

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.

*Frank Tester is Professor of Environmental Studies, York University and Visiting Professor of Social Work, Micmac Social Work Programme, Dalhousie University. He has taught and worked with Indian Nations for*

*nearly 20 years and makes his home on Denman Island, British Columbia.*

### **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:

We mothers have a lot of young children. The greatest concern of the mothers today is what the children are going to live on if the water, land and animals are destroyed.

Who Writes? This question is unanswerable without considering Barthes' last question, "For Whom?" Miles Goldstick's commitment to the struggle against uranium mining in northern Saskatchewan, and his passionate devotion to the rights of Wollaston people cannot be doubted. But neither commitment nor passion can suffice as the basis for a good book. It is difficult to imagine the audience which Goldstick envisioned when writing *Wollaston*. There are passages in this book which assume that the reader retains memories of undergraduate chemistry classes in which one memorized the periodic table and at least feigned a familiarity with basic nuclear physics. There are others in which the philosophy of Ghandian civil disobedience is debated. These are interspersed with reproductions of posters, newspaper editorial columns, letters from members of the provincial legislature, and bad photographs.

I cannot imagine that *Wollaston: People Resisting Genocide* will find a broad readership among the Native Canadians who feature in it. Nor can I imagine that it would be palatable to

politicians with power to effect policy changes at the provincial or federal level. Mining executives will undoubtedly shrug it off as more hysterical propaganda which is poorly documented and filled with ambiguous statistics. A few die-hard activists and aspiring environmentalists may read it as a testimonial to popular protest which, although ultimately ineffective in blocking mining activities in northern Saskatchewan, gives strength through example. While it is perhaps true that the substantive content of a book should not be censored by a consideration of audience, I think it is also true that writing is responsive to an imagined readership, in addition to being responsive to the people about whom one writes. And this is particularly the case with a book such as *Wollaston*, which seeks to learn from mistakes, to analyze the failings of popular resistance in Canada, and to make recommendations for the future.

However, it is in his attempt to offer concrete policy options and safety guidelines that Goldstick's failures are most conspicuous. After devoting much of the text to a debunking of the popular belief that dilution is the solution to pollution, Goldstick can only suggest avoidance of nuclear wastes and careful monitoring of radioactivity levels in

areas where uranium mining is taking place. Quite simple, radioactivity cannot be avoided as can other wastes. Its most sinister aspect is its ability to invade the ecosystem, to accumulate in the food chain and to penetrate living systems silently and, at first, imperceptibly. This fact is horribly apparent in statistics about increased miscarriage rates, food contamination, cancer and birth defects in human and animal populations.

It is therefore somewhat surprising to read Goldstick's suggested precautions in a sub-section of "Chapter 2 — The Mines," titled "Remedial Action." Here, he advocates such measures as fencing to keep animals from feeding in contaminated areas, posting warning signs, regular and systematic monitoring in the vicinity of uranium mines, and better removal equipment. These actions might form the most basic initiatives in environmental protection, but they are far from adequate to deal with the problem at hand. And that problem, while it is both immediate and acute in Canada, is global in nature. We cannot simply run and hide from uranium; nor can we pack up our radioactive wastes and take them to Native lands or other parts of the world for dumping, although this has been standard practice for several decades now. The resulting destruc-

tion of marine ecologies in the North Sea, the contamination of people and their environs in third world countries where most are ignorant of radiation hazards, are the result of short-term policies which are regional in character and which deny the fundamental interconnectedness of all ecosystems on earth.

Goldstick's failures are critical ones. Upon finishing *Wollaston: People Resisting Genocide*, I felt, with a certain disappointment, as though the banality of evil, to borrow from Hannah Arendt, may well be surpassed by the banality of our response to it. And this is a grave pity, because the issues of uranium mining, of the oppression and silencing of Native people, and of our (white Anglo-Canadian) complicity with both, deserve immediate attention. The virtue of Goldstick's book is that it points out the relationship between the various structures of power and between processes which appear, at first glance, to be independent of each other. These are important issues, and in raising them Goldstick does us a service. Unfortunately, I do not feel the book fulfills its role or its promise.

Rosalind Morris is a graduate student in Social Anthropology at York University.

Conferences

**Canadian Graduate Conference in Philosophy**  
November 4,5,6, 1989  
Halion (CGSCP Sec of Philosophy, Mc Hamilton, Ontario,

**Representing Aids: Criticism**

November 11-13, 1989  
Western Ontario, La conference will ex presentations of AIDS osophy, theology, ing arts, and the me to the conference w sity of humanities retical perspectives and national backg vailing emphasis at be the impact of the tural and intellectual information contac Miller, Dept. of En Western Ontario, L

**National Forum on Un/Underemployment the Humanities and of New Professional**

Ottawa, November tion from: Canadian Humanities, 151 St tawa, Canada KIP 5

**Conference on Latin Popular Culture**

April 13-15, 1989, E gan. Write to: J.D American Studies State University, 48823

Calls For Paper

**Strategies of Critiq Annual Graduate**

**Cultural Software**

658 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M6J 1E5  
416-863-6081

Push for the creative artist.

CREATE

Complete Macintosh systems and support from Cultural Software.  
*Challenge your imagination.*

Design: Linzi Bartolini. Production: Greg Van Alstyne. Tools: Apple Macintosh, Adobe Illustrator 86, Abaton C-Scan, Quark X-Press. Output to paper on a Linetronic L300.

Apple, the Apple logo, and Macintosh are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc.

P R E S E N T S

Public Access

*Counter Talk: The Body*

\$2.99 Discourse

A lecture series exploring the interdisciplinary aspects of discourses on the body.

Tuesday evenings at 8:00 p.m. at **A.R.C.** 658 Queen St. West, Toronto, Ontario

Single lecture \$2.99  
Series ticket \$24.00  
Available from Pages Bookstore, Public Access, and A.R.C.  
For more information call 860-0701

**Public Access**  
24 Ryerson Ave, suite 310, Toronto, Ont. M5T 2P3

September 20	Jane Gallop
September 27	Lola Lemire Tostevin
October 4	Charles Levin
October 11	Nicole Brossard
October 18	Mira Schor
October 25	John O'Neill
November 1	Phillip Monk
November 8	Abigail Solomon-Godeau
November 15	Simon Watney
November 22	Arthur Kroker
November 29	Judith Barry

Presented with the assistance of the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, Metropolitan Toronto-Cultural Affairs Division, and the Toronto Arts Council.