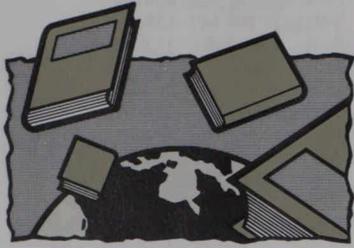


## REVIEWS



---

### **Shadow of Heaven: The Life of Lester Pearson, Volume One: 1897–1948** John English

*Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989,  
414 pp., \$28.95 cloth*

---

■ For most readers of this journal, Lester Pearson is a familiar figure. Almost everyone knows something, and many know a lot, about his life and accomplishments, especially during his years of public prominence, the quarter century after World War Two. *Shadow of Heaven* is concerned to reconstruct and interpret his less public first fifty years. It is very much a study of a man and his times. John English not only explains Pearson's unfolding character and attitudes, from youth to middle age; he also writes, sensitively and evocatively, of Pearson's various milieus (his turn-of-the-century Methodist home, the University of Toronto in the 1920s, wartime London and Washington). And he suggests as well some of the circumstances and experiences that especially influenced Pearson's conduct, outlook, and career.

This is a readable and engaging biography. It is sympathetic and admiring but not uncritical or effusive. It gives a good sense of Pearson's concrete, lived experience, including the fortuitous elements, and a few rough passages (actually, very few). The phases of his life are well-distinguished, including his coming of age in World War One and his transition in the late 1920s from a teacher of history to a shaper of foreign policy. Pearson was almost constantly on the go, seeing the world, playing sports, meeting people, moving from here to

there. Between 1915 and 1946 he was almost as often abroad as at home. As English makes clear, Pearson's wife, Maryon, was not always a beneficiary of her husband's public successes.

*Shadow of Heaven* sheds light on the logic of Pearson's move from diplomacy to party politics. He possessed many of the qualities of a good politician and had refined these qualities over thirty years, some of them spent at or near the centre stage of world affairs (notably in the 1940s). English, in comparing Pearson and Mackenzie King, writes that "Both men scanned the surface with political antennae of exquisite sensitivity, and their feelings largely shaped their deeds." A feel for the surface – this was a precondition for political success. English likens Pearson to "a prospector of extraordinary skill and intuition." He was observant, resourceful, quick-witted, and wide-ranging. And he was persistently, and usually cheerfully, in search of usable political deposits, grounds for accommodation, practical opportunities, and better maps to the future.

This is an admirable book – a book that is likely to be enjoyed by a wide readership.

– Robert Malcolmson

*Mr. Malcolmson is a Professor of History at Queen's University in Kingston.*

---

### **The Defence of Canada: In the Arms of the Empire, 1760–1939** Gwynne Dyer and Tina Viljoen

*Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990,  
375 pp., \$34.95 cloth*

---

■ This is the first of a two-book work, based on the controversial NFB/CBC TV series of the same name, broadcast in 1986. A lot of potential readers are no doubt

already prepared to love or hate this volume, depending upon how they feel about Canadian neutrality, a cause with which, especially thanks to the television series, the Dyer name is now closely associated.

Yet let us not get all worked up just yet, one way or the other. NATO supporters and Dyer's other ideological adversaries should save their real ire for the second volume, which will pick up with events in the summer of 1939 and eventually deal with NATO issues. Just about everyone interested in Canadian history, regardless of opinion on contemporary Canadian defence commitments, can welcome this first volume as a popular, well-written, often intriguing and sometimes moving survey of the roles military force and the threat of military force have played in the development of Canada from the fall of New France until the eve of the Second World War.

To be sure, this first volume is intended to set up the second. Dyer and Viljoen seem never to have encountered an alliance they have liked. And this certainly includes the British Empire. They underline that by the end of the 19th century the British could not be counted on, if necessary, to defend Canada against the US, although the British government took pains to conceal this from Ottawa. Yet, "London was able to inveigle Canada into a series of imperial wars that were none of Canada's concern, but in which millions of Canadians endured great hardship and a hundred thousand were killed, by playing on the gullibility of English Canadians who were blinded by their sentimental attachment to Britain."

Understandably then, Dyer and Viljoen are sympathetic to French Canada's historic resistance to overseas imperial commitments.

One of the book's greatest strengths is this openness to French Canada. The country's military history is not described as an English Canadian affair into which French Canadians periodically attempted to throw monkey-wrenches. Dyer and Viljoen are particularly effective in quoting both English Canadian and French Canadian historical sources.

The chief conclusions Dyer and Viljoen draw are twofold. Canada was created and has been shaped by European military struggles. Second – and to the authors' regret – participation in the British Empire conditioned Canadians to see their security frontier as lying overseas: "The old strategic and psychological equation of dependence on Britain to protect us from American invasion ... lasted just long enough to deliver us smoothly into our new obsession with playing a role in the European balance of power." This "new obsession" is to be the main subject of the second volume.

– Joseph T. Jockel

*Mr. Jockel is with the Canadian Studies Program at St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York.*

---

### **Canada's Department of External Affairs, Volume I, The Early Years, 1909–1946** John Hilliker

*Montreal and Kingston: The Institute of Public Administration of Canada, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990,  
406 pp., \$45 cloth, \$19.95 paper*

(French translation:  
*Le ministère des Affaires extérieures du Canada, 1909–1946, Les presses de l'Université Laval.*)

■ This book is one of the Canadian Public Administration Series sponsored by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada. Although the emphasis throughout the book is on the evolution of the