

undeniably important to understanding the history of Canadian business. Nonetheless, this imbalance results in a narrative that does not sufficiently describe the rise of the service sector and the concomitant expansion of the low-wage economy over the last few decades; only resource-rich provinces such as Alberta remained more dependent upon goods production. By 2007, the service sector accounted for more than two-thirds of Canada's gross domestic product. The political implications of this transition, of course, have been significant.

Indeed, while Taylor discusses the political effectiveness of the business elite during the early twentieth century, he largely passes over the question for the period after the Second World War. In part, this appears to stem from a methodological approach that emphasizes the study of business institutions and the state. Political activism outside these institutions is not ignored by Taylor, but more certainly could have been said about the think-tanks supported by Canadian business figures, which championed neoliberal ideas in the 1970s and 1980s. The work of sociologist William K. Carroll has suggested, for example, that the collective efforts of the country's business community, by mobilizing outside the structures of the state, helped lay the ideological groundwork for the transition to a neoliberal era. If anything, these observations would strengthen Taylor's overall argument about "the rise of Canadian business" by highlighting the political dimensions of the ascent.

Nonetheless, this history has been profoundly ambiguous in recent years. "Globalization" has, some observers will claim, de-nationalized capital and, as Taylor notes, within the last decade numerous well-established Canadian firms have been snatched up by foreign competitors. To what extent does Canadian business survive under these new conditions?

Attempts to quantify foreign ownership and the assets of Canadian firms perhaps miss a more profound qualitative transformation in the outlook of business leaders, who see themselves primarily as players in a global market with ephemeral national affiliations.

The Rise of Canadian Business will stand for some time as the standard text for the history of Canadian business from the National Policy period on into the early 21st century, covering the major Canadian companies and business moguls since the last spike was nailed to mark the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. His view – that Canadian business was on the rise – will be met with skepticism by some observers. And, as a work of synthesis, it displays both the strengths and gaps within the historiography. Nonetheless, Taylor makes a complex story understandable, and this book offers something for academic specialists, undergraduate students, and general readers alike.

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Terry Gibbs and Garry Leech, *The Failure of Global Capitalism: From Cape Breton to Colombia and Beyond* (Sydney: Cape Breton University Press 2009)

ONCE OR TWICE a week, while sitting in my university office, I can hear a train whistle. Long and low, the sound comes from the southwest, the neighbourhood of Whitney Pier, where a train is loaded with coal before it travels to a power station in the community of Lingan, about 10 kilometres by rail to the northeast. I am struck by this sound each and every time I hear it because it is so rare. It was not that long ago that trains criss-crossed this corner of Cape Breton on a regular basis, laden with steel from the plant in Sydney, the island's largest city, or coal

from the nearby towns of New Waterford and Glace Bay. But not today. Deindustrialization here has been swift and brutal; the island's largest private-sector employer is now a call centre.

Yet as Terry Gibbs and Garry Leach suggest in this pointed and deft publication, the presence of this train, audible from my desk chair, is remarkable not only for its rarity, but also for the cargo it is carrying: coal from Colombia. Imported by Nova Scotia Power because it is cheaper and cleaner than Cape Breton coal, the Colombian coal is extracted from the world's largest open-pit coal mine, El Cerrejon. Located in the rural community of Tabaco on the country's Caribbean coast, the facility (a "massive hole in the ground") was constructed with significant assistance from the Canadian Export Development Bank and is owned by a consortium of multinational mining companies, one of which – paradoxically – is also active in Cape Breton, exploring the feasibility of exporting dirty local coal to India and China. (65) These transnational connections between peripheral Canada (Cape Breton) and peripheral Colombia (Tobaco) provide Gibbs and Leach with an opportunity to examine the ways in which neo-liberal economic policies – a "conscious, ideologically chosen set of policies" – have drawn workers and communities from different parts of the world together into a "single, global economic process." (15, 11) Those policies, the authors argue in four lively chapters, undermined Cape Breton's industrial economy, pried open Colombia's natural resources, and created gross inequality and environmental devastation in both locales.

The book begins with an examination of the rise and fall of Cape Breton's industrial economy. It highlights the bone-grinding poverty among steel workers and coal miners in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the union struggles mounted by both groups to

redress these conditions, and the decline of labour radicalism on the island after the 1920s, as the pressures of union bureaucracy, industrial legality, and anti-communism grew too heavy. Throughout the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, the authors illustrate, the viability of coal and steel production in Cape Breton waxed and waned. Owned by a single private-sector corporation, the fate of the former was inextricably linked to the success of the latter, as the only market for local coal was the local steel plant. By the late 1960s, however, both operations were in government hands, where they remained, largely unprofitable and environmentally reckless, for the next 30 years. The beginning of the end for coal mining came in 1992 when Nova Scotia Power, which used to purchase Cape Breton coal for its local generating stations, was sold by the provincial government to Emera, a private-sector corporation with energy interests in Canada, the United States, and the Caribbean. Seven years later, in 1999, Emera started to purchase its coal from Colombia. By then, Gibbs and Leach argue, with neo-liberalism guiding both provincial and federal governments in Canada, the state-owned steel plant and coal mines had become "quintessential examples of the failure of Keynesian policies." (41) Both were closed by 2001.

That Colombian resources, such as coal, were available to multinational corporations from the global North at rock-bottom prices reflected the extent to which neo-liberal economic policies had reconfigured the Colombian economy since the 1980s. As Gibbs and Leach maintain in what is the book's most engaging chapter, it had a lot to do with coffee: when free trade replaced managed trade in that sector in 1989, the price of coffee on international markets plummeted. As the coffee industry collapsed, cocoa production grew, drug cartels flourished, and government revenues contracted. In

exchange for loans, aid, and military support from the United States, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund, Colombian officials agreed to open up their country's energy resources to foreign corporations, among other acts of neo-liberalization. In the specific context of coal, Gibbs and Leech write, this meant selling off the assets of the state-owned coal company (Carbocol) in 1999 and rewriting the country's mining code to relax environmental regulations and drastically cut royalty rates. This was completed in 2001, with the help of the Canadian International Development Agency and the Canadian Energy Research Institute. While coal exports and coal profits have jumped considerably under this new neo-liberal framework, the authors observe, life for rural Colombians has only gotten worse: poverty has deepened, rural communities have been forcibly removed to make way for bigger mining operations, and repression of union and human activists has intensified. All the while, the Colombian government's "dirty war" against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the country's largest leftist rebel group, has continued with renewed vigour, drawing energy from the need to police coal and oil facilities owned by multinational corporations and soothe the nerves of international investors.

Gibbs and Leech's indictment of neo-liberalism continues in the book's final two substantive chapters, which examine the broader remaking of the Atlantic Canadian economy in the 1980s, 90s, and 2000s and the challenges to neo-liberal orthodoxy posed by state and non-state actors, including Venezuela's "Bolivarian revolution" under president Hugo Chavez and the Las Gaviotas experiment in eastern Colombia. Not content to merely catalogue the many failures of neo-liberalism, the authors have identified possible alternatives to the political and economic status quo – thus drawing

their trenchant, empirically rich critique to a cautiously optimistic conclusion: nothing is inevitable. Yet today at least, I feel hardpressed to share the authors' sense of hope. The local newspaper is reporting that Cape Bretoners will, once again, be going underground to mine coal, this time around at the behest of Xstrata, a multinational mining corporation with a stake in El Cerrejon, to supply Asian markets; I can also hear the faint sound of a coal train, headed to Lingan with its Colombian cargo.

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Thom Workman, *If You're In My Way, I'm Walking* (Winnipeg: Fernwood 2009)

THE DECLINE OF the Canadian left, the continued erosion of trade union rights, and debates about how to improve the lives of working people in Canadian society in this context are issues that perpetually vex sympathetic academic and non-academic commentators and activists. Thom Workman's volume is an addition to the work that has been done on the left in Canada, and it explores both the losses suffered by the left and the problem of crafting methods of revitalizing it. Workman begins his analysis by covering what are frequently considered the origins of the left's problems in Canada. More specifically, he focuses on the period from 1970 onward with an emphasis on the fate of Fordism, the post-war compromise between capital and labour. Fordism both enabled and accompanied comparative peace within the labour movement. Unionization increased in the post-war years, but the movement was also purged of those members viewed as radical. The Canadian state oversaw labour-management relations, and Canadian capitalists prospered prior to 1970. Anti-Communist rhetoric was not

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