

Transcending the Bounds of Nationalism: Contemporary Quebec Historiography

Michael D. Behiels

Volume 11, numéro 1, autumn 1981

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/acad11_1rv02

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

The Department of History of the University of New Brunswick

ISSN

0044-5851 (imprimé)

1712-7432 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce document

Behiels, M. D. (1981). Transcending the Bounds of Nationalism : contemporary Quebec Historiography. *Acadiensis*, 11(1), 115–137.

means to combine local creativity and local control of productive resources with the benefits of unity.²⁴

David Alexander knew only too well that grave warnings and fervent pleas did not resolve the profound historical dilemma which preoccupied him for almost ten years. But he was fortunate, as he well knew, to be one member of a thriving fraternity of scholars who will answer many of the questions raised in his time. In the end he returned to Newfoundland, to the weakening of the island's economic base and its dependent culture. His last essay is a bold advance in his thinking about Newfoundland, and it poses questions relevant to Canada as a whole: a strong economic base was essential to a viable society and culture, but is it possible that influences within that culture operated as independent variables, limiting growth and diversification of the economy.²⁵ The influences of culture, education and social structure now become central questions in the economic labyrinth of Newfoundland's history, and the art of this modest Daedalus has made it so. His legacy is the beginning of a new economic history for this region of Canada, and a challenge to those who survive him.

ERIC W. SAGER

24 "Convocation Address" (Memorial University, May 1978), published in *MUN Gazette*, X (June 1978), pp. 6, 13.

25 "Literacy and Economic Development in Nineteenth Century Newfoundland", *Acadiensis*, X (Autumn 1980), pp. 3-34.

Transcending the Bounds of Nationalism: Contemporary Quebec Historiography

Prior to the Second World War Quebec historiography reflected the concerns, values and aspirations of lay and clerical nationalists who concentrated on depicting the long struggle for survival of the conquered and beleaguered French-Canadian nation. As Serge Gagnon has demonstrated recently, the bulk of Quebec historiography from Garneau to Groulx focused on the history of New France which was portrayed in romantic and idealist terms as the crucible and golden age of the French-Canadian nation.¹ Since the War there has occurred a significant and continuing metamorphosis in Quebec historiography. While nationalism, in its modern secular and liberal clothing, remains an important element in much of Quebec's recent historiography, it must now compete with other ideologies, methodologies and perspectives.²

1 Serge Gagnon, *Le Québec et ses historiens de 1840 à 1920* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978).

2 Fernand Ouellet makes this point quite eloquently in his "Historiographie canadienne et nationalisme", *Mémoires de la Société royale du Canada*, Série IV, XIII (1975), pp. 25-39.

This transformation of French-Canadian historiography was engendered by the development of faculties of social sciences and the establishment of history departments, staffed by the first generation of professional historians, in Quebec's Francophone universities in the 1940s. These historians were influenced by the secular methodologies of the newer social sciences as well as their perceptions of a rapidly changing Quebec society, its problems, its needs and new aspirations. As a result, French-Canadian historiography experienced within a generation an expansion in breadth as well as in depth. With the emergence of the quantitative and global approach of the *Ecoles des Annales*³ in the 1950s and the ideologies of socialism and marxism in the 1960s, there has been a refreshing and enlightening shift of emphasis from the nationalist-imbued political, constitutional and institutional historiography of the past to a thorough scrutiny of the socio-economic structural elements which underlay and contribute to the stagnation or the development of all institutions, ideologies and the people who create and use them. This reviewer has chosen to concentrate on five themes in modern Quebec history: economy and society, the Church and education, ideologies, organized labour and the working class, and politics and political institutions. Certain areas such as material history, demographic and geographic studies, agricultural history, urban history, business history and the history of Quebec's non-Francophones are all alive and thriving and would confirm the author's premise that nationalism has been transcended. There has been some very exciting work pertaining to New France and a veritable explosion of quite uneven studies covering Quebec's "Quiet Revolution". Alas, the lack of space simply precluded an assessment of the literature devoted to these themes and periods.

A quick and easy entry into Quebec economic history from the fur trade to Hydro-Quebec can be found in *Economie québécoise* (Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1969), edited by Robert Comeau, which contains a number of interesting historiographic essays as well as several studies on the socio-economic thought of traditional French-Canadian nationalists. A disciple of the *Ecole des Annales*, Fernand Ouellet, pioneered a reinterpretation of Quebec political and constitutional history by analysing the long-term economic and social structural changes taking place in Lower Canada after the Conquest. His *Economic and Social History of Quebec* (Toronto, Gage, 1980), first published in 1966, challenged quite successfully the thesis advanced by the Montreal school of neo-nationalist historians — Guy Frégault, Maurice Séguin and Michel Brunet — to the effect that the economic inferiority of French Canadians and the non-existence of a Francophone "grande bourgeoisie" stemmed from the military/political conquest of 1760-63. Ouellet argued that both

3 For a critical assessment of the influence of the *Ecole des Annales* on Quebec historians and historiography see Alfred Dubuc, "L'influence de l'école des *Annales* au Québec", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 33 (1979), pp. 357-86.

these phenomena were caused by the French-Canadian society's inability and unwillingness to abandon its ancien régime socio-economic values and institutions and adopt values and institutions required by the rapidly emerging commercial capitalism introduced by the progressive Anglo-Scottish merchants. On the political level, the villains responsible for impeding modernization of the French-Canadian society were the emerging Francophone petite bourgeoisie and its political arm, the parti patriote led by Louis Joseph Papineau. Under the guise of nationalism, as self-appointed defenders of the French-Canadian nation, the Francophone petite bourgeoisie struggled for increased political powers which could be wielded to overcome its growing economic inferiority in a rapidly changing environment. This historical drama is told forcefully and comprehensively in Ouellet's recent award-winning *Lower-Canada, 1791-1840* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1980). Ouellet plays down the Weberian concept of contrasting mentalities stressed in his early work and emphasises the secular difficulties facing agriculture in Lower Canada. He concentrates on analysing the emergence of a generalized socio-economic crisis in Lower Canada which fuels the development of nationalism and ends ingloriously in the revolutionary activities of 1837-38. Louis-Joseph Papineau receives the bulk of the blame for the disaster. While *Lower Canada* certainly has shortcomings,⁴ one of which is Ouellet's unwillingness to see the need, in part, of a political resolution of the socio-economic and ideological power struggle between the Francophone and Anglophone bourgeoisies, Ouellet's work will, no doubt, loom large in any "definitive" history of Lower Canada before Confederation.

Challenging Ouellet for a say in that "definitive" history are two contemporaries, Gilles Paquet, an economist at Carleton, and J.P. Wallot, an historian at the Université de Montréal. They have attacked Ouellet's interpretation of the period on several fronts and in the process have initiated a controversial and at times polemical debate. Setting Lower Canada in the context of the Atlantic Revolution interpretation developed by R.R. Palmer, D.C. North and F. Mauro, Paquet and Wallot argue in a number of important articles that commercial capitalism was becoming the modernizing motor force of the economy of Lower Canada in the early nineteenth century. They question, with the use of a quantitative model, the existence prior to 1815 of the generalized "agricultural crisis" in Lower Canada which in Ouellet's interpretation of the period precipitates the emergence of French-Canadian nationalism and accounts for the intense political, constitutional and class struggles which ensued between the parti patriote and the British rulers and Anglo-Scottish entrepreneurs in Lower

4 Pierre Tousignant has written a lengthy critical review of Ouellet's recent work in which he analyses carefully the evolution in Ouellet's interpretation since his imposing 1966 study, *Histoire économique et sociale du Québec*. He also questions the statistical evidence — export records of wheat and flour and the tithe on wheat — Ouellet uses to demonstrate the onset of an agricultural crisis after 1802. ("Le Bas Canada: Une étape importante dans l'oeuvre de Fernand Ouellet", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 34 (1980), pp. 415-36).

Canada.⁵ In *Patronage et pouvoir dans le Bas-Canada (1794-1812): un essai d'économie historique* (Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1973) Paquet and Wallot offer their explanation of the socio-political crisis of the period. Commercial capitalism and market pressures suddenly but perceptibly restructured and modernized socio-economic institutions in Lower Canada between 1792 and 1812. The two bourgeoisies, Francophone and Anglophone, locked themselves in an inevitable struggle for power and self-preservation and both groups attempted to modernize existing political institutions for their own benefit. The end result was the neutralization of the state, increasing political instability and socio-economic stagnation, all felt and perceived differently by the various social and ethnic groups. The bitter and intense struggle over patronage, i.e., the civil list, is portrayed as a microcosm of this larger, global contest for power. Wallot's *Un Québec qui bougeait* (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1973) contains an excellent bibliography and a number of interesting essays dealing with Governor Craig, the Church and the seigneurial regime. In reality, the interpretations offered by Ouellet, Paquet and Wallot are not as divergent as they first appear. Anyone attempting a "definitive" synthesis of this formative era will, no doubt, reach conclusions which incorporate most of the major insights of both approaches. That this is already happening is a healthy sign that the clash of nationalisms between the Montreal School and the Laval School is no longer a major force in the evolution of Quebec historiography.

The industrial revolution brought profound changes to Quebec's economy. These changes are portrayed in a systematic, coherent fashion by Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby in their *Histoire économique du Québec, 1851-1896* (Montréal, Fides, 1971). They demonstrate convincingly how agricultural specialization and the transportation revolution were as important as the 1879 National Policy and foreign investment in bringing about the transition from commercial to industrial capitalism. By the end of the nineteenth century the modernization process was incomplete and camouflaged structural weaknesses and traditional inequities. Despite valiant efforts, the economic inferiority of French Canadians was accentuated and the traditional clerical and professional petite bourgeois elites continued to exercise their control over a French-Canadian society in flux and transition. These elites "s'accrochent au modèle de la chrétienté rurale en terre laurentienne. Influencées par les courants de pensée ultramontain et agriculturiste d'Europe, les yeux fixés sur Rome et non sur la réalité québécoise, elles raidissent leurs positions idéologiques et font passer leur mythe par l'école, le prône, le confessionnal et la presse catholique" (p. 376). This social and ideological conservatism only served to accentuate their back-

5 Gilles Paquet et Jean-Pierre Wallot, "Crise agricole et tensions socio-ethniques dans le Bas-Canada, 1802-1812: éléments pour une ré-interprétation", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 26 (1972), pp. 185-237; and "International Circumstances of Lower Canada, 1780-1810: Prolegomenon", *Canadian Historical Review*, LIII (1972), pp. 371-401.

ward mental outlook on economic development and aggravated economic disparities between classes and ethnic groups.

Adding colour and depth to the work of Hamelin and Roby is Albert Faucher's *Québec en Amérique au XIXe siècle* (Montréal, Fides, 1973). The relative under-development of Quebec vis-à-vis Ontario, contends Faucher, was due primarily to the forces of continental capitalism and technology centred in New York, which, for geographic and other reasons, favoured south-west Ontario over Montreal and Quebec. In short, Quebec's lack of political sovereignty was not a crucial factor in determining the region's rate of economic diversification and growth. As a result, a major component of French-Canadian nationalist ideology was refuted by careful scholarship. Other studies have contributed to this dismantling of the nationalist interpretation of Quebec history. Gerald Tulchinsky's *The River Barons: Montreal Businessmen and the Growth of Industry and Transportation 1837-53* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1977) portrays Montreal's transition from pre-industrial to industrial metropolis by focusing on the transportation revolution from the age of wind and water into the new age of steam and iron. Montreal's socially and ethnically diverse business community proceeded to invest some of its accumulated capital from the staple trade and transportation ventures into industrial undertakings located along the Lachine Canal, a major hydraulic energy source. French-Canadian entrepreneurs did participate, on a strictly regional basis, in this development and the process was not merely "defensive expansionism" to protect the traditional staple trades. The River Barons were motivated by a genuine belief in economic progress. Similarly, *Promoters and Politicians: The North-Shore Railways in the History of Quebec, 1854-85* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1978) by Brian Young questions long-accepted interpretations by demonstrating the prominent role played by the Quebec government — narrowly avoiding bankruptcy — and the Catholic Church in the construction of the North-Shore line which formed an integral part of the CPR after 1885. The Groupe de recherche sur la société montréalaise is in the process of confirming the existence and importance of a French-Canadian commercial and industrial bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century. Paul-André Linteau, Jean-Claude Robert and Jean-Paul Bernard are demonstrating the existence of a strong and active French-Canadian petite bourgeoisie which wielded considerable power over the Francophone urban proletariat because of its almost monopolistic control of real estate. Furthermore, many French Canadians formed part of the "moyenne bourgeoisie" which, through regional banks and credit and insurance companies, initiated and underwrote small and medium-scaled Francophone commercial and industrial projects.⁶ This is a far cry from the traditional stereo-

6 Paul-André Linteau, "Quelques réflexions autour de la bourgeoisie québécoise, 1850-1914", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 30 (1976), pp. 55-66; Linteau and Jean-Claude Robert, "Propriété foncière et société à Montreal: Une hypothèse", *ibid.*, 28 (1974), pp. 45-66;

type of a monolithic, backward, church-dominated, French-Canadian society depicted in most histories of nineteenth-century Quebec.

The major theme running through the economic history of twentieth-century Quebec is the economic inferiority of French Canadians and their society.⁷ Thanks to the work of André Raynauld and other economists, the long held notion that this economic inferiority was the result of the "backwardness" of Quebec's economy has been laid to rest.⁸ A tradition of political economy has never taken root in Quebec but a recent study by Yves Roby, *Les Québécois et les investissements américains, 1918-1929* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1976) is an excellent beginning. The title fails to indicate the complete range of topics and material dealt with by the author, who examines the issue of American investment from the perspective of four groups: the Taschereau government and the Liberal press, the official opposition and the Conservative press, the Church and the clerical press, and the nationalist movements. What emerges from this analysis is the existence of two major currents of thought in French-speaking Quebec. The mainstream current is an ideology of development, progress and liberalism which was harnessed by the Taschereau Liberal government to justify its generous policies towards resource development and open encouragement of American investment. The second ideological current of conservation and protest was the preserve of lay and clerical nationalists who feared that the massive industrialization and urbanization associated with foreign investment would destroy the traditional, predominantly rural and Catholic, French-Canadian nation. There was also a strong concern that continued foreign investment would undermine the relatively recent commitment of many nationalists to a strategy of economic liberation and independence for French Canadians. Roby is quite critical of the nationalists and charges them with exaggerating "les indices de la faiblesse économique des Canadiens français et à surestimer la puissance des Américains au Québec" (p. 212). This misrepresentation of the situation, he argues, only served to reinforce the out-moded perceptions and solutions of traditional nationalists, who continued to advocate measures such as colonization, agricultural reform, government sup-

and Jean-Paul Bernard *et al.*, "La structure professionnelle de Montréal en 1825", *ibid.*, 30 (1976), pp. 383-415. See also Ronald Rudin, "A Bank Merger unlike the others: the Establishment of the Banque Canadienne Nationale", *Canadian Historical Review*, LXI (1980), pp. 191-212.

7 See René Durocher and Paul-André Linteau, dirs., *Le 'Retard' du Québec et l'infériorité économique des Canadiens français* (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1971) for an overview of the literature pertaining to this theme.

8 *Croissance et structures économiques de la province de Québec* (Québec, Ministère de l'industrie et du commerce, 1961). After 1870 Quebec's manufacturing sector developed at the same rate as that of Ontario. What Raynauld's study did reveal was the persistence of certain structural weaknesses and lower industrial wages per capita in Quebec. He offers a number of convincing reasons for these anomalies.

port for small and medium scale French-Canadian businesses and the need to instil a greater sense of national pride in all classes of French Canadians to support their own rather than foreign business ventures. Roby's study is important because it helps to destroy the traditional view of Quebec as a monolithic, church-ridden, rural conservative society in which nationalism and the nationalists held sway. The degree to which liberal values and tenets of economic development had permeated Quebec are well illustrated by the strong political support for the Taschereau Liberal government throughout the 1920s. In short, ideological pluralism prevailed in French-speaking Quebec long before the 1960s.

Although the Quebec Catholic Church was for centuries one of the most important and influential institutions in the lives of French Canadians, the full history of that institution, especially for the period since the Conquest, remains largely unwritten. An excellent but somewhat thin survey can be found in *Histoire de L'Eglise catholique au Québec, 1608-1970* (Montréal, Fides, 1971) by Nive Voisine, André Beaulieu and Jean Hamelin. Léon Pouliot's comprehensive five-volume biography, *Monseigneur Bourget et son temps* (Montréal, Bellarmin, 1955-1977) provides a descriptive narrative of the major issues confronting the Quebec Catholic Church as well as a sympathetic but mildly critical assessment of the most vocal proponent of ultramontane catholicism between 1840 and 1876. The author's documentation is extensive and detailed, with some of the more central documents reprinted in lengthy appendices, but what does not emerge from this lengthy biography is an understanding of the social forces and classes behind the ideological struggle between liberalism and ultramontanism. *Louis-François Laflèche, deuxième évêque de Trois-Rivières* (Saint-Hyacinthe, Edisem, 1980), the first of a two-volume biography by Nive Voisine, is a finely crafted study of the upper levels of Quebec's Catholic Church, which sorts out reasonably well Laflèche's role in the numerous conflicts of Church and State. This, unfortunately, leaves limited space to recount the bishop's relationship with the priests and the faithful of his diocese. The author maintains in his conclusion that all Quebec's bishops were ultramontane, including the "liberal" Taschereau; some were moderate, others like Laflèche were intransigent, and a small vocal group are labelled fanatics. Is this not stretching the interpretation of the ideology of ultramontanism to the point where it becomes a less enlightening analytical tool? Does it not reintroduce the notion that Quebec's Catholic Church was a monolithic entity uniformly opposed to the modern world and everything that it exemplified? Perhaps Nive Voisine will clarify these problems in his second and final volume.

Several monographs deal with particular segments or activities of the Church. Richard Chabot recounts the fascinating struggle between the professional petite bourgeoisie and the local clergy for social and ideological dominance in his *Le Curé de campagne et la contestation locale au Québec (de 1791 aux troubles de 1837-38)* (Montréal, Hurtubise HMH, 1975). He portrays

the local parish priests as the arch-defenders of the ancien regime while the local secular professional elites championed the cause of liberalism. Yet he fails to define the nature of this liberalism. Was it essentially political, as was the case for most of the supporters of the parti patriote? Did this liberalism entail the wholesale dismantling of ancien regime institutions, the modernization of agriculture, the abolition of the tithe, the seigneurial regime and the coutume de Paris? If these local professional elites had been radicalized to the point claimed by Chabot, why was there not much wider rural support for the parti patriote in 1837-38? Surely, the mere presence of parish priests hostile to change is not sufficient to explain the failure of the habitants to rise up in hopes of improving their lot.

Was the Catholic Church an impediment to economic development in Quebec? Most of the literature has replied, either implicitly or explicitly, in the affirmative. Albert Faucher questioned this view in the 1950s in his work on the Quebec economy. William Ryan added substance to the emerging revisionist approach to the subject with his study *The Clergy and Economic Growth in Quebec, 1896-1914* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1966). Concentrating on the regions of the Mauricie and Chicoutimi-Lac St. Jean, Ryan illustrates that the local clergy, with the approval of their bishops, often initiated and encouraged industrial development. The prime motive was to slow down and, if possible, stem the tide of rural depopulation to the United States and the large urban centres of Quebec. Yet, Ryan's conclusion that the Church's role was positive "without being either decisive or determining" is questionable in the light of the Church's hostile attitude toward the modernization of education, especially to the Gouin government's strong determination to create technical and business schools for French Canadians.⁹

Church-State relations in the period 1920-1936 are dealt with in Antonin Dupont's *Les relations entre l'Eglise et l'Etat sous Louis-Alexandre Taschereau* (Montréal, Guérin, 1973). The author argues that the Liberal government's secularizing and interventionist designs in the area of social policy and education prompted a strong counter-reaction by the Church. This clerical opposition contributed considerably to the defeat of the Taschereau administration in the election of 1936. This interpretation is not fully supported by the sketchy and often contradictory nature of the documentation presented. The subject of Church-State relations is treated with greater sensitivity and historical accuracy and enlightenment in the work of B.L. Vigod.¹⁰ The Taschereau government's

9 Of the Church in this period Albert Faucher writes: "...même si le clergé a produit une certaine espèce de bourgeoisie. . . , il n'en demeure pas moins que cette engeance instruite a rendu un mauvais service à l'économie québécoise en attirant dans ses rangs, ou en les refoulant dans les professions paraecclésiastiques dites libérales parce que l'esprit y jouait un rôle plus grand que le corps, les meilleurs cerveaux les soustrayant ainsi aux tâches plus utiles au pays" (*Québec en Amérique au XIXe siècle*, p. 227).

10 B.L. Vigod, "'Qu'on ne craigne pas l'encombrement des compétences': le gouvernement

reforms in the field of education and social welfare, it appears, merely allowed these traditional, church-controlled institutions to survive at the increased expense of Quebec's taxpayers. The state, in return, gained a wider range of patronage opportunities very useful for the governing Liberal party.

The history of education in Quebec has not, by and large, attracted the attention it deserves from contemporary French-Canadian historians, perhaps due to the strong ties between education and the Church and the identification of education prior to the reforms of the 1960s with the worst features of the ancien régime. An indispensable tool for the novice is Louis-Phillippe Audet's two-volume *Histoire de l'enseignement au Québec* (Montréal, Holt, Rinehart et Winston, 1971), a comprehensive overview with selections of documents and bibliographies at the end of every chapter. The sections dealing with the twentieth century are the weakest, especially concerning post-secondary and technical education. This, no doubt, reflects the paucity of solid monographs. The nineteenth century is better served, as the collection of articles by Marcel Lajeunesse, *L'éducation au Québec '19e et 20e siècles'* (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1971), demonstrates. His brief but helpful introduction reviews all the pertinent literature. Elementary education was not always so heavily dependent upon religious teaching personnel. While hastily written and marred by numerous printing errors, Labarrière-Paul's *Les instituteurs laïques au Canada français, 1836-1900* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1965) remains the best study on the topic. He recounts how and why lay teachers, who formed 96 per cent of the profession in 1836 but only 57 per cent by 1900, were displaced by religious personnel and made subservient to the objectives of the Catholic Church.¹¹ The social significance of the rural one-room schools is well documented and analysed in Jacques Dorion's *Les écoles de rang au Québec* (Montréal, Les Éditions de l'Homme, 1979). The author interviewed some forty retired teachers and inspectors in order to discover the influence these rural schools had on the popular mentality of their times.

No aspect of nineteenth-century history was immune to the bitter urban rivalry between Quebec City and Montreal. When the former's role as the dominant cultural and educational centre of Quebec was challenged by Montreal's desire for an autonomous French-language Catholic university, a lengthy and bitter struggle ensued. André Lavallée's *Québec contre Montréal, la querelle universitaire 1876-1891* (Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1974) is

Taschereau et l'éducation 1920-1929", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 28 (1974), pp. 209-44; and "Ideology and Institutions in Quebec. The Public Charities Controversy 1921-1926", *Histoire sociale/Social History*, XI (1978), pp. 167-82.

¹¹ See also his *Les Laïques et la presse pédagogique au Canada français au XIXe siècle* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1963). The development of lay teaching in the first half of the nineteenth century is dealt with in J.J. Jolais, *Jean-François Perrault (1753-1844) et les origines de l'enseignement laïque au Bas-Canada* (Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1969).

an extensively researched and informative monograph which illustrates many of the problems confronting Francophone university education. Montreal, contends the author, deserved its own autonomous university, not because ultramontanes desired an institution to disseminate their ideology, but rather because the city had become the leading urban centre in Quebec and throughout Canada. Unfortunately, the failure to sort out what is essential from what is peripheral clouds the author's line of argument and the author too often substitutes personal judgment for rigorous historical analysis.

One of Quebec's most important educational institutions has received long overdue consideration and study. Claude Galarneau's *Les collèges classiques au Canada français, 1620-1970* (Montréal, Editions Fides, 1978) begins to unravel the historical significance of an institution that was maligned unfairly in the iconoclastic mythology surrounding the Quiet Revolution. The concept of college-seminary, introduced by Bishop Laval, to prepare religious vocations and educate a lay elite devoted to the interests of the Church was followed faithfully until the 1960s. The bulk of the study is devoted to the twentieth century when the system experienced considerable growth, as well as growing criticism to reform its traditional curriculum. In the 1960s, the classical college was displaced by a public secondary system and the CEGEPs, because its functions were no longer considered essential and/or feasible in a dramatically altered society. The State, and not the Church, had become the dominant institution of national survival and development and its advocates quickly set out to create educational institutions geared to its needs and aspirations.

Intellectual history in Quebec has been, by and large, the history of ideologies. With the emergence of new ideological currents in the province after World War II, a keen interest in the history of ideologies developed. The resulting studies can be divided into two different approaches or schools of thought.¹² The first or traditional school can be characterized as idealist. Its practitioners study ideas as phenomena important in themselves and therefore emphasize the internal connections between ideas so as to portray a systematic context of ideas and their evolution. The materialists, on the other hand, seek out the external connections between ideas and action and perceive the genesis of ideologies in the prevalent socio-economic conditions. Ideologies are essentially the justifications and plans of action for society's various social groups and classes who formulate them to defend or advance their particular interests.

Drawing upon a highly selective range of secondary literature, Denis Monière, who is a strong proponent of the materialist approach, has produced a general synthesis of the "dominant" ideological currents. But *Le développement des idéologies au Québec* (Montréal, Editions Québec/Amérique, 1977), while in a

12 See John Higham, "Intellectual History and Its Neighbors", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 15 (1954), pp. 339-47 for a discussion of these two approaches, their contrasting underlying assumptions and consequences.

narrow sense a veritable *tour de force*, is seriously flawed for several reasons. Monière's study is imbued with what is presently a popular combination of neo-nationalism and socialism. Consequently, all important ideological movements in Quebec history are judged according to their contribution, negative or positive, to the dual struggle for national self-determination and political independence and the socio-economic liberation of the Francophone proletariat. The unfortunate result of this reading backwards of current concepts and political and class aspirations is a distortion of much of Quebec's ideological history. For example, ultramontane or conservative nationalism, of which the author is most critical, is portrayed as the dominant, indeed monolithic, ideology for a full century, 1850-1950. In fact, recent studies by Ralph Heintzman,¹³ Jacques Rouillard and Yves Roby have demonstrated the increasingly predominant influence of liberalism after 1900 and its articulation by business groups, organized labour and the Liberal party which retained power for over thirty years under Lomer Gouin and Alexander Taschereau. The dominant ideology, to which even the so-called nationalist Duplessis administration adhered, was economic liberalism. Ultramontane nationalism had become by the twentieth century, as demonstrated by its offshoots, social catholicism and social corporatism, an ideology of protest characterized by a state-of-siege mentality defending a rapidly vanishing pre-industrial society. Finally, Monière's synthesis reflects the weaknesses of the secondary literature and the lack of detailed monographs on the ideas of the *Ecole sociale populaire*, the cooperative movement and the *Bloc Populaire Canadien*.¹⁴

The nineteenth century has received considerable attention from intellectual historians, especially the ideologies of ultramontanism and liberalism. The metamorphosis of French-Canadian nationalism, as articulated by Louis-Joseph Papineau and the *parti patriote*, into the anti-statist, agriculturalist and messianic ultramontane nationalism of Bishop Bourget and Jules-Paul Tardivel is described with clarity and thoroughness in Jacques Monet's *The Last Cannon Shot; a Study of French-Canadian Nationalism, 1837-1850* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1969). A radical minority of French-Canadian nationalists, centred in the *Institut Canadien* and the *Rouge* movement, refused to support the Church's redefinition of nationalism. They reasserted their commitment to the principle of national self-determination and called for a comprehensive modernization of the tradition-bound, French-Canadian society. What ensued was a clash of nationalisms. Phillippe Sylvain describes the origins and development of this battle between liberalism and ultramontanism as a

13 Ralph R. Heintzman, "The Struggle for Life: The French Daily Press of Montreal and the Problems of Economic Growth in the Age of Laurier, 1896-1911" (PhD, York University, 1977).

14 A clear indication of what has been done and what needs to be studied carefully can be gleaned from Jean-Paul Bernard, dir., *Les idéologies québécoises au 19e siècle* (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1973). His introductory historiographical essay is excellent.

microcosm in the nineteenth-century conflict between the ideological forces of revolution and those of counter-revolution.¹⁵ For a more detailed and enlightening account of the ideological forces of "revolution" one must consult Jean-Paul Bernard's *Les Rouges: libéralisme, nationalisme et anticléricalisme au milieu du XIXe siècle* (Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1971), which analyses the Rouge press, recounts the movement's electoral successes and setbacks up to 1867, and recalls the *Institut Canadien de Montréal's* courageous but unsuccessful battle for survival with the Catholic Church. Bernard's explanation for the failure of the Rouge movement reflects, in part, his commitment to the neo-nationalism of the 1960s, with its secular, materialist and political interpretation of French-Canadian history. Ultramontane nationalism triumphed not because of its inherently superior value or coherent logic but rather because Quebec society was dominated by the Anglophone commercial bourgeoisie and the Francophone petite bourgeoisie allied with the clergy: "Le statut de minorité des Canadiens français dans l'Etat canadien, résultat de la Conquête, permet à la petite bourgeoisie et au clergé de définir le Canada français comme un groupe ethnique menacé de l'extérieur et qui ne peut survivre que par une cohésion totale derrière ses élites" (p. 321). Surely this is much too general and simplistic an explanation for the failure or unwillingness of the majority of the French-Canadian people, still largely living in a pre-industrial rural society with all its attendant values and ethos, to support the secular, nationalist and liberal society advocated by the Rouges. Considerably greater knowledge of the prevalent religious, cultural and social values is required before definitive conclusions can be formulated.¹⁶

Constrained by the same lack of understanding of the larger socio-cultural context is Nadia F. Eid's otherwise provocative study, *Le clergé et le pouvoir politique au Québec, une analyse de l'idéologie ultramontaine au milieu du XIXe siècle* (Québec, Hurtubise HMH, 1978). The author combines the idealist and materialist approaches to produce a comprehensive analysis and description of the political, religious, social and nationalist dimensions of ultramontane thought, as well as its impact on Quebec society and politics prior to 1871. The author accomplishes the first task of analysing these various components reasonably well in four long chapters. Unfortunately, the author, as one reviewer has pointed out, ignores the differences between the extremists and the moderates and exaggerates the importance of the former.¹⁷ Regrettably only one chapter is devoted to analysing the influence of ultramontanism and the cutoff date of 1871

15 Phillippe Sylvain, "Libéralisme et ultramontanisme au Canada français: affrontement idéologique et doctrinal (1840-1885)", in W.L. Morton, éd., *Le bouclier d'Achille* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1968), pp. 111-38 and pp. 220-55.

16 Cf. Fernand Dumont, "Idéologies au Canada français, 1850-1900: quelques réflexions d'ensemble", *Recherches sociographiques*, X (1969), pp. 145-56.

17 Philippe Sylvain, "Compte rendu", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 34 (1980), p. 108.

seriously weakens the author's thesis and general conclusions. The strong influence of ultramontanism, Eid contends, stems from the fact that the clergy "constituait un groupe social distinct, jouissant d'une identité propre, occupant une place spécifique au sein de l'échiquier social, et ayant, comme tel, des intérêts particuliers à défendre" (p. 17). If this was so, why the significant reverses of ultramontanism as a political force in the 1870s and 1880s and the decision of the moderates like Bishop Taschereau to end the open hostility of the Church toward the Liberal party and Catholics wishing to support it? Much more convincing evidence is required to substantiate the argument that the clergy operated as a distinct class using the political institutions to defend and promote its economic and social interests. Surely, the class interests of lay ultramontanes like Hector Langevin, F.-X. Trudel and J.-P. Tardivel were not completely identical with those of the priests and bishops! Unless, of course, ultramontanism transcended particular class interests and offered Franco-phones a shared "ethos" or world view. Pushing Philippe Sylvain's line of argument to its logical conclusion, Arthur Silver contends that French-Canadian "international" Catholicism, as articulated in the ideology of ultramontanism, was a form of religious and cultural imperialism shared, in varying degrees, by all classes in French Canada.¹⁸

As is often the case, certain articulate and charismatic spokesmen come to symbolize prevalent ideological currents. In the first half of the twentieth century two such Quebec spokesmen were Henri Bourassa and Abbé Lionel Groulx. Joseph Levitt offers a revisionist account in his *Henri Bourassa and the Golden Calf. The Social Program of the Nationalists of Quebec, 1900-1914* (Ottawa, Les Editions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1969) in which he places Bourassa and his colleagues in the context of both social Catholicism of Leo XIII and the American progressive movement. Yet Levitt does so without fully describing either of those ideologies. The diversity of interpretations of American progressivism ranges the full spectrum from populist liberal democracy to romantic anti-urban, anti-industrial, conservatism.¹⁹ In effect, by concluding that Bourassa and some of his nationalist colleagues were "utopian corporatists" (p. 144) Levitt appears to be saying they were fundamentally conservatives seeking ways to retain and restore the morally-imbued organic social structure of the traditional French-Canadian nation. If Bourassa remains an enigma, so does Groulx. A well researched and superbly written monograph by Susan Mann Trofimenkoff entitled *Action Française: French Canadian Nationalism in the Twenties* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1975) delineates

18 Arthur I. Silver, "Some Quebec Attitudes in an Age of Imperialism and Ideological Conflict", *Canadian Historical Review*, LVII (1974), pp. 440-60; and "An Introduction" in the English language edition of Jules-Paul Tardivel's *For My Country: 'Pour la Patrie'* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. vi-xxvii.

19 Cf. Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Movement* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1978), "A Critical Essay on Authorities", pp. 333-42.

Groulx's prominent role in the definition and dissemination of a Quebec-centred French Canadian nationalism. The author portrays the Action Française as "a hyphen in a nationalist tradition", an uneasy combination of the religious nationalism of Laflèche, Tardivel, and Bourassa with an emerging secular and political nationalism of Edouard Montpetit, Esdras Minville and Groulx. The author hints at, but never fully develops the argument that it was Groulx's Catholicism which, in the end, prevented Action Française from breaking with the past and coming to grips with the modern world. Some writers, namely P.M. Senese and Michael Behiels, see Catholicism as the central component of Groulx's life and thought.²⁰ Was Groulx, then, not more of an impediment to the transition than a harbinger of the future? Groulx's reaffirmation of his and French Canada's Catholicism in his memoirs seems to confirm the former interpretation.²¹

Confirming the vital influence of integral Catholicism on the values and ideas of French-Canadian nationalists during the inter-war years is Richard Jones' *L'Idéologie de 'l'Action catholique', 1917-1939* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1974). The counter-revolutionary state-of-siege mentality of this official organ of the Quebec Catholic Church was fuelled by international events like the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent spread of communism, the persecution of Catholics and the Catholic Church in France, Mexico and Stalinist Russia, and finally the Spanish Civil War. Little wonder then that *l'Action catholique's* editors displayed a naive and misguided support for Mussolini, Hitler and Franco, the great stars of the counter-revolution movement. On the domestic scene *l'Action catholique* was on the ramparts fighting all the battles of the Church against divorce, free and compulsory education, female suffrage, socialism, communism, social welfare and immigration. To counter these threats the editors advocated colonization, the "revenge of the cradle", catholic unions, corporatism, and social credit to undermine corporate capitalism. The newspaper's readership was predominantly rural but included the nationalist lay and religious élites of the cities. Perhaps the shrillness and intransigence of *l'Action catholique's* message was an indication that its support was eroding in the face of an emerging secular, liberal and pluralistic society.²²

Despite the considerable attention devoted to the 1930s the full nature and

20 P.M. Senese, "Catholique d'abord!: Catholicism and nationalism in the thought of Lionel Groulx", *Canadian Historical Review*, LX (1979), pp. 154-77; Michael Behiels, "L'Association catholique de la jeunesse canadienne-française and the Quest for a Moral Regeneration, 1903-1914", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, XIII (Summer 1978), pp. 27-41.

21 Lionel Groulx, *Mes Mémoires* (4 vols., Montréal, Fides, 1970-74).

22 A collection of essays edited by Fernand Dumont *et al.*, *Idéologies au Canada français 1900-1929* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1974) is somewhat disappointing in this regard. The majority of the studies focus on the nationalist and clerical periodicals and spokesmen, thereby simply reinforcing the notion of ideological homogeneity and stagnation which is not an accurate historical reflection of the era.

significance of the ideological developments of the period remain to be explained and analyzed in a comprehensive manner. André Bélanger's poorly argued, organized and written *L'Apoliticisme des idéologies québécoises. Le grand tournant de 1934-1936* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1974) does considerable disservice to the inordinately ideological complexity of this crucial decade. Concentrating on the nationalist and clerical press and their leading spokesmen, Georges Pelletier at *Le Devoir* and Lionel Groulx at *L'Action Nationale*, Bélanger concludes that they wallowed in an unrealistic, romantic and seemingly incurable apoliticism. Had the author also scrutinized the Liberal and Conservative press his thesis of apoliticism would have been shown to lack any foundation. His conception of politics is that of the Quiet Revolution, i.e., the formation of a liberal democratic or social democratic state, but to project this concept back on the nationalist and clerical ideologues of the 1930s is patently ludicrous. What could be more political than the attempt by these nationalist ideologues to restore a sense of community and conservative social values through the implementation of socio-economic corporatism? "On cherchait", writes a very perceptive Fernand Dumont, "sous les auspices du corporatisme, les voies de constitution d'une société où la politique descendrait si loin dans la texture de la société qu'elle finirait par en exprimer la substance de la vie".²³

In many respects the period between the end of World War II and the defeat of the Union Nationale in 1960 was a watershed in the evolution and metamorphosis of ideologies in Quebec. The leading proponents for a redefinition and reformulation of French-Canadian nationalism, like Gérard Filion, Jean-Marc Léger, Pierre Laporte, and André Laurendeau, articulated a devastating critique of traditional nationalism in the pages of *Le Devoir* and *l'Action Nationale*. In the process they developed a neo-nationalism which was more in tune with the urban, secular and liberal society of post-war Quebec. A wide selection of Laurendeau's writings and a lengthy introductory essay analysing the evolution of his thought can be found in *The Essential Laurendeau* (Toronto, Copp Clark, 1976) by Michael Behiels and Ramsay Cook. There was also the articulation of the ideology of liberalism and social democracy by the *Cité-libristes* namely Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, Gérard Pelletier, Charles Lussier, Pierre Juneau, and activists in the labour movement. They all distrusted the Quebec Liberal party and attempted unsuccessfully to create a viable third party between 1956 and 1959.²⁴

23 Fernand Dumont, "Les années 30: la première Révolution tranquille", in Fernand Dumont *et al.*, dirs., *Idéologies au Canada français 1930-1939* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978), pp. 1-20. Unfortunately, none of the articles pursues Dumont's critique of Bélanger's thesis by scrutinizing the ideology of corporatism. Neither do the articles, most devoted to the nationalist and clerical press, confirm Dumont's contention that the decade marked an ideological break with the past.

24 See Michael D. Behiels, "Prelude to Quebec's 'Quiet Revolution': The Re-emergence of Liberal-

Underlying much of the impetus for comprehensive social, economic and political modernization of Quebec society and, in time, adding considerable weight to the preachings of neo-nationalists and *Citéliristes* was a wide ranging and increasingly vocal coalition of special interest groups and voluntary associations. Organized labour, the cooperative and *Caisses populaires* movements, the private social service and health institutions, municipalities, Chambers of commerce, and teachers organizations at all levels, undertook separately and jointly an analysis of their own internal shortcomings as well as the common problems confronting French-Canadian society in Quebec. This awakening process is well described in Jean-Louis Roy's *La Marche des Québécois, le temps des ruptures, 1945-1960* (Montréal, Leméac, 1976). Unfortunately, the study lacks analysis of why this awakening and growing demand for reform took place after the War, since most of the problems had existed for decades. Finally, his contention that all of these interest groups and voluntary associations had come to the conclusion that the "modernisation de la société québécoise suppose des choix collectifs que seul l'Etat est en mesure d'assumer" (p. 339) is a generalization which distorts the historical reality of the period. The disagreement over the potential role of the state was intense and remained non-conclusive by 1960. What happened, in effect, was that the particular vested interests and varying perceptions of the role of the state of organized labour, the Church and the business community were glossed over by the increasingly powerful and influential ideology of neo-nationalism. The divergent views would emerge once again in the late 1960s.

Perhaps the most dramatic departure from the nationalist historiography of the past has come in the area of literature devoted to the history of working people and their organizations. Fernand Harvey's recently revised and expanded collection of essays by various authors, *Le mouvement ouvrier au Québec* (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1980) illustrates the high level of activity and progress in this field. Harvey has contributed a superb wide-ranging historiographical essay covering every important dimension of his field including the historical origins of workers' movements, their attempts at political action, some of their major strikes, inter-union rivalry and external influences. He has selected essays by Robert Babcock, Paul Bernard, Jean Boivin, Hélène David, Jacques Dofny, Margaret Heap, Jacques Rouillard, Louis-Marie Tremblay and himself. No area is left untouched and the reader is rewarded amply by the depth and breadth of the research and insights offered.

As of the moment there is no synthesis of the history of organized labour in Quebec apart from the one published under the auspices of the CSN and the CEQ for internal circulation.²⁵ One must rely on the limited material available

ism and the Rise of Neo-Nationalism, 1940-1960" (PhD, York University, 1978) for a description and analysis of ideological developments leading up to the Quiet Revolution.

25 Béatrice Chiasson *et al.*, *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier au Québec, 1825-1976* (Montréal et Québec, CSN et CEQ, 1979).

in the existing surveys of organized labour in Canada, a wide range of periodical literature,²⁶ or several excellent chapters in a new survey of Quebec history.²⁷ A recent monograph by Jacques Rouillard, *Les Syndicats nationaux au Québec de 1900 à 1930* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1979) helps immensely to remedy this situation. The title is somewhat misleading. This excellent study deals not only with the relatively unknown national unions but devotes considerable attention to the origins and development of the Catholic labour movement which, in part, developed out of the disintegration of the national unions after 1911. Rouillard provides an effective analysis of the varying ideologies of the internationals, the nationals and the Catholic unions and demonstrates how the tough realities of the industrial world forced the Catholic labour unions to adopt the same conception and practices of collective bargaining — organization by trade, closed shop, strike action — as their rivals the internationals. The traditional interpretation claims that this credibility gap between the actions of the Catholic labour movement and its ideology of social Catholicism and corporatism developed after the War and was symbolized by the 1949 Asbestos Strike. Rouillard's neo-nationalist assumptions account, in part, for his sympathetic revisionist account of the Catholic and nationalist Francophone unions but that neo-nationalism does not warp his reading of the historical record.

A comparison of the ideologies of the Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux and the Fédération des Travailleurs du Québec between 1940 and 1970 is provided by Louis-Marie Tremblay's *Le syndicalisme québécois* (Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1972). Unfortunately, the author simply limits himself to chronicling the changes in the official ideologies of the CSN and FTQ to arrive at the vacuous conclusion that by the late 1960s there had occurred "une convergence progressive des politiques globales de la FTQ et de la CSN au point que les structures de leurs idéologies comportent maintenant plusieurs éléments de base communs" (p. 242), without explaining why and how this evolution took place. Much more revealing and analytical accounts have been written by F. Isbester and Jacques Rouillard, both of whom try to explain the evolution of organized labour by relating ideological developments to the socio-economic changes taking place in Quebec society after 1945 and to the internal need to modernize their operations for greater effectiveness.²⁸

26 Apart from those reprinted in Harvey's *Le mouvement ouvrier au Québec*, one can profitably consult for the period after 1867 Louis Maheu, "Problème social et naissance du syndicalisme catholique", *Sociologie et Sociétés*, 1 (mai 1969), pp. 69-87; Jean-Claude St. Amant, "La propagande de l'Ecole sociale populaire en faveur du syndicalisme catholique, 1911-1949", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 32 (1978), pp. 203-28.

27 P.-A. Linteau, R. Durocher et J.-C. Robert, *Histoire du Québec contemporain. De la Confédération à la crise, 1867-1929* (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1979).

28 Fraser Isbester, "Quebec Labour in Perspective, 1949-1969", in Fraser Isbester and Richard Miller, eds., *Canadian Labour in Transition* (Toronto, Prentice Hall, 1971), pp. 240-66; Jacques

The historiography of the working class is not as advanced as that of organized labour but has attracted considerable attention in the past decade. A number of studies of uneven quality have attempted to portray and analyze the socio-economic and cultural conditions of Quebec's industrial work force in the period 1850 to 1930. The Regroupement de chercheurs en histoire des travailleurs québécois, under the directorship of Jean Hamelin, began the process with *Les travailleurs québécois, 1851-1896* (Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1973). Various authors recount the origins and early struggles of workers and the hostile reaction of the established clerical, business and political elites. The novelty of this synthesis stems from the fact that the discussion on the emergence of organized labour is placed, although somewhat superficially, in the socio-economic and cultural context of the lives of the workers, their families and communities. Considerably more research is required to confirm the group's thesis that a working-class consciousness had emerged by the 1890s.

Monographs like Jean de Bonville's *Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit: les travailleurs montréalais à la fin du XIXe siècle* (Montréal, L'Aurore, 1975) and Fernand Harvey's *Révolution industrielle et travailleurs* (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1978) will, no doubt, when combined with future studies, help historians to decide when and how a working-class consciousness emerged in Quebec. De Bonville combines a study of Jules Helbronner's labour reporting for *La Presse*, 1884-1895, with an analysis of the condition of the working class in Montreal in the last two decades of the century. He describes the economic expansion of the City, the prevailing working conditions, the salary scales, the material and social conditions of working class families and communities, the growth of organized labour and the unsuccessful attempts to enter the political arena. While de Bonville admits that the real wages of workers in the period improved, he remains unwilling to admit that this translated into any meaningful improvement in their general standard of living (p. 111). Lacking any empirical evidence, de Bonville accepts uncritically Lenine's theory that a social-democratic working class consciousness failed to emerge in Montreal because a Francophone bourgeois, socialist intelligentsia did not exist. A more detailed and lucid picture of the conditions of Quebec's working class emerges from Fernand Harvey's exhaustive analysis of the two volumes of testimony from 649 Quebec witnesses gathered in the 1889 *Report* of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital. His argument that the Commission has to be considered as a tool of social investigation for the governing Conservative party and the emerging industrial bourgeoisie appears sensible and well documented. The innovative aspect of *Révolution industrielle et travailleurs* is its vivid demonstration of the dramatic changes wrought in the daily lives of the workers, in the factories and in the homes, by the process of industrialization. At the heart of the growing sense of alienation and despair was the destruction of the traditional guilds and crafts along with the system of worker-employer relationship these represented. Technological change and a dramatic restructuring of

the workplace in terms of employer-employee relations were expressed in terms of a decline in the salaries, if not the demise, of the traditional trades, the employment of large numbers of unskilled workers including women and children, and the emergence of the "sweating system", and an oppressive system of fines and physical punishment for workers failing to obey obnoxious foremen and meet production quotas. Harvey is also sensitive to the impact of the industrial revolution on the socio-cultural values and behaviour of the workers. Unfortunately, his decision to restrict his inquiry to the testimony of witnesses before the Commission does not allow him to develop this important theme of social history.

The lot of the workers did not improve with the coming of the twentieth century. In fact, the picture which emerges from Terry Copp's *The Anatomy of Poverty. The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1974) is uniformly bleak and depressing. All of the extant evidence points to a continued deterioration in both the quantity and quality of life for Montréal's rapidly-expanding working class. Copp's revisionist attempt to discount religious, ethnic and ideological factors and seek an explanation for this continued deterioration in geographic and economic constraints facing Montreal is refreshing but not fully convincing. This narrow approach leaves too many questions unanswered and lets the traditional elites, francophone and anglophone, off the hook.²⁹ Somewhat more sophisticated and analytical is Jacques Rouillard's *Les travailleurs du coton au Québec 1900-1915* (Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1974). The author argues quite strongly that the terrible working conditions and extremely low salaries of the textile workers were related directly to the surplus labour force emanating from rural Quebec or imported by the employers from Great Britain. Only when demand for their products increased after 1906 and New England manufacturers competed for Quebec workers with higher salaries did the Quebec cotton industries improve wages and working conditions. What the study fails to elucidate is the significance of the role played by the French-Canadian petite bourgeoisie and the Church in preventing the predominantly French-Canadian workforce in the cotton factories from organizing more effectively to improve salaries and working conditions. In fact, the shortcomings of these monographs by Copp and Rouillard have been offset by a number of excellent articles dealing with the role of women in the Montreal labour force.³⁰

Rouillard, "Mutations de la Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada (1940-1960)", *Revue d'histoire l'Amérique française*, 34 (1980), pp. 377-405.

29 The same critique applies to Paul Laroque's "Aperçu de la condition ouvrière à Québec, 1896-1914", *Labour/Le travailleur*, I (1976), pp. 122-38.

30 Suzanne Cross, "The Neglected Majority: The Changing Role of Women in 19th Century Montreal", *Histoire sociale/Social History*, VI (November 1973), pp. 202-33; Marie Lavigne et Jennifer Stoddart, "Les travailleuses montréalaises entre des deux guerres", *Labour/Le travailleur*, II (1977), pp. 170-83; and "Ouvrières et travailleuses montréalaises, 1900-1940", in Marie

The field in which the new approaches to history have had the least impact is that of political history. Although there are exceptions to the rule, most of the political biographies remain excessively partisan and do not take into account the new material pertaining to the socio-economic and cultural dimensions of society. What is refreshing is the fact that most of the literature devoted to politics is no longer marred by the nationalist preoccupation with survival. Alastair Sweeny's *George-Etienne Cartier: A Biography* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1976) proffers the revisionist claim that Cartier, not Macdonald, was the dominant force and strategist of the Liberal-Conservative party. This might well be correct, but Sweeny provides no new evidence and what he does offer is marred by factual errors and misinterpretations. The long and tumultuous career of another ambitious Quebec politician is retold by Andrée Désilets in her *Hector-Louis Langevin, un père de la Confédération canadienne 1826-1906* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1969). The research is extensive and while the author's interpretation is highly sympathetic, even laudable, the reader does gain innumerable insights into the inner workings of the political and social life of Quebec's traditional bourgeois and clerical elites. The demise of Langevin in the 1890s signalled the rise to prominence of Wilfrid Laurier and the transformation of Quebec into a bastion of the Liberal party. This watershed development is analysed and explained in Blair Neatby's *Laurier and a Liberal Quebec* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1973). His Quebec-centred interpretation of the rise to power of the Liberal party has since been challenged by Lovell Clark and others and illustrates the need for a modern biography of Laurier and his times.

When it comes to Quebec provincial politicians, especially premiers, there is a complete dearth of serious academic studies. Robert Rumilly's forty-one volume *Histoire de la province de Québec (1940-1969)* is an indispensable gold mine of information on provincial politics and premiers but is marred by an almost total lack of analysis. One of Quebec's most controversial premiers, Maurice Duplessis, has been the subject of two recent biographies. Rumilly's two volume, 1500 pages, *Maurice Duplessis et son temps* (Montréal, Fides, 1978) is a wildly partisan memorial to "le chef". Nevertheless, Rumilly's access to Duplessis' correspondence, his active participation in the battles, internal and external, of the Duplessis regime 1944-1959, as well as his willingness to lend some credence to extra-parliamentary opponents and critics of the regime, enable him to provide solid contributions to our historical knowledge of this crucial era in the emergence of modern Quebec. Unfortunately, as much cannot be said of Conrad Black's *Duplessis* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1977), which in its evidence and approach resembles Rumilly's work. While he scrutinizes Duplessis' motives and ethics and reveals the operation of a ruthless

patronage system, all neglected by Rumilly, Black appears to admire his subject not in spite of these shortcomings but rather because Duplessis' authoritarianism appeals to him. Black portrays all Duplessis' critics as inane, self-serving, fuzzy-minded intellectuals deserving no attention whatsoever. In so doing, Black reflects the "Rhodesian" qualities of the Quebec Anglo-Scottish plutocracy from which he came and to which he owes much of his present status. In sum, Black has served "le chef" poorly. All of the recent biographies could have profited from a close reading of the essays offered in *Le personnel politique québécois* (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1972), edited by Richard Desrosiers. All the essays undertake a socio-economic analysis of Quebec's political elites since Confederation. For example, Robert Boily's revisionist study sheds considerable light on the reasons for the lag in political modernization during the Duplessis era, insights which Black and Rumilly might have used with considerable rewards.

Some attention has been directed toward Quebec political institutions. Henri Brun's *La formation des institutions parlementaires québécoises, 1791-1838* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1970) fills an enormous gap in our knowledge of those institutions prior to the achievement of responsible government and sheds new light on the nationalist/class struggle which peaked in the rebellions of 1837-8. Flawed by numerous factual errors and sloppy editing, *Le Conseil législatif de Québec, 1867-1967* (Montréal, Bellarmin, 1967) by Edmond Orban offers readers a competent survey of the declining importance and usefulness of Quebec's upper house in protecting the interests of the traditional clerical and secular elites. The first decade following Confederation was a formative period in Quebec provincial politics. Marcel Hamelin's *Les premières années du parlementarisme québécois, 1867-1878* (Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1974) is an excellent comprehensive synthesis of the first three provincial legislatures focusing on four or five major themes, which demonstrates that the major, almost exclusive, preoccupation of politicians was with the economic development of the province and each of its regions. The ideological disputes over liberalism, ultramontanism, provincial autonomy, minority rights and Church-State relations were conspicuous by their absence from the legislative debates.

A strong visual symbol and demonstration that Quebec historiography has matured immensely in the past two decades is the emergence of a new generation of modern textbooks. A group of Laval historians, under the direction of Jean Hamelin, has produced a well organized and clearly written comprehensive survey of Quebec history from pre-historic times to the present. *Histoire du Québec* (St. Hyacinthe, Edisen, 1976) provides a solid, sensitive overview of economic, social, cultural and political developments and succeeds quite successfully in integrating into a reasonable synthesis competing nationalist and anti-nationalist interpretations. The text has three shortcomings. The history of

Quebec's English-speaking minority is conspicuous by its almost total absence, less than 30 per cent of the text is devoted to the period since Confederation, and the bibliographical references are far too sketchy. Fortunately, a recent survey by Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert, *Histoire du Québec contemporain. De la Confédération à la crise, 1867-1929* (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1979) complements the former text admirably. Excellent chapters devoted to the geographic, demographic, economic, social, political, cultural and ideological developments destroy effectively the traditional portrait of a monolithic folk society led by an omnipresent Church and uniformly wedded to a conservative, anachronistic nationalism. What emerges from their excellent "objective" and balanced account is a panoramic view of a complex and pluralistic society attempting to come to terms with the benefits and the problems generated by the emergence of a new industrial social order. The only frustrating shortcoming of this survey is that the highly condensed chapters devoted to politics and political developments do not allow the authors to demonstrate very effectively how Quebec's political elites dealt with the social, class and economic tensions created by industrialization and urbanization. This is only a minor flaw in what is otherwise an excellent modern survey which reflects the dramatic professionalization of the discipline of history in the past three decades.

Quebec's historians clearly have abandoned the narrow road of constitutional and political history which was the servant of the ideology of nationalism in its conservative or liberal variations. They have turned to a close scrutiny of Quebec's social and economic institutions, the ideological currents underlying or challenging those institutions, and the elites which have governed and controlled them. While adopting new methodologies and approaches, more quantitative and analytic, the historical literature has not become hostage to any new dominant orthodoxy. But the significance and influence of ideas and ideologies remains a strong concern for Quebec historians even in the new fields such as economic development or the growth of organized labour and the working class. This preoccupation is, no doubt, a reflection of the fact that Quebec society, at all levels, has experienced in the past forty years a dramatic and exciting ideological debate covering the full spectrum from neo-conservative nationalism to revolutionary libertarian socialism. Not all of the recent historical literature is of equal quality or value. Many of the studies suffer from an overly academic writing style and organization, but the high quality of the two new textbooks mentioned above indicates that Quebec's professional historians understand the value of a history well-told. Overall, the bulk of the material reviewed is of sufficient quality in terms of methodologies employed, organization of content and argument, as well as writing style, to allow any sensitive reader to conclude that perhaps the past twenty years will be looked back upon as "a golden age" in Quebec historiography. Lord Durham's claim that Quebec had no history or no

culture, challenged so forcefully by F.X. Garneau, has been laid to rest forever by a post-war generation of professional historians. Contrary to Garneau they have done so without relying on the crutch of nationalism!

MICHAEL D. BEHIELS

The Relevance of Canadian History

W.L. Morton once described himself as a "relational historian". The appropriateness of that description is revealed in *Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W.L. Morton* (Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1980), a collection of Morton's essays published in the Carleton Library series and edited by A.B. McKillop. The description is, of course, far too modest, as Carl Berger has shown in his brilliant chapter on Morton in *The Writing of Canadian History* and as Brian McKillop reminds us in his perceptive introduction to this volume. By any standard of judgement, W.L. Morton must be ranked among the tiny number of historians of Canada who have deeply influenced the way we think and write about our past. Throughout his long career his unique contribution to historical writing was to discover, to understand and to explain the sometimes ironic, sometimes paradoxical, frequently baffling and often subtle relationships between local, regional and national loyalties; native, French, English and immigrant traditions; daily endeavours and high policy; cultural heritage and environmental influence that are the essence of our history. As McKillop remarks, no other historian "has been as sensitive to the parts within the Canadian whole, the sources of division and hostility, and the multitudinous particularities of Canadian life, while at the same time searching for the factors which make that whole greater than the sum of its constituent elements, thereby giving Canadian life its significance" (p. 10).

Morton's task was to identify and unravel the complex web of the past, whether it was "a nationalism cut athwart by a sense of sectional injustice" (p. 108), or the preservation of "the essentials of the greatest of civilizations in the grimmest of environments" (p. 184), or "the unique nature of the Canadian community, a political community without nationalism or ideology, a community of political allegiance alone" (p. 254), or the reconciliation of "the legal authority of the Crown with the democratic power of the people" (p. 209). In "Seeing an Unliterary Landscape", an essay rich in the elegant phrases and sweeping associations of a master historian, Morton explained that he sought "two things": "One was to see my world only in some more penetrating way than casual sight afforded; the other was that others should also see more in it than met the unaided eye" (p. 22). Acutely aware that his were the aspirations of