

the contributions these two men made to the island's economy matched the capital they drained from it is open to question. Perhaps the best that can be said for the tenancy system is that, like its seigneurial counterpart in French Canada, it could provide an efficient means of colonizing a new land, though the experience of Prince Edward Island suggests that this was not always the case. While he never visited North America, Maxwell himself was astute enough to appreciate the long-term limitations of the landlord's role in the colonies. A good deal more research will certainly be needed before we gain a clear idea of the role that tenancy played in Canadian rural society, but Wilson's study represents an excellent start in that direction.

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Brian P. Clarke — *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850–1895*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993. Pp. xii, 340.

This work by Brian P. Clarke, taken from his doctoral dissertation, was awarded the Catholic Historical Association's John Gilmary Shea Prize. A well-researched and documented study of the Irish Catholics in Toronto, it focuses on two of the most important issues in the history of the nineteenth-century Irish: religion and nationalism. The author contends that the consensus among most historians, that religious renewal emanated from the Church hierarchy and orders, casts the laity into an acquiescent mould. Clarke sets out to demonstrate the vitality of Toronto's Irish immigrants who, while adopting a subculture of religious identity, exhibited a strong initiative that supported the group's social interaction, independent of clerical influence.

Clarke provides insight into the conditions encountered by the Irish immigrants, their reaction to the devotional renewal that followed, the subsequent emergence of devotional organizations, and the outgrowth of national associations. One wonders, however, how much Clarke was inspired in his perspective by the work of Emmet Larkin on the rise of devotional organizations in Ireland.

The chapters on Irish nationalism are erudite. Of particular note is the concept that the clergy's reluctance to participate fully in advancing the cause of national organizations promoted lay leadership in associations that became disassociated from, if not confrontational to, the Catholic Church. One exemplary organization Clarke examines in great detail is the Hibernian Benevolent Society, which had its heyday in the 1860s. Closely aligned with the Fenian movement and denounced by both the Church and the Canadian government, it subsequently declined. Clarke also gives some consideration to the various organizations that replaced the Hibernian Benevolent Society. These societies were more moderate, no longer radical in philosophy, and tolerated some ideological diversity, but above all they forged closer ties with the Church and espoused constitutional nationalism.

One must examine the central theme of this work, however: the role of the laity in founding many of the Catholic voluntary associations. It seems that Clarke attempts to eclipse the position of the Church and its clergy in the formation of Irish Catholic societies. The major portion of the social work done in Toronto on behalf of the Irish Catholic community occurred under the auspices of the Church and its religious orders of men and women. The St. Vincent de Paul Society, run by those outside the clergy, existed under the guidance of the Church. Prior to the twentieth century, the Church led and the laity followed; the Church condoned and condemned. The piety of the people was an outgrowth of what the Church dictated.

In identifying “the culture of piety”, Clarke points to the involvement of women as the primary adherents of devotional practices. These provided women with the opportunity to exercise control in the home over religious and moral matters. The parish-centred associations developed into benevolent societies, which furnished activities like bazaars and sewing circles that increased the financial status of the parish and of related causes such as the House of Providence, St. Nicholas Home for Boys, or Notre Dame des Anges, under the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The voluntary organizations, while under the supervision of the clergy as spiritual advisors, were led generally by women associated with the upper class, but had a membership that encompassed those of the working class.

With the exception of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Church was not as successful in enrolling the participation of men. The St. Vincent de Paul Society, commencing in the 1850s, was endorsed first by a select number of non-Irish elite; within a decade it became a middle-class organization of Irish and remained so until after 1895, when it attracted the working class. Regardless of its composition and relatively small membership, the St. Vincent de Paul Society was instrumental in solidifying the religious and national identity of the laity. Bridging piety and charity, the Society assisted the poor, especially women and children, by providing basic requirements like food and fuel through outdoor relief programmes and direct visitation, which allowed for religious intervention and the distribution of devotional aids. While the Society “played a critical role in the formation of a religiously informed community and culture in Victorian Toronto” (p. 126), its structure and expectations were beyond the appeal of most Irish-Catholic men.

Clarke uses a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, citing the majority of authors dedicated to the study of the Irish within the past two decades. Although he discounts the work of some writers who have explored the social background of the Irish Catholics in Toronto, he fails to provide sufficient evidence to disprove their analyses. For example, while admitting that in contemporary accounts and manuscript material Irish Catholics were stereotyped as drunken brawlers, Clarke takes to task some authors for basing “their respective interpretations on this stereotype rather than exploding it as a myth” (p. 28). Contending that “the drunkards and the brawlers represented, for all their visibility, a minority group within the larger Irish-Catholic community” (p. 29), Clarke devotes a chapter to the formation of parochial temperance societies and their connection to male piety. These associations, with their goals of moderation or abstinence assisted by sacramental incentives, were a means of spiritual renewal. While they were guided by the clergy, the

lay membership was free to plan and organize related social activities. Their popularity was sporadic, however, and they declined, in many cases, because the clergy did not consider them a high priority. Nonetheless, Clarke concludes, "their impact should not be underestimated". Their values, "an acutely self-conscious respectability and a demonstrative identification with the Catholic Church" (p. 151), were widely shared in the transference of support to independent nationalist societies.

Through this detailed study, Clarke has opened a door on a vibrant ethno-religious community that contributed to the development of Toronto. It invites new approaches that will lead to a standard work in this field.

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Ruth A. Frager — *Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Jewish Labour Movement of Toronto, 1900–1939*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. Pp. 300.

Since the publication of Ezra Mendelsohn's *Class Struggle in the Pale: The Formative Years of the Jewish Workers' Movement in Tsarist Russia* (Cambridge University Press) in 1970, interest in the Jewish labour movement has spread at the historiographic crossroads of labour and ethnic studies. Studies dealing with Jewish leftists and labour activists from New York's Lower East Side to London's East End, from Paris's Pletzl to Leeds and Manchester, from Buenos Aires to Amsterdam have appeared in the last 25 years, culminating in a recent exhibit and catalogue on *Workers and Revolutionaries: The Jewish Labor Movement* at the Tel Aviv Beth Hatefutsoth Museum. *Sweatshop Strife* is a welcome and thoughtful addition to this literature, ranging from the garment boss who remembered to wake up his brother so that the latter would not be late for the picket line, to fistcuffs between women strikers and women scabs.

Much of the story is by now familiar. In many respects the similarities between Toronto and New York (which literature Ruth Frager cites) or Paris or Manchester (which she does not) are striking: immigration from Eastern Europe; the development of Jewish working-class activism from an Eastern European tradition combined with conditions in the New World; conflicts between Jewish manufacturers and Jewish workers; tensions and conflicts between Jewish and non-Jewish workers; political infighting among Jewish Bundists, Left and Right Labour Zionists, Trotskyists, Anarchists, and Communists.

What is new, however, is Frager's attention to gender. While the first generation of Jewish labour historians focused on class and community, in keeping with their historiographic times, Frager has made a salutary advance, in keeping with hers. Aside from the classic articles of Alice Kessler-Harris and more recent books by Susan Glenn and Naomi Shepherd, the place of women in the Jewish labour movement, while always noted in passing to be remarkably high, has not always received the attention it deserves.