

relégué au rang de minorité ethnique » (p. 41). De là à considérer les Acadiens et les Franco-Ontariens entre autres, comme des « dead ducks » ou des « cadavres encore chauds », il n'y a qu'un pas, que l'historien ne franchit pas, se rappelant sans doute de la controverse que ces expressions avaient suscitée. Il n'en reste pas moins que ce silence ignore totalement le rôle historique du Québec envers les communautés francophones. Et qu'il faudra bien un jour établir la contribution de ces communautés envers le Québec, au delà de l'appropriation de Gabrielle Roy, de Daniel Lavoie et d'Antonine Maillet...

Bouchard pousse donc à *une* conclusion politique les débats continus sur le Québec et sa souveraineté. Rejetant la notion de Canada français, il avance celle de la nation québécoise, comprise dans les frontières actuelles du Québec, avec les populations qu'elles contiennent, peu importe leur souche ou leur origine — une ouverture sur les autres qui est la bienvenue. Son essai place la question nationale dans le contexte qui lui appartient, celui de l'avenir de la population du Québec, à qui il revient de le déterminer, ce que la Cour suprême a reconnu dans son récent avis au gouvernement fédéral.

L'essai de Gérard Bouchard est une contribution de qualité à un débat vieux de plusieurs décennies, ne serait-ce que pour son regard d'historien projeté en avant. La discussion « nationale » — au sens québécois ou canadien du terme — est loin d'être terminée et, si l'on en juge par les discussions politiques récentes, l'arrangement acceptable n'est pas en vue. Comme cela arrive souvent, une solution, valable pour une ou deux — ou trois — générations viendra probablement d'un horizon imprévu — amérindien peut-être. C'est que les composantes du débat ne sont pas que québécoises, et que les quatre groupes identifiés par Bouchard — Franco-Québécois, Anglo-Québécois, Amérindien et Néo-Québécois — se retrouvent sous des noms et dans des proportions différentes à l'échelle du Canada : anglophones, francophones, Premières Nations et communautés culturelles.

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James Cameron — *For the People: A History of St. Francis Xavier University*.
Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996. Pp. xx, 551.

James Cameron's *For the People* is a curious book. It reveals as much about the strengths and limitations of the Roman Catholic tradition in Eastern Nova Scotia as it does about St. Francis Xavier University, an institution which has endured innumerable hardships and disadvantages to become established as a national institution. A book about a university that is Roman Catholic raises numerous questions about the conflict between the religious aspirations of its founders and the ideal of a liberal arts education as well as about state control and clerical sponsorship.

Cameron brings to this history an impressive personal background within the Roman Catholic tradition, making this in some ways an insider's history. His frequent references to the Roman Catholic tradition, to the Urban College in Rome

where Nova Scotian students were regarded as “colonials”, or to the Sacred Congregation for the Propaganda of the Faith, known as *Propaganda Fide*, also illustrate that, in the Canadian context, this was a university tradition unto itself. It was also one that only occasionally intersected the main course of Canada’s other universities, leading this reader to wonder whether Cameron’s book is mistitled: ought it to have been *For the Church* rather than *For the People*? His explanation is that the Roman Catholic mission is to protect and to christianize the people. Cameron begins by noting the historic roots that lay behind the founding of St. Francis Xavier: “Ever since the Highlander’s large-scale immigration ... a tiny band of clerical leaders had decried the dearth of priests for their people” (p. 11). The university was established to ensure a continuous supply of reliable priests and to prevent “the clerical adventurers” who too often took advantage of the local inhabitants. Locally trained native priests were needed “for the people”, explained Bishop MacKinnon, the founder of St. Francis Xavier University, who lamented that “the reception of clerical adventurers into the missions of this country has been the bane of religion in our province. Catholicism has suffered more from the bad conduct of such men than from all other obstacles put together” (p. 16). Hence, St. Francis Xavier was begun as a seminary whose students were its first “gifts to the priesthood” (p. 23).

Cameron’s story reveals much about the cultural tradition of the Highland Scots in Eastern Nova Scotia. He does well to establish this context, for it is one that may not be immediately familiar to readers outside the province. He notes, for example, that barely a century after the defeat at Culloden, “a people who were once subjugated by religious intolerance, by racial bigotry and economical oppression” now had their own college and seminary which offered them “a promising means to advance their religious, social and economic interests in a new, freer and more hospitable land” (p. 25). The Highland Scots historical experience would undoubtedly shape St. Francis Xavier’s role as a Canadian university. It would also restrict many of the university’s future aspirations.

The establishment of St. Francis Xavier strengthened the already existing Nova Scotian pattern of denominational colleges and in this way fragmented the province’s higher educational efforts. Similarly, the university’s move in 1855 resulted in the shift of the diocesan centre from Acadian Arichat to Scottish Antigonish, dividing the Roman Catholic tradition within the province. It also placed the Bishop firmly in charge of this institution in a way that would differentiate it from Roman Catholic universities created by teaching orders such as the Basilians in Toronto or the Jesuits in Halifax.

This book is replete with illustrations of the hardships of Nova Scotian society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It also describes in great detail the intense religious ethos surrounding the division between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Nova Scotia. The author frequently adopts an unusual colloquial style, as, for example, when he explains that the first rector and director of studies at St. Francis Xavier, Father John Schulte, had “disappeared” to Boston in 1861 and “had turned”, meaning that he had “apostatized” and had “slyly and with great deception” concealed the true state of his faith. In other words, he had begun to have doubts about some of the practices of Roman Catholicism. Cameron’s choice of phrasing

does much to reveal the intensity of emotions of the time as well as something of his own sentiments.

As part of the cultural ethos of the time, Cameron regularly notes the preponderance of the use of alcohol among many of the clerics who were professors at St. Francis Xavier. All too often a professor would be removed and the explanation would be offered that “the root and source of the evil is intoxication” or that “the liability of the drink” had struck again. Staffing problems were influenced by nineteenth-century diseases, inclement weather, loneliness, and too often “the wee droppie”. Cameron spares no detail to bring these issues to the fore as he outlines the complex and often emotional difficulties of creating this Nova Scotian university.

Cameron also traces the political development of St. Francis Xavier within the larger framework of university politics within Nova Scotia as well as from the early threat of the creation of a University of Halifax. The attempt to establish a single university for Nova Scotia was in keeping with the province’s dearth of economic resources and also with the movement toward university reform, with the goal of raising the standards of education and establishing a central university free from denominational control. Some issues are ever-present. Nor does Cameron overlook the early beginnings and faltering attempts to educate women, at the very least to establish a convent “for the fairer sex” in 1858. Not altogether surprisingly, Cameron devotes considerable space to the Antigonish Movement and its outreach programme into the outports of Nova Scotia and ultimately to a number of developing nations where the Antigonish Movement seems to represent the Canadian university tradition. Although this programme was related to St. Francis Xavier’s extension efforts rather than to its academic reputation, this, too, says much about this particular university and its ideal of service to the people.

One great strength of the book is Cameron’s description of student life, an area often overlooked in other university histories. Wherever possible, Cameron also provides an analysis of the students’ social, economic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. He also outlines changes in the curriculum, the development of buildings on campus, and the attendant problems relating to finances which have remained a constant challenge to university life in Antigonish. From the beginning, financing the university was one of the greatest problems facing St. Francis Xavier. It remains a formidable obstacle.

Cameron’s history is more than merely a study of clerical overlords, scholarly endeavours, bricks, mortar, and athletic victories. It places the university and its traditions within a distinctive Nova Scotian setting. It is well worth reading for anyone interested in the social, cultural, and economic history of this province and of St. Francis Xavier as a mirror of the community in which it has its roots.

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