

on the social and cultural aspects of the fur trade is apparent. But equally evident is the fact that a beginning is being made. One can hope that at future fur trade conferences the "strengths" will continue and the "weaknesses" disappear.

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ROBIN W. WINKS. — *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press; London and New Haven, Yale University Press, 1971.

In his recent book *The Blacks in Canada*, Professor Winks has attempted to record the story of one of Canada's oldest and most historically-neglected ethnic groups. The scope of his book is sweeping, ranging from the institution of slavery in New France to the first meeting of the National Black Coalition in Toronto in 1969. In spite of the breadth of his subject matter Professor Winks initially takes time slowly and painstakingly to sort out the often contradictory legislation which provided an early legal framework for Black slavery in Canada. The 1781 act passed by the General Assembly of Prince Edward Island provides a good example of the legal confusion which existed over the question of slavery in Canada. The act itself was straightforward, simply stating that the baptism of slaves would in no way exempt them from bondage. Casuists in the Assembly, however, argued that the act had no real meaning since slavery as an institution had no legal foundation in the colony. Those who had initiated the legislation quickly replied that the very passage of the act itself recognized that such a foundation must exist. Such circular arguments continued for another forty years until the Assembly reluctantly admitted that "Slavery is sanctioned and permitted within this Island," although "entirely in variance with the laws of England and the freedom of the Country." Winks describes how the ambivalent attitude displayed towards slavery by the Prince Edward Island Assembly was characteristic of the attitudes held in the rest of the British North American colonies. On the one hand Canadians would have liked the moral superiority over their American Neighbours of a completely free society, but on the other hand, they hesitated to pass the necessary legislation so long as a profit margin remained to be considered. It was not until the emancipation edict was passed by the British Parliament in 1833 that the various Canadian assemblies mustered enough courage openly to condemn slavery. One cannot help but wonder if perhaps the promise of reparation payments lay behind this newly found moral courage.

Equally praiseworthy are Professor Winks' attempts to sort out exactly from where Canada received her Black immigrants and why they came. What emerges is a picture which tends to dull — but not fully discredit — the popularly-accepted notion that most of Canada's Black community are

descendants of either the colourful and rebellious Jamaican Maroons or of those freedom-seeking individuals spirited north via the highly glamorized and largely mythical underground railroad. Instead the reader's attention is drawn to the first waves of Black settlers brought north by the social and political upheavals occasioned by the fighting of the American war of Independence. He traces another influx of American Blacks into Upper Canada following the war of 1812. Winks also adequately deals with the little-known movements of the Blacks from Kansas and Oklahoma who in the first two decades of the twentieth century accepted the invitation offered all Americans to move north and settle the Canadian prairie provinces. It is unfortunate that Professor Winks does not attempt to deal more fully with the recent West Indian arrivals. His failure to do so, in the opinion of this reviewer, results in a rather lop-sided and unfinished analysis of just where the origins of Canada's present Black community do lie.

Professor Winks uses his chapters on the growth of the Negro church in Canada, the establishment of Negro schools, the development of political alliances, party support, the Black press and trade unions to hammer home one of the central themes of his book: that is, that Canadians — although slightly more ignorant of all the implications of racism — are equally as race conscious and as prejudiced as their American neighbours. This in itself is not new to any thinking or aware white Canadian. What is new are the many painful examples which Winks dredges up and records to prove his point: school segregation in southern Ontario, the bombing of a church in Barrie, the activities of the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan, race discrimination within the federal Public Service — all vaguely remembered or felt, but never before piled one upon the other or documented so thoroughly. Thankfully the sensational and the over dramatic are avoided. Nevertheless, by the simple tactic of underplaying the material, Winks' analysis comes across with all the clarity and coldness of an unfavorable medical report.

The final chapter of the book is an extremely helpful "Note on Sources." The bibliography was compiled and the research completed without apparent regard for time, distance or finances. Public archives, museums, libraries and record offices across Canada, Britain, the United States, the Bahamas, Bermuda and Jamaica were consulted. Professor Winks was thorough enough to consult many of the often neglected smaller Ontario libraries in Barrie, Orillia, Kent, Chatham and London. Where written sources were lacking, time was taken to record, edit and check verbal reports. The latter method was particularly useful when dealing with the western provinces since most Black settlement there has taken place within the memory of living men. Notes and one of the early drafts of the manuscript have been thoughtfully deposited in the Schomburg collection of the New York Public Library.

The book nevertheless contains some serious shortcomings. Too little effort was spent in dealing with the social and economic origins of the Black immigrants. Certainly a brief section on the background of the Jamaican

Maroons, fugitives from the deep south and the free Black immigrants from the mid-west would have led to a greater understanding of their individual adaptation to the Canadian scene. Perhaps most disturbing is the manner in which Professor Winks first establishes the nebulous nature of his topic (he guesses that the "... Negro proportion of the population probably is no more than two percent...") and then proceeds with grandiose designs to: "... examine the history of Negro life in Canada from 1628 to the 1960s, and by so doing to reveal something of the nature of prejudice in Canada..." "... to use the Negro's story as a means of examining some of the ways in which Canadian attitudes towards immigration and ethnic identity differ from the American..." "... to show the Negro as an actor in the context of an emerging national history..." "and... to inquire into a neglected aspect of Canadian-American cultural relations." Any serious historian who attempts to draw all of these conclusions for an entire nation from subject matter which is limited to a decidedly small, racially-unique, and relatively-poorly documented ethnic group, is treading on thin historical ice. It would have been better had Winks concentrated solely on his one central theme of race prejudice in Canada. His evidence, incidently, proves that the Canadian response was in no way unique, and tends instead to demonstrate, in this matter at least, how very alike we are to all Americans.

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PIERRE THIBAUT. — *Savoir et pouvoir; Philosophie thomiste et politique cléricale au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1972.

The charge that the nineteenth-century revival of Thomist philosophy was fundamentally a matter of clerical politics is not new; it was made by contemporaries who opposed the revival. But in this case the thesis is argued by a young Québécois who is trying to "settle accounts" with the recent past. Until about a decade ago, Thibault claims, instruction in the French Catholic school system was so thoroughly shaped by Thomist categories of thought that for generations of Québécois the Aristotelian-Thomistic universe remained the only "natural and evident" one. When Thibault made the traumatic discovery that Thomism was not the only philosophy worth serious consideration (about 1964, he tells us), he became "obsessed" with finding out how this curious "blockage" had occurred. This book, which was originally presented as a doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne, is his contribution to an answer.

Thibault dates the absolute reign of Thomist philosophy in Quebec from September 9, 1879, when Laval University decided upon rigorous conformity to *Æterni Patris*, Pope Leo XIII's recently issued encyclical enjoining adherence to Thomism as the philosophy most acceptable to Catholicism.