

its policies and procedures remained woefully incongruent with its formal stand on ecclesiastical parity.

Boyd and Brackenridge provide so much useful information that inadequacies and omissions in their work are particularly frustrating. The last two sections lacked the thoroughness and thematic unity of the first two. Perhaps because it is closest to my own research interest, I found the chapter on career missionaries especially disappointing. The authors suggest, for instance, that despite the missionaries' unconventional roles and their unique opportunities abroad, they were not notably active on behalf of women's rights. But they do not consider the possibility that the feminist energies of such women may have been aroused and absorbed by the often tempestuous politics of the mission field (as was the case for many late nineteenth-century Canadian Presbyterian missionaries). This chapter, in fact, reflects the scarcity of completed studies to date on the backgrounds and career experiences of women missionaries. Other important questions also remain largely unexplored. For example, what part did Presbyterian women play in the social gospel, a movement in which their church played a leading role, and which was at least comparatively sympathetic to women's rights? How important were family, marital and social ties in constraining would-be Presbyterian feminists from criticizing upholders of the status quo? Did Presbyterian women attempt to use the relatively more liberated position of their Methodist sisters as a lever to improve their own? And how did they respond to the radical critiques of Christian anti-feminism published in the 1890's by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Matilda Jocelyn Gage? The case of Cady Stanton—herself a former Presbyterian—is particularly relevant: her *Woman's Bible* was disavowed even by other prominent feminists, and regarded by most clergymen as simply beyond ridicule. In all likelihood, had leading Presbyterian women mounted a public critique, however cautious, of their church's sexism, it would have

cost them their place within the church establishment. And that place, as Boyd and Brackenridge demonstrate, involved a good deal of power and prestige, if not formal authority. Pragmatic self-interest must surely be added to denominational loyalty and scripturally rooted conservatism as explanations for Presbyterian women's quiescence. That being the case, it is not surprising that some of the best publicized and most forceful calls for women's rights within the church came from men. Finally, the usefulness of this work would have been considerably increased for non-Presbyterian readers if the authors had included at least a brief description of the Presbyterian system of church government and organization, and a table listing the several Presbyterian denominations discussed in the volume, abbreviations and dates of unions.

Yet these criticisms should not obscure the fact that *Presbyterian Women in America* is a well-written, valuable book, one that takes us beyond generalities about "soft" feminism to the realities of a specific case.

Ruth Compton Brouwer  
York University

#### NOTES

1. Elizabeth Howell Verdesi's *In But Still Out: Women in the Church*. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), focuses mainly on the first half of the twentieth century and does not include women's work in and on behalf of foreign missions.

**"Traitors to the Masculine Cause": The Men's Campaign for Women's Rights.** Sylvia Strauss. *Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982. Pp. 290*

Sylvia Strauss states at the outset that her purpose in writing "*Traitors to the Masculine Cause*": *The Men's Campaign for Women's Rights* was to trace the evolution over more than one hundred years of male support for women's rights. This is clearly an interesting question; recent studies such as Peter N. Stearns, *Be a Man!*

(1979) and Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics, and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (1981) have revealed how little we, in fact, know about the response of men—be they feminists or anti-feminists—to the nineteenth-century debate over sex roles. Strauss provides a useful service in bringing together in one book the accounts of about fifty men who (by one criterion or another) could be considered to have been on the feminist side. Indeed, her study reads more like a biographical dictionary than a monograph. To give the true flavor of her book it is best to indicate briefly what she accomplishes in each chapter.

In chapter one, Strauss provides potted biographies of those whom she calls the “fathers of feminism”—Daniel Defoe, Jonathon Swift, Tom Paine, Condorcet, Charles Brockden Brown, Thomas Spence, William Thompson, Robert Owen, John Stuart Mill, and George Jacob Holyoake. Her main concern is with the British but when it suits her purposes she draws in American and French men. More curious is the fact that she bases much of her interpretation of the early “philosophical feminists” on the reminiscences of George Jacob Holyoake, a man whose bad memory was so notorious that J.M. Ludlow claimed that if Holyoake said, “he had dined off a mutton chop the chance would be ten to one it was probably a beefsteak.”

Strauss turns, in chapter two, to the men who interested themselves in the establishment of a single standard of sexual morality. Benjamin Rush, Auguste Tissot, J.H. Kellogg, Thomas Gisborne, and Charles Kingsley all make appearances but Strauss focuses on the main male contributors to the debate over prostitution—William Acton, James Stansfeld, and William Stead. She effectively employs the information gathered by Judith Walkowitz in her recent history of the Contagious Diseases Acts but does not contribute anything new to our knowledge of nineteenth-century prostitution.

The “sex radicals”—basically the men who were active in defending recourse to birth control—are discussed by Strauss in chapter three. The activities of Place, Carlyle, Knowlton and Drysdale are familiar to those who have read Fryer, Ledbetter, and McLaren; for those who have not, this chapter will provide a starting point. Of course, men who opposed traditional sexual codes could nevertheless support different forms of male dominance. In chapter four, Strauss deals with this tradition of what she calls “domestic feminism” when relating the activities of John Humphrey Noyes, William Morris, Karl Pearson, Edward Bellamy, and Havelock Ellis. And shifting from sexology to fiction, Strauss uses chapter five to review the works of the leading male writers—Meredith, Hardy, Allen, and Shaw—who treated the subject of the late nineteenth century “new woman.”

The men involved in suffrage agitation are dealt with by the author in two chapters. The early liberal supporters—Mill, Bright, Fawcett, Courtney, and Dilke—are examined in chapter six. Chapter seven is devoted to defenders of the WSPU such as Pankhurst, Snowden, Keir Hardie, and Pethick-Lawrence. Strauss's book has no real conclusion but the last chapter on men who wrote women's history—Mill, Engels, Buckle, McCabe, Blease, Brailsford, and Dell—provides a parting overview.

Strauss's book is very much like a biographical dictionary. It has the strength of that sort of work, thoroughness; but it also has its weakness, lack of analysis. No single, clear argument emerges from this study. If one hypothesis had been pursued, presumably many of the men in this book—drawn from England, France, and America, from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, and from a variety of political persuasions—would have been dropped and a more sharply focused but more rewarding work would have resulted. Strauss makes the best defense of her book in the first line of her preface when she asserts that her subject “has been neglected in the

past." Unfortunately, that is not quite true. As her own footnotes indicate, every male supporter of feminism whom she treats has been the subject of historical study. In quarrying these secondary accounts, Strauss does provide a handy compendium of the existing literature on nineteenth-century male feminists; an original approach to the issue remains to be plotted.

Angus McLaren  
University of Victoria.

**Travailleuses et féministes: Les femmes dans la société québécoise.** Marie Lavigne and Yolande Pinard, et al., *Montréal: Boréal Express, 1983*. Pp. 430.

**Maîtresses de maison, maîtresses d'école: Femmes, famille et éducation dans l'histoire du Québec.** Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Micheline Dumont, et al., *Montréal: Boréal Express, 1983*. Pp. 413.

There are many reasons for women's historians of English Canada to envy those of Quebec. Now that these two readers comprising 32 articles in 843 pages join the 513 page general survey, *L'Histoire des femmes au Québec depuis quatre siècles* published in 1982, Quebec students and teachers have classroom materials unmatched for breadth and depth in any part of Canada. The Quebec literature in women's history shows a discerning eclecticism in methodology and a knowledgeable receptivity to a wide international literature—a maturity which has not yet been so apparent in the parallel literature outside Quebec. It is striking in these volumes, not only the degree to which Quebec feminists are attentive to the wider North Atlantic literature in both French and English, but also the thoroughness of their command of the English Canadian literature, a traffic in insight which appears from examination of the notes of most other Canadian writing in women's history, to be too often inefficiently one way. Finally, there is in this literature, notably in the

work of Micheline Dumont and Marie Lavigne, a refreshing jocular irreverence toward academic pretension and an insistence upon the self-conscious imbrication of politics in scholarly investigation at a level beyond polemic, which is a notably healthy sign in a group attempting to remake historical categories.

The first of these volumes, on working women and feminists, is substantially a reprint of earlier work. Half of the sixteen essays appeared in *Les femmes dans la société québécoise—aspects historiques*, which this collection supercedes. Also included are Susan Trofimenkoff's "Muffled Voices", which was published first in this journal, Marta Danylewycz's "Nuns and Feminists in Montreal" from *Histoire sociale Social History* and Jennifer Stoddart's study of the Dorion Commission from the first volume of Osgoode Society publications. Most valuable for teaching purposes among the new contributions is the editors' "Work and the women's movement: a visible history", which summarizes and scrutinizes the literature on women's paid and unpaid work, and female activists' place in political and religious movements within a broad temporal, spatial and theoretical context. The discussion of female waged and non-waged work during the process of industrialization is particularly deft in its collection from all possible quarters to craft as comprehensive a summary of research and reasonable inference on this topic as we yet possess for Canada or Quebec. Johanne Daigle's history of organisation among Montreal nurses 1946-66 suggests the ways in which work action was amply constrained by the long associations of nursing with mothering, religious vocation and more recently but as compellingly, with the facade of separation from shop floor politics of professional status. If nurses since 1966, when nursing aids appeared as a new level in the hospital female job hierarchy, have been at pains to distinguish the status from the gender aspects of their occupation, it is clear from the work of Mona-Josée Gagnon on women in the Quebec labour movement, particularly from her new