and the next generation following them now find many other possibilities before them, including intellectual and religious history, historical biography, administrative history and political history. No one school or approach is any longer predominant or preferred in the field. Even those who draw upon the social sciences do so in a selective manner, seemingly cognizant of Ramsay Cook's designation of history as "the invertebrate social science" and his conclusion that history "need have no fear of the other social sciences, provided it is prepared to learn from them".[46] So at a time when educational history is establishing its professional status as evidenced by a lively association and a new journal, there is evidence of a new diversity of form, content, methodology and interpretation. The history of education is studied in both Faculties of Education and History Departments and both books and journal articles on the subject appear on a regular basis. While some might lament the absence of a predominant school or approach, most of us, I wager, are optimistic about the prospects for the 1990s.

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46 R. Cook, "History: The Invertebrate Social Science", in Grant Reuber and Thomas Guinsberg, eds., *Perspectives on the Social Sciences in Canada* (Toronto, 1974), p. 145.

Conflict to Consensus: The Political Culture of Upper Canada

ANXIOUS TO KNOW HOW MANY WHITE anchors adorned the sleeves of NCOs in the Queen's Marine Artillery, raised in Upper Canada in 1838, or what colour welt ran down the side of the grey trousers of the regulars of the 24th Regiment? If so, Mary Beacock Fryer's *Volunteers & Redcoats, Raiders & Rebels: A Military History of the Rebellion in Upper Canada* (Toronto, Dundurn Press, 1987) is the book for you. *Volunteers & Redcoats* is the companion piece to Elinor Kyte Senior's *Redcoats and Patriotes: The Rebellion in Lower Canada, 1837-38* (Stittsville, Ont., Canada's Wings, 1985) and, like Senior's book, is intended to appeal to academics as well as the general public. Both are chock-a-block with photographs and maps. Of the two, the Senior book is the more exciting, perhaps because the story it has to tell, the response of the militia and the British regulars in the lower colony to the rebellion and the patriot raids, is a more dramatic tale than that told by Fryer. In Lower Canada pitched battles were fought and villages set ablaze. Upper Canada's rebellion was more *orderly*. Part of the greater excitement of the Senior book, though, stems from the fact it is better written. Unlike Fryer, Senior has no trouble moving from one subject to another, nor does she describe uniforms at length! Nonetheless Fryer's book is a

useful one. Her recreation of events is generally accurate and her judgements usually sound. The patriot raids "were much more alarming and violent than the original rebellions" (p. 54). The raids and the retaliatory cutting out of the *Caroline* did produce the spectre of a general British-American war. Readers might, however, raise an eyebrow at the declaration that the patriots were terrorists, pure and simple, or blanche at the assertion that Canadian authorities typically over-react in crises and, panic-stricken, make "mass arrests" (p. 54).

Volunteers & Redcoats was published during the sesquicentennial of the rebellion and was designed to capitalize on the broad public interest in the one moment in Ontario's past when a sizable segment of her people resorted to violence to register their discontent and achieve change. That public interest exists was clearly demonstrated by the enormous success of the week-long conference held in 1987 on the rebellion by the Ontario Historical Society. Designed for the general public, the conference, like Topsy, "just grewed", expanding into ever larger halls. Its proceedings have been published in *1837: Rebellion Remembered ...* (Toronto, Ontario Historical Society, 1988). The cover shows a determined group of C.W. Jefferys' rebels marching past the CN Tower (angered by the discovery that all the tickets to the Jays' game at the Skydome had been sold out?). The papers range in quality from execrable to acceptable, their significance residing in the attempt to slake the public thirst for knowledge.

Of course, much writing about the rebellion period has been for an academic, not a general, audience. In 1982 I published *The Rising in Western Upper Canada: The Duncombe Revolt and After* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1982) and co-edited a 1985 Champlain Society volume with Ronald J. Stagg, *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada* (Ottawa, Carleton University Press, 1985). Mercifully, I do not propose to review those — except to note that I have argued that the causes of the rebellions (William Lyon Mackenzie's at Toronto, Charles Duncombe's near Brantford) were many, that in terms of those mustered for and against the rebellions no simple class divisions obtained, that religious and national factors were important, and that the rebellions and subsequent patriot raids created a climate of fear and hostility that delayed, not promoted, the winning of responsible government. A spate of recent books bear on these and other issues, illuminating in the process the political culture of the province.

One such volume is J.K. Johnson's *Becoming Prominent: Regional Leadership in Upper Canada, 1791-1841* (Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's Press, 1989). Johnson has compiled considerable biographical detail (which appears in an extensive appendix) about the 283 men who sat in the Upper Canadian assembly, 1791 to 1841. He shows that a commission in either the magistracy or the militia, preferably both, was a virtual prerequisite for election. An examination of the province's last four parliaments, 1828-41, when a reform-tory split had emerged, demonstrates that reformers might expect a sizable, if

inequitable, portion of these lower echelon appointments. They found it far more difficult to secure high status ones. In obtaining appointments loyalty and allegiance to Great Britain were important; so too, Johnson argues, echoing S.F. Wise, was "a total rejection of 'the manners, politics and social arrangements of the United States' " (p. 88). Competence, while desirable, was not essential. A "*sufficient degree* of loyalty and respectability" (p. 90) was.

Occupationally, the MHAs had a wide range of jobs, with farming in the forefront, though declining over time as lawyers and professionals pushed forward. Just as likely to be merchants as the tories, the reformers were more often land developers or speculators, and less often engaged in "modern" activities such as manufacturing or "business". On balance, they "reflected more closely a traditional rural past" (p. 143).

Fully 1/3 of all MHAs were Anglican. Next came the Presbyterians at 1/7, followed by the Methodists at 1/10. Over 1/2 the conservatives were Anglicans, while just 1/5 of the reformers were. Even then, it seems, the Anglican church was the Conservative party at prayer. The Anglican MHAs had a more profitable occupational profile than the rest, though the Methodists were concentrated in what some might regard as two contrarities — farming and commerce. As immigration increased, the percentage of native-born MHAs declined. In the 1830s only native-born Upper Canadians and the Irish were under-represented. Those "over-achievers" (p. 106), the Scots, did remarkably well. In securing election and patronage, though, religion was generally more important than nationality. Hence it was more likely that being an Anglican would compensate for being native-born than it was that being a Scot would compensate for being a Methodist, except that nothing, seemingly, could compensate for being Irish. "The Irish were thought of — rightly or wrongly, consciously or unconsciously — as unskilled, unlettered, quarrelsome, shiftless people" (p. 117). Donald Akenson take note! To conclude, the reformers typically had some sort of characteristic that excluded them from complete participation in the elite, and hence some may have been pushed into reform.

Johnson's meticulous study provides much water for the historian's mill. At times one is inundated by his flow of statistics; occasionally one wonders if the current is as strong as he suggests. He ascribes enduring characteristics to his subjects. Once an Irishman always an Irishman — fair enough, but once a Methodist always a Methodist is more problematical. And small numbers may indicate an eddy, not the mainstream. What conclusion might we safely draw from the observation that 49.3 per cent of the reformers were North American-born while only 46.1 per cent of the conservatives were (p. 139)? To be fair, Johnson recognizes such difficulties and characteristically proceeds with caution. His study provides a wealth of insight into the political divisions in Upper Canada and demonstrates that on a variety of scores reformers tended to be different from conservatives.

Four works of political/religious/intellectual history confirm in various ways

the development of polarities in the pre-rebellion period: Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987); David Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada, 1784-1850* (Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988); William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario* (Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989): and Gordon T. Stewart, *The Origins of Canadian Politics: A Comparative Approach* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1986). The four authors adopt differing stances towards critics who might take them to task for not writing social history. Stewart affirms his faith in the genre but pleads that all the "big" political questions have not been answered (p. ix). Errington apologetically notes that hers is an elitist study of attitudes and that much of the time "the views of the elite mirrored their own self-centred concerns, nothing more and nothing less" (p. 10). Westfall goes on the offensive, objecting to the fact that recent preoccupations have "reinforced a long-standing positivism in the Canadian historical profession that treats the past as a variety of discrete materials that can be weighed and measured according to the standards of value-free research" (p. 18). Mills is even more forthright, affirming that local studies of the sort recommended to us by Donald Akenson and others "may be simply expressions of historical empiricism, just as social histories of the period are too often examples of economic determinism focusing upon the experiences of the radical urban artisan" (pp. 142-3, note 9). But whatever the authors' attitudes towards social history, all make contributions in their chosen fields.

Errington's *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada* canvasses the years 1791-1828. In it she examines the twin influences of Great Britain and the United States on Upper Canada, taking issue with S.F. Wise's contention that the early elites were resolutely anti-American. Rather, they were aware of the province's "dual heritage" (p. 5) — the British and the American. Before the war of 1812 those who, like Simcoe, wanted to make a "little Britain" (p. 7) of the colony were mostly British-born officials. The war had the twin effects of creating "a sense of community" (p. 86) in Upper Canada and helping convince the Strachans and Robinsons of the colony to stand four square behind the status quo. Anything less would be an invitation to the Americans to send in the troops and for the British to abandon Upper Canada. Opposition to their attempts to curb American inroads into the province led to the heated alien controversy and convinced the tories that "subversive, democratic elements" (p. 181) were rife. Britons could not adopt American principles and remain loyal. The British and American "systems of government and...societies were antithetical" (p. 182). Those in opposition disagreed. They believed that Upper Canadians should take advantage of the bountifulness of the North American environment by utilizing the developmental example the Americans provided. At the same time they should have the very image (or transcript) of the British constitution, and not just its principles as the tories averred.

Errington's book is thus important in reminding us of the differing weights in colonial minds of Upper Canada's two metropolitan poles. Yet all were influenced by both, even the tories, who found the American Federalists congenial. Nonetheless one aches for more precise categories here than she provides. We are told throughout that "most" or "many" of the elite(s) thought this or believed that. Could not more specific political, regional, national or religious categories have been constructed? Perhaps not. Still, the main lines of Errington's argument could have been struck more forcefully. Upper Canadians drew differing lessons from the War of 1812, but developed "a new colonial consciousness, one which was distinctly Upper Canadian" (p. 89). By 1828 a real provincial community had emerged but one "polarized ... into two warring political camps" (p. 93). "It was really the growing maturity of the Upper Canadian community and the colonists' increasing appreciation of the common interests and concerns that produced the psychological and political environment necessary for broad colonial protest" (p. 95). Readers may be forgiven for pausing at these seeming contradictions. Nevertheless, Errington supplies convincing evidence that warring camps existed, prodded into being by different views of Upper Canada's past and of its future. And on departing, she warns that 1828 "really marked only the end of the beginning of serious political controversy in Upper Canada" (p. 187).

David Mills' short but abundantly documented analysis, *The Idea of Loyalty* also examines the notions "of the articulate elite" (p. 10). He seconds Errington's view of the increasing political polarization of the province in the 1820s, though he is not in uniform agreement with her, feeling, for instance, that she overstates Federalist influence on Upper Canadian conservatives. He suggests, too, that *many* Upper Canadians had sought to make a "little Britain" of the colony. Like S.F. Wise, he argues that tory loyalty before 1820 was an amalgam of the attitudes of the Loyalists and the toryism of late 18th century England. A rigid tory mind was rendered more so by the war of 1812. After it, tory views "precluded any conception of legitimate opposition" (p. 27). But opposition there had been and opposition there continued to be. To the tory claim that Upper Canada was a Loyalist province "governed by a Tory elite" (pp. 34-5) the reformers replied with an assimilative concept which would admit to citizenship Americans and other newcomers. The alien controversy brought the two disparate views into sharp focus. Defeated, the tories became even more exclusivist, while the reformers happily "linked loyalty to the internal growth" (p. 50) of the province, arguing that settlers would be loyal to a community whose progress they were furthering. Hence while the reformers still saw Britain and British constitutional principles as important to their recipe for loyalty, they were adding the province itself as an ingredient.

The "assimilative myth" (p. 53) of the reformers found ready acceptance in the 1830s among the Methodists, hitherto the most explicit of the tories' targets. But influenced by English toryism through John Wesley and the Loyalist tradition

through Egerton Ryerson, Methodist loyalty was conservative. In 1836 Ryerson took many of his brethren into the conservative coalition, thus helping produce the appearance of moderate toryism, which increasingly defined loyalty in terms of colonial nationalist goals. The thirties were a transitional phase for the Methodists and other moderate tories. They could accept some reform notions but not others. The idea of legitimate opposition provided particular difficulty. As for the reformers, the thirties crystallized their concept "of loyalty, which accepted the legitimacy of dissent based upon the defence of the constitutional rights of British subjects" (p. 97), but the radicals, led by "grievancemonger" Mackenzie (p. 181, note 60), allowed the high tories to equate them and their love of American institutions with reform. However amorphous its categories — at one point Ryerson seems grouped with the high tories (p. 91) — Mills' study is useful. It pulls together a number of hitherto disparate threads and emphasizes the polarized, albeit confused, ideological state of the province on the eve of the rebellion. "Rhetoric had replaced analysis; labels and symbols became the staples of debate" (p. 7).

Mills' book examines a particular aspect of Upper Canada's political culture. Gordon T. Stewart's *The Origins of Canadian Politics*, though even shorter, is more ambitious. Stewart, influenced by a seminal article of John Murrin on Anglo-American political culture from the 17th to the early 19th centuries and by the Hartzian fragment approach,[1] has produced an extended essay on the political culture of 19th century Canada which stresses the importance of the central Canadian experience. Stewart establishes the comparative framework briefly, perhaps too briefly, at the outset. Following Murrin, he notes that in England "the court party", in alliance with the king, evolved a strong national government which was aristocratic and oligarchic in character. The Americans, strongly influenced by "the country party" tradition in England, which distrusted central power and looked to parliament to check both it and royal authority, had by the 1820s a weak national government. As for the two Canadas, they were given decidedly "court"-oriented governments by the Constitutional Act. The British governmental system worked because the Crown chose many leading ministers from the Commons, but in the Canadas, as in the former 13 colonies, the governor and his councillors unwisely ignored the assemblies, thus depriving the provinces of a vital link between the executive and the legislature. The main body of Upper Canada's reformers wanted to establish that all-important link and secure a truly mixed constitution through the adoption of responsible government. Hence they were deeply "court"-oriented in their assumptions.

1 John Murrin, "The Great Inversion, or Court versus Country: a Comparison of the Revolution Settlement in England (1688-1721) and America (1776-1816)" in J.G.A. Pocock, ed., *Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1980), pp. 368-453.

Mackenzie and the radicals were "country"-oriented.[2] Rebellion in Upper Canada broke out when "frustrated Reform leaders despaired of changes coming through a system controlled and manipulated by the governors and their Tory allies" (p. 33). Stewart's analysis is based on selected secondary sources. My book on Charles Duncombe's rising is listed as one. In both Stewart's text and index poor Charles becomes William Duncombe, shaking my faith in the author's mastery of the literature. But others with fewer special interests will likely be more forgiving, grateful for the broad analytical framework which he provides.

Stewart, in his analysis, points to the fact that the "court" party insisted on the necessity of a state church. William Westfall's *Two Worlds* does likewise. The Church of England's defenders argued that only religion could secure order and that it could do so efficiently and cheaply. The Anglicans (and the Presbyterians) espoused a religion of reason. For them, the process of redemption was slow. People had to be taught how to keep their passions in check, accept their stations in life and approach God as virtuous, moderate individuals. Only well-educated, resident clergy, "the advance guard of the counter-revolution" (p. 88) whose expensive establishment required state support, would be suitable instructors. But as Westfall, who examines the question of establishment from the Church of England's perspective, points out, establishment proved elusive. Though the British government had intended to establish the Church in Upper Canada, the state failed to honour its obligations, despite demonstrations from the Church that it was living up to its side of the bargain.

In part, the state did not oblige the Anglicans because of the widespread opposition to their pretensions. Their most powerful opponents were the Methodists whose religion was informed not by reason but experience. Here the counterpart to Strachan, Westfall's Anglican of Anglicans, is Ryerson, who "turned Strachan's words on their head: knowledge without zeal was a positive evil" (p. 27). For the Methodists, conversion was a sudden and immediate process, defying analysis and description. Preaching must raise emotion, must "admonish and convert" (p. 26). As the emotional and intellectual universe of the Methodists was very different from that of the Anglicans, so too was their daily world. For the Anglicans, the world was a garden. For the Methodists, it was "a wilderness of sin and degradation" (p. 38). In some Methodists this perception produced pessimism about society and a withdrawal from worldly affairs. In others it led to an identification with political radicalism, which also rejected the world as it was. On balance, the contrasting views meant that

2 Peter J. Smith, "The Ideological Origins of Canadian Confederation", *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XX, 1 (March 1987), discusses the policy of Mackenzie in a Stewart-like framework, emphasizing the importance of the Creightonian commercial-agrarian conflict (pp. 12-14).

religion in Upper Canada, "far from promoting order, ... was the wellspring of intense social, political, and class conflict" (p. 200).

Westfall's book, like the Mills and Stewart works, points to the polarities that had developed on the eve of the rebellion. These three canvass general trends in political and religious cultures. Paul Romney in his Osgoode Society publication, *Mr. Attorney: The Attorney General for Ontario in Court, Cabinet and Legislature, 1791-1899* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1986), and in a flurry of recent articles explores those polarities by examining specific political issues. Romney devotes half of *Mr. Attorney* to matters which provide a backdrop for the rebellion, doing so without "being unduly influenced by the official viewpoint on events and individuals" (p. 337). His law officers were incompetent or roguish, often both. After Simcoe's departure successive attorneys general connived at the attempt of influential merchants and others "to engross as much wealth as they could at the expense of the rank-and-file farmer" (p. 28). J. C. Dent in *The Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion* ... (2 volumes, Toronto, 1885) largely explained the rebellion in terms of the abuses perpetrated by such officials. In this, Romney believes, he went too far, ignoring economic, ethnic and religious tensions "that were equally important" (p. 64), but he also feels that modern historians have gone just as far in the other direction. Desensitized by the Holocaust and other modern horrors, they have reduced the systematic perversion of justice that occurred to a few "outrages" (p. 64).

Romney's indictment of the justice system is most pronounced for the Robinson years. John Beverley Robinson, attorney general from 1818 to 1829, was the first holding his office to be an influential politician. John Brode's recent biography, *Sir John Beverley Robinson: Bone and Sinew of the Compact* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1984) is sympathetic to its subject. Brode judges Robinson to have been, in the main, a fair-minded and honest functionary and politician with many successes to his credit. Upper Canada would have been the poorer without him. If Brode recognizes that Robinson had warts — an archaic social vision, for example — Romney sees him as a great malevolent toad, gobbling up the poor and the innocent. Romney resurrects and examines in detail several formerly celebrated cases discussed by Dent. These may have provided Robinson and his ilk with just a few of their flies.

Among the victims, albeit an indigestible one, was Robert Randal, who lost valuable property to merchants Thomas Clark and Samuel Street of the "Niagara mafia" (p. 72). Had Robinson had his way, all the other Americans in the province would have been served up too. Like Errington and Mills, Romney sees the celebrated alien controversy as a turning point in the politicization of the province. Unlike them, he examines its murky depths. Unlike Brode, he believes that Robinson, and fellow toad Lieutenant-Governor Maitland, conspired to rob American settlers of their political rights under the guise of guaranteeing their property rights. Romney's case is based on conjecture, but "proof of the matter one way or another may lurk somewhere in the archives. For the moment

we must be content with raising the question and affirming that the events...gave skeptical MPPs every reason to suspect a scam" (p. 104). (A subsequent article saw Romney still without that proof.[3]) Reformers, realizing that the "colony was ruled not by law but by Mammon" (p. 150), mobilized, forcing a fair settlement of the alien issue. They won the election of 1828 and ultimately put the issue of responsible government, to say nothing of the rule of law, on the agenda. In *Mr. Attorney* Romney rushes over the 1830s but makes it clear that in escalating their violence through the Mackenzie expulsions, election riots and such, the tories made the resort to arms by beleaguered reformers an inevitable response, "virtually an act of self-defence" (p. 157).

Romney presented the latter argument at somewhat greater length in "From the Types Riot to the Rebellion: Elite Ideology, Anti-Legal Sentiment, Political Violence, and the Rule of Law in Upper Canada", *Ontario History*, LXXIX, 2 (June 1987), pp. 113-44. The editors took the unusual step of noting, rather cryptically, that "even before seeing the full light of day" the piece "has been the subject of heated debate and controversy....this debate has taken place in a somewhat unusual manner" (p. 113, note). Clearly it would have been unfortunate had someone succeeded in downing Romney's pen or pulling the plug on his word processer. He has usefully underlined the politicizing effects of the alien controversy and reminded us of the importance of several grievances that might now *seem* petty. That is not to say that his work is without blemish. Some of his language is anachronistic or overly cute. At times he goes further than his evidence will allow. More importantly, the simple construct that underlies his work — that the farmers who pursued the noble goal of making a living were oppressed by those who pursued the ignoble goal of making a fortune — is open to question. To Romney, lawyers like Robinson, whatever their pretensions, were "paid agents of an economic system, entrenched in law, that discriminated against agrarian smallholders and left them at the mercy of the merchant and the money lender".[4] He reports this as a contemporary perception but leaves little doubt that it is one he shares. Behind the scenes, then, was "Mammon", best exemplified perhaps by Samuel Street Jr. of the "Niagara mafia", a man so infamous for cupidity that when he died a local paper, the *St. Catharines Journal*, itself much in favour of commercial development, recorded with evident distaste that he had habitually extracted "the last penny of interest".[5] As Douglas

3 Paul Romney, "Re-inventing Upper Canada: American Immigrants, Upper Canadian History, English Law, and the Alien Question" in Roger Hall, William Westfall and Laurel Sefton MacDowell, eds., *Patterns of the Past: Interpreting Ontario's History* ... (Toronto, Dundurn Press, 1988), pp. 78-107.

4 Romney, "From the Types Riot", p. 121.

5 Quoted in Bruce A. Parker, "Samuel Street", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. VII (Toronto, 1988), p. 835.

McCalla has recently argued, however, few merchants could afford to be so greedy.[6] As the province developed, they faced competition for the farmer's trade. If they drove him to the wall and took his land, they would have no one to buy their goods unless they could unload that land on another unsuspecting dupe. As McCalla notes, those who argue that this is precisely what happened have a tremendously condescending view of the farmer, who appears as a rural simpleton, too stupid to take advantage of competition among the merchants or too inert to flee to the nearby United States to escape those who would devour him. Once this central prop of Romney's article is removed, his argument crumbles.

While Romney's work examines events in Upper Canada, Phillip A. Buckner's authoritative, *The Transition to Responsible Government: British Policy in British North America, 1815-1850* (Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1985) relates those events to policy making in London and to developments in other British North American colonies. On the former score Buckner notes that parliament, the cabinet and the British public paid, at best, sporadic attention to colonial concerns. In this context, Colonial Office officials, like James Stephen, "Mr. Mother Country", permanent under-secretary from 1836 to 1847, could have extraordinary influence. Even they were prepared to concede by the 1830s that colonies like Upper Canada which had assemblies should look after local concerns. There was no question, however, of letting them go. The ministers regarded the empire as a sort of alpine burden: it "had to be retained...simply because it was there" (p. 6). The representative of the British government in the colonies, the governor, was in the unenviable position of reacting to erratic influence from London. Worse, deprived of significant control over the assembly, he headed a weak executive. Here, Buckner's views on the necessity of having a strong executive in a "modernizing" state and on the importance of political parties, which, once institutionalized, he theorizes, help avoid open conflict by allowing for the orderly transfer of power from one coalition of interests to others, are much influenced by Samuel P. Huntington's, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1968).

Buckner denies S.F. Wise's suggestion that the Upper Canadian tories acted like a political party. "Upper Canadian conservatism was a multifarious political movement embracing a wide range of interest groups and many intellectual currents" (p. 159). The loyalty cry of the 1830s was so important because it was an appeal to the one notion that all could rally round. Equally, the reformers were a diverse bunch. For inspiration they drew variously on American examples, the "country" tradition in England and 19th century British radical thought, which

6 Douglas McCalla, "Rural Credit and Rural Development in Upper Canada, 1790 to 1850" in Hall *et al.*, eds., *Patterns of the Past*, pp. 37-54.

focused "on the sinister influence exercised by a privileged aristocracy" (p. 160). On balance, Wise, in seeing "Upper Canada as a battleground between a clearly defined and antithetical British conservatism and American liberalism" (p. 173, note 108) has oversimplified things. As for parties, though still weak in the 1830s, they were of increasing importance, with the reformers forcing the pace. The political system, however, "did not allow for" their "free play" (p. 161), helping lead to an intensity of political division and bitterness of feeling which amazed outsiders.

Contrary to some modern commentators, Buckner argues that responsible government, at least its main tenet that the Crown's ministers were responsible to parliament "for the general conduct of the executive" (p. 5), had been established in Great Britain in the 18th century. By the mid 1830s reformers throughout British North America were demanding a responsible executive council; yet only the Baldwins, "perhaps because they were more conservative than" most reformers "were more perceptive" and "were moving towards a modern conception of politics", seeing "responsible government as providing a mechanism which would allow for the retention in office of parties with legitimate differences of opinion" (p. 161). Other reformers, and the tories, denied that differences could be legitimate. For its part, the Colonial Office adopted the view that parties and partisan rivalries were unhelpful. Not understanding the gravity of the situation and not prepared to grant responsible government, it failed to solve the problem of how to establish "a working relationship" (p. 166) between the assembly and the executive. Reform frustration led to rebellion.

The rebellions in the Canadas led, in turn, to Durham's mission. Durham correctly decided that the greatest weakness of the colonial government was "the relative impotence of the local executive" (p. 257). Obliging the governor to appoint men to the executive council who had majority support in the assembly would ensure that the executive could direct the legislature. As for that contentious term "responsible government", Durham did not use it himself. Though he clearly felt that there were just a few matters of legitimate imperial concern, he desired a powerful local executive and an assembly checked in various ways. In fact, locally the governor would exercise power of a sort the Crown in Britain no longer had. "Not a good party man himself" (p. 259), Durham had failed to appreciate the significance of parties, assuming that the governor "would retain considerable personal influence" (p. 259). Whatever Durham had in mind, his report focused attention on the demand for responsible government, leading colonial reformers to agitate for more autonomy than he envisaged.

Durham and his report have been highly contentious in Canadian historiography — his liberal proposals for government restructuring usually seen as clashing with his conservative suggestions for restructuring French Canadian society. Buckner does a service in directing attention to the inherent conservatism of his political vision — his failure to appreciate party and his insistence on the necessity of a strong executive. Other recent commentators have noticed this

latter aspect also. Gordon Stewart in *The Origins of Canadian Politics* tells us that "Durham's starting and finishing points focused on the need to increase executive weight and influence by means of a broader and more vigorous exercise of the governor's powers" (p. 44). The most recent work on Durham, Janis Ajzenstat's *The Political Thought of Lord Durham* (Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) observes that Durham "was something of an anti-democrat" who "seems to have supposed" that responsible government "would usually work to maintain the executive in office so that it in fact became less responsive to immediate popular demands" (p. 52). Faithful to the principles of "balance" in Britain's mixed constitution, "he argued that the executive should be strengthened and the legislature curbed" (p. 59), since the assemblies of the Canadas "had reached for improper powers in an attempt to secure proper ones" (p. 60). Responsible government would help create a "strong, relatively independent political executive" (p. 60).

The bulk of Ajzenstat's slender book, though, is less a consideration of Durham's recommendations for governmental reforms than a spirited defence of his prescriptions for the ills of French Canada. A political scientist, she approaches Durham in isolation from his political and social milieu. Emphasizing his truly liberal creed, she argues that he was no bigot; he feared that a distinct and peculiar society in an age of rapid economic progress would remain a backwater, its members exploited by the majority. From this, she makes the leap that modern Canada's multicultural policies are probably unwise.

Ajzenstat notwithstanding, the central debate about Durham's report is its effect on the winning of responsible government. Here, Buckner feels that it was of real consequence. He notes that, despite opposition in the Colonial Office to the grant of responsible government, Colonial Secretary Lord John Russell was forced, while denouncing it, into "admitting that it would normally be acted upon in practice" (p. 261). Acting on Russell's circular instructions, the first governor of the united Canadas, Charles Thomson, formed "a rudimentary cabinet" (p. 262). As early commentators and practitioners of history recognized, unlike many modern historians, he was obliged to concede the essential principle of responsible government, with the members of his executive council acting like a ministry. Bagot, after taking Baldwin and Lafontaine into the ministry, declared that whether or not responsible government was officially acknowledged, it existed. With this, Buckner concurs. Unfortunately, Metcalfe and his reform ministers fell out over the control of patronage. Shortsightedly, British officials were "reluctant to surrender complete control over the patronage of the Government to men whose loyalty was suspect and to exclude from office those who played the most active part in assisting the Government in putting down the rebellions" (p. 338). The achievement of full responsible government, or whatever one wishes to call it, occurred smoothly, indeed inevitably, under Elgin. The passage of the Rebellion Losses Bill capped the process. Party development and organization hereafter proceeded apace as all realized that in

the future Britain would be unlikely to respond to local appeals to redress the actions of the legislature.

Gordon Stewart's analysis of the 1840s helps provide an important corrective to the Buckner argument. As Stewart notes, various interpretations of responsible government abounded at the outset of the decade, with the central issue being the role of the governor. In the period 1840-46 the governor in official eyes was to act as King and Prime Minister both, but after Elgin's arrival, governors never again acted as Prime Minister. Party men assumed the position. As responsible government became party government, parties used patronage as vital cement. Responsible government, party and patronage were a trinity, holy or unholy. Control of patronage was more than the "concomitant of party government" that Buckner believes (p. 305). It was an integral and indissoluble part of it. Thus when Metcalfe refused to allow his ministers control of patronage, he refused them the stuff of political life. The willingness of Elgin to accept his ministers' advice on patronage was more than just a widening of responsible government or an exploration of its outer limits. It was a grant of a vital discretionary authority that made responsible government, as we know, it possible. It is curious that Buckner, with his emphasis on the importance of political parties, fails to see this.[7]

As for the outcome of the struggle for responsible government, Stewart decides that the Canadas created a decidedly "court" or statist-oriented political culture, with the executive eager to free itself "from close legislative supervision" (p. viii) and committed to economic growth. Buckner notes that responsible government gave the Canadas the strong executive modernizing societies require. The political parties created helped contain those conflicts that had led to violence in 1837. On the ideological level, Mills in *The Idea of Loyalty* also sees the emergence of consensus — a conservative one — in the 1840s. After the rebellion an ideological gulf opened up between the ultra and moderate tories over the concept of loyalty. Moderate tories, led by new men such as John A. Macdonald who represented urban, capitalist society and for whom economic growth was a *sine qua non*, came to adopt a moderate reform position, accepting

7 Buckner has restated his argument that responsible government was achieved in 1841 in "The Transition to Responsible Government: Some Revisions in Need of Revising" in C.C. Eldridge, ed., *From Rebellion to Repatriation: Canada and Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* ([Cardiff?], Canadian Studies in Wales Group, 1989), pp. 1-25. Providing an erudite review of the controversies involved, he argues that the essence of responsible government was the principle that the Crown or governor "had to act upon the advice of ministers who commanded the support of the Commons" or assembly (p. 23, note 40). As such, he argues, responsible government need not be connected with party government; perhaps not, but responsible government unconnected to party would not be responsible government as we know it today. Much of the debate swirls about the question: when was responsible government as we know it achieved?

the legitimacy of formal opposition and of parties and party government. "The assimilative concept of loyalty" which triumphed "was based on the constitutional rights of British subjects, especially if those subjects were respectable men of property; there were no democrats among the effective participants in the debate on the nature of loyalty" (pp. 133-4). The "new political elite...reflected the concerns of an urban and commercial community" (p.135).

Among the Protestants too, a conservative consensus triumphed. William Westfall's *Two Worlds* notes that Durham, "preoccupied with economic development" (p. 108), had argued that responsible government would give power to the "economically progressive" who, pursuing "self-interest...would promote the prosperity of the entire colony", which would, in turn, "solve the problem of social disorder" (p. 109). And so it happened. The old alliance with the Church of England was no longer necessary for the state. "Progress was to replace religion as the new opiate of the masses" (p. 111). The Church of England successfully responded to the new reality, with Strachan after 1840 preaching "the sacred independence of the church" from the state (p. 120). The Methodists too had to change, spurred on by the developing middle class. Methodism had to adapt, to temper its old enthusiasms and alter its techniques. "More moderate worship was part of a more moderate culture" (p. 75). By 1850, then, the bitter divisions between Methodists and Anglicans had begun to disappear and a developing Protestant consensus emerge.

On balance, writers agree that out of the turmoil of the rebellion period came a broad consensus. Politically, its hallmark was the appearance of new men representing new urban, commercial, financial and industrial realities. Significantly, J.K. Johnson in *Becoming Prominent* finds farmers to have been the single largest occupational group among Upper Canada's MLAs before 1841. Donald Swainson on the other hand, in examining Ontario's representatives in the House of Commons, 1872-74, discovered them displaced by businessmen (47 per cent of the total) and lawyers (22 per cent).[8] The lawyers were perhaps even more important than their numbers would allow, from 1841 until the end of the century nearly monopolizing the premiership of the province.[9]

These observations on the decline of the "old" men and the rise of the "new" are borne out by two recent studies of antagonists from '37 — Donald Beer's *Sir Allan Napier MacNab* (Hamilton, Dictionary of Hamilton Biography, 1984) and Lillian F. Gates' *After the Rebellion: The Later Years of William Lyon Mackenzie* (Toronto, Dundurn Press, 1988). MacNab, the "Gallant Knight" of

8 D. Swainson, "The Personnel of Politics; A Study of the Ontario Members of the Second Federal Parliament", Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1968, cited in Johnson, *Becoming Prominent*, p. 162.

9 Romney, *Mr. Attorney*, p. 160.

'37, was not a new man in the 1840s but he was a lawyer, a land speculator, a railroad promoter — indeed "a businessman". Beer argues persuasively that before the rebellion MacNab, an advocate "of the interests of the business and professional classes" (p. 68) who encouraged "an active, productive co-operation between private enterprise and the state" (p. 71), was a political moderate. The election of 1836 and the rebellion made him ultra-tory. His discreditable role in the Rebellion Losses controversy was, though, his ultra swan song. He returned to his earlier refrain: moderate toryism, coupled with economic development. In 1851 he hit a famous note: "all my politics are Railroads".[10] This "caught the imagination of the public and helped to establish MacNab ... as the personification of Canada's Railway Age" (p. 276). Politically, Beer gives MacNab much credit, perhaps too much, for forging the Liberal-Conservative party of the 1850s. Beer pursues this aspect of his argument in a recent article, "Toryism in Transition: Upper Canadian Conservative Leaders, 1836-1854", *Ontario History*, LXXX, 3 (September 1988), pp. 207-25, deciding that MacNab became "a symbol of Upper Canada, a leading spokesman for the political and social consensus and sense of national mission of this mid-Victorian society" (p. 219).

In many respects Mackenzie's post-rebellion career stands in sad contrast to MacNab's. Lillian Gates follows Mackenzie's exile and political resurrection in Upper Canada through thin and thin, often in excruciating detail. Hers is very much the life of the public Mackenzie. She largely ignores analysis of his troubled relations with his son, James, or those with his wife, who bore him children year after year. Instead, she leads us through a long recitation of his trials and tribulations in the United States — his unsuccessful involvement in patriot activities, his unexpected incarceration, his unsuccessful publishing ventures, his peregrinations, his enduring penury. Only in his involvement in American politics did he make a bit of a splash. Hating the monied Whigs, he supported Van Buren who refused aid to the patriots. This led to a former comrade, Bill Johnson, terming him "William 'Lying' Mackenzie" (p. 80). Later, enraged with Van Buren's obstinate refusal to be of service, Mackenzie turned against him and, from papers purloined from the New York City Customs House, where he worked, produced a startling expose which did lasting political damage to the former president and his associates. Corruption, nativism, slavery, swashbuckling in Mexico, and growing social inequities temporarily cured Mackenzie of his love for the United States. He was ready to return to Upper Canada when his long-awaited amnesty was granted in 1849.

Elected to the legislature of the united Canadas in 1851, Mackenzie sat until 1858. Here, Gates follows the history "as just one damned thing after another"

10 Beer, *MacNab*, p. 271. Like every other authority, Beer produces this famous statement in the third person. I have taken the liberty of recasting it in the first person.

style, bombarding the reader with details, significant and otherwise, of Mackenzie's legislative activities. In this, the new age of parties, he sat as an independent. In the age of railroads, he was ambivalent, at first supporting their construction, but then coming to see them, the Grand Trunk in particular, as engines of iniquity, with their public funding and special charters. Through it all, he fought privilege, sought to maintain "a stable currency", ease "the plight of poor but honest debtors" (p. 12), in fact, to create "a land of equal opportunity for all ... with no extremes of wealth or poverty" (p. 324). In the end, he decided that these noble goals could not be achieved within the existing union. Upper Canada should seek independence and, possibly, annexation. In the end, too, Gates largely redeems herself, producing a final chapter that puts Mackenzie in context and over-zealous critics in place.

Gates acknowledges that Mackenzie had warts, perhaps best revealed when he largely precipitated his own trial in the United States and then conducted his own defence in less-than-masterly fashion. Here he demonstrated "his verbosity, his inconsistencies, his over-confidence in his own abilities, his tendency to incriminate others and to find excuses for his own failings" (p. 64). But perhaps his biggest failing was not of his own making — by the 1850s he was a man out of time. The new conservative consensus, with its emphasis on economic development, the sober virtues of the middle class and the sanctity of party government had little toleration for such as him. This helps explain the cat-calls he endured in the house and the steadily declining support of his constituents. Gates notwithstanding, he could not adapt himself sufficiently to the new realities.

Those realities in the new age of consensus are applauded, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, by several of the authors canvassed — notably Buckner, Stewart and Mills. But not by all. Romney argues the shamful nature of responsible government. Its achievement did not alter "the social balance of power that placed the lawyer and financier above the farmer" (*Mr. Attorney*, pp. 323-4). The communists of the 1930s had it right. "Responsible government, universal suffrage, and the rule of law together comprised no more than an ideology by which a ruling class justified its hegemony to the ruled" (p. 328). Westfall maintains that ultimately "the nascent capitalist system ... destroyed the old religious structure" (p. 196) but that the new Protestant culture that emerged could not tame capitalism. Offices came to tower over churches and "self-interest and greed" to overwhelm society (p. 207).

Friendly and unfriendly commentators alike seem to agree that the changes which turned a political culture characterized by conflict into one of consensus stemmed from a deep structural change, the development of capitalism. Oddly, none really explore that key notion. They leave unanswered the question of precisely how a province that was overwhelmingly rural in 1841, which was

predominantly rural still in 1851 and 1861, was captured and controlled by the agents of a "nascent capitalism". They provide the broad outlines. We await the details.

COLIN READ

Workers, Schools and Women: Some Recent Writing on the History of British Columbia

BRITISH COLUMBIANS, SOMETIMES PERVERSELY, revel in being known as rather peculiar. Political culture in Lotus Land is characterized as bizarre and unconventional, workers are portrayed as militant and radical, and life west of the Rockies is perceived as a world unto itself. However, some of the best recent work on the history of British Columbia suggests that this portrait is overdrawn, arguing that provincial workers were inclined towards labourism rather than revolutionary socialism in the early 20th century, that education in the province followed national trends, and that British Columbia women were not out of step with the rest of Canada in terms of institutional and ideological development. Examining the past from a social perspective, broadly conceived, writers are locating the British Columbia experience in the context of national processes. The emerging perspective emphasizes the similarity of the development of British Columbia with Canada as a whole rather than the province's uniqueness.[1]

The best example of recent historical scholarship is Robert A.J. McDonald and Jean Barman, eds., *Vancouver Past: Essays in Social History* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1986), a collection of essays published to celebrate the centenary of the city of Vancouver.[2] *Vancouver Past* explores aspects of the social history of Vancouver and included in the collection are articles on the history of labour, women and education, reflecting the topical interests of much recent scholarship. Historians of labour and education in British Columbia have also contributed to other scholarly collections of essays. Despite its title, *Workers, Capital, and the State in British Columbia: Selected*

1 This essay selectively surveys the literature of the last six years. For more comprehensive bibliographic essays, see Allan Smith, "The Writing of British Columbia History", *BC Studies*, 45 (Spring 1980), pp. 73-102; Patricia E. Roy, "British Columbia", in J.L. Granatstein and Paul Stevens, eds., *A Reader's Guide to Canadian History 2 Confederation to the Present* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 161-86.

2 The contents of this book were also published in *BC Studies*, 68-70 (Spring-Summer 1986).