

Whence they Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935. BARBARA ROBERTS. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988. ix, 246 p. ISBN 0-7766-0163-6 \$24.95.

What an evil place the Government of Canada's Immigration Branch must have been. First Harold Troper and Irving Abella revealed the bureaucratic anti-Semitism that prevented the entry into Canada of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany in their excellent 1982 book *None is too Many*. Now Barbara Roberts presents another example of the calculating cruelty of Canadian immigration authorities in *Whence they Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935*. However, while Troper and Abella gave us a book which has already become a landmark in Canadian historiography because of its gripping tale and the way it forces the reader to question Canada's reputation as a welcoming haven for the persecuted, Roberts has produced a dense, hard to read litany of bureaucratic wrongs, written in a tiresome tone of righteous indignation.

Barbara Roberts contends that between 1900 and 1935 deportation served as an important feature of Canadian immigration policy, "a necessary part of immigration, the equivalent of the sewage system of cities" and, in times of economic hardship, "a national system of immigrant poor relief." Roberts charges that Canadian immigration authorities worked with neither the knowledge nor the consent of Parliament to rid Canada, often illegally, of the socially and politically unfit: the victims of the capitalist economic system, and those who dared to decry the system. To prove her point, Roberts describes in successive chapters the role of deportation in immigration policy, the legal basis of deportation, the characteristics of those deported, the administration of the deportation process, and the way in which the deportation system was used against specific classes of immigrants.

As the evidence against the immigration bureaucracy mounts, it becomes clear that Roberts is quite correct in her charges. The civil servants did indeed expel innocent people from their chosen land for an unknown and sometimes dangerous future in homelands abandoned long before, and, in the course of this work, deliberately misled Parliament and the Canadian public as to the extent of and reasons for the deportations. But while Roberts hammers her point home, she fails to analyse just what the Canadian deportation experience can tell us about Canada during the years 1900 to 1935. What sort of a country was Canada, when its citizens, the vast majority of them recent immigrants or descended from immigrants, could stand by and allow so many to be treated so cruelly by the national government? Roberts does not provide much information on the political, social, and economic conditions that led, in part, to the policy of the deportation of the so-called unfit.

Ironically, for a book which purports to be concerned with those who were victimized for their opposition to the established political and economic order, almost all the evidence for Roberts' thesis is taken from government sources, in the form of federal, provincial, and municipal government records and published reports. The only unpublished sources listed in the bibliography which represent the side of the deportees are three taped interviews. Very little of the published primary material represents the side of the deportees either. As a result, we learn very little of the deportees' experience of the deportation process; the book is practically devoid of the firsthand testimony of the deported. Nor are we given the opportunity to see what

deportees and the deportation process might have looked like; there is only one photo, on the front cover, and it is not credited nor labelled. Unfortunately, there is no bibliographical essay which discusses the obvious problems of sources in this study. Perhaps this omission will be corrected in future editions of the book. (The book also lacks an index, a problem which is supposed to be remedied in the next edition.)

Archivists should take a lesson from such problems and ensure that they do not neglect to consider acquisition of records which will document the experience of such marginalized members of our society as deportees. Government records archivists should also remember that, regardless of the vast physical extent and intellectual scope of their records, only one side of any story can be told through recourse to official documents, including case files.

In his foreword to *Whence they Came*, Irving Abella describes Roberts' treatment of the Immigration bureaucracy as careful and dispassionate. But a little more passion would have made for a much better book. *Whence they Came* fills a void in the written history of Canadian immigration, and will no doubt be required reading for those interested in the history of immigration policy. Perhaps it will form the basis of a more interesting and reflective book about deportation, one of the most significant topics in the history of immigration, some time in the future.

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Labor's Heritage: Quarterly of the George Meany Memorial Archives. STUART B. KAUFMAN, ed. Volume 1, Number 1 (January 1989), 80 p.

These are difficult days for the once-proud American Federation of Labor. Membership in unions in the United States has been in precipitous decline during the Republican ascendancy. The combination of an anti-labour central government and corporate aggression has resulted in a series of decertifications and losses in representation battles.

While such problems are pervasive for the contemporary American labour movement, the leadership has begun to do some things very well. The creation of the magnificent George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Springs, Maryland, is one example. The impressive George Meany Memorial Archives is one part of the Center's operations. The magazine under review is a glossy, beautifully produced publication of the Archives.

The first issue contains four substantial articles, each profusely illustrated, a detailed guide to labour sources in the archives of the University of Colorado, and a useful section of "News," which includes announcements of conferences, archival additions, and other material of interest to students of the labour movement.

Perhaps most impressive about the first issue is the editor's success in choosing articles that combine scholarly merit with wide popular appeal. All too often it is assumed that a scholarly article is by definition abstruse. Kaufman has worked hard to demonstrate that this assumption need not be true. This has been accomplished in a number of different ways in this first issue. One method lies in the large magazine