
Book Reviews

***The Good Fight: Marcel Cadieux and Canadian Diplomacy* by Brendan Kelly**

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Marcel Cadieux died six months before I joined the Canadian Department of External Affairs. His portrait, hanging in a corridor on the eighth floor of the Lester B. Pearson building in Ottawa amid those of the undersecretaries and deputy ministers who preceded and succeeded him, depicts a man with an austere countenance and a direct, piercing gaze. A fighter. In his superb, comprehensive, and highly readable biography, Brendan Kelly provides an insightful view of the character behind that gaze, set against over three decades of exceptional diplomatic service abroad and key, ever more senior bureaucratic roles at headquarters. Marcel Cadieux's storied career was grounded in his formative years in Montréal, his passion for legal issues, and his early experience as a foreign service officer during World War II and the beginnings of the Cold War. Using a wealth of sources, including Cadieux's "journal in time," his many letters, and interviews with former colleagues, Kelly humanizes a man who rightfully stands with the legendary undersecretaries of the foreign service: OD Skelton; Norman Robertson; and Lester Pearson. The ascent of Cadieux

was, however, more unusual in that he worked both the legal and personnel sides of the Canadian Department of External Affairs, providing him with an opportunity to shape the fledgling foreign service on the bread and butter issues affecting employees as much as the larger policy questions of the day. The approach he set for the former influenced the conditions of foreign service for future generations of Canadian diplomats, particularly the administrative modernization policies of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The welfare, recruitment, retention, and career development (“rotationality”) of foreign service officers remained a passionate theme throughout his career, despite or perhaps because of habitually uncomprehending views among the Ottawa mandarin.

As Kelly describes, it is without question that the greatest contribution Cadieux made to policy was on the highly sensitive Canada/Québec/France file of the 1960s, the apotheosis of which was the *cri du balcon* in Montréal by French President Charles De Gaulle in July 1967. Cadieux countered the steady advance of Québec’s wish for an international personality like a chess master, offering sound legal arguments to Cabinet and, at times, directly to Québec City in countering the evolving Gérin-Lajoie doctrine for international agreements for Québec (with a view towards eventual treaty-making) with an overly willing, if not cynical, France. Cadieux’s well-reasoned, but often pugnacious approach won him no friends in the Québec government, unease among his francophone colleagues in Ottawa, and nervousness in the Cabinet of Prime Minister Lester Pearson. As one source remarked, Cadieux accurately predicted every move by both Québec and France from 1964 to 1967. Yet Cadieux knew when to press federal positions hard, when to seek compromise, and when to present a pragmatic plan that would support Québec’s international aspirations without endangering national unity. He reshaped the department that he led through establishing a task force and promoting the most capable officers to deal with the international aspects of federal/provincial relations.

Simultaneously, he pushed for greater bilingualism in the federal public service and more recruitment of francophones from Québec and across the country. To a great degree, it was the Cadieux *marge de manoeuvre* that established the blueprint for Canadian provincial engagement both abroad and in international organizations that governs activities to this day. It is worth highlighting Kelly's perceptive rendering of the diplomatic cut and thrust of the Gabon affair in the early days of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, where there was an attempt to have Québec represent Canada at a meeting of education ministers of French-speaking countries.

Kelly expertly probes the symbiotic interaction and relationship between the political and bureaucratic levels, including those of Cadieux as undersecretary with Paul Martin Sr. as his minister and, later, Pierre Trudeau as Prime Minister. Trust, transparency, and mutual respect necessarily represent the cornerstone of all such relationships. Cadieux's superb professionalism shines through but not without the frustrations he committed to his journal and shared with his closest departmental friends, ranging from recognizing Martin's indecision and political leadership aspirations to Trudeau's overt skepticism concerning the role of the diplomatic service. In addition, there was the apparent inability of the political class to recognize that a department charged with pursuing an active foreign policy also required the budgetary wherewithal to execute it. A signal Cadieux concern was the foreign policy review, "Foreign Policy for Canadians," released in 1970, where, in his opinion, ceaseless public consultations could have been dispensed with through a few well-placed Trudeau speeches on foreign policy.

But Cadieux did have the trust and respect of the highest political levels of his country. His tenure as ambassador to the United States from 1970 to 1975, after fifteen years in Ottawa, spanned the United States' decision to relinquish the gold standard for dollar convertibility with its consequential shock on the bilateral economic and trade relationship, a myriad of bilateral

irritants, the last years of the Vietnam War, and the strained personal relationship between Prime Minister Trudeau and President Richard Nixon. The arrival of a more left-leaning minority government in Ottawa in 1972 (thanks to a balance of power push from the New Democratic Party), coupled with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries oil crisis, required Cadieux to employ his great diplomatic skills to broker disputes and irritants between Washington's Republicans (made easier by President Gerald Ford following Nixon's resignation) and Ottawa. Relieved of the intensity of the "intermestic" work that characterized his tenure in Washington, Cadieux spent his last years of public service in Brussels as ambassador to the European Community, working on the much-vaunted "Third Option" or "contractual link" for Canada with Europe. That work ultimately amounted to little more than a theoretical precept that lacked private sector and whole of government backing on the Canadian end and a palpable lack of enthusiasm to follow through among the Europeans. Concurrently, Cadieux became the lead negotiator for longstanding boundary issues between Canada and the United States and masterfully negotiated an East Coast Fishery Agreement only to see it elude ratification in the United States Senate. Kelly's analysis of all of these negotiations and the role played by Marcel Cadieux at their centre is detailed and riveting.

This excellent biography should be required reading for foreign policy practitioners and academics alike. Kelly has deeply mined his primary sources in both official languages and has offered up a narrative that convincingly challenges some existing precepts of this period in Canadian diplomatic history. He offers us a convincing portrait of one of the greats in Canadian public service. In his Marcel Cadieux we see a selfless diplomat of firm and fearless skill, as well as a Canadian and Québécois patriot deeply devoted to national unity. Through Brendan Kelly's rendering, we also see Cadieux as the epitome of the human, networked, and connected diplomat. Today's world needs more of them.