

Book Review

Shipley, Tyler. *Canada in the World: Settler Capitalism and the Colonial Imagination*.
Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2020. xii + 537 pp.

With his latest publication, *Canada in the World: Settler Capitalism and the Colonial Imagination*, Tyler Shipley delves into the intricate web of Canadian foreign policy, highlighting leftist interpretations and unveiling the deep-rooted influence of settler capitalism and colonialism. Embarking on a comprehensive exploration of Canadian foreign policy, Tyler Shipley's *Canada in the World* intricately examines over a century and a half of historical events, dissecting the underlying forces of conquest, imperialism, and racism. The overarching thesis of Shipley's comprehensive analysis is that Canadian colonialism is intrinsically linked with capitalism. While acknowledging the presence of capitalist motivations, Shipley primarily focuses on the colonialist aspects of Canadian foreign policies. Central to his argument is the definition of colonialism as a deliberate effort to establish settler capitalism in North America, entwined with a presumption of European superiority (20). Shipley's conceptual foundation helps illustrate how colonialism was a driving force in Canadian foreign policy and how capitalism propelled these colonial behaviours. While the argument that Canada's foreign policy was intrinsically linked to colonialism and settler capitalism is the main argument of Shipley's work,

it is not the only argument that Shipley makes. Through a more subtle approach, he also argues that Canada's very nature as a nation-state was driven by the same principles as Canada's foreign policy: colonialism and settler capitalism.

Unfolding chronologically, the first section of *Canada in the World* immerses readers in the era of "Conquest and Colonialism," where the foundations of Canada's foreign policy were laid amidst the interactions between settlers and Indigenous peoples. The second section presents a tapestry of historical accounts, shedding light on Canadian involvement in various imperialist endeavours and its transformation into an imperial force during World War I. The last two sections, "Peacekeeping the Cold War" and "The New Canadian Imperialism," span 1945 to the fall of the Soviet Union and from the Gulf War to the rise of the far-right in Canada and scrutinize Canada's role as a "peacekeeper," intertwining narratives of Canadian support for American imperialism and colonial echoes of Canada's past. Throughout the book, Shipley asserts that since colonization began, colonialism has motivated key elements of Canadian foreign policy and that Canadian policy.

The first section argues that Canada's original foreign policy continued through the process of Western expansion in Canada before transitioning into assimilationist policies, cultural genocide, and the systemic dismantling of Indigenous cultural structures and institutions. The book describes how the government's early treaties and the reserve system were intended to quarantine Indigenous people from settler societies. However, within this analysis, Shipley does not provide an analysis of the capitalistic components of westward expansion or the Indian Residential School system. Where Shipley does provide a discussion that could support an argument about capitalism's impact on these histories, he chooses instead to continue the narrative of colonialism.

Shipley's analysis of settler population responses to active Indigenous resistance is significant in this section. He successfully argues that the reactions of fear, anger and counter-protesting are strongly rooted in Canada's colonial and imperialist nature stemming from its first foreign policy. Within this section, several Indigenous resistance movements such as Oka, Ipperwash, Idle No More, and Wet'suwet'en blockades are mentioned by Shipley, but he focuses primarily on non-Indigenous actors in his analysis (86–92). This lack of in-depth discussion omits critical discourses on Canada's history as it favours the actions of the governmental actors over Canada's varied and diverse voices.¹ However, given

the scope, magnitude, and intent of Shipley's work, expecting him to provide an in-depth analysis of each resistance movement from an Indigenous perspective would be unrealistic.

In the second section, Shipley highlights the involvement of Canadian citizens in various imperialist endeavours through multiple historical accounts, including William Stairs, Percy Girouard, and Walter T. Currie's actions in Africa (105–8). While acknowledging that the Canadian Government did not send Stairs, Girouard, or Currie to Africa, he maintains that the basis of Canadian foreign policy and its attitudes made their actions possible. In his description of Stairs, Girouard, and Currie, Shipley points their writings's focus on Africa as a savage, unclean, and uncivilized place that needed saving from themselves, which mirrored earlier commentary on Indigenous populations in Canada (105–8). This section boils down the actions and colonially-based attitudes and beliefs of these imperialist actors to being made "from the very mould of Canada" (107–8).

In the next section, Shipley advances his thesis through an analysis of Canada in World War I. He argues that Canadians ignored the war's imperialist nature and that the Canadian narrative around WWI, especially Vimy, encouraged nationalist sentiments that perpetuated imperialist notions about Canada's founding. Shipley's analysis proceeds chrono-

1. For an in-depth analysis of these resistance movements see Scott Rutherford, *Canada's Other Red Scare: Indigenous Protest and Colonial Encounters During the Global Sixties*, Rethinking Canada in the world 6 (Montreal, Kingston, London, Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020), Isabelle St. Amand, *Stories of Oka: Land, Film, and Literature* (University of Manitoba Press, 2018) and Ken Coates and Kenneth Coates, *#IdleNoMore: And the Remaking of Canada* (University of Regina Press, 2015).

logically into the interwar period, exploring the concepts of appeasement, and Canadian involvement in fascist activities. Shipley's argument here relies heavily on an imperial narrative that does not examine how Canadians outside the government felt about these issues; however, Shipley's comparison of multiple nations and world leaders provides strong evidence of Canada's fundamental nature as a settler-capitalist nation-state. While Shipley briefly acknowledges that countries were apprehensive of another global war, he dismisses the importance of this fear in relation to appeasement policies. He states that "[t]houghtful analysis...fails to confirm [fear of another war] was the primary motivation of Canada and the Western powers" (162). Continuing this argument, Shipley asserts that during the interwar period and into WWII, Canada's foreign policy was inherently imperialist and underwritten by white supremacy. Shipley supports his argument primarily by comparing the reactions of different nations to the rise of fascism with their reactions to the rise of the left during the same period.

Commenting on state-level Canadian imperialism, Shipley points to crimes committed by Canadian soldiers in the Second World War—including the rape of German women and the mistreatment of German prisoners of war—to illustrate the darker side of the common Canadian's complicity in nation-state imperialism. He also compares these actions to those taken by early settler colonists in Canada to highlight the similarities between Canada's early colonization and its later global interactions.

In Part III, "Peacekeeping the Cold War," Shipley focuses on Canada's role as a "peacekeeper" throughout the Cold War. Canada was involved in various events, such as the Vietnam War, the Korean War, the Suez Crisis, the creation of Israel, and the Contra Wars in Nicaragua. Shipley contends that while Canada primarily played a supportive role for the United States, Canada's assistance offered to American imperial efforts was congruent with Canadian colonial history. Shipley further asserts that Canada's role as a peacekeeper was colonial and imperialistic and that Canada's Cold War foreign policy was equivalent to its "first foreign policy" with Indigenous populations. In this section, Shipley successfully highlights the difference between the state and Canadians' popular opinions. He provides evidence of citizens' disillusionment with Canada's involvement in anti-communist wars while also highlighting many movements that opposed state militarism and the capitalist motivations behind these wars.

The final section of *Canada in the World* is Shipley's strongest work in this book. He provides strong evidence of Canada's colonial actions and capitalist motivations in these chapters. This section depicts the start of the twenty-first century as a time of cascading imperialist violence, including invasions, coups, and proxy wars that destroyed entire countries. Shipley uses examples from Canada's involvement in Afghanistan, Rwanda, Iraq, Haiti, Libya, Syria, Israel, Palestine, Honduras, and Yemen to illustrate how Canada has been in the middle of the twenty-first century's imperialist push. Shipley's analysis of Canada's

involvement in Afghanistan is a strong example of the chapter's argument. Shipley argues that the media portrayal of Afghan people was colonial in nature as it depicted all Afghans as either villainous Taliban, grateful recipients of Canadian help or hapless allies. Shipley successfully highlights the colonial nature of the Afghan war through a comparison with past (and present) Canadian depictions of Indigenous people as "savages" or "helpless and in need of saving." The colonial nature of contemporary Canadian foreign policy is examined further through the Justin Trudeau government. Shipley strongly focuses on Canada's investment in natural resources, low-wage labour, and the banking and finance sectors to illustrate the capitalistic nature of Canadian foreign policy. Shipley points to various neo-colonial and neo-imperialist policies and how Canadian companies are inherently linked to the first foreign policy of colonialism and settler capitalism.

Following an in-depth examination of these policies, Shipley once again turns his gaze inside the colonial borders of Canada to analyze the rise of the far-right in Canada and Canada's support for various far-right governments around the world. Shipley also scrutinizes non-state actors within Canada's far-right movement. Shipley demonstrates how capitalist and colonial ideologies fuel the movement, and his breakdown of the movement's militaristic nationalism is especially poignant. These last chapters effectively demonstrate a growing trend toward imperialism and neo-colonialism within Canadian foreign policy.

Overall, Shipley argues that the very fab-

ric of Canadian society is imperialist and racist and that this can only be changed through extensive changes to Canada's fundamental structure. Shipley approaches this book through the lens of creating a synthesis of historical approach and thought. It is important to note that due to this synthesis-based approach and the massive scope Shipley is heavily reliant on secondary sources. However, Shipley is aware of the shortcomings of drawing heavily on other scholars' works without adding significant primary source materials (10). He also does not disentangle or define the various forms of colonialism and imperialism and uses them synonymously when they are not, which at times can be distracting for the reader. Additionally, Shipley does not always tie his commentary and examples back to his thesis, which can leave the reader feeling untethered from his argument. Furthermore, in the third section, Shipley falls into a trap of engaging in leftist debates about Canadian and world history, which sidetracks his narrative from his main thesis. While these debates are interesting to examine, they do not add value to his work in this instance.

Despite these issues, Shipley effectively demonstrates that Canada's foreign policy was ruled by violence and imperialism. While not the entirety of Shipley's thesis, it provides a counter-history to the national narratives of conservative Canadian historiography and adds to the growing body of work on Canadian imperialism. The theoretical depth of analyzing settler-Indigenous relations in terms of foreign policy and extending this analysis in a comparison with later Canadian foreign

policies is beneficial for Canadian historians. Furthermore, by reframing the national narrative around colonial and imperial frameworks, Shipley provides a compelling analysis of imperialism in Canadian foreign policy that is a great addition to Canadian historiography.

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