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W. PETER WARD. — *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy toward Orientals in British Columbia*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978. Pp. xii, 205.

Peter Ward presents us with an interesting study of anti-Orientalism in British Columbia. This work attempts to explain the popular attitudes toward Orientals and to a limited extent deal with the public policy on this issue. It is the first effort to deal with anti-Orientalism on this scale. Previous studies have viewed it as an aspect of labour history, political history, or of Imperial relations. Ward argues that anti-Orientalism in British Columbia was the consequence of the White community's drive for racial and cultural homogeneity. This impulse, we are informed in the conclusion, was fuelled by the Whites' fear "that heterogeneity would destroy their capacity to perpetuate their values and traditions, their laws and institutions" (p. 169). With this study he challenges "the myth of the ethnic mosaic: the belief that the nation has evolved more or less harmoniously as a multicultural society" (p. x), and seeks to lay to rest the assumption "that anti-Orientalism was grounded in economic tensions created by the availability of cheap Asian labour in a maturing industrial capitalist economy" (p. ix).

It is argued that psychological tensions developed when the arrival of Orientals created a plural society. This structurally plural society is defined as consisting of three components, White, Asian and Native. The latter collectivity, however, is dismissed for the purpose of this study for Ward considers Natives as existing only on the margins of British Columbian society. This is an assumption which is made too readily by Ward. The Asians, on the other hand, are presented as a community which had its own cultural identity, but which had economic bonds with the White community. Thus, the very existence of this multiracial community "stirred a profound psychological impulse within the white community to strengthen its collective identity by striving for a homogeneous society" (p. 22). The anti-Orientalism in British Columbia is analysed from this perspective.

Ward presents a survey of the Oriental presence from the first Chinese to arrive during the Fraser River gold rush to the evacuation of the Japanese from the coastal areas in 1942. In the study's conclusion we are informed that during this period of almost a century the numerous conflicts between the White and Asian communities varied in their nature and intensity, occurred at one time or another throughout the province, and "transcended most social, religious, economic and political bounds" (p. 168). Racism had become a cultural norm on the west coast because White British Columbians "yearned" and "longed" for a homogeneous society. Ward suggests that "racism was grounded in the irrational fears and assumptions of whites who lived in the farthest west" (p. 169).

The study, as already noted, is essentially a survey. A considerable amount of new material has been marshalled, but very significant gaps remain. While the anti-Chinese agitation in the Vancouver mining communities is dealt with we learn little of the popular attitudes toward Chinese coolies employed in the building of the CPR. The important conflict during the 1890s in the salmon fishery which pitted the Whites and Natives against the Japanese is treated very lightly. The Komagata Maru incident is inadequately documented. Not only do these weaknesses raise questions but the organization of the study creates a major difficulty for the reader. Ward attempts to create three distinct chronological periods, each focusing on one of the three Asian communities. Consequently the 1860s to 1905 is Sinophobia ascendant, 1914 is the East Indian interlude, and 1914 through to the 1940s is the rise of anti-Japanese feeling. This organization is not only cumbersome and impractical, but it also indicates that the Whites did in fact distinguish significant differences among the Asian immigrant groups. Ward does not attempt fully to explore this fact

and, thus, he does not test his hypothesis that the very Oriental origins of these peoples produced the wrath of the White community.

The framework used by Ward is the sociological theory of the structurally plural society. This concept is characterized by structural segmentation and cultural diversity. Ward adopts this theory while at the same time acknowledging that it was developed to describe the domination of cultural groups by minorities within a colonial setting. There may be a basis for a debate on the applicability of this theory to British Columbia, but a much more fundamental issue is at stake. Ward, rather than utilizing an historical methodology, selected an analytical framework and then sought supporting evidence. The result is a distorted and simplified version of British Columbia's history of anti-Orientalism.

What is clear about anti-Orientalism in British Columbia, and what is amply supported by Ward's evidence, is that the early history of this sentiment was founded in the fears of the working classes for their economic security. Conflicts such as the Vancouver Riot of 1907 and the Komagata Maru incident of 1914 were both primarily responses to massive influxes of labourers during a period of serious unemployment. However, it is also evident that after the turn of the century other factors were at play. The growing Asian population, and its increasing competitiveness in economic sectors other than unskilled labour produced some new concerns and involved more of the middle classes in this question. Nevertheless, most of the public debate revolved around the restriction of immigration, for the working classes had no security except for the market forces created by a relative scarcity of labour. The fact that some members of the middle classes sought to present pseudo-scientific social or cultural rationalizations for the restriction of this immigration does not challenge the essential basis of this prejudice. The majority of the middle classes agreed with the working classes for they saw that emigration would not solve Asia's economic problems, and they felt that it could substantially threaten the living standards in British Columbia while only benefiting a few employers.

During the 1920s and 1930s nativism, as Ward clearly demonstrates, was the basis of anti-Orientalism. Adequate immigration restrictions and the power of trade unions had provided the working classes with some security against the threat of Asian labour flooding the labour market. This rhetoric, however, did not die easily and it did surface during periods of unemployment. What is striking about this period is that the Japanese, and not the larger Chinese community, were the focus of the opposition which was headed by members of the middle classes. There was a general and deep distrust of the Japanese for not only were they aggressive in their economic competition, but their insistence on maintaining close ties with an aggressively nationalistic Imperial Japan produced considerable anxiety among all classes on the west coast. There can be no question that the treatment of the Japanese during the Second World War was unconscionable, but one can only begin to explain this event by looking at the history of the relations between the two communities and not by simply accusing the Whites of irrational fears.

There is ample evidence that throughout the period under study there was some concern by the White community in British Columbia about being endangered by either a mass emigration from Asia or by a military invasion assisted by a fifth column. Ward, however, does not provide a convincing argument that this resulted in an impulse for a homogeneous society. British Columbia was not a colonial outpost where all the Whites had a common bond cemented by their self-interest in exploiting a native population. One must look at class tensions, regional tensions and international pressures, at the very least, in order to approach an explanation for the ethnocentrism which was found in British Columbia. These conflicts were the products of real problems and not merely the result of irrational fears and assumptions.

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