and asexual youth (and of course the young people who occupy multiple identities), and the sex education that they themselves might particularly desire — can those desires be met in sanitised, heteronormative, ableist public school spaces? Ultimately, Bialystok argues, "the kind of sex education that young people need, and that schools can provide, is comprehensive without trying to be exhaustive, factual without being heartless…rather than try to teach young people everything there is to know about sex and sexuality as though in preparation for some cosmic multiple-choice test, schools should focus on equipping young people to be literate members of the sexual world and ethical participants in all their relationships" (160–161).

The authors close the book by arguing, "everyone needs and deserves good sex education, but good sex education is also an equity issue of paramount importance" (167). Throughout the book, I found myself underlining and annotating moments that reminded me of the current state of sexuality education in New Brunswick, where I have found myself teaching comprehensive sex education methods to pre-service teachers, as well as researching the supports and barriers to sexuality education with teachers in the system over the past few years. One such moment is reflected in rhetoric about parents. Andersen suggests that mid-century American "school administrators, in turn, tended to assume that an angry phone call was the harbinger for an angry mob, whether the initial phone call came from a district parent or someone in a whole other state" (57). Last spring in New Brunswick, the education minister and premier publicly proclaimed that they received "hundreds of emails" complaining about gender and sexual diversity and inclusivity in schools, which later turned out to be, in fact, three emails.[11] *Le plus ça change.* Given the current climate, increasing parents' rights discourses, and moral panicking from Canada, the US, and elsewhere, *Touchy Subject* is required reading.

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Gary McCulloch, Antonio F. Canales, and Hsiao-Yuh Ku

*Brian Simon and the Struggle for Education*

University College London Press, 2023. 191 pp.

The third iteration of Canadian History of Education Association/Association canadienne d'histoire de l'éducation met jointly with the American History of Education Society in Vancouver in 1983. Brian and Joan Simon were among the attendees, and Brian's essay "Can Education Change Society?" was included in the post-conference

11 Jacques Poitras, "Minister tells Moncton school district he's repealing its gender identity policy," *CBC News,* April 26, 2024, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/district-education-council-gender-policy-1.7186501

publication, *An Imperfect Past*.[12] The essay rejected the one-dimensional answers to that question common in the sociological literature and argued for an approach to the history of education based on the fundamental Marxist tenet that people make history, under conditions inherited from the past, and in so doing, make and remake themselves. For Brian Simon, history of education is to be studied as a dialectical process, full of unintended consequences, but one in which members of various social groupings and classes learn from and are formed by activity and experience: as the foremost twentieth-century historian of education in England, Simon could make this claim with authority.

Brian Simon (1915–2002) was a life-long educational activist, policy critic, and historian. With Joan Peel Simon (1915–2005), as one commentator has noted, their historical work covered the period from 1485 to 2000. Joan's work ranged from foundational studies of Renaissance education and the secretaryship of the Communist Party's Historians' Group, to the translation, at the author's request, of Luria's *Speech and the Development of Mental Processes in the Child*, and to scathing criticism of Margaret Thatcher's education policy.[13] The Simons shaped the formation of the British Educational Research Association, the History of Education Society, and the International Standing Conference for the History of Education.

Brian Simon's life and legacy have been examined repeatedly both before and after his death, including in his attempt at autobiography, *A Life in Education* (1998). Gary McCulloch, Antonio F. Canales, and Hsiao-Yuh Ku's new short but densely detailed biography *Brian Simon and the Struggle for Education* revisits earlier work, but provides depth to accounts of Simon's origins, education, army service, and teaching career. Readers can learn more about Simon's attacks on the psychometric establishment and its practices. Chapters detail his role in the struggle for comprehensive education and in its defense in the wake of the Thatcher disaster. The book distinguishes itself by placing Simon's trajectory squarely in that of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), which he shaped, and which shaped him and his work. Simon joined the Party at Cambridge in 1935 and there is no record of his leaving before its dissolution in 1991. Until about the early 1960s, he toed the Soviet-inflected Party line, remaining quiet publicly about the 1956 repression of Hungarian democracy, endorsing Lysenko's flawed analysis of genetics, and embracing a late-Pavlovian vision of psychology, positions he regretted later in life. He was boosterish about Soviet schools after a 1955 visit.

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12 Brian Simon, "Can Education Change Society?" in *An Imperfect Past: Education and Society in Canadian History*, ed. J.D. Wilson (Vancouver: UBC Faculty of Education 1984), 30–47. Older readers might remember that in Vancouver in 1983, little CHEA/ACHÉ (Canadian History of Education Association/Association canadienne d'histoire de l'éducation) and big American HES (History of Education Society) held a joint conference using HES's model: session chairs introduced papers, telling the audience what they were about to hear; presenters presented; discussants told the audience what they had heard; and there was little if any time left for questions. The model embodied a didactic approach Simon disliked. When an after-banquet speaker then spoke at great length, I was seated beside the Simons and started throwing paper airplanes. Brian gleefully joined in this breach of decorum, despite Joan's tut-tutted "Brian!" CHEA/ACHÉ has not had voluble chairs, discussants, nor lengthy banquet lectures since, although paper airplanes sometimes still fly. We do typically have lots of time for discussion and debate.

13 Ruth Watts, "Obituary: Joan Simon (1915–2005)," *History of Education* 35, no. 1 (2006): 5–9.

To my reading, the present book is especially interesting for its account of Simon's role in the CPGB's National Cultural Committee, which he chaired from 1962 until 1975. The Party had effectively no presence in the cultural domain beyond music in the 1950s. Simon used his position to pursue a project of engaging professionals and intellectuals in order both to renovate Marxist theory in light of the 1960s cultural revolution and the rise of cultural studies and to encourage the spread of Marxist analysis across scientific and academic disciplines and into the arts. The project might provide a Party response to the New Left, but Simon was also open to the creation of a broad front in the cultural arena.

What the authors suggest may have been "the most notable public intellectual contribution of his entire tenure as head of the committee" (104) was Simon's 1967 brochure "Questions of Ideology and Culture." It contained a total rejection of socialist realism as well as of the equation of the democratization of art with the popularization of art. Popularity was not a measure: the formation of taste itself had to be understood. At the same time, the document defended democracy and insisted that socialism could be a multi-party system. After Vatican II, religion might be a source of solidarity. And Marxism was clearly a humanism. Simon wanted to encourage the engagement and promotion of a younger generation of intellectuals working in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, although he too was concerned about the individualist tendencies he saw in demands by such people for greater autonomy in the wake of the Soviet smashing of the "Prague Spring." Having himself sacrificed so much for the Party, he insisted on a continuing support for democratic centralism; and yet he was disgusted by the Soviets' expulsion of Solzhenitsyn and by the stances of the Stalinists in the British Party. Against strong internal Party resistance, in 1971 he agitated for a revival of the *Weeks of Marxist Debate* which he had promoted in the previous decade., Effectively, he sought to promote the new academic Marxism.

The realization of Simon's project came ultimately from the Party periphery, from communist university students in the Radical Student Alliance, formed in 1966, who were also a minority in the Party's National Student Committee. With Simon's support against a conservative student majority, in 1969 they organized the Communist University of London (CUL).[14] From modest beginnings as a party school, the CUL opened itself to general attendance with non-party presenters from 1974, and at the height of its popularity in 1977-8, drew more than a thousand attendees to its courses. In close collaboration with *Marxism Today*, which published articles from younger intellectuals on changing social relations and cultural issues in the same period, and with the party publishing house Lawrence & Wishart, CUL effectively realized the proposals from Simon's 1967 brochure. CUL embodied a broad left strategy, and its publications promoted a renewal of Marxist theory, as we can see in the work of figures such as Stuart Hall.[15] For his part, Simon retired from the chair of the

14 Unfortunately, McCulloch et al.'s account of the origins of CUL is flawed, with corrections forthcoming. A better account is in Geoff Andrews, *Endgames and New Times* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2004), 39–60.

15 For instance, Stuart Hall, "The 'Political' and the 'Economic' in Marx's Theory of Classes," in Classes and Class Structure, ed. Alan Hunt (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), 15-60.

Culture Committee in 1975 to pursue his political work in educational practice and to complete the later volumes of his *Studies in the History of Education*, while engaging in new projects, such as classroom ethnography.

Brian Simon comes across as a fascinatingly complex character in this biography, born into wealth and privilege but tirelessly campaigning for an egalitarian and democratic society. A loyal party man, toeing the party line in public as he followed its vagaries, but working within the party to undermine its authoritarian, anti-intellectual tendencies. Insisting on democratic centralism but opening spaces for the autonomous work of intellectuals and cultural producers. A brilliant historian, attentive to the long term and to the unintended consequences of political projects, pushing for democratic reform of educational provision, then forced to fight the rearguard action against Tory populist reaction. This book makes for a rewarding read. What we need now is a similar volume focused on Joan Peel Simon.

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Leo Baskatawang

*Reclaiming Anishinaabe Law: Kinamaadiwin Inaakonigewin and the Treaty Right to Education*

University of Manitoba Press, 2023. 224 pp.

Many Indigenous nations today are revitalizing their laws in a written form. This endeavour raises questions about reducing our teachings to writing and about which level of Indigenous governance should undertake this work. Leo Baskatawang's book, *Reclaiming Anishinaabe Law: Kinamaadiwin Inaakonigewin and the Treaty Right to Education*, offers valuable insights on these topics.

Professor Baskatawang documents Grand Council Treaty 3's draft education law — Kinamaadiwin Inaakonigewin — including both its content and the process of articulating it in a written form. Chapter 1 argues for the transformation of education from a force of colonization (as epitomized by the residential school system) to a means of saving and celebrating Indigenous languages, worldviews, and ways of knowing (16). Baskatawang's rationales in support of Indigenous control of Indigenous education are both principled (Indigenous self-determination and resurgence) and consequentialist (potential solutions to the global ecological crisis) (16, 17). In chapter 2, Baskatawang references the teachings of Elder Fred Kelly to explain that the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty 3 has an inherent right of self-determination, which includes the right of self-governance over education (9, 47, 53). While Canada recognized this right when it entered into Treaty 3, the right is bestowed by the Creator (9, 48). This chapter adds to the body of research about Treaty 3 and Anishinaabe pedagogy that has been produced by members of Treaty 3 First Nations such as Sara