

2016

H-Diplo

H-Diplo Roundtable Review

Volume XVII, No. 18 (2016)

4 April 2016

Roundtable Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse

Roundtable and Web Production Editor: George Fujii

Introduction by Francine McKenzie

Greg Donaghy. *Grit: The Life and Politics of Paul Martin Sr.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2015. ISBN: 9780774829113 (hardcover, \$39.95).

URL: <http://www.tiny.cc/Roundtable-XVII-18>

Contents

Introduction by Francine McKenzie, University of Western Ontario	2
Review by Petra Dolata, University of Calgary	5
Review by Patrick James, University of Southern California.....	8
Review by John Nethercote, Canberra Campus, Australian Catholic University	12
Review by Kim Richard Nossal, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario	16
Author's Response by Greg Donaghy, Head of the Historical Section, Global Affairs Canada	19

© **2016 The Authors.**

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 United States License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

Introduction by Francine McKenzie, University of Western Ontario

Paul Martin Sr. was a career politician. He was Canada's Minister of National Health and Welfare (1947-1957), Secretary of State for External Affairs (1963-1968), government leader in the Senate (1968-1974) and finally High Commissioner to London (1974-1979). Over his forty-year career, Martin had many accomplishments and made enduring contributions to Canada in the areas of social and foreign policy. Although Canadian political biographers typically choose to write about prime ministers, not cabinet ministers, the four reviewers of *Grit* all agree that Paul Martin Sr. is a worthy subject. According to John Nethercote, this is because he was "one of the big beasts in the post-war generation of Liberal politics in Canada;" Petra Dolata believes his biography is useful precisely because he was not a prime minister. The reviewers also agree that Donaghy is a skillful biographer. A worthy subject and a skilled historian make for an excellent biography.

Kim Nossal and Patrick James laud *Grit*. Nossal calls it a "sensitive biography;" James describes it as "exceptional" and gripping. The reviewers agree that Donaghy has avoided the common pitfall of biographers: this is not a one-sided account that only celebrates Martin's career and achievements. As Nethercote put it, if this biography "is not quite a case of warts and all, there are nevertheless plenty of wrinkles." An entirely celebratory biography of Martin would in fact be impossible because Martin never attained his ultimate goal: to lead the Liberal party and become Prime Minister. Unfulfilled ambition is a theme that runs through *Grit* and it adds, as Nossal observes, an element of sadness to the study. According to Nossal, Martin's long and successful career "magnified that sense of failure." Donaghy closely chronicles Martin's relentless drive to achieve political success. His efforts were rewarded with nine consecutive elections to parliament. Ambition motivated him, but it also held him back. His political colleagues never entirely trusted or respected him. James suggests that the importance Donaghy attaches to ambition could be reinforced by considering Martin's authoritarianism, by which he means the value that Martin attached to 'order and stability.' According to James, this authoritarian tendency led to decisions on foreign policy questions that showed poor judgement and alienated Martin from other Liberals and public opinion. I am not convinced that ambition plus authoritarianism explain Martin's successes and shortcomings, although they might shed light on some questionable foreign policy decisions. In the author's response, Donaghy thoughtfully explains why authoritarianism is not an apt term for describing Martin's appreciation for "order and stability." In addition to ambition, Donaghy explores various attributes – Catholic, liberal, Franco-Ontario, outsider, progressive, internationalist, idealist – that defined Martin as a person and politician.

The reviewers agree that Martin was a 'retail politician' and they praise Donaghy's efforts to explain his involvement in his constituency. Pounding the pavement, looking after the interests of constituents, and remaining connected to his community might make for less exciting reading than the high-stakes political battles that Martin waged – such as over health care policy or the war in Vietnam – but it is endlessly interesting. Though Martin was a lifelong politician, Donaghy's study makes clear that he cannot be reduced to a one-dimensional self-interested politician simply seeking re-election; he was also motivated by a deep sense of duty. Nossal is right to emphasize (as Donaghy does) that Martin understood politics to be a vocation. Overall, the reviewers find Donaghy's "nuanced and complex picture" of Martin to be convincing and complete.

There is slight disagreement amongst the reviewers about the effectiveness with which Donaghy exploits the possibilities of the biographical genre. Nethercote gives Donaghy high marks for including all facets of Martin's life: in *Grit* we see Martin as "the whole man, the public man, the politician, the grassroots

campaigner and the family man.” Dolata notes that the career and personal sides work best when they speak directly to one another, but sometimes they are discussed side by side without being connected. More seriously, she criticizes Donaghy for occasionally lapsing into simplistic explanations; this criticism stems from her very close reading of *Grit* but it does not seriously detract from the overall compelling picture of Martin.

A successful biography illuminates the life of a person (no small task) and shows how the subject is representative of a larger society, time and place. As David Nasaw has pointed out in a discussion of history and biography in the *American Historical Review*, “Historians are not interested in simply charting the course of individual lives, but in examining those lives in dialectical relationship to the multiple social, political, and cultural worlds they inhabit and give meaning to.”¹ *Grit* addresses issues that go beyond Paul Martin Sr., big subject though he is. According to Nethercote, the four decades of Martin’s public career serve as “a very promising vehicle for an account of Canadian Liberal politics from the high point of Mackenzie King’s regime through to the entrenchment of the Trudeau prime ministership.” He also believes that Donaghy’s account of Martin’s time as Secretary of State for External Affairs sheds light on the challenges facing a “medium power” with a superpower neighbour and ally; these “mini-case studies give the volume a significance which perceptibly transcends its value as a biography.” Dolata, however, criticizes Donaghy for alluding to social dynamics – in particular in relation to gender – without fully exploring “their broader historical meaning.”

At the end of James’s review, he suggests that a counterfactual study might be useful: what if Paul Martin Sr. and Lester B. Pearson – Nobel Peace Prize winner, distinguished diplomat, who defeated Martin in the 1958 leadership campaign and later became prime minister – had switched roles? Useful insights might emerge from such a study. But for the foreseeable future, people will be more than satisfied with Donaghy’s authoritative and insightful biography.

Participants:

Greg Donaghy is Head of the Historical Section, Global Affairs Canada. He is the General Editor of its series, *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, and author of *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968*. Most recently, he edited (with Michael Carroll), *From Kinshasa to Kandahar: Canada and Fragile States in Historical Perspective* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2016). The views expressed here are his alone and do not reflect the views of his Department or the Government of Canada.

Francine McKenzie is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University of Western Ontario. She completed her Ph.D. in history at Cambridge. She is currently completing two projects: an institutional and international history of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and an edited collection on the role of race in Canada’s international history.

Petra Dolata is Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in the History of Energy at the University of Calgary. She has published on Canada’s foreign and Arctic policies, transatlantic relations, and the concept of energy security.

¹ D. Nasaw, Introduction for AHR Roundtable on Historians and Biography, *The American Historical Review* (2009), 114, 3: 574.

Patrick James (Ph.D., Government and Politics, University of Maryland, College Park, 1984) is Professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California. He is the author or editor of 23 books, along with over 120 articles and book chapters. His recent books include *Canada and Conflict* (Oxford, 2012) and *Game Changer* (edited with Jonathan Paquin, UBC, 2014). James served as President of the International Council for Canadian Studies and the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States. He also served as editor of *International Studies Quarterly*. James is writing a book that will reassess realist theory and seek to reformulate it in line with the principles of systemism.

J. R. Nethercote is Adjunct Professor, Canberra Campus, Australian Catholic University. Editor of the *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration* for two decades, he has edited many books including *Parliament and Bureaucracy* (1982) and *Liberalism and the Australian Federation* (2001).

Kim Richard Nossal is a professor in the Centre for International and Defence Policy, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. He is the author of a number of works on Canadian foreign and defence policy. His most recent book, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, 4th edition, co-authored with Stéphane Roussel and Stéphane Paquin, was published by McGill-Queen's University Press in 2015.

Review by Petra Dolata, University of Calgary

With *Grit: The Life and Politics of Paul Martin Sr.* Greg Donaghy has produced an extensive political biography of one of Canada's long-serving Liberal politicians in the twentieth century. It is a welcome addition to the literature on Canadians beyond prime ministers who shaped the country's post-WWII foreign policy. It is also an illustration of how thorough archival research and interviews help to highlight the complexities of important historical actors, who too often are narrowed down to one political (stereo) type. Paul Joseph James Martin (Paul Martin Sr.) was elected into Parliament in 1935 as a Liberal representing the constituency of Essex East in southern Ontario. He joined the Cabinet in 1945 when Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King appointed him as Secretary of State. In 1946 he became Minister of National Health and Welfare, a position he held until 1957. During this time he was called upon by both the King and Louis St. Laurent governments to carry out specific diplomatic assignments foreshadowing his 1963 appointment as Secretary of State for External Affairs, a portfolio he held until 1968 when he lost the Liberal leadership race against Pierre Elliott Trudeau and decided not to run for parliament again. Until then he had won in every federal election since 1935. Appointed to the Senate in 1968 he served as Leader of the Government until 1974. Yet, as Donaghy eloquently reminds the reader throughout his biography, despite Martin's prolific career in federal politics and his close to forty years of service under four prime ministers, he never achieved his main ambition, that of becoming Prime Minister of Canada. Before his defeat by Trudeau, he had already lost the Liberal leadership contest against Louis St. Laurent in 1948 and Lester B. Pearson in 1958.

This unfulfilled ambition is one of the tropes found in Donaghy's elaborate account of Paul Martin's life in politics. Another is Martin's political skill, which earned him a reputation as a seasoned "political pragmatist" (284) and "fixer" (29) who would engage in political patronage and electioneering strategies resulting in complaints about "the Martin machine" (125). However, Donaghy provides a much more nuanced and complex picture than the image of the "populist politician from Windsor" (206), which has persisted in the Canadian public mind until today. His biography provides a more balanced account of Martin's political career. While Martin is still portrayed as a career politician, i.e. as "a professional and practical politician" (354) and someone who defined his professional life through politics and not through his profession as a lawyer, Donaghy reveals the progressive nature of his politics. He argues that Martin was driven by more than just political ambition. Instead, the reader learns about the substantial impact that Martin made in his two main Cabinet portfolios, social security policies and foreign affairs. As Minister of National Health and Welfare Martin gave "Canadians a new citizenship, larger pensions and better health care" (96). His agenda of "building the welfare state" (115) reflected his progressive liberal views which distanced Canada from the British Empire and an American-type capitalism. While Martin's term as Minister of National Health and Welfare was defined by changes to the Canadian welfare state, particularly "increased spending on health care and pensions" (118), his foreign policy outlook was influenced by his "staunch liberal internationalis[m]" (191) which translated into unwavering anticommunism as well as support of multilateral and transatlantic institutions. It is this complex tension between politics and ideas that Donaghy uncovers and teases out of the detailed life story of Paul Martin Sr.

Quite fittingly, Donaghy devotes a section on Martin's first speech in the House of Commons, which addressed the League of Nation, a foreign policy issue. This speech not only foreshadowed his later appointment as Secretary of State for External Affairs, it also symbolized his strengths as a foreign policy actor (and I refrain from using the word decision-maker since we do not really learn so much about that side of his office). It was his speeches that indicated change (270), not necessarily his actions. And Martin was a very

good speaker, he was fluent in both English and French and he was able to captivate audiences through “rhetorical tricks [and] verbal sleights of hand” (193). However, he was not a diplomat nor was he always diplomatic (see page 142). He was unlike his predecessors in office, many of whom were or became prime ministers. He was also very different from the “civil servant mandarins” whom Jack L. Granatstein labeled “the Ottawa Men.”¹ But not only was Martin different from past secretaries of state, he was also out of touch with the new cohort of politicians. He was indeed “vintage Martin” (167), his methods looking increasingly old-fashioned as he championed quiet diplomacy and “compromise and accommodation” (272). His values became increasingly out of touch with new variants of liberalism in Canada which now included a nationalist, anti-American slant (174).

While Donaghy’s biography is foremost a political history book he skilfully uses the first chapters on Martin’s early life to engage with his socialization as a bilingual Catholic who had been exposed to both social ideas in Catholic teachings and the liberal philosophies of thinkers such as John Stuart Mill. This allowed him, for example, to “manage competing cabinet and union pressures” (72) with respect to labour relations in the immediate post World War II era. Overall, this linking of personal experience and political views throughout the book is convincing. However, there are a few instances when the direct connection is presented too strongly as a direct cause. For example, Donaghy uses Paul Martin’s son’s polio illness in 1946 to explain how “his son’s crises [...] fuelled [Martin’s] commitment to activist government and provided his politics with a wellspring of deeply personal inspiration for the next two decades” (78).

While highly readable and reflecting the chronological sequence of personal lives, Donaghy’s linear approach also poses some problems. It works very well when personal and political life intersect, since experiences in one may help explain decisions in the other, but sometimes it makes for major jumps in a story such as in chapter 2. Here, discussion of Martin’s first speech at the House of Commons in 1935 is followed by a paragraph on his personal life starting with the sentence “In the Fall of 1936, Martin fell in love with Eleanor (Nell) Adams [...]” (42). While both are part of the story, these passages stand unconnected. Where personal and political spheres link they help shed light on Martin’s career: “Like many central events in Martin’s life,” Donaghy writes, “the courtship became a finely honed story that he and Nell often presented” to shape their image (42). At times, more could have been teased out of these intersections. For example, it might have been useful to hear more about how exactly “[t]he masculine environment eased Martin’s transition from the rural, bilingual St-Alexandre to the urbane and English-speaking St. Mike’s” (9). In general, the author could have been more nuanced when using gendered narratives. Is the above use of “masculine” to assign femininity to rural areas where French was spoken? On page 45 we read again about the “masculine environment” in the House of Commons but Donaghy does not explain in any detail what such a gendered space entails. And he continues to highlight how the “backbench politician” Martin “flirted easily with the very few women members and kidded around with older, more experienced MPs, who teased him about his well-known prime ministerial ambitions” (46). This paragraph does not have a footnote to reference the evidence and it is not clear what the purpose of such an undocumented vignette is. Understandably, Donaghy tries to provide as many snapshots in order to tell the complex story of a complex man. But it would have been desirable to embed the anecdotes into their broader historical meaning. Even more so, historians should avoid using the sources’ diction. When Donaghy writes about “socialist” – as opposed to social-democratic – “foreign ministers of West Germany and Britain” (269) it is not clear whether this is Martin speaking or the historian.

¹ Jack L. Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men: The Civil Service Mandarins, 1935-1957*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1982.

This is not to diminish Donaghy's meticulous attention to historical detail and the impressive body of archival and oral interview sources that he has employed in writing this comprehensive biography.

Another strength of the book lies in Donaghy's juxtaposition of official archival records with Martin's own recollections of the same events that were published in his two-volume autobiography.² These disjunctions highlight how autobiographies are essentially testimonies to the self and consist of self-edited memories making one's life into a story that one can live with. Despite its overall sympathetic perspective, this critical view makes Donaghy's autobiography of Pau Martin Sr. an important and authoritative contribution to Canada's international history while proving that recent criticism of 'historiographical stagnation'³ in Canadian diplomatic history may be slightly overstated. It may also lead Canadians to remember Paul Martin Sr. as an alternative figure to existing types of Canadian foreign policy actors, be they Prime Ministers or the "mandarins", i.e. the elite bureaucrats in Canada's foreign relations.

² Paul Joseph James Martin, *A Very Public Life*, 2 vols., (Ottawa: Deneau, 1983, 1986).

³ David Meren, "The Tragedies of Canadian International History," *Canadian Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (2015): 538.

Review by Patrick James, University of Southern California

Grit is an exceptional book. I simply could not put it down. This is a remarkable work of political biography. While many themes could be pursued in reviewing this book, what follows will focus on the life of Paul Martin, Sr. as a mystery story: Why did such an able and diligent politician never become Liberal Party leader and prime minister, in spite of herculean efforts toward that end? Martin, to be sure, had major accomplishments – he was a long-serving MP, cabinet member with multiple portfolios, and leader of the government in the Senate – but his principal career goal eluded him. The explanation lies within the pages of *Grit*. Two personality traits – ambition (emphasized by Donaghy) and authoritarianism (not mentioned directly but of great seeming importance) – appear central to the outcome. The review culminates in a call for counterfactual analysis about a Martin prime ministership because it arguably stood as a realistic possibility on at least one and possibly other occasions.

One personality trait that comes out throughout the book, with mixed results for Martin's career, is his ambition. On the one hand, it vaulted him from rather modest origins into the corridors of power at the national level and beyond. On the other hand, any number of instances emerge where Martin's perceived level of ambition turned important people off and quite possibly denied him success. For example, an American-style political rally stands out as an early example of how what seemed like an excess of self-promotion alienated at least some elite observers (125). Martin also "shocked" Canadian diplomats with his intense insistence on press releases during trips abroad that gave him special prominence (130). Importantly in terms of the ultimate goal of becoming prime minister, influential journalists tended to be troubled from near the outset of his career by Martin's seemingly "vaunting ambition" (132). The same could be said for Martin's lack of popularity among senior members of the Liberal Party, who shared the views of the media about his off-putting ambitiousness (163).

There is an element of unfairness inherent in what is reported above. As Martin pointed out, Lester Pearson, his rival – and the victor at the time when he arguably had the best chance to win the Liberal leadership – simply hid his ambitions more effectively (165). However, is false modesty a good criterion to determine the outcome of a leadership struggle? Anyone reading the account will be struck how Martin, striving to overcome a modest starting point in life, worked very hard and promoted himself out of perceived political necessity. It is likely that the criticism Martin received would have happened no matter what he did, with those in elite positions joining forces to keep him out of the Liberal leadership position each time he tried.

At the same time, there is some truth behind what the critics had to say. Martin's poorly concealed ambitions turned off policy-makers in the U.S. as well (250). This observation leads into discussion of the other significant personality trait in the story of Martin falling short of party leadership: authoritarianism.¹ Consider Martin's support for General Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War – a product of seeing the Republicans and their Communist allies as "threats to church authority" (48). His indulgent reaction to the shameful sellout of Czechoslovakia at Munich in 1938 is puzzling, but not from an authoritarian point of view. Simply put, he valued order and stability and could overlook otherwise dreadful things in pursuit of those objectives. Martin hoped that the deal with Hitler would lead to a permanent and lasting peace and

¹ Additional evidence exists for this assertion about Martin's personality. For example, consider his rather strict sense of proper division with regard to the work of politicians and bureaucrats (84).

also reacted with sadness to the eventual Canadian declaration of war against Germany (50, 52). Martin engaged in wishful thinking on more than one occasion when order and stability came into jeopardy.

This point comes to mind again with respect to Vietnam. Martin pursued a middle ground, with continuing public support for the United States, while simultaneously trying for a settlement via behind-the-scenes diplomacy. Martin deferred to the U.S. as the leader of the Western coalition and became badly out of touch with Canadian public opinion, which increasingly opposed the war. He also ended up at odds with Pearson, who came out into the open intensely against the United States' conduct of the war and thereby provoked Martin into a threat of resignation (231, 234). Martin continued to make efforts to manage the "terrible war in Vietnam" and it turned into "an unhappy and damaging obsession" (248). Unfortunately, his attempt to keep a dialogue open with Washington meant that he would be "unshakably identified with the US cause in Southeast Asia" (271). For all of his political acumen – practiced best, perhaps, at the retail rather than wholesale level – he sometimes acted in ways that created major problems for his ultimate career ambition. At times he simply persisted with no support at all for a given policy initiative and seemed very slow to figure out that he needed to back off (252). The high level of activity, even fixation, on Vietnam is a prime example because it caused serious collateral damage by the time of his final leadership bid. Ongoing efforts to manage the war also reflected the inherent contradiction between an authoritarian's preference for order, which pushed in one direction, and a liberal internationalist's desire for peace, which naturally pulled in the other.

One further illustration of authoritarianism in action concerns his otherwise baffling reaction to the excesses of French President Charles de Gaulle on the Quebec issue in 1967. The old General's interventionism angered the Liberal leadership across the board, but Martin showed deference and wanted to avoid confrontation with de Gaulle seemingly at all cost. Instead, Martin once again preferred behind-the-scenes diplomacy, with an emphasis on working with his French opposite number, Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville, to manage the problem. The approach failed miserably. All of this "hurt Martin" as he continued, through the summer and fall of 1967, to ignore "French provocations" (297).

While unflattering, the preceding review of personality traits is intended to explain a particular career outcome and does not entail a negative judgment regarding the substance of Martin's accomplishments. By contrast, his career at the international level is quite extraordinary and at times even visionary. Martin's liberal internationalism comes through clearly in his track record on foreign policy.² This is true throughout his career. Experiences in Cambridge and Geneva, early on, caused him to look favorably on the work of the League of Nations and the role of international law and institutions within world politics in general (24). After World War II, Martin welcomed the United Nations and so began a lifelong loyalty to that institution. *Grit* brings out the incredibly underrated role of Martin as an actor within the UN. He stood up for the principle of universality regarding membership and championed foreign aid for decades after a memorable trip to Asia (144, 145, 158).

All of that came together most visibly in Martin's service as Secretary of State for External Affairs – Canada's foreign minister. Martin, who served as Foreign Minister from 1963 to 1968, "embraced foreign policy as a vital activity with real implications for Canadian lives" (189). Among his priorities, Martin identified

² While beyond the scope of this review, *Grit* also establishes an impressive record for Martin as a liberal on social welfare policy. The many examples include conflict over the cost of social security reform (108-109) and massive spending increases on health care and pensions (118).

improved relations with the U.S. and other NATO allies and his foreign policy would “aim for the moderate selflessness of the responsible middle power” (191). He proved to be ahead of his time, as a liberal internationalist, in calling for Canadian membership in the Organization of American States as a specific initiative and further attention to global inequality as a general priority (191). Along similar lines, he had to back off in 1964 from the position that Canada should recognize China (223). This turned out to be a bridge too far in a world still revolving around Washington, D.C. and its concerns within the Cold War. In pushing for a more assertive UN role in the settlement of the Six Day War, Martin acted independently and once again annoyed Pearson (280-281). This conflict occurred as a by-product of Martin’s passionate liberal internationalism, with special devotion to the UN as the manifestation of all that he saw as good about international relations and foreign policy.

Martin’s shift from domestic to foreign policy – he previously had been quite successful within the left wing of the Liberal Party as an advocate for social welfare – connected with career ambitions but did not serve them well. In the mid-1950s he saw time at the UN, at least in part, as an opportunity to “re-inforce his claims to the Liberal leadership” (138). By the time of the lead-up to the Liberal leadership convention in April 1968, Martin had taken on numerous liabilities as a result of his actions as Foreign Minister. Tensions with Pearson and public perceptions of him as being out of touch about Vietnam caused great problems for his leadership campaign. The sheer level of activity Martin maintained as a committed liberal internationalist put him at risk of alienating potential supporters because various high-profile issues had the potential to go the wrong way for him (and sometimes did). In a sense, all of this represented the unfortunate consequences of ‘too much of a good thing’. Martin believed in “strong and forceful government action” and genuinely wanted to improve the lives of Canadians through that means (355). As a result, he sometimes went too far – ironically, at times in pursuit of stability and order – and underestimated the importance of backing off from potential controversy and resultant political liabilities as a result of being on the perceived ‘wrong side.’ Put differently, hyper-activity in the domain of foreign policy became a boomerang that struck Martin and helped to deny his ultimate goal of becoming Liberal leader and prime minister.

Martin’s fascinating story begs for a counterfactual analysis, which could yield significant insights by considering ‘what might have been.’³ What if he *had* become prime minister? A key component of a counterfactual analysis is plausibility. Martin ran three times for the Liberal Party’s leadership and it is not difficult to imagine a scenario in which things went the right way for him. For example, did the Nobel Prize obtained by Pearson in 1957 clinch the leadership? A case can be made that, given Martin’s extraordinary skills as a politician and Pearson’s greater ability as a diplomat, both the Liberal Party and Canada might have been better off if they had switched positions. If so, Martin would stand out as an anomalous case of the Peter Principle in reverse: blocked from rising to the level of his competence. All of this is quite speculative, but endlessly fascinating, and a systematic counterfactual analysis could address the question of a Martin prime ministership with rigor and academic value.

Grit, in closing, is a wonderful book about an important political figure for Canada and beyond. The account of Paul Martin’s life will be of great interest to the fields of Canadian Studies and International Relations. There is no better way to finish than to quote the final line of text from *Grit*: “Simply put, at

³ A paradigmatic example of counterfactual analysis, which focuses on a possible Gore presidency in 2000 and possible consequences for the occurrence of the Iraq War, appears in Frank Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War: Counterfactual Theory, Logic and Evidence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

home and abroad, Paul Martin embodied both his church's call to action and humankind's obligation to fashion a more just and equitable world" (355).

Review by John Nethercote, Canberra Campus, Australian Catholic University

Monday November 16, 1992, was a very cold day in Ottawa. But, during the question period in the House of Commons that day, the atmosphere was heated as the besieged Progressive Conservative Government of Brian Mulroney weathered a torrid battery of questions about financially troubled Canadian Pacific Air.

At the conclusion of questions, the Opposition critic on Finance rose to make a statement: “My father [who had died on September 14] loved this House so much. He had so much respect for all those who serve in this great institution. On behalf of my mother and our family, I want to thank each and every one of you in this big parliamentary family for the moving message of sympathy you extended to us in this trying period.”

“There is a small room off the kitchen in my parents’ house with a TV set that is permanently frozen on the House of Commons channel. It was there over the last five years that my father used to sit and pass judgment on the debates in this House.”¹

The speaker was Paul Martin, subsequently Minister for Finance then Prime Minister of Canada. He was speaking about his father, also Paul Martin, a member of the House of Commons from 1935 until 1968 and a minister in the Liberal governments of Louis St. Laurent, Lester Pearson and Pierre Elliot Trudeau, holding most notably, the portfolios of Health and Welfare, and External Affairs.

As Martin, the son, spoke, the heat of the question period quickly gave way to a warmth which almost glowed. Having read this exemplary biography of the father by Greg Donaghy, I can now understand why.

Paul Martin was one of the big beasts in the post-war generation of Liberal politics in Canada. Elected to the House of Commons in 1935, when Mackenzie King recovered office from the Conservatives who had ruled from 1930 to 1935, he had to wait a decade for ministerial honours. When they came, at last, he found himself, as Minister for Health and Welfare, present at the creation of the modern welfare state. He held the portfolio for a decade, relinquishing it only when the Liberals lost office in 1957.

In addition to his departmental responsibilities Martin was also active internationally, frequently being included in Canadian delegations to the United Nations and other international bodies on both sides of the Atlantic.

When the aged St. Laurent surrendered leadership of the party after the 1957 defeat, Martin had aspirations of succeeding him. The prize, however, went to Pearson, a former top diplomat who moved into parliamentary politics in 1948 upon King’s retirement, and was immediately appointed Secretary of State for External Affairs (as the foreign minister of Canada was then designated).

The next six years in opposition to John Diefenbaker’s disorganized Progressive Conservative Government were not especially happy even though Martin was among the more formidable members of the Liberal front bench.

¹ (Canadian) House of Commons, Hansard, 16 November 1992, 1340.

The Liberal return to the government benches in 1963, albeit in a minority situation, saw Martin take the External Affairs post himself; he held it for the entirety of the Pearson Government (1963-68). It was a fraught assignment. Pearson, a winner of the Nobel Prize for peace, with his long experience in diplomacy, was an ever-present overseer. Relations with the United States were tense. There were a range of cross-border matters to address, from management of the Columbia River in the West to automobile manufacturing affecting not least Martin's own riding in south-western Ontario in the environs of Windsor.

The big issue was the war in Vietnam, where Canada, as a member of the International Control Commission, initially sought to play a mediating role, an intervention not really welcomed by the Johnson administration. As the war escalated both Pearson and Martin struggled to find a policy in circumstances of a highly sensitive American administration on the one hand and rapidly emerging hostility to the war and any Canadian association with it among Canadians, particularly young Canadians.

Another matter of intense sensitivity was coping with Quebec's resurgence and its pursuit of international links. The major complication came from France's mischievous encouragement, culminating in President Charles de Gaulle's notorious '*Vive le Quebec libre*' speech from the balcony of the Town Hall in Montréal in mid-1967.

It was in the field of foreign aid that Martin seems to have made his most enduring contribution during this period. In this instance he had the support of Maurice Strong, a Canadian businessman who periodically undertook major public assignments. A larger budget brought increased Canadian activity in Africa, the Caribbean and, under Trudeau, Latin America.

Martin was a front-runner for the party leadership and, thus, the prime ministership when Lester Pearson announced his retirement late in 1967, staying on until the leadership convention in April 1968. Age was against Martin and he ran fourth in the first ballot, well behind Pierre Trudeau who led the poll and went on to win.

Martin decided not to contest the election which Trudeau called immediately. Instead, he became leader of the Government in the Senate to which he had been appointed and kept the job until Trudeau, who barely survived at the 1972 national election, recovered a good majority in 1974 and decided to freshen up his ministry with some younger faces. Martin successfully claimed the High Commissionership in London where, for four years, he was an energetic advocate of Canada's interests.

In conventional terms, Martin's career, because of his energy, the breadth of his interests and its longevity, provides a very promising vehicle for an account of Canadian Liberal politics from the high point of Mackenzie King's regime through to the entrenchment of the Trudeau prime ministership, a period of more than four decades. Greg Donaghy, head of the Historical Section in the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, accomplishes this foundational aspect of the work with great skill and clarity.

But he is continually alive to the opportunities which an examination of Martin's life offers. The first of these is the well-known tale of a boy from a very modest background who, by a combination of ability and application and notwithstanding polio, advanced in life by means of the openings provided by education, often working part-time. Martin not only got himself admitted to a college affiliated with the University of

Toronto but went on to the Law School at Harvard where he encountered Dean Roscoe Pound and Felix Frankfurter, and from thence to Cambridge.

This path gave him an enviable resume. It also provided him with both training in law and a broader education in history, biography and philosophy. His Catholic background contributed and he benefitted from the legacy of Cardinal Newman and also the Catholicism embodied in *Rerum Novarum*, namely that following the Gospel embraced a social dimension. He simultaneously fostered skills important to him in his career, the most conspicuous of which was experience in public speaking and debating. Another talent evident from an early stage was a gift for attracting mentors (Vincent Massey, the first Canadian-born Governor-General of Canada, as well as Pound and Frankfurter), and what is now called ‘networking.’

Martin was a great retail politician with an enviable capacity for remembering people’s names and often those of other family members. Many biographies of major politicians deal only briefly with the grass-roots dimension of political life, concentrating mainly on the early years. But Donaghy continues the riding story throughout the entirety of Martin’s career; he likewise keeps readers abreast of Martin’s family life. A distinguishing quality of this biography is thus the manner in which Donaghy embraces the whole man, the public man, the politician, the grass roots campaigner, and the family man.

Nor is the story always rosy. Readers learn in some detail of the pitfalls facing a parliamentarian in the chore of winning government contracts for businesses in the riding. This is a valuable insight into political activity in the era before government funding.

An appropriately understated but nevertheless important theme of the work is Martin the outsider: he was not Anglophone but nor did he come from Quebec. He was Franco-Ontarian. He was from a minority within a minority.

Donaghy’s skill in seeing context and circumstance along with individual perspective is prominently on display when he traces Martin’s term as Minister for Health and Welfare. The account tells the reader how Martin assembled administrative support to formulate policies and advocated the case within the machinery of government and particularly with the Department of Finance. The tale likewise covers the tribulations of inter-governmental negotiations in establishing the various programs.

It is during this period that Martin was also spending time in New York at the United Nations. Again readers are provided with a full picture. Martin not only did his UN work; he was still in touch with Ottawa and, as always, with Windsor. He was so much in touch with Windsor that External Affairs was reluctant to pay postage on any letters to Windsor from departmental funds.

The chapters dealing with his time as Secretary of State for External Affairs form the climax of this compelling insight into Canadian government in the middle decades of last century. Again, Donaghy ensures that readers have both context and circumstance. This is a drama, not a one man show. In Canadian terms, foreign policy decision-making is cast not just in terms of ministerial perspective but in terms of the prime ministerial, departmental and cabinet dimensions. Especially valuable is the attention Donaghy gives to Martin’s relations – relations which were far from smooth - with the departmental head, Marcel Cadieux (Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs).

Even more important is his portrayal of foreign policy-making by a medium power when dealing with a superpower and one which is an immediate neighbour. Both Pearson and Martin were continually searching for policies which had some effect and which had some prospect of public support in Canada at a time when Canadian public opinion was becoming increasingly hostile towards the United States. It was not only Vietnam. It is also NATO and NORAD. The Government even had to be circumspect about establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China.

The United Nations did not necessarily offer any respite for Canadian policy-makers. Donaghy brings this out in very lively fashion when he explains UN peace-keeping in the Middle East and the antecedent events to the Six-Day War in 1967. These mini-case studies give the volume a significance which perceptibly transcends its value as a biography.

Donaghy's systematic coverage of Martin's career does not end with his subject's departure from the House of Commons. Anyone interested in the Canadian Senate will profit from a reading of the chapter covering Martin's time as Leader of the Government in that chamber, just as those interested in the practice of diplomacy will gain a useful insight into the work of a high commissioner by reading about Martin's years in London.

The former Prime Minister of Australia, Sir Robert Menzies, used to say that to succeed in life, chose one's parents wisely. The corollary of this wise counsel is that one should also chose one's biographer wisely.

Martin has clearly been fortunate in the choice of his biographer. Donaghy has written a very good biography. It is a favourable portrait and, if not quite a case of warts and all, there are nevertheless plenty of wrinkles. He has not risked Martin's reputation with either hagiography or eulogy. It is also a very good book about Canadian government and politics and can be strongly commended on that account alone.

It is also a biography which illustrates just how a biography should be written. The reader learns a great deal about Paul Martin. But the strength of the book is that the reader learns much about the Canada in which he lived and worked, the Canada whose politics he practised, the nation whose fortunes he strove to enhance.

Review by Kim Richard Nossal, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario

Early one morning in August 1989, when I was at McMaster University, Paul Martin Sr. phoned me at home out of the blue. He was touring the Great Lakes as a passenger on a Canada Steamship Lines freighter, and it had docked in Hamilton harbour for unloading. Could he come out to McMaster for lunch? “I knew your dad back in the 1960s,” he said by way of introduction. He and I had never met, but I of course knew of him. I also knew that when he was Secretary of State for External Affairs (as Canada’s global affairs minister was called before 1993), he had played an important part in an episode involving my late father Frederick. It was during the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965, and my father, then a foreign correspondent for the *Globe and Mail*, was covering the war from Pakistan. After filing a story that was particularly critical of Pakistan, he had been arrested by the Pakistani security services, and held incommunicado for several days. It was only after the personal intervention of Paul Martin Sr. that he was released and then expelled from Pakistan. So I invited Mr. Martin out to the university for lunch, and asked David Docherty, who was then a master’s student doing his thesis on patterns of parliamentary careers in Canada, to join us. Martin spent a long lunch regaling the two of us with war stories from his long time in office.

While I was surprised by Martin’s out-of-the-blue call that morning, I should not have been. For, as Greg Donaghy’s sensitive biography makes so clear, that was Martin’s *modus operandi* throughout his long career: he spent a huge amount of his time and energy keeping in touch with people, remembering their important milestones, writing them cards and letters to wish them well, reaching out to pass on his best. Indeed, we even have a term for the kind of politician that Martin was: a ‘retail’ politician, who approaches politics as a deeply personal exercise, always working to build support on a small-scale and an individual basis, one voter at a time. The term is, however, somewhat pejorative, and Donaghy judiciously reminds us that Martin was genuine in his fondness for reaching out to people, even though it looked to some detractors as an artifice driven by ambition (37–38). Certainly his call to me in 1989 suggests that even in his late 80s, with elections only a distant memory, reaching out was deeply ingrained.

But that well-developed willingness to reach out was one of the key reasons why Paul Martin Sr. enjoyed such a long political career. Indeed, as David Docherty, who went on to become one of Canada’s leading analysts of politicians and legislatures, has noted, only a tiny number of elected politicians in Canada manage to secure the support of voters so consistently that they are able to remain actively involved in politics across the historical eras that we tend to mark out to make sense of transformations in politics.¹

Paul Martin Sr. was one of those extraordinary politicians. He was first elected to the House of Commons at the age of 32, taking the riding of Essex East in Windsor, Ontario, for the Liberals in the sweeping victory of Mackenzie King in 1935. Martin held that riding for the next nine elections. He finally retired from elected politics in 1968, by which time Essex East had been abolished in the 1966 redistribution.

Martin’s tenure in the House of Commons thus stretched from the prewar period through the Second World War and for much of the Cold War, through four Liberal Prime Ministers—King, Louis St. Laurent, Lester B. Pearson, and Pierre Elliott Trudeau (though he served as an MP under Trudeau for just three days before

¹ David C. Docherty, *Mr. Smith Goes to Ottawa: Life in the House of Commons* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

the 27th Parliament was brought to an end on 23 April 1968)—and one Progressive Conservative, Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker.

To be sure, we cannot attribute Martin's long-running electoral success purely to his constituency work. It mattered that from 1945 onwards, with the exception of the six years of Diefenbaker government between 1957 and 1963, he was a cabinet minister, and thus well positioned to do things for the constituents who sustained him in office so solidly and for so long. He was first elevated to the ministry by King in 1945, and served as Minister of National Health and Welfare from 1946 to 1957. From 1963 to 1968, he served as Secretary of State for External Affairs in Pearson's two minority governments. Indeed, Martin remained in cabinet even after his time in the House of Commons. Appointed to the Senate by Trudeau in 1968, he served as government leader in the upper house until 1974, when Trudeau appointed him as Canada's High Commissioner in London.

In his decades of public service, as Donaghy demonstrates so clearly, Martin achieved a great deal. As Minister of National Health and Welfare in the 1950s, he presided over a major change in the Canadian welfare state. In the 1960s, Martin was an activist foreign minister, and Donaghy reminds us that Martin was also active as a Canadian diplomat in the 1950s, when, as minister of national health and welfare, he was active on the Canadian delegation at the United Nations. Indeed, one of the most interesting accounts in this book is of Martin's efforts on the new members' initiative at the UN in 1954–55 (140–45).

Most people, looking at Martin's long career of public service, from his first election in 1935 until the end of his posting as Canada's High Commissioner to London in 1979, might be inclined to judge it as a great success. As former Prime Minister John Turner put it on Martin's death in 1992, Martin was a "titan... He really towered above the political process for half a century" (354).

But there is also a certain sadness in Martin's story, for Martin himself was not entirely satisfied with what he had achieved. And, paradoxically, his longevity in politics magnified that sense of failure.

This is underscored by the title that Donaghy gives his biography. The "grit" of the title most obviously refers to the common nickname for Liberals in Canada—inherited from the "clear grits" of pre-Confederation Ontario (named after the fine sand prized by masons: "all sand and no dirt, clear grit all the way through"). And Martin was, as Donaghy puts it, "an unshakeable Grit" (xiv).

But "grit" is also American colloquial slang for determination, and Donaghy argues that this characterization of Martin is equally apt. For Martin was unshakeably determined to be the leader of the Liberal Party, and thereby Prime Minister of Canada. He ran for the leadership three times—in 1948, 1958 and 1968—and on each occasion he had his ambition thwarted. The stories of these leadership contests are compellingly told by Donaghy, who presents a sympathetic but unvarnished account of how Martin was defeated.

In retrospect, Martin always seemed to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. In 1948, he was pushed into withdrawing from the race by Mackenzie King himself, who was keen to see his preferred candidate, Louis St. Laurent, 'crowned.' In 1958, the unspoken agreement that the leadership of the party would alternate between an anglophone and a francophone doomed the francophone Catholic Martin. And in 1968, Martin, who had a well-organized campaign machine and started off as a front-runner, was gazumped by the exquisitely-timed entry of Pierre Elliott Trudeau into the leadership race.

But on each of these occasions, Martin was also hampered by a lack of support among his colleagues, many of whom, it is clear from Donaghy's account, viewed Martin and his political operations with skepticism, if not outright disdain. One can almost viscerally share the hurt that Martin must have felt to have been rejected, often with great bluntness.

Martin viewed politics as a vocation, and spent quite literally a lifetime in public service. As Donaghy notes, the negative perceptions that he tended to generate during his life run the risk of overshadowing the contributions that he made to Canada over his long years in office. It is thus fortunate that we have a biography like this, which lays out those contributions so judiciously while nonetheless leaving us with a very human portrait of Paul Martin Sr.

Author's Response by Greg Donaghy, Head of the Historical Section, Global Affairs Canada

I am grateful to the multinational quartet of Professors Petra Dolata, Patrick James, John Nethercote, and Kim Nossal for the care and warm welcome they gave my biography. I am pleased that they enjoyed its contents and the writing. The extensive research I can claim as my own, but credit for the prose must be shared with my editors at the University of British Columbia Press.

Although none of the four reviewers takes serious issue with my portrait of Paul Martin Sr. – they are so polite, they might all have been Canadian-born and raised – there are a few foreign-policy themes in the reviews that are worth drawing out more fully.

Paul Martin Sr., as the reviewers emphasize, was a politician, driven by his strong partisan and prime-ministerial ambitions. This matters, particularly in Canada, where the lingering legacy of the postwar 'golden age' exerts a distorting influence over contemporary policy discussions. Canada's diplomatic success under the stewardship of Lester B. Pearson, a professional diplomat who won a Nobel peace prize in 1957 as Foreign Minister, has convinced many Canadians that foreign policy ought to be left in the safe and expert hands of the diplomats. When a senior retired ambassador learned whom I was writing about, he shook his head sadly, remarking with a typical and obvious disdain, "He was a politician, you know." The biography reminds us that democratic foreign policy decisions are always political. And legitimately so, hence the sharp distinction that Martin drew between the role of bureaucratic advisors and decision-making ministers.

There is another broad theme of some significance to contemporary policymaking that my reviewers stress: the foundational role of ideas. Canadian foreign-policy dialogue tends to favour pragmatic and tough-minded realists, from both the left and the right, who eschew idealism and romanticism, and emphasize the vital importance of interests over ideas. Ensnared in his Windsor redoubt, on the edge of the vast mid-twentieth century American industrial heartland, Martin clearly knew where Canadian interests usually lay. Southward. At the same time, and I hope the biography makes this clear, he was moved by his Catholicism, his intellectual commitment to liberalism, and his unshakeable internationalism to challenge U.S. leadership. The result was often trouble, at the UN in the mid-1950s, and at NATO and in Washington in the 1960s.

The centrality of the U.S. experience in Martin's (and Canada's) twentieth-century life represents a third theme raised in the reviews, and is worth underlining. Canada, the Western Canadian journalist J.W. Dafoe wrote almost a century ago, is an "American nation."¹ Martin's life story confirms that observation. American ideas and culture infused his existence. Educated at Harvard, he embraced U.S. progressivism and American pop culture in the 1920s. He and his wife, Nell, reveled in New York, the epitome of American urbanism, embracing Broadway and the Yankees in the 1940s. Throughout the Cold War, he readily acknowledged that Canada's postwar defence and foreign policy were inextricably linked with Washington's. And thus, it is fitting that near the climax of this biography, Martin is forced to confront the U.S. experience in Vietnam, an unhappy obsession that helped seal his fate.

Finally, a few quibbles. Professor James is right to highlight Martin's interest in "order and stability." He is wrong, however, to pejoratively label it as "authoritarianism" or to push his analysis as far as he does. Martin

¹ J.W. Dafoe, *Canada, An American Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935).

inherited a set of conservative ideas from his Catholic traditions, especially his reading of Cardinal John Henry Newman's works. But Newman's reverence for tradition was offset by his simultaneous support for reform; the final result was far from authoritarian. Certainly, Newman didn't shape Martin's views on the roles of bureaucrat and minister, which were drawn from the British Parliamentary tradition. Nor did Newman's legacy influence Martin's wrongheaded views of Munich, which were widespread among progressive thinkers at the time and rooted in a North American isolationism. It is intriguing, however, to speculate that Martin's diplomatic efforts 'to manage' the Vietnam war might well be rooted in a Newmanesque conservatism.

And a *mea culpa*. Professor Dolata is doubtless right to chide me for not more explicitly documenting Martin's behavior in the House of Commons and his relations with other members. I can only plead that these represent a broad judgment from reading many small exchanges in House debates that hardly seemed to merit citing or footnoting. Dolata is right too to object that I might have drawn out more fully the theoretical significance of the masculine environments that Martin encountered at secondary school, at St. Michael's College, and in the House of Commons. However, the forward momentum of the biographical form discouraged me from detailed explanations likely to divert readers from the course of Martin's life story. Less persuasive, however, is Dolata's challenging of the link between polio and Martin's commitment to activist government. As I make clear elsewhere in the biography, polio helped define Martin Sr. – his childhood relationships, his ambitions, his faith, and his politics. The illness forged a profound and remarkable link between Paul Sr. and his son, Paul Martin Jr. The opening paragraphs of Professor Nethercote's review capture this essential truth.