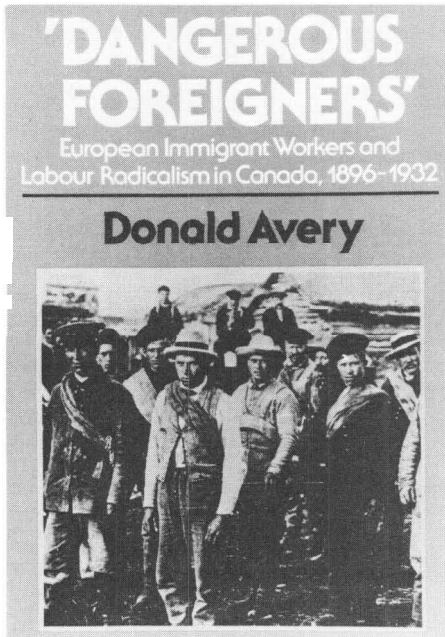


Review Articles



The trouble with people is not that they don't know but that they know so much that ain't so.

—Henry Wheeler Shaw

In his *Josh Billings'*
Encyclopedia of Wit and Wisdom (1874)

The Strait-jacketing of Multiculturalism in Canada

by EDWARD W. LAINE

'*Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932*. DONALD AVERY. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1979. 204 p. ISBN 0 7710 0826 0 pa. \$6.95. (Included as a volume in the publishers' *The Canadian Social History Series*.)

If the grim necessities of *realpolitik* in the early 1970s had finally forced the federal government to recognize the fundamental presence of cultural pluralism in Canada for the sake of national unity, they were also instrumental in establishing the outer limits for the expression of this ethno-cultural diversity under the rubric of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework".¹ In other words, the main thrust of the government's multicultural policy was to reaffirm the Official Languages Act of 1969 which accorded *de jure* status to

1 House of Commons, *Debates. 28th Parliament, Vol VIII* (Ottawa, 1971), p. 8545, in which the then Prime Minister of Canada noted during the course of his announcement on the government's implementation of this policy on 8 October 1971: "A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. Such a policy should help break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies. National unity if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all."

both English and French, while stressing the “non-official” nature of the other *de facto* languages of Canada.² In divorcing language from culture, the government also undertook the implementation of a wide range of programmes which were to provide the “linguistically alienated” minorities with a cultural stake in the nation.³ Even if the policy and some of its programmes have since failed to meet their expectations,⁴ the concept of official multiculturalism initiated by their enactment has succeeded in profoundly altering the way Canadians now perceive themselves, their society and historical past.

Indeed, even the Anglo-Canadian establishment—be it commercial or academic in orientation—has discovered that there is untold fame and fortune to be gained from the exploitation of “multicult”. Perhaps the most striking example of this is found in the recent publication of Donald Avery’s *Dangerous Foreigners* by McClelland & Stewart, a firm styling itself *The Canadian Publishers*. This slim paperback volume is aggressively marketed by the publishers in bookstores catering to the general trade as well as in those outlets frequented by the university and college crowd. To further enhance the book’s sales, its contents are described in what might be best termed as radical-revisionist chic.⁵ In sum, we are informed that this work is so extraordinarily important that the publishers had to include it in *The Canadian Social History Series* which “is devoted to in-depth studies of major themes in our history, exploring neglected areas in the day-to-day existence of Canadians. *The emphasis of this exciting series is on increasing the general reader’s appreciation of our past, and on opening up new areas for students and scholars.*”⁶

Notwithstanding the broad claims of this bit of puffery which would promote *Dangerous Foreigners* into a new “classic” of Canadian historical scholarship, the book itself contains so many editorial shortcomings as to undercut any utility or credibility that it might otherwise have had. *Dangerous Foreigners* evokes the familiar response that it is just “another example of a McClelland & Stewart book that feels not so much edited as thrown at the printing press.”⁷ If the editorial staff have not taken this supposedly “significant” work seriously in the course of their duties, then why should we, the readers? How, for example, have the editors served the author or reader when they have not even insisted that the cover photograph—one of only two illustrations in the book—be identified other than as “European ‘agriculturalists’ heading for railway construction work, circa 1908” and as coming from “The Public Archives of Canada”? As a result, Avery has missed the opportunity to convey additional knowledge to his readership; the

2 *Ibid.* In a supplementary document tabled by the government before Parliament—“Federal Government’s Response to Book IV of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism” (Mimeographed; Ottawa, 8 October 1971), p. 4—the distinction between language and culture was made: “. . . biculturalism does not properly describe our society; multiculturalism is more accurate. The Official Languages Act designated two languages, English and French, as the official languages of Canada for the purpose of all the institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada; no reference was made to cultures, and this Act does not impinge upon the role of all languages as instruments of the various Canadian cultures.”

3 “Federal Government’s Response”, pp. 5-10, lists a number of programmes including Multicultural Grants, Cultural Development, Ethnic Histories, Canadian Ethnic Studies, Teaching of Official Languages and Federal Cultural Agencies (National Museum of Man, National Film Board, National Library, Public Archives) programmes.

4 For example, see Jean Burnet, “The Policy of Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework: A Stock-taking”, *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 10, no. 2 (1978): 107-113, and Karl Peter, “The Myth of Multiculturalism and other Political Fables” (Paper delivered at the Biennial Conference of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association, Vancouver, B.C., 11-13 October 1979).

5 Quoted from the publisher’s blurb in Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners*, back cover.

6 Quoted from Avery, back cover (italics mine).

7 Quoted from Morris Wolfe’s review of Raymond Massey’s *A Hundred Different Lives in Books in Canada* (June-July 1979), p. 21.

reader doesn't know whether the sashed individuals in the photo actually signify a paramilitary organization of "dangerous foreigners" about to strike the CPR or simply a group of the "boys" down from the farm dressed to impress the local "straw boss" into hiring them; and the researcher—or even the photo archivist—hasn't been given the faintest notion as to which of the millions of items in the National Photography Collection this one might be.⁸

Inattentive editors and proofreaders have also contributed to the shoddiness of the text. The notes are extremely disorganized and difficult to use. Too often, complete citations of sources follow abbreviated versions of the same.⁹ Also, the citations have not been standardized so that single sources are cited in a number of different ways.¹⁰ Then, since there is no bibliography, the reader must search through forty-four pages of notes for the complete citation to make sense of an abbreviated one. Apart from an excessive number of typographical errors, there are curious word mutations and forms that are not in the lexicon of the *O.E.D.*¹¹ Most offensive, however, is the cavalier treatment given to non-English names: for example, V. Rosvall and J. Voutilainen are never correctly spelt in the book, although these names appear in a number of different variations.¹² *Vapaus* is

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- 8 See Avery, p. 4, back cover. Note that McClelland & Stewart's non-inclusion of the photograph number in the credit line contravenes the policy of the Public Archives of Canada regarding acknowledgement for the use of its holdings.
- 9 In this regard, Avery does not even respect his own work. For example, the first citation to his own article, "Canadian Immigration Policy", is abbreviated (note 5, p. 148) while the complete citation does not appear until the following chapter's notes (note 56, p. 158). The same thing occurs with his citation of manuscript sources as in the case of the records of the Chief Press Censor, Department of Secretary of State, Public Archives of Canada, RG 6 E 1: Cf. Avery, note 14, p. 162 (abbreviated); note 33, p. 164 (complete citation); note 34, p. 164 (second version of abbreviated note; lacks volume number); notes 59 and 62, p. 166.
- 10 Cf. Avery's references to A. T. Hill's "Memoirs", note 90, p. 160; note 64, p. 167; and note 37, p. 181. Since the quotation in Avery's text (p. 79) does not seem to appear in any of the several existing versions of Hill's "Memoirs" preserved at Lakehead University or the Public Archives of Canada (Finnish Organization of Canada Collection, MG 28 V 46, Vol. 93, File 9) although he avers (note 64, p. 167) that his source is "A. T. Hill Memoirs (in possession of the author)", one would wish that the author would have noted with greater precision whether this is a hitherto unknown version that he had used. In note 64, Avery also refers to "OBU Collection, J. W. Ahlqvist circular letter" without identifying which one of the three repositories he notes as having an "OBU Collection" holds the material he is citing. With incomplete, imprecise notes such as these, how can another researcher verify Avery's documentation?
- 11 For example, see "adaption" (pp. 44, 188) and "willowing" (p. 142). "The conviction of the Finnish Communist, Arvo Vaara, in December of 1928" (p. 109) should have read as "The indictment of . . ." The use of the term "contemptuous" seems rather strong when used by Avery (p. 127) in: "Ukrainians and Finns had been the great strength of the CPC but they had, on occasion, been quite contemptuous of other ethnic groups, especially the Jews and Blacks." This is especially so in the case of the Finnish Canadian radicals inasmuch as Avery's only substantiation of this charge is based on one exaggerated statement by a Finnish-American defector from the radical movement in the United States (p. 128 and note 59, p. 183), and not in the context of the Finnish Canadian experience. Thus, Avery's misuse of language ultimately defiles logic and historical accuracy.
- 12 The misspellings include "J. Voutilainier and V. Rosevall" and "Viljo Rosval and John Voutilaimen" (pp. 137 and 125 respectively). Other non-English names are also frequently misspelled, as happens with the following names: Arvo Vaara, Vladimir Kaye, Auvo Kostainen, R. Jalkanen, P. Yuzyk. English names are not immune to author errors either as, for example, W. F. Langworthy becomes "W. F. Langworth" and the recipient of his correspondence, J. J. Carrick, M.P., becomes "J. J. Garrick" of the Dominion Police. The date of their correspondence is changed from 4 August 1917 to "14 March 1917" and, too, the material quoted in Avery's text is ascribed to the Thomas Crerar Papers in the Queen's University Archives. For this, see Avery, pp. 73-74 (text) and 164 (notes 38, 39). Indeed, the entry in note 38, "BP, 123189, W. F. Langworthy . . ." should have been in note 39 as "BP, 123186, *W.F. Langworth . . .*" (In this context, BP refers to the Borden Papers, MG 26 H, at the Public Archives of Canada.)

variously translated as "Truth" and "Worker".¹³ In fact, it means "Liberty" which is incorrectly ascribed to *Työmies* ("Worker").¹⁴ While, as in the latter instance, the editors may not know the proper translation to use, they should at least demand consistency from the author.

As respectable Anglo-Canadian publishers, surely McClelland & Stewart would not knowingly flog a book which is a seriously flawed and grossly insulting account of Canada's multicultural past. Nor should any reputable publisher be suspected of purposely attempting to foist a wildly misleading and distorted description of cultural pluralism in Canadian history upon the reader as the pre-emptive scholarly work in the field. Therefore, the injudicious huckstering of *'Dangerous Foreigners'* can only be attributed to a basic ignorance of life beyond the strait-jacket of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. Apparently, their cloistered, bi- (or is it uni-?) dimensional *Weltanschauung* prepared them to see in Avery's manuscript revelations of Canada's "ethnic" past which convinced them that here was the unfolding of the wisdom of the universe.¹⁵

If the responsibility of McClelland & Stewart is questionable with respect to its involvement with *'Dangerous Foreigners'*, there can be no doubt about the author's position in this affair. As Avery himself admits, he alone is fully responsible for "errors of fact, judgement and interpretation".¹⁶ Thus, if one cannot say too much for his scholarship, one can certainly commend him for his courage and candour. Although Avery may not realize it, the central problem afflicting his work is part and parcel of the one that bedevilled the efforts of his publishers in printing his book. That is, in essence, the belief that a reasonable appreciation of cultural pluralism in Canadian history can be developed even by those persons bound in the strait-jacket of a "bilingual framework". Absurd as this may seem to non Anglo-Canadian scholars, an *idée fixe* still persists among Anglo-Canadian historians that a knowledge of the Queen's English and a good grounding in Canada's "British" heritage sufficiently equip one to unravel all the skeins of Canada's past.¹⁷ Perhaps the arrogance and sense of superiority contributing to this myopic vision is congenitally endemic to the element of our society which has traditionally formed the *crème de la crème*.¹⁸

The insularity of the Anglo-Canadian intellectual establishment has been further nurtured by its tendency to authoritarianism. Thus, the federal government's declaration of official multiculturalism was perceived not only as a political solution to a contemporary issue, but it was also accepted as the authoritative *primum mobile* in legitimizing the historic presence of cultural pluralism in Canada and in justifying it as a proper subject of historical inquiry. Not surprisingly, the actual policy of multiculturalism itself has also been taken as gospel, so that it has come to provide the intellectual frame-

13 For example, see Avery, pp. 120 and 191 respectively. However, in his article "Continental European Immigrant Workers in Canada, 1896-1919: From 'Stalwart Peasants' to Radical Proletariat", *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 12, no. 1 (1975), p. 58, he correctly translates *Vapaus* as "Liberty" although he is otherwise in error concerning the Finnish socialist movement on the same page.

14 Avery, p. 129.

15 Plainly, the institutional "sensitivity" of McClelland & Stewart towards multiculturalism has not been improved by the fact that they are co-publishers of the *Generations* series sponsored by the Ethnic Histories Programme of the Department of the Secretary of State (Canada).

16 Quoted from Avery's "Acknowledgements", p. 198, a feature buried at the end of this book.

17 This point was also made by Walter Neutel, the Chief of Ethnic Archives, Public Archives of Canada, in his "*Geschichte wie es eigentlich gewesen* or The Necessity of having Ethnic Archives Programmes", *Archivaria* 7 (Winter 1978): 104-107 especially.

18 For this, see also Edward W. Laine, "Finnish Canadian Radicalism and Canadian Politics: The First Forty Years" (Paper delivered at the Biennial Conference of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association, Vancouver, 11-13 October 1979), p. 2.

work for Anglo-Canadian academics in their study of the “ethnic” component. However, some critics of Anglo-Canadian scholarship might prefer to regard this too-eager acceptance of “multiculturalism within a bilingual framework” as an instrument of convenience in excusing various academics for their lack of knowledge of the “non-official” languages necessary to their work.¹⁹ *Dangerous Foreigners*, for example, points to the author’s competence in no language other than English. Indeed, Avery’s doctoral dissertation—the father to the work being reviewed—can be considered an exercise in the avoidance of having to do any research in the “non-official” languages. That is implicit in the thesis title itself: “Canadian Immigration Policy and the Alien Question, 1896-1919: The Anglo-Canadian Perspective”.²⁰ Although *Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932* (as a title) would suggest that the author has amplified upon his original dissertation to include the “non-official” language sources created by the radicalized European immigrant workers themselves, such has not been the case.

The author fosters the impression that such sources have been investigated. Certainly a cursory look at his documentation will reveal numerous citations from “non-official” language sources. The author’s footnoting style also reinforces the impression that he has consulted the original sources in the various languages and, in the context of the book as a whole, clearly Avery is doing his best to cultivate this illusion.²¹ His “Notes on Sources” underlines the point:

A variety of primary and secondary sources were used in the preparation of this book; almost all of them have been cited in the chapter notes. What is offered here is a more general comment on some of the important primary collections *examined*.²²

However, a closer examination of some of these citations underscores the fact that the author has not used the original “ethnic” sources themselves. For example, he refers to the “April edition” of *Vapaus*, then a Finnish language daily newspaper.²³ In the accompanying note, he cites “*Vapaus*, November 2, 1930, p. 650” as his source.²⁴ No edition of *Vapaus* was published that day, a Sunday.²⁵ “Page 650”, in fact, refers not to *Vapaus*—which would make it a rather hefty daily—but possibly to a citation of it in the court records relating to the trial of Tim Buck *et al.*²⁶

He confirms his inability and failure to use sources in the non-official languages in his assessment of those records that he has found to be of most value:

The files of the Immigration Branch (PAC) are the single most important source available for the study of Canadian immigration policy *and of the adaption [sic] of specific European groups*.²⁷

19 This is particularly true when many Canadian universities lowered their “foreign” language requirements as a pre-requisite for graduate work (as noted by Neutel, p. 104).

20 Ph.D. diss., University of Western Ontario, 1973.

21 Cf. notes 66 (p. 183) and 103 (p. 230).

22 p. 188 (italics mine).

23 Quoted from p. 130.

24 Quoted from p. 183 (note 66).

25 *Vapaus*, 1 and 3 November 1930, constituted issues no. 258 (Saturday) and 259 (Monday) respectively. The newspaper did not publish on Sunday.

26 Seized records of the Communist Party of Canada, in Attorney General’s records, Archives of Ontario, RG 4, include the transcripts and related documents in the trial of Tim Buck and other communist leaders (1931). Assorted non-English materials were translated in evidence. Hence, Avery uses the trial material and the Communist Party records which were written in English, but does not cite the extensive documentation in the collection which appears exclusively in other languages.

27 p. 188 (italics mine).

Later, when discussing documentation specifically relating to "Immigrant Worker 'Radicalism'", he emphasizes the particular importance of the records of the Immigration Branch, RCMP, Department of Justice, Department of National Defence and those of the Chief Press Censor, Department of Secretary of State, that is to say the public records of the Government of Canada. To this list, he also adds the files of various provincial police forces. Yet, for balance concerning the documentation of the "ethnic radicals" themselves, this is what he has to say:

A common characteristic of all these records, however, is the hostility towards the immigrant activist, often on cultural as well as class grounds.

The bias can be partly offset by reference to the record left behind by the radicals themselves. Here the papers of the Communist Party of Canada (PAO) are particularly valuable. These contain extensive references to the activities of the *Ukrainian, Finnish, and Jewish groups* within the broader Communist organization.²⁸

Clearly, when we penetrate the smokescreen, we recognize his admission of relying almost exclusively upon English language sources. How else is it possible that a professional historian can be so naïve or disingenuous as to publish so simplistic an approach to "ethnic" evidential sources?

Like the various levels of government, the Communist Party in Canada was not immune to Anglo-Canadian control—and, therefore, Anglo-Canadian bias. The only difference was that the overwhelmingly large non-Anglo majority in the Communist Party purposely allowed the Anglo leaders to become the "front".²⁹ Thus, both the "establishment" and "anti-establishment" records reveal—whether they are hostile or sympathetic—the attitudes, interests and perspectives of their own institutional being. In the same way, only the records created by the "immigrants" themselves and their organizations—radical or conservative—properly address their existence from their own point of view.³⁰ To suggest otherwise is pure nonsense.

Yet in this book which supposedly concerns itself with the European immigrant workers and labour radicalism, the following is what Avery has to offer about sources created by the principals:

Ethnic newspapers such as *Robotchny Narod* ("Working People"), *Vapaus* ("Truth") [*sic*] and the *Ukrainian Labor News* offer a commentary on contemporary events that often differed from those found in English working-class newspapers such as *The Worker*, the *One Big Union*, and the *B.C. Federationist*.³¹

28 p. 191 (italics mine). Again he tries to cover up his language (or is it source?) deficiencies, here by implying that the Communist Party material constitute the records proper of the cited ethnic groups.

29 For a discussion of this concerning the Finns, see Laine, "Finnish Canadian Radicalism", *passim*.

30 For an overview of some of the records of the Finnish Canadian community itself, see Edward W. Laine, "The Expanding Opportunities for the Study of the Finnish Canadian Heritage at the Public Archives of Canada," *Siirtolaisuus/Migration*, no. 2 (1977): 1-5, 9; his "Archival Resources relating to Finnish Canadians", *Archivaria* 7 (Winter) 1978: 110-116; and his *Selections from the Finnish Organization of Canada Collection* (Ottawa, 1979), especially pp. 6-7. For archival resources relating to other groups mentioned by Avery, see Lawrence F. Tapper, *A Guide to Sources for the Study of Canadian Jewry* (Ottawa, 1978); and Oksana Migus with Walter Neutel, *Canadians of Ukrainian Origin: Reflections on the Formative Years* (Ottawa, 1979), especially p. 10.

31 Quoted from p. 191.

By ignoring this “commentary . . . that . . . differed”, Avery is assuming an Olympian posture which sweeps away the rich and varied documentation of our multicultural heritages as though it was but a scattering of a few “eccentric” newspapers, and he demonstrates a fundamental ignorance of the real nature of the immigrant communities. For example, the publications which he cites, did not exist merely to translate the directives of the Anglo-Canadian leadership of the Communist Party but rather represented the community organizations which owned them. Thus, when the Communist party and these radical “non-official” language publications came into conflict, a compromise had to be effected by the Comintern, as happened in the quarrel between the Finnish Organization of Canada (which wholly owned and controlled *Vapaus*) and the Communist Party.³² Avery’s contention that *Vapaus* simply capitulated to the Party as demonstrated by editor Arvo Vaara’s “confession” of his sins, is based on his uncritical reliance upon secondary information.³³

Indeed, in his practical selection of sources and data, Avery reminds one of the late cartoonist Al Capp’s “General Cornpone”—that military genius who was always able to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Avery, for example, unerringly extracts chaff even from those sources which are available to him. For example, he places too much value on rather dubious sources.³⁴ He also ascribes his own mistaken notions to otherwise reliable sources such as when he refers to the non-existent Finnish “province of Karvia”.³⁵ Once having mistaken this commune for an entire province, he then compounds his error by assuming that the behaviour of a sample of emigrants (947) from Karvia establishes the attitude of all Finnish immigrants (some 43,800 in Canada alone according to the 1931 census) in maintaining family and village ties because “the majority [from Karvia] gravitated toward Port Arthur and Nipigon in Ontario and Fort Covington in Minnesota.”³⁶ In addition to misinterpreting his sources, he sometimes cites them in such

32 For this, see Laine, “Finnish Canadian Radicalism”, pp. 15-16.

33 Cf. “Canadian Kp:n ja Suom. Järj. välisen selkkauksen selvittely—Kominternin poliittisen komissionin päätöslauselma Canadian kysymyksessä”, *Vapaus*, 5 April 1930, p. 2, and continuing in the following issue, 7 April 1930, p. 2. See also Mauri A. Jalava, “The Political Reaction of Finnish Factions in the Sudbury Area to the Great Depression” (Paper delivered at the Biennial Conference of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association, Vancouver, B.C., 11-13 October 1979), especially p. 12, in which he notes that: “During the fight the Communist Party of Canada had fired from the party its foremost Finnish leaders: J. W. Ahlqvist, John Wirta and Bruno Tenhunen; and took away ‘the trust of the Party’ from comrades Vaara, Oksanen, Helin, and Kannasto. The Commission [sent by the Comintern direct from Moscow] noted after its investigation that these persons had behaved against the Comintern resolutions, but that they had also confessed and promised to return to the party fold. Furthermore, the Commission had discovered that the *Polcom* (The Political Committee of the Canadian Communist Party) had overextended some of its powers.”

34 Most particularly his reliance on Martha I. G. Allen, “A Survey of Finnish Cultural, Economic and Political Development in this Sudbury District of Ontario” (M.A. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1954), a less than objective work written under the influence of the Cold War and informants who were principally “White” Finns (abetted by the fact Allen could not function in the Finnish language herself).

35 p. 44. Although Avery cites Reino Kero as his reference for this (note 18, p. 155), Kero actually describes Karvia as an example of a “rural commune” rather than a “province”. For this, see Reino Kero, “The Return of Emigrants from America to Finland” in *Publications of the Institute of General History, University of Turku*, ed. by Vilho Niitemaa, Publication No. 4 (Turku, 1972), p. 10. Avery, p. 155 (note 18), ascribes this article to the wrong publication!

36 Quoted from p. 44. Avery is being too selective with his evidence here, giving it greater importance than is found within the source that he is citing. Indeed, his source—Kero, “The Return of Emigrants”, pp. 10-11—makes no broad claim that the tendency amongst all Finnish immigrants was to settle the same areas to which their communards and kinfolk had gone, but he does note certain exceptions to this pattern and, therefore, suggests that any definitive conclusion must await further investigation. Moreover, nowhere in this article does Kero substantiate Avery’s conclusion (p. 44)—which in the context of the latter’s book implicates all Finnish immigrants in North America and not just those from the Karvia region of Finland—that “close familial and fraternal connections persisted among these Finnish immigrants, the international boundary notwithstanding.”

a fashion that they may not be found.³⁷ Then, he may also quote spurious sources.³⁸ Even worse, he ascribes to his sources an entirely new context which is historically insupportable, as the following example shows:

Richard Pipes's [*sic*] description of Russian Workers' protest movements would probably apply equally to their Italian, Austro-Hungarian, and Finnish counterparts: "... their sporadic outbursts of protest resembled less industrial strikes than rebellions similar in their motives and manifestations to the peasant *bunty* of the same time. It was a relatively undifferentiated mass of frightfully exploited, illiterate labourers, cut off from the world, and to a large extent still rooted in their village."³⁹

Since Pipes' statement was intended only to describe the situation prevailing in Imperial Russia about the turn of the century, it can hardly be cited as evidence of those conditions that existed elsewhere. For example, the Finns were neither "illiterate peasants" (in Finland or Canada) nor were they given to a tradition of spontaneous violence.⁴⁰

The fact is that Avery demonstrates an appalling lack of understanding of European history. Indeed, insofar as the Finns are concerned, he is inventing a history that never was. For example, he says:

37 Kero's essay, "The Return of Emigrants", does not appear in *The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives*, ed. by Michael G. Karni, Matti E. Kaups and Douglas J. Ollila Jr. (Turku, 1975) as claimed by Avery (note 18, p. 155) but rather in the publication cited in Note 35 above. Instead, Kero's paper in *The Finnish Experience* (pp. 212-221), as well as in the conference of the same name, was "Emigration of the Finns from North America to Soviet Karelia in the Early 1930's".

38 For example, see note 23 above. Then, of course, Avery also cites sources spuriously as when he refers (note 36, p. 156) to J. Donald Wilson, "Matti Kurikka: Finnish-Canadian Intellectual", *BC Studies*, no. 20 (Winter 1973-1974): 50-65, especially when it is written in this article (p. 64): "As for Kurikka, after departure from Sointula and the failure of another utopian socialist colony . . . , he returned to Finland in 1905. . . . From 1906 to 1908 he edited the newspaper *Elämä* (Life) before returning to America where he lived the rest of his life as a newspaperman in New York and a farmer on Rhode Island." Yet, after supposedly having used Wilson's work, Avery (p. 49) concludes: "After the 1905 upheavals Finnish intellectuals, such as the utopian socialist Matti Kurikka and the syndicalist Leo Laukki, were forced to flee to North America, and thus strengthened the already radical point of view among Canadian Finns." The errors in this one statement are beyond belief. For example, Avery should not have stated that Kurikka fled Finland because of the "1905 upheavals" in Finland. Moreover, not only did Kurikka return somewhat later to the United States, but also his influence with the mainstream radical movement amongst Finnish Canadians was already ended well before his two failures with utopian socialism. As for Laukki, he emigrated to the United States and never had any importance in Canada.

39 Quoted from Avery, p. 49. The original source for Avery's quotation is from Richard Pipes, *Social Democracy and the St. Petersburg Labor Movement, 1885-1897* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), p. 1.

40 The Finns who came to Canada were neither illiterate nor were they mostly peasants. In fact, there were very few peasants among them (but does Avery know what constitutes a "peasant" as opposed to a "crofter"?). Indeed, Avery contradicts himself when he lumps the Finns into his supposed "undifferentiated mass of frightfully exploited labourers". For elsewhere (p. 62) he says that: "The high level of Finnish involvement in socialist and syndicalist organizations was partly because they arrived in North America with a 'higher level of literacy' and educational aspiration." (One wonders why the use of quotation marks about the higher level of literacy? Was this is doubt according to Avery? There is no doubt about this at all when all the evidence is considered.) As for a tradition of violence, Finland possessed none. Hence, from the time of her conquest by Russia at the beginning of the nineteenth century until the commencement of a policy of Russification by the Russian state, Finland was allowed to retain a great deal of autonomy although she bordered upon the Russian capital of St. Petersburg. For this, see Edward W. Laine, "Finland's Military Significance for Nineteenth Century Russia" in *War and Society in the Nineteenth Century Russian Empire*, ed. by J. G. Purves and D. A. West (Toronto, 1972), pp. 34-44.

In Finland the labour and socialist movements had both class and national characteristics. Indeed, the 1901 conscription riots and the 1905 general strike in that country were as much directed against Russification as against capitalism.⁴¹

In actual fact, the situation in Finland was much more complex than supposed by Avery. Since 1899, quiet Finland had been provoked by a stream of measures emanating from the Imperial government in St. Petersburg which were seen by Finnish nationalists (especially the Swedish-speaking elite) as part of a campaign to russify the country. Hence, these street demonstrations (not riots) were consciously directed together with other orderly forms of pre-meditated protest against the tsarist measures by the upper class nationalist elements and, therefore, were not connected with labour radicalism *per se*. It is only with the General Strike of 1905—imported into Finland from Russia via the railway workers—that the radical labour movement became a force to be reckoned with because it had been schooled to the value of protest by the example of the very bourgeois nationalists with whom it was now coming into conflict.⁴²

Presumably, it is also Avery's woefully inadequate background in Finnish, as well as European history, which leads him to group together "Ukrainian, Finnish, and other Central European workers".⁴³ Taken alone it is merely laughable to encounter this ludicrously fallacious statement, but the concept itself becomes most offensive in historical and qualitative terms when Avery tries to use it to link certain ethnic groups and a presumed innate tradition of violence.⁴⁴ Clearly it is his intention to attribute the supposed excesses of radical "violence" to the non-official language groups associated with the Communist Party, thereby "sanitizing" the immigrant British and Anglo-Canadian element that comprised the majority in the leadership of the Communist Party and a minority in the rank and file.⁴⁵ Ironically, most of the excess of violence that he attributes to the radicals usually was precipitated in reaction to the violence done to them.⁴⁶

In the vain attempt to prove his point, Avery himself does much violence to history, whether it be European, immigrant or Canadian. For example, he makes the assertion that:

41 Quoted from p. 49.

42 See Edward W. Laine, "Finland's Road from Autonomy to Integration in the Russian Empire, 1808-1910" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 1974), chapter six, *passim*.

43 Quoted from p. 7. From the Soviet viewpoint, Finland might still be considered within its "Baltic" sphere of influence, but for all others Finland is a "Nordic" country. For example, see Edward W. Laine, "Finland—A Baltic or Nordic State?" *The New Review* 13 (June 1973): 89-93; and his "The Place of Finland in Russia's Baltic Policy, 1808-1855: The Era of Liberal Imperialism" (Paper delivered at the Fourth Conference on Baltic Studies in Scandinavia, Stockholm, June 1977), *passim*.

44 See especially pp. 48-53.

45 This was more clearly seen in Donald Avery, "Ethnic Loyalties and the Proletarian Revolution" (Paper delivered at the Biennial Conference of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association, Vancouver, B.C., 11-13 October 1979), a paper which led to spirited debate concerning Avery's concept of radical immigrants and traditional violence.

46 It is interesting that Avery makes use of the early labour unrest in Fort William, leaving it very much in the mind of the reader that the fault somehow lay with the reaction of the immigrant workers. For example, consider this (p. 52): "When the companies refused to negotiate violence ensued. On October 2, a gun battle occurred between the strikers and the CPR and Fort William police: one police constable and three strikers were seriously injured. Eventually the strikers gained concessions, but their victory was dearly bought". Yet he manages not to mention that his research had also taken him through files of the Borden Papers which relate to later labour troubles with the Fort William grain handlers in 1917. For these, see Borden Papers, item nos. 126353-126370, especially 126370 in which Prime Minister Borden (in a letter to Leslie H. Boyd, Chairman of the Grain Commission, 7 October 1917) concedes that, at least in this case, violence would only occur should the government act upon the employer's request to use force. Obviously, Avery would prefer to put the onus upon the immigrant workers in matters of violence.

Beyond the boardinghouse stood the ethnic church, “the first and most easily understood form of organization [*sic*]” immigrants brought from the Old World to the New. . . . Finnish churches appeared in both Port Arthur and Sudbury; indeed, in Port Arthur three rival Lutheran churches established themselves.⁴⁷

Yet even the Reverend Yrjö Raivio wrote that “the Lutheran Church did not ever have a great influence in this area” when referring to the Finnish community of Port Arthur during the earliest period of immigration there.⁴⁸ Raivio also notes that a small Finnish Lutheran Church was not established in Sudbury until 1932.⁴⁹ The inclusion of the Finnish Canadian experience to bolster the view that “the churches were still the Old World institution to which immigrant workers were most likely to turn” is therefore entirely unacceptable. Apparently, Avery also finds this so, for he later contradicts himself by saying that “unlike other immigrant groups the Finns did not benefit greatly from religious leadership”.⁵⁰ The reason for this, he suggests, is that “the Finnish churches were deeply divided . . . at home”.⁵¹ In this re-writing of Finnish history, Avery is ignoring the fact that religious life in Finland was monopolized by the state religion as embodied in the National Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.⁵²

His notions about Canadian history also seem a trifle vague on occasion. For example, he writes:

In 1891 Sir John A. Macdonald had deplored the influx of millions of Slavic and Southern European immigrants into the United States: “It is a great country, but it will have its vicissitudes and revolutions. Look at that mass of foreign ignorance and vice which has flooded that country with socialism, atheism and all other isms.”⁵³

Yet, as his reference, Avery cites “Toronto, *Empire*, October 2, 1890”.⁵⁴ Apart from this conflict of dates, the passage bears a remarkable likeness to the interpretation that Avery is positing in this book. In more fudging of the historical record, he states that “a small group of activists in Port Arthur and Sudbury such as A. T. Hill, John Ahlqvist and Arvo Vaara, all of whom had been active in Finnish left wing politics elsewhere, were responsible for the establishment of Finnish Socialist locals between 1908-1911.”⁵⁵ Both A. T. Hill (born 1897) and Vaara (born 1891) were obviously too young to be active participants before 1911. J. W. Ahlqvist, on the other hand, was one of the leading figures in the founding of the Finnish society of Toronto in 1902 and in the creation within the

47 Quoted from p. 45.

48 Yrjö Raivio, *Kanadan suomalaisten historia* (Copper Cliff, 1975), p. 285 (my translation).

49 *Ibid.*, p. 255.

50 Quoted from p. 62.

51 Quoted from p. 62. More fully it reads: “The Finnish churches were deeply divided and offered little social leadership at home, and even less in North America. Cast adrift in this fashion Finnish workers increasingly turned to the socialist *émigré* intellectuals for guidance, men such as Matti Kurikka, Martin Hendrickson, Antero Tanner, Leo Laukka.” Note also Avery’s enthusiasm for Laukka and other Finnish American “intellectuals”. Only Kurikka (see note 38 above) and Hendrickson had any impact on the Finnish Canadian radical movement, and even that was relatively slight. Indeed, as noted throughout by Laine, “Finnish Canadian Radicalism”, the Finnish Canadian labour radicals were most emphatically not followers of intellectuals amongst them.

52 For example, see Jorma Louhivuori, “The Church in Finland” in *Finland: An Introduction*, ed. by Sylvie Nickels, Hillar Kallas and Philippa Friedman (London, 1973), pp. 177-187, and especially p. 184.

53 Quoted from p. 40.

54 Quoted from note 7, p. 154.

55 Quoted from note 90, p. 160.

Society of a local affiliated to the Socialist Party of Canada in 1906.⁵⁶ In any event, Avery appears not to know that the most important Finnish socialist local and the national headquarters of the Finnish radical movement was located in Toronto, not northern Ontario.⁵⁷

Indeed, it is evident from *'Dangerous Foreigners'* that there is a great deal that Avery does not know—and the book does much less than enlighten us. The “Introduction”, for example, describes the topic to be studied so as to completely bewilder the reader. Consider the following excerpts from the first page:

This book is a study of European immigration to Canada between the years 1896 and 1931. It is not a study of the Canadian experience of particular national or ethnic groups; nor is it an examination in any great detail of the pattern of immigrant agricultural settlement. *The part which European immigrant workers played* in the rapidly changing economic and social life of the country *is the central concern here.* . . .

The immigrant workers whose lives are described in this study came mainly from Eastern and Southern Europe. . . .

This study primarily concentrates on the reaction of the English Canadian community to these European immigrant workers. There are several reasons for this approach. During this period Canadian Immigration Policy was essentially determined by English Canadians . . . Yet another factor was that most of the Ukrainian, Finnish, and other Central European workers found employment outside Quebec.⁵⁸

Here we are treated to double-talk, for he states in one paragraph that no particular European group is being studied while in the next we are told that a specialized group is, in fact, to be studied. Is Avery trying to have it both ways, or is there a third? Is he studying “the part which European workers played” or the English Canadian reaction to the entry of a stereotyped group of European workers?

Avery appears to be re-creating the old prejudices of the Anglo-Canadian community and appropriating these historic concepts as though they are the original core of his scholarship. In trying to differentiate between the more acceptable “British” immigrants and those of Eastern and Southern European origin (and, of course, the Finns whom Avery mistakenly includes in this group), he writes:

Yet as “foreigners” theirs was a decidedly mixed reception, the attitude of their hosts varying with time and economic circumstances. *Language and culture clearly set the European immigrant apart in Canada.* So too, it will be shown, *did occupation and place of residence.* And this social distance was lengthened when they discovered Canada could not deliver what they had come—or been led—to expect. To the immigrants who form the subject of this study, the rising Dominion both promised and threatened.⁵⁹

This description is, however, by no means exclusively applicable to Eastern and Southern European immigrants. Even the more “desirable” classes of English-speaking immigrants, whether from Great Britain or the United States, encountered the same problems. Have there not also been signs declaring that “English need not apply!”? Therefore, Avery's

56 For example, see Varpu Lindstrom-Best, *The Finnish Immigrant Community of Toronto, 1887-1913* (Toronto, 1979), especially p. 49.

57 This is confirmed in the records of the Finnish Organization of Canada at the Public Archives of Canada.

58 Quoted from p. 7 (italics mine).

59 Quoted from p. 8 (italics mine).

concentrated attempts to discriminate between immigrants to Canada on the basis of their nationality speaks more of the author's own Anglo-Canadian reaction to particular "ethnic" groups rather than of any radical-revisionist approach to Canadian history (as claimed by the publishers). The rest of the "Introduction" does little more than introduce such gems as "statistically, the period of Canada's immigration history is well documented."⁶⁰ The final paragraphs, however, refer to some of the "neglected themes" of the study and end with the final restriction of Avery's work in that he intends "to concentrate here on the immigrant experience in mining, lumbering, harvesting and railroad construction."⁶¹

So, in all, Avery has told us that which he will not do. In excluding the French, the Blacks, the Orientals, the Amerinds, the farmers but not harvesters, the urban workers, women, West Europeans and Scandinavians, the remaining group of "immigrants" is rather small—especially when only the radicals from this group are to be considered. But nowhere does he say in clear and unequivocal terms exactly what he is doing. While the body of his work continues to discuss the role of the "immigrant" worker from 1896 to 1932 in the Canadian economy, in the movement towards labour radicalism, in the First World War, in the Post-War Period and the Great Depression with its "Red Scare", nowhere does Avery precisely confine himself to his particular subjects of enquiry or establish how he can actually isolate these groups in sound methodological terms from those he has excluded from his purview. The only clue seems to be his frequent mention of Ukrainians and Finns with a scattering of asides to Jews, Italians and several other groups (although others such as the Poles, British and a host of others are undeservedly ignored for their part in the radical movement). Even then, it is not absolutely certain whether Avery is simply citing these groups as examples or if he is, in fact, trying specifically to study and analyse their past.

Unfortunately, the "Conclusion" bears no greater relation to the "Introduction" than does the narrative body of the text of *'Dangerous Foreigners'* in answering this question. The only real hint that it offers as to this work's focal point comes in its very last paragraph:

Shunned or patronized by traditional native institutions, alienated immigrant workers turned to groups who sought to transform Canadian life through revolution: the Industrial Workers of the World, the One Big Union, and the Communist Party of Canada. But even within these fringe organizations their deeply felt particularities could pose problems. Class and ethnicity proved as hard to reconcile in Canada as elsewhere. Thus, when the Communist Party of Canada attempted to reduce the influence of its foreign-language federations in the name of working-class solidarity it met stiff resistance. *To many Ukrainian and Finnish workers in Canada, cultural assimilation was too high a price to pay even for the proletarian revolution.*⁶²

Since he has drawn our attention particularly to the Ukrainians and Finns in his last sentence, these people surely must have been his primary concern. Yet he has not dared to single them out in his work. Moreover, he has not shown how he has been able to separate the urban and agricultural elements from the mass of these two groups to accord with his "Introduction". Nor has he been able to draw out a common theme for them except in sporadic attempts of strait-jacketing them into a supposedly common cultural tradition in order to prove that they were similarly rooted in the same soil of radicalism and violence. If so, Avery has condescended to stereotyping these radical "immigrants"—and the communities to which they belonged—in a most unhistorical fashion. Sadly, in the final

60 Quoted from p. 14.

61 Quoted from p. 15.

62 Quoted from p. 143 (italics mine).

analysis, a reading of this book does no more than to reinforce our opinion that for Avery, his '*Dangerous Foreigners*' were really dangerous foreigners and—I suspect—he would have treated them openly as brutish beasts but for the imposition of a new climate of toleration in Canada under official multiculturalism.

In this regard, his last paragraph sums up his visceral views very well. He simply ignores the fact that politically sophisticated, radical Ukrainians and Finns were instrumental in *creating and sustaining* the very institutions to which, according to Avery, they were turning for succour. He also ignores the fact that the Anglo-Canadian leadership of the Communist Party of Canada was trying to wrest financial as well as political control of the "ethnic federations", all "in the name of working-class solidarity" as prescribed by Joseph Stalin. Also ignored is the fact that many of these immigrants could best function in their "Ukrainian" or "Finnish" cultural milieu—not because they were stupid or congenitally defective but because they, like Avery, lived within the limitations of their native language and culture. Perhaps the worst omission in this respect is the fact that nowhere is it emphasized that only a portion of the members of these two communities belonged to the radical movement throughout the period of 1896-1932. For, when finally stripped of his own patronizing verbiage, Avery is as cruel an exploiter of the "European immigrants" as the most ruthless and unfeeling capitalist of the period which he discusses. He would despoil the heritage of these groups by committing their history to a cultural strait-jacket of his own manufacture.

Of Book Reviews and Polemics: A Rejoinder to Edward W. Laine*

George Woodcock, another Anglo-Canadian historian who has ventured into the field of ethnic and immigration history, recently made the following comment about negative book reviews: "It is generally agreed among writers that to be condemned is infinitely preferable to being ignored, and that the more elaborate the condemnation the more seriously one is being taken, at least as a threat."¹ On the basis of his review article, Dr. Edward Laine obviously regards *Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932* (Toronto, 1979) as a very great threat indeed. Thus, readers are told over and over again in his thirteen-page treatise that Dr. Laine is not merely engaged in a scholarly exercise. Rather, he is trying to preserve the Canadian commitment "to provide the 'linguistically alienated' minorities with a cultural stake in the nation."²

The target of this massive assault is a short monograph: one hundred and forty pages of text, and fifty-four pages of notes, charts, and bibliographical references. My book is part of McClelland & Stewart's 'Social History Series' which is examining major themes in Canadian history, especially those which have been neglected in past general works.

* My references here to Dr. Laine's article require a word of explanation. When I received page proofs of Dr. Laine's review on 25 March 1980, I immediately requested the editor of *Archivaria* the right of rebuttal. Laine's piece as it came to me was thirteen pages long. Accordingly, my citations give both my pagination (1 to 13) and, in brackets, the pagination of the proofs I received. As far as I know neither the text nor footnotes of the Laine article have been changed since I received them in proof form. If, when *Archivaria* finally appears, changes have been made, I would be prepared to send at my expense the original review to which I address this rebuttal.

1 "A Counterblast by George Woodcock," *B.C. Studies* no. 40 (Winter, 1978-79): 71.

2 Laine Review, p. 2 (211).