

wrote that it was a good decision because “the document was not convincing” (57). The use of the War Measures Act was another good decision but there were mistakes made in how it was implemented. According to Tetley, these mistakes were that the State should have been “more careful in the choice of those arrested”. Those who were arrested should have been allowed to see their lawyers and should have been released “more quickly”. As well, the government should have said more to the public (94). Finally, Tetley acknowledged that Cabinet ministers had access to the list of individuals to be arrested. Did Provincial Cabinet Ministers try to remove names from the list? Tetley wrote that “none of use recognized any names” (96).

His comments on the Cabinet are not abundant and only reassure the reader that ministers were not divided and not in a state of panic (134). Concerning Premier Bourassa, he was “calm, fair and human” (41). The author does not say much about his role during the Crisis. Was he asked to advise the Premier? Did he feel that his views of the Crisis were well received by his fellow colleagues at the Cabinet table, those who worked for the Premier’s office and the Premier himself? He did not say much about it.

Throughout the book, Tetley justified the decisions made by governments at various stages of the October crisis. His criticisms are for those who lost what he called their “composure” during the October Crisis. Who were they? The elected members of the Parti Québécois (PQ) in the National Assembly, the PQ leader himself René Lévesque, the editor of *Le Devoir* Claude Ryan, and the intellectuals who signed the petition calling on the Quebec government to negotiate an exchange of Cabinet minister Pierre Laporte and James Cross for political prisoners.

In conclusion, for those who don’t know anything about the October Crisis, Tetley’s book is a good place to start. However, those who are familiar with this tragic event may wish that Tetley would have written more about his experience. Perhaps I should send my review directly to him since he indicated in his introduction that he would welcome any comments on his book by giving his email and professional addresses.

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Andrée Lévesque, translated by Yvonne M. Klein, *Red Travellers: Jeanne Corbin and Her Comrades* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queens University Press, 2006).

In the corpus of writing on the Canadian left, there have been few critical scholarly biographies, particularly in comparison to US and British historical writing.

Although a few well-known social democrats like Grace McInnis and Helena Gutteridge have been the subject of biographical studies, most biographies of communist women have been short and/or hagiographical, with the very notable exception of the recent biography of Dorise Neilsen by Faith Johnston. For this reason, Andrée Lévesque's treatment of Jeanne Corbin's life is a welcome addition to scholarship on the communist left in Canada, providing valuable insight not only into Corbin's life, but especially into the left milieu that Corbin was very much a part of.

Lévesque was faced with an unusually difficult task, since Corbin died of Tuberculosis while she was still quite young, at thirty-eight, leaving no personal papers for posterity, and by the 1990s, the circle of communists who worked with her had also become quite small, limiting the number of oral interviews possible. In fact, Corbin might not have *wanted* to leave any personal papers, as she grew to maturity in the communist movement in a time when state repression was particularly harsh: she saw Party headquarters raided, all the office papers confiscated and Communist Party of Canada (CPC) leaders imprisoned. Discretion was both a political necessity, and 'personal' life in the sense that we know it was in some ways a luxury for dedicated comrades whose whole life involved the Party and class struggle.

The latter most certainly did define Corbin's life, and Lévesque has done an excellent job of reconstructing Corbin's evolution as a communist, using every source at her finger tips, from RCMP files to judicial records detailing strikes, to the Communist Party papers seized by the government under Section 98 of the Criminal Code. She has also gleaned some information from interviews with the few surviving CPC members who knew Corbin. As Lévesque notes on her source dilemma, it was impossible to really delve into Corbin's ideas and inner motivations, but it was possible to reconstruct her communist milieu, placing Corbin firmly within a historical context and surmising her political beliefs. The result is a 'life and times' biography that suits the subject very well.

Corbin's role in the Party was distinctive, not simply because she was a mid-rank leader in a Party with almost no female leaders, but also because she was French. Although born in France and raised in a rural area of Alberta in a poor farming family, she was seen as a glimmer of hope for the Party's efforts in urban Montreal and in the northern Ontario/Quebec resource hinterland. The Party was ever conscious that it lacked francophone members particularly since the Comintern continually chastized the Canadian leadership for failing to recruit these doubly exploited and oppressed Québécois workers. Corbin was thus a part of Montreal organizing efforts in the early 1930s, particularly party efforts to start a French-language communist paper, and she subsequently played a key role in northern loggers strikes, in the mining town of Timmins, and especially in the Rouyn loggers strike of 1933-1934. By re-focusing our attention on party organizing these geographical areas, understudied in communist historiography, Lévesque

adds considerably to the more general history of the communist left in Canada.

Lévesque must also account for Corbin's interesting role as a woman little interested in the woman question. Corbin's radical identification, as she points out, clearly took shape around class and ethnicity, not gender. Unlike Becky Buhay and some other communist women, she was not very involved in the Women's Department, and her organizing efforts were for a time focused on male-dominated resource industries. This was not really a contradiction, though, for the Party did have a strong attraction for women and men alike whose sense of injustice was shaped from reading and experience that saw class as the primary and overriding contradiction of capitalist society. Moreover, as a single woman, Corbin was unencumbered by the tasks of familial care that limited the participation of many other female comrades. Lévesque also does a good job of placing Corbin generationally within the communist movement, another means of understanding her brand of radicalism. Corbin was not part of the founding group of the early 1920s, but joined late in the decade, at precisely the time the party was becoming Stalinized, and also during a period—the Depression—when the party faced both state repression and the intense immiseration of working people. All these factors created an activist who believed fervently in class struggle, and also in the wisdom of the Comintern and Canadian Party leadership; Corbin never deviated from the party line and she was selfless in her dedication to party goals, even serving a jail sentence after the Rouyn strike.

In the final resort, Lévesque tries to help us understand this sense of commitment and sacrifice without romanticizing Corbin, whose uncritical dedication to a Party increasingly intolerant of criticism could also been interpreted more negatively. This biography thus makes an important addition to the existing literature on the communist party in Canada, offering us both a tantalizing view of one communist life but also a better sense of the difficult and tumultuous times that made her the communist she was.

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Tamara Myers, *Caught: Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law, 1869-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

Common discourse suggests that 'caught' signifies a capture or seizing hold of some intended object (a fish, for example). But it also denotes contraction (catching a cold), arresting (the flashing light caught my eye), to attend (catching a show) and, but certainly not limited to, become popular (catch on). Common to all this is the idea of grabbing, holding or encircling. As such, *Caught* is an apt title for Tamara Myers' book subtitled *Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law, 1869-1945*. Against the backdrop of a rapidly morphing social, economic and political ethos,