Storia del Canada dalle origini ai giorni nostri (History of Canada from Beginning to our Days). By Luca Codignola & Luigi Bruti Liberati. 815 pp. Milano: Bompiani, 1999. L. 24.000 (\$20.00 Can.).

The publication of Luca Codignola and Luigi Bruti Liberati's book, *Storia del Canada dalle origini ai giorni nostri (History of Canada from Beginning to our Days)*, marks an important cultural event. It is in fact the first comprehensive history of Canada to have been published in the Italian language. It also crowns fifty years of growing interest in Canadian culture and arts in Italy. During this half century, theoretical works by Northrop Frie and Marshal McClunen have been translated and published as have literary works by Margaret Lawrence, Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen, Nino Ricci and many others. Canadian history and literature, in the French and English languages, have been thought in several Italian Universities; and the Associazione Italiana di Studi Canadesi has been active for over twenty years. Furthermore, *Storia del Canada*...condenses more than two decades of the authors' research and work on the subject. Both Codignola and Bruti Liberati teach Canadian history and have published widely in their specialized fields, pre- and post-Confederation history respectively. Luca Codignola lives in Genoa and teaches at its university whereas Luigi Bruti Liberati teaches and lives in Milan.

Because of its dual authorship and their different methodological approaches, *Storia del Canada*... is practically made up of two distinct parts or two different books that are bound between one cover. The first part, written by Luca Codignola, deals with Canadian history from pre-historic times to Confederation in 1867. This part makes up the first 446 pages and comprises nine chapters, which can be divided in three sections. Each section deals with one of the three periods into which Codignola divides North American history for this time period. The first section deals with North America before "contact" with Europeans. The second section discusses the rush of the great European powers (France, England and Spain) to the new land following Columbus' voyage and ends with the battle of Abraham or the "conquest" (1760). The third section goes from the conquest to Confederation.

Codignola begins with the first immigration to the continent, which occurred circa 35,000 years ago when nomadic tribes crossed Bering Strait and moved from Siberia eastward to America and peopled the land. A thorough analysis of the native populations from the Atlantic to Pacific oceans gives a clear idea of the complex relations existing among quarrelsome native nations, focusing as well on their social life, institutions and mores. After the contact, the different ways British and French related to indigenous populations is highlighted well. The French were able to create with some Indian nations a mutually profitable partnership; whereas the British settlers, who were after land, had most of the time violent confrontations with native peoples. After the conquest and as a consequence of the American Revolution of 1785 and her expansionistic aim, the isolated British

colonies of North America (Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and the future British Columbia) were in a precarious situation. Their commerce was disrupted, their economy in crisis and England was too far away to provide her North American possessions with military assistance. These problems created opposing forces within the colonies, each one different from the others. Some felt the need for some form of collaboration; which was encouraged by London. Others entertained the thought of joining America. The unification of these colonies was "one of the possible solutions" (p. 7), the authors say.

From contact on, the history of North America is cast against the European background where economical interests, political intrigues, personal ambitions, social events and Royal prestige mingled to disrupt plans, enhance projects and shape new policies in which settlements in the New World often were an ignored appendix. Because of its geographic position, its huge land mass extension and scarce population, Canada has been conditioned to live always in the shadow of powerful nations: first France, then Britain and now the United States.

What makes this part of the book appealing is the masterly way in which Codignola organizes the staggering masses of information: a fine example of what the authors call "European" social-anthropological history. Codignola draws information from several disciplines: economic history, political history, geography, cartography, anthropology, archeology, medicine, genetics, foodways, survival and war techniques and more. This heterogeneous but related material helps him to create a grandiose fresco in which the organizing principle is the slow but steady growth of two distinct North American nations, Canada and the United States. He accomplishes this with clarity and without simplifying or detracting from the complex relationships governing events, the men involved and the interwoven international, national and local interests treated.

The second part of *Storia del Canada...* (449-712), written by Bruti Liberati, deals with Canadian history from Confederation to 1998. This part is essentially a study in Canadian international and home policy with references to social-economic events when they either interfered with or enhanced nation building. Liberati follows the growth of Canadian international policy from Sir John A. Macdonald through Wilfrid Laurier, Robert Borden, William Mackenzie King, John G. Diefenbaker, Pierre E. Trudeau, Brian Mulroney to Jean Chretien. He probes the contribution made by each Prime Minister, according to his personality, political affiliation and existing conditions at home and abroad, to the inching of Canada from colony to full-fledged nation. He also highlights Mackenzie King's stand against the patronizing attitude of the Imperial Government and the resistance of John Diefenbaker to the bullish behavior of the United States.

With regard to home policy, he pays attention to the different conflicts between the Federal Government on one hand and the Provinces on the other hand and the confrontations that rose between French speaking and English speaking Canada as well as those between Protestants and Catholics. These include events like Louis Riel affair, the Manitoba separate-school problem, the conscription crisis during World War One and so forth. Attention also is given to

economic affairs in the country and its provinces and particularly to the depression years. Through this the author shows how, due to the declining power of the British Empire, Canada slowly preferred the United States as privileged economic partner in place of England. Liberati treats, in a cursory manner, due probably to the proximity of the events, the "Quiet Revolution", the growth of the separatist movement in Quebec, the failure of Meech Lake Accord and the sound defeat of the Referendum of 26 October 1992.

Storia del Canada... ends with a short chapter on the Italian experience in Canada and a bibliography. Because of its length, the bibliography is undoubtedly useful to intellectuals and scholars but it is perhaps of no use to the average Italian reader for whom the book is intended. Another shortcoming of this otherwise excellent book is the adopted practice to place after the name of a person when first mentioned the date of birth and death in brackets, even if the person was of relatively little importance. This practice detracts the attention of the average reader particularly when some pages include long lists of names.

Considering that *Storia del Canada* ... is for Italian readers, a chapter tracing the history and conditions of Italian Canadians is justified. It recognizes the multitude of Italian men and women, who toiled to make a living and to insure a better future for their offspring. It is also interesting to point out that, in the first part of the book, several footnotes highlight the participation of persons of Italian origin (merchants, soldiers, or priests) involved in Canada before Confederation.

This fine work which bristles with information and arguments on many aspects of Canadian life and history takes the reader through a long and fascinating journey in time and space. A journey, which is presented in vivid details, and which is grandiose and complex, coherent and contradictory, and during which the land and its people merge and emerge to form the present country, full of potential and with a specific social-economic personality. Hence, the book concludes, "Canada of the future, with or without Quebec, stands as a North American alternative to the United States of America" (p. 712, my translation).

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