

Restoring the Canadian Left

In the fall of 2008 the global capitalist system was confronted with a major crisis, which was manifested in falling stock markets, collapsing financial institutions, the tightening up of credit, a bankrupt auto industry and steep declines in commodity prices. By most accounts the economy was heading into a long-term recession and unemployment rates were rising quickly. Commentators drew parallels with the 1930s and talked of a new “new deal.” Suddenly, Keynes was in; Friedman was out; and Galbraith’s “affluent society” looked to be taking an awful hit. Demand-management policies and government stimulus packages, sometimes even with the Keynesian label, were all the rage again. (Of course, when it came to such things as military spending and taxes for most working people, Keynesianism had never passed.) “Regulation” was no longer a dirty word, and unqualified support for free markets was rejected in Obama’s 2009 inaugural address, ironically just as the controversial Milton Friedman Institute was getting off the ground at the University of Chicago. In Canada, Prime Minister Harper advised that he would not be too worried about running deficits if the economy truly needed government stimulation. Neoliberalism seemed dead or, at least, *free marketism* was being ignominiously repudiated in much of the world.

With neoliberalism fading as the preferred idiom of capital accumulation a new regime of growth is bound to emerge. What has tended to go unnoticed in both Canada and the United States, however, is the troubling fact that the so-called “new deal” of the 1930s was forged with the presence of an energetic left, at a time when the system itself was seen to be under threat from communism. This configuration of class relations and historical tides no longer holds true. As a new regime of accumulation takes shape the voice of the working class will be muted owing to the sorry state of the left in Canada. The post-neoliberal era, therefore, will not be kinder to working people. Optimism that the new regime will better insulate working people from the ravages of unfettered accumulation, like a pendulum swinging back in their favour, is rooted in a naïve view of class struggle. There is no such thing as beneficent politics when it comes to the capitalist class — the ever-pressing logics of competition deaden any instinct to be generous, and capitalists are not blessed with more generosity than other mortals.

The factions of capital will broker a new “new deal” that will contain just enough “good will” to save “the system.” The new era in North America will be fashioned largely by the requirements of capital accumulation, and labour is not about to fair any better than it has in recent decades. Said a little differently, there will be no Rooseveltian “new dealer” in the post-Bush era because the left has crumbled. Capital will forge a new economic framework, and labour, after years of neoliberal hammering, will demur mildly and provide *pro forma* ratification. The central point is that the new compromise setting the revised institutional terms of accumulation will retain all of neoliberalism’s regressive features pertaining to labour. During the worst part of the crisis the “pogey” may loosen ever so slightly, real wages may rise owing to deflation and government-sponsored economic initiatives may create jobs, but the neoliberal screws will continue to tighten for the working class all the same. Those aspects of the neoliberal paradigm that decimated the working class and fundamentally altered the social relations of power in favour of capital are not about to be dismantled any time soon. Only pressure by labour and the left will do this, and the labour movement and the left are in a bad way.

This point about the strange politics of the present conjuncture is worth reiterating. As the neoliberal era enters its twilight it is hard to imagine that the left will have much of a role in shaping the post-neoliberal “Promised Land.” The new order will emerge slowly and will likely include enough “regulation” so the assorted factions of capital do not devour each other in the drive to accumulate. But the basket of anti-worker measures, sometimes referred to as the deregulation of labour markets, is unlikely to fade away. Any reversal of the anti-worker measures will occur only when there is a resurgent left.

Prior to exploring ways to rebuild the left in Canada we must first focus attention on the present character of the left, particularly its outlook on capitalism. Accordingly, this chapter first provides an assessment of the progressive left in Canada today. The chapter then explores suggestions about restoring the Canadian left.

The Left in Canada Today

To gain some sense of how best to re-ignite the left, we must begin with a question: What is the left? The American philosopher and social critic Richard Rorty offered as good a definition as anyone when he claimed that the left does not think that the world in its current state is acceptable and thus seeks to make it more just.¹ The left, as a movement, is comprised of people who are not satisfied with many features of contemporary life — its poverty, its abuses of working people, its wars, its environmental degradation and so forth. Their empathy for those who suffer is a rebel passion. They are

frustrated by the capacity of mainstream society to ignore suffering and wary of political and economic promises that things will improve over time. Their unease leads them to vote for political parties with sympathetic platforms, send money to organizations that confront the dispiriting aspects of the world, join demonstrations, volunteer and generally try to turn the world into something better. They desire to see the world become fairer and more just and would, as the twentieth-century philosopher Alfred North Whitehead professed when defining the very meaning of “civilization,” generally like to see the salient use of “force” be replaced by the use of “persuasion.” Empathy and dogged determination mark the progressive spirit.

There is, however, another way to define the left, which has to do with the ancient notion of critique. For many ancients things could be both true and false at the same time. To be critical meant that a person could hold that the very real world, full of tangible practices and conventions, could still be unreal and untrue — that is, not in keeping with the proper order of things, not really faithful to the way things are supposed to be. As Athens was amassing its empire and heading into war with Sparta and its allies, many Greek intellectuals, including Thucydides the historian, Aristophanes the comic poet and Euripides the tragedian, all stressed that the world was unfolding in a manner that was not true to the way it should be, not in keeping with the proper order of things, namely, peacefulness. The Peloponnesian War spanned an entire generation; it was very real, but it was also awfully wrong and untrue to “the good life.”

For the left “to be critical” in this sense requires it to embrace the view that the very basic organization of capitalist society fails to be in keeping with the *proper order of things*. Capitalism — its alienating character, its devastating ecological practices, its obscene extremes of wealth and poverty, its tendencies towards universal commodification, its propensity for war and its sheer wastefulness, to say nothing of its capacity to create crisis after crisis, simply cannot be squared with “the good life” in any Aristotelean sense of the term. A critical left would harbour a deep suspicion about the nature of capitalism itself. The left would see capitalism’s essential, defining features as flawed and accordingly would strongly suspect capitalism of necessarily immuring humanity in never ending misery and privation. Such a left would push to see capitalism consigned to the proverbial scrapheap of history.

Bearing in mind that two measures of the left are possible, we can explore the nature of the left in Canada today by posing further questions: Does the anti-neoliberal movement in Canada actually serve to strengthen the very forces that undergird neoliberalism and capitalist globalization in the first place? As the left strives to humanize capitalism, to sand down its rough edges, is a life dominated by capitalist social relations tacitly assumed to be the only possible world? To express this question in terms characteristic of the hubris

of the early 1990s and the heralded writings of Francis Fukuyama, does the anti-neoliberal movement merely wish to gentrify the apparent “end of history”? Are we in the midst of an historic political struggle that sees, on one side, unrelenting pressure for relatively unfettered global capitalism and its promise to bring “the greatest advantage to the greatest number of people” confronting, on the other side, a progressive movement that also assumes a world dominated by capitalist social relations but insists that these basic relations be infused with considerations of fairness, justice and environmental responsibility? Or, is it the case that capitalism itself — a system of private property, wage labour and highly developed market relations — is no longer “on the table” or “up for debate”?

Such queries illuminate my claim that the prevailing left in Canada does not reject capitalism. This progressive force is noteworthy for its refusal to entertain alternative social vistas. It is characterized by the collapse of any standpoints that explicitly repudiate capitalist social relations. For this left, the world that stands before us is not “untrue” but rather in need of “tweaking.” In more analytical language, political life in Canada has lost the *negating* reflex, the reflex that turns away from the basic social relations of capitalism. In a Canada where poverty is on the rise, where working people are being hammered from countless directions and where a new Canadian-style militarism seems to be orchestrating its own birth, capitalism itself is taken to be sacrosanct. Almost all voices of criticism and dissent call for something friendlier, something less cruel, less humiliating and even less violent, but something that is, when all is said and done, *capitalist* nevertheless.² The consensual elements in political discourse between the “left” and the “right” in Canada are striking. These opposing political forces agree on the economic fundamentals. This fundamental consensus has tamed a more severely critical attitude. Ironically, as the decades have passed and things have gotten worse by any standard of suffering in Canada and around the world, the view that capitalism itself might be the problem has tended to wither.

This claim is a bit overdrawn. The instinct to reject elements of capitalism may have petered out on the left, but people vote with their feet and reject capitalist society everywhere. On the ground a veritable “second society” dwells in the shadows of the “first society,” a society that tends to stay off the radar screens of the mainstream media and leading political groups. This is the society that has “removed itself, thank you” from the primary capitalist world. Its citizens seek to sidestep capitalism’s exploitative tendencies, its hectic rhythms of daily life and its poignant contradictions. The logical line of demarcation is the habit of rejecting some or all of the practices of capitalism. They do not merely despise the “spirit of the capitalist” in its vague, Weberian sense, but rather turn away from its essential social relations

centred around wage labour, private property and universal commodification. The second society seeks to carve out a mode of survival that is less rushed, much more human-needs-oriented, more in tune with the natural and spiritual world and, to be sure, peaceful. Over the years it has included barter communities, minimalist movements, communal societies, religious communities, back-to-the-landers, co-operative communities and a legion of concerned volunteers.³

The populace of the second society includes many who were born into an alternative community established by earlier generations. The second society, however, also includes scores of tortured souls who have repudiated many of the principles and institutions of the first society. They strive to find a community that is organic and internally true to the authentic demands of life, and avoid as much as possible participation in communities that feel voluntary and external; they seek *to be* a part of a community rather than merely *joining* one. They often tend not to “make a living” but rather piece an existence together that is relatively free from emotional distress and complications of conscience associated with the daily routines of the first society. At a time when the burdens of modernity render the task of daily life more challenging for everyone, especially by creating the possibility of “guilt” and “shame” arising from the simplest of tasks like grocery shopping, driving to work or watching television, it has managed to select out a special brand of absolute sufferers who must “drop out” of mainstream society, in whole or in part, just to cope. These are the anguished denizens of the second society.

In the second society resides what some might call the “genuine moment of criticism.” Like the ancients who associated the very idea of critique with the notion that the world before them was false, so the citizens of the second society fold their arms, turn away and declare: “No!” They reject the world and seek to live another way, for the world before them does not feel proper. When considered against the last few decades they make our one-dimensional world feel a little less flat in the Marcusean sense. To a man or woman they will find the musings of Henry David Thoreau solacing and the success-oriented councils of Ben Franklin’s autobiography borderline pathological. To fit in would be, for them, the mark of failure; they live in fear at being sucked into the vortex of the prevailing capitalist world.

But in the second society the possibility of political transformation fails to develop and mature. The second society is not part of the *political life force* of society, a fact that prompted G.W.F. Hegel’s harsh indictment of the Quakers so long ago. The routines of this rejectionist society may constitute the “embryo of the future within the old,” as Marx once speculated when speaking about cooperatives, but it is unclear how their alternative modes of existence can do anything but remain on the margins of the mainstream

world. This has been especially true for the self-contained religious communities across Canada. Nothing has really changed in the intervening decades since Hegel's unsparing assessment of the Quakers. The second society tends not to contribute to the political life-blood of society in any meaningful way. These "conscientious objectors" chisel away at the main features of capitalist society by refusing to buy things, give away their superfluous possessions, return to the land alone or as part of a collective, volunteer for long hours to make the world a better place and so forth. The mainstream left offers little political sanctuary for these natives of negation owing to the fact that it does not reject the essential aspects of capitalism — private property, wage labour and universal commodification. The odd member of the *second society* might dilly-dally among the ranks of the mainstream left in body, but never in spirit. The political world offers them no home and little solace. The citizens of the second society pursue small-scale perfections in a world that feels upside-down and alienating, and the left-right politics of capitalist preservation are not about to make them feel much better. But neither is their "example" going to change the world. From the standpoint of the politics of class and the evolution of capitalism, the presence of *islands of integrity* within the *ocean of capitalism* will never ever develop into a meaningful, transformative political force.

Although the instinct to negate is hardly dead in Canadian society, it does not form a part of the left, nor is it likely to steer political struggle in the direction of a post-capitalist world. And so we can return to the principal claim about the left in Canada today, where any flame of anti-capitalism has long since been extinguished. The left is estranged from the Trotskyist and communist currents of Marxism in Canada and meshes awkwardly with the editorial line of publications such as *Canadian Dimension*. The left does not reject the core of the world that stands before it, but rather rejects selected aspects of the world in favour of something more bearable — fair profits over unrestrained corporate accumulation, universal standards of well-being against poverty and sustainable development rather than environmental degradation. This left is the product of a long journey from the Knights of Labor to the NDP, the Council of Canadians and the Green Party, a journey that passed through anti-communist hysteria and the CCF along the way. In this left resides the spirit of reform and renewal. In a sense the defining political moment of this progressive movement occurred when the NDP removed its opposition to capitalism in its founding manifesto.⁴

In the left today we witness a wholesale immersion in the immediacies of capitalist life and its pathologies — a ravaged natural world, chronic joblessness and poverty, peacelessness, money-grubbing corporate profiteering of the most conspicuous sort — so that the *critical attitude* succumbs wholly to the desire to see this or that ugly trend ameliorated without delay. Progressive

commentators weigh in on the cruelty of the day and insist on appropriate policy changes. The left would like to see welfare policies reformed in a manner that does not involve cutting payments, it would like to see the unemployment insurance system restored, it would like to see public health care preserved and privatization resisted, it would like to see the minimum wage raised, a greater regulation of corporate practices, the greening of capitalist enterprise and so forth. It believes that neoliberal policies have been far too harmful to far too many people and that remedial action must be taken now. In the end the progressive movement in Canada both *is* and *is not* optimistic; it believes wholeheartedly that capitalism is retrievable with appropriately deployed government intervention and regulation (the optimistic part), but it also calls for immediate attention to the staggering human costs and horrendous environmental tolls (the pessimistic part).

The measure of politics for the left in Canada is often little more than a Panglossian take on the “golden age” of capitalism. The problem is *bad capitalism* rather than capitalism itself. The mainstream left lacks a core critique derived from a coherent inquiry into the nature of capitalism *per se*, just as it lacks a long-range understanding of human sociocultural evolution that ever gets beyond the vacuity of Karl Popper’s ideas about “piecemeal engineering” in democratic societies. The left is progressive in a touchy-feely sort of way; it tends to run on noble instincts rather than sound analysis. It cares about people, and it cares deeply about the harm that befalls them. Most importantly, the left does not trivialize the injury done by global capitalism. But it nevertheless fails to pivot politically from a sound take on capitalism *qua* capitalism. It is from these limited horizons that it enters debates, considers policy proposals and plans political strategies. To put this differently, it is not sensitive to the need to develop a foundational understanding of capitalism and its severe limitations, which can then frame and inform political discussions. The measure of politics for the left in Canada is often little more than a romanticized view of the Keynesian social policy framework of the 1960s. This is a Canada that is fondly recalled despite the fact that it is a Canada that never was, and a Canada that has long since passed by anyway.

A series of other grievous problems that beset the left have been thrown into relief in the neoliberal era. These problems are related to its failure to consider any alternatives to capitalism.

Eclipse of the Language of “Class”

It is difficult to establish a definitive link between the collapse of a negating political discourse in Canada and the concomitant eclipse of a class-based political discourse, but a number of factors have undoubtedly been at play. The fierce anti-communism of most of the twentieth century made it politically expeditious to jettison the language of class, especially as notions like “working-class revolution” and “working-class emancipation through

socialist revolution” were assailed in the mainstream cultural and political fora. To even talk about class issues or express sympathy with unions or the plight of workers was to risk inviting hostility and alienating potential voters conditioned by anti-communist hysteria. Even the non-communist left was regularly branded as “communist” and placed on a discredited political slope. This taboo has persisted for decades. To mention the “working class is forbidden from political talk,” remarked American labour writer Steven Greenhouse, author of *The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker*, in an interview on *Democracy Now* in the fall of 2008, “because people are going to be accused of being class warriors.”⁵ A pointed editorial in the *Monthly Review* applies as much to Canada as it does to the United States:

Many on the left have indeed retreated from class and a vision of a democratic, egalitarian socialism. The important social issues of our day — race, gender and the environment — more often than not are divorced from the role of class structures. The rule of the capitalist class and the class struggle are shoved to the back burner. Whether consciously or not, the implicit assumption underlying the retreat from class is that capitalism will somehow or other go on and on as it creates miraculous new technology. Best then to stick to making those adjustments in social conditions that the system will presumably allow.⁶

This reluctance typifies the academy and has prompted some to use the language of “breaking cover” when speaking about issues in terms of class and class struggle.⁷

At the same time, “interest-aggregating parties,” which embrace issues for the sake of garnering political support at the polls, have tended to emphasize cleavages and splits rather than commonalities among working people. NDPism, the watered-down version of social democracy in Canada, must also be counted in as a factor in the eclipse of a class-based political discourse. The highly corporatized media and the fawning professional milieu it encourages among journalists have certainly had their roles to play. And the economic changes within the working class itself, especially the relative decline of the traditional manufacturing job and the growth of the service sector and irregular employment, has helped to dull the class discourse in political life.

Reactionary Politics

The political agenda of the left today is largely reactionary, progressive to be sure, but reactionary nevertheless to the agenda of politics set by transnational capital. To each of the central elements of the neoliberal agenda the left has made its stand and defined its ambition: against unfettered free marketism

it stresses the importance of maintaining some regulation and state control; against cut-backs it stresses the importance of restoring and retaining a full array of government services; against privatization it favours government expansion; against tax cuts it promotes adequately funded social programs; against corporate restructuring it draws attention to the social costs of de-industrialization, sub-contracting and short-term contracting; against rollbacks in labour laws it argues in favour of strengthening the regulatory regime; against elitism it favours expanded democratic reforms.

Decline of Left Parties

The radical left parties in Canada receive little support from the wider population, and the more popular social democratic alternative in Canada does not provide much traction for the development of a worker-friendly politics. The political orientation of the New Democratic Party offers little resistance to either neoliberalism or capitalism. It refuses to speak the language of class and class struggle, preferring instead the catch phrase “middle class” when speaking about the consequences of neoliberal policies. The NDP has even become a champion of some of the basic elements of the neoliberal agenda, for example, elevated concerns about government debt, which are used to ram home neoliberal reforms. A 2006 election post-mortem on the federal NDP by Dennis Pilon drew attention to the party and its anything-but-worker-friendly platform:

Selling themselves as the “real” defenders of Canada’s social programs, Layton’s NDP promised to steer a “moderate” course on the economy, making some noises about corporate power but mostly amounting to a Blairite accommodation to the market and globalization. Gone were the allegedly controversial inheritance-tax proposals from the last campaign, as well as any real engagement with the economic problems facing “ordinary” Canadians.... The party arguably ran its most “mainstream” and neoliberal campaign ever: no tax increases, tough on crime, a mainstream economist running for the party and no mention of social democracy, let alone socialism.⁸

Not surprisingly, NDP governments elected at the provincial level have not stemmed the neoliberal onslaught.

Fragmentation

The wilting of the first wave of leftism in Canada included the aggressive marginalization of socialist and communist elements and the atrophy of social democracy. Well-meaning groups have stepped in to fight for the rights of migrant workers, female workers, low-wage workers, the poor,

the working poor, welfare recipients and so forth. Other progressive organizations address such issues as environmental degradation. Local research and activist organizations like the Parkland Institute in Alberta have been complemented by nationally based organizations like the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in an effort to draw attention to many of the issues facing oppressed groups, to attack the boasts of neoliberal apologists directly and to press for policy changes. Although these organizations generally oppose neoliberal policies, they also reveal the fragmentation and marginalization of the left. Without an enriching dialogue about capitalism in Canada, an informational network that counters the nonsense of the nightly news, a working-class culture that affirms the insights and experiences of working people and the coherent resistance of organized labour, *all* we are left with is a diverse collection of issue-based, resource-poor, small-scale organizations biting at the heels of the corporate Leviathan. They seem to accept that their concerns can be resolved at the policy level. They seem to accept that resistance against the abuses of capitalism is a cumulative process characterized by incremental successes, and they carry on despite their little headway year after year. To these groups the problems of capitalism are reduced to a series of “burning issues” urgently in need of attention. They work in relative isolation from one another, and there is little prospect that their efforts will galvanize into a movement capable of crossing a decisive political threshold. Through no fault of their own they are out of sight from a general public conditioned by the mass-mediated world of the CBC and CNN, and most of their efforts go unnoticed. They crave media attention — a mistake — and do not get much of it anyway. On the whole, they lack a political voice and press for changes with nothing more than moral authority at their disposal. They really are *all that's left* in Canada.

The Collapse of Labour

Those very institutions that throw the contradictory nature of capitalist society into relief have come to be little more than extensions of the productive process. Unions now merely shield individual workers from gratuitous abuse and summary discipline while faithfully delivering them to a productive sphere where the prerogatives of management and capital remain wholly intact. *Organized labour* has become an aspect of the *organization of labour* and little more, a wing of the exploitative process that smoothes out things. These historical expressions of working-class struggle have ossified into an arm of exploitative production. They effectively gift-wrap labour time in a manner that is appropriately pliant, docile and obedient. The radicalism and vision that attended much of the labour movement in the past, even if imperfectly, has been replaced by institutions that represent working people largely on the terms of their employers. Organized labour, as E.P. Thompson once wrote, is prone to feeding parasitically off the growth aspirations of

the capitalist class, and in the neoliberal era this tendentiousness has been frequently confirmed.⁹

Combined with the redoubled aggression of neoliberalism against the working class, the capitulative political tendencies of organized labour have become the working class's greatest liability. Stories about sell-outs of the rank-and-file make the rounds. Workers occupy factories only to have the union leadership talk them down. Union leaders are trapped in legalistic straight-jackets partly of their own making. In the midst of this debacle all resistance seems to collapse. Solidarity is usually salutary: "I feel for your plight sister!" or "We wish you well in your strike brother!" As some union locals have been crushed their larger unions have proceeded in a business-as-usual manner. During the Irving Oil strike of the mid-1990s, Canada's equivalent of the Caterpillar strike in the U.S., the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union negotiated several other contracts with the Irving Group of Companies throughout the maritime provinces as the Saint John refinery workers were being pummelled. Protestations posted on websites have replaced sit-ins, marches, demonstrations and, most sadly, toughness during strikes. "Days of Action" and "Days of Disruption" are followed by weeks, months and even years of inaction. Sometimes the confusion on the part of organized labour boggles the mind, as when the Power Workers' Union came out in support of the Harris government during its dismantling of Ontario Hydro in the late 1990s. In the aftermath of the 2006 federal election, one commentator wrote without reserve about the political character of organized labour:

This most recent election will go down in history as the one time the Canadian labour movement set a new record in ideological confusion. Buzz Hargrove hugged Paul Martin. A PSAC regional leader speculated on the benefits of electing Tories. Then, to top it all off, after the election the CLC issued a statement congratulating Harper and stating that all four parties, including the Conservatives, had 'addressed the concerns of working Canadians and working families,' especially on issues like women's equality, anti-scab legislation, pensions, health care, job creation, education and wages.¹⁰

At best, organized labour as a political force has withered. Such assessments even appear from those on the inside:

Internally the union movement is not much of a movement these days, but a collection of individual unions pre-occupied with serving the members they have and competing with other unions for new members. As a movement, we are not in the lead when it comes to social issues or for fighting for the dignity and equality of all

workers.... We have been more engaged in fighting one another for membership than in finding ways to pull more workers into the union movement.¹¹

A militantly organized labour movement could have challenged the neoliberal agenda. It utterly failed to have such a political presence. Only organized labour could have responded with something more than was done, by carrying an avowedly political message against capital and the political forces of neoliberalism directly into the “economy.” Only strikes, sit-ins, sustained general strikes and marches backed by clearly articulated political messages could have stemmed the neoliberal tide. Nothing close to this ever happened.

Restoring and Deepening Left Culture

In many respects the restoration of *left culture* would mean the restoration of a pluralist left. It would move beyond today's truncated left, which has lost its political depth. Among other things the restoration of left culture would put the question of capitalism back on the table and enrich a politics of transformation. It could be said that culture must precede politics, that the restoration of left culture is a necessary condition for the restoration of left politics. Hence, the development of a rationally grounded left culture will precede a Gramscian-like counter-hegemonic struggle. There is little hope of cultivating a receptivity to transformative left policies until such a rationally grounded left culture congeals. To put this in more analytical terms, a vital left politics will emerge only after an intersubjective consciousness critical of capitalist social relations is forged. What I am suggesting is the promotion of a *left culturism* with an eye to the future, with the hope of encouraging what the esteemed sociologist John Porter dubbed a “creative politics” of class. The creation of a left culture is about the deepening of critical sensitivity in all matters of daily life. This revived culture will cradle a meaningful, proactive politics that confronts capitalism directly. My proposal is unlikely to help salvage much with respect to the present opportunity, which is passing us by. To minister to the policy demands of the present would be a mistake, a sacrifice of the possibility of more meaningful change in the future on the altar of opportunism, a sacrifice that will not achieve anything anyway. We have to see past this crisis of 2009 to better confront the post-neoliberal world down the road.

The following suggestions for restoring left culture include a rather surprising one about “quitting” politics altogether, a romantic one about striving to remember working-class history, a democratic one about giving voice to working people and two more commonplace suggestions about centring global citizenship and pushing for organized labour to exploit its latent

capacity to disrupt things. There is nothing novel about these suggestions; the goal is to rebuild the left by restoring *left culture*. This culture would promote a discourse about the nature of capitalism, help to forge links between the different constituencies on the left, tap the vast potential of working people and celebrate the richness of our left heritage. Most significantly, this culture would help to tease out the radicalized consciousness of working people formed through their life experiences in a capitalist world.

Quit Politics

This peculiar suggestion for restoring the left has the following three elements:

The Left Requires a Rational Foundation

A healthy left politics *absolutely* requires open and reflective discussion, an intensive and exhaustive survey of history, an understanding of the left's past and its unique failures, an analysis of capitalism, an unrelenting commitment to education, a dialogue about the possibilities of change and the cultivation of strategies covering both the short and long terms. A rationally grounded left critique will promote the cultivation of "the suspecting attitude." It will encourage a healthy suspicion toward ideas and slogans generated in the context of the everyday culture industry. This politically sensitive culture will simultaneously de-construct the flood of mainstream messages and re-construct more worthy interpretations.

Most importantly, the "left" and "rational reflection" must go hand in hand for two reasons. First, working people may hold utterly contradictory sentiments about the world: "It is a rich man's world" and "unions are too powerful." These sentiments are in lockstep with the contradictions of capitalism. Recognizing that these contradictions of consciousness are lodged in everyone's head, a rational left culture must intervene assiduously to promote a resolution of the conflicting ideas. In the face of bloviating politicians and an equally windy right-wing media, far too many people conclude that job insecurity is the result of too much immigration or too much overseas production, or, in the face of homophobic diatribes, they become convinced that they should care deeply about the appropriate forms of sexual congress in God's eyes. A rationally formed left culture will do much more than merely counter such nonsense. A left culture rooted in an *ethos* of reflection will help to *resolve* these contradictory understandings and tease out truly critical sensibilities among all working people. Here the potential is vast. Despite the distortions of the mass mediated world, many people still arrive at the conclusion that politics itself looks like "mass distraction" and they still take a stand against war, union busting and so on. By this resilience we can be heartened. Indeed, it is only this resilience that has sustained the broken left in recent decades.

Second, capitalist society produces a litany of horrors and injustices that excite our emotions. Capitalism is troubling, and these emotions can carry us away. An *ethos* of reflection and contemplation will assuage the welter of emotions experienced by everyone, effectively absorbing our emotional distresses about capitalist life into a patient and reflective standpoint. A properly formed left culture is not unlike a properly formed Platonic soul, the soul where the faculty of reason governs the spiritedness and passion of our being. Passions are a part of life, but in capitalist society they can overtake us and must be massaged by reason, contemplation and sustained reflection.

In the Mass Mediated World Politics Is Entertainment

Conventional politics is inseparable from the world of entertainment and the culture industry. It is not so much that the terms of political discourse have shifted to the right in the last few decades, although this is certainly true. Rather, the terms of all political discourse have fallen from their loftier, more engaged and reflective heights of the past. The process was already well under way by the time the post-World War II order was established in North America, and largely coincides with the growth of the mass media. The rise of the television age in the 1950s intensified the problem.

Mass culture and entertainment are the natural allies of capitalist society insofar as they contribute to sustained consumption and promote the notion of the classless society, and political life has become part of this entertainment industry. Politics has been dumbed down to the level of meaningless protestations and empty slogans, to the “sound bite” and the puffed-up declaration, to the one-liner and the volley of vacuous phrases. Capitalism is the safer for this. At its best, the political media today is little more than a forum where the disciplining catchwords and stupefying mottos are rehearsed with varying degrees of anger, hostility or red-facedness. These lively but gentrified discussions merely stake out the field of acceptable discourse. In the world framed by CNN and the CBC the political pitfalls of a mass mediated life differ only by degree. In the media emotions are exploited while experiential dots are never connected; convictions are rehearsed but argumentative conclusions are never the goal; trip-wires of reaction are set but deliberation is never fostered; facts and events are adduced to reinforce “unshakable beliefs” and rarely brought forward to stimulate discussion. The citizen-viewer is meant to be either charmed or disgusted but never encouraged to develop a truly reflective and critical spirit.

The mainstream left has been drawn into this sphere of rational decay. The left is no less guilty of conducting politics at the level of name-calling, mythic misrepresentations of the past, imperialist and petty-nationalist euphemisms, comfortable turns of phrase, “magic words,” shibboleths, sneering epithets and Orwellian “thought-stoppers.” Completely lost in this irrational political world is a robust characterization of the character of

global capitalist social relations, of the place of the Canadian social formation within it and of the required political responses to it.

The Left Must Quit Politics

Since leftism requires a rational, open discourse about the capitalist world and the nexus of the mainstream media and political discourse cannot facilitate this, there is no point in being a part of this system. When our political and cultural milieu can take Woody Guthrie's poetically anti-capitalist "This Land Is Your Land" and turn it into a children's song about the greatness of America, or parley Dylan's "The Times They Are a Changin'" into a ditty about the responsiveness of the banking industry to technological change, it clearly cannot sustain resistance against capitalism.

To revive itself the left must quit politics and quit thinking that the NDP or the Green Party offer anything that is politically redeemable. It must suspend its "civics" reflex and recognize that voting, circulating petitions and writing members of parliament are inconsistent with the cultivation of a meaningful left critique of capitalism in Canada. The natural seat of *left culturism* is the explanatory pamphlet, the week-end retreat, the study session, the free-school, the library and the church basement. Few lectures are worth attending unless you can take a sandwich and make a day of it. Blogospheres and "digital dissent" might help a bit, but not much. The internet should be used to network and post educational material. Rather than *Hockey Night in Canada*, we need "Left Afternoons in Canada," nation-wide socials sure to confound the mass media. Left television should resemble a community channel announcing lectures and other gatherings. This is how the left will begin afresh and renew itself from below. And we will know that a properly formed left culture is taking shape in Canada when the mass media and its news services cannot find the words to describe it.

This process will not be spectacular. The rehabilitation of the left in Canada must occur off the mainstream political grid — this is the only chance. In time there will be a fuller, rationally grounded political discourse that contributes to the growth and expansion of authentic working-class movements. Politics will again take on the richness that it once hinted at, and maybe, just maybe, political parties that are truly on the side of the working class will take shape, older parties will be revived and the act of voting will not be such a dispiriting waste of effort.

Strive to Remember

To revive itself the left must discover the working-class past. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus, sometimes called the "father of history," believed that societies naturally suffer from a deficit of memory. Thus he was motivated to record the deeds of men who valiantly defended the Greek world from the Persian invasions before they faded from living memory. More

than 2,300 years later the celebrated German essayist Friedrich Nietzsche argued that Europe suffered from a surfeit of memory and that this excess had weakened the character of its people and repressed their "life-affirming instincts." Concern about social memory today is directed to the *politics of memory*. Social memory is never innocent but always tinged with a political purpose. Memory constitutes an increasingly significant part of the cultural consciousness that frames social practices and imbues those practices with meaning. The manner in which we narrate the *past* is very much a part of the *present* political struggle.

And yet, when we reflect on our inability to remember matters relating directly to working people we cannot help but think that Herodotus may have been on to something. We suffer from a deficit of memory when it come to working people and their achievements. We do rather well when it comes to erecting monuments to capitalist barons and their political supporters. But we forget about Winnipeg and the wave of strikes after World War I, the 1935 Trek to Ottawa and the One Big Union, just as we forget about Oshawa of 1937, Joe Beefs of Montreal, the Provincial Workmen's Association, the Glace Bay strike of 1925, the Workers' Unity League and figures like Paddy Draper, Joe Zuken and Maurice Spector. Forgetfulness about working-class achievements seems to be a sort of default setting for capitalist society.

The capitalist state does its part to insure that forgetfulness, as when it declared a sham day for working people, September's Labour Day, to replace May Day, a real worker's day, which passes by largely unobserved each year. When it so desires the state can pour vast resources into the orchestration of social memory. Each November 11, for example, sees a formal remembrance that rehearses the prevailing patriarchal narratives about the courage of soldiers and the importance of the sacrifices they have made to "safeguard freedom and democracy." The hallowed day is consecrated with all manner of solemnity and pageantry, and the ubiquitous poppy is impossible to miss during the first week of November. Officials declare that this day is really about preserving peace; "Lest we forget" is the expression that cautions the public about the importance of "remembering" so as to avoid future war. In fact soldiers' deeds are honoured in a highly cleansed way, and this day is really about preparing the next generation for war. We do not hear about the personal trauma and the deep psychological scarring soldiers experience, the severe strains soldiery places upon families and the financial hardships created by battlefield trauma, just as we fail to hear about the litany of battlefield depravities, such as rape, reprisal executions and extortion, that unfold in all war zones. Remembrance Day is a selective and politically motivated act of social recollection, and even to question the sanctity of this sacred day is to risk condemnation.

The Canadian state orchestrates this social remembrance, with its

unifying motifs of *courage* and *sacrifice*. But there is no comparable effort to remember the *courage* and *sacrifice* of working people in Canada. We do not hear this language being used in the context of workers who courageously risked their lives and their livelihood by trying to form a union, of those who endured profound workplace abuse to feed their families, and especially of the many women who stood up to sexual predation in the workplace. We also fail to remember those workers who endured police abuse on the picket lines or sacrificed their lives in the “line of work.” The notions of *courage* and *sacrifice*, along with many other inspiring qualities, could easily apply to the working-class past in Canada. To even suggest that we forget about the soldiers and remember the achievements of working people, however, is akin to committing treason.

Sheldon Currie’s novella *The Glace Bay Miners’ Museum* is set against the backdrop of the silence about the victimization of workers. It tells the story of a distraught woman who, in the aftermath of a mining accident that took the lives of her husband and brother, seeks to preserve the truth about abuse and class struggle by preserving representative body parts in jars of formaldehyde (her grandfather’s blackened lungs, for example, since a doctor had once declared that he was fit to work). The woman, eerily, is hauled away by authorities at the end of the novel. The silences about the working-class past must be broken. Efforts have been afoot for several decades in the academy to recover this aspect of Canadian history. These discoveries need to become a part of everyday culture.

Celebrate the Winter Worker

A most striking thing unfolded during the Vietnam War years in the United States. In January 1971 American veterans started to gather in Detroit to tell their stories. Their accounts of the war become known as the Winter Soldier. They interrupted the prevailing narrative about the war and drew attention to the atrocities and war crimes that were being committed in Vietnam. This process was erected again during the more recent Gulf War in Iraq. The soldiers tell simple and plain truths about war — its horrors, confusions, depravities, injuries and mental scars. Their narrations are acts of peace.

Such storytelling is an indispensable part of the restoration of left culture, and it is equally crucial that it develops in the sphere of working life. Working people desperately need to tell their stories. Accounts of the experiences of workers in their own voice are relatively uncommon. Elliot Leyton’s *Dying Hard: The Ravages of Industrial Society*, which outlines the suffering of mine workers in Newfoundland in the words of the miners themselves, is a rare example.¹² A renewed left must create venues that give working people a voice. This process will legitimate the experiences working people, who are generally ignored, draw attention to the quality of jobs, to counter the more typical quantitative emphasis on jobs, and explore the experiences of

working people in detail, particularly the anxieties and fears that beset so many workers.

Become Citizens of the World

The history of capitalism and the history of nation-state sovereignty have been closely intertwined. What is striking about capitalism, however, has been its inexorable march to every region of the globe and its capacity to draw non-capitalist societies into the capitalist orbit. Although the term “globalization” has become fashionable in recent years, capitalism has been pushing out globally since its consolidation centuries ago. The search for new resources, the search for new markets, the exploitation of new pools of labour, the growth of local capitalist classes and the appearance of comprador bourgeoisies, and the patent domination of many regions in the South by the imperialist centres in the North have all contributed to the spread of capitalism around the world. In the first phases of this process Indigenous Peoples suffered horribly, as was certainly the case in the western hemisphere and Canada. As capitalism passes through its later phases of consolidation — roughly the middle of the nineteenth century in the Canadian case — a working class invariably arises. Although this process is still ongoing in some places, over time a global working class has arisen. This class is marked by the fact that their existence is entirely contingent upon their ability to sell their labour. In recent decades, with the ascendancy of transnational capital and its penchant for intra-firm trade and productive restructuring, the press of globalization and the concomitant consolidation of a global working class have intensified. Of course, “globalization” is the nice, safe, almost romanticized term that is used to describe this most recent process of capitalist expansion. Any analytical discussion that centres the domination of local capitalist classes in the North and the grotesque immiseration of working classes in the South, and that also emphasizes the typically brutal domination of the world's working people through military networks coordinated in the North, especially in the U.S., will be more inclined to use the term “imperialism.”

In the imperialist age the horizons of capital are global. *As capital is internationalist in nature, so too must be left political struggles against it.* On this point, the left in Canada, by which is meant the left that must deploy its energies to confront capitalism in the social formation called Canada, faces its greatest hurdle. Most of what has ever called itself the left in Canada has been wrapped up in the flag. To some this nationalism has been its glaring albatross. If empathy is the rebel passion that drives the left in its grandest sense, then pride in one's country has been the taming instinct that creates political lassitude.

Perhaps if a truer image of Canada was portrayed this cleansing would be a little easier. Canada is merely a typical capitalist country with a typical

history of oppression — despite its carefully crafted image as humanity’s “poster country” for the forces of good. It is not unique and certainly not especially bad or especially good. These pedestrian political truths are concealed by the myths of the prevailing culture, including those about Canada’s “peacefulness,” particularly along the path of nation building. Much scholarship narrates the past as though the history of Canada has largely been about the forging of the nation. Even much critical scholarship seems to come to the conclusion that history has all been about securing the country and that, despite some rough spots here and there, there is still something in the Canada-that-has-come-to-be about which we can all be proud.¹³ The left in Canada, moreover, has tended to gaze southwards rather than upwards, expressing concern about U.S. domination with much élan and intimating that a merry band of home-grown, robber barons would somehow make the country even better.

A rationally formed left will come to understand the political implications of the fact that the “achievement of nation” was not much on the mind of a woman “roughing it in the bush,” an apprentice in the nineteenth century, an Irish immigrant helping to construct the Welland canal, a *patriote*, an organizer of unskilled workers in the early twentieth century, a victim of the residential schools system or a post-war European immigrant working in the construction sector, any more than it is likely to be much on the mind of a “temp” worker living in Vancouver, a struggling lone mother in Halifax, an unemployed auto-worker in Oshawa, a bureaucrat in Ottawa, a migrant worker from Mexico picking tomatoes in Leamington or a service worker struggling to pay rent in Calgary.

A rationally grounded left culture will help transfer the “fondness” for country to more worthy recipients, particularly working people and those who struggle against oppression in all of its guises in Canada and elsewhere. It will re-learn that the only appropriate starting point for analysis concerns the dynamics of imperialism and the necessity of a coordinated confrontation that extends beyond national boundaries, notwithstanding the fact that state policies continue to demand due attention. It will learn that the U.S. warrants special attention only because it is the centre of global imperialism and that Canada has played a considerable role in the construction of the global imperialist system. It will learn that corporations based in Canada have done their fair share of destruction and damage around the world. It will deepen its understanding of the similarities between exploited seamstresses in the Mexico and exploited janitors in Canada. It will come to appreciate that the expression of *solidarity* with struggling Indonesian workers loses its credibility when tied to an *oath of loyalty* to country and Queen. In any renewed left *solidarity must be worldly and seamless.*

Revive Organized Labour

In an interview with Maude Barlow marking the twentieth anniversary of the Council of Canadians, the dreadful failure of the left in the last three decades was indirectly disclosed. In commenting on the achievements of the Council, Barlow had this to say:

We've had some tremendous wins. We stopped a big pension grab, we stopped the bovine growth hormone and we stopped the bank mergers. I can point to being deeply part of both Seattle and Cancun, where twice we stopped the World Trade Organization. I look at wins like stopping genetically engineered wheat and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. I think that we've helped keep health care in public hands. These are big powerful wins that we accomplished with others.¹⁴

Immediately after this enumeration Barlow candidly added: "We've certainly lost a lot — *we haven't stopped the neoliberal agenda.*" This sobering admission is striking and desperately needs to be placed in a properly analytical context. For those a little further to the left there are many criticisms to be made of the Council of Canadians, including its reactionary agenda, its tiresome nationalism, its civics notion of political activism in "democratic" societies and its indefatigable faith in the redeemable nature of capitalism. But these limitations, which justify the criticism that it is ideologically eclectic at best, do not explain the failure of the Council or the left *in toto* to parry neoliberalism.

To account for this failure, we must ask why the avowedly nationalist and political Council of Canadians appeared at all in Canada? Why has the Council been forced to fight the neoliberal agenda? The answer to these questions draws attention to the political atrophy of the left in two crucial respects. First, we have seen the decay of a broad cultural left with spirited parties that combine to set the terms of political discourse. This failure, discussed extensively above, has created a political vacuum. The neoliberal era has witnessed intensive class struggle — capital squaring off against working people to ram home neoliberal policies — but no clearly marked "class politics." The political lacunae have been devastating for working people. The Council partially fills this void.

Second, organized labour failed to resist the agenda of the corporate world with the one strategy that could have stopped the neoliberal onslaught: strikes. Organized labour chose the path of *civil obedience* — and working people have paid dearly. One scholar has even linked the decline in union density in Canada to the declining militancy of the union movement and its loss of a political centre: "Union membership has declined in the last quarter-century chiefly because unions have increasingly fallen into the pockets of

capital, have responded to structural shifts and employer/government assaults by acting more like managers and owners than like militant and upset workers, and thus have failed to come close to serving the inherently oppositional needs of their members.”¹⁵ An article on the CAW by Freda Coodin in *Canadian Dimension*, written before Buzz Hargrove negotiated the shocking “framework of fairness” with Magna International, captured many of the problems associated with organized labour today with impressive pith: “In spite of the occasional strong statement, the overriding message seems to be that there is no space for fighting anymore; no real point in reaching beyond defensiveness; no point in blaming the companies or making demands on them; no point in using the high-profile pulpit of negotiations to raise larger political demands around which the larger movement might be mobilized.”¹⁶ Again, the Council partially fills this void.

Absent robust working-class parties and a militant labour movement, an organization akin to the Council of Canadians was bound to have appeared. Resistance was left in the hands of an organization that could only engage in the occasional protest, issue press releases and publish literature on the harms of the neoliberal agenda. If organized labour had anything more than a rhetorical political presence on the Canadian political scene when the doyen of progressive luminaries established the Council of Canadians in the mid-1980s, it might never have formed, or at the very least it would have been considerably different. The failure of the left owes much more to the politically dismal performance of organized labour than to the well-intentioned efforts of the Council of Canadians.

And so the challenge before us is paradoxical. A revitalized left would likely draw organized labour into a more militant posture, but that left is unlikely to be revitalized without organized labour being outwardly militant and aggressive. It is a difficult situation: greater militancy on the part of organized labour is necessary to stimulate and revitalize the left; a more coherent and revitalized left is more or less necessary to render organized labour more confident and aggressive. At the moment, sadly, we have neither. How can we loosen our Gordian knot? While organized labour is uniquely capable of bringing sustained pressure to bear on the agenda of capital, it is rendered inefficacious by conservative stewardship, a stewardship seemingly prone to an *iron law of buttoned-down caution*. This problem, in some ways, is endemic to all capitalist societies with liberal political veneers, that is, to societies where fear, vulnerability and anxiety unfold within institutions constrained by procedural and legal formalism. Changing this tendency on the part of organized labour is next to impossible. In its paroxysms the rank and file sometimes punches through the encrusted leadership to prevail, and sometimes labour leaders themselves summon the courage to run with the rank and file. But we cannot count on such irregularities to ever amount to much.

As for the other side of the paradox, however, there may be hope. Through the revitalization of a left culture the paradox can be softened, especially as a vibrant left culture promotes worker-friendly political organizations and parties. This twenty-first-century left will blend the best of the “old left” and the “new left.” As the strategies suggested above encourage the development of a stable and enriched critique on the left, teasing out along the way the profound insight of working people into the nature of capitalist societies, the staid leadership of labour will be drawn along willy-nilly into a more militant posture. And then the energy of the left movement evident in social fora, issue-based organizations, political parties, some academics, activists and so forth will, at one and the same time, complement and reinforce an increasingly militant organized labour. The overall resistance to the agenda of capital will gather strength and deepen. The blossoming of this political movement will reflect the transformation of resignation and capitulation into reasonable optimism and meaningful solidarity. Salutations and website declarations will give way to real resistance. Only then will the face of the post-neoliberal world be stamped with a class politics that has finally caught up to the class warfare that has been waged for decades. And only then will the well-rehearsed ideals about Canada, ideals that presently warm the cockles of many a nationalist’s heart, be exposed for what they really have always been — comfort myths contemptuous of both First Nations peoples and the working class. Most importantly, only then will the stage be set for further evolution of all things in the direction of a post-capitalist world. No one knows when this will happen, and the twilight of capitalism does not appear to be upon us at the moment, but things sometimes happen faster than we expect. We would do well to bear in mind that a rather sharp politico like Vladimir Lenin bemoaned the fact that he and his comrades would never see change in their lifetime, and commiserated so just a few weeks before the winter phase of the 1917 revolution began to unfold in Russia. Decades ago the conservative social thinker Eric Voegelin condemned socialism for “interiorizing the Christian eschatology,” that is, for believing that a heaven-like world could be produced here on earth. To the Voegelins of the world we say: “Guilty as charged!” We can always count on capitalism to serve up depravity, cruelty and crisis, just as surely as we can count on it to engender responsive souls convinced that something much better awaits humanity on this planet. To the sensitive among us who have succumbed to this more immanent faith our struggle continues.

Notes

1. Richard Rorty, *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in the 20th Century* (Harvard University Press, 1999), chapter 1 *in passim*. In keeping with his embrace of the American “pragmatic” tradition Rorty was very careful to stress that the only measure

- of the left will be found in the effectiveness of its accomplishments. Left goals are true if they make the world a better place.
2. And this pleases the left. How assuaged would we be with reports of a law that forbade masters from whipping their slaves while leaving the system of slavery untouched?
 3. Many examples of organizations characteristic of the second society are surveyed in Jack Quarter's *Canada's Social Economy: Co-operatives, Non-Profits and Other Community Enterprises* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1992). However, not all of the organizations reviewed in Quarter's study reject the essential principles of capitalism, and many of them, like universities or professional business associations or organizations commonly identified as part of the "third sector," feed parasitically off the first society while contributing openly to its overall reproduction.
 4. One of the best essays on this development is found in Michael S. Cross's introduction to *The Decline and Fall of a Good Idea: CCF-NDP Manifestoes 1932 to 1969* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1974).
 5. Steven Greenhouse, *The Big Squeeze: Steven Greenhouse on Tough Times for the American Worker*, Radio interview, *Democracy Now*, interviewed by Amy Goodman (New York: Pacifica Radio Network), July 29, 2008.
 6. Editors, "Socialism: A Time to Retreat?" *Monthly Review* 52: 4 (September 2000), p. 1.
 7. See the extended discussion in London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, *In and Against the State* (London: Pluto Press, 1980), chapter 2.
 8. See Dennis Pilon's commentary in "Election 2006: The NDP's Strategic Dead End," *Canadian Dimension* 40: 2 (March/April, 2006), quote from pp. 16–17.
 9. E.P. Thompson, "Revolution," in *Out of Apathy*, E.P. Thompson, ed. (London, Stevens & Sons, 1960).
 10. See Geoff Bickerton's discussion in "Labour and the Election," *Canadian Dimension* 40: 2 (March/April, 2006), quote from p. 10.
 11. See the discussion in David Kidd, "State of the Unions 2005," *Canadian Dimension* 39: 3 (May/June 2005), quote from page 30.
 12. Elliott Leyton *Dying Hard: The Ravages of Industrial Society* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1975).
 13. For an example of this tendency, see Alvin Finkel and Margaret Conrad's *History of the Canadian Peoples: 1867–Present*, Volume II, (Toronto, Ontario: Pearson Education Canada Inc., 2002), where they write in the preface: "The third edition of *History of the Canadian Peoples* tries to preserve our primary object of an inclusive history of Canada. In addition to the achievements of the rich and powerful, we include developments in the lives of Aboriginal peoples, women, racial and ethnic minorities, and the poor, who also helped to *create the Canada we know today*." p. xv, my emphasis. Notice also that no mention of "class" is made in this list.
 14. Editorial Feature: Pathbreakers, "The Council of Canadians at 20," *Canadian Dimension* 39: 1 (January/February 2005), quotes from pp. 20–21.
 15. Wythe Holt, "Union Densities, Business Unionism, and Working-Class Struggle: Labour Movement Decline in the United States and Japan, 1930–2000," *Labour* 59 (Spring 2007), p. 103.
 16. See an excellent discussion in Freda Coodin, "The CAW Turn: Bargaining Versus Building," *Canadian Dimension* 39: 6 (November/December 2005), quote from p. 37.