

Greer, Allan and Ian Radforth, eds. *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-nineteenth-century Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. Pp. Xii, 328. \$22.95 paper

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frustration of a debutante's life in the Ottawa of the Thirties—during which she reveals what an oasis of culture the Scott home near Lisgar and Elgin represented:

Last Thursday I had tea alone with the Duncan Campbell Scotts at their house on Elgin St. The nice big room and the contented atmosphere and the sane language. I felt at home, although they were both polite to me—she especially asking about my foreign travels and other things which made me suspicious lest she be trying to make conversation and thaw me out or something else incompatible with mutual friendship. Left loving them both and walked all the way home in the cold. He lent me a book on the Rossettis, Morrisises, etc.<sup>2</sup>

One wishes also that, instead of Arthur Bourinot's brief poem "Night on the Ottawa River," John Bell had included an excerpt from his nostalgic autobiographical poem *To and Fro in the Earth*<sup>3</sup> (1963), a superb evocation of the Ottawa of early in the century, and the perfect companion piece for Joan Finnigan's poem "Ottawa and the Valley," that the editor wisely included here. Finnigan's poem, with its descriptions of middle class Centretown during the Depression, touches on one of the great mysteries of Ottawa life:

... the girl across the street  
with the "good job in the government"  
is home from "her good job in the  
government,"  
looking as sad about it as ever. (p.108)

There is a certain flat affect in Ottawa that emanates from its bureaucratic heart, and no literary work, to my mind, has yet transported us to the centre of paralysis—the Ottawa government office and the minds and hearts of the civil servants at work. Ottawa awaits its Joyce—that much is clear. But there is one astonishing omission in the book. The

omitted writer is a presence in some selections, and he wrote perhaps the quintessential Ottawa document. I refer, of course, to the diary of William Lyon Mackenzie King, whose presence haunts the city like that of no other man. Reminders of King are everywhere—from the statue of Sir Galahad he erected to his friend Henry Harper in front of the Parliament Buildings to the eerie maternal portrait in Laurier House to the synthetic ruins of Kingsmere—the classic Ottawa outing. One wonders on what editorial principle an excerpt from the King diary was excluded, for this is like a portrait of Paris without Proust or London without Pepys.

Even without Mr. King, *Ottawa: A Literary Portrait* is a worthwhile book, and should find a place on the bookshelf beside John Taylor's fine *Ottawa: An Illustrated History* (1986) and Sandra Gwyn's estimable *The Private Capital* (1984). But Ottawa is a harder portrait to paint than that of Halifax. Of Bell's two anthologies, I must quote Joseph Howe, who appears in both anthologies, about the Ottawa volume:

...although I prefer [the] City of Halifax, with its varied aspects, and fine sea views, still ... it is richly endowed and not unattractive to the eye. (p.43)

### References

1. Duncan Campbell Scott, *Untitled Novel, ca. 1905* (Moonbeam, Ontario: Penumbra, 1979).
2. Elizabeth Smart, "Ottawa, 1933-34," *Necessary Secrets: The Journals of Elizabeth Smart*, ed. Alice Van Wart (Toronto: Deneau, 1986), 61.
3. Arthur Bourinot, "To and Fro in the Earth: An Autobiography in Verse," in *To and Fro in the Earth* (Bourinot: 1963), 29-37.

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Greer, Allan and Ian Radforth, eds.  
*Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-nineteenth-century Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. Pp. Xii, 328. \$22.95 paper.

Unfortunately for historians of cities, *Colonial Leviathan* has less to say about the local state than about higher levels of government and public administration. Admittedly, in Radforth's article on Lord Sydenham's reforms, the apparatus of local government is assigned its proper importance among the administrative innovations of the 1840s. But only Greer treats a specific activity of urban public administration—policing—and this only in his literature summary preceding a discussion of rural police. As the editors point out, however, stimulation rather than comprehensiveness was their object. And undoubtedly, urban historians will find much that is suggestive in this nicely assorted sampling of recent historical writing on state formation between 1830 and 1870.

In spite of the usage "state formation" in the sub-title, neo-Marxist sociology is not uniformly the book's unifying perspective. For instance, Douglas McCalla's piece on railways and economic development criticizes the "defensive expansionism" thesis simply in empirical terms, without altering the conceptual frame to take in matters of moral regulation and political legitimacy. Nor does Michael Piva speak to theoretical debates about bureaucratization in his masterful technical discussion of crisis-driven improvements in public finance administration. Peter Baskerville, discussing railway regulation, actively takes as his target Corrigan's and Sayer's "long waves" of revolution in government" whose conceptual presence is palpable in an essay such as Brian Young's broadly integrative piece on class and state formation in Lower Canada. With amplification by Greer's and Radforth's

lucid introduction, and enhanced in certain ways by juxtaposition, all the essays speak clearly to the question of how the social and the political are linked.

Behind this simply-stated question lie more complex ones, both historical and theoretical: Exactly what are the social and the political? How can the two be distinguished? From whence does our sense come that they need to be separated? As the topics covered in *Colonial Leviathan* suggest, these questions are usefully explored through analyses of developments in bureaucracy and law. In case after case, different contributors show how the routinizing and codification of values into these state forms anointed particular interests and perspectives with the sacred oil of objectivity. For example, in the case of the school inspectors discussed by Bruce Curtis, the impersonal (i.e., bureaucratic) authority of leaders took its specific content from the personal (i.e., social) values of the first cadre of notables enlisted in the service of public education. As Mariana Valverde and her co-authors suggest for gender relations in other areas of state expansion, this transfer of values reproduced in the state/society hierarchy the hierarchies of civil society. Often the growth of the state amplified the inequalities of social power that lay at its origin. On these questions, this collection leaves one wanting to know more about the tensions associated with the emergence of hierarchies *within* the state system. For example, did the local/provincial hierarchy, at its origins, carry the same meanings as at its decline in the 1930s?

Two of the essays stand out for their fresh conceptualization of the relations of state and civil society. Jean-Marie Fecteau's mainly theoretical piece brings to historians' attention a set of ideas with major research potential, not only for the nineteenth century (Fecteau's focus) but also for the twentieth. His subject is the

place of "associational life"—an abstraction that includes everything from business corporations to literary clubs—in relation to the state. Sketching changes in this relationship, he argues that the hostility towards associations inherent in eighteenth century liberalism became enthusiasm among nineteenth century liberals as, through mid-century, associations were redefined as manifestations of the individual will—i.e., as "voluntary" associations rather than feudal estates—and endorsed in a controlling legal framework. While association came to be seen as an aid rather than a threat to governance (think of agricultural improvement clubs or women's benevolent societies), it also had the potential to act as a counterweight to or even a replacement for the state, a potential contemplated explicitly in corporatism and various socialisms. In making these connections, Fecteau places associational life squarely in the political, reaffirming but refining the Thompsonian insight about how life ways are linked to political agency.

Graeme Wynn's considerably more accessible essay, focused on the Maritimes, is no less sophisticated than Fecteau's in its conceptualization of the social and the political. Stating his conclusion in a metaphor, he achieves that never-to-be-undervalued goal: complexity of apprehension combined with simplicity of expression. Having a horror of paraphrased poetry, I refer you to the original for Wynn's conclusions. What *can* be noted about his perspective is his satisfying historical sensitivity to multiple social identities, and his appreciation of how such identities were both based in state forms, and were the state's necessary underpinnings. Historians with a deep repugnance for abstraction will find some of *Colonial Leviathan* unbearable, but Wynn's piece nicely ends the collection by speaking to the lover of stories as well as to the philosopher in all of us.

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Frager, Ruth A. *Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Jewish Labour Movement of Toronto, 1900-1939*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. Pp. Xi, 300. Black and White Photographs, Statistical Appendices.

This is a judicious book: informed, careful, and precise. Ruth Frager takes clear and sophisticated positions on the class and ethnicity, and class and gender debates. The book, however, is not dryly analytical. Frager also conveys the heroism, humanly flawed as it was, that flourished in Toronto's Jewish labour movement between 1900 and 1939. In *Sweatshop Strife*, the empyrean abstractions of class, gender, and ethnicity are rendered alive and active in the Spadina neighbourhood's union halls, garment factories, and family kitchens. Here is one scholar truly answering Robert Harney's call for an "interior" history of immigrant communities.<sup>1</sup>

The questions Frager poses about social and political solidarities are not mere presentist theorizing. These are questions often discussed by Toronto's Jewish garment workers among themselves, as they made the critical decisions of organizational strategy. They asked searching questions about the politics of identity, such as: do our loyalties to other Jews require that we moderate our class-based demands, or will our interests as Jews ultimately be served best by leftist political action? Can we as Jewish wage-earning women rely on other women as allies, or are we better served by class bonds, or by ethnic ones? As these questions suggest, to sustain politically effective solidarities was difficult when competing communities made conflicting