

BOOK REVIEWS

*On the Line: A History of the
British Columbia
Labour Movement*

Rod Mickleburgh

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2018. 320 pp. \$44.95, cloth.

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On the Line is an account of BC trade unions by the BC Labour Heritage Centre (an offshoot of the BC Federation of Labour) written by retired *Vancouver Sun* labour reporter Rod Mickleburgh. In a well-illustrated and lively manner, he tells the story of workers' organizations and struggles, from Vancouver Island coal miners in the 1850s to teachers' struggles today.

The author tells three stories in twenty-four chapters: settler-Aboriginal relations in the labour market; the rise of craft and industrial unions in the private sector – often divided by anti-Asian racism and the politics of reform or revolution; and the ascendancy of public-sector unionism since the 1970s, which raised gender equity as more women entered unions.

Mickleburgh begins with John Lutz's research on the inclusion of Indigenous workers at the beginning of European settlement in BC's major resource industries and then their exclusion with mass European settlement. Exclusion also characterizes Asian migrants, despite labour market inclusion: such as Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian resource workers. Only political groups like the Industrial Workers of the World and the Communist Party's Worker's Unity League challenged this, though Canada removed these barriers after the Second World War.

What strikes the reader immediately is how violent labour relations were as unions were established – as chapters on the Great Vancouver Island Coal Strike in 1912 or Ballantyne Pier in the 1930s illustrate – and continued court repression with *ex parte* injunctions (with jail sentences for union members) until the 1970s, when the NDP government established the Labour Code and the Labour Relations Board.

Legalization of unions, compulsory dues collection, collective bargaining, and labour standards have usually been established elsewhere in Canada and then reluctantly acknowledged in British Columbia. This speaks volumes about the small business nature of provincial

politics in dealing with dominant resource corporations.

What also stands out is how important socialist politics were to worker self-organization. From the Socialist Party of British Columbia, to the IWW, to the Communist Party, to new leftists in the independent Canadian union movement of the 1970s, socialist militants risked serious, sometimes deadly, reprisals to establish unions and bargain contracts. Later, international unions and social democrats purged or expelled leftists as threats to union and state stability. But that hasn't meant comfortable relations with NDP administrations in legally containing workplace conflict, with essential services and social accords that offered equity without investment (i.e., wage controls).

Another theme is how the unionization of public-sector workers clashed with Social Credit and Liberal governments' commitment to the market through legislation that tried to de-unionize the BC Government and Service Employees' Union and the BC Teachers' Federation and unilaterally altered agreements. In 1983, Bill Bennett tried to end job security and destroy the social safety net in a package of twenty-six "restraint" bills: then Gordon Campbell stripped job security and working conditions from health workers and teachers' contracts in the early 2000s.

Ultimately, by 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that union rights were protected rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Despite the decline of union density in the province, as Mickleburgh states, unions remain critical to the well-being and rights of the waged majority.

In narrative terms, some gaps exist. Craft unions (other than the building trades under siege since the 1980s), the 1994 NDP Korbin Report establishing sectoral bargaining to extinguish local

certifications, and the general decline of private-sector unions are largely missing. And contextualization could be improved with a few tables outlining the scale and composition of the workforce, union density, and strike patterns.

More important, when the author describes new pressures and tactics, the politics need to be discussed. In particular, why has the general strike arisen as an economic response to government interventions – from the 1965 BC Federation of Labour mobilization for oil refinery workers, to Operation Solidarity, to the looming showdown with the Liberals in 2005 over contract stripping? How do unions develop fixed interests over time that lead to rank-and-file rebellions, up to and including independent movements like the Service, Office, and Retail Workers Union of Canada for women bank workers in the 1970s, which the established trade union movement refused to support? What about the often difficult relations between unions and movements like the Solidarity Coalition and the environmental movement in 1993's War in the Woods over Clayoquot Sound?

On the Line is a good introduction to BC organized workers' struggles, but more needs to be debated. As a college faculty association president in 2005 and chair of the provincial college bargaining committee, I can assure the reader that such debates happened.

Sonny Assu: A Selective History

Sonny Assu, with Candice Hopkins, Marianne Nicolson, Richard Van Camp, and Ellyn Walker

Victoria: Heritage House, 2018.
224 pp. \$34.95 paper.

ALEXANDRA PHILLIPS
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THIS COMPREHENSIVE survey of Sonny Assu's work is prefaced by four incisive essays by prominent Indigenous scholars and curators. This beautifully designed and thoughtfully organized book covers significant phases in the Kwakwaka'wakw artist's career, punctuated by key quotations illuminating his artistic philosophy. Among the texts the most poignant words are the artist's own reflections on his personal history, beginning with his deep affection for his grandfather – a seine boat fisher who early on recognized that his grandson would take a different path. Unknown to the senior Assu, who encouraged him to pursue a law career, Sonny's activism on behalf of his people would emerge in the studio and not the courtroom.

The book traverses the significant works and series that make up the artist's production over a period of roughly fifteen years, beginning in 2002. Included are early pop culture-infused works such as *Coke-Salish* (a theme to which he would later return), iterations on drums, and sculptures such as his rough-hewn solid cedar masks and his grandmother's school desk.

In the *Propaganda* series the artist describes his explorations of Indigenous iconography intermingled with typographical elements that critique

racist colonial policies. Other series, such as *The Longing and Artifacts of Authenticity*, touch on the importance of cedar to the Kwakwaka'wakw and how museological display affects the perceived value of art. In *Billy and the Chiefs* and *Ellipsis*, Assu's vivid imagination is applied to honouring significant aspects of Kwakwaka'wakw history: in this case, the recording of traditional songs for academic purposes that were simultaneously banned from performance by colonial laws.

In *Interventions on the Imaginary*, Assu inserts Indigenous ovoids, U-shapes, and formline designs into scans of historical works by artists such as Emily Carr and others, disrupting their depictions of the unpeopled landscape as "terra nullius." The artist conceives these interventions as "acts of resistance toward the colonial subjugation of the First People." Throughout these works, Assu's critical awareness, his mastery of form, and fearless remixing of traditional and contemporary themes provides a wealth of opportunity for aesthetic and scholarly appreciation.

In addition to the essays, the book is liberally illustrated with full-page, full-colour photographs of the artist's works. There are multiple selections from each of his series. *Sonny Assu: A Selective History* is a necessary addition to an understanding of this artist's work and contemporary Indigenous art in Canada and beyond.

*At the Bridge: James Teit and an
Anthropology of Belonging*

Wendy Wickwire

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019.

400 pp. \$34.9, paper.

CHARLES R. MENZIES

University of British Columbia

JAMES TEIT was an amazing community-based engaged anthropologist long before such labels were invented. Wendy Wickwire's anthropological life story of Teit is a consummate account, and indeed, as the top of page advertisement exhorts, it is "a must read." Wickwire weaves together personal biographical details of Teit, the political economy of his Shetland Island homelands and colonial British Columbia, ethnographic details of the Indigenous peoples Teit worked with and lived among, and a wider political analysis of both anthropology and Canadian political history. This is an accomplishment that shows the decades of work it took to amass the knowledge and understanding of the place and the person that resulted in this book.

Wickwire has produced an exemplary postmodernist life history – one that, had it been written in time, would have found a place in Marcus and Fisher's *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (1986). Wickwire's expertise as an anthropological ethnographer is clear in her treatment of Teit's life and practice. Rather than simply recounting life events, Wickwire shows us how "Teit's story can be understood only in light of the push and pull of the forces of colonialism and dispossession" (85).

This, though, is no simple biography. The reader is served the requisite biographical details: arrival in British

Columbia (29–58), origins in the Shetlands (59–87), life and work as an anthropologist and activist (essentially all of the book). But it is more than this. This book is an intervention into the debates of anthropological history. It is a revisionist take on the canon. It is a political intervention into academic practice. It is a manifesto for a plain language community-based approach to scholarship.

We see this best in Wickwire's explication of Teit's invisibility in the anthropological canon. Often described as simply a research assistant by his contemporary anthropologists (and latter day commentators), Wickwire shows how Teit was very much more than a mere assistant. Some significant portion of the book is taken up with the detailed and nuanced approach to Indigenous life that Teit practised. Wickwire doesn't just tell us: we are guided through almost line by line. For example, in the chapter "Dwelling," Wickwire documents Teit's careful and thorough work as opposed to the "white supremacist rhetoric" common in the prose of those such as Hill-Tout (158). Wickwire moves us through Teit's *The Thompson Indians of British Columbia*, which she describes as subtle and precise, holding value "as an endless source of insight and illumination" (162).

On the subject of use and occupancy, consider: "Teit's description of Nlaka'pamux occupancy as dependent on movement and movable lodges spread across the full territorial base – touching that base sensitively, that is, through careful cultivation, selective harvesting, and managed forest fires – challenges the settler-colonial model of occupancy as a permanent and continuous presence in a discrete spot" (164). This is an understanding years ahead of the field. It is what we as Indigenous researchers (and some of our allies) are now documenting. It varies from place to place, but the

underlying truth – that Teit was able to see – is that we dwell in our places in ways that are not tied to the individualist capitalist logic of fee simple alienable ownership.

Wickwire uses Teit's disciplinary invisibility to critique both early twentieth-century anthropological practice and her contemporary anthropologists. Much of the discussion of Teit's work and life is framed around the question: Why is the formal discipline of anthropology so silent on his existence and work? This is framed as the outcome of an encounter between two very different scholars: "one urban, classically trained ... the other a community-based intellectual and man of action" (90). Wickwire goes further, describing the youth and childhood experiences of the two. Teit is described as having "spent his teens surrounded by extended family in a town-and-country setting populated by working-class and merchant families [while Boas] spent his teens largely in a city setting with his immediate family." These differences in origin and training become a means of contextualizing the different life courses of these two settler scholars, one of whom accomplished great things and has been largely forgotten, the other of whom is presented as an uncomfortable fieldworker but is remembered as the founder of the discipline. Underlying Teit's invisibility within the discipline, it would be fair to infer, is a class bias that mirrored (and continues to mirror) the structure of academic production.

There is so much more one could say about this book and the man at the centre of it. I would love to comment on Teit's inherently anti-colonial socialism and consider the ways it contrasted with Boas's more urbane abstract socialism and anti-racism. Or to parse why Boas seems to take more heat than white colonial apologists like local historian Susan Allison (celebrated by former Minister

of Indian Affairs, Jim Prentice in 2010 [156–57]). Or to explore in more detail the ways in which Teit's work could be used as an exemplar for helping us to understand the wider political economy of colonial states like Canada and British Columbia. But this is a simple book review, and one ought to leave an in-depth discussion to a campfire, a classroom, or a long ride down the highway where one can engage in detail this amazing book and even more amazing man.

Wickwire's account of Teit's life, work, and significance is engaging, provocative, and, as Audra Simpson is quoted as saying, "a must read."

*Return of the Wolf:
Conflict and Coexistence*

Paula Wild

Madeira Park, BC: Douglas and McIntyre, 2018. 272 pp. \$32.95 cloth.

K.R. JONES

University of Kent

IN HIS FAMOUS study *Of Wolves and Men* (1978), Barry Lopez pertinently noted that "the wolf exerts a powerful influence on the human imagination. It takes your stare and turns it back on you." Paula Wild's new book, *Return of the Wolf*, eagerly demonstrates that, forty or so years after Lopez's classic exposition, we are still equally (perhaps even more) enthralled by *Canis lupus*.

A Courtenay-based nature writer with a proven track record of publication on large canids (*The Cougar* [2013]), Wild offers here an engaging study of a captivating and endlessly reinvented species over millennia, tracked both through animal biology and a long testimonial trail of human-animal encounter. As she points out, wolves

share a domestic lineage with the dog, but they also stand as a modal binary, a carrier of the “wild” in all its fearsome and attractive capacities. More than any other animal, Wild contends, the wolf has become embedded in our psyche (4). Breathless in its scope, informed, and certainly readable, *Return of the Wolf* tracks this story through Greek mythology and across the Russian Steppes in “The Big Bad Wolf of the Old World” before turning to a New World human-lupine entanglement as expressed through the likes of Cherokee storytellers and the fireside yarns of nineteenth-century wolf bounty hunters. We learn, too, much about “the life of the wolf” – its eating and sensory habits – as well as about the complex negotiations that have taken place in areas where wolves have returned (either through their agency or government reintroduction programs) to ancestral haunts.

A blend of natural history, Indigenous folk tales, and personal anecdotes, this book spends considerable time exploring the social dynamics of the pack, debunking some of the hoary misconceptions about wolves along the way. As such, it not only offers a useful focus on the animal itself but also chronicles the diverse ways in which different communities have treated wolves on the global stage. The range is expansive and the writing spirited (though necessarily using a broad brush for historical explanations). Dominant in the latter is an exploration of the paradigms of reverence (typically associated with Indigenous communities and conservationists) and revilement (espoused, most often, by architects of European colonization and those living close to *Canis lupus* in areas devoted to pastoral subsistence and ranching). The subtitle of Wild’s study, *Conflict and Coexistence*, helps to anchor this story of misunderstanding and territorial

collisions (though it is at times a little simplistic in its declensionist treatment of science as an objective bodyguard of public sentiment). Throughout, the wolf appears as a resilient and adaptable species. *Homo sapiens*, on the other hand, comes across as rather less benign and certainly inflexible. Even today, with *Canis lupus* enshrined as the alpha symbol of environmentalism, as *Return of the Wolf* notes, there remains a sense of what Wild nicely refers to as “primal uneasiness” (7) when it comes to their up-close presence. Her guiding question is thus a salient one: Can humans adapt to wolves?

*At Home in Nature:
A Life of Unknown Mountains
and Deep Wilderness*

Rob Wood

Vancouver: Rocky Mountain Books,
2017. 286 pp. Illus. \$22 paper.

*Grizzlies, Gales and Giant
Salmon: Life at a Rivers Inlet
Fishing Lodge*

Pat Ardley

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour
Publishing, 2018. 351 pp. \$19.95 paper.

ANDREW SCOTT
Sechelt, BC

MANY PEOPLE dream of “getting away from it all” (“it” usually being some version of congested urban life). Few of us realize this dream, of course, and only a handful write about the experience. British Columbia is well represented in this handful. BC authors from M. Wylie Blanchet to Roderick Haig-Brown to Gilean Douglas have

helped make autobiographical writing set in remote locations a West Coast specialty.

Two recent books show how variable this literary subgenre can be. Rob Wood's *At Home in Nature* follows the author from the Yorkshire moors, where he developed a love of rock climbing, to rugged Maurelle Island north of Campbell River. Here, in 1975, he and a group of friends, inspired by BC's dramatic coastal beauty, buy a quarter-section of logged-over waterfront and establish a land co-operative.

The book is arranged as a sequence of questions and answers, organized by theme. This format is unwieldy at times, but it allows Wood to focus on topics he considers important. The writing is intelligent and passionate, especially when the author describes guiding climbers in the nearby mountains. The camaraderie of the co-op's early years receives lyrical treatment, though the narrative bogs down when it ventures into environmental politics and attempts to analyze our social ills.

Of more interest are Wood's pantheistic spiritual beliefs: much of the text pays homage to his trust in the rejuvenating, transformative powers of nature. Many of the planet's problems, he feels, are the result of the inadequate harmonization of human consciousness with the energies of the surrounding natural world – a defect he ascribes to “inappropriate cultural conditioning” (274). Even the author's aortic rupture and his wife Laurie's breast cancer were, he suggests, “most likely caused by some uneasiness inherent in our lifestyle. Something in our lives must have been out of balance” (190). Both quickly return to idyllic island life after successful treatment in urban hospitals.

Wood has impressive construction skills and five years' training as an architect, and it's fun to watch the family residence evolve from a shack in a field

of stumps into a sophisticated dwelling powered by a micro-hydroelectric turbine. As time passes, the household becomes more and more self-sufficient; Laurie's garden, “the heart of the homestead” (211), expands to include a meadow, orchard, barn, tractor shed, chicken run, and workshop. Two healthy, happy children are raised on this island farm. Sadly, perhaps, of the co-op's ten original families, Rob and Laurie are now the only full-timers.

At the same time the Woods are setting up their co-op, another story of outdoor adventure is unfolding 250 kilometres northwest, on windswept Addenbroke Island, where a young couple, George Ardley and his wife-to-be, Pat, start work as junior lighthouse keepers. *Grizzlies, Gales and Giant Salmon* is Pat's intensely readable account of her forty-year career on the BC coast, most of it spent in Rivers Inlet, just south of Addenbroke, where she and George build and operate a celebrated fishing lodge. The book is also a touching love story.

Despite her fears (of the ocean, small boats, darkness, freezing weather – and combinations thereof), Prairie-born Pat turns out to be a surprisingly good fit for wilderness work. She is a creative cook and gardener, smart, brave, and hard-working. George, like most long-time Rivers Inlet residents, is a problem-solver: he can build anything, fix anything, and is a good man in an emergency. All these skills will be tested in the years ahead.

Ardley's writing style is straightforward and descriptive; she has a fine sense of humour and, while occasionally introspective, is not given to lengthy philosophical digressions. Life in the inlet provides her with a seemingly endless supply of stories. She writes about eccentric wilderness characters and encounters with bears and whales. Boats break down and giant waves threaten; construction deadlines loom and lodge

staff misbehave. On the bright side there are great friendships and parties, and exciting expeditions to isolated beaches and islands. Her relationship with George becomes deeper and more complex. They are married by a sea-going minister and raise a family. Their floating fishing lodge, where summer visitors fly in hoping to hook giant chinook salmon, grows in size and stature. Everyone knows the Ardleys.

Then tragedy strikes. In his late fifties, George is diagnosed with esophageal cancer and dies suddenly after a short illness. Pat struggles on, with the help of her two children, and runs the lodge for nine more years before selling up in 2012 and moving to West Vancouver. A series of heart-wrenching letters, in which Pat pays tribute to an extraordinary partnership, concludes this remarkable book.

*Dreamers and Designers: The
Shaping of West Vancouver*

Francis Mansbridge

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour
Publishing, 2018. 208 pp.
\$29.95 cloth.

PETER HALL

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BETWEEN 2011 and 2016, the population of the District of West Vancouver declined by one-half of 1 percent. In contrast, the population of Metro Vancouver grew 6.5 percent; even the comparably wealthy West Point Grey neighbourhood of Vancouver grew by 2.1 percent. In a region where house prices are out of reach for almost all local earners and rentals are increasingly unaffordable, West Vancouver's population decline is exhibit A when residential supply constraints are cited

as causing the housing crisis.

The negative effects of population decline seem to have been on the minds of the West Vancouver Historical Society's book committee when they commissioned Francis Mansbridge to write this, the third book in its series "celebrating and preserving various aspects of West Vancouver's history." (I should add here that I am not the Peter Hall acknowledged as one of the individual contributors who made the book possible.)

Mansbridge's readable account provides ample and well-deserved fodder for the argument that the exclusionary practices of the few are to blame for the inability of the many to attain affordable housing. Where I would push the author – and his local sponsorship – is on the diagnosis of the institutional arrangements that enable these exclusionary impulses and, hence, on the policy prescriptions.

Perhaps one of the most fascinating tells in the book is the way that Mansbridge describes the lineage of West Vancouver's first British settlers. We learn, for example, that Reeve Joe Leyland, co-author of the district's first zoning bylaw, was the second son in a family that traces its origins to the Norman Conquest. I am sure this fact was selectively valued by past archivists; what it also reveals is how British laws and customs of primogeniture helped to shape this place half a world away.

Appropriately, Mansbridge places the question of land use, and the community values that inform that use, at the centre of his story. Through multiple episodes of development application, rejection, and approval, Mansbridge doesn't pull any punches. We learn that the people of West Vancouver have, at times in their history, not liked the idea of living with: Indigenous Canadians, vacationers, Jews, black people, Chinese, renters, density,

industry, through traffic, working women, and people who didn't grow up there. In other words, the people of West Vancouver are lot like the rest of us – except that here institutional arrangements have encouraged and enabled the preference for homogeneity. While many of these exclusionary practices have thankfully been overtaken by social change, some, notably the limits on density and industry, remain.

And that's not good for the incumbents. In concluding, Mansbridge describes a situation in which long-time residents cannot afford to retire-in-place; where immigrant children are growing up in physical, linguistic, and social isolation; and in which working people, from municipal employees to housemaids, must commute long distances by bus, a service the municipality has rejected improving.

So, how far can West Vancouver go to heal itself? Here I am not persuaded by Mansbridge's invocation of Richard Florida's idea that a diverse creative class can fuel innovation. The price of entry into West Vancouver is simply too high for any hungry innovator-entrepreneur. Indeed, it has always been so: Mansbridge shows convincingly that West Vancouver has, since colonization, been a place that fortunes made elsewhere are brought to be enjoyed. Instead, we have likely reached a state in the Lower Mainland where we not only need to strengthen the power of regional agencies and/or the province to ensure that individual municipalities are fully integrated into regional transit systems but also to ensure that these municipalities accept their share of affordable, rental, and social housing; industry; and other locally unwanted land uses.

*Children of the Kootenays:
Memories of Mining Towns*

Shirley D. Stainton

Vancouver: Heritage House, 2018.

320 pp. \$22.95 paper.

DUFF SUTHERLAND

Selkirk College

SHIRLEY D. STAINTON'S *Children of the Kootenays: Memories of Mining Towns* describes her own and her brother Ray's childhoods in West Kootenay mining communities during the 1930s and 1940s. Stainton's father, Lee Hall, was a cook who worked in camps and towns across the region as mines opened and closed. Hall's working life reveals the effects of capital's intensive, transient development of the Kootenays' mineral veins. His jobs rarely lasted for more than a few years, and he moved on with his family as working conditions deteriorated or companies abandoned operations and workers and their families dispersed. Among other communities, Hall worked in Sandon; Camborne, in the remote Incomappleux Valley; and in Sheep Creek south of Nelson – a place that reached a population of a thousand before the companies closed the town's mines during the Second World War. Stainton deeply admired her father and her mother, Jennie, who worked hard and, despite economic uncertainty, kept their family together and gave their children happy childhoods. Stainton notes: "I never questioned our moving around; I just went with my brother and my parents wherever 'that' was. I have always been grateful that they never left me behind" (72). In the 1940s, when the companies abandoned Sheep Creek, Stainton's parents moved to Nelson, where her father eventually found

work with the Nelson Street Railway Company. By that time, Stainton was boarding in the city to attend Nelson High School. Ray had also left home and was planning to become a miner. In 1943, however, he was sent overseas with the Seaforth Highlanders and was killed in action in the Liri Valley in 1944.

Stainton's memories of her growing up, assembled by her daughter and granddaughter, make a significant addition to West Kootenay social history. Writers about the region have emphasized the hard-rock mining frontier's "roaring days" of the 1880s and 1890s, which saw capital develop mines, smelters, and railway lines; the emergence of Nelson, Rossland, and Sandon as significant cities; and the creation of a working class of miners and their union. Stainton's memories, on the other hand, portray life and work in West Kootenay communities as the hard rock mining era was coming to an end during the 1930s and 1940s. She recalls communities made up of families and single men of Canadian and northern European background; of close friendships with the children of neighbour families and with her brother; of houses with few pieces of furniture and with no indoor plumbing, siding, or insulation; and of her enjoyment of her few toys, gifts, books, and the pieces of stylish clothing made for her by her mother. Stainton notes that her mother dreamed of a house with a bathtub, that the children of Sheep Creek played in a creek polluted with arsenic and cyanide by the mines, and that her father quit his job when the companies tried to reduce costs during the Depression by providing inferior food to the miners. At the same time, Stainton feels that her family's regular moves led to her spirit of adventure and ability to throw herself into trips to the Slocan Valley, Nelson, and Manitoba to visit family; to schooling,

sports, and social activities; and to life as a high school student in wartime Nelson. Stainton remembers a generally happy childhood in the Kootenays while also referring to her family's grief at the loss of her brother and of the difficulties of growing up in any era.

Shirley Stainton's memories return life to working-class communities of the West Kootenay before the Second World War. Many family and community photographs illustrate her detailed descriptions. Stainton's memories also provide information for the book's important townsite sketches of the abandoned communities of Camborne and Sheep Creek. The townsite sketches suggest the life of the communities where Stainton grew up. They also point to the precariousness of work in communities that companies abandoned because, as Stainton puts it, "the mine was no longer profitable enough ... to keep ... open" (120). *Children of the Kootenays* describes well what it was like to grow up in these communities; it also evokes the memories of a fun-loving brother and of hard-working parents.

*Suffer the Little Children:
Genocide, Indigenous Nations
and the Canadian State*

Tamara Starblanket

Atlanta: Clarity Press, 2018.

374 pp. \$29.95 paper.

CARLING BENINGER

University of Alberta

TAMARA STARBLANKET is a Nehiyaw (Cree) legal scholar from Ahtahkakoop First Nation and is currently dean of academics at Native Education College in Vancouver,

located on the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. *Suffer the Little Children: Genocide, Indigenous Nations and the Canadian State* is an important addition to the ongoing discussion of genocide in Canada. For decades, many Indigenous peoples have called on the Canadian government to recognize residential schools as genocidal. However, as stated in Stephen Harper's 2008 apology to residential schools survivors, the Canadian government identifies residential schools as part of a policy of assimilation. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC's) final report concluded that the residential school system was a form of cultural genocide, which is not recognized under international law. Starblanket refutes both the TRC's and the federal government's conclusions, arguing that residential schools were indeed sites of genocide.

Starblanket's book is personal. In her introduction she explains that she is a "product of this genocidal reality" (22). Her grandparents and parents, as well as their siblings, went to residential schools, and she is the only member of her birth family alive. She further explains that it is her obligation as a Nehiyaw to tell the story: "To do so is an honouring, an expression of my love and respect not only for my family, but for the Nehiyaw, and for all Indigenous Peoples, our children, their children and for every coming generation" (23).

Starblanket convincingly argues that Canada committed genocide under the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNGC) with the forcible transfer of Indigenous children into residential schools, in which forced indoctrination of Western Christian ways caused serious bodily and mental harm and identity destruction. She

draws on the work of Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term "genocide" and drafted the UNGC, to place her analysis within his two-step process of genocide: "the destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor" (41). She further contends that intergenerational trauma, including the loss of traditional parenting skills, continues to affect Indigenous people today and that the genocidal process is still occurring with the continued removal of Indigenous children from their families and their placement in the child welfare system.

Starblanket's book is comprised of four main chapters. In Chapter 1, "Naming the Crime: Defining Genocide in International Law," Starblanket, utilizing testimony from the UNGC *travaux préparatoires* as well as international and national case law, and drawing on the work of Lemkin, explains that cultural genocide, despite protests from other countries, was removed as a form of genocide from the UNGC during the drafting process. She argues that Canada supported this removal because it is a settler colonial state and because the inclusion of cultural genocide, as Lemkin intended, would implicate the country in genocidal acts.

Chapter 2, "The Horror: Canada's Forced Transfer of Indigenous Children," draws heavily on the work of Ronald Chrisjohn, Sherri Young, Michael Maraun, and Ward Churchill. The chapter establishes the residential school system as an institution in which forced removal and indoctrination was a violent, dehumanizing, and traumatic process for Indigenous children – a process that included torture, disease, sexual torture, forced starvation, and forced labour. Residential schools devastated the identities of Indigenous children, with the long-term effects affecting

generations and resulting in collective serious bodily and mental harm and trauma (127). Here, Starblanket links the genocide of the residential schools to the continued forced removal of Indigenous children and their placement in the child welfare system: “there is no distinguishing one residential institution from the other as one directly feeds off the other” (139).

In Chapter 3, “Coming to Grips with Canada as a Colonizing State: The Creator Knows Their Lies and So Must We,” Starblanket, drawing on the cognitive legal theory of Steven Newcomb, evokes the metaphor of a brainwashing machine to further demonstrate how the residential school system dominated and dehumanized Indigenous children as part of colonialism and the genocidal process (196). Canada used doctrines of racial superiority, colonial legal frameworks, and policy to isolate and destroy Indigenous children through demonization, dehumanization, and forced indoctrination of the Western perspective.

In Chapter 4, “Smoke and Mirrors: Canada’s Pretense of Compliance with the Genocide Convention,” Starblanket argues that Canada violated the Vienna Convention by adopting a limited definition of genocide in its Criminal Code, which she effectively concludes was done on purpose so that Canada could evade guilt and culpability in genocide (222). In addition, Starblanket points out that, after the ratification of the UNGC in 1948, Canada continued to engage in genocidal acts with the forcible transfers of Indigenous children to residential schools and the child welfare system. Moreover, as Ian Mosby uncovered in 2013, officials conducted nutritional experiments on Indigenous people.

In her conclusion, Starblanket argues that Canada should be held accountable for its crimes of genocide and that the

country needs to cease genocidal practices immediately. She sees self-determination as the way forward for Indigenous people: “The road home entails the right of self-determination as subjects in international law, which is a fundamental aspect of healing and recovering our way of life. In fact, it is the only solution for peace and for true justice” (280).

Suffer the Little Children, although based on her master of laws thesis, is accessible to other disciplines. Given the technical nature of the legal analysis, without a prior knowledge of the UNGC some readers may feel out of their depth. Throughout the book, Starblanket relies heavily on block quotes, which some might see as a drawback; however, this approach allows readers to reflect on the source material. Despite these minor criticisms, Starblanket’s book is an important, thought provoking, and timely interdisciplinary contribution to the fields of law, history, and Indigenous studies, and it will push readers to reconceptualize colonization and residential schools as genocidal.

*Assembling Unity: Indigenous
Politics, Gender, and the
Union of BC Indian Chiefs*

Sarah A. Nickel

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019.
236 pp. \$32.95 paper.

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SARAH NICKEL’S *Assembling Unity: Indigenous Politics, Gender, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs* is a significant contribution not only to the history of Indigenous affairs in British Columbia but also to Indigenous history as a field overall. Focusing on

a period of increased and widespread pan-Indigenous organizing between the 1960s and early 1980s, Nickel explores the history of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), Indigenous women's groups like the BC Indian Homemakers' Association (BCIHA) and the BC Native Women's Society (BCNWS), as well as other grassroots organizations and movements, to interrogate how the concept of unity was mobilized to achieve political goals for Indigenous nations in the province. Nickel's analysis rests on a foundation of interviews with former members of these organizations, primary sources drawn in large numbers from the UBCIC archives, and Indigenous theoretical frameworks – specifically Glen Coulthard's theory of recognition (*Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* [2014]), Audra Simpson's theory of refusal (*Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States* [2014]), and, more broadly, what Nickel calls “new Indigenous feminisms” (11). In particular, the Indigenous feminist approach allows her to take a decolonial and intersectional approach to analyzing the actions of the UBCIC and related organizations. Working with these frameworks as a base, and prioritizing Indigenous understandings of the past, she argues that achieving a kind of unity among BC Indigenous nations in order to have their voices heard in settler colonial spaces was a complex and often “fraught” process of negotiation between Indigenous groups with unique needs and interests (15).

Nickel's analysis is particularly important because it challenges how Indigenous political organizing has traditionally been done in Canada. As Nickel explains, there have been community-based studies focused on specific nations' and bands' political

strategies in individual battles against the Canadian settler state, such as *The Same as Yesterday: The Lillooet Tribal People Chronicle the Takeover of Their Territory* by Joanne Drake-Terry (1989), but works such as these have not connected more local histories to national and even international trends that would have been influential at the time. This is what Nickel works to do in *Assembling Unity*. Conversely, works that focus specifically on pan-Indigenous movements and their relationship with the Canadian state, like Laurie Meijer Drees's *The Indian Association of Alberta: A History of Political Action* (2002), have neglected to capture the unique needs and identities of the nations that make up the organizations under study. Nickel's focus on multifaceted Indigenous organizing in British Columbia specifically provides a great vantage point from which to connect provincial Indigenous politics to broader trends and movements (like Red Power), and it also highlights the complexities and internal debates that occurred as very diverse groups of Indigenous people worked together.

This study of UBCIC's desire to achieve unity as a tool to combat settler colonialism and assert Aboriginal rights tackles the “messiness” of Indigenous politics head-on, and it does not try to smooth out the dissensions and disagreements within and between UBCIC and other BC Indigenous organizations. Nickel argues that this challenges a “double standard” applied to Indigenous politics (169), an assumption that imperfect alliances mean that Indigenous people are not able to participate in politics at the same calibre as are settler-Canadians. In this book, Indigenous people are afforded the privilege of having their complex political structures and organizations recognized, and this reflects a reality few works on late

twentieth-century Indigenous politics have thus far portrayed.

In another large departure from previously published studies on Indigenous organizing in Canada, Nickel studies the concerns and actions of the BCIHA and the BCNWS in the same context in which she studies the more male-dominated UBCIC. In doing so, she is able to critically interrogate the heteropatriarchal colonial structures imposed upon and, in some cases, replicated by some First Nations political organizations during this era. She also uses this tactic to demonstrate the significant role these Indigenous women's organizations played in negotiating how UBCIC would represent First Nations within British Columbia. This, as Nickel so aptly describes, challenges the traditional "decontextualization" of Indigenous women's political organizing by acknowledging how much influence their work had on pan-Indigenous politics more broadly (π). Overall, Nickel's work pushes studies of Indigenous politics in new and exciting directions and, importantly, provides an easily accessible historical narrative that challenges deep-seated colonial conceptions of what Indigenous politics looks like.

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*By Law or In Justice:
The Indian Specific Claims
Commission and the Struggle for
Indigenous Justice*

Jane Dickson

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018. 240 pp.
\$32.95 paper.

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THE FOUNDATION of Professor Jane Dickson's book, *By Law or In Justice*, is her work as a commissioner for the Indian Specific Claims Commission from 2002 to 2009. The commission itself endured from 1991 to 2009, with the mandate to conduct inquiries into numerous Indigenous grievances with respect to treaties, land settlements, and fiduciary obligations held by the Crown to look out for the best interests of Indigenous peoples.

The commission itself could not make orders binding on the Crown, but it could come to factual conclusions based on its inquiries and at least try to bring parties together for negotiated resolutions. Add in that the commission itself was a creation of the federal government in Ottawa, and there is an obvious problem. Those two realities together already scream conflict of interest from the very start, but the problems hardly end there.

Dickson details numerous tactics employed by the Crown, including spurious delays designed to wear down the Indigenous participants (contrary to the ostensible policy being a timely resolution of claims); conveniently spinning legal arguments to the present benefit of the Crown, where previously the prerequisites for the arguments were brought about by previous Crown misconduct; and Crown lawyers purporting to dictate to

the commissioners what the outcome would be.

Dickson also weighs into other illuminating facets of the commission's work. For example, she relates how legal standards and protocol, although centred around procedural fairness and propriety, can sometimes amount to real encumbrances in very ironic ways. One example concerns the time she made direct contact with a hired researcher in an effort to ascertain the answer to a question that had been on her mind. The end result was a great deal of hand-wringing and stress as the proper protocol was to present the question to legal counsel for the commission, who, in turn, would set the researcher to the task. And yet certainly the more direct approach seemed more practical and expeditious by comparison. Another example concerns Indigenous persons, Elders in particular, being treated with kid gloves, as though they needed to be protected from the harshness of cross-examination in adversarial justice systems. Dickson felt that very often, more than anything, those Indigenous participants wanted an opportunity to tell their stories, even if this had to be accompanied by cross-examination.

Dickson ends the book with some final reflections on the commission itself as it wound down and on the relatively new Specific Claims Tribunal Act. She notes that the latter does not appear to have amounted to an improvement in practice, but she holds out some hope that the Crown can reverse course and begin acting in a manner truly fitting its honour and its fiduciary obligations towards Indigenous peoples.

By Law or In Justice is an excellent read, although I do have a few minor points of concern. One is that I would have appreciated some consideration of Indigenous rights litigation, particularly with respect to treaty rights. The two selling points for going the litigation

route is that a court can make decisions binding on the Crown and that the judiciary, at least in theory, is supposed to be impartial towards both the Crown and the Indigenous litigants, thereby removing the conflict-of-interest problem. At the same time, litigation itself requires enormous time and monetary resources. That in itself has been a driving force behind initiatives like the Specific Claims Commission, which was meant to provide a less expensive and more expeditious route for addressing the claims. Comparing and contrasting the two pathways would have given the reader a greater appreciation for the legal landscape and the commission's place within it.

Another minor issue is the aforementioned point about treating Indigenous witnesses with kid gloves. Dickson almost assumes that Indigenous witnesses are willing to shrug off the adversities of the system and are eager to tell their stories. Issues of cultural faux pas and the lack of legitimacy of adversarial systems for Indigenous peoples is a real issue, and the concerns can be felt acutely when it comes to Indigenous Elders. The topic has received treatment in other literature, particularly with reference to American tribal courts, and from well-known scholars such as John Borrows. I am not saying that Dickson is wrong in her assessment of what she observed first-hand, but a more complete treatment of a quite sensitive issue would have been appreciated.

Another concern is that, despite Dickson's best efforts to reach a lay audience, I am not entirely convinced that she will succeed. Although she probably should not be faulted for that. The complexity of the field and its knowledge base make the use of jargon and specialist language unavoidable. I recommend this book as a solid read for anyone interested in learning more about this particularly pressing subject matter.

*Breaching the Peace: The Site C
Dam and a Valley's Stand
against Big Hydro*

Sarah Cox

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018. 312 pp.
\$24.95 paper.

*Damming the Peace: The Hidden
Costs of the Site C Dam*

Wendy Holm, editor

Toronto: Lorimer, 2018. 272 pp.
\$22.95 paper.

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STATE-SPONSORED impoundment and “improvement” of rivers is nothing new, and much ink has been spilled documenting the social, ecological, and fiscal impacts of dams. In spite of growing awareness of these costs and declarations from scholars that the 1990s marked the end of the dam-building era, climate change concerns and economic development have fuelled a resurgence of interest in hydroelectric dam projects in many countries around the world. These megaprojects can be understood as “high modernist” projects, underpinned by a faith in the rational ordering and administration of nature and society to transform and improve society. Scott (1998, 89) argues that this vision goes awry “when it is held by ruling elites with no commitment to democracy or civil rights and who are therefore likely to use unbridled state power for its achievement.” The Site C hydroelectric dam in British Columbia’s Peace River Valley is one such project, thrust forward by the BC government with

abject disregard for political process, First Nations, or local property owners.

In *Breaching the Peace*, journalist Sarah Cox adroitly introduces the reader to the Site C dam, the aggressive tactics employed by BC Hydro to promote it, and the local residents and First Nations fighting against it. Peopled with vivid characters, Cox’s compelling narrative explores the impacts of the Site C project through the eyes of those most affected: Treaty 8 First Nations members and local Peace Valley landowners. At stake in the struggle over the Site C dam are some of Canada’s finest hectares of farmland, hundreds of significant ecological and cultural sites, and Indigenous treaty rights.

People, their livelihoods, senses of place, and connections to the land and each other feature prominently in this book, which makes convoluted politics and a challenging subject matter accessible and engaging. Though Cox focuses primarily on the human dimensions of the controversy, she weaves together a tapestry that emphasizes the relationships between people and the natural world: disregard for families and communities is inextricably bound up with environmental destruction, as is the failure of the BC government to view the project as the extension of a sordid history of violence and dispossession amid asymmetric power relations. Cox situates the project within relevant history, explores the biogeography of the Peace Valley, and documents the dubious tactics employed to push the project forward.

This work is sure to appeal to scholars interested in natural resource politics, colonialism, and Indigenous politics, and it could serve as a textbook for university courses in those subject areas. Importantly, *Breaching the Peace* is accessible and engaging enough to entertain interested lay readers and compel them to action. In his preface

to the book, Amnesty International's Alex Neve writes: "Past injustice does not excuse more of the same; rather, it makes it imperative to break with that disgraceful history" (xii). Cox's book is a rallying cry, told with compassion, against "Big Hydro."

Individuals inspired to learn more about the Site C project (perhaps inspired by Cox's *Breaching the Peace*) will find a similarly titled volume to be of interest as well. *Damming the Peace* is a collection of writings by journalists, planners, and policy professionals that explores Site C's many facets. In her introductory chapter, editor Wendy Holm hopes her book will serve as "both a rallying cry and a roadmap" to empowering critical discussions about the impacts of the dam (27).

The fifteen authors explore a wealth of topics, including: alternatives to hydroelectric energy (Guy Dauncey); climate change (David Schindler); violence, trauma, and Indigenous resistance (Andrew MacLeod); biodiversity (Brian Churchill); food security (Wendy Holm); data manipulation (Joan Sawicki); hydromorphic and geologic impacts (Andrew Nikiforuk); trust and human health (Warren Bell); water geopolitics (Joyce Nelson); cumulative impacts on First Nations in the context of larger dispossession (Briony Penn); the necessity of social licence and its absence in the Site C proceedings (Reg Whitten); the sunk-costs fallacy (Zoë Ducklow); Canada's weak legal institutions for environmental protection (Silver Donald Cameron); and democracy (Rafe Mair). Taken together, these chapters offer a wealth of arguments and data against the dam.

The style found in *Damming the Peace* is decidedly activist and is likely to be appealing to a wide audience, including those with little background on the topic. The wealth of data presented makes the volume a useful compendium for those

looking to make a rational case against the dam – but this approach also serves as a shortcoming. At times, authors appear to embrace the notion that scientific facts unequivocally inform the proper course of action: to counter BC Hydro's "statistical confusion, misrepresentation of facts, creative distractions, false comparisons and invalid modelling" (122), an assemblage of data and calculations are presented to help correct the aforementioned manipulations. Yet, as an ample body of literature has pointed out, a reliance on data to "prove" a position in an environmental controversy obfuscates but does not obviate the value divergence at the heart of the disagreement (e.g., Sarewitz 2004).

Sarewitz (2004, 399) asserts that "progress in addressing environmental controversies will need to come primarily from advances in political process, rather than scientific research." To this end, both books highlight the subversion of accepted political mechanisms for decision-making and call attention to the serious abdication of considering the public interest in the case of Site C. If Scott (1998, 88) is correct that a necessary element for high modernist plans to succeed is "a weakened or prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist these plans," the two books reviewed here are sure to invigorate the requisite Canadian civil society to help halt construction at Site C.

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Sustenance: Writers from BC and Beyond on the Subject of Food

Rachel Rose, editor

Vancouver: Anvil Press, 2017. 256 pp.
\$25.00 paper.

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WITH ITS OVER 250 prose and poetry narratives, biographies, and recipes, *Sustenance: Writers from BC and Beyond on the Subject of Food* is a timeless anthology edited by Rachel Rose, Vancouver's poet laureate of 2014. During her tenure, Rose wanted to produce a book such as *Sustenance* to "engage those outside of the poetry community as much as those within it" (13). To complete the project, she enlisted colleagues – gifted poets and teachers – to interact with people in Vancouver and elsewhere to find the poetry and other narrative treasures that appear in the book.

Rose and colleagues were successful in finding a diverse array of authors – unpublished writers, grade-school students, well-known chefs, instructors and professors, émigré prize-winning essayists, grade-school teachers, college students, residential school survivors, writing fellows, and arts activists. Rose envisioned the project as contributing to social change not only via its educational value but also via its financial significance. Contributors donated their honoraria to the BC Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Program, which provides vouchers to low-income and refugee families in the province to procure local fresh produce.

The topics in the book are wildly varied – cooking in refugee kitchens, heating a pan of oysters, preparing mushy peas and carrots or chicken-foot

soup, making golden sauces with honey and almonds, mixing slabs of crumbling cheese, fermenting fruit, stewing fava beans, cutting rockfish, enjoying sea-lion stew – as Rose wanted to build diverse tables, not walls, so as to allow us to "sit eye to eye in the sacred relationship of guest and host, mutually obliged and interdependent" (13).

The introductory poem, "Cooking Lesson: *Kebbe*" (excerpted) is respectfully humble and tender:

Blend the mixture either in a machine that is not to be found in Canada, or with the hands.

Cook the meat separately, *though in Aleppo we eat it raw.*

Do you have any Canadian friends yet? I ask, and you both shake your heads.

We came here as refugees; we will stay refugees ...

(17–18, attribution is given as Rachel Rose, trans. Raed Al-Jishi)

The poetry is beautifully visual, as in Diane Tucker's "Oregano" (132): "Oregano has overrun everything / Let your vision puddle and spread and you'll see the little mistresses, the honeybees, waving"; and political, as in T'uy'T' Tanat-Cecelia "Cease" Wyss's "A Fish Camp Story from My Childhood" (16–64), which describes her mixed heritage and what that cost her parents in court hearings in which they defended their rights to cultural food fishing. The "recipes," when written in prose, are quite remarkable, rendering unforgettable images rather than merely instructions, as in Kathryn Alexander's "Making Marmalade" (182–83): "Stir the bitter stories / until they froth and rise like fruity lava / to set like jewels on a cold spoon."

Rose, however, is cooking up more than food with this anthology: “Words of pain and hope from within our fractured literary community sing on these pages, as we collectively struggle to find a way through our own complicated inheritances” (13). Rose recognizes that she (and many of the contributors) lives and works on the unceded homelands of First Nations people. Further, part of the motivation for the project comes from Rose’s profound experiences supporting refugee families. In *Sustenance*, she has succeeded in compiling the contributors’ emotion-stirring prose around refugee themes, as with Terrie Hamazaki’s “Eggs” (111–12) or Claire Sicherman’s profound “Fragments” (114), which describes her grandparents’ concentration camp experiences in the vitally important activity of food bartering.

Sustenance is a must-have book for any teacher, student, poet, or consumer of food. If, in fact, “food, art, and kindness can change the world,” as one author (A.L. Carlson) writes in her bio (57), then *Sustenance* should do much to advance such change.

*Working towards Equity:
Disability Rights Activism and
Employment in Late Twentieth-
Century Canada*

Dustin Galer

Toronto: University of Toronto
Press, 2018. 328 pp. \$32.95 paper.

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Working towards Equity examines the intersection of the contested nature of disability movements and activism and decision maker actions

related to labour market activity in late twentieth-century Canada. Galer’s argument is that advances in labour market activity for disabled people were not the result of a series of progressive developments but, rather, of a series of repeated waves of public and political awareness. In this process, an uncalibrated cacophony of disability voices interacted to construct and reconstruct efforts aimed at needed changes.

Three voices loom large in this ensemble: families and family advocates, the rehabilitation-industrial complex, and disability activists. The central role of families and family advocates in the deinstitutionalization movement and the development of the voluntary sector is explored, illustrating the emerging (and new) discourse surrounding disability and work (chap. 2). This is largely at odds with the almost complete control the rehabilitation-industrial complex (deeply rooted in the medical model of disability) had over the sector – a complex that was most concerned with maintaining its authority (chap. 3). As Galer details, disability activists challenged these approaches, arguing for disability organizations to be led by disabled people and geared towards independent living (chap. 4).

The interactions of these three often conflicting voices are traced through the role and evolution of sheltered workshops (chap. 5), the role played by employers in the economic integration of disabled people (chap. 6), and in the evolution and impact of disability rights on the structure and policies of the Canadian state, including the influence of political ideologies (chap. 7). Readers will find it both informative and shocking to learn about the efforts taken to build cooperative and collaborative working relationships among various state and non-state actors in the 1960s, 1970s, and

early 1980s, only to have them disintegrate in the 1990s when various governments, especially Ontario's Mike Harris Progressive Conservatives, adopted the neoliberal state. The tenuous relationship between disability activism and the labour movement, highlighting how disability activism posed challenges for unions, bookends this volume (chap. 8).

The strength of *Working towards Equity* is the rich narrative the author weaves. Detail surrounding the intricacies and complex relationships among the various disability voices is provided, ensuring that this volume will be well cited for years to come. Even better is the fact that it is grounded in the employment experiences of thirty disabled people over a period of forty years. It is the first chapter that draws the reader in to learn how these individuals characterized employment as a central element of their identities. To Galer's credit, these experiences are further integrated into the various chapters to tease out meaning (with more information on these individuals provided in an appendix). Readers will also enjoy how Galer integrates various films and television shows into the narrative, such as *The Disability Myth*, *Hurry Tomorrow*, *The Littlest Hobo*, and the *Best Years of Our Lives*.

While there is much to like about *Working towards Equity*, this reviewer is not convinced that the fragmented and contested nature of disability voices necessarily held progress back. Rather, disability crosscuts other movements (e.g., the women's movement, the environmental movement) and, as such, needed time to build a base from which to act. Moving forward, the diversity of the disability movement and activism may be its greatest strength. This is an important consideration as British Columbia moves closer to the enactment of provincial accessibility legislation. For example, to what extent has this intersectionality

influenced the province's disability movement throughout this process?

Questions also surround Galer's lament that the newer disabled generation has not picked up on disability activism as older disabled generations have been phased out. Until newer disabled generations situate and find fault with their starting points, define their identities and whether or not they wish to engage in activism, they may remain content with the progress made to date. It is also hard to find fault with families and family advocates who did not fully engage in a newer model of disability, given their central role in the deinstitutionalization movement. No doubt many were simply tired and decided to leave that fight for others rather than continue to push for more changes. Still, newer generations may simply engage differently. Certainly, the election of Stephanie Cadieux, Sam Sullivan, and Michelle Stilwell to provincial office (British Columbia) suggest as much. So does the election of BC's Carla Qualtrough, who has become a powerful minister in Justin Trudeau's cabinet.

Working towards Equity is an excellent volume and a welcome addition to the disability literature. It is a must read for its fresh perspective, especially for those interested in the disability movement and activism side of the employment equation.

*The Hundred-Year Trek: A
History of Student Life at UBC*
Sheldon Goldfarb

Victoria: Heritage House, 2019.
304 pp. \$32.95 paper.

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TO BORROW an old joke, institutional histories can often be the sofa beds of historical writing. Neither good as a sofa nor as a bed, institutional histories can often find themselves trapped between academic and local audiences, and can become the worst of both worlds. To the credit of Sheldon Goldfarb and the UBC student society (called the Alma Mater Society, or AMS), *The Hundred-Year Trek* has avoided this trap by committing to be a popular history of the student association's operations at UBC. The result is a very readable, beautifully illustrated coffee table book that offers an incredibly detailed account of the foibles of the student union at BC's largest university. Although historians might be disappointed that the book does not contribute to the existing literature as much as it might have, former students of UBC will likely enjoy the invitation to wander the Main Mall again, as captured in hundreds of photos of UBC over its century of existence.

The book is formatted as a year-by-year account of the goings-on in the AMS. Goldfarb, who is the archivist for the AMS, is a lively writer who works in a good joke here and there, and the book moves quickly. The majority of the material is drawn from the pages of UBC's student newspaper *The Ubysey*, with a special focus on AMS politics. Goldfarb traces several themes throughout the years, including the ways in which UBC students drew on Indigenous symbolism, the student campaigns to develop the campus, and the changing culture of the AMS itself. The book's perspective, which places students and their union at the centre of the story of UBC, is unique and valuable.

For readers who are more interested in the social history of British Columbia, though, or who are especially interested

in the history of higher education, *The Hundred-Year Trek* can feel like a missed opportunity. For example, there is very little discussion of how and why UBC's student population has changed over time. The arrival of women on the campus in the 1920s and 1930s gets a few brief mentions but very little discussion (though there is a bit more attention in the post-Second World War era); the expulsion of Japanese Canadian students in 1942 receives one paragraph, half of which is about a 2012 apology (70); the veterans flooding onto the campus after the Second World War merits only two small paragraphs (80); the changing racial makeup of the campus is only discussed through the lens of AMS elections (96); the changing class position of UBC students after the war is noted only obliquely and in passing in a discussion of funding (112). Readers hoping to get a deeper sense of the history of higher education in British Columbia will often find themselves wishing Goldfarb had offered more analysis of the events being described. Moreover, the emphasis on students' perspective is at times underdeveloped. The book would have been improved by using its deep dive into student life to offer students' perspectives on some of the issues in the existing higher education literature, or even to offer a new perspective on some of the most important events in UBC's history.

In sum, this is a well-written, attractive book that will appeal to any UBC alumni looking to reminisce about the institution. But it perhaps misses the opportunity to use its source material to make larger arguments about the history of British Columbia and UBC's place in it.