

frameworks, but rather that “the former can be said to work within the terrain delimited by the latter ...” (30). Marxists, for their part, may wonder at the basis of some aspects of Martin’s reading of Marx.

Paradoxically, then, the great strength of Martin’s book is also its weakness: Having avoided the sterile presumptions of the literature of interparadigmatic debate, *On Your Marx* could nevertheless benefit from greater theoretical elaboration. Martin’s book functions well as a reflection on contemporary political discourse, but his powerful synthetic framework deserves elaboration in itself. Martin states in his Preface that *On Your Marx* was originally to be a collaboration with Michael E. Brown, but that the two “decided to split the labor into separate volumes, [Martin’s] dealing directly with Marx and [Brown’s] on some fundamental issues for theorizing today” (ix). Both the considerable strengths of *On Your Marx*, as well as its weaknesses, dictate that this companion volume should be much anticipated.

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Errol Black and Jim Silver, *Building a Better World: An Introduction to Trade Unionism in Canada* (Halifax: Fernwood, 2001).

Jeffrey Taylor, *Union Learning: Canadian Labour Education in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing 2001).

How do unions work and what do they do? These seemingly simple questions have produced countless labour studies publications, ranging from general introductory texts to specialized and detailed historical and sociological studies. This diversity is evident in two recent texts, which both examine how unions work and what is it that they do: *Building a Better World*, by Errol Black and Jim Silver, and *Union Learning*, by Jeffrey Taylor. While Black and Silver construct a general overview of the roles and history of labour organizations in Canada, Taylor undertakes a detailed historical study of how the labour movement has developed a system of labour education, and how this system has simultaneously shaped the development of the movement. Despite their differences, both texts provide informative answers to the questions stated above.

Black and Silver begin *Building a Better World* by claiming that trade unions are a major force in our society. With this comment, they undertake to explain both the role unions play in Canadian society, and the ways in which unions themselves are organized internally. Through this exposition, they also take a brief journey through Canadian labour history, exploring the labour struggles and labour politics of the past, in attempt to illustrate the historical trajec-

tory that has shaped the labour movement of the present. They argue that unions have not only played a major role in challenging social inequality historically, but that unions are central to a more equitable workplace and society in contemporary times.

The text is divided into three sections. The first, "What Unions Do and Why It Matters" focuses on the role of unions in representing members through collective bargaining, grievance procedures, and strikes, and on the legal framework that regulates union actions. This section will be most useful for those looking for an introduction to how unions work, whether they are students of labour studies, new union members, or workers considering undertaking an organizing drive. The discussions of collective bargaining, grievances, union organizing, and strikes are written in a manner that clearly explains the ways in which unions accomplish these various activities, and the ways in which these activities benefit workers. The section on the benefits of collective bargaining is particularly useful, as it includes a well-organized statistical breakdown of the "union advantage" in wages, benefits, and other workplace rights. The text also provides instructive case study examples to bring these practices to life.

Black and Silver also briefly outline various theoretical explanations of why unions exist and what their role is or should be. This section summarizes some of the most influential theories of trade unionism, including the works of revolutionary theorists who have written on the role of unions in working class struggles, and "accommodationist" theorists, who have written on the ways in which unions act as interest groups within a capitalist framework. While this section adds to the analytic content of the text, however, the distinction between revolutionary and accommodationist theories is in some ways unsatisfying. The authors do not clearly explore theoretical contributions that have attempted to explain unions as contradictory organizations, promoting workers' rights in some ways, while at the same time constraining working class struggles. A discussion of feminist and anti-racist theories of the labour movement would have added to the analytic depth of this section as well.

The second section of the text examines the history and politics of the Canadian labour movement. The history section begins with craft unions in the 1800s and moves through the twentieth century to conclude with labour market restructuring, free trade, and the impact of these processes on the contemporary movement. Black and Silver do not claim to provide a comprehensive history of the Canadian labour movement. Those who are looking for a more detailed approach to labour history for either teaching or research purposes will likely want to look elsewhere. Nonetheless, the text highlights many of the definitive moments in Canadian labour history, including the 1919 workers' revolt, the postwar compromise, and the unionization of the public sector, and concludes by situating the labour movement within its contemporary economic and political context. But like the section on labour movement theories, the discussion of

labour history does not clearly assess the gendered and racialized history of Canadian labour, mentioning only briefly male unionists' opposition to women's paid employment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nonetheless, while the treatment of labour history is brief, it provides a useful introduction to the topic that could be used by students of the labour movement as a background to guide more detailed historical research. As well, this historical background helps to contextualize the authors' arguments about the centrality of organized labour in Canadian society.

The history of political strategies undertaken by Canadian labour is given its own chapter, separate from the general discussion of labour history. Black and Silver briefly explain political initiatives ranging from labourism to socialism, focusing in particular on labour's relationship with Canada's social democratic parties – the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and New Democratic Party (NDP). The involvement of the Communist Party in the labour movement is also outlined in an interesting section that illustrates the ways in which conflict over radical and reformist politics shaped the political culture of Canadian labour. This chapter clearly highlights the fact that Canadian labour has never had a clear and coordinated political strategy. In the contemporary context, the authors suggest that both the strains on labour's relationship with the NDP, and the growing coalition-based activism between labour and social movements constitute the current phase in this unresolved debate. The authors enter the debate themselves, clearly stating that they favour a strong relationship with a political party over coalition-based activism with social movements. They do not, however, suggest that labour's party should necessarily be the NDP in its current form, choosing instead to simply outline what they consider to be the central questions in this political debate.

While clear in their support for the efforts of unions to challenge the social inequalities of capitalist society, the authors are also clear that unions need new strategies for the twenty-first century. They focus specifically on the need to organize the growing numbers of non-unionized contingent workers, and to build new organizational structures to create a more inclusive and democratic labour movement. They also outline some of the challenges created by globalization and argue that Canadian unions must continue to pursue cross-border labour solidarity initiatives to support unionization in low-wage jurisdictions. Finally, they advocate a political strategy that includes a political party (without specifying what the politics of that party should be), but that is built upon political activism amongst rank-and-file union members.

The greatest strength of this text is its accessibility to a wide audience. Like the field of labour studies, the text is interdisciplinary in its approach, drawing from sociology, political science, political economy, and history to construct its analysis. Those who already have a detailed knowledge of either labour history, or the organizational practices of the labour movement, will not likely gain a

great deal of new information from the text. However, those looking for an interdisciplinary, introductory account of the Canadian labour movement will find Black and Silver's approach quite valuable. In particular, the text will be very useful for teachers and students of labour studies in undergraduate academic settings, and for union educators, union members, and non-unionized workers who want an introduction to the Canadian labour movement and to how unions work.

While Black and Silver take a very general approach, perhaps dictated by the nature of their project, Jeffrey Taylor's *Union Learning* takes the opposite approach. Taylor provides the reader with a highly detailed account of a very specific topic: the development of labour education in Canada in the twentieth century. Taylor organizes his study historically, beginning with a brief sketch of labour education in the mid-nineteenth century. From there, he moves through the twentieth century in a linear fashion, outlining the central developments that shaped labour education programs. As he constructs this history, he is particularly careful to illustrate the ways in which different approaches to labour education, as practiced by the different social actors involved in providing labour education, have shaped the labour education system. Thus, his study includes not only unions and central labour bodies, but also universities, colleges, and other organizations external to the labour movement. Through the course of his study, it becomes clear that the labour education system is very much a product of both cooperation and conflict between these various organizations.

Before undertaking the historical study, Taylor begins with an explanation of the basic concepts used to describe the field of labour education. For those unfamiliar with the field, this section provides a very useful introduction. The terms union education, labour studies, labour education, and workers' education have all been used to describe formal and informal educational programs for adult workers. While Taylor notes that these terms are often used interchangeably, he nonetheless distinguishes between them, providing some conceptual clarity for his study. Union education is used to describe educational programs for union members provided by labour organizations. Labour studies refers to university and college programs and courses with labour as the primary the subject of study. Labour education includes union education, labour studies, "and other non-vocational courses and programmes offered for trade unionists by educational and other social institutions" (3). Finally, workers' education refers to educational programs for both unionized and non-unionized workers. As indicated in the title of the text, Taylor's is a study of labour education, focusing primarily on educational programs for union members provided by unions, and post-secondary and other educational institutions.

Canadian labour education was influenced by both workers' and union education initiatives in the United Kingdom and the United States. Workers' education initiatives date back to the efforts of nineteenth-century social reformers

(including employers) in the UK, who sought to provide adult members of the working class with basic literacy and mathematical skills. By the early twentieth century this had developed into a system that provided education on politics, society, and economics. Along with providing workers with general knowledge, it was hoped that such education would channel workers towards “responsible” (reformist) rather than revolutionary politics. Socialists undertook their own initiatives, developing independent working class educational programs. The Rand School for Social Science in New York provided workers with education oriented towards the building of a socialist society. By the 1920s, there was a wide range of labour education programs in the U.S., offered by both university and union-based educators. The goals of these various programs were to create “a new democratic, egalitarian and worker-friendly society” (5). By the 1930s, however, union education programs began to replace workers’ education in the US, as the AFL began to organize programs to teach union members the basics of New Deal-era trade unionism: collective bargaining, labour law, and how to make unions run to provide benefits to members.

In Canada, the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) formed in 1918 through the efforts of trade unionists, university professors, and members of the broader public. Following the British model, the WEA sought to provide university-level education to Canadian workers in attempt to curb working-class radicalism and promote “responsible” citizenship. The work of the WEA peaked during the years of the Second World War as it broadened its mandate in an attempt to coordinate a wide range of educational initiatives in an autonomous and non-sectarian manner (it cooperated with all trade unionists, including communists). It was these principles that led to the marginalization of the WEA in the post-World War II years, however, as Canadian unions sought to develop a more focused approach to labour education, and to purge communists from the labour movement.

In the post-war years, labour education programs that were under direct union control, and that were focused on providing training for union members on how to run their unions slowly replaced the WEA approach. Following the enactment of postwar labour relations legislation, labour education became primarily directed towards the “bread-and-butter” methods of industrial unionism: collective bargaining and grievance resolution. It was through these programs, which were provide by the unions, that union members learned how to run their unions in “responsible” manners. By highlighting this aspect of labour education, Taylor adds an important dimension to our understanding of how the “post-war consensus” operated, and how labour organizations introduced union members to the principles and practices of “responsible unionism”.

Taylor also explores the complex relationship between union-run labour education and initiatives in post-secondary institutions, including both cooperative projects such as the Labour College of Canada (LCC), and more

autonomous programs. At its 1958 convention, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) decided to establish a labour college that would work in collaboration with a Canadian university to provide a union-centred model of labour education. Through cooperation between the CLC, the University of Montreal, and McGill University, the Labour College of Canada (LCC) began teaching classes to union members in 1963. The LCC was designed to provide social science education to potential labour leaders so that they would be better equipped to deal with university-educated employer representatives, and thus further contributed to the practice of responsible unionism.

The relationship between the labour movement and post-secondary institutions was characterized by competing perspectives on both the methods and goals of labour education. Early university involvement with labour education took place through the WEA. In the 1950s, efforts to develop new partnerships between unions and universities were explored; however tensions between academics and trade unionists created obstacles to full-fledged cooperation. University educators stressed the need for “objectivity” and resisted the political orientation of union-based education, while unionists considered such views to represent the interests of the business community. University and college-based labour studies programs designed to educate unionists and post-secondary students about the role of the labour movement in Canadian society emerged on a widespread basis with the expansion of post-secondary educational institutions in the 1960s and 1970s. Along with providing education about the labour movement, these programs produced partnerships between unions and post-secondary institutions. However, the question of the appropriate level of autonomy of these programs from the labour movement continued to remain a subject of debate.

Taylor concludes his study by assessing the changes to labour education that have been implemented during the last decade and a half of the twentieth century. Contemporary initiatives are situated in the context of corporate restructuring and the neoliberal assault on union members. He suggests that in this context, labour educators have responded by attempting to revitalize the system, to use labour education to mobilize union members around progressive, union-oriented causes, and to develop new cooperative arrangements with universities, such as the initiative between McMaster University and the Canadian Auto Workers. Taylor does not become as politically engaged with his subject as Black and Silver do, but he does make some suggestions as to potential future directions for labour education in Canada. For example, he concludes by arguing that a vibrant system of labour education is essential for the broader labour movement, and that such a system must be grounded in cooperative efforts between unions and external partners.

Both of these texts make important contributions to our knowledge of Canadian unions. While Black and Silver provide a useful introduction for stu-

dents looking for a general overview of how unions work, Taylor's study is a highly detailed examination of the specific topic of the development of labour education. Despite their differences in focus and method, both provide indications of the significance of unions in Canadian society, and make insightful suggestions as to the future possibilities for Canadian labour.

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Katherine Barbieri, *The Liberal Illusion: Does Trade Promote Peace?* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

During World War II, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull stated most clearly one of the central beliefs that came to define the international liberal order after 1945: "If goods can't cross borders, armies will." The idea that interdependence based on increased trade flows would avoid a repeat of the destruction caused by depression and war was institutionalized in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which, along with the United Nations (security) and the International Monetary Fund and World Bank (fiscal stability), became one of the pillars of the postwar multilateral world.

Barbieri poses fundamental questions that challenge this long-held shibboleth, and reconsider the entire field of trade-conflict studies: Does interdependence based on trade (if that notion actually exists) really prevent war? If so, what are the conditions that actually allow trade to promote peace? How does the liberal idea of interdependence hold up against critiques of that theory, which argue that trade's consequences vary depending on whether interstate relationships are equal or unequal in terms of relative power, or those who claim that trade interdependence actually increases conflict? What of the "null theory" that trade has no impact on interstate conflict whatsoever? In trying to answer these questions, her purpose is to "underscore the differences that exist in trading relationships and the manner in which these differences might produce outcomes that differ from the liberal model of commercial peace."

The methodology employed is expansive. A very useful literature and theoretical overview in which Barbieri helpfully conceptualizes trade relationships as a continuum, is followed by the core of the book: By analyzing more than 100,000 observations of pairs/dyads of states from 1870 to 1992, Barbieri aims to better assess the "generalizability of hypotheses related to the trade-conflict relationship." Employing a number of charts and graphs to simplify her detailed and complex evidence, Barbieri finds that the notion that trade promotes peace is erroneous, and that interdependent countries are actually more likely to engage in military conflict than countries with less extensive trade relationships.