

# ABSTRACTS / RÉSUMÉS

## “Race, Employment Discrimination, and State Complicity in Wartime Canada, 1939-1945”

Carmela Patrias

THE STUDY SHOWS that the crisis of war reinforced pre-existing social and economic inequality based on racist views and practices. War-induced anxieties intensified suspicion of “foreigners” — a term which encompassed large numbers of Canadian-born and naturalized people of Japanese, central, eastern, and southern European descent and Jews — as unpatriotic, disloyal, radical, and incapable of becoming truly Canadian. The war also brought sharply into focus and even intensified racist assumptions that African Canadians, eastern and southern Europeans, and Native people were suitable only for menial jobs; that Jewish, Chinese, and Japanese Canadians were economically aggressive; and that Jews in particular were given to shady practices. Such racist stereotypes in turn legitimized the ongoing marginalization of these minorities in the workforce. The state colluded in racist practices. To be sure not all state officials or all Canadians were racist, but the pragmatism that informed official complicity with employment discrimination underscores the pervasiveness of racism in wartime Canada. State officials — some of whom held racist ideas — were willing to accept employers’ and workers’ racist preferences because they believed that to do otherwise would create social unrest and disrupt war industries. Moreover, officials found that the relegation of minority groups such as Chinese Canadians, Japanese Canadians, and Native people to menial work offered the important benefit of filling jobs that Canadians with wider options avoided.

L'ÉTUDE MONTRE que la crise entraînée par la guerre a renforcé l'inégalité sociale et économique existante basée sur les opinions et les pratiques racistes. Les anxiétés provoquées par la guerre ont en effet intensifié la suspicion des « étrangers » — un terme qui englobe un grand nombre de personnes nées au Canada ou naturalisées, d'origine japonaise, européenne (du centre, de l'est ou du sud) et juive. Ces indigènes ont été perçus comme peu patriotiques, déloyaux, radicaux et incapables de devenir de vrais Canadiens. La guerre a brusquement ravivé et même intensifié les préjugés racistes que les Canadiens d'origine africaine, européenne (de l'est et du sud) et les Autochtones ne convenaient pas aux travaux manuels; que les Canadiens d'origine juive, chinoise et japonaise étaient économiquement agressifs; et que les juifs en particulier s'adonnaient aux pratiques louches. De tels stéréotypes racistes, à leur tour, ont rendu légitime la marginalisation permanente de ces minorités dans le monde du travail. L'État a contribué aux pratiques racistes. Il est certain que tous les représentants de l'État et tous les Canadiens n'étaient pas racistes. Mais la discrimination en matière d'emploi et la complicité des autorités à cet effet soulignent l'omniprésence du racisme au Canada pendant la guerre. Les représentants de l'État — certains d'entre eux avaient des idées racistes — étaient prêts à accepter les préférences racistes des employeurs et des travailleurs car ils avaient peur de provoquer des troubles sociaux et d'interrompre la production des industries de guerre. De plus, les représentants se sont rendus compte que la relégation aux travaux manuels des groupes minoritaires, tels que les Canadiens d'origine chinoise et japonaise et les Autochtones, offrirait l'important avantage de combler les emplois que les Canadiens évitaient parce qu'ils avaient plus d'options.

## *Vancouver Through the Eyes of a Hobo:* Experience, Identity, and Value in the Writing of Canada's Depression-Era Tramps

Todd McCallum

AS A WINDOW into contemporary debates about the concept of experience, this essay examines 1934's *Vancouver Through the Eyes of a Hobo*, which may have the distinction of being the only extant book about hoboing in Depression-era Canada written by a self-identified transient, Victor Wadham Forster. Forster mapped for his readers a dialectic: Nature — an antimodern pastoral refuge where hoboed lived in freedom — stood against the City — a wholly modern capitalist nightmare,

home to economic exploitation and its attendant moral degradations. Yet, the author also articulated his desire to destroy this way of life — and the foundation of his claims to authority as a writer — in order to effect his and every hobo's reintegration with society. Casting off his avowed allegiance to tramping, Forster divined for his readers a third social formation, a new kind of capitalism infused with a Christian ethos of brotherhood and cooperation, and propped up by an unbounded white supremacy and a rigidly patriarchal division of labour. Herein lies the tragedy of *Vancouver Through the Eyes of a Hobo*: to save the hobo required the destruction of the hobo way of life.

COMME UNE FENÊTRE s'ouvrant sur les débats contemporains à propos du concept d'expérience, cet article examine *Vancouver à travers les yeux d'un vagabond*, paru en 1934, un livre qui peut avoir la distinction d'être le seul ouvrage d'histoire à propos de la vie vagabonde au cours de la période de la Dépression au Canada, écrit par un migrateur autoproclamé, Victor Wadham Forster. Forster a donné à ses lecteurs une pensée dialectique : la nature — un refuge pastoral contre la vie moderne où les vagabonds vivaient en liberté — se tenaient debout contre la ville — un cauchemar capitaliste entièrement moderne, centre de l'exploitation économique et de dégradations morales. Pourtant, l'auteur a aussi exprimé son désir de détruire ce mode de vie — et la base de son affichage comme écrivain — afin d'effectuer sa réintégration, ainsi que celle des autres vagabonds, dans la société. En laissant tomber son engagement voué à la vie vagabonde, Forster a présenté à ses lecteurs une troisième formation sociale, un nouveau genre de capitalisme infusé d'un éthos chrétien de camaraderie et de coopération, accompagné d'un suprématisme blanc et d'une division patriarcale rigide de la main-d'œuvre. D'où cette tragédie inhérente à *Vancouver à travers les yeux d'un vagabond* : pour sauver le vagabond il fallait détruire le mode de vie fondé sur l'itinérance.



# Labour History

A Journal of Labour and Social History

Published by the

Australian Society for the Study of Labour History

**Number 92 \* May 2007**

## ARTICLES

American Liberalism and Labour Politics: Labour Leaders and Liberty Language in Late Nineteenth Century Australia and the United States

*Robin Archer*

Transcending Class? Australia's Single Taxers in the Early 1890s

*Melissa Bellanta*

Fat Man v. 'the People': Labour Intellectuals and the Making of Oppositional Identities, 1890-1901

*Nick Dyrenfurth and Marian Quartly*

Careers Advice for Women and the Shaping of Identities

*Kay Whitehead*

Labour Management Practices in Non-Union Firms: Australian Abrasive Industry 1945-70

*Melissa Kerr*

Collateral Damage: B.A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholicism

*Race Mathews*

The Mine at Baryulgil: Work, Knowledge, and Asbestos Disease

*Jock McCulloch*

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT ISSUES

Vitiating the Federal Principle: The High Court *Work Choices* Case, 2006

*Mark Hearn*

## CONTESTED HISTORIES FORUM

Was the 'Southern Tree of Liberty' an Oak?

*Paul A. Pickering*

'A Song for the Future': A Response to Paul Pickering

*Terry Irving*

CONFERENCE REPORT \* OBITUARY \* BOOK REVIEWS \* NOTICE BOARD

Labour History, Institute Building H03

University of Sydney 2006 Australia

Fax: +61 2 9351 4729 Email: [m.walters@econ.usyd.edu.au](mailto:m.walters@econ.usyd.edu.au)

Web sites: [www.asslh.org.au](http://www.asslh.org.au) Full Text: [www.historycooperative.org](http://www.historycooperative.org)

**Eugene A. Forsey Prize  
in Canadian Labour and Working-Class History**

Thanks to an anonymous donor, the Canadian Committee on Labour History (CCLH) is pleased to announce the 12th Eugene A. Forsey Prize competition. The CCLH, with the consent of the late Dr. Forsey's family, chose to name it in his honour because of his pioneering work in the field of Canadian labour history. Dr. Forsey, Research Director of the Canadian Congress of Labour and later the Canadian Labour Congress, also served on the committee which founded *Labour/Le Travail*.

The CCLH invites submissions for the 12th Forsey prize competition for graduate and undergraduate work on Canadian labour and working class history.

Prizes are awarded annually for the best undergraduate essay, or the equivalent, and for the best graduate thesis completed in the past three years. Separate committees, established by the executive of the CCLH, will award the prizes.

The committees, like *Labour/Le Travail* itself, intend to interpret widely the definition of Canadian labour and working-class history. Undergraduate essays may be nominated by course instructors, but nominators are limited to one essay per competition. Additionally, authors may submit their own work. Essays not written at a university or college may be considered for the undergraduate awards.

For the graduate prize, supervisors may nominate one thesis per competition or an author of a thesis may submit a copy. Submissions of both MA and PhD theses are welcome. Theses defended on or after 1 May 2004 are eligible for consideration in the current competition.

**The deadline for submissions is 1 June 2007.** Prizes will be announced in the Fall 2007 issue of *Labour/Le Travail*. Four copies of essays and one copy of a thesis must be submitted for consideration to Forsey Prize, Canadian Committee on Labour History, Faculty of Arts Publications, FM 2005, Memorial University of Newfoundland, FM 2005, St. John's, NL A1C 5S7 CANADA.

**2006 Forsey Prize Winners**

Todd McCallum, "'Still Raining, Market Still Rotten': Homeless Men and the Early Years of the Great Depression in Vancouver," PhD thesis, Queen's University, 2004.

Alexandra Dodger, "The Eyes of Canada on Stratford: Reconsidering the Causes and Consequences of Stratford's 1933 Furniture Strike," undergraduate essay, University of Toronto, 2005.



Labour/Le Travail

we're  
moving  
to Athabasca University

Open Access  
AU Press 

780.497.3412  
aupress@athabascau.ca

*AU Press publishes scholarly monographs, journals  
and websites. Electronic publications of AU Press will  
be freely available online via open access.*

[www.aupress.ca](http://www.aupress.ca)



## CANADIAN COMMITTEE ON LABOUR HISTORY

### LABOUR/LE TRAVAIL: JOURNAL OF CANADIAN LABOUR STUDIES

Labour/Le Travail is the official publication of the Canadian Committee on Labour History (CCLH). Since it began publishing in 1976, it has carried many important articles in the field of working-class history, industrial sociology, labour economics, and labour relations. Although primarily interested in a historical perspective on Canadian workers, the journal is interdisciplinary in scope. In addition to articles, the journal features documents, conference reports, an annual bibliography of materials in Canadian labour studies, review essays, and reviews. While the main focus of the journal's articles is Canada, the review essays and reviews consider international work of interest to Canadian labour studies. Many of Labour/Le Travail's articles are illustrated and each issue is book length, averaging 350+ pages. For a complete listing of volumes and articles, please visit the journal's website at <http://www.mun.ca/cclh/ll/>

Subscription rates: Canadian dollars (Foreign, in US dollars)  
 Individual: \$25 (\$30 US); 2 years \$45 (\$55 US); 3 years \$60 (\$75 US)  
 Institutions: \$35 (\$50 US); 2 years \$60 (\$90 US)  
 Student/Retired/Unemployed: \$15 (\$25 US); 4 years \$50 (\$90 US)

### BOOKS: RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF THE CCLH

**\*\* NEW RELEASE \*\***

The Struggle against Wage Controls: The Saint John Story, 1975-1976  
 George Vair  
 ISBN 1-894000-07-2, paperback, \$19.95

Fighting For Dignity: The Ginger Goodwin Story,  
 Roger Stonebanks  
 ISBN 1-894000-06-4, paperback, \$26.95  
 A Very Red Life: The Story of Bill Walsh,  
 Cy Gonick  
 ISBN 1-894000-05-6, paperback, \$24.95  
 A Square Deal For All And No Railroading:  
 Historical Essays on Labour in Brandon,  
 Errol Black and Tom Mitchell, eds.  
 ISBN 1-894000-03-X, paperback, \$24.95

A Memoir of the Spanish Civil War: An  
 Armenian-Canadian in the Lincoln Battalion,  
 D.P. (Pat) Stephens, Rick Rennie, ed.  
 ISBN 1-894000-02-1, paperback, \$24.95  
 The Woman Worker, 1926-1929,  
 Margaret Hobbs and Joan Sangster, eds.  
 ISBN 1-894000-02-3, paperback, \$24.95  
 Labouring the Canadian Millennium,  
 Bryan D. Palmer, ed.  
 ISBN 1-894000-04-8, paperback, \$20.00

For a complete listing of titles, please visit our website at <http://www.mun.ca/cclh/>  
 Send orders with payment to the Canadian Committee on Labour History  
 c/o Athabasca University Press, Peace Hills Trust Tower, 1200, 10011 - 109 Street  
 Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8, Canada  
 Telephone: (780) 497-3412, Facsimile: (780) 421-3298, E-mail: [aupress@athabascau.ca](mailto:aupress@athabascau.ca).  
 All foreign orders, please remit in US dollars.

