

unclear from this argument whether Hufton would agree that it was during the French Revolution that citizenship became based on the exclusion and subordination of women.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is Hufton's discussion of the mythology of women and their combined roles in the French Revolution. On the one hand, women were viewed as dangerous. The Republican fathers claimed that women's political associations and protests were inappropriate and unnatural and that they should have been content with their domestic role as Republican mothers. Active female participation in the Republic was rejected, their citizenship was never seriously considered, and in 1793 women's clubs were outlawed and attendance at Assembly meetings was prohibited. On the other hand, when women tried to retain their connection to the church, one of the few areas where they could be active on some level, functioning at appropriate levels of femininity (through charity work, teaching or socializing), they were immediately labelled "counter-revolutionary" and blamed for the failure of the Republic. Women during the revolutionary period were in a terrible bind: try to participate actively in the Republic and you were seen as a threat, don't participate and risk being held responsible for the downfall of the Republic. Women were viewed as violent protestors or religious fanatics; even as they were denied citizenship or permitted active participation they continue to be blamed for the failure of the Republic. According to this logic women risked being blamed for the backlash against them. It is this mythology and legacy that Hufton claims kept women out of the public, political sphere for so long in France and that continues to have ramifications for women in the public sphere today. It is also this discussion that I find most new and interesting about Hufton's book.

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Rose Potvin, ed., *Passion and Conviction: The Letters of Graham Spry* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre 1992).

Ever the cynic, Paul Goodman once stated that, in all likelihood, few great men [sic]

could make it past the Personnel Department. One might add in this regard that being a socialist never helped either. Political activist Graham Spry's career is a case study in this sort of irony. As this book clearly demonstrates, Spry was one of the most diligent, perceptive, and capable Canadians of the twentieth century. Yet because of his political leanings and despite his accomplishments — the greatest of which was persuading R.B. Bennett's free-enterprise government to create a nation-wide public broadcasting system — he remained penniless and unemployable in Canada. He had no choice but to leave the country if he wanted to find work. "Here I am," he wrote late in 1937, "the nationalist working for Americans and in England. And here I am the socialist serving the biggest of big business."

Spry was born into a well-placed Ontario military family in February 1900. He was gifted in many respects, not the least of which was his ability to teach himself French. Language remained a special interest, and throughout his career he promoted harmonious relations between Canada's two main linguistic groups. A well-rounded student, he went to Oxford in 1922 as Manitoba's Rhodes scholar and there came under the same Fabian influences as Frank Underhill, Eugene Forsey, and King Gordon (with whom he later wrote *Social Planning for Canada*). After university Spry went to work for the International Labour Organization in Geneva and later the Association of Canadian Clubs in Ottawa. As national secretary of the Association he played a principal role in planning a coast-to-coast radio broadcast for Canada's Diamond Jubilee in 1927. He became fascinated with radio's potential: in the right hands the medium could promote a sense of Canadian nationhood; but in the wrong hands — those of private owners who would do anything for profit — it would degenerate into another vehicle for the spread of American culture and for "selling cakes of soap." The Aird Commission on Radio Broadcasting (1929) later formally suggested public radio for Canada. Its recommendations, however, were adopted only after eighteen months of frantic lobbying by the Canadian Radio League (CRL) under the joint leadership of Spry and Alan Plaunt. Afterwards, Spry became immersed in the burgeoning socialist movements of the 1930s.

At one time his Toronto office was the point of convergence for the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR), the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) of Ontario, *Canadian Forum* magazine, and the socialist newspaper *The New Commonwealth*.

As a biography-substitute, *Passion and Conviction* offers an informative and novel view of the early days of the Ontario CCF, its leadership problems, and the issues that were under discussion in the mid-1930s. Spry was one of the CCF's first candidates, running (and losing) in a 1934 by-election. Unfortunately, none of his letters or notes deals with this event or the 1935 general election, and therefore this important phase in Spry's life and in Canadian political history is given short shrift. Further research would certainly show that there is much more to the story. But Potvin does provide a telling glimpse into the circle of friends who founded the LSR and CCF out of a sense of disappointment when the "old idea of a left-wing Liberal party, so freely promised in private conversations," failed to take shape. Her book is also the fullest and most colourful account to date of the CRL's thrifty and effective lobbying effort.

Potvin came to write this book through her research on Canadian broadcast policy as well as a brief friendship she and Spry enjoyed late in his life. Shortly after his death in 1983, Irene Biss Spry asked Potvin to write her husband's biography. But interviews with friends and colleagues and the nature of Spry's personal papers convinced Potvin "that the biographical form was not the best to tell Graham's story." She therefore decided to craft it in the subject's own words. "My job," she writes, "was simply to select the material, put some order into it, and introduce it with background information here and there." But this approach does not always suffice. In addition to letters, Spry wrote diaries, unfinished memoirs, articles, speeches, and reports, all of which would further elucidate the story of his life. Potvin intermittently draws on these additional sources, but her reliance on the correspondence is still too great. She herself acknowledges certain "glaring omissions" inherent in collections of letters. For example, absent from this "biography" is the interchange between family and friends as well as others who, because of their physical nearness, never exchanged letters with Spry. At its

worst, this failing misrepresents much of his most important work, namely the behind-the-scenes lobbying he must have engaged in as part of his CRL activities. As well, the close relationship with his friend and colleague Alan Plaunt appears here merely as sporadic promissory notes between debtor and creditor. Quite simply the two men dined together nearly everyday during their radio campaign and therefore had little cause to describe their activities in written form.

Throughout the book, Potvin attempts to stress Spry's contentedness with his life and the absence of bitterness and remorse. However, a tone of sadness pervades. She notes the tragedy in the fact that what Spry wanted most he never got: a chance to serve Canada in Canada. But clearly he did serve Canada in Canada. His work with the CRL shaped Canadian broadcasting; several generations have not entirely undone what Spry and Plaunt accomplished in that busy year and a half. He was also an important part of the generation that brought Canadian socialism to bud. Knowing what we know about Spry's character, it is likely that he held it all together through the difficult early years. However, what is most clear from *Passion and Conviction* is that Spry represents a vanished type: a Canadian committed to public service, willing to work exceedingly hard for a better nation and not simply for personal advancement and profit. This collection is a good start but a thorough and critical biography of Graham Spry still awaits.

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Donald Harman Akenson, *God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel, and Ulster* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 1992).

Donald Akenson's latest book, *God's Peoples*, is timely, ambitious, and tough to review. The author, who teaches history at Queen's University, admits as much at the outset:

As even a glance at the table of contents makes clear, this book is a study in analogical history. Either the reader will be convinced that the ancient Hebrews had a distinct and robust way of constructing their