

2012

H-Diplo

H-Diplo Roundtable Review

www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables

Volume XIII, No. 34 (2012)

30 July 2012

Roundtable Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse
Roundtable Web/Production Editor: George Fujii

Introduction by David Webster

John Price. *Orienteering Canada: Race, Empire, and the Transpacific.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011. ISBN: 9780774819831 (hardcover, \$85.00); 9780774819848 (paperback, \$34.95).

Stable URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XIII-34.pdf>

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Introduction by David Webster, Bishop's University

The fact that racialized perceptions are crucial in shaping foreign policy is widely understood by those who study American foreign relations. Yet there is no Canadian parallel to the copious body of literature that examines the role of “race” in US foreign relations. John Price’s *Orienting Canada: Race, Empire and the Transpacific* is a shot across the bow, a challenge to scholars of Canadian diplomatic history to see the role of race in their own country’s foreign policy history. It aims to open a debate into which other voices will enter, rather than claiming to be the last word on race in Canada’s transpacific relations. As Price notes, the book is “a very partial deconstruction of the politics of race and empire in the Transpacific” (8).

With that proviso aside, the reviewers find much to praise in *Orienting Canada*, from its broad research to its innovative approaches. As Henry Yu writes: “It captures the crucial idea that we cannot understand the diplomatic history of Canada without embedding it within the white supremacy and anti-Oriental racism of both British imperial expansion and Canadian nation building.” Erika Lee points out that diplomatic historians are invited to “think about how domestic and global ideologies of race and empire influence foreign policy and the treatment of ‘others’ at home and abroad,” while Laura Madokoro writes that the book “re-oriens scholarship in Canada.” Greg Donaghy, the only reviewer who could be described as *primarily* a diplomatic historian, also has positive words to say about the approach, but finds fault in much of the interpretation and accuracy. In calling for “greater theoretical precision” in the links between foreign relations, race and empire, Donaghy also finds some support from the other reviewers.

The reviews are as rich as the book. Here I’ll highlight four points that span all the reviews: the gap Price is trying to fill in the historiography of Canadian foreign relations; the centrality of the Pacific; the role of individual life stories; and Price’s approach to empire and the early Cold War.

(1) The place of “race” in Canadian foreign relations history. “Race” is of course not accepted as a fixed category by either Price or his reviewers, and quotation marks are implied even when omitted. Erika Lee, the only reviewer writing from a U.S. university, is all too aware that the book “fills a major gap in Canadian historiography.” She also points to the book’s integration of diplomatic history and ethnic studies approaches as an important development in Canadian foreign relations historiography. Where the pages of *Diplomatic History* and the thoughts of U.S. diplomatic historians have room for the role in foreign policymaking of race and racism, there has been little of this in Canada. Price puts that down to a greater Canadian reluctance to admit the prominent role of racism in national history. But his book argues that racism has been central in Canadian diplomatic history, as it has in Canadian history as a whole. Race has not been marginal, but formative, even while being marginalized in policymaking and in the historiography.

Yu similarly highlights “the very different senses of national self-identity” in Canada and the United States, with Canadians still reluctant to accept the centrality of white supremacy in their national history. National myths about multiculturalism and a look south to ‘bad examples’ of racism may even reinforce Canadian self-satisfaction on this core.

Related points are stressed by Laura Madokoro, who opens her review with a telling anecdote about the silences surrounding race and racism in a Canada shaped by white privilege. While she is very sympathetic to Price’s efforts to see race in Canadian foreign policy, she finds Price’s integration of racism at home and abroad to be somewhat lacking. She sees much space for others in the future to continue filling the gap in the historiography: “There is the implicit potential in *Orienteering Canada* to connect support for imperialism abroad with imperialism at home. In hinting at the empire within, Price opens the door to future avenues of research on the resilience of empire even if he does not venture down these paths himself.” Donaghy also urges a wider approach, suggesting for instance that race in Canada-Caribbean relations – where Canada has often been the imperialist big brother – merits more attention.

(2) The centrality of the “transpacific.” In a postwar overview of Canadian foreign relations published in the journal *Foreign Affairs* in 1951, foreign minister Lester B. Pearson wrote that Canada was painting its Pacific policy on a virtually blank canvas.¹ The historiography has been dominated by an argument that policymakers thought and moved overwhelmingly within a “North Atlantic triangle,” eyes always fixed on London and Washington. Some scholars (including Greg Donaghy) have disputed that claim and drawn attention to the earlier Canadian attention to Asia. Price argues that the “transpacific” has been central rather than marginal, but that Canadian diplomatic history has tended to marginalize the Pacific. As Donaghy writes in his review, Price offers “an audacious and sweeping tour of Canada’s long engagement with the transpacific, a journey shaped by theory, ideology, and a simmering anger.” He accepts Price’s view that the Pacific was “written out” as part of an act of excluding Asians from the Canadian story. The 1907 anti-Asian riots in Vancouver (along with similar riots on the American west coast) were central to this silencing.

Lee, whose own research explores 1907 as a transnational event, sees the racism of those riots sustained afterwards, as Price carries forward the 1907 story into the middle years of the twentieth century. Madokoro, as noted, sees Price’s intermingling of the international and domestic as successful with regard to the 1907 riots, but less successful afterwards. Yu notes that the riots helped create a uniform category of “Orientals” who could then be excluded. All the reviewers, in other words, agree with Price that Canada-Asia interactions have been overlooked in too much of the writing of Canadian diplomatic history, and they seem to welcome the concept of a “transpacific” as a useful way to think about racialized foreign policymaking and racism at “home” as

¹ Lester Pearson, “The Development of Canadian Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 30: 1 (Oct. 1951): 17-30.

part of interlinked processes. Donaghy again is the most critical reader, wondering why Price paid little attention to the vast Christian missionary enterprise that saw many Canadians cross the ocean in the nineteenth century. He ascribes this absence to Price's alleged failure to notice ebbs and flows in Canada-Asia interactions.

(3) Life stories. That racism was present, Henry Yu writes, was obvious at the time and is something no reviewer disputes. To him, this book's innovation is elsewhere: "what stands out in Price's study is his ability to listen to the voices of those who struggled for justice, otherwise ordinary men and women who became remarkable not for implementing the injustice and inequity rationalized by racism and colonialism, but because they stood in its way." Price interweaves the stories of Asian-Canadians, First Nations people, and European-Canadians who were part of a Pacific story, into his archivally-driven narrative. The effort is to hear voices that have too often been silenced, and to integrate these individual life stories into the state-level story. "Identifying the crucial role of racism in the history of Canada and the United States is one thing," Yu writes, while "respecting the voices of those who were its victims and therefore not reiterating their exclusion is another."

Lee underlines this point by noting the ways in which ethnic studies scholarship has influenced Price's approach, praising him for including "numerous examples of Asian Canadians' struggle against discrimination." Donaghy would have liked to have seen more of this and the inclusion of European-Canadian efforts: he sees "insufficient attention to the growing efforts of many Canadians to combat [racial] stereotypes."

For Madokoro, the life story given the most attention here is that of Lester Pearson (ironically, since Pearson is the central, mainstream figure in Canadian diplomatic history). She writes: "Price's focus on Pearson as the embodiment of "whiteness" norms raises the question of the degree to which racism's pervasive influence is structural and the extent to which individuals can propagate racial norms. In *Orienteering Canada*, Price pays only modest attention to how structural norms, such as immigration regulation, perpetuated stereotypes of Asian migrants and ideas of racial superiority."

(4) Empire and the Early Cold War. *Orienteering Canada* is divided into two parts, split by the 1945 watershed. In the first, Canada exists within a British imperial space; in the second, it is part of an imperial space dominated by the United States and its Cold War world order. The reviewers are uniformly positive about the first half: they broadly agree that racialized perceptions shaped Canadian foreign policymaking, and that this connected in significant ways to the imperial experience inside Canada. It's possible that the more distant period is easier to see, and that the Canadian presumption that racism is a thing of the past in this country makes the later part of Price's argument less convincing to some readers. It's also possible that the argument holds up less well in the American age than in the prewar years when Canadian elites saw the country as more comfortably British. And finally, as Donaghy argues, it's possible that debates over the early Cold War take centre stage, and Price's argument is a standard revisionist Cold War interpretation, with errors that throw some of its main arguments into doubt. He warns that if we "press hard on the evidence – sometimes incomplete, often simplified"

then “Price’s schemata sometimes quakes, leaving us with less than we expected.” Whether these criticisms are enough to condemn the book’s central arguments is for the reader to decide. Regardless of this issue, the reviewers broadly welcome Price’s approach and hope to see Canadian diplomatic history including “race” in the future in ways that, so far, it has not often done.

Participants:

John Price is Associate Professor of Japanese and Asian Canadian history at the University of Victoria, Canada. He is the author of *Japan Works: Power and Paradox in Postwar Industrial Relations* (Cornell University Press, 1997). For the past decade his research has focused on issues of decolonization, race and empire in East Asia. He is currently researching the transpacific life stories of Asian Canadians including Victoria Chung, a medical missionary to China, and Peter Higashi, a journalist who worked for the *Manchurian Daily News*.

David Webster is an Assistant Professor of History at Bishop’s University in Sherbrooke, Quebec. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of British Columbia. His first book was *Fire and the Full Moon: Canada and Indonesia in a Decolonizing World*; his current book project in progress will be titled *Modern Missionaries: Canadian Development Advisors in Southeast Asia, 1945-65*. He is also co-editing a collection of papers on Canada-China relations.

Greg Donaghy is Head of the Historical Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. He is the General Editor of its series, *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, and author of *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968*. Most recently, he edited (with Michael Carroll), *In the National Interest: Canadian Foreign Policy and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1909-2009* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011). The views expressed here are his alone and do not reflect the views of his Department or the Government of Canada.

Erika Lee is Professor of History and Director of the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Minnesota. She researches and writes on U.S. transnational history, especially related to issues of race and immigration. She has published widely, including articles in the *Journal of American History*, *Pacific Historical Review*, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, *Amerasia Journal*, *Journal of Asian American Studies*. Her books include: *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* and *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (co-authored with Judy Yung). She is currently writing a transnational history of Asian migration to the Americas.

Laura Madokoro is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of History at the University of British Columbia. She is a 2009 Trudeau Scholar and Liu Institute Scholar. Her SSHRC-supported doctoral research explores the politics surrounding the movement of migrants and refugees from the People’s Republic of China from 1949-1989.

Henry Yu is an Associate Professor in the Department of History, University of British Columbia. His book *Thinking Orientals: Race, Migration, and Contact in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) received the Norris and Carol Hundley Prize, and he is currently working on a book entitled “How Tiger Woods Lost His Stripes” exploring ideas about interracial sex and another entitled “Pacific Canada.” He is also the Project Lead for “Chinese Canadian Stories,” a \$1.17 million research and public education project <chinesecanadian.ubc.ca>.

Review by Greg Donaghy, Head of the Historical Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

Canadians just don't write books like this. *Orienting Canada: Race, Empire, and the Transpacific* is an audacious and sweeping tour of Canada's long engagement with the transpacific, a journey shaped by theory, ideology, and a simmering anger. Beginning in the late-1800s and ending in the mid-1950s, this study draws on a vast range of sources and scholarship, both Canadian and international, to challenge the Eurocentric bias of Canadian historiography and reframe the country's past on a large scale. John Price insists that from the start, the flow of peoples and ideas across the Pacific has shaped Canada in crucial but unexplored ways. Teasing out the relationship between race and empire, *Orienting Canada* uncovers a thread of 'uncommon' and overlooked people and events that forces its readers to re-imagine Canada as a Pacific nation, facing Asia.

There was nothing predetermined about Canada's North Atlantic gaze for most of the last century. As Price demonstrates early on, the Pacific was deliberately written out of the young country's future, beginning in the mid-1880s. Populist leaders and government commissions constructed notions of race and whiteness to exclude Chinese and Japanese immigrants (along with South Asians and Blacks) from the new Dominion. Porous and ineffective, explains Price, these early barriers were weakened by the political adjustments made as the British Empire and its constituent parts, including Canada, responded to Japan's growing stature as an imperial power.

As race and empire intersected along the Pacific rim, one result was a series of race riots that swept North America's western seaboard, engulfing Vancouver in April 1907. For Price these riots are foundational. Resolving local tensions meant renewed efforts to restrict Asian immigration (making this, rather than trade, the focus of Canadian diplomacy in the region) and drew Canada into its defining role as a linchpin between the American and the British empires. "Herein," contends Price, "lies the wellspring for an alliance among the Anglo-Saxon states and an important impetus for what would later be called Atlanticism." (22)

Orienting Canada goes on to explore the intersection of race and empire within this racialized alliance over the next four decades, paying particular attention to Canada's role as imperial handmaiden. Prime Minister Robert Borden is excoriated for sabotaging efforts to protect workers from racial discrimination during talks over the ILO's charter at the peace conference in Versailles. Price similarly holds Borden's hapless successor, Arthur Meighen, to account for marginalizing Japan in the postwar Pacific, destroying the inter-racial Anglo-Japanese Alliance to please Washington.

Race too played its part a decade on, as Canada opened its first diplomatic mission in Tokyo, where its primary purpose was to control Japanese immigration to Canada. The mission's mandate, Price points out, reflected the steady "institutionalization of state racism during this era." (31) Indeed, this development allowed official Canada to accommodate itself easily to Japanese aggression in the 1930s, when Tokyo's invasion of

Manchuria signaled the start of a long and bloody Pacific war. Other Canadians, however, were more deeply involved in this conflict, and Price traces the complex and varied response to the war among Japanese and Chinese Canadians, as well as among progressive Canadians in the League for Peace and Democracy. Some of this material treads familiar ground – Norman Bethune, the heroic left-wing surgeon from Montreal, makes an obligatory appearance – but Price mines it diligently to link Canadians to broader spasms of transnational support for China.

Canada was called upon to supply more substantial aid to China in 1941, when it sent its troops off to garrison the British outpost of Hong Kong, just weeks before the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor. Ottawa followed Washington to war, as the U.S. welcomed the chance to extend its imperial reach and tap new markets, riding the crest of a “great racist imperative.” (66) Price uses Hong Kong and the familiar narrative of the evacuation and deportation of Japanese Canadians – “ethnic cleansing ... short of physical extermination” (307) – to argue that “[d]efending the British Empire and uprooting the Japanese communities were the primary goals of the Canadian government in the Pacific theatre at this time.” (69) *Orienting Canada* incorporates a number of less well-known incidents – Japanese chemical and biological warfare, the new Canadian diplomatic mission in China, and Korean comfort women – into its narrative of the unfolding war to explore how race defined Canada’s approach to wartime Asia.

It’s a tragic story that culminates in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an episode in which Canada was deeply implicated. Price’s explanation for using the bomb is critical, fair, and balanced: “The pressures of war, technological imperatives, and disregard for civilians all contributed to the decision makers not really caring about civilians,” he argues, adding that “Racialized notions of the Japanese as beasts and demonic savages ... exacerbated the disregard for civilian lives in Japan.” (99)

The war stripped racism of its ideological legitimacy but not its potency. In the second part of this study though, race is more often interwoven with an older revisionist perspective. For Price, the postwar world in Asia and Europe precariously perched, full of possibilities, on the brink of peaceful ‘co-existence’ from 1945 until as late as 1948. He argues that this balance was finally upset as Washington backed Europe’s imperial powers, especially France and Britain, in re-establishing their empires and making the world safe for global capitalism. In Europe, American support culminated in the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance that hid the Anglo-Saxon roots of its racialized imperialism behind a screen of empty liberalism.

Overlapping notions of empire, race, and anti-communism joined the U.S. with its Canadian and European allies. With their backing, argues Price, the U.S. set out in 1945 to carve up postwar Asia: in Korea, it cancelled elections and divided the country in two; it illegally prolonged the Occupation in Japan, and ‘reversed’ the process of democratization; and it fatally stalled the recognition of the People’s Republic of China. When North Korea invaded its southern neighbor, the U.S., now armed with NSC-68 and primed for conflict, headed for war. *Orienting Canada* marches steadily through the imperfect diplomacy and brutal fighting that scarred mid-twentieth century Asia: the war in Korea; the truncated peace

treaty with Japan; and the unfolding tragedy in Vietnam. Time and again, Canada rallied to the U.S. side, despite its hesitations and doubts. "It was Big Power politics," Price contends, "and Pearson knew which side he was on." (188)

Orienting Canada is a challenging and provocative book, which will certainly leave its readers thinking. But it could have been a better book. There is a hurried and relentless quality to this study, when a more measured, perhaps more thoughtful, pace might have paid better dividends. Certainly, there is room for greater theoretical precision, and a more explicit delineation of relations between race, capitalism and empire, and anti-communism. At times, Price seems to root empire in no more than racialized notions of spheres of influence or great power politics. Elsewhere, empire seems primarily driven by the economic imperatives of capitalist expansion. This is especially true of the postwar American empire, whose foreign policy, it seems, came to rest in the hands of a triumvirate of "policymakers, corporations, and military planners." (129) At the very least, Price's phrase raises compelling questions about the nature of these three partners and relations between them.

Race and empire are undoubtedly important themes in the history of Canada's international relations, and *Orienting Canada* does a good job in hammering away at the persistence of both. It seems unlikely, however, that the twin themes of race and empire were formed solely in the crucible of Canada's encounter of Asian immigrants in the late nineteenth century or that race and empire can be considered without explicit reference to developments on Canada's Atlantic coast. By 1900, Canada's Maritime provinces had enjoyed a long economic and racially-charged relationship with British possessions in the Caribbean. These ties flourished in the early decades of the twentieth century against a backdrop of a revived interest in British imperialism.¹ Borden even considered annexing parts of the British West Indies to Canada in 1917, while Prime Minister King opened his coffers to subsidize steamship travel between the two imperial outposts in the 1920s. The two parts, Atlantic and Pacific, seem part of a larger, unexplored whole.

Price's single-minded focus on the foundational importance for Canada of the Pacific and race means that *Orienting Canada* misses two more subtle narratives. First, Canada's encounter with the Pacific has always ebbed and flowed, a cyclical movement obscured in this work. The great missionary projects of late nineteenth century (hardly mentioned here) subsided during the First World War to emerge in secular form in the 1930s, as Canadians began to wrestle seriously with their Pacific destiny for the first time. Similarly, popular and official interest in the region waned after 1945, reviving again in the 1970s.

Second, in his determination to demonstrate the persistence of Canada's racialized approach to Asia, Price pays insufficient attention to the growing efforts of many Canadians to combat these stereotypes. Progress was slow, but it was there, leading to the great

¹ Carl Berger's seminal work on this subject, *A Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), is absent from Price's bibliography.

changes of the late 1960s and 1970s. Fainthearted liberalism, perhaps, but nonetheless a hopeful intimation of the possibilities of forward movement in a benighted world.

More important, and setting aside the hoary debate over who started the Cold War and the complicated nature of U.S. liberal imperialism, Price's interpretation of postwar Canadian policy in Asia is not persuasive. Having turned its back on the Pacific in 1907, it was hardly surprising that Canada's postwar interests remained concentrated in the North Atlantic. In particular, most Canadians embraced their closest neighbor and richest trading partner, the United States, with which they shared a common set of liberal cultural, economic, and political values. For Ottawa, those interests often meant keeping the U.S. focused on developments in Western Europe, and when that failed, making sure that Asia did not split the West. A more independent policy might have been more democratic or moral, or both, but there is no evidence that it would have served Canada's interests. (Breaking with the U.S. over China in the winter of 1951, for instance, would have jeopardized U.S. support for the proposed St Lawrence Seaway, and all that it meant for Canada's industrial heartland.) And so, Canada in many, often important cases, happily followed the U.S. lead in Asia, especially in Japan and over the creation of the UN Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK). As Foreign Minister Louis St. Laurent remarked to a visiting delegation in 1948, "Korea was still a long way from Canada."²

Even when backing the U.S. and its anti-communist agenda, Canada could be a willful and difficult ally as it pursued its own interests. *Orienting Canada* often fails to give its readers a full and balanced view of the varied influences on the development of Canadian policy. For instance, as Price indicates, Ottawa's support for the Colombo Plan surely included a hefty dose of anti-communism. That was a necessary, but not sufficient condition to win cabinet backing. As the documents make clear, Ottawa's hesitations were only overcome when the U.S. was persuaded to join the plan and, more important, when Canada's cash contribution was linked to Saskatchewan wheat sales. As the best account of the plan makes clear, Canadians backed the Colombo Plan for a combination of three reasons: it met the country's desire to forestall the spread of communism in Asia; it filled an economic need; and Canadians thought it was the right, humanitarian thing to do.³

Price's treatment of the debate over recognizing the PRC is problematic as well. For Price, Ottawa faced a stark choice between the U.S. and China. Canadian ministers rarely saw their choices in such Manichean terms. They had other legitimate interests at stake. Some, like the outstanding loans to Chinese ship owners, are mentioned, but dismissed in passing.

² Cited in Robert Bothwell, "Eyes West: Canada and the Cold War in Asia," in my edited collection, *Canada and the Early Cold War, 1943-1957* (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1998), 66.

³ The most judicious and lyrical of Canadian motives for backing the Colombo Plan remains Douglas LePan's *The Bright Glass of Memory: a set of four memoirs* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979). A more recent exploration, David R. Morrison, *Aid and Ebb Tide: A History of CIDA and Canadian Development Assistance* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press in association with The North-South Institute/L'Institut Nord-Sud: 1998), also emphasises the multiplicity of Canadian motives.

Others are not considered. Domestic opposition, especially in Catholic Quebec, had to be weighed. So too did the fate of Canadian government property in Nanking and the diplomatic procedure involved. The Chinese had not made recognition easy for either Britain or India, and Ottawa justifiably wanted to avoid embarrassment. In the end, St. Laurent's cabinet was ready to defy Washington, but by the time this was all worked out with the Chinese, it was too late. When North Korea marched south on 25 June 1950, the window of opportunity slammed shut.⁴ For the next two decades, the choice was indeed stark: "Peace with Washington," Pearson would scribble in the margin of a memo in 1966, "is better than praise in Beijing."⁵

One final example. Canada's relations with India too were more complex than Price makes out. Ottawa welcomed Indian independence and moved quickly to establish good relations with the new republic and ensure its continued membership in the British Commonwealth, independent initiatives largely ignored in this study. Sturdy relations with India, despite tensions with the U.S., persisted as a Canadian objective throughout the 1950s. For Pearson, the choice between supporting India and Washington was rarely as easily made as Price implies. During the UN debate over crossing the 38th parallel, Ottawa fought hard to get the U.S. to amend its position on the understanding that India would cooperate. When Washington compromised and New Delhi did not, Ottawa chose to back the U.S., pleasing Secretary of State Dean Acheson. In the fall of 1952, Ottawa reversed itself, parting company with Washington and backing an Indian initiative to restart the stalled Korean armistice talks. Acheson never forgave Pearson for joining the "Menon cabal."⁶

Orienting Canada suffers from a handful of minor factual errors and smaller faults that invite readers to handle it with care. Price aims for the provocative, and he sometimes resorts to rhetorical and stylistic techniques to get there. He belittles U.S. diplomat George Kennan for using a private railcar in war-torn Japan and sneers that trade minister C.D. Howe took "particular pleasure" in announcing the bombing of Hiroshima. (92)

He also reframes and simplifies events for his readers. When King declared war on Japan in December 1941, he did so on the same basis that he sent troops to defend Hong Kong: as "part of the defence of Canada and of freedom [against] any attack ... against British territory." (66) This justification is rendered thus by Price: "In other words, King ... declared war on Japan as part of its defence of the British Empire." (66) But that's not quite what King, who was most particular about his language, clearly meant. He went to war to

⁴ Interested readers can consult the documents themselves at <http://www.international.gc.ca/departement/history-histoire/dcer/1950/menu-en.asp>

⁵ Cited in Greg Donaghy and Michael Stevenson, "The Limits of Alliance: Cold War Solidarity and Canadian Wheat Exports to China, 1950-63," *Agricultural History*, Vol 83, No 1 (Winter 2009), 30.

⁶ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 700. On the general point on relations with India, see Donaghy, "Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Canada, the United Nations, and the Search for a Korean Armistice, 1952-53," *War and Society*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (October, 2011), 134-46.

defend Canada and British territory (not the empire.) A small but important distinction. Similarly, when McGill professor Otto Maass joined the U.S. Biological Warfare Committee as a liaison officer, Price simplifies: “In other words, a Canadian scientist, appointed by the Canadian Government, became an integral member of the U.S. team.” (276) Again, not quite – Maass simply represented Canada on a bilateral committee.

Finally, how helpful is it to send reader away thinking that the stationing of U.S. nuclear-armed bombers in Goose Bay during the Korean War was evidence of the tenuous control exercised by civilians over the military? In an emergency and in the absence of established procedures, the deployment was approved by two civilians, the Defence Minister and the Prime Minister, and quickly prompted civilians on both sides of the border to develop more robust and effective approval channels. Civilian control was never at issue.

Engaged and partisan, *Orienting Canada* splashes Canada’s past across a sprawling Pacific canvas. Original in conception and scope, it confronts and provokes its readers in unfamiliar ways. But press hard on the evidence – sometimes incomplete, often simplified – and Price’s schemata sometimes quakes, leaving us with less than we expected.

On the evening of September 7, 1907, an estimated crowd of ten thousand whites gathered in Vancouver to support an anti-Asian parade. The group soon attacked almost every building occupied by Chinese immigrants and several dozen in the Japanese quarter. Both immigrants and rioters were wounded, and the mob inflicted almost \$40,000 in property damages. A few months after the dust had settled in Vancouver, Canada entered into a diplomatic agreement with Japan to prohibit the entry of Japanese laborers. The United States brokered an almost identical agreement with Japan at the same time. A “Continuous Journey” law also effectively barred the admission of South Asians into Canada without explicitly challenging British colonial policies that allowed subjects to travel freely from one part of the empire to another.

In *Orienteering Canada: Race, Empire, and the Transpacific*, John Price identifies the anti-Asian riots of 1907 as one of the key transpacific incidents that connected race and empire and ‘oriented’ Canada towards the Pacific in the first half of the twentieth century. Ideas and practices of race and empire, Price argues, continued to permeate Canadian-Asian relations and the status of Canadians of Asian descent throughout the twentieth century. These included racist immigration laws like the Chinese head tax legislation (1885-1923) that levied taxes on all Chinese who wished to enter the country, Canada’s involvement in the Pacific Wars from 1937 to 1945, and Canadian support of U.S. anti-Communism efforts in Asia during the Cold War.

Price’s goal is to examine how the “Transpacific has played a foundational role in Canadian and world politics in ways that are too often neglected and/or are poorly understood.” (2) This comprehensive analysis of how racial ideologies and domestic race relations informed Canada’s foreign policy with Asia and vice versa fills a major gap in Canadian historiography. Like that of its southern neighbor, Canadian history has often been told from a Eurocentric perspective that focuses on eastern Canada, European colonization and settlement, and Europe and the Atlantic world, rather than on Asia, the Pacific, and peoples of Asian origin. Western states and provinces like California, Washington, and British Columbia are often viewed as marginal to larger national narratives.

However, unlike recent U.S. scholarship linking race to U.S. foreign relations, Canadian history, according to Price, has not followed suit in a comprehensive way. Thanks to a wealth of rich and innovative work over the past ten to fifteen years, the central role of race in shaping U.S. foreign policy has been well documented. From the colonial era to the present, U.S. historians have been adept at explaining the complicated relationships between domestic politics, race, class, gender, and immigration and U.S. foreign policies. Both diplomatic historians and ethnic studies scholars from a broad range of disciplines have increasingly paid attention to both foreign and domestic aspects of particular issues, events, and processes. In addition, historians have shown a growing interest in the global significance of race. As a result, we have a better understanding of how racial attitudes and the racialization of nonwhite peoples as inferiors helped justify U.S. actions including westward expansion, the conquest of American Indians, war with Mexico, the colonization

of lands and peoples in Hawaii, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, demonization of the Asian “enemies” at home and abroad, and Cold War-era liberalization of racist immigration policies and new support for African American civil rights.

A casual search in the back issues of *Diplomatic History* calls up over 300 articles related to race and foreign policy published in the last ten years. Scholarly monographs related to race, empire, and foreign relations have been among the most innovative in the field of U.S. history generally. Two particular areas of interest include the relationship between Cold War politics and African American civil rights and the role of race in U.S. imperialism in the Pacific and U.S.-Asian relations.¹ U.S. historians might ask why hasn't there been a similar flourishing of scholarship linking race and foreign relations in Canada. Price argues that in Canada, “there remains a deep-seated reluctance, what might almost be termed an avoidance syndrome, to openly identify racism in Canada as a problem, past or present.” (4) As a result, Canada's transpacific history has been relegated to the margins.

Other participants in this roundtable with more expertise in Canadian historiography will assess Price's characterization of the state of Canadian scholarship, but it is clear that Price's revised transpacific Canadian history will prove to be deeply illuminating for historians of race, foreign relations, and empire in both the United States and Canada. With its transnational methodology and critical analysis of race, *Orienteering Canada* follows some of the best recent work in ethnic studies and the history of foreign relations. Price's multi-sited research draws from archival materials from the archives in Canada, London, Tokyo, and elsewhere. The author conducted oral histories in Korea, Japan, and China, and has masterfully synthesized a rich body of secondary scholarship on twentieth-century Asia, Canada, Canadian-Asian relations, and Asian Canadians.

What makes *Orienteering Canada* unique and compelling is that it resembles ethnic studies scholarship as much as it is a product of diplomatic history. In terms of the latter, *Orienteering Canada* offers a dramatically different view of Canadian foreign policy that challenges conventional interpretations of Canada as isolationist in the first half of the twentieth century and a ‘middle power’ in the second. Price goes farther than others to argue that Canada not only played a “supporting role” in the United States' emergence as a superpower in the emerging post-war global world order, but that it also “actively encouraged the United States to take on this role.” (304) Shared values of race and empire, from Anglo-Saxonism and Atlanticism in the early twentieth century to a racialized anti-Communism in the mid to late twentieth century, supported U.S. and Canadian beliefs that

¹ Just a few recent examples include Penny Von Eschen's *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (2001); Mary Dudziak's *Cold War Civil Rights* (2002); Thomas Borstelmann's *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (2003); Brenda Gayle Plummer's edited volume *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1988* (2007); John Dower's *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (1987); Yukiko Koshiro's *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (1999); Eric Love's *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (2003); Gerald Horne's *Race War!: White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire* (2005); Paul Kramer's *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (2006); and Naoko Shibusawa's *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (2010).

“the Euro-American powers had to play a significant role in Asia” as well as around the world. Thus, Price asserts, “in an era of decolonization, the Canadian government aligned the country with American imperialism.” (304)

Reflecting critical ethnic studies scholarship, Price persuasively argues that writing from the “margins” of Canadian history offers “different and valuable ways of reframing Canadian history.” (302) He also expresses his abhorrence of “conventional narratives” that center and assume whiteness while Canadians of color are “relegated to ‘minority’ status and therefore [seen as] irrelevant given the majority view.” (303) He calls for historians and others to “decentre our history and to relocate its margins” in order to allow for different stories to emerge, including not only the experiences of many Asian Canadians whose lives have been erased or ignored from Canadian history, but also their transnational connections to Asian homelands and politics. (303) *Orienting Canada* itself cites numerous examples of Asian Canadians’ struggle against discrimination including the use of petitions, government lobbying, community building. It also pays close attention to Asian Canadians’ transnational connections to their homelands and offers portraits of Asian victims of war. Thus we are introduced to individuals like Chinese Canadian pilot Kam Len Douglas Sam who parachuted to safety in France after his plane was shot down. He joined the French resistance and became such a valuable member that he was honored with a Croix de Guerre for his service by the French government. We also learn about Ahn Jeomsun, a former Korean “comfort woman” kept in sexual slavery by the Japanese military, Kinuko Doi, a survivor of the U.S. atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima who later married a Canadian, and Shin Hyun-Chan, a Korean man who was wounded and whose father was killed by a Canadian soldier deployed to Korea in 1951.

The primary strength of *Orienting Canada* reflects Price’s main goal of infusing race into the history of Canadian foreign relations. Thus, in Part I of the book, “Race, Empire, and War,” Price details the ways in which anti-Asian racism drove Canada to restrict and exclude Asian immigrants through diplomatic agreements and missions and national policies that were shaped by the global rise of white supremacy as well as the new Atlanticism – the north Atlantic triangle of the United States, Canada, and Great Britain – that arose after World War One. Anti-Asian racisms – including the differential ways in which Chinese/China and Japanese/Japan were racialized in Canadian newspapers – affected Canada’s negligible response to the atrocities Japan inflicted on Nanjing and elsewhere in China during the 1930s and 1940, the ban on Japanese Canadians and Chinese Canadians from serving in the Canadian military once Canada entered World War Two in 1939, the forced removal of 23,149 Japanese Canadians into the interior regions of British Columbia, and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

In Part II of *Orienting Canada* (Pax Americana: Race, Anti-Communism, and Asia) Price demonstrates that racism continued to shape Canadian and American policies at home and abroad following World War Two. Asian Canadians achieved the franchise and the Chinese Exclusion Act was overturned, but the racialization of Koreans as inferiors led to wartime crimes against humanity during the Korean War. Institutionalized discrimination targeting Japanese Canadians continued after the war ended in the form of forced deportations and prohibitions of their resettlement on the west coast. Such treatment contrasts with the case

of Japanese Americans who were largely able to return to their former homes and reclaim their property. While the United States gradually opened up its gates to minimal Asian immigration during the 1940s, Asians largely remained barred from Canada.

Price also effectively demonstrates how race continued to shape European and American relations in Asia as the powers attempted to assert their hegemony in the region through the U.S. occupation of Japan, the reimposition of western colonial control in Vietnam, and military interventions justified as anticommunist measures. The United States and its Anglo allies were the major power brokers in the Pacific, and although the Canadian government played a small role in shaping the new world order, it was significant. Post-war Canada became closely aligned with the United States, sometimes renegeing on its own principles of democracy and justice and the tenet of multilateralism in favor of supporting the imperial aspirations of the United States. It would be this relationship that would shape how race and empire intertwined in Canada's transpacific history during the latter half of the twentieth century. Price contends that from the peace treaty negotiations with Japan to the recognition of South Korea in 1948, "Canadian policy in East Asia...was predicated not on the needs of people in the region but, rather, on the belief that Canadians interests required reinforcing US power in the Pacific" (190). This means that even when the Canadian government disagreed with the United States's insistence that all armed conflict in Asia fell squarely within the Communist-anti-Communist ideological, political, and military axis of the Cold War, it nevertheless sided with the United States and its interests in Korea and Indochina.

Price aims to cover a broad swath of issues, people, events, and space. For the most part, he does it exceptionally well. There are times when the argument gets lost or is not fully connected across the thirteen chapters and 321 manuscript pages. However, there is much to learn from Price's masterful book. Ethnic studies scholars are reminded of the ways in which domestic issues of race extend beyond the nation-state and impact foreign relations. Diplomatic historians are urged to think about how domestic and global ideologies of race and empire influence foreign policy and the treatment of 'others' at home and abroad. Both U.S. and Canadian historians in general will gain new perspectives on the histories of their own countries as well as their entangled pasts with race and empire in the Transpacific.

In reading John Price's important new book, *Orienting Canada: Race, Empire and the Transpacific*, I was reminded of a story my aunt told me a few years ago. It pertained to a Japanese-Canadian architect, Sada Sato, who wanted to buy property in the town of Tofino on Vancouver Island. When he tried to buy property, the local council was embarrassed to discover that a resolution that had apparently been passed at the time of the Second World War, to prevent 'Orientals' from owning property in the area, had remained on the books in the intervening years. No 'Oriental' had tried to buy land in that time and when the Council discovered the situation, it hurriedly erased the by-law and Sato proceeded with the purchase. The year was 1997.

The story of Sada Sato and the Tofino council illustrates the kind of silence around racism in Canada that animates Price's work. In *Orienting Canada*, Price surveys Canada's engagement with the 'Transpacific' from 1907-1954 and uses racial supremacy as a category of analysis to explain how Canadian diplomats and politicians viewed developments in Asia. Rather than focusing on bilateral relations, Price effectively addresses the sweeping political and cultural connections between Canada and Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and China (although the latter receives relative scant attention with much of *Orienting Canada* focused on the Canadian response to American interventions in the other three countries). Through an analysis of major events in the region, Price argues that Canada's relationship with the Transpacific in this period was informed by enduring notions of racial supremacy and changing ideas of empire in which the interests of Asian leaders were subsumed in favour of carving out an American sphere of influence.

Orienting Canada is an ambitious work. Structured in two parts, the first section "Race, Empire and War" traces the history of Canada's worldviews of the Transpacific beginning with migration issues in the late nineteenth century to the Tokyo Tribunal at the end of the Second World War. The second part, "Pax Americana – Race, Anti-Communism and Asia," documents America's embrace of "imperial anti-communism" (189) and Canada's active and tangible support for the idea of an American sphere of influence in Asia. Price rejects using the Cold War to frame this time period and refers instead to "the remilitarization of the Pacific" (7) with important implications for how he understands anti-communist rhetoric and the presence of the United States in Asia after the Second World War (discussed below).

In each chapter, Price documents the history of major events in Asia before exploring the history of Canadian engagement and participation with events in Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Unfortunately, the Chinese Civil War and the rise of the People's Republic of China receive short shrift in Price's analysis. Nevertheless, Price convincingly demonstrates not only that issues in Asia played "a foundational role in Canadian and world politics" (2) (contrary to previous assessments that cast Asian issues as peripheral to Canadian world views)¹ but

¹ Fred Edwards, "Chinese Shadows" in *Canada Among Nations, 2008: 100 Years of Canadian Foreign Policy* ed. Robert Bothwell (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009); Angela Graham, *A Colossus and a Conundrum: Canada, the United States and Canadian China Policy, 1942-1970* (PhD Thesis: McMaster

that it was the upheaval in Asia that lay the groundwork for America's imperial ambitions and encouraged Canadian diplomats to actively encourage the United States to take on this role (128). The structure of *Orienting Canada* means that Price has a lot of ground to cover and it is a testament to his commitment to bringing together the stories of actual participants, witnesses and victims and to his skills as a historian that he is able to weave disparate narratives into a cohesive whole. The geographic scope of this work as well as the variety of sources used in making arguments about the significance of race in shaping views of Asia from the household to the national level is truly impressive.

While Price acknowledges a shift in how the Canadian state engaged with Asia in the postwar period, he cautions that the "resilience of race" (317) meant that racially-based politics revealed themselves in a number of different ways. Most particularly, anti-communism became the "rationale for continued imperial intervention in the postwar era." (283) This imperial attitude meant that Canadian leaders consistently ignored the agency of political leaders in Asia and the legitimacy of decolonization movements. He maintains that historians have reproduced this practice in their representations of the Korean War and the Vietnam War as "proxy wars" which, as Price argues, denies "those in Asia any substantial form of agency in world history." (3) The lack of agency in assessments of Asia is an oft-repeated refrain in Price's analysis of decolonization movements and the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

Paradoxically, Price dedicates significant attention to exploring the agency of leaders in Canada in fostering particular views of the Transpacific. Price documents Mackenzie King's well-known aversion to Chinese immigration as well as some of his more shocking comments about Asia (upon hearing of the bombing of Hiroshima, King wrote in his diaries, "It is fortunate that the use of the bomb should have been upon the Japanese rather than upon the white races of Europe" (94)) but does not dwell on this relatively notorious aspect of King's character. Rather, Price directs his attention to Lester B. Pearson, who was Secretary of State under Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent and himself Prime Minister from 1963-1968. Price examines the politics of Pearson's internationalism and finds it wanting since it was overshadowed by Pearson's determination to work in support of American spheres of influence. According to Price, the focus on "Anglo-Saxon unity" in Canada reflected "decades of racist exclusions and the edification of the Canadian state to the point that "whiteness," or Anglo-Saxonism, had become normative." (13)

Price's focus on Pearson as the embodiment of "whiteness" norms raises the question of the degree to which racism's pervasive influence is structural and the extent to which individuals can propagate racial norms. In *Orienting Canada*, Price pays only modest attention to how structural norms, such as immigration regulation, perpetuated

University, 2007), ETD Collection for McMaster University, <http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/dissertations/AAINR36042>, accessed December 20, 2011; Paul Evans and B. Michael Frolic, *Reluctant Adversaries: Canada and the People's Republic of China, 1949-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Robert Bothwell, "Eyes West: Canada and the Cold War in Asia," in Greg Donaghy, ed. *Canada and the Early Cold War* (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1998).

stereotypes of Asian migrants and ideas of racial superiority.² In this respect, it is unfortunate that Price ends his analysis in 1954. The immigration reforms of the 1960s that universalized immigration laws in Canada in the United States deepened connections with the Transpacific. Given Price's compelling arguments about the character of anti-communism in Asia, it would have been interesting to have his assessment on the nature of imperial ambitions during the era of liberal immigration reforms.

Aside from Price's exploration of the 1907 riots, the manner in which developments within the nation contributed to Canada's history with the Transpacific remains under-developed. This may be in part due to a certain amount of tension in *Orienteering Canada* over how to "approach the past from the margins" (302) without implying that the people and issues involved were marginal or arguing that the Transpacific was significant in large part because it sheds light on how Canadian officials pursued their Atlanticist worldview. While Price emphasizes the 'trans' in his analysis, more research needs to be done on the relationship between imperialism abroad and imperialism at home, arguably manifested in Canadian immigration laws and in the state's treatment of Canada's indigenous peoples, an issue that Price touches on all too briefly. In a passage called "Canada's Hiroshima", Price documents how exposure to uranium used in the production of American weaponry killed many of the Dene men who transported the material on behalf of the Canadian state. There is the implicit potential in *Orienteering Canada* to connect support for imperialism abroad with imperialism at home. In hinting at the empire within, Price opens the door to future avenues of research on the resilience of empire even if he does not venture down these paths himself.

Orienteering Canada moves far beyond the decades-old historiographical debate about how marginalized perspectives should be written into Canadian history by taking up the much-needed task of considering the formative influence of race on Canada's foreign relations.³ To my mind, Price does more than "orient" Canadian history by writing the history of the Transpacific into Canadian history and the history of Canada into the Transpacific. Thanks to his prodigious research skills and his sensitive analysis, Price offers an entirely new conception of Canada's relationship with the United States and the Transpacific from 1907-1954. It is one that *re-orients* scholarship in Canada and invites future research into the manner in which imperialism, in its various guises, creates silences and gaps in the collective memories of the nation.

² Adam McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008) and Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³ In the late 1990s, Jack Granatstein's *Who Killed Canadian History?* prompted a backlash amongst historians. In response to Granatstein's critique of "multicultural mania," historians such as Timothy Stanley argued for the importance of making multiculturalism a central concern in the writing of Canadian history. J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2007, c1998); Timothy Stanley, "Why I Killed Canadian History: Towards an Anti-Racist History in Canada," *Social History* (33)65 (2000): 79-103.

S ometime in the 1990s, I spent a long dinner conversation with another scholar arguing about whether racism could be used as an analytical factor in explaining the diplomatic relations between Japan and the United States before Pearl Harbor. He was a historian from Japan, en route to home from a conference in the United States addressing cultural approaches in diplomatic history, and he asserted that the diplomatic negotiations that took place between the 1920s and 1940s could be analyzed best using approaches that emphasized rational choices about national self-interest. Over three dinner courses and two hours, I offered suggestion after suggestion for ways to understand how racial discourses were neither ‘irrational prejudice’ nor mere ‘cultural differences’ that did not affect intelligent men—the other scholar dismissed the possibility that any analysis of race could help explain the clear thinking of high-minded diplomats. Surely we needed to take into account the personal backgrounds of some of the politicians and negotiators on both sides, I argued, and the paradigmatic forms of white supremacy that shaped understandings of the ‘Orient’ and ‘Asians’ in North America? Or how domestic political pressures from anti-Asian organizations informed political possibilities in the U.S.? Or how the frustrations of being treated as inferior non-whites must have affected some of the Japanese, especially the most highly educated and refined of them who had spent significant time in North America? Nothing I suggested could dissuade him from his conviction that the study of trans-Pacific diplomacy need not take into account the widespread politics of white supremacy that shaped colonialism and white settler nation-building in the 20th century Pacific world. By the end of dessert, I had given up and we were talking about the weather.

I wish that I had been able to read John Price’s *Orienteering Canada* before the appetizers that night. Better yet, I wish Price himself had been a dinner guest. But perhaps even if Price had been there, we still might not have achieved the level of analysis contained in Price’s recent book. As Price observes in the introduction to *Orienteering Canada*, his “initial project examining Canada and the ‘Cold War’ in East Asia ended in the uncomfortable realization that questions of race were essential to the telling of the story but...they were not easily written about or readily received by traditional diplomatic historians.” (1) After decades of studies such as those by John Dower, Akira Iriye, Penny Von Eschen, Thomas Borstelmann, and Kevin Gaines emphasizing the importance of discourses about racial inferiority and superiority in understanding international relations, it would seem that the historical study of diplomacy has come a long way indeed.

The title of “*Orienteering Canada*” is more than a clever pun. It captures the crucial idea that we cannot understand the diplomatic history of Canada without embedding it within the white supremacy and anti-Oriental racism of both British imperial expansion and Canadian nation building. From the 1885 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration through anti-Asian policies such as the Chinese Head Tax in 1885, Chinese exclusion in 1923, Japanese Canadian internment in 1942, and the racialized violence that was normative in the Pacific theater of the Second World War and the Korean War, John Price details how, at both the ground level and in the highest reaches of government offices and policy creation, racial

discourses built around white supremacy were such a normal part of conceptions of defining Canada and its interests that they were often left unspoken. But fortunately for historians such as Price, anti-Asian attitudes were so commonplace that they were also spoken and written without the need for euphemism. With little necessity for historical actors to hide the ways in which attitudes towards 'Orientals' helped 'orient' Canada's place in the world, Price is able to trace white supremacy's long history and pervasive legacies.

One of the crucial moments for Price was the series of anti-Asian riots that took place in Bellingham, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia in 1907. In the aftermath of the riots, Canadian Federal minister Mackenzie King helped create an array of anti-Asian policies, transforming decades of anti-Chinese practices in British Columbia into new policies that targeted Japanese and South Asian residents. Allowed by the British to negotiate the Hayashi-Lemieux Gentleman's Agreement of 1908 in parallel with the Gentleman's Agreement between the United States and Japan the same year, for the first time Canadian Federal officials were also able to acquire control of Canada's diplomatic relations. Similar to the formation of anti-Asian racial discourses in the western United States, the creation of a generic category of "Orientals" served as the foil for developing a broader conception of citizenry and belonging around Canada being a "white man's country" (captured in the popular song "White Canada Forever") that excluded residents of Asian ancestry. Along with ethnic cleansing and relocation policies that targeted, removed, and re-educated indigenous peoples, anti-Asian policies became a formative part of imperial territorial expansion as well as national diplomatic relations, lasting well into the latter half of the twentieth century.

The 'transpacific,' in Price's perspective, anchored the national aspirations of Canada as it became a global player, even during the period when Lester Pearson shaped a new conception of Canada as a global 'peacekeeper.' In the nation's dealings with China, Japan, Korea, and others across the Pacific, and in its virulent racism against "Orientals" in its definitions at home and abroad, Canada used racial exclusion and assertions of non-white inferiority to achieve its national interests. Racism, in other words, was a very rational choice created out of the self-interests of nationalism built around white supremacy.

But Price's signature accomplishment in *Orienting Canada* is not to document what was actually quite obvious both to those who espoused and resisted white supremacy at the time—rather, what stands out in Price's study is his ability to listen to the voices of those who struggled for justice, otherwise ordinary men and women who became remarkable not for implementing the injustice and inequity rationalized by racism and colonialism, but because they stood in its way. Whether writing about Dené indigenous activists whose lands were poisoned by the uranium mines that fueled the bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki (101), or a Korean victim of Canadian military war crimes still searching for justice half a century later (259), Price avoids the disservice that so many studies still do in reinforcing the silence of those who have been victimized. Identifying the crucial role of racism in the history of Canada and the United States is one thing, respecting the voices of those who were its victims and therefore not reiterating their exclusion is another.

Price is also sensitive to the ways in which the racial policies of Japanese imperial expansion sometimes mirrored that of European and American colonialism. Tracing the resistance of women to the sexual slavery imposed by the Japanese military in colonized areas, Price consciously avoids the trap of selectively identifying the injustices of the past. His sensitivity to the ways in which imperial expansions relied upon and promulgated racial and sexual violence serves as a welcome corrective to interpretations of diplomacy and international relations in the twentieth century Pacific that are extricated from the terrible contexts within which they took place. At the heart of *Orienteering Canada* is a scholar who is clearly committed to exploring questions of historical injustice, and to dealing with their legacies in the present. The struggles of those who fought against the racial hierarchies of colonialism both in Canada and in Asia are not forgotten in Price's narrative.

If there is a distinction to be drawn between how Price's study will fare in the scholarly communities of the United States versus those in Canada, it will likely involve the very different senses of national self-identity that currently reign in each nation. For the last half century at least, scholars in the United States have wrestled with the central and foundational place of white supremacy in American nation-building, from slavery through to current debates on immigration and the wars on "terrorism" and drugs. Although scholars in Canada have waged their own debates on the importance of white supremacy in understanding Canada as a settler colony growing out of the British Empire, there is a palpable difference in popular national discourses about the role of racism in each nation's history. Indeed, it is only recently that Canada has confronted the meaning for its national history of a series of historic apologies by the Federal government—for Japanese Canadian internment in 1988, for the Chinese Head Tax and other anti-Chinese legislation in 2006, and for the aboriginal reserve system and residential schooling in 2008. Each apology belied an idealized and at times self-satisfied portrayal of Canada as a multicultural nation that had avoided the virulent racism of its southern neighbor. A portrayal of Canada as a friendly global peacekeeper, artfully constructed during the 1960s under the leadership of Lester Pearson, further elided the long history of involvement in imperial expansion that John Price is at pains to detail.

Oddly enough, as interesting as Price's study will be for diplomatic historians both in the United States and Canada for the ways in which he brings together race and empire as central elements for understanding the trans-Pacific, it remains to be seen whether his book will become dinner table conversation in many Canadian households. This is a shame, since he has written a compelling, accessible, and provocative story, one that should inspire enough dialogue to last a long evening.

Greg Donaghy's provocative and clever opening remark that "Canadians just don't write books like this" certainly awoke my latent, nationalist inner self. My white hackles rose, my street brain went into overdrive, and I conjured up just as clever retorts that would assert my credentials as a bona fide 'Canadian'. But perhaps I am over-reacting and Donaghy is suggesting that more Canadians should write books like this?

Before plunging any further into these murky waters, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to Henry Yu, Greg Donaghy, Erika Lee, and Laura Madokoro for plowing through a rather dense tome, for their generosity in constructing their critiques, and for the insights that they bring to this roundtable discussion. It has been an important learning experience for me. In my response I consider three broad themes raised by the reviewers, including where *Orienteering Canada* fits in the existing historiography; some of the limitations of the book particularly regarding indigeneity and coloniality; and the nature of Canadian postwar policy in Asia. Within each of these broader themes I address specific points raised by the reviewers.

Historiographical Issues

Erika Lee expressed the hope that other participants would assess the accuracy of my claim that transpacific Canadian history had been relegated to the margins. Henry Yu partially affirms my contention in pointing out how Canadian nationalism claims a self-satisfied portrayal of a multicultural country that has avoided the virulent racism of the U.S. and that the mantle of 'peacekeeper' has masked Canada's involvement in imperial expansion. Given Lee's description of the state of American scholarship, however, I think some elucidation of the state of Canadian scholarship regarding race and foreign policy might help contextualize some of the issues under consideration.

If *Orienteering Canada* partially broke out of the constraints of diplomatic history it was largely because of decades of efforts and insights of scholar/activists in the Asian Canadian communities. The book's genealogy might help explain this. It began as a project on 'Canada and the Cold War in Asia' with an initial focus on the role of the Canadian diplomat-historian Herbert Norman in the Occupation of Japan. I eventually came to realize, however, that examining Asian policies mainly through Norman's experiences was to distort what was occurring in Canadian foreign policy. This became perfectly clear, around 2004, when I realized that the ship that Norman sailed on from Vancouver to take up his post as Canada's representative in Occupied Japan in 1946 was also carrying 1,377 Japanese Canadians who were being exiled from Canada. My informant on this matter was Tatsuo Kage, a friend, scholar and activist whose Japanese-language study on the exile, *Nikkei kanadajin no tsuihō* [Exiled Japanese Canadians] allowed me to grasp this connection.¹ To continue to write about Norman while ignoring the plight of Japanese

¹ Tatsuo Kage, *Nikkei kanadajin no tsuihō* [Exiled Japanese Canadians], (Tokyo, Akashi shoten, 1998).

Canadians was, it seemed to me, inappropriate. And so issues of race and empire crept into the original manuscript. UBC Press rejected the first draft of the manuscript after one reviewer took particular exception to its style and its emphasis on racism. A book on Norman, the reviewer suggested, was what was necessary. However, after much emotional turmoil I rejected that option and decided to rework the manuscript to put questions of race and empire front and center in the analysis and to provide a theoretical basis for the study. To do this essentially required a crash course in Asian Canadian history and critical anti-racist theory as well as a re-reading of Canadian diplomacy. This patchwork effort was only partially successful in that the agency of Asian Canadians and Asians is still only weakly reflected. As Laura Madokoro incisively yet diplomatically points out, I paradoxically “dwell on the agency of Canadian leaders such as King and Pearson.” This is perhaps *Orienting Canada's* failure and its strength. It is not bottom-up history, told mainly through the eyes of Asian Canadian experiences. On the other hand, it does short-circuit the traditional self-righteousness of Canadian nationalists by foregrounding the racism and Eurocentrism of Mackenzie King, Louis St. Laurent, and Lester Pearson and graphically connecting the impact on peoples of Asia and of Asian heritage in Canada.

To the extent I was able to make these connections was due in large part to the significant amount of historical work that had already made the connection between racisms and Canadian foreign policy. One that greatly affected me was Harold Sugimoto's study *Japanese Immigration, the Vancouver Riots and Canadian Diplomacy*.² Also foundational for me were the multi-authored volume *From China to Canada*, Hugh Johnston's *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru*, and the Ujimoto/Hirabayashi edited collection *Visible Minorities and Multiculturalism*.³ The volumes were all written as part of the first tide of Asian Canadian writings, a tide that unfortunately ebbed to some extent in the 1980s. It surged again in the 1990s with significant new works about each of the historic Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian communities in Canada. This included a new transnational current represented, for example, by Tim Stanley's 1996 article, “Chinamen, Wherever we Go,” a powerful illustration of how the Chinese community articulated the triangulation of racisms in Canada, strengthening of China, and justice for Chinese Canadians.⁴ A strong feminist current emerged as well, including Midge Ayukawa's study of Japanese picture brides and Yuen-Fong Woon's *The Excluded Wife*.⁵ This trend expanded as critical anti-racist and

² Howard Sugimoto, *Japanese Immigration, the Vancouver Riots, and Canadian Diplomacy* (New York: Arno Press, 1978).

³ Harry Con, Edgar Wickberg, et al, *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982); Victor Ujimoto and Gordon Hirabayashi, *Visible Minorities and Multiculturalism: Asians in Canada* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1980); Hugh Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

⁴ Timothy J. Stanley, “Chinamen, Wherever We Go': Chinese Nationalism and Guangdong Merchants in British Columbia, 1871-1911,” *Canadian Historical Review*, Volume 77, Issue 4, (Winter 1996): 475 – 503.

⁵ Midge Ayukawa, “Good Wives and Wise Mothers: Japanese Picture Brides in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia.” *BC Studies* 105-106 (1995), 103-18; Yuen-fong Woon, *The excluded wife*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).

feminist voices made their mark.⁶ Enakshi Dua's brilliant study "Exclusion through Inclusion," and the Thobani/Hellwig edited volume *Asian Women: Interconnections* were significant in my (re)education.⁷

Regrettably, as important as Tatsuo Kage's *Nikkei no Tsuihō* work was to my own education, I was not able to explore or incorporate much of the related non-English language works. Nor does *Orienteering Canada* draw on the rich and extensive Asian Canadian literary tradition. Dating from the late 1960s, the Asian Canadian Writers' Workshop has been a powerful impetus for making the connections between racisms, nationalism and empire. Later, Wayson Choy's story of illegal paper sons (*Paper Shadows*) or Terry Watada's story of the imperial boss in *Kuroshio* have opened new territories in their explorations of race, immigration and empire.⁸ They now stand alongside earlier historical novels and literary non-fiction such as *Obasan*, *Jade Peony*, *Concubine's Daughter*, *Disappearing Moon Cafe*, and *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?*⁹

Thus, in response to Greg Donaghy's claim that "Canadians just don't write books like this," I would only say that Canadians and even non-Canadians have been writing books and articles like this for a long time but they have been marginalized to the extent they have been siloed as ethnic history. The problem, it seems to me, is that many of us remain stuck behind disciplinary boundaries and miss the potential that interdisciplinarity and critical anti-racist studies can provide. A brilliant example of the potential insights to be gained from this interdisciplinary approach is Jodi Kim's recent *Ends of Empire* in which she skillfully interweaves political economy, geopolitics and cultural studies.¹⁰ Both a sensitive exploration of Asian American cultural expression and a scathing indictment of the gendered and racialized politics of empires, this new work sets an innovative standard for all who work in related fields.

⁶ The founding of R.A.C.E. (Researchers and Academics of Colour for Equality/Equity Network) in 2001 was an important marker in this regard. It has served as a forum for bringing together First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Non-status Indians and people of colour and allies in annual conferences.

⁷ Enakshi Dua. "Exclusion through Inclusion: Female Asian Migration in the Making of Canada as a White Settler Nation." *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, Vol. 14 No. 4 (August 2007): 445-65; Tineke Hellwig and Sunera Thobani, *Asian Women: Interconnections* (Toronto, Women's Press, 2006).

⁸ Wayson Choy, *Paper Shadows: A Chinatown Childhood* (Toronto, Penguin Canada, 1999); Terry Watada, *Kuroshio: The Blood of Foxes* (Vancouver, Arsenal Pulp Press, 2007).

⁹ Joy Kogawa, *Obasan* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 1983); Wayson Choy, *The Jade Peony* (Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre, 1995); Denise Chong, *The Concubine's Children: Portrait of a Family Divided*, (Penguin, 1994); S.K.Y. Lee, *Disappearing Moon Café* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990); Anita Rau Badami, *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* (Toronto, Knopf, 2006).

¹⁰ Jodi Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

Given the strength of Asian American studies, it is deeply gratifying to read Erika Lee's positive assessment of *Orienting Canada*. Asian American history has been and continues to be a huge influence in my own work and scholars trained in Asian American studies are currently having a significant impact in Canada. They, along with critical anti-racist scholars in feminist and critical cultural studies, and specialists in specific ethnic fields are forming the critical mass necessary to overcome marginalization and transform Canadian education. This is not to say there are not ongoing problems. In the case of ethnic studies, there remains the problem of siloing each ethnocultural group to some extent, and a related emphasis on 'model minority' or 'loyal Canadian' discourses. However, the challenge of marginalization has more to do with the continuing domination of institutionalized racism and patriarchy, and the constraining effects of multiculturalism than anything else. I raise these issues in the specific context of mainstreaming critical anti-racism within the Canadian academy and the potential role for Asian Canadian studies. It is only recently that we see this field (re)emerging as a distinct topic of research and education.¹¹ One of the reasons I believe Asian Canadian Studies is important is that it provides a space for cultivating pan-Asian approaches to scholarship and developing cross-cultural solidarity, a concept the Asian Canadian Writers' Workshop has seized on and developed over a number of years. This also extends to building closer ties with Indigenous Studies. Today Asian Canadian studies is (re)emerging in tandem with the anti-colonial, Indigenous rights movement in Canada, in ways similar to how Asian American studies evolved in conjunction with the civil rights movement in the U.S. in the late sixties.

Indigeneity, Decolonization, and Asian Canadian

Laura Madokoro points out that, apart from the chapter on "Canada's Hiroshima", I do not adequately explore the relationships between the state's treatment of Indigenous peoples and foreign policy, or "imperialism abroad with imperialism at home" as she puts it. I agree and on re-reading my own work I cannot help but feel how it continues to reproduce terrible silences at the same time that it disrupts the self-satisfied nationalist discourse too often found in Canadian diplomatic history. The great upsurge in Indigenous history and contact literature in Canada is beginning to have an effect in reshaping Canadian scholarship. Defining the intersections with the struggles of Asian Canadians and others can only enhance and deepen this transformative process.

For example, during the research for *Orienting Canada*, I discovered that the denial of the franchise for Chinese in British Columbia was directly tied to Indigeneity and the creation of whiteness in the province. In 1872, British Columbia legislators wanted to expand the white electorate by removing property and literacy requirements for voting. Under the

¹¹ The University of Toronto and UBC have only recently announced they will be establishing Asian Canadian minor programs, the first in the country. Literary and cultural studies have, however, talked about Asian Canadian for many years. An initial foray into Asian Canadian studies in the 1970s did not lead to the institutionalization of the concept. For recent developments see Henry Yu, ed., "B.C. Studies, Refracting Pacific Canada, No. 156/157 (Winter/Spring 2007/08) and also Henry Yu, ed. *Pacific Canada: Beyond the 49th Parallel*, *Amerasia Journal*, Vol. 33 No. 2 (Fall 2007) as well as G. Beaugard, G. and A. Y. Leung, eds., *Asian Canadian Studies, Canadian Literature* (University of British Columbia, 2008).

gendered norms of the day this would have given the franchise to all adult males. However, this would open up the danger, as one legislator perceived it, that “we might, after next election, see an Indian occupying the Speaker’s Chair, or have a Chinese majority in the House.”¹² The legislators solved this perceived danger by denying both Indigenous peoples and Chinese the right to vote provincially a few days later. To my knowledge this moment in the dialectics of creating whiteness and disenfranchising the ‘non-white’ has never been explored in the literature to date. There are also some similarities in missionary treatment of First Nations and Asian Canadians, i.e. in the creation of segregated sites of education. And white discourse in the early era painted both Chinese and Indigenous women as prostitutes. I do not want to overdraw the parallels—the appropriation of the lands of the First Nations, the residential school system and much else in the state’s treatment of Indigenous peoples distinguish their history from that of the newcomers. Yet there is much to be learned from the intersections. Unfortunately, by the time I had come across some of these materials, the manuscript had already grown to 200,000 words and I came under pressure to cut out sections. I only hope that *Orienteering Canada* does, as Madokoro suggests, invite new scholars to take up the pathbreaking work begun by researchers such as Lily Chow, Rita Wong, Renisa Mawani, and Henry Yu who have been actively cultivating the connections between Indigeneity and Asian Canadian for a number of years.¹³

Madokoro also points out other limitations of *Orienteering Canada*, including its select treatment of immigration issues, the modest attention I gave to structural norms of racialization, and the constraints of ending the narrative in the mid-1950s. To what extent these reflect my own limits, and to what extent they reflect the limits of the research that existed at the time requires further reflection. In either case, Madokoro has taken on one issue directly in her recent synopsis of the Chinese Canadian communities’ quest for equity of family immigration policies in the 1947-67 period.¹⁴ Her study opens up interesting new questions including how and why the Liberal Party in Canada finally acceded to the pressures for the ostensible elimination of race as an overt category of immigration exclusion in 1967. That this coincided with the Quiet Revolution and the rise of Québec nationalism suggests a potentially important intersection that requires careful historical scrutiny. Regardless how we assess matters today, anyone who reads Lord Durham’s 1838 report cannot help but be struck by certain similarities in the racialization of Québécois in that era with the treatment of later newcomers. As we explore the intersection between Indigenous and Asian Canadian history, is it not also necessary to explore the historical struggle of Acadians and Québécois against expulsion on the one hand and assimilation on

¹² “First Provincial Legislative Assembly,” *The British Colonist*, April 6, 1872, p. 2.

¹³ Lily Chow, *Sojourners in the North* (Prince George, BC: Caitlin Press, 1996); Rita Wong, “Decolonization: Reading Asian and First Nations Relations in Literature,” *Canadian Literature*, Issue 199 (February 2009): 158-; Renisa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871-1921* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009). For Yu’s contributions see footnote 12.

¹⁴ Laura Madokoro, “‘Slotting’ Chinese Families and Refugees, 1947-1967,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 93, I (March 2012): 25-56.

the other? Do we not need to also understand the intersections with the historical struggle of Jews and African Canadians against their historical exclusions? Having faced some of these questions in writing *Orienteering Canada*, I found it was not easy to fathom or to bring together these diverse experiences. Perhaps it was just me and my baggage, but I suspect that many scholars face similar challenges and that, despite the efforts by many to date, we still have a long way to overcome the ideology of racelessness that continues to hold sway in so many domains. There are many pitfalls along the way, including the danger of 'enlightened whiteness' emerging as a new form of domination. Nevertheless, I do believe that a coordinated and concerted effort by many people from diverse sectors will be necessary if we are to transform Canadian educational norms so that Indigeneity, race and intersectionality become a foundational part of all institutions.

Postwar Foreign Policy

For the most part Greg Donaghy seems to endorse *Orienteering Canada's* analysis of Canadian foreign policy from the early twentieth century through World War II. However, he contends that my interpretation of postwar Canadian policy in Asia "is not persuasive" and suggests that most Canadian's embraced their southern neighbor with whom they shared "liberal cultural, economic and political values". Canada's interests, according to Donaghy, were therefore best served in sticking by the U.S. even if an independent policy might have been "more democratic or moral, or both." He then cites the Canadian government's quest for an agreement with the U.S. on the St. Lawrence Seaway as a reason not to ruffle Washington's feathers over recognition of China, underscoring the ever-tighter ties between the two economies.

In regard to the economic strand of his argument, Donaghy seems to be invoking economic self-interest and rational choice theory in his interpretation of postwar foreign policy. Powerful economic factors have and will continue to be an important factor in Canada's relationship with the United States given the shared border. However, it seems to me Donaghy's emphasis on this aspect of the postwar Canada-US relationship elides a number of important matters and rests on questionable assumptions, some of which *Orienteering Canada* addressed directly.

For example, invoking the term 'liberal' to describe the shared values of that era seems somewhat problematic given the institutionalized racism that existed in both countries at the time. People like Pearson, Dean Acheson and George Kennan shared important values to be sure, but if anything *Orienteering Canada* points to the centrality of their abiding belief in the western (read white man's) burden expressed through the priority attached to maintaining Anglo-American or 'Western' unity whatever the cost. This foundational belief in the end determined much of the policy orientation, a belief that for the most part also coincided with the economic goal of closer economic ties with the U.S. But as I point out, and Donaghy affirms in citing British recognition of China in 1950, it was possible even for an ally to stray from U.S. policy on a given issue without necessarily jeopardizing economic relations. We have seen this even in this century when the Liberal government declined to join the invasion of Iraq in 2003 despite being urged to do so by elite economic bodies including the Vancouver Board of Trade and the Canadian Council of Chief Executives.

If we reposition the discussion then to allow for the possibility of divergence in foreign policy, the multiple examples I cite in *Orienting Canada* were such moments. Yet Pearson and St. Laurent worked assiduously to avoid crossing swords with the U.S. in these examples (the Far Eastern Commission, San Francisco Peace Treaty, and so forth) despite the fact that they knew U.S. policies were problematic. Here, Donaghy is left to marshal out the old chestnut about the danger of Asia splitting the West, a concept evocative of Lester Pearson's 1953 policy statement, "Don't Let Asia Split the West."¹⁵ Despite the title's overtones of an earlier discourse in which a 'yellow peril' menaced a fragile west, Pearson's statement was in fact an appeal for a flexible policy towards Asia. But this 'liberal' appeal was founded on the belief that Asian lives were not worth disunity among the Anglo-European motherlands. To be very concrete about it, Pearson was prepared to give the French guns in their colonial war in Indochina, a war he did not support, in order to protect the unity of the west. This type of inhumanity could only survive so long as peoples in the west were not confronted with the reality of such pragmatism. So long as the charred corpses in Korea or the maimed bodies of Vietnamese were kept out of the picture all seemed well. Yet when gruesome news reports about the napalming of Korean villages crept into the news, Pearson was upset. He knew that many Canadians were not willing to support such atrocities as the price to be paid for maintaining western unity or for friendship with the U.S. On more than one occasion Pearson demonstrated a rather illiberal fondness for censorship in order to avoid such inconvenient truths from being told. One of Lester Pearson's great fears was that Canadian opinion could sharply veer towards criticism of U.S. policy. Donaghy gently and appropriately chides me for underplaying the role of resistance to racism in Canada in the 1930s, yet he seems unwilling to recognize or credit the resistance to U.S. imperialism in Canada in the 1950s. Part of the reason I believe is in his desire to 'set aside' what he calls the "hoary debate over who started the Cold War and the complicated nature of U.S. liberal imperialism." These issues are precisely what I tried to address in drawing the link between racism and empire. Officials like Pearson were in incredible positions of power and, as I demonstrated in the case of the San Francisco peace treaty, Pearson knew that the treaty was largely opposed in Asia. His performance in San Francisco reflected expediency in desiring to please the Americans but it also reflected contempt for the majority of the world's population rooted in the legacy and continuing power of racialization on a global scale.

Donaghy correctly identifies important omissions in my work, particularly the Canadian missionary projects in Asia and, I should say, among Asian Canadians. This and his point regarding the importance of India I think are quite appropriate. Nor does *Orienting Canada* properly connect the racisms toward Asia and Asian Canadians with others, including anti-semitism and racism towards the Caribbean. In other words, in concentrating on Asia the book generates its own exclusions, problems I am confident future researchers will be able to avoid as we build a more comprehensive body of work on these subjects and make them a foundational part of Canadian history.

¹⁵ Lester Pearson, "Don't Let Asia Split the West," December 1953, Statements and Speeches 53/50, External Affairs, Information Division.

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