

THE BLACK BOOK OF CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

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Regarding Canada's role and reputation in the field of international relations the widespread public belief is that Canada is a tolerant and peaceful nation maintaining a safe distance from conflict and acting as a force for good in the world. Yves Engler challenges this taken-for-granted assumption asking readers 'whether or not we should be so proud of Canada's foreign affairs?' (4). Engler's aim is to expose readers to a side of international relations that remains hidden from public knowledge and to generate public debate as to Canada's actions abroad. In this way, he intends for the book to be an antidote to what he sees as ignorance regarding the actions of the Canadian government in support of multi-national corporations, military coups and authoritarian governments abroad.

Engler's book is not organized into clearly identifiable chapters, rather case studies divide the book into sections, including the Caribbean, the Middle East, Mexico, Central and South America, East Asia, Central and South Asia, and Africa. Within each section, Engler outlines Canada's self-serving, anti-democratic, colonial, and environmentally destructive foreign policy initiatives (34). In doing so, Engler attempts to cover a variety of contentious topics including colonialism, Canada's unique bind to the United States, the fight against communism and terrorism, war, aid and exploitation, and how these measures are very lucrative profit making opportunities. The author employs a 'journalistic approach' to the case studies, whereby he reports facts, news bulletins, policy briefings, and headline stories regarding Canada's role in a particular region. While the case study method can provide a rich connection between empirical observations, as well as the concepts and theories utilized to explain these observations (see Blatter and Haverland, 2012, 20), this book would benefit from an overarching theoretical framework and conceptual terminology informed by theories and approaches to colonialism and imperialism.

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Engler is clear that he is not writing for an academic audience, rather his objective is to engage a wider public debate about Canada's actions abroad and its multi-relational implications. However, the absence of a theoretical approach and its lack of engagement with other works in the field of colonialism and imperialism are a major shortcoming of Engler's book. While he is interested in a contemporary discussion of Canadian foreign policies, this discussion could be better situated in, for example, post-colonial critiques which highlight the ways modern international relations are simply 'old formulas of colonialism' reworked under the guise of liberal democracy and modernization (Duffield, 2001). Engler's case studies could be read as illustrations of a wide range of important theoretical subjects such as global governance, the rule of law and global political economy. However, with little to no engagement with these bodies of literature the reader is left to make these connections on their own. Further, with an emphasis on contemporary international relations, the book would benefit from a more in-depth discussion of controversies and debates about "globalization" at the outset in order to contextualize the various cases provided. A strength of Engler's book is the inclusion of discussion questions, which does help readers to reflect on commonly held assumptions about Canadian international relations as well as the lessons learned in each case. This book would be well suited as a course reader for intermediate level political science, global studies or political sociology courses, however it should be read alongside theory in order to provide students with the tools necessary for analysis.

Following the case study portion of the book, Engler provides a section on international alliances that details Canada's relationship with several prominent international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Had this section been integrated within the case studies, Engler could have provided specific examples of Canada's international alliances at work in the various global regimes he presents. As it is, this section reads as a disjointed extension of the case studies. Further, Engler problematically reifies the dichotomy between 'strong Western states' such as Canada which under the guise of aid, and often in conjunction with international alliances, intervene in the affairs of predominantly 'weak states' in the Global South. Yet Noam Chomsky (2006), David Chandler (2010), and Mark Duffield (2001) argue against this dichotomy of 'strong' and 'weak' states pointing out that Canada and the United States also possess characteristics found in so-called 'weak states,' including poverty and unequal access to social services such as healthcare and the colonial objectification and alienation of Indigenous peoples.

Following the work of Barbara Heron (2007) on the Desire for Development, Engler's book fails to capture the ways in which the third world is present in the first world and the first world is present in the third world.

In the final section entitled "Why our foreign policy is the way it is and how to change it," Engler provides the reader with tangible advice for fixing the problem of Canadian foreign relations. The author does not shy away from the difficult task of equipping Canadians with tools for demanding democratic, respectful, benevolent, and caring foreign relations. Some of his suggestions are bold (such as the suggestion that Canada pull out of NATO immediately), but by far the strongest section of the book rests on a call to invoke the "golden rule" in foreign policy, versions of which he claims exist in every culture, country, and religion (243). In conclusion, this book has much to contribute to the field of Canadian international relations. Although the case study approach is underutilized due to the lack of a theoretical framework, Engler does successfully challenge the assumption that Canada is a peaceful nation acting as a force for good in the world.

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