

demonstrates great skill at analyzing gendered constructs in the context of all male prisons. We would have benefitted from her keen insights on the relationship between white dominance and sexual deviance.

Zoë Newman has taught Women's Studies and Sociology at the University of Toronto and York University, with a focus on transnational feminism, critical sexualities and urban spatial regulation. Her current research looks at public celebrations of difference—particularly queer pride and Caribana/Carnival—and their mobilization by mainstream coverage to tell stories of Canadian tolerance, or dangerous alterity.

TRANSFORMING LABOUR: WOMEN AND WORK IN POST-WAR CANADA

Joan Sangster
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REVIEWED BY DOMINIQUE CLÉMENT

Joan Sangster couples statistics and broad theoretical insights with profoundly personal depictions of the lives of working women in post-war Canada. Her study offers a fresh perspective on several topics, including fordism, French-English relations, the intersection of race-class-gender, state regulation, the labour movement, workplace conflict, the Cold War, the sexual division of labour, and the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Post-war Canada documents how women transformed the workplace and the resistance they faced from employers and the state. The book opens with detailed statistics on labour force participation rates to demonstrate the impact of women on the workplace. The next few chapters

explore women's experiences as workers, including their role in strikes among the Dionne textile workers and the Dupuis Frères department store, as well as obstacles to unionization (including opposition within the labour movement's leadership or rank and file). Her chapter on Aboriginal women tells us a great deal about women's work in rural Canada and their conflicting roles in the family and workplace. The two most original contributions in the book include a chapter on how women took advantage of grievance mechanisms secured under the rubric of the post-war fordism accord, and another chapter on letters to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

Perhaps the most important contribution of this book is Sangster's commentary on fordism. Except for Gordon Hak's recent book on the forestry industry in British Columbia, there is no recent sustained study on fordism in Canada. Sangster argues that the fordism accord was a limited, gender and race-biased agreement, which nonetheless facilitated unionization and helped women fight for equal pay, job security and career advancement. Her analysis is more nuanced than simply denouncing fordism outright, which is a common theme in the literature on the labour movement. Sangster takes into account how women operated within the framework of the fordism accord to challenge restrictions and regulation of working class and white-collar women.

It is to Sangster's credit that she has gone to great lengths to provide a genuinely pan-Canadian history of post-war women and work. Far too many anglophone historians of Canada today provide flimsy excuses for excluding French Canadians in purportedly "national" studies, or fail to draw on French sources and literature. Her chapter on women at the Dupuis Frères department store is an engaging account of paternalism, labour relations, women's resistance, Québécois nationalism, and dis-

courses surrounding women's bodies. The author should also be lauded for drawing on French Canadian historiography, including studies by Denyse Baillergeon, Martin Pâquet, and Jacques Rouillard. It is tempting to suggest that a national study of women and labour is impossible given the scope of such an ambitious undertaking. The book, for instance, tells us little about women in regions such as Newfoundland or the north (Linda Cullum's 2008 article on women berry pickers in Newfoundland, which is not cited in Sangster's long bibliography, is an excellent example of unique regional differences). Still, this in no way detracts from the substance of Sangster's arguments on, for instance, women in the retail sector or unionization. In fact, the author endeavours to link the history of Dupuis Frères with women's experiences in other regions.

One of the odd points raised sporadically throughout the book is Sangster's criticism of the term "second-wave feminism." She makes a case for the need to recognize women's activism as part of a longer historical continuum. In truth, Canadian historians have long abandoned the myth of a quiescent inter-war period and of a conservative post-war era. In addition, Sangster offers a spirited defence of Marxism. Her arguments regarding the sexual division of labour, and the intersection of class and gender in structuring workplace relations, are clearly valid. But the author is cognizant of the fact that, compared to the literature produced in Canada twenty years ago, Canadian historians (especially the growing number of new scholars) rarely apply this theoretical framework. *Transforming Labour* may be one of the last genuinely Marxist studies of women and labour for a generation.

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