

upon domestic workers from the Philippines and the Caribbean. In chapter four, Judy Fudge demonstrates how organized resistance in Ontario resulted in securing collective bargaining rights for domestic workers in 1993, only to be reversed by the provincial conservative government in 1996. Chapters five by Elvir and chapter six by Velasco document the experiences of two domestic activists, recounting their encounters with wealthy employers and intimidating immigration bureaucrats.

The anthology spans the systematically (and racially) stratified admission of domestic servants into Canada since the nineteenth century, with each essay uniquely exposing oppressively racist, sexist and classist characteristics of the capitalist society. In Velasco's chapter, one brief but compelling paragraph speaks volumes about the institution that prides itself on its democratic platform: "Canada is not the compassionate country it portrays to be internationally. Domestic workers are not here for humanitarian reasons. It's not from the bottom of their hearts that the government wants to help us. This is posturing. It is difficult sometimes for many domestic workers to recognize that we are here because they need us. There is a need to be met" (163). While these particular words are directed at the state, the subtextual message goes out to the female employers of domestic workers. As bell hooks says: "the contemporary feminist call for sisterhood, the radical white woman's appeal to black women and all women of colour to join the feminist movement, is seen by many black women as yet another expression of white female denial of the reality of racist domination, of their complicity in the exploitation of black women and black people" (1994, 102). With that in mind, what both these volumes implicitly ask, but fail to pursue in the end is, "what are we going to do about it?"

#### REFERENCE

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### **In Search of Foremothers: Herstory or the Perpetuation of Myths**

*Mary Ann Shadd Cary: The Black Press and Protest in the Nineteenth Century*. Jane Rhodes. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998; photographs; ix+284 pp; ISBN 0253334462; \$39.95 US.

Black women's history in North America has been recently enhanced by the publication of a number of biographies of "Black women who made a difference." Jane Rhodes' book on Mary Ann Shadd Cary aims to restore an important foremother to the forefront of popular and academic consciousness. Mary Ann Shadd Cary, journalist, schoolteacher, abolitionist, suffragist and lawyer emerges as one of the nineteenth century Black women who fulfilled the requirements for Black foremother and hero. Perhaps more than any Black woman who lived in nineteenth century Canada, she has left behind many written records of her life.

Rhodes looks at Shadd's life and various careers in both the United States and Canada, and in so doing advances our knowledge of the life of this important pioneer, especially during her American years, before and after the Civil War. Two of Rhodes' more important contributions to our knowledge are her discussion of the ways that Shadd fought racism and sexism, and the important awareness Shadd had that Black women's gender was racially constructed. Her explorations of Shadd's involvement in the suffragist movement is also groundbreaking. But while trying to restore Shadd to her "rightful place," Rhodes has either ignored (or suppressed) significant information that would reveal the complexity of Shadd's life and actions. Foremothers, when they are found, sometimes appear with embarrassing flaws. Historians, at times, disconcerted by the fact that their subjects are really quite human, consciously or unconsciously pay little or no attention to evidence that reveals the unsavoury aspects of their subject's character. Rhodes is guilty of this. She has written a "great woman" biography and by using such methodology naturally valorizes Shadd and her life.

Central to Rhodes' discussion of Shadd's Canadian years is the now-contested thesis, advanced by Daniel Hill and others, that Shadd was an integrationist and anti-begging champion par excellence.<sup>1</sup> This thesis has been presented as the reason Shadd clashed with Henry Bibb. But such an argument is untenable. No Black abolitionist at the time can be described as either "integrationist" or "segregationist." Such a dichotomy is unhelpful if we are to understand the complexities of Black abolitionist thought.<sup>2</sup> Shadd opposed the Refugee Home Society, a land settlement project established by Bibb to help fugitives buy land, on the grounds that the RHS was open only to fugitives and that it utilized the begging system to raise funds. Shadd also charged the RHS with fraud without presenting a shred of evidence. Jane Rhodes herself naïvely repeats Shadd's accusations without seeming aware that Shadd had presented no evidence, something that historians take great pains to marshal and present. Yet, ironically, at the same time that Shadd was vigorously criticizing and condemning the RHS, she was openly supporting the Buxton colony led by Rev. William King, who himself "begged" funds to stabilize his colony. The Buxton settlement was also established for fugitive slaves. This contradiction in Shadd's thought and action is never explored by Rhodes.

In my view, Shadd's attack on the RHS settlement was racist and classist. She was incensed that only fugitives could buy land from the company, and not once thought of the difficulties fugitives endured in settling in a new and hostile country. Most free Blacks, like Shadd, on the other hand, did not have to surmount the many hardships faced by escaped slaves. Shadd went so far as to suggest that the vote be denied the Black men of the RHS because they were "riff-raffs." This was some time before Elizabeth Cady Stanton made the same suggestion with regard to Black American men after the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment which gave them the vote.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the flaws of the book, Shadd's accomplishment cannot be overlooked, and Rhodes has made sure that her readers will remember them. Shadd was a notable "first" in many areas. She was the first woman in Canada to own, edit, and publish

a newspaper, the first woman to recruit troops for the American government during the Civil War, and the first Black woman to pursue law studies. She was in more ways than one a pioneer and as such must be given her due by historians.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Daniel Hill. *Freedom-Seekers, Blacks in Early Ontario*. Toronto: Book Society of Canada, 1981. The *Fugitive Slave Law* pushed thousands of Blacks, free and runaway slaves, into Canada. For many, especially those of fugitive origins, life was very difficult. Philanthropic agencies were established to aid the fugitives, and many of these organizations resorted to fund-raising tours or "begging" in order to obtain money to help the fugitives. Many Blacks came out against begging as they felt it compromised their "manhood" and gave the appearance that they could not look after themselves. But begging was a complex issue. Many of the Blacks like Shadd, Bibb, and Samuel Ringgold Ward who made public pronouncements against this kind of fund-raising often resorted to it. Ward, for example, an ally of Shadd, was incensed at the Refugee Home Society's begging practices, but saw no contradiction in his begging efforts for the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society. Ward lost favour with this organization when he absconded with a large portion of the money he raised for it. I have dealt with both sides of the begging issue in "Begging in Canada," a paper presented at the Organization of American Historians' meeting, Toronto, April 1999.

2. Sterling Stuckey has argued against this dichotomy, especially in the manner historians have used it to describe the political thought and practice of Martin Delany and Frederick Douglass. Sterling Stuckey. *The Ideological Origins of Black Nationalism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1972.

3. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn. *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850-1920*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.

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***Painting the Maple: Essays on Race, Gender, and the Construction of Canada.*** Veronica Strong-Boag, Sherrill Grace, Avigail Eisenberg, Joan Anderson, eds. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998; vii +290 pages; ISBN 0774806923; \$75.00.

The authors of the thirteen research essays in this study of the impact of race and gender on