

real price was paid by formerly "liberated" women for reappropriating their tradition, although there are reasons why women might willingly make that choice. Both Darrow and Haddad teach the reader much about contemporary Middle Eastern perceptions of the West. One issue of particular concern, cited by Haddad, is the belief in some Islamist quarters that gender equality is a Jewish plot, a plan of International Zionism to subvert women and destroy Islam from within (p. 291, 305). In Haddad's thorough and complex portrayal, the absolute centrality of women to the Islamist revolutionary program is made plain.

Also deserving of mention is Michael Letsz' "The Soong Sisters and China's Revolutions, 1911-1936." This fascinating story of two American-raised, Methodist-educated sisters, and their subsequent marriages to Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek suggests that the common understanding of women as "the power behind the throne" is not always platitudinous. Letsz' treatment of Soong Chingling and Soong Mayling's differing views of revolution, and the positions they consequently took on the issue of women's rights is likewise illuminating.

The volume concludes with the section, "Women, Religion and the Transformation of Society in North America," in which the obligatory "impact of feminism" question is addressed by Antoinette Iadarola and Ellen Umansky. Less conventionally, Ann Braude's "Spirits Defend the Rights of Women: Spiritualism and Changing Sex Roles in Nineteenth Century America" convincingly shows the power of religion to subvert the very ideology it ostensibly seeks to uphold. Braude notes:

When Spiritualists took seriously Victorian ideas about women's nature, they found that these dictated radical departures from Victorian norms for woman's role. In woman's spiritual experience, they found a warrant for participation in public life (p. 428).

Further, "Spiritualism bolstered the claims of the women's rights movement by integrating them into a religious system that had a strong appeal to mid-century Americans (pp. 429-30)."

Other contributions to the volume include essays on women in Buddhism, the Magdalen in Christian art, women in Islamic art, women in the Nicaraguan Revolution, Iroquois women, and the nineteenth century abolitionists, the Grimke sisters. The breadth of concerns addressed throughout, the inclusion of all tradition, east and west, mainstream and marginal, add to the text's distinctiveness.

In reading *Women, Religion and Social Change* it becomes obvious that the complex inter-dynamic of religion and society can only be enriched by focussing attention upon the experience and contribution of women. Although occasionally uneven, as is not unexpected in a volume containing such a range of topics and perspectives, *Women, Religion and Social Change* contains many valuable and original contributions to scholarship; indeed, Haddad's article alone warrants its high recommendation.

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D.J. HALL — *Clifford Sifton Vol. 2: A Lonely Eminence 1901-1929*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985. Pp. 437.

When the first volume of this biography appeared in 1981 it was widely acclaimed as a scholarly study of Sifton's political career. It was clearly based on a thorough and meticulous study of the Sifton papers and told us a great deal that we had not known, especially about Sifton's electoral activities and his administration of the Department of the Interior. The first volume was also notable for its scholarly restraint; where the evidence was incomplete or contradictory, the author did not impose an interpretation. The second volume has the same virtues. Indeed, the biography is divided into two volumes only because of its length. The year 1900 was not a year of transition or a turning

point in his life and the first chapter of the second volume might easily have been the last chapter of Volume One. The same meticulous care and the same scholarly caution are characteristic of Sifton's last years in office and as a senior statesman.

For all his restraint, the author wants to believe that his subject was a man of exceptional political importance. "The power that Clifford Sifton wielded in the Liberal government", he writes, "stemmed not only from the strength of his intellect and the breadth of his grasp of the issues confronting the administration; it was firmly rooted in his mastery of both tactics and the strategy of political organization in Ontario and the West (p. 145)". His grasp of the issues, however, as the author makes clear, did not go much beyond the trite assumptions of a North American businessman committed to private exploitation of the continent's natural resources. He used the rhetoric of national unity but he had no sensitivity to the aspirations of French Canadians, had little sympathy for western regionalism, and none for the poor. Nor is there much evidence of his contribution to party policy. His name is not attached to any restructuring of tariffs or freight rates or even of any major changes in the pattern of western settlement. He was a man of action, a pragmatist who had the good luck to be Minister of the Interior when the tide could flow to the "last best west." His vigour and his commitment to getting settlers on the land made him a good Minister for his time but there was nothing very original about his policies. As for his political tactics, they were largely restricted to the use of patronage to reward his supporters and to punish his opponents. The author has no affection for the man and shares neither his individualism nor his materialism; in trying to be fair to Sifton he has made him part villain and part hero but has not succeeded in making of him an interesting or convincing human being.

Part of the difficulty is that this study is, in the author's words, "essentially a political biography (p. ix)." The Sifton papers unfortunately provide little information about his personal or his business affairs. Hall has pieced enough information together to show that Sifton was more speculator than entrepreneur and that he continued to invest in speculative ventures while he was in office. But it is difficult to sustain interest in a political biography for the years when Sifton was not an active politician, and he was out of office by 1904, out of the House by 1911, and was never a close adviser of either Borden or King.

To a social historian the author's restraint can be almost exasperating. We were told in the first volume that Sifton was a Methodist who took his religion very seriously (I, p. 23). But did his Methodism link him in any way with the social gospel movement or with social charities and how did it compare with that of Joseph Flavelle or Newton Rowell? The relevance of his religion to his private or public life is never discussed. Closer to the political focus of the book are Sifton's views on Canada and the Empire. Sifton's views on autonomy are clearly developed but what are we to make of a populist from Brandon whose passion for Irish hunters and riding to the hounds suggests an identification with the gentry of the old world? A greater curiosity about the social context might not have added much to a study of Sifton's political career but it would at least have told us more about the man and his times.

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JEAN HAMELIN, NICOLE GAGNON — *Histoire du catholicisme québécois III : le XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, tome I, 1898-1940*. Montréal, Boréal Express, 1984, 507 p.

Pour bien caractériser l'Histoire du catholicisme québécois (1898-1940), il convient peut-être de commencer par dire ce que ce livre n'est pas. On y chercherait en vain une histoire du sentiment, on dit aujourd'hui de la mentalité religieuse. On n'y trouvera pas davantage une étude de la pratique, sujet à la mode en France depuis un quart de siècle. Les masses anonymes surgissent certes