

of whether the balance between the threat of torture to the individual, and the threat to national security had been balanced correctly is one that the courts “are content to defer to the Minister her or himself.” With reference to this and other cases, Diab carefully demonstrates that since 9/11, in cases where national security is perceived to be under threat, the Canadian courts have facilitated a situation in which the rights of the individual are trumped by national security considerations.

The final aspect of Diab’s analysis concerns the erosion of accountability and transparency of policing practices that have emerged, again under the banner of protecting national security. This situation, he shows, has emerged in part because the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) now has a much greater role in issues pertaining to national security, which has involved increases in the level of intelligence gathering by the police. As a result, appeals and complaints against policing practices have frequently been held in secret, which undermines claims that policing practices are fully accountable to the public. With reference to specific cases, especially the Arar review, he shows that a further balancing act is being conducted, whereby transparency, openness, and full disclosure are deemed important, but that they are frequently balanced with the need to protect national secrets. Diab persuasively argues that any measures aimed at improving reviews of RCMP activities are undermined since secrecy continues to shroud many of its activities.

Throughout, Diab laments the indefinite nature of the changes to counter-terror legislation in Canada, and contrasts this with the case of the UK, where certain counter-terror measures were introduced for a limited period only. Yet many of the curtailments of civil liberties that suspects were subjected to in Canada

were also meted out on dozens of terror suspects in the UK. A focused comparison of the commonalities between these practices in various liberal democratic states, with a view to assessing the degree to which parliamentarians, judiciaries, and police forces shared ideas about counter-terror measures would make for a fascinating study, building on the work undertaken by the author here.

Diab’s analysis leads him to the conclusion that the developments in counter-terror legislation and judicial and policing practices call into question the assumed universality of the presumption of innocence, as well as the notion that all subjects are equal under the law, since terror suspects are afforded far fewer rights than ordinary suspected criminals. They have also contributed, he argues, to the reproduction of social stereotypes and inequalities. These conclusions are certainly sustained by the preceding analysis, and justify his prescriptions that considerable shifts in attitude are necessary, both at the parliamentary and judicial level, as well as among the public. This, he maintains, can only be possible through better informing the public of the implications of the counter-terror legislation and policing practices for the sustainability of essential democratic values. In this regard, his work constitutes an important and necessary contribution to public debate.

RUTH BLAKELEY

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**Marc Edge, *Asper Nation: Canada’s Most Dangerous Media Company* (Vancouver: New Star Books 2007)**

It’s THE 2004 federal election, and then-Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper is late for a campaign event in Hamilton. Traffic on the 401 is busy enough to tempt even a Prius driver to

road rage. But the party faithful need not worry: the CanWest Global corporate helicopter is available, and Canada's future prime minister will be transported to his appearance courtesy of the country's largest media conglomerate.

CanWest Global, of course, is the Canadian media empire that is the nation's largest publisher of daily newspapers, including flagship *The National Post*, and owns the Global and E! television networks, the Alliance Atlantis stable of specialty channels, the Canada.com Internet portal, and television and radio interests in Australia and Turkey. It has also been, since the late, litigious, and likable Manitoba tax lawyer, journalist, and provincial politician Israel "Izzy" Asper bought a second-hand US TV station and established CKND in 1975, the very model of a Canadian media company at its most concentrated and converged.

The Harper-in-a-helicopter scene from Marc Edge's book, *Asper Nation: Canada's Most Dangerous Media Company*, is metaphor for CanWest Global's complex identity as until recently a very successful corporation, while at the same time a vehicle for the Asper family's neo-liberal campaigns against the welfare state and the centre-left Canadian consensus. Never patient with the Fourth Estate convention that even private media companies are a public trust, CanWest Global has severely tested customary principles relating to a newsroom's independence from the owner, the ideological diversity of reportage and opinion, and CRTC regulations limiting foreign ownership. It has acted on the potential always available to a media company – to get rich *and* advance the views of its owners – but generally curbed by the tradition of editorial autonomy.

Through its corporate behaviour, we get a glimpse of an alternative universe where there was no Friends of Canadian

Broadcasting or *Tyee*, no Davey, Kent, or Lincoln commissions, no CBC and no *Adbusters*. Conrad Black's Hollinger was no less inhibited in using its print properties to advocate philosophical and policy views, but its presence was limited to newspapers and its tenure in Canada comparatively brief. CanWest Global, for all Black's grandiloquence, has been a more influential voice in the conservative movement. Outside of the Conservative Party itself, CanWest Global is the major point of access for conservative thought to the country's consciousness, with editorial directives that reconcile western Canadian populism with corporate desiderata.

A former *Vancouver Province* journalist and now communications professor at Sam Houston University in Texas, Edge provides the most honest and complete account yet of CanWest Global's rise. *Asper Nation* is exceptional in demonstrating that concern about CanWest Global's reach ought to go beyond the usual anxiety about media concentration. Izzy's son David Asper, one of the three Asper children now running the company, was a director and patron of the right-wing Fraser Institute, and the company sought to bring Fox News to Canada; CanWest Global contributions to Canadian journalism schools and media research consortia have arguably muted criticism of the company there; and columnists and career journalists as prominent as past British Columbia Liberal leader Gordon Gibson and former Ottawa Citizen publisher Russell Mills have been fired for failure to conform to editorial policy. Such policy, in a firm where the family is the majority shareholder, typically reflects the Aspers' passionate opinions about western alienation, the state of Israel, and what Izzy called the "free ride society."

CanWest Global is a communication professor's dream. The company's more notorious decisions, such as writing national editorials for its papers from head office, airing cheap American programs on its networks to the point of being dubbed the "Love Boat Network," and a pattern of cross-ownership that make it western Canada's own media monopoly, dramatize abstract issues that are stock villains in media studies courses: convergence, concentration, cultural imperialism. One of the welcome features of Edge's treatise that elevates it beyond books about media for the general reader are the several chapters that bring themes relevant to CanWest Global, such as media power and bias, into direct contact with the theoretical literature on these issues. Commenting on the company's moves as reflected through research into propaganda and media influence allows Edge to transcend the usual well-meaning analytical clichés about influence, ownership, and ideology. The book itself is a superior example of what Edge calls "critical corporate media history," a genre we need more of.

Since the book's publication in 2007, the company has had a terrible 2008–9 recession. Its debt is over \$3.5 billion, its shares are trading at penny stock levels, its ad revenues are declining, and it's just announced the sale of its share of the American magazine *The New Republic*. It has also sought buyers for several of its secondary E! network stations, and its audiences are leaving broadcast television for cable, specialty channels, and the Internet. Some commentators suggest that the company may have to be sold or seek bankruptcy protection.

However, CanWest Global's troubles are not unique to it. Canadian media executives have been quoted recently as saying the business model of broadcast TV is "broken." In this time of "credit crunch,"

the already existing vulnerability of media companies that spent big to maximize share when the trends were toward smaller audiences and specialized media is made visible and worsened. The survival of Canadian media arguably lies in rejecting convergence – expensive, clumsy, and built to scale for large audiences that no longer exist – and seeking transformation instead. The wholesale conversion of analog to a digital television system in Canada in 2011 gives a technological incentive to this change, and the means to address a more fragmented public with rich and diverse content, through new hybrid and mobile media forms, and with an eye to social media's interactive appeal to the Facebook generation.

Edge, the author of a previous history of the Pacific Press, and an admitted "disillusioned former journalist," has written this book almost exclusively using published material from news accounts, government commissions, and academic scholarship. The absence of interviews doesn't reduce its value or appeal, but it does limit Edge's ability to get some of the more vivid CanWest personalities off the page. Notably, the sensibility and genius of Izzy Asper – whose views live on in CanWest papers like the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Calgary Herald* – is missing here. Those wanting a closer look at Asper and a book with more insider texture might read Peter C. Newman's 2008 authorized biography of Asper, *Izzy*.

The best kind of book is one that identifies a gap in the research literature, then fills that gap convincingly. *Asper Nation* does just that. Edge addresses a comment by Peter Desbarats, a journalistic icon, that Canadians suffer a shortage of "historical perspective and reliable data" that weakens debate about media here. Edge's fine book, with its closely argued historical analysis, enlightened with media theory, should encourage the creation of

more such research for Canadian scholars and citizens. Such perspective beats a helicopter ride over Toronto traffic, no matter the view up there.

DAVID BLACK

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**Donald Wright, *The Professionalization of History in English Canada*** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2005)

IN *THE PROFESSIONALIZATION of History in English Canada*, Donald Wright recounts the story of how the historical profession gained many of the trappings we recognize today: the advent of Canadian specialists in university history departments, the founding of the Canadian Historical Association and the Canadian Historical Review, and the necessity to complete elaborate training processes in graduate schools to practise as a historian in universities. Yet Wright goes far beyond a progressive “road to here” narrative of professionalization. His story asks other important questions such as who was excluded in this process. What have been the social consequences of professionalization and, when compared to other professions, how successful was the professionalization of history? Wright’s answers are smoothly written, at times presenting thoughtful comparative analyses and intriguing paradoxes that bring us closer to understanding what was at stake in the making of the historical profession in Canada.

The story begins in the 1880s and 1890s when the first university appointments of historians took place. At that time, men and women writing history had day jobs. Wright argues that the advent of university-based historians was not a story of natural progress towards a more accurate discipline. Amateur historians evaluated primary evidence, were sceptical and sought to present truths,

whether it was through historical fiction, museums collections, or works of history. They were not much different from the first professional historians at Acadia, University of Toronto, or McGill. And amateurs continued to play influential roles in the Canadian historical profession throughout the period studied here. Indeed Wright insightfully points out that university-based historians were never as successful in monopolizing their profession as other groups like medical doctors or dentists and tensions between amateur and university-based historians continue to today, frequently replaying the same issues.

That said, the boundary between amateur and professional became clearer after World War I. Wright situates these changes as part of the larger turn in English-Canadian society from a faith in the Social Gospel to a belief in the social sciences. While this did not mean that they rejected their Protestant beliefs (following Michael Gauvreau), it did mean that historians were expected to do primary research on limited subjects using specialized methodologies. This apprenticeship involved formal graduate training with language requirements, courses in methodology, and oral and written exams – to be up to the standards, less of Oxbridge like the pre-war generation, but more like German-influenced American history departments. Increasingly those who wanted to have careers in history felt it necessary to have a doctorate. Many promising Canadian history students went to the US or England to do their graduate work, though numerous Canadian universities established Masters and PhD programs to stem the exodus. The graduate school and the National Archives of Canada became important spaces of socialization for historians where social bonds were created and a growing sense of the discipline was fostered.

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