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**Augie Fleras and Jean Leonard Elliot**, *The Nations Within: Aboriginal-State Relations in Canada, The United States and New Zealand*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 267.

Reviewed by Jim Albert  
*School of Social Work*  
*Carleton University*

The struggle of Aboriginal Peoples to be recognized and acknowledged as "nations within" continues in all three national territories referred to in this book. For many reasons it is not always clear what the issues are and what the different positions are. Rhetoric and political pronouncements on the part of the state usually cloud the issues, with efforts being made to sound reasonable without any serious intention of responding to the real concerns of Aboriginal Peoples. This book plunges into this territory with the goal of informing the reader about historical events and the current situation in the evolution of Aboriginal-State relations in Canada, the United States and New Zealand. Overall, the authors have provided some useful information and have whetted the appetite to learn more about the comparative experience internationally. The majority of the text however, (6 substantive chapters) is about the experience within Canada and one chapter each is devoted to First Nations in the United States and in New Zealand.

The intent of the authors is to develop a comparative analysis, that will help in the understanding of the structures that are in place to manage relations and also the actions taken against the limitations imposed by these structures. They refer to an emerging paradigm shift. More about that later. They have taken their central concept from an earlier book by Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

The authors are both Associate Professors of Sociology at Canadian Universities and are drawing upon already available material. Their section on Aboriginal Nations in Canada is a useful overview of history and current issues, particularly for those with little background. For the reader with considerable background, these chapters will look very familiar. The two chapters on the Aboriginal Peoples in the United States and the Maori of New Zealand are quick snapshots of the experiences and aspirations of the First Nations in these territories.

The first substantive chapter is Chapter 3 and it presents some general information on the Aboriginal Peoples in Canada and what their concerns are, including treaty rights, land claims, inherent right and self-determination. The next chapter on Aboriginal Policy sketches the historical development of state policy and suggests that the spirit of the 1969 White Paper still roams the corridors of Parliament Hill in Ottawa. It discusses the current approach which is designed to give First Nations administrative control in a municipal form of government. I wouldn't agree that "Ottawa is anxious to forge a new working relationship based on mutual 'respect' and agreeable levels of power-sharing" (p. 53). The authors appear to contradict themselves at times. After painting a picture of paternalistic policies aimed at assimilation — they state "But a new paradigm based on decolonization of aboriginal-state relations has not yet taken hold" (p. 53). As far as I can see there is no evidence as yet that Ottawa is open to such a policy of decolonization. The authors' discussion of the state's overriding agenda of fiscal restraint basically argues that state policy toward Aboriginal Peoples is not likely to be inconsistent with that agenda. What does this say about a possible "paradigm shift"?

Chapter 5 examines the politics of self-government and the recent constitutional processes that have been engaged in, including the First Ministers' Meetings. Chapter 6 examines the bureaucratic structure put in place to manage aboriginal-state relations, the Department of Indian Affairs, tracing the early history of the First Indian Act to the establishment of DIA, to the current discussion about closing down the Department in favour of 'devolution'. There is some useful information here but some of this chapter is confusing. On the one hand the Department is seen as having the function of controlling Aboriginal Peoples, and later the authors state that the Department is an *intermediary* between the state and Aboriginal Peoples. Aboriginal People certainly don't see it as an intermediary — it is the direct instrument of the state. Again in this chapter, the authors state that a new paradigm has gained a foothold. Where?

Chapter 7 focuses on Aboriginal protest and gives a profile of the authors' perception of what has been happening. Aboriginal Peoples may present it somewhat differently. There is *reaction* against continuing assimilationist policies and practices but there is also *action* of survival and self-determination, expressions of self-acknowledged autonomy. I would have to challenge the authors' statement that protests are symbolically astute gestures (p. 86). They are actions of survival and defense and actions of self-confirmation.

Chapter 8 presents some information on the situation of the Inuit and Métis Peoples and traces some recent developments in their relationships to the state. They touch the surface here, but so much more is needed.

The next substantive chapter is Chapter 10 on Aboriginal Nations within the United States. It is hard to do justice to the topic in one chapter, but the authors provide some useful comparative information. They trace the historical behaviour of the state against Aboriginal Peoples, essentially a policy of detribalization, genocide assimilation, and the stripping of land from the people. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is the main instrument. The differences and similarities to the experiences of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada are pointed out.

Finally, Chapter 11 explores the historical and current experience of the Maori People in New Zealand. It traces a shift from blatant paternalism to an effort at some recognition of inherent rights. The Department of Maori Affairs was characterized at one period as a welfare department. The Maori, like Aboriginal Peoples in North America, have been struggling for survival and renewal, of culture, language and traditional lands. The authors present a useful analysis of the policy of "devolution," that would be applicable in the U.S., and Canada as well.

Overall, there is some useful information here. I would like to have seen a more substantial comparative approach used. We need more comparative information which will highlight and respect both similarities and differences. The book succeeds in pointing out the divergent positions of the state and the Aboriginal People in each national territory.

I would like to see more exploration of the ways in which State-Aboriginal relations are structured in keeping with the dominant political-economic relations that propel state actions. With globalization Aboriginal Peoples are experiencing an intensified assault in many ways. The state is under pressure to conform to the needs of international financial institutions, who have world views and intentions that are in direct opposition to those of Aboriginal Peoples around the world. State actions need to be understood in the context of this larger reality.

One book can only deal with so much material. What is missing here from an Aboriginal perspective is a clearer understanding of who Aboriginal Peoples are and what they have to offer, and are giving to the larger society, to humanity. The danger is that Aboriginal Peoples will get defined in relation to others and not in relation to themselves. Also the historic experience affected the settlers too, not just the original peoples. A clear view of history would see the countries included in this study as having been built on plunder and destruction that surely dehumanized the settlers as well as the original peoples and this legacy of dehumanization runs through contemporary society.

As a general overview of the experience within Canada and a stimulant to international comparisons I would recommend this book.

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