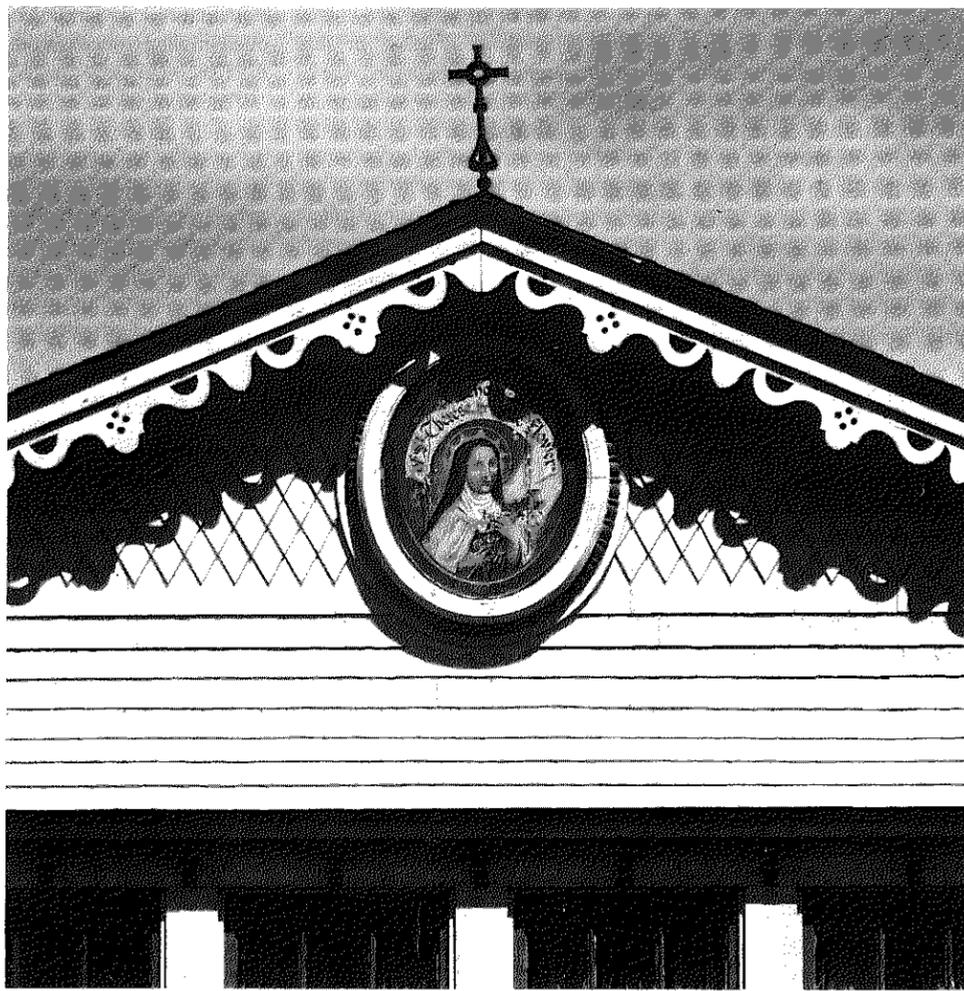


itself. Rather, love of place often intrudes in a gushing fashion in the description of natural phenomena, and the sense of loss for a passing way of life invariably becomes nostalgia.

This is a pity because the best Maritime art does possess that toughness which can juxtapose historical loss with some promise not of "a future" but of what is here now. The paintings of Alex Colville and novels of David Adam Richards come to mind. However confining the small town mentality may be, some primal identification between people and place remains. And this makes the obsessive dream of Toronto to become a "world-class city" seem parochial indeed. The photography of Thaddeus Holownia often captures this sense brilliantly (in his marshland work, for example), but the photographs reproduced in this book fail to do justice to his vision. Perhaps the theme of "Gas Station" is just not to my taste; but the failure of the photographic images undoubtedly has something to do with a straightforwardly inappropriate context. *People and Place* itself, in fact, is a highly uneven collection of essays looking for an appropriate context.

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photograph by Thaddeus Holownia, reprinted from *People and Place*

Still circulating, slowly working their way in from the periphery, the Native margins in this country: stories, rumours, half-truths, lies, myths. Stories about pipelines, about hydro-electric projects, about the sporadic explosions of violence, about mercury poisoning. Stories that are the by-product of, or the sub-plots in a larger pattern of the systematic, continuing oppression of the aboriginal inhabitants of Canada. Somewhere in these sub-plots – as in the case of the two stories you will read about here, the story of a doctor or the story of a uranium mine – we perhaps catch a glimpse of these historical processes in their everyday disguise, as experiences. And, more rarely, a glimpse of how the historical process of dispossessing Native people is resisted on a day-to-day level, of the struggle that life has become in these margins, of the ways Native people find to fight against the Canadian State and international capital.

The two stories reviewed below illustrate, in part, that this struggle spills over the boundary of political economy as we narrowly conceive it, and even over the boundary of culture as that concept is exchanged in Native Studies. The struggle has come to inform every aspect of life, however we might choose to analytically slice it up. So, in one case we hear a story of how medical care in a small Native community is a highly charged, political issue. In the other, of how a large uranium mining project changes (threatens?) the way of life of another community by destroying the environmental basis of traditional Native pursuits. Some of these stories are told well, others badly; but I think we must read them all carefully and learn what we can, piece together what we can, because in some way or another we have a role to play. What we know helps to determine that oldest of political questions, whose side we're on.

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An Error in Judgment: The Politics of Medical Care in an Indian/White Community
by Dara Culhane Speck
Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987,
281 pp.

Alert Bay, the setting for Dara Culhane Speck's *An Error in Judgment: The Politics of Medical Care in an Indian/White Community*, is located on Cormorant Island off the northern tip of Vancouver Island. I read this book the week I returned home to Denman Island, also offshore, midway up the eastern coast of the Island. Like the weather, Speck's book was grey, dark and disturbing.

Renee Smith, an eleven-year-old member of the Nimpkish Indian Band, died in an Alert Bay hospital of a ruptured appendix on January 22nd, 1979. The author, a Band member by marriage, details the death and the events

which followed. The far more than a mere. These include: the inquest, a provincial by the Band; the College of Physicians revoke the licence of the sician found responsible for the death of an over woman from an over arrival in Alert Bay physician; his subsequent suicide; and, finally, into health care in Alert Bay is a carefully crafted how, exactly, the "p... The author intersperses with background ch... and Native communities the history of the c... on Kwakwaka'wakw health care in Canada B.C. in particular.

The result is a s... tion, not only to our myriad of issues wh... Nations in this country methodology, researching.

Stories about D... lendar along the focuses on Dr. Pick... ism, negligence a... serve as a vehicle to... historical and polit... which the administr... affairs and Indian hea... The book is an am... sive portrayal of soc... diction, conflict a... small community c... dian and White res... vincingly exposes th... colonial attitudes o... Alert Bay. Her anal... and supremacy i... searched. Using a... scriptive analysis of... stration in the co... from local papers... around the contro... death and transcrip... inquiries, Speck pu... colonial, assimilat... tudes are merely p... torical past.

Her treatment of... nity is open, honest... does not gloss over... conflicts and destr... her own adopted pe... haps best illustrat... comes of the boyco... quiry. Noting the... administration of th... hospital, the Provin... mends the appoint... Eric Powell, an A...

which followed. The book, however, is far more than a mere narrative of events. These include: the death; a coroner's inquest, a provincial inquiry boycotted by the Band; the refusal of the B.C. College of Physicians and Surgeons to revoke the licence of the alcoholic physician found responsible by the inquest; the death of another young Indian woman from an overdose of pills; the arrival in Alert Bay of a man posing as a physician; his subsequent arrest and suicide; and, finally, a federal inquiry into health care in Alert Bay. The book is a carefully crafted demonstration of how, exactly, the "personal is political." The author intersperses her narrative with background chapters on the White and Native communities in Alert Bay, the history of the community, insights on Kwakwaka'wakw culture, and the organization and politics of Indian health care in Canada in general and B.C. in particular.

The result is a significant contribution, not only to our understanding of a myriad of issues which confront Indian Nations in this country, but to feminist methodology, research and critical writing.

Stories about Dr. Jack Pickup are legendary along the B.C. coast. Speck focuses on Dr. Pickup, whose alcoholism, negligence and racist attitudes serve as a vehicle to illustrate the larger historical and political context within which the administration of Indian Affairs and Indian health care are located. The book is an amazingly comprehensive portrayal of social struggle, contradiction, conflict and resistance in a small community divided between Indian and White residents. Speck convincingly exposes the individualism and colonial attitudes of the White elite of Alert Bay. Her analysis of White power and supremacy is thoroughly researched. Using a statistical and descriptive analysis of health care administration in the community, material from local papers, letters generated around the controversy over Smith's death and transcripts from subsequent inquiries, Speck puts to rest any idea that colonial, assimilationist and racist attitudes are merely part of Canada's historical past.

Her treatment of the Indian community is open, honest and refreshing. She does not gloss over the contradictions, conflicts and destructive behaviour of her own adopted people. These are perhaps best illustrated by one of the outcomes of the boycotted Provincial Inquiry. Noting the inadequacies in the administration of the local community hospital, the Provincial Inquiry recommends the appointment of Reverend Eric Powell, an Anglican missionary

who had spent a lot of time in the Kwakwaka'wakw area. Speck carefully documents the response of the Nimpkish Band. In doing so, she reveals the impact of missionaries on Indian Nations and the difficulty faced by the Band in responding to this apparently benevolent but obviously inadequate response to their demands. The paternalism of this move is made obvious as is the internal problem of the Band in resisting the appointment. Here, Speck ties together contemporary political difficulties with historically-constituted problems, noting that many older Band residents were loyal to their priest and that elders are typically respected in Indian communities, thus complicating Band opposition.

There is one event portrayed by the author which perhaps more than any other in the book best captures the sensibilities of the Nimpkish Nation in their struggle for control over health care. Many Canadians will remember the case of Roberto Enrique Trujillo (alias Dr. Robert Rifleman). Trujillo had made a career out of posing in the States and Mexico as a child psychologist, physician and lecturer. Using documents stolen from a Dr. Robert Rifleman, Trujillo presented himself to the community in September of 1979 as a physician. He quickly established himself as a well-liked alternative to Dr. Jack Pickup, the town's long-standing alcoholic physician.

However, Trujillo is discovered and while in custody, commits suicide. When no one claims the body and the Anglican church refuses to bury him because of his suicide, the Indian community buries him as Dr. Robert Rifleman in the Band cemetery. The eulogy says it all:

He may not have been a real doctor but at least he has shown us the kind of treatment we have a right to expect. He came and helped us in our distress. We don't condemn this man. He was our friend.

This will not be an easy book to read, especially for those who have no previous experience with Indian Nations, their history, and struggle for self-government. It is essential reading for those concerned with Native/Canadian relations, Indian health care and community development. The lessons it contains are many, no less among them the author's conclusion that not only is the personal political, the political can be very personal.

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Wollaston: People Resisting Genocide

by Miles Goldstick

Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987, 315 pp.

Since 1984, Canada has been the largest single producer and exporter of uranium in the Western world. This extraordinary position in the international nuclear economy is made possible by the presence of large high-grade deposits in north central Canada, particularly Saskatchewan. Uranium City, Rabbit Lake, Key Lake, Collin's Bay, Wollaston Lake. These fragments of the landscape are also the names of uranium mines. More importantly, they are also home to a Native population whose economic base has traditionally been oriented around fishing and trapping. These tiny communities are Canada's front line in the battle against nuclear technology. *Wollaston: People Resisting Genocide* chronicles their struggle against the uranium mining industry, a struggle against environmental destruction, against economic injustice and the international power politics associated with nuclear armaments.

Because most of the uranium deposits are located on or near Native lands, the responsibility for opposing the mining industry in northern Saskatchewan has fallen to the area's Chipewyan and Metis population. Claims to land title, which have been a central concern for Native communities throughout Canada, have even greater urgency here. In one of many transcribed statements from a blockade held in June of 1985, Jake Badger of Mistawasis summarizes the situation as follows:

The Land belongs to all people and when there is something threatening the land, like the way it is being raped up here, it should be a concern to all because it concerns all, not only the people from around here; because all over the world the uranium is affecting the land.

The nuclear war begins on Native land.

In many ways Badger's statement represents the core of Miles Goldstick's book. In *Wollaston*, Goldstick seeks to sketch the structural relationships between multinational activities in several different sectors and to explicate the political processes which form the context for uranium mining. At the same time, he tries to bear witness to the personal dimension of a political

struggle between the relatively powerless indigenous citizens and their opponents, the representatives of multinational industry.

This bi-polarity of the book, this oscillation between various levels of abstraction, is expressed in a narrative which moves from technical discussion of the process of uranium refinement, to descriptions of public meetings and journals of a blockade. A large proportion of the text is made up of direct quotations or transcribed interviews with local residents. Indeed, *Wollaston* is a veritable pastiche of selected voices. Some of these are extremely elegant, some poignant, some frighteningly naive. There is both optimism and despair here, juxtaposed one against the other according to a logic that Goldstick has failed to convey if, indeed, such a logic informs their arrangement at all.

In a text which is so self-conscious in its efforts to achieve representativeness, which refuses to speak on behalf of anyone, but which gives space and voice to a formerly silent people, the question of authorship demands to be asked. Roland Barthes comes to mind: "Who Speaks? Who writes? For Whom?" Goldstick's endeavour to achieve textual multivocality, and to thereby enact a democratic textual politics that would correspond with his commitment to a broader participatory democracy, falls far short of its goal. Editorial sloppiness and the repetition of excerpted statements contribute to the book's amateurish quality. These weaknesses are further compounded by a failure to adequately confront the contradictions between the various voices, including those between Goldstick and members of the Lac La Hache Band of Wollaston.

Who Speaks? Native people, impoverished and victimized by misinformation and neglect. Environmental activists concerned with the effects of radiation on the food chain and those concerned with the impact of a possible war. We are reminded that plutonium, the basis of nuclear arms, is produced in every nuclear reactor, regardless of its function. However, this fact is not foremost in the statements made by Native and Metis people who inhabit the area around Wollaston. Their concerns focus on poverty, on the need for employment, the broken promises of Eldorado Nuclear Ltd (the main operating company in the area), on the sense of powerlessness that comes from being forced onto reserve land and then having no control over the kinds of pollutants which are injected into the environment. Frequently, Goldstick cites people who express fear of and for the future, fear that is poignant in both its honesty and its naivete: