

Les treize articles de ce livre intéresseront nombre de spécialistes en sciences sociales, féministes ou pas, qui utilisent l'histoire orale dans leurs recherches.

L'histoire par les femmes, pour les femmes et au sujet des femmes est indispensable à l'élaboration de l'histoire des sociétés. Il existait donc un besoin urgent de réaliser un recueil d'articles comme *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. Ces textes ne sont pas seulement des morceaux de littérature intéressants, mais ils sont aussi l'expression de la recherche féministe actuelle dans le domaine de l'histoire orale.

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Allan Greer and Ian Radforth, eds. — *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. Pp. xi, 328.

*Colonial Leviathan* identifies itself with new historiographic trends towards re-evaluating familiar material. Its editors comment: "Power is indeed coming to be a central preoccupation of historians of Canada more generally." This is not the sign of "a 'return to political history' in any simple sense"; rather, "social history and political history are engaged in a process of interpenetration, as neat distinctions between 'the social' and 'the political' begin to break down." The contributors, from a range of perspectives, have returned to the period from 1830 to 1870, the period of 'the Rise of Responsible Government,' out of a common interest in the concept of "state formation" (9).

*Colonial Leviathan* contains ten papers. It originated in a "workshop" held in 1989 and shows signs of its genesis. Two articles are aspects of larger works in progress, and thus difficult to assess in their own right. There is some casualness about detail. The "river guard" was not a "special unit" of the Québec City police (26); it was a separate organization. Women formally lost the franchise in Central Canada in 1849, not "with the union of the Canadas" (164). The Act of Union came into effect on 10 February 1841, not on "that February day in 1840" (274).

The editors disclaim any common concept of the State. Nonetheless, seven of the article address both the date and nature of colonial state formation. Four find the roots of the Canadian State in the specific event of the 1830s and 1840s; two focus on events in the late 1850s to raise doubts about linear models of state development. The last turns to the Maritimes to look at the problem of state formation in a colonial context.

The first four are linked by a common image of Lord Sydenham. Allan Greer discusses the creation of a "salaried, uniformed, disciplined and professional policeman" (17). This type of force, he argues, was created between 1838 and 1842 in Lower Canada, the period of Sydenham's governorship. Brian Young discusses the way in which "Lawmakers on the Special Council [dominated by Sydenham] aimed high, creating Benthamite systems that emphasized centralization, uniformity, and inspection" (52). Ian Radforth claims that Sydenham shows that "one man, armed

with ideas, could indeed have a profound effect on the process of state formation” (96). Bruce Curtis agrees that Sydenham’s reforms were “extended and consolidated in the 1840s” (109).

This restoration of Sydenham to his early twentieth-century niche as a “Maker of Canada” is surprising. Greer’s Rural Police were disbanded in 1842. Much of the Special Council’s legislation was temporary, repealed or profoundly modified between 1842 and 1848. Bruce Curtis’ district superintendents only existed between 1846 and 1850. Radforth acknowledges that “certainly the Province of Canada in 1849 did not conform with Sydenham’s ideal,” (95) but attributes the checks and failure the Governor experienced in his educational legislation to “in part, the difficulties derived from those who bungled its implementation” (93). Sydenham did not fail the Canadian State; Canadians failed Sydenham.

Curtis admits that Sydenham’s success in transforming the Canadas “remains a matter of debate” (129). This question is central. If Sydenham’s programme was not, in some substantial sense, effective, then Greer, Young and Radforth have written contributions to intellectual and political history rather than studies in state formation. Peter Baskerville points out that “local politicians soon came to resent, distrust — and dismantle — Sydenham’s administrative machinery” (233).

As a counterpoint to Curtis’ examination of educational inspection, Baskerville offers the case of railways (231-232). While Sydenham did create a centralized and professional Board of Works, by the 1850s, government supervision of railway construction was “ad hoc” (237). A combination of fiscal and physical railway crashes brought renewed government regulation and inspection, but this too faded under the regime of John A. Macdonald. “Put simply, the first dramatic examples of state intervention in a major economic area preceded the social and economic milieu necessary for the continuance of such behaviour” (250).

Michael J. Piva produces a slightly different image. Again, while Sydenham may have created the departmental framework that made good financial management possible, there was no smooth development of bureaucratic planning. The catalyst was the discrete financial crises of 1847 and 1857. Thus “Financial administration ... involved exercises in crisis management; as often as not it was an exercise in damage control.” Competent fiscal administration was achieved by a series of panic-inspired reforms (258).

Graeme Wynn approaches state formation from two different perspectives. His vignettes raise the question of how important in Maritimers’ lives was a state so often amateurish, incompetent, corrupt and “limited” (323). On a more fundamental level, he challenges the entire theoretical basis of the first four writers. Curtis calls on the reader “to notice the colonial parallels to the English ‘governmental revolution’” (109). Wynn insists that colonial state formation was not parallel to imperial changes: “It would be a mistake simply to classify the colonies, on this evidence, as ‘transitional’. Rather than standing at some intermediate point in this conjectural framework, they form a special variant” (317).

Indeed, this problem appears in the book’s title. As the introductory quotation from Hobbes makes clear, the Leviathan is by definition sovereign (v); the colony is by nature dependent. A Colonial Leviathan is a contradiction in terms. The traditional Gramscian model proposed by Curtis may be appropriate for primary cultures, but more nuanced theories of the colonial experience of cultural hegemony are available.

The three remaining articles do not touch upon the Sydenham debate. Jean-Marie Fecteau's contribution presents the basis in political philosophy of his on-going work on Québec corporate law. One product of this project has appeared in *Histoire sociale — Social History*, Vol. XXV (n° 49), Mai-Mai 1992. Douglas McCalla suggests: "On balance, the railway record in Canada's West suggests that failure should not be the essence of the story" (209). This promises a revolution in pre-Confederation historiography, but, again, only the completed study can prove such an important point.

Lykke de la Cour, Cecilia Morgan and Mariana Valverde present an article that is "a modest attempt to formulate some questions that we believe merit further study, with the aid of a review of the existing fragmentary work on gender regulation and *the state*" (163). The article makes the point that it was in the pre-Confederation period that patriarchy moved from practice to principle. Unfortunately, the great bulk of the material they review focuses on the post-Confederation period. There is a striking absence of any discussion of French-Canadian material touching on this period.

The editors of *Colonial Leviathan* make it clear that the book "is intended to open a discussion, not to close it" (13). The diversity of approaches and the clash of ideas that it contains make it both interesting and stimulating. Jacques Le Goff asked: "Is Politics Still the Backbone of History?" In answer, he described "a new political history, different from the old — dedicated to structures, social analysis, semeiology and the study of power" (*Daedalus*, Winter 1971, 12). *Colonial Leviathan* is a step towards this.

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Éliane Gubin et Yvan Lamonde — *Un Canadien français en Belgique au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Correspondance d'exil de L.-A. Dessaulles, 1875-1878*. Bruxelles : Commission royale d'histoire, 1991, xlii, 190 p.

Louis-Antoine Dessaulles est un personnage relativement connu de notre histoire. Philippe Sylvain (*Cahiers des Dix*, vol. 34, 1969), Christine Piette-Samson (*Recherches sociographiques*, vol. 10, 1969), Jeannette Bourgoïn (mémoire de M.A., Université de Montréal, 1975) et Harel Malouin (*Figures de la philosophie québécoise après les troubles de 1837*, 1988) nous ont présenté le libéral, disciple de Lamennais, le journaliste et l'écrivain. Enfin, Jean-Paul Bernard et Yvan Lamonde ont publié une première biographie de Dessaulles dans le *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada*, vol. 12, 1990.

Louis-Antoine Dessaulles (1818-1895) appartient à la bourgeoisie canadienne-française du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Il est le fils de Jean Dessaulles, seigneur de Saint-Hyacinthe, et de Rosalie Papineau, sœur de Louis-Joseph. Subissant l'influence de son oncle, Dessaulles est happé par la politique. Il la pratique de façon active (candidat à plusieurs élections, maire de Saint-Hyacinthe, conseiller législatif élu). Il guerroye aussi par la plume ou la parole (articles dans les journaux libéraux *L'Avenir* et *Le Pays*, brochures et conférences). Libéral radical, bagarreur intraitable, Dessaulles en vient à inquiéter les Rouges eux-mêmes et il se voit retirer la responsabilité du *Pays* en