

remarkably restrained, and points to an eirenic spirit of compassion. The candour and consciousness of his story carries conviction, and is strengthened by his readiness to forgive, if not forget. And the inclusion of an epilogue describing a return journey to Japan in 1985 is heartfelt testimony to the fact that, for at least one Canadian prisoner, the memories of the past, and the accompanying fears and doubts, could be turned to an experience of renewed hope for the future.

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Grassroots Politicians: Party Activists in British Columbia, by Donald E. Blake, R. K. Carty, and Lynda Erickson. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1991. x, 168 pp. \$19.95 paper; \$39.95 cloth.

Admitting at the outset that little is known about "the men and women who make up the parties in the provinces and who keep these political organizations functioning at the grassroots" (p. 13), the authors of this important new book have contributed a significant first to the growing literature on Canada's provincial party systems. To explain the pattern of party polarization in British Columbia and its impact on those "who drive the system," Professors Blake, Carty, and Erickson have examined systematically the "values and beliefs of those who constitute the party cores" (p. 13). They conducted a demographic and attitudinal survey of the delegates in attendance at three provincial leadership conventions held over a fourteen-month interval in 1986-87. This book is the product of that research.

In keeping with the parties themselves, the conventions were a study in contrasts. The governing Social Credit party replaced one William with another (Bennett, the party modernizer, with Vander Zalm, the populist) in what remains to this day, with its twelve leadership candidates, the most contested convention in Canada's history. The New Democrats, the only other party with a legislative presence at the time, "quietly agreed" (p. 19) on the ex-mayor of Vancouver, Mike Harcourt, in an uncontested convention. And the Liberals, long accustomed to having no MLAs and to winning only a fraction of the province-wide popular vote, chose an obscure college instructor, Gordon Wilson, by acclamation.

By first establishing that the rhetoric "and sometimes the substance" (p. 85) of British Columbia's electoral politics is indeed as polarized as it has been typically described, the authors demonstrate how that feature of B.C. politics has manifested itself at the grassroots level. As in the description of the Anglican church being Britain's Tory party at prayer, British

Columbia's Social Credit party can safely be said to be Canada's federal PCs at the provincial level. That much was confirmed by the survey responses. Socred activists were also found to be both more heterogeneous and less likely to have changed over time in their socio-economic characteristics than those in the NDP. Compared with those in the other two parties, New Democratic activists showed the greatest ideological cohesion. They also shared closely the beliefs and values of their national party. Liberal activists occupied the ideological centre in B.C. politics, as their party's rhetoric would have it, even though in terms of social characteristics they were found to resemble those in the NDP more than Social Credit activists.

The size of this book belies the wealth of data and the sophisticated analysis it contains. The authors set the stage for their examination of party activists with a particularly fine introductory chapter reviewing briefly the history of B.C. politics. It is followed by eight chapters that are a model for the comparative study of party politics. Those who willingly put in the hours to serve as the backbone of modern political parties are analyzed carefully, and astute observations are offered about their behaviour and attitudes. The final chapter draws on a small number of theories of party competition and raises important questions about the future direction of B.C. parties. The authors speculate about the social and attitudinal changes that must first take place among party activists if B.C.'s party system is to become more centrist and less polarized. Although one might question the authors' description of Anthony Downs' theory of two-party competition as leading "inevitably" to parties locating "themselves immediately adjacent to one another at the centre" (p. 121), the final chapter nonetheless deserves close attention for what it tells us about change in a dynamic two-party system.

Understandably, much is made in this book of British Columbia's polarized party system. For a reviewer from a province with equally polarized electoral two-party competition and a centrist party squeezed in the middle, the parallels are obvious. Veteran Saskatchewan voters recalling the electoral oscillation from Tommy Douglas, Woodrow Lloyd, and Alan Blakeney on the one hand to Ross Thatcher and Grant Divine on the other would have good cause to challenge the statement on page 124 that "party competition in British Columbia has a sharper left/right focus than in any other part of English-speaking North America." Polarized politics, in rhetoric and in substance, can be said to characterize at least two of Canada's provinces.