

experience, legal systems, and the timing of settlement meant that the Ross children's interracial heritage had a different impact on their lives, depending upon which side of the border they resided.

The iconoclasm that typifies *One Step Over the Line* owes much to the authors' devotion to questioning received themes, categories, and professional practices. Margaret Walsh captures the spirit of this approach in her pedagogical piece, emphasizing the importance of raising questions in the classroom, even when the evidence to resolve those questions is currently inadequate (401). Throughout the collection, stock Western narratives are challenged. The mythical Wests of young white men, the narrative contrasts often drawn between the "Wild" (American) and "Mild" (Canadian) Wests, the received history of racism in both countries, and the notion of the West as region all receive scrutiny and reconceptualization. The editors also draw attention to the social construction of gender, race, class, and nation-states, arguing that each has "been understood and created in different ways in different times and places ... among people with unequal access to resources and power" (xx), an observation that is borne out by many of the articles. Finally, in a remarkably frank historiographical piece, Joan M. Jensen engages in constructive self-scrutiny, reflecting on various impulses – which she terms fantasizing, romanticizing, victimizing, rationalizing, personalizing, and politicizing – that threaten to distort the significance, ideals, ambitions, and even the privacy of the women she studies.

One Step Over the Line is an important and meaningful addition to the histories of the American and Canadian Wests, and it would serve well as a college or university course reader. While there are

some important gaps in chronological and thematic coverage – which the editors acknowledge – the collection's superb contextualization of events, along with its persuasive challenges to the ideas, themes, and categories prominent in Western history, make it a potentially thought-provoking classroom tool and worthwhile reading for any student of Western history.

*Canada's Rights Revolution,
Social Movements and Social
Change, 1937–82*

Dominique Clément

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008.

296 pp. \$32.95 paper.

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I AM NOT AS confident as is Dominique Clément that "the vast majority of Canadians instinctively see human rights as an inherent good" (9). It might be true that most of us value civil liberties, at least for themselves. But, as he argues in this work, what people actually believe is really best understood by examining how such rights concepts are expressed in action. "We" may share some very general views that there are such things as rights. But defining the content of those rights deeply divides us now, and the same question was hugely controversial during the period Clément describes in this very useful book. By examining the activities and accomplishments of four human rights associations from the 1960s and 1970s, Clément shows us how a small minority of Canadians helped to redefine as human rights abuses things that most Canadians in the 1960s and 1970s were used to accepting as the normal

operations of the state and normal workings of business.

In the book's introduction, he asks how effective the strategies of these organizations were. Over the course of the book, he argues that they were not especially effective, largely because, for the most part, the associations limited their activities to "briefs, publications, litigation, the development of position papers, and sending observers to protest marches" (208). They made little or no use of tactics involving broad, grassroots mobilization. These were "conservative" strategies, albeit applied to a project of change. While some of the rights associations were also somewhat conservative in their definition of rights, hewing to a civil liberties/negative freedoms ideology, Clément finds that even organizations that conceived of human rights in more socialist terms were confined in their strategies and, therefore, limited in their effectiveness. In his view, the human rights organizations, compared with other social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, were hamstrung by their preference for elite, professional tactics.

He also examines another explanation for these groups' modest accomplishments. In the 1970s, social activists disagreed about whether critics of the state and of the social order could be effective if their work was funded by government grants. Such grants were abundantly distributed by the Citizenship Branch of the Secretary of State, and, in three of the four cases Clément studies, the associations would have been unable to function without them. The fourth, Toronto's Canadian Civil Liberties Association, did well with regard to fundraising. It went on to stymie the creation of a national organization because of its view that to collaborate with government-funded associations would inevitably limit what human

rights advocates could accomplish. To assess this argument, Clément compares the tactical creativity, ideology, and challenges to state power provided by each association – one each from British Columbia, Quebec, and Newfoundland – and finds that all were at least as independent, aggressive, and ideologically radical as was the one from Toronto. In addition, he points out that large private funders, such as the United Way, could and did constrain projects. Careful comparative description underpins this analysis, and though Clément probably will not change the minds of those who believe that the 1970s funding bonanza built a certain fragility into the human rights movement, he effectively dispatches the notion that private funding is always more likely than is public funding to allow innovation and radicalism.

This comparative analysis is not the only reason to value Clément's regionally diverse case studies. To see how the general phenomenon of rights activism varied so widely by context puts paid to any simplistic structuralist or vague culturalist account of this important international phenomenon. Perhaps surprisingly, the BC organization defined its concerns more "conservatively" than did those of Montreal and Newfoundland. The human rights that BC activists defended were civil liberties such as free speech, the right to refuse medical treatment, and the limitation on police power. In supposedly more conservative Newfoundland, particular contingencies of leadership and politics led the human rights association there to promote the right to adequate housing. The sheer variety of rights issues in Clément's sample illustrates perfectly how little the general theory of human rights tells us about the history of human rights.

For students of BC history, and especially of Vancouver history, Clément's chapter on the BC Civil Liberties Association will be essential reading. The particular tensions of life in the Lower Mainland, with its free marketeers, Christian fundamentalists, communists, drug culture, and radicals of multiple stripes, is vividly portrayed in the episodes Clément discusses. I was sorry not to see any mention of the Civic Unity Association, a labour human rights organization that was funded by the United Way in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It may be that labour human rights work did not fall away in the 1960s as abruptly as Clément suggests. It is inevitable, however, in ranging from sea to sea, as Clément does, that local specialists will find holes to fill. I hope the work of more deeply investigating these local narratives will be taken up by a horde of honours and graduate students.

The more important vulnerability of Clément's work is on its right flank. Clément's work is open to attack or appropriation by conservatives such as Tasha Kheiriddin and Adam Daifallah. In their 2005 work, *Rescuing Canada's Right: Blueprint for a Conservative Revolution*, they argue that the problem with state funding of human rights associations, and with the Charter Challenges Program that followed them, is that the state should not spend tax money to support "rights" that are actually, in their view, "wrongs." They would agree with Clément that the advocates of human rights were a small group, but they would dispute his implication that there was a potential for a broad mobilization that this elite failed to deploy. If there had been, they would say, then the market and private donations would have provided the means. The need for government funding, in this logic,

proved the illegitimacy of the project. To respond to this logic, historians on the left might want to consider whether celebrating the grassroots versus the elite always helps to accurately identify the mechanisms of progressive change towards a more just society.

*Country Roads of British
Columbia: Exploring the Interior*

Liz Bryan

Vancouver: Heritage House, 2008.
192 pp. \$24.95 paper.

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LIZ BRYAN will be known to many readers of *BC Studies* as the founding publisher and editor (with her husband, photographer Jack Bryan) of *Western Living* and the author of *British Columbia: This Favoured Land* (1982); *Buffalo People: Pre-Contact Archaeology on the Canadian Plains* (2005); and *Stone by Stone: Exploring Ancient Sites on the Canadian Plains* (2005).

Country Roads of British Columbia is an excellent collection of eighteen articles, some of which are reprinted from Bryan's earlier works, and some from *Westworld Magazine* and *Western Living Magazine*. Each article, or "journey" (as Bryan terms them), covers a drive of not more than a few days (and most can be done in one day) along a less-travelled road in British Columbia: the appealingly named route "Soda Creek and Sugar Cane" (from Williams Lake to McAlister), or "North of the South" (from Kamloops eastwards to Squilax Hostel), or "High Hedley Circuit" (from Hedley to just past Keremeos). The result is not only an impetus to undertake these