

stand it now. I do not even like the word "history," for it implies that something is forgotten, as in "that's history – so, forget it," "he or she is history," or "if you don't conform, you're history." Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey may be criticized for portraying a utopian view of First Nations before contact and for being somewhat ethnocentric. I would only ask everyone to reflect that ethnocentrism, like reverse discrimination, may occur, but one must have power before one can be ethnocentric. Maybe it is a form of resistance, like the stories that the authors let individuals tell.

As well as providing a socially sensitive and responsible account of the experiences of First Nations children,

Fournier and Crey show that responsibility and accountability continue to be part of First Nations communities, individuals, and leadership. Much of the book is concentrated on the experience of British Columbia's First Nations children. Initial contact with First Nations is recent in British Columbia, and one-quarter of the residential schools were located in this province. The book can provide insight into the distinct BC First Nations experience with child welfare while providing a crucial overview of First Nations experience throughout Canada. *Stolen from Our Embrace* is a text for First Nations and non-First Nations interested in either collective or individual experiences.

### *Alejandro Malaspina: Portrait of a Visionary*

John Kendrick

Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.  
200 pp. Illus., maps. \$34.95 cloth.

By Freeman Tovell

*Victoria*

**T**HE FIVE-YEAR EXPEDITION (1789-1794), planned and carried out by the thirty-five-year-old Italian-born Spanish naval officer, Alejandro Malaspina, was designed to equal if not surpass the achievements of England's Cook and France's Bougainville and La Pérouse, and bring Spain the international prestige their expeditions acquired. Malaspina's purpose was not exploratory but scientific (in the spirit of the Age of Enlightenment) and political: to examine the state of the Spanish

vice-royalties in the Americas and the Philippines.

Malaspina chose his officers and scientists carefully. The mass of cartographic, ethnological, botanical, ornithological, and other scientific data they gathered related to the Pacific Basin generally. Important work was also accomplished on the Pacific Northwest Coast, including a fruitless search for the Northwest Passage in the region of Yakutat Bay, Alaska, and a two-week visit to the Spanish establishment in Nootka Sound.

Malaspina had planned to publish a full account on his return, but he first attempted to depose the ruling corrupt administration in the hope of seeing it replaced with an administration that would institute more liberal policies in the governance of the Empire. He was declared a "criminal," imprisoned for eight years, then exiled to his native Italy. All the expedition's documents were sequestered.

The recent growth of interest in the Malaspina expedition, stimulated by the research of a handful of American, Spanish, and Italian historians, has encouraged the Museo Naval in Madrid – which holds some 6,000 of the expedition's papers – to publish, in a projected twelve-volume series, the journals, the cartographic work, and the drawings of people, landscapes, birds, animals, and fish. The Hakluyt Society of London, jointly with the Museo Naval, is publishing a three-volume translation of Malaspina's journal edited by an international group of scholars, including Kendrick.

Kendrick's study is the first to deal at length with Malaspina's intellectual formation and political thought. It is neither a biography in the usual sense, though it contains essential biographical material, nor a detailed account of the voyage. Its special merit is that it enables the reader to gain a more complete picture of this fascinating sailor and a clearer understanding of the causes of his ultimate tragedy.

Kendrick traces the development of Malaspina's ideas, beginning with his liberal studies at the Clementine College in Rome, through his friendship with influential contemporary Spanish writers such as Gaspar Melchior de Jovellanos, Francisco Cabarrús, and the group of intellectuals known as the *Amigos del País*. Carefully analyzed are

Malaspina's most important writings, his youthful *Theses ex Phisica Generali* and his important *Axiomas políticos sobre América*, which were largely formulated during the expedition. In them, Kendrick states, "Malaspina comes [close] to warning his masters of the danger of revolution in America" (110). Also discussed is Malaspina's equally important *Discurso Preliminar*, which he intended to be the first chapter of his account of the voyage. Of particular interest is his extensive, very personal correspondence with his long-time banker-diplomat friend, Paulo Greppi (both during the voyage and, later, when a prisoner), in which he chronicles the ups and downs of his moods.

Kendrick also describes how Malaspina was influenced by non-Spanish contemporary writers, including Rousseau, Diderot, and the French *Philosophes*. Among the books he took on the voyage were the writings of David Hume and Thomas Jefferson as well as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, which was a particularly strong influence and led him to advocate, among other matters, freer trade between disparate components of the Spanish Empire.

Despite warnings from his superiors, including his nemesis, Manuel Godoy, the chief minister and the queen's lover, Malaspina never understood the danger he was running in his pursuit of a more enlightened administration and the removal of corrupt officials. Though not seeking political office for himself, his "blind refusal to recognize the futility of his plan to unseat Godoy ... cost him his liberty" (10). Even his patron, Antonio Valdés, the minister of the navy, voted for his incarceration. His naïveté also cost him well-deserved renown, and it cost Spain the prestige he sought for it.

This well written volume is flavoured by occasional touches of humour, such as “[Malaspina] was getting into very deep water; for a navigator this is the best place for his ship, but Malaspina was swimming in

the waters of politics” (137). It is an important contribution to the growing literature on the Malaspina expedition, especially for readers not at home in Spanish.

*Unwilling Idlers: The Urban Unemployed  
and Their Families in Late Victorian Canada*

Peter Baskerville and Eric W. Sager

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998. 294 pp. Illus. \$24.95 paper.

By John Belshaw

*University College of the Cariboo*

UNEMPLOYMENT IN CANADA appeared in the Victorian era as a corollary of growing dependence on wage labour as a source of income. As alternative non-wage strategies began to shrink or disappear, and as “seasonality” became a less relevant consideration, the phenomenon of unemployment was “discovered.” Nineteenth-century observers, steeped in liberal individualism, were quick to assign to the unemployed negative qualities, among which “sloth” was the principle deadly sin. Naming the fact of regular, widespread, and persistent joblessness was a first step in problematizing unemployment; coming to know what it was in human terms proved elusive for Victorian commentators. The identification of unemployment as a “social problem” is the subject of the first substantive chapter in this text, but it is a theme to which the authors return repeatedly.

Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager approach their quarry – the economically vulnerable, those thousands

of Canadians who fell between labour market cracks 100 years ago – from a mainly quantitative angle. They tease out the correlation between unemployment and underemployment on the one hand, and gender, neighbourhood, trade, age, and other variables found in the census manuscripts from the late nineteenth century and 1901 on the other. Focusing their efforts on six cities (Victoria, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Montreal, and Halifax), the authors situate employment in its specific economic milieu, being sensitive to the particular while alert to the general. The picture that emerges of the nation’s unemployed is unsettlingly familiar. The experience and “problem” of unemployment in the past, likewise, turns out to be even more recognizable in the present than one might have guessed.

Through careful demographic spadework, Baskerville and Sager not only provide an understanding of *who* was unemployed, but also, in some measure, *why* unemployment struck certain households and *how* those