

Parr had interviewed some of the female workers in Hanover, she might have discovered that they were able to devise certain networks or strategies that served to enhance their power and authority within this male-dominated community. One also is left to wonder whether Paris' men were really as accommodating and helpful within the home as we are led to believe. While Parr has used the testimony of seven women to reach the conclusion that the men were often quite willing to engage in some of the chores around the home, she might have discovered that the majority of men were not quite as liberated had she interviewed a larger segment of the population.

Aside from these minor quibbles, *The Gender of Breadwinners* is a wonderfully written piece that makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of gender relations within two very different local settings. Parr creatively uses sources such as municipal assessment rolls and company payrolls to produce a chronological, occupational, and gender breakdown of both Paris and Hanover's workforce. She also relies on these two sources to determine the age, marital status, and living accommodations of the workers. Her usage of these types of sources, as well as the oral history projects that she undertook, could open up new avenues of research for labour historians interested in documenting the activities of workers in local industries. Finally, Parr's study has made a strong and vital contribution to the larger field of local labour history. Her new approach has provided a more dynamic alternative to the old and stale studies that focused more on workers' industrial and organizational activities. Instead, Parr introduces a more comprehensive and complex analysis of working people's lives by taking into consideration important forces such as gender, ethnicity, community and religion, all of which help to shape the lives and experience of Canada's working class.

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White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914. PATRICIA E. ROY. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989. xvii, 327 pp. ISBN 0-7748-0330-4.

In September 1988 the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney, on behalf of all Canadians, formally apologized to the Japanese Canadian community for the mistreatment accorded them during the Second World War when thousands were uprooted from their coastal homes and businesses and relocated to the interior of British Columbia. Compensation for their economic losses was awarded to the survivors and their relatives upon validation of their claims by the Secretary of State. The Japanese Canadian community felt vindicated after many years of pressuring the Canadian government to right the wrongs of nearly fifty years ago. Other ethnic groups who also felt unfairly treated at the hands of previous Canadian governments took heart. The Chinese Canadians began to press for redress of the infamous "head tax" of \$500 imposed on each immigrant from China who entered Canada to find work during the early part of this century. The Ukrainian Canadians renewed efforts to obtain some compensation for their ancestors, who had settled in the prairie provinces and subsequently were deprived of their property when about 5,000 were interned as "prisoners of war" during the First World War; a further 88,000 had to carry identification cards and report to the police regularly. Recently the Prime Minister

apologized to Italian Canadians whose relatives were also interned as “enemy aliens” during the Second World War. It seems as though the “sins of our forefathers” have finally caught up to this present generation of enlightened Canadians who want to redress past wrongs.

Or are we so enlightened? While most Canadians dismiss misgivings about certain ethnic groups as products of a bigoted mind, many display ambivalent views on immigration. They distinguish between “deserving” immigrants, such as those refugees fleeing from genuinely oppressive political regimes and those so desperate to come to Canada that they will do almost anything, including providing false documentation to prove legitimate refugee status. The latter are looked upon with hostility and told to return to their countries and apply from there. The Sikh RCMP officer who won the right to wear the Sikh turban as part of his uniform is still an object of hostility and derision by some groups who refuse to respect the argument that the turban is an important religious symbol in the Sikh religion. The two teachers, one in Alberta and one in New Brunswick, who question the existence of the Holocaust also indicate that bigotry, prejudice, and intolerance still exist in our country. Racism—that is, stereotyped and often derogatory views of various groups in society based on physical appearance, religion or other beliefs, customs or standard of living — is not just something that happened in the past, or exists in other countries, but is still something that confronts Canadians today. To understand the roots of these attitudes, it is necessary to study the past.

Patricia Roy’s book, *A White Man’s Province*, attempts to do just that. Professor Roy concentrates on the anti-Asian sentiment that dominated British Columbia for almost the first one hundred years of its existence. In the foreword she explains that her interest in this subject stemmed from her focus on the exclusionary Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 and the removal of the Japanese Canadians from the coastal areas of the province in 1942. She decided to start her research with the commencement of the First World War. After investigating a number of sources including archival records and primary printed material, Professor Roy concluded that “one could not fully understand the animosity British Columbians felt towards East Asians after 1914 without comprehending what went before. Indeed, the logical starting date was 1858, the year the colony of British Columbia was created and Chinese residents first arrived” (p. vii).

This publication is the result of that perceptive conclusion. Moreover, Professor Roy does not limit her study to the exposure of racial attitudes and actions by the British Columbia population. She clearly indicates that how the economy developed in that province helped to reinforce and exacerbate opposition to Asian immigration and settlement. During the gold rush era, the Chinese immigrants were tolerated because they worked the old mines abandoned by white prospectors who had moved to more lucrative areas, kept to themselves, and were only in the country for a short time before returning to China with their savings. By the 1870s, the tolerance changed to hostility and resentment of the white populace who claimed that these men never “contributed” to building the new province by spending their money or becoming interested in how the local municipality or province was governed. The cheap labour provided by the Chinese aroused the antipathy of the trade unionists. The change in attitude led to a long series of measures by B. C. politicians to restrict immigration from China through pressure on the federal government, to disenfranchising Chinese and later Japanese immigrants, to

prohibiting provincially chartered companies from hiring Asiatic labour and other restrictive measures.

In fact, the Chinese and Japanese, who represented a small proportion of the population, were often used as pawns in the political chess game between the provincial and federal governments. The B.C. government often introduced and passed controls aimed at these two ethnic groups just before an election. Ottawa frequently disallowed provincial acts considered to be *ultra vires* and British Columbia was not excepted from this practice. When this happened, provincial politicians conveniently could blame the federal government for making the problem worse because they were unsympathetic to provincial aspirations. (By the way, the book rightly points out that the anti-Asian sentiment was not confined just to British Columbia; these views were held by many Canadians, but were strongest in the West Coast province.)

Professor Roy also places the anti-oriental measures in the context of the struggle between capital and labour, a theme which runs throughout her study. The Chinese and later the Japanese were a source of cheap labour: they worked as domestics, gardeners, or labourers. They were generally hardworking and, more important from the employers' point of view, were content with low wages, less inclined to belong to a trade union or participate in a strike than their white counterparts. For that, they incurred the enmity of the trade union movement which saw them as a threat to its fight to obtain better wages and improved working conditions. The Japanese especially became small businessmen who competed with the white businessmen for the same markets. Economic competition aroused further anti-Asian hostilities and contributed to the demand for restrictive measures on the immigration and movements of these people.

Professor Roy concludes that the anti-Asian hysteria and its consequences in British Columbia were the product of a young province, economically, politically, and socially unsure and uncertain of its future. Only by the late 1940s was the province mature and self-confident enough to remove the last anti-Asian piece of legislation. The hostility had never been based on race alone, but on economic views that Chinese and Japanese immigrants who intended to return to their homeland would slow development of the province, that their acceptance of lower wages and working conditions would reduce the standard of living, that they would "take over" certain industries, and that increased immigration from the Orient would ensure that eastern, not western standards, dominated. She has succeeded in demonstrating that the existence of hostility and prejudice towards "foreigners," in this case those immigrating from China and Japan, often had an economic base with resulting political overtones. The rhetoric that accompanied the agitation frequently had racial overtones.

Based on extensive use of primary printed material, especially British Columbia newspapers as well as government records (both federal and provincial), personal papers of politicians (Laurier and King particularly), and church and labour records, *A White Man's Province* is full of fascinating detail about the treatment accorded Asian immigrants and its tragic consequences. It is well written and particularly well documented. Whether or not one agrees with her premise that anti-Asian agitation was economically rooted and not rooted just in racial prejudice, the book provides a number of insights and should become a standard reference source for some time to come. This publication should assist not just Canadian historians but should also stimulate further discussion by sociologists, political scientists, and ethnologists.

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