

exploring the other side of the treaties, the so-called, national "white perspective" (pp. xiii-xvi). This is most disappointing, since the colonizer's perspective is well known and has been rejected in the 20th century by the federal courts. These duelling constructions are evident throughout the book, resulting in an unbalanced assessment.

Another conceptual bias arises from what the author calls the "white perspective." That is, the book is based on the assumption that treaties with indigenous people are politically anomalous. This is the American colonizer perspective, and it is propaganda. The fact is that, around the world, treaties with indigenous polities are the norm, not the anomaly. The concept of political anomaly is the apologetic context allowing latter-day colonizers to ignore indigenous self-determination for self-interest. This one-sided colonial perspective predominates in various analyses, making the value of the volume questionable.

For example, Prucha builds his book around Chief Justice John Marshall's suggestion, in the Cherokee Nation case (1831), that "[t]he condition of the Indians in relation to the United States is perhaps unlike that of any other two people in existence" (p. 550). But the author ignores Marshall's argument, in Worcester 1832, that the Indian treaty, "in its language, and in its provisions, is formed, as near as may be, on the model of treaties between the crowned heads of Europe" (p. 550). If the latter understanding was taken as fundamental, the thesis of the book and its explanation of legal oppression would collapse.

It was also disappointing to see the author begin his analysis with the Delawares, in 1778, overlooking the Mikmaq-Maliseet treaty with the United States, in Watertown 1776. This is a small point, but a significant one, in the context of the neglect of the northeastern states that has recently been corrected by Congress.

In a history of American Indian Treaties in the post-colonial era, scholars expect fair evaluations. Any author must challenge assumptions rooted in colonialism, many of which remain today. Historians should strive to keep from affirming or imposing new forms of colonialism. They should refuse either to indulge in colonial nostalgia or to justify colonialist policy and practice. This book missed a tremendous opportunity to balance colonialist with aboriginal history.

Ethnicity and Aboriginality: Case Studies in Ethnonationalism

Michael Levin, ed.

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993. xiii + 179 pp. \$50.00 (cloth), \$19.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Deirdre Meintel

Université de Montréal

This collection is based on a conference, held in late 1990, that took as its point of departure the propositions about ethnicity and nationalism made in a 1973 article by Walker Conner. The articles focus on groups having some claim to aboriginal status, by virtue of a historical tie to a given territory and, in most cases, a cultural distinctiveness from surrounding groups. A wide range of cases are presented from Canada, Malaysia, Kenya, Nigeria and Australia.

One interesting issue that emerges from several articles is the international dimension of ethnonationalism in the present day. Audiences and reference groups beyond

the border of the nation-state are likely to affect how identity and nationalist claims are played out, as Tanner notes in his article on the Inuit of Labrador. This theme is central to Nagata's article on Malays, whose aboriginal status (so unlike that of other groups described in the book) is privileged in the national context but irrelevant to their identification with Muslims from the central Islamic states of the Middle East.

This collection also shows that the process of naturalizing language and culture, in order to assert "self-evident" claims to ethnic jurisdiction (to paraphrase Levin, p. 164), is fraught with political risks and contradictions, whether these claims be based on historical priority or on sheer numbers. For example, an ethnonationalist claim based on historical depth may be challenged by another group with still older roots. As Nagata shows, some Chinese and Indian families have been present on the Malay peninsula longer than some who claim Malay identity. One is reminded of Native Peoples' responses to certain historical justifications for sovereignty invoked by Quebec nationalists. Moreover, as Nagata notes, privileging one group on the basis of aboriginal status means discriminating against immigrants, not always a feasible or acceptable alternative.

Furthermore, as Levin points out in his study of the Bette (Nigeria), ethnonationalism in one group can intensify the group identities of others in the same nation or region. This was the case for the Bette, a small group in relation to their Igbo neighbours, whose efforts to secede led to the short-lived state of Biafra. Except for brief episodes, though, the Bette have generally rejected nationalism, perhaps because of their small numbers, choosing instead to defend their interests through alliances with other Nigerian groups outside their region.

In the book's conclusion, Levin notes that secession is only rarely the solution adopted by groups seeking cultural autonomy. In fact, there is a range of possible modalities for satisfying ethnonationalist aspirations short of outright ethnic separateness. However, negotiating the issues involved may well require overcoming historical biases built into existing legislation and policy, as Asch and Macklem show in their analyses of Canada's relation with its Native Peoples. Tanner's chapter on the Inuit of Labrador shows, furthermore, that not all groups with a claim to aboriginal status accept the legitimacy of the modern state.

Probably the collection's greatest strength is the indisputable competence of the authors regarding the societies and groups they treat. The empirical basis of the papers is generally thorough and convincing. However, I would like to have seen more comparative discussion, with contributors relating their cases to others—whether in the present collection or not—such as Maoris and Tibetans, as well as to theoretical works on nationalism (e.g., those of Anthony Smith, Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner). Of course, Michael Levin's readable concluding chapter sheds light on some of the comparative issues implicit in the highly diverse analyses and case materials presented by the other contributors, and it leaves the reader with much to reflect upon. Lastly, an index and more detailed information on the contributors, whose university affiliations are listed at the end of the book, would have been helpful.

Though the interest-value of some of the articles will be largely restricted to those who focus specifically on the political and cultural claims of indigenous peoples, several (those by Nagata and Tanner, in particular) are presented in such a way as to be interesting to a wider audience. Beyond its contribution to scholars concerned with the political organization of ethnic diversity, the high quality of the collection as a whole should be emphasized.