

## *Canada 1919: A Nation Shaped by War* edited by Tim Cook and J.L. Granatstein

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diplomatic history of Ottawa's relations with Dublin, and with somewhat less emphasis on the Belfast or French-Canadian dimensions. It is, perhaps, an odd choice to use the Battle of Ridgeway on the cover of a book that had next to no focus on Fenianism, and Currie's description of the Jus-

tin Trudeau-Leo Varadkar era of relations as having been reduced to "photo-ops and selfies" (223) seems like an unnecessary political jab, but these are but trivial concerns in an otherwise excellent book.

James Cousins

## *Canada 1919*

### *A Nation Shaped by War*

Edited by Tim Cook and J.L. Granatstein

Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press, 2020. 324 pages. \$32.95 paperback. ISBN 9780774864084 (ubcpres.ca).

1919 was a year of hope and idealism in Canada but also of fear and upheaval. The fighting of the First World War had ended, peace treaties were being negotiated, and soldiers began the process of repatriation. Canadians on the home front anxiously awaited the return of their loved ones and grieved for those who did not come home. Politicians sought to assert Canada's role on the world stage, and the military struggled to define itself in a peacetime environment. Many veterans, particularly those from Indigenous communities and ex-nursing sisters, envisaged a better world but often found themselves disillusioned with the Canada they returned to. The 1918-19 influenza pandemic, the Winnipeg General Strike, and an economic downturn also contributed to the uncertainty.

*Canada 1919: A Nation Shaped by War*

sets its sights on this turbulent year. While focusing on a single year might appear restrictive, the editors and authors of *Canada 1919* demonstrate how that single year is a compelling lens through which to view the First World War's enduring effects on Canada. 1919—a year in which the war was not quite over, and the peace had not quite started—serves as a springboard for exam-

ining wider issues. Nineteen chapters span topics from the jubilant reception in Quebec City and Montreal of the 22nd Battalion (canadien-français) to children's responses to the difficult readjustments brought about by the end of the war, and from the development (or lack thereof) of Canada's post-war armed forces to the relationship between war art and national art.

The collection's overarching question—a common one in scholar-



ship of the First World War—is whether the war served as an engine of change. The editors, Tim Cook and J.L. Granatstein, argue that ultimately yes, Canada was “a country shaped by war, a nation that could never be the same as it had been before 1914” (11). The chapters themselves demonstrate, however, that change was uneven.

In the world of politics, the war brought about significant changes for Canada. As outlined by Norman Hillmer, Canada took steps towards a greater role in its own foreign affairs and international recognition. Domestic politics were altered, as J.L. Granatstein shows, as the war contributed to the decline of the national two-party system and the development of third parties such as the Progressive Party. Jeff Keshen describes the rise and fall of federal intervention in the lives of Canadians.

Social change was more inconsistent. Many veterans were disappointed and disgruntled; they had fought for a better world but they returned to Canada to labour unrest, a devastating pandemic, and lacklustre reintegration plans. The post-war world's lack of change was especially true for veterans from minority groups. Brian R. MacDowall and Mélanie Morin-Pelletier analyze Indigenous and nurse veterans respectively and find that equality earned during the war was lost upon these veterans' return to Canada.

While change may have been variable, the editors and authors agree that the First World War left a lasting impact on Canada. The war touched many aspects of life and the chapters reflect this by covering several fields such as diplomatic, medical, military, political, and social history. The authors use sources ranging from works of art, newspapers, and oral history interviews to military memoranda, pension files, and government policy documents. The collection takes a broad view of Canada, with most chapters

examining the country as a whole. More regional case studies, such as Serge Durflinger's chapter on the 22nd Battalion in Quebec, would have been an interesting addition to see if there was regional variation in the war's effects. Another avenue that could have been further explored is the “average” civilian experience, like in Kristine Alexander's excellent chapter, since most of the chapters focus on the federal government or veterans. However, these are minor critiques as this is an ambitious collection that covers many aspects of the transition from war to peace. As well, the collection's examination of veterans is one of its strengths as scholarship on veterans is still rather limited in Canada and so it is a valuable addition to that growing field. MacDowall and Morin-Pelletier also rightly remind us that veterans were not only Anglo-Canadian men.

The key contribution of this edited collection, which also serves as somewhat of a call to action, is highlighted in Kristine Alexander's chapter on Canadian youth in 1919:

Like the historiography of the war more generally, these [previous] studies of the children's war on the Canadian home front take the signing of the Armistice in November 1918 as their end point—an approach to periodization that obscures the fact that the transition from wartime to peacetime, at home and on the front lines, was not a singular event. Instead, military, social, cultural, and psychological demobilization—in Canada and across the world—was a slow, piecemeal, and difficult process (177).

The 1918 Armistice was not a clear-cut end point after which “normal life” immediately resumed for all involved. The transition from war to peace was messy and complicated, and historians of the First World War and its aftermath must contend with this, as the authors of this collection do. *Canada 1919* effectively demonstrates the complexity of 1919 itself as well as the years

that preceded and followed it, identifying changes and continuities. I recommend this edited collection to anyone who wants to understand the immediate and long-lasting legacies—both positive and negative—of

the First World War on Canada.

Brittany C. Dunn, PhD Candidate  
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### *Murder on the Inside*

#### *The True Story of the Deadly Riot at Kingston Penitentiary*

by Catherine Fogarty

Windsor, ON: Biblioasis, 2021. Pp. 344. \$24.95. ISBN 1771964014. (Biblioasis.com)

In *Murder on the Inside: The True Story of the Deadly Riot at Kingston Penitentiary*, Catherine Fogarty presents the events and aftermath of the 1971 Kingston Penitentiary (KP) riot—one of the worst in Canadian history—with a true crime gloss. Fogarty is a self-described “storyteller,” television producer, podcaster, and author with a background in social work and she holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of King’s College. Fogarty’s approach makes for a compelling narrative and an extremely readable book that is aimed at a popular audience. *Murder on the Inside* will particularly appeal to those with an interest in Canadian crime and corrections, although the book also offers some interesting insights into Canadian politics and policy in the early 1970s.

Unfortunately, the book’s emphasis on narrative contributes to some of its most significant shortcomings as Fogarty’s literary flourishes sometimes come at the expense of factual precision. While, on the whole, the book attempts to remain sympathetic to its main protagonists—prisoners, guards, journalists, and administrators—at times Fogarty indulges in sensationalism. In one example, Fogarty recounts a rumour that two rioters imprisoned for murder had “quartered” their victim by tying chains to his legs and driving their motorcycles in opposite directions (p. 75). This is certainly a shocking

detail that potentially speaks to the character of these particular rioters—however the veracity of this rumour is left unexplored.

The book largely relies on newspaper and magazine articles, along with government documents, for source material. Fogarty’s most significant contribution is in a number of original interviews with guards, including one who had been held hostage, and prisoners who had lived through the riot. These interviews allow for a rich chronicling of events; however, the value of the interviews is somewhat diminished by the book’s sparse citations, which makes it at times difficult to know what source material is being drawn upon. Some information obtained from interviews is cited very generally, but a large amount of the book’s narrative—which is presumably based on interviews and court testimony—is not cited at all. While this undoubtedly contributes to the book’s readability, it has the effect of implying a more objective account of events than is likely warranted.

While not an academic book, the narrative would also have benefited from some engagement with the scholarly literature on Canadian prison riots. This is especially important because some of this work has had considerable influence on the Correctional Service of Canada. For example, two academic analyses of the 1971 KP riot, both by