these events. There is a danger — particularly in an age where the boundaries between thesis and utterance, and morality and desire have become increasingly blurred — in not using such a well-crafted film to clearly underline the incredible evil that these events represent.

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