

implemented a wide range of measures, including group insurance plans, profit-sharing schemes, pension plans, plant cafeterias, company picnics, and sports, to instil loyalty to the firm and a measure of satisfaction in the workplace. Industrial councils were established in many of the mass-production industries. In effect, these were nothing but company unions, which proved incapable of defending the interests of workers. The failure of labour's new democracy, Naylor concludes, was the bedrock upon which "Tory-blue Ontario" was reconstructed in the 1920s.

Naylor thus uses the labour movement in industrial Ontario to argue convincingly against the "western exceptionalism" thesis and substantiate Kealey's contention that the Winnipeg General Strike was part of a national phenomenon. Naylor further suggests that regional and local variations must also be considered. Additional to considerations of class, however, are those of gender and ethnicity, which need to be integrated more fully into the analysis. Nevertheless, *The New Democracy* is an important contribution to this on-going debate in the field of Canadian labour history.

Christina Burr
University of Ottawa

Franca Iacovetta — *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. Pp. xxix, 278.

This ambitious study begins at a place beyond the traditional framework of immigration research. Franca Iacovetta looks at the class, ethnicity, and gender of post-war Italian immigrants to Toronto, providing an internal and external view of this population. Using oral histories as well as published records, she recreates the process by which the newcomer moved from the position of labourer, recruited for government priorities, to resident citizen, active in influencing government policy. An array of information, rich in interpretive potential, illustrates her major theses: post-war immigrants came to Canada with some skills and experience suitable to an industrial economy; migration was a calculated decision to improve their status in life; the successful integration of immigrants into Canadian life represents a combination of "old world" coping mechanisms with an ability to adapt to the demands of a modern workplace; immigrant women played an important role in the stability and advancement of the family. The monograph also examines the interaction between the immigrants and the host society and the issue of ethnic militancy in seeking social and economic justice.

Iacovetta describes well the setting for post-war immigration to Canada. She demonstrates the intersection of economic opportunities in Toronto in the 1950s and 1960s with the socio-economic aspirations of the Italian newcomers. She shows how the immigrants mustered old world patterns of family co-operation and networks to advance towards the goal of home ownership. She illustrates how the Italians filled the labour market need for construction workers mainly for residential housing and

municipal improvement projects. She documents working conditions for men and women, the social services system in the Italian community and in the public sector.

Originally conceived as a doctoral thesis, the organization of the book still reflects some of the "pro forma" tedium in dissertation style, such as the need to "refute" earlier scholarship. This is evident when Iacovetta cites Virginia Yans McLaughlin's explanation of how traditional southern Italian attitudes influenced women's work options. For some time now scholars have redefined this aspect of Yans McLaughlin's study as being reflective of the Buffalo experience rather than a pattern describing all Italian immigrant women.

On the other hand, Iacovetta gives inadequate attention to the role of the pre-war Italian community of Toronto in terms of established ethnic beachheads, ethnic kin and friendship networks with the newcomers, and she fails to assess conflictual or co-operative interaction between pre-war and post-war immigrants. Did post-war immigrants not build upon some of the experiences of their predecessors? The section on the impact of immigrants arriving in the 1950s, especially upon the Roman Catholic religious infrastructure, makes only passing mention of the religious involvement of pre-war Italians, even when discussing established Italian parishes. Her references to pre-war immigrants centre on institutional activity in religious and community organizations. It would be important to know if regional or family networks ever bridged the time span between the earlier arrivals and the post-war immigrants. Even if the gap represented a lack of ethnic responsibility or identity of the older immigrant group for its compatriots, documentation of this phenomenon would further an understanding of the dynamics of Italian Canadian settlement.

The study also makes it difficult for a reader unfamiliar with local Toronto politics and labour practices to follow the strike background and story. Sections describing the unsafe and inequitable working conditions of the immigrants and their attempts to fight these injustices are packed with detail on individuals, labour organizations, and local events. Use of abbreviations and assumptions that the reader can recall from memory the dramatic story tend to confuse and puzzle. A glossary of groups, a time line of events, a linkage, perhaps in the footnotes, to earlier references would have eased the path of the reader in following the fascinating momentum of immigrant job action and organization strategy.

To establish the significance of the struggles of Italian immigrant labourers to improve their working conditions and hours, more attention should have been given to the provincial system regulating these practices. Did Italian on-the-job injuries and loss of life provide the mortar used to repair inadequate government controls and remedies? Did Italian immigrant activism serve as a catalyst to motivate lawmakers to establish reforms?

Iacovetta touches on Canadians' antagonisms towards the Italians whom they viewed as too different from the native-born population. However her pat statement suggesting that the Italians received the brunt of post-war hostility because other visible minority groups were not present (p. 123) offers a stereotyped explanation of a complex subject. My study of Italian immigrants working on the sugar plantations of Louisiana in the 1890s documented the establishment of a semi-caste

position that placed the immigrants somewhere in between blacks and whites in the socio-economic spectrum. Perhaps a more detailed discussion of Italian customs and mores contrasted with those of Anglo-Canadians might better explain some of the distaste. Elsewhere she notes the complaints of neighbours regarding the Italian habit of gathering in groups outside church after mass, or regarding men standing on the sidewalk socializing, perhaps as a pretext to leer at Anglo-Canadian women.

Oral history can provide details about internal behaviour and individual actions. Iacovetta uses it well to recreate family economic strategies and networks. On important issues, such as the division of responsibilities where men support and women govern the family, she misses an opportunity to explore the nuances of southern Italian form and substance. How do women wield power in a male-centred society? Also she does not follow up on the informal support systems of women during the long strikes. In the larger context, she does not inquire whether the immigrant labourer believed that unsafe job conditions and lack of wage/hour stability was due to an absence of responsibility for the foreign work force on the part of employers or government agencies.

Despite methodological inadequacies, the study provides a richness of detail on the socio-economic process in which an ethnic work force supplies labour for a growing industry, then attempts to redefine the terms of labour. The give and take of labour demands, public/political awareness, and ethnic socio-economic networks demonstrate the interactive process of immigrant adjustment. As Iacovetta suggests, such a perspective moves beyond the "dichotomy between the heroic view of immigrants and the victimization thesis". The price tag included "considerable emotional and physical cost".

Vincenza Scarpaci
Sonoma State University

Michael Craton and Gail Saunders — *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People. Volume One: From Aboriginal Times to the End of Slavery*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992. Pp. xxiii, 455.

In *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People*, Michael Craton and Gail Saunders set out to combine the traditional concept of a comprehensive national history with the much more recent idea of a people-centred or even populist social history. In large measure they succeed.

Perhaps the greatest challenge inherent in trying to craft a thoughtful social history for a broad time period lies in the search for a theme or focus. Writing the history of women, workers, or other "ordinary people" (p. xi), as Craton and Saunders attempt to do, almost always incorporates an effort to unify or at least codify the experience of these multitudes with some particular thesis or idea. Craton and Saunders, however, set for themselves the task of unifying or codifying the experience not of one multitude — slaves or seamen or free people of colour — but of many: Lucayan elites, Lucayan commoners, seventeenth-century religious refu-