

advocates and political leaders to support dictators whose compliance with the corporate agenda rests on the repression, and often oppression, of their own populations – Suharto, of course, being at the forefront during the Vancouver meeting.

The book is somewhat repetitive regarding the APEC events and even

more so regarding the law, but since each writer adds a new interpretation, this fault is not deadly. There is some unevenness in tone between the more academic arguments and the more polemical arguments, but, on balance, this is a good set of essays worth reading.

*The Politics of Resentment:
British Columbia Regionalism and Canadian Unity*

Philip Resnick

Vancouver: UBC Press for Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2000.
172 pp. \$34.95 cloth.

BY STÉPHANE LÉVESQUE
Universities of Western Ontario

PROLIFIC POLITICAL SCIENTIST Philip Resnick has ambitiously sought to conceptualize British Columbia as a “region-province” and to study its role in the Canadian unity debate. Although he set out to make a comparative analysis of British Columbia regionalism and Québec nationalism, Resnick found that the abundant material on British Columbia required an exclusive emphasis on that province. This is mildly disappointing to a Québécois such as me but still good news for all those interested in the past, present, and future political lives of British Columbians. Indeed, *The Politics of Resentment* is one of the first books to examine the insufficiently appreciated role that British Columbia has played in Canadian political debates in the last forty years or so.

Divided into six chapters, the book begins with an overview of British

Columbia as a particular region of Canada as historians, social scientists, politicians, and writers have understood the matter. In later chapters, Resnick constructs an analytical framework – not very well defined – to examine the political views of BC premiers and other politicians (Chapter 2), from W.A.C. Bennett to Glen Clark; the views of various British Columbia opinion makers, business spokespersons, consultants, journalists, academics, and others (Chapter 3); and, finally, the comments of British Columbians during the British Columbia Unity Panel hearings of 1997 (Chapter 4). In Chapter 5, Resnick presents his own construction of BC regionalism. He concludes that, in the minds of British Columbians, there resides a feeling of hurt, of betrayal, of unfair treatment in the Federation, and this he calls the “politics of resentment” (p. 119). For him, resentment is the result not only

of past actions – or neglect – on the part of the federal government, but also of an envy of Québec's position. That "other" distinct region-province has largely monopolized Canadian politics since the 1960s. In the last chapter, Resnick adopts a position on Québec nationalism that, ironically, has grown in popularity in English Canada since the 1995 referendum. He engages in a series of hypothetical answers to the question: "What if ... Québec separates?"

Resnick's analysis of British Columbia regionalism is likely to attract considerable attention from social scientists on the West Coast. The *Politics of Resentment* not only offers a discussion on Canadian unity as seen from the Pacific, but it also dares to ask what makes British Columbia such a distinct, unique place in Canada – a place that Robin Fisher believes historians have not yet adequately defined. For Resnick, British Columbia is "a pluralistic, multifaceted society that does not lend itself to easy generalizations" (p. 19). Yet, he thinks of British Columbia as a "region-province" in Canada characterized by geographic location, specific economy, population inflow, and new patterns of integration into the larger global economy. British Columbia's distinctiveness makes its residents feel they have a distinct regional identity and problems that are not well understood in Ottawa. Resnick is quick to add, on the other hand, that, unlike Québec nationalism, this distinctiveness remains compatible with pan-Canadian nationalism and unity. In other words, "region" and "nation" have for him very different

places in the collective imaginings of British Columbians than they do in the collective imaginings of Québécois.

Unfortunately, Resnick's suggestion of rethinking the symbolic makeup of Canada on the basis of province, region-province, and nation-province (for Québec) falls short. If the Canadian Federation is de facto regionally divided and governed, then Resnick offers no clear explanation of how and why some provinces would deserve the status of "region-province" instead of "province." More important, Resnick's construction is caught between Scylla and Charybdis. On one side, one has the negative attitudes of British Columbia towards Québec's special status and powers in the Federation, an arrangement likely to incite region-provinces to also ask for more powers and recognition – something Resnick rejects. On the other side, all other "provinces" will surely oppose particular status or power for region-provinces because this would go against the sacred dogma of the equality of provinces and against English Canada's "territorial conception of federalism," to use Will Kymlicka's expression. In the end, it is uncertain what British Columbia would gain by being officially a "region-province."

Resnick's work has value, offering an unexpected approach to BC politics and Canadian unity. His view of British Columbia's distinctiveness should have a healthy effect on those who write and make BC history and politics. Yet, in the present circumstances, his (re)-construction of Canadian federalism lacks clarity and applicability.