H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Bill Graham. *The Call of the World: A Political Memoir.* C. D. Howe Series in Canadian Political History. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016. 456 pp. $39.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-7748-9000-7.

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Published on H-Canada (March, 2017)

Commissioned by Corey Slumkoski (Mount Saint Vincent University)

Bill Graham has had a wonderful life. Born on the eve of the Second World War, he grew up wealthy and privileged in a large, blended family of fifteen children, who ranged in age from their early twenties on down. Shuttled between extended family in Toronto and Vancouver, school, and summer camps, he rarely saw his jet-setting and sociable parents. Yet childhood in the Graham household was clearly an affectionate affair, populated by a constant array of distinguished visitors, including entertainers Louis Armstrong and Maureen Forester, journalist Bruce Hutchinson, and physicist Homi Bhabha. “A bit bizarre,” writes Graham, “but fun bizarre” (p. 13). The Dickensian quality of his youth is confirmed in spades as the unusual circumstances of his birth and parentage are skillfully revealed.

Graham did not much like Upper Canada College, where he boarded in the 1950s—“I at least survived,” he grimly remarks (p. 14)—though he accepted its values, especially the emphasis it placed on public duty. He was much happier at the University of Toronto’s Trinity College, where he thrived amid the overlapping political, economic, and social networks of Canada’s small elite. After completing a University of Toronto law degree and articling with Faskin and company, he left Toronto in 1966 for the Université de Paris, where he completed a French-language doctorate in law, marking him out as an unusually cosmopolitan lawyer. His thesis, comparing Canada’s anti-trust laws with the European Economic Community’s, helped open his eyes to the inexorable integration of domestic and international law, a logical result of accelerating postwar globalization.

Globalization, and the accompanying transformation of international law from a minor legal specialization into a cornerstone of world trade, served Graham well. He spent his early career, first in Paris and then in Toronto, on cases that were the very manifestation of the process of working out the legal implications of globalization for businesses across Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. His account of his international legal work in the mid-1970s is more than memoir; it is a contribution to the intellectual history of globalization. Indeed, by 1980, as the new global order dawned, Graham’s bilingual legal expertise was in high demand, leading to simultaneous appointments teaching international law at the universities of Toronto, Montreal, and McGill.

Globalization also marked Graham’s parliamentary career. The bilingual anglophone cut his political teeth in the 1970s on the margins of the endless national debates over Quebec’s place in Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s bicultural nation. He served as co-counsel for the Commission of In-

quiry into Bilingual Air Traffic Services in Quebec, as an advisor on the use of French in Ontario courts, and with the federalist campaign during the 1980 Quebec referendum. A run for parliament was inevitable.

After defeats in the 1984 and 1988 federal elections, Graham won election in 1993 as the Liberal member of Parliament (MP) for Rosedale (later renamed Toronto Center), the vast cosmopolitan riding that swept down from tony Rosedale to gritty Regent's Park, embracing the entire east side of downtown Toronto. A contented and hard-working backbencher, Graham carved a niche for himself as chair of the House of Commons standing committee on foreign affairs and international trade (SCFAIT). While Graham is very good at recording the rhythms of daily life for the contemporary MP, in this part of the memoir he also argues for the value of committee work and track-two parliamentary diplomacy.

Committee travel is doubtless broadening, and members surely do some useful work in defining and popularizing issues. And, as Graham shows in his accounts of his work on Liberal International and the Canada AIDS Russia Project, parliamentary diplomacy may even do some good. Yet Graham's claims are much more ambitious. He decries the popular street protests of the 1990s against such engines of globalization as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Trade Organization (WTO), insisting that elected representatives, perhaps working through inter-parliamentary associations, can solve the democratic deficit that emerged as the unanswerable imperatives of globalization outstripped the capacity of domestic democratic institutions to respond. The angry populism that surged after the 2008 financial crisis, "Brexit," and the election of Donald Trump in November 2016 suggest just how futile a strategy this was.

The best parts of the book deal with Graham's tenure as foreign and defense minister in the governments of prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin. Appointed foreign minister in January 2002, Graham writes engagingly of the techniques of contemporary diplomacy, including the relentless calendar of G-7, G-20, and UN meetings, with their rushed "bilats" and "pull-asides." A shrewd yet self-aware observer, he pokes gentle fun at the absurd protocol and social rituals involved in moving ministers, prime ministers, and presidents across the globe, never losing sight of the truth that all politics, even at this exalted level, are personal and local. Indeed, he makes this point in a fine discussion of the domestic pressures on Canadian policy in the Middle East, aptly illustrated with an account of his first speech on the subject and the brutal media scrum that followed.

The heart of his foreign policy recollections are in a long chapter tracing the efforts of the Chrétien government to respond to US President George W. Bush's march to war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. While the decision was essentially political, balancing domestic opposition to the war against potential US retaliation, Graham makes a good case for considering the importance of international law as a vital factor shaping Canada's decision not to participate. The memoir judiciously traces the competition between Canadian values and interests against the backdrop of the US campaign for action in late 2002 and early 2003, the pressures on the government from business and policy wonks to back the United States, and popular demands to reject Bush's war. Graham's account culminates in the last-ditch efforts of Canada's UN ambassador, Paul Heinbecker, to align American behavior with accepted international legal principles. When this failed, it was simply impossible for Canada to back Washington.

Graham, who became Martin's defense minister in December 2003, tackles the war in Afghanistan in some detail as well. He does his best to find grounds for encouragement in this tragic venture, though the results are slender.

Canada acted in accordance with allied needs and international law, he argues, gamely pointing out that NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) helped arrange early provincial and national democratic elections. But success fled early. Canada was ignorant of the region, Graham notes, and its policymakers underestimated the "scale, intensity, and duration of the fighting" (p. 384).

This was a new kind of warfare, a "3D War" that was supposed to combine defense, development aid, and diplomacy into a potent tool for modern nation building. But the Canadian mission in Kandahar Province quickly bogged down. As the Canadian International Development Agency and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade bickered over aid disbursements, security displaced development and diplomacy as the mission's overarching concern.

For Graham, who is an honest if not always an unflinching critic of government policy, the war went from bad to worse. He traces the sorry story of Canada's Taliban prisoners, who were turned over to the Afghan national government, which was unable or unwilling to safeguard their rights, despite Canadian efforts that fell short of the standards set by their allies. "In retrospect," the defense minister concludes, "we were all naïve to believe that the Afghan system could handle the prisoners" (p. 397). Naïve? There was trouble too along the porous border with Pakistan, where besieged Taliban fighters fled into relative safety. Here too, Graham's conclusion is weak. "The bitter truth was that we had undertaken a 3D operation in a political environment involving regional players whose motives we couldn't rely on and over whose conduct we had little influence" (p. 400). This too was perhaps foreseeable.

One theme in Graham's ministerial recollections is especially worrying. The former minister was well served by his immediate staff and closest advisors, but he left office deeply skeptical of the officials he encountered and their bureaucratic processes. He chaffs at their carefully scripted speeches and talking points that preclude, in his view, genuine dialogue and the exercise of ministerial judgment. Advice from the public service was often weak and ill informed, he argues, arriving "full of ambiguities" (p. 326). As the government thrashed out its position in the run-up to the Iraqi war, Graham found officials running detailed policy proposals by an unsuspecting and sometimes uninformed prime minister, locking in his approval. "So they misled the boss," he fumed angrily in his diary, "and presented it as ***fait accompli*** to us!" (p. 302).

Well written, and leavened with ample doses of humor and insight, ***The Call of the World*** is above all a frank and compelling account of one policymaker's efforts to reconcile our highest legal and human rights ideals with the real world. However imperfect, it's a record worth celebrating.

Citation: Greg Donaghy. Review of Bill Graham. *The Call of the World: A Political Memoir.* H-Canada, H-Net Reviews. March, 2017.

URL: https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=48985