

BOOK REVIEW – *CLAWS OF THE PANDA*

JONATHAN MANTHORPE, *CLAWS OF THE PANDA: BEIJING'S CAMPAIGN OF INFLUENCE AND INTIMIDATION IN CANADA*. TORONTO: CORMORANT BOOKS: 2019

Claws of the Panda by veteran foreign correspondent Jonathan Manthorpe establishes the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) sophisticated espionage efforts in infiltrating Canada's political, commercial, media, and academic sectors, as well as the utility of China's diaspora in doing so (6; 167). To begin, a historical context of Sino-Canadian relations is established by discussing the impact of Canadian missionary efforts in China, arguing missionary kin as crucial in establishing diplomacy between the CCP and Canada. From there, Manthorpe shifts towards thorough case study analysis regarding infiltration allegations of CCP influence into Canada's economic, information and academic sectors. Manthorpe then analyses examples of CCP transnational espionage and money laundering tactics masquerading as cultural and economic exchanges, which he argues occur via the exploitation of Canada's immigration and foreign investment legislation. The book concludes by emphasizing the negligence of Canada's provincial and federal political class in acknowledging subversion, and points to incompatible ideologies that he argues make mutually beneficial Sino-Canadian diplomacy unattainable (223).

Manthorpe's underlying thesis is that Canada needs to strongly consider what type of relationship it wants with China in the developing world order, where Canada has become excessively dependent on China as an emergent global power who is alleged to be actively undermining

Canadian democratic values (8; 209-10; 225). Early on, he sets out to create a timeline of Sino-Canadian diplomacy to provide a historical foundation for this stance by weaving information from a scatter of literature across the Canadian Political History field. Accompanying this selective historical context are stories from diplomat friends of his (108; 128), which facilitate the insertion of his own poignant conclusions about the circumstances he deems responsible for Canada's vulnerabilities to foreign infiltration. This creates a biased and anecdotal historical account, which needs to be considered when understanding its value as a historical text.

However, the book is likely designed more as cautionary text, which becomes obvious as Manthorpe shifts his attention from historical analysis to case study analysis. Through this shift, Manthorpe meticulously and coherently presents the basis evidence supporting his thesis: the sinister nature in which the CCP manipulates its diaspora in Canada to establish a benign international reputation (48; 169); and Canada's insouciance in challenging CCP infiltration efforts (141). Manthorpe's strengths as a journalist are showcased here as he harmoniously compiles evidence from: expert testimonial, analytical data, media and executive reports, and policy framework to provide an impactful evaluation of the immigration and foreign investment policies facilitating foreign influence into Canada (141-5).

By celebrating the onus of the Canadian media sector in exposing governance complacency regarding instances of information manipulation by the CCP directed at its diaspora, he establishes a scenario of transnational tension between a cluster of organizations and institutions who are vying for influence via Canadian media, economic and academic mechanisms. And while the message of this book may be directed at Canada's policy makers, his ability to coherently organize his arguments make this book pertinent to Canadians whose democratic values include notions of holding power to account.

To conclude, considering Manthorpe's focus is at the macro-level, he seldom establishes China's diaspora as non-monolithic (252). It is troublesome to think that a reader may walk away from this book developing or intensifying a distrust towards a complex and vibrant part of the diasporic community in Canada. Nonetheless, his stance that the call for network reform at the political level as coming from the work of Canadian journalists in addressing the discriminatory dissemination of information by the CCP is a salient addition to the analysis of Sino-Canadian cultural and economic exchange initiatives. It is, however, to the reader's discretion in determining if *Claws of the Panda* should motivate prejudice, or to serve as one piece in the complex understanding of Sino-Canadian relations.