

Book Reviews

The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961, Walter D. Young. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1969. Pp. xi, 328. \$8.50.

This book is thrice-blessed — a fact not without significance when one considers the strong evangelical fervour of the CCF — thrice-blessed because Professor Young can write lucidly; has a substantial contribution to make; and has had complete access to party files. And no one should labour under the illusion that the volume is simply a recitation of the electoral successes and failures of the national CCF party from 1932 to 1961. The author has, as his title suggests, probed deeply into the CCF and has produced an intelligent examination of its founding, policy development, public appeal, organization, and performance in parliament.

He has also made it abundantly clear that, despite the title, he feels the CCF was considerably more than a political party: it was, in addition, a movement or, perhaps because of the difficulty in separating the two words, it was a movement-party. The CCF was a party in the sense that it did seek political power; and it was a movement in the sense that it had a political philosophy and a platform (admittedly subject to a variety of interpretations), as well as a zealous membership that clung to it in the face of election disasters. The CCF had the followers that a secular religion would attract. For the most part, Professor Young's thesis about a movement-party bears close examination, although it does seem that there were sufficient compromises from the days of the Regina Manifesto through to the time of the disappearance of the CCF into the NDP to warrant a little more emphasis on the party side of the CCF.

This point is debatable, however, and it should not detract from the fact that the book represents a thorough, candid and competent piece of work. And for those outside this movement-party, it will even be comforting to realize that, despite the real and apparent democracy of the CCF, the party was run for much of its life by a Family Compact in which

David Lewis wielded a power unmatched by persons in comparable positions in either the Liberal or Conservative parties.

But the CCF was most certainly a movement; because, what other than a movement could fail to take account of original sin until the 1950's and could press on in the belief that man was perfectable? The CCF was a product of the Enlightenment and it held to the idea of progress long after pragmatic politicians had realized — along with that one-time visionary, H. G. Wells — that man was generally at the end of his tether.

Much of the strength of the movement side of the CCF came, not unexpectedly, from British Columbia where, it seems, there was a strong belief that the second coming could be achieved by man alone. Throughout the book the strident militancy of the B.C. left comes through. It was British Columbians who wanted more radical tones in the Regina Manifesto; it was British Columbians, following J. S. Woodsworth, who gave the party its pronounced pacifists; it was British Columbians who were critics of the Second World War and aspects of the Canadian war effort, long after the rest of the party had lapsed into silence in the face of the awesome conflict; and it was British Columbians who strongly opposed the first hints that the party was contemplating burying itself and rising again as the NDP.

The toughness of the British Columbia left raises a question that should possibly be asked in *BC Studies*: why was — and is, for that matter — the hard left so strong in this province? Its strength provided internal troubles for the national party and bedevilled the activities of the provincial party. Using Professor Young's movement-party thesis, it seems fair to suggest that the movement side of the CCF remained stronger in British Columbia than elsewhere in the country. Here there was more fundamentalism in socialism and less accidentalism in party membership. These aspects of the CCF produced reactions to the party in B.C. which had results that cannot be found elsewhere in Canada. For example, these aspects helped in the formation of a coalition of the Liberal and Conservative provincial parties in order to deny the CCF access to office; they assisted in the creation of the NPA in Vancouver politics for the same purpose; and they lay back of the preferential ballot of the 1952 provincial election which gave W. A. C. Bennett his first years as premier of the province.

Within the British Columbia party, this strident socialism was regarded by some as a reason for electoral losses; and such thinking surely lay back of the recent NDP decision to ease out Robert Strachan and elevate Tom Berger to the leadership. Some in the party thus hoped to present the

image of scrubbed-down, safe socialism. But such an image was distorted at the start of last year's provincial election when the question of public ownership of B.C. Telephone was raised by Tom Berger; this certainly looked like a reversion to the old hard line, a sign that the movement was alive and well and living in B.C. It provided Premier Bennett with the club for which he had been looking — free enterprise against runaway socialism — and he proceeded to beat the NDP unmercifully with the weapon shaped by a party leader who could not escape the movement side of his party's history. Here again was that old evangelical fervour for socialism troubling the party; here again was oblique reference to the belief that man could be perfected.

It is interesting to note that — after the election was safely over — Premier Bennett announced he was plugged into God; this connection undoubtedly confirmed for the premier the validity of the doctrine of original sin and the election results would seem to bear out his conviction. The premier knew that he was working with an electorate that was considerably lower than the angels; the NDP, still showing signs of being a child of the Enlightenment, could not believe this and paid for its disbelief.

University of British Columbia

CHARLES HUMPHRIES

Vancouver's Svenskar: A History of the Swedish Community in Vancouver, by Irene Howard. Vancouver, Vancouver Historical Society, 1970. 127 pp. \$6.50.

The Vancouver Historical Society deserves warm congratulations on the publication of its first Occasional Paper which is, in fact, not a paper but a book and a very handsomely produced one at that. The subject matter of this first "Paper" is an excellent choice. With the exception of the Japanese and Doukhobors, no immigrant group in British Columbia has been the subject of a full scale book. Mrs. Howard's study of the Swedish community is thus a particularly welcome contribution to the historiography of British Columbia.

Mrs. Howard did not set out to write an academic treatise. The absence of footnotes (there is, however, a good bibliography) is the most conspicuous indication of this. More significantly, the book has not been conceived within any theoretical framework and has no thesis except to