

# ABSTRACTS

## **Nineteenth-Century Canada and Australia: The Paradoxes of Class Formation**

**Bryan D. Palmer**

**THIS SPECULATIVE ESSAY** presents a preliminary statement on the paradoxical character of 19th-century class formation in the two white settler dominions of Canada and Australia. Outposts of empire, these social formations were early regarded with disdain, the one a classic mercantilist harvester of fish, fur, and wood, the other a dumping ground for convicts. By the mid-to-late 19th-century, however, Canada and Australia were the richest of colonies. Within their distinctive cultures and political economies, both supposedly dominated by staples, emerged working classes that were simultaneously combative and accommodated. By the 1880s impressive organizational gains had been registered by labour in both countries, but the achievements of class were conditioned by particular relations of fragmentation, including those of 'race' and gender.

## **Gender, Race, and Policy: Aboriginal Women and the State in Canada and Australia**

**Ann McGrath and Winona Stevenson**

**THIS ARTICLE** examines the history of colonial and national policies towards indigenous peoples in Australia and Canada during the 19th and 20th centuries. It is specifically concerned with the ways in which such legislation affected Aborigi-

## 290 ABSTRACTS

nal women. In attempting to provide a comparative assessment of the "statutory subjugation" of Aboriginal women, the article examines the law's definition of identity and band membership; enfranchisement and assimilation; personal autonomy (marriage, divorce, sexuality, motherhood); private and personal property; and political reorganization. It concludes that gender and race were key determinants of government policy in both countries, and that under the Canadian Indian Act and Australian Aboriginal Acts, women, in particular, suffered a great decline in status and severe limitations of autonomy. But the failure of state policies to bring about the complete degradation of Aboriginal women in particular, and Aboriginal peoples in general, suggests that there were forces operating to "destabilize ... hegemonic colonial control." Competing colonial values, collective resistance of Aboriginal societies, and the individual contestations of both colonizer and colonized, in the end, undermined imperial objectives.

### Women and Wage Labour in Australia and Canada, 1880-1980

Raelene Frances, Linda Kealey, and Joan Sangster

A CENTURY of women's work history in Australia and Canada reveals both similarities and contrasts. Women workers in both countries have faced persistent occupational segregation and lower pay, justified by the "family wage" ideal of a male breadwinner and the accompanying perception of women's paid labour as secondary, less skilled and transient. While Canada's female labour force has historically demonstrated a significant proportion of immigrants from countries other than England, Australia's female labour force contained fewer immigrants but revealed a visible minority of Aboriginals who have demonstrated labour militancy in several well-known disputes in this century. Perhaps the most striking differences between the two countries, however, relate to the extent of the Australian state's involvement in wage tribunals and in the compulsory arbitration system, both of which have given women improved wages and "a floor of protection." By contrast, state intervention in Canada was minimal until well into the 20th century when minimum wage laws were passed during and after World War I. Despite these differences there are areas of similarity, particularly in this century as women workers tended to mobilize at roughly the same time, not only in unions and workplaces but also in neighbourhoods, ethnic communities, rural areas and to some extent in labour and left wing political groups. Modern feminist movements in both countries have waged some successful campaigns to change not only government views and agendas, but also those of trade unions. Thus, while

Australian women have perhaps been more successful at “playing the state” depending on the government in power, both groups of women are increasingly faced with the challenge of government retreat from egalitarian policies under the onslaught of a right-wing, corporatist agenda.

## Immigration and Labour: Australia and Canada Compared

Franca Iacovetta, Michael Quinlan and Ian Radforth

NO PERSUASIVE ACCOUNT of labour in Australia and Canada can ignore the impact that immigration has wrought on the composition of the working class and preoccupations of workers, unions, and the varied political parties they have sponsored. Highlighting both similarities and differences between countries, the paper explores the paradoxical relationship that immigration has had with the labour movements of Australia and Canada. Although immigrants have been a critical source of union recruits, new ideas, and leaders (this being especially true for British skilled men), their presence was also long a source of concern, chauvinism, and division within predominantly white, Anglo-Celtic, and male-dominated union movements that adopted exclusionary policies, particularly regarding Asian and continental European workers. A more recent shift towards non-racist and inclusive policies unfortunately has not obliterated labour segmentation along racial and ethnic lines, especially job ghettos for immigrant women. Meanwhile, global restructuring and the loss of hard-earned union protections have increased immigrant workers' historic vulnerability. In explaining differences in the two countries —for example, Australia's greater 'success' at restricting non-white immigration before 1945 and Canada's earlier experience with a racially diverse work force — the paper cautions against easy generalizations, pointing instead to a series of historically contingent factors (such as 'accidents' of geography and differing political developments) that on some occasions led to rather different outcomes.

## **Workers' Welfare: Labour and the Welfare State in 20th-Century Australia and Canada**

**Stephen Garton and Margaret E. McCallum**

**THIS ARTICLE** investigates the historical dimensions of the labour movement's relationship to the welfare state in Australia and Canada during the 20th century. It assesses existing class and party politics theories of this relationship and by proposing particular historical accounts of the welfare state in a comparative context, it seeks to move beyond the limitations of these theories. The article argues that such approaches focus too narrowly on social security and wage regulation as the key parameters of the welfare state, ignoring major fields of welfare intervention for women, indigenous peoples and war service. In attempting to provide a more comprehensive narrative of the welfare state in a comparative context the article seeks to provide a clearer conception of the distinctive features of settler society welfare states. And by placing the role of the labour movement in this broader history it critically assesses the successes and limitations of the labour movement's engagement with the welfare state.

## **Rural and Urban Labour Processes: A Comparative Analysis of Australian and Canadian Development**

**Jacques Ferland and Christopher Wright**

**THIS PAPER** examines labour process developments within Canada and Australia during the later 19th and early 20th centuries. In contrast to traditional labour process studies, which have focused upon the development of sophisticated forms of managerial control within modern industry, this comparative analysis stresses the much simpler forms of labour control that existed within Canadian and Australian rural and urban workplaces. The paper explores the reasons underlying differences in labour process developments, and argues for the need to broaden labour process analysis in order to take account of spatial and geographic variations in working life.

## Workers' Education in Australia and Canada: A Comparative Approach to Labour's Cultural History

Gerald Friesen and Lucy Taksa

THIS ESSAY investigates the formal and informal educational pursuits of the labour movements and working-class communities of Australia and Canada. It suggests that worker education in the two countries was conducted by similar institutions, notably by branches of England's Workers Educational Association (WEA) but within very different cultural contexts. By juxtaposing these two national cases we demonstrate that labour's reliance on such community-wide institutions was mediated by the relationship between the labour movements and informal networks of working class interaction, on the one hand, and the body politic, on the other. Australia's prominent labour movement and strong tradition of public working class interaction enabled community-wide educational activities to be challenged. In Canada, by contrast, the collaborative nature of adult education and the "tools courses" taught by unions represented a different consensus about the nature of class identity and the place of unions in national politics.

## Union Structure and Strategy in Australia and Canada

Mark Bray and Jacques Rouillard

THE AIM OF THIS PAPER is to identify and explain the main differences in the structures and strategies of the national union movements in Australia and Canada during the 20th century. Parallel historical narratives reveal that the differences between the two union movements ebbed and waned. They were most similar to each other in the 19th century and after the 1960s, while there was more convincing evidence of divergence in the intermediate period. Following Ross Martin, the explanation offered for these trends emphasises the relationships between unions, political parties and the state. The earlier growth of mass unionism and the political strategies adopted in Australia after their defeats in the 1890s produced more sympathetic state policies (specifically compulsory arbitration from around the turn of the century), which allowed Australian unions to prosper in ways which Canadian unions did not begin to enjoy until the 1940s. At the same time, differences in the types of state policies in the two countries subsequently affected both the structure of unions, Canadian unions being more fragmented at national

level than their Australian counterparts, and the strategies they employed, Canadian unions relying more on decentralized collective bargaining compared to the more centralized arbitration approach of Australian unions.

## Labour and Politics in Australia and Canada: Towards a Comparativist Approach to Development to 1960

Terry Irving and Allen Seager

**THIS CHAPTER** seeks to move the discussion of labour and politics beyond the contest of political ideologies in the movement and the constraints of the liberal democratic state. To explain the different political histories of the Australian and Canadian movements we use a model with three dimensions: the changing balance between labour and politics; the different social forces that labour seeks to represent; and the different conceptions of politics that labour holds. After a discussion of the literature on labour and politics in the two countries, the paper applies this model to distinguish two periods, a formative period up to the early 1920s, in which labour entered politics, and the period from the 1920s to the 1950s when parties or governments took politics into the labour movement. The model enables us to characterize the politics of the Australian Labor Party as a form of class-based labourism, with significant moments of working-class socialism. We characterize the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation/New Democratic Party as a form of populist socialism. The paper concludes with some insights gained from using a common model in a comparative exercise.