

**Edward J. Hedican, *Ipperwash: The Tragic Failure of Canada's Aboriginal Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013). 320 pp. \$32.95 Softcover.**

In *Ipperwash: The Tragic Failure of Canada's Aboriginal Policy*, Edward J. Hedican laments the current status of Canadian-First Nations relations. While the title suggests a focus on the Chippewa reclamation of Ipperwash Provincial Park in 1995, the book also spans a wide range of historical land claims disputes and provides an introductory overview to Canadian Aboriginal policy. The central argument of *Ipperwash* is that Canada's Aboriginal policy is fundamentally flawed. This is evident in the 1995 fatal shooting of Indigenous protestor Dudley George by the OPP at Ipperwash but it is also endemic in Canadian policy more generally. As such the guiding questions throughout the study are: how did the policy get this way? And, what can be done?(3)

Hedican begins much of his overview of Aboriginal policy with European contact in North America. While this is understandable, as the focus is on Eurocentric policy, one would benefit from a history that does not so strongly center Europeans and settler Canadians. For instance, while Hedican skillfully navigates European-First Nations interactions through the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the numbered treaties and the Indian Act, there is very little mention of say the Kaswentha or Two Row Wampum forged between the Haudenosaunee people and Dutch settlers in 1613 and later reaffirmed by the British. While this is one specific example rooted in Haudenosaunee context, it is nonetheless important to emphasize for when Hedican later discusses the Caledonia reclamation in 2006, its absence in the discussion is striking. As well, by continually overemphasizing European treaties and policy as the singular point of analysis Hedican risks reproducing a liberal history of Turtle Island that, while explicitly intended to provide context for Indigenous resistance, nonetheless eschews a decolonizing framework that would necessarily center Indigenous perspectives.

With this in mind however, Hedican does deliver a strong overview of past and current Canadian policy. Specific focus is paid to the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), the creation of Nunavut in 1999, Canada's vote against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's apology for the residential school system, and the development of the federal Urban Aboriginal Strategy in 1997. As well, the first half of *Ipperwash* confidently reviews the relevant judicial history of First Nations land rights in the Canadian courts in a highly accessible and concise manner. This sets the stage for his later discussion on the politics of Indigenous resistance and confrontation with the Canadian state.

As the book progresses Hedican's own voice begins to shine through in his analysis of Indigenous resistance more generally, and the Ipperwash Inquiry in particular. Beginning with a common sense notion that settler Canadians are generally uninformed about and often confused by the regularity of Indigenous protest, blockades and land reclamations, Hedican investigates some of these flashpoint events. One of his most consistent findings is that, contrary to sensationalist representations that emphasize the seemingly capricious nature of conflicts between Indigenous protestors and police, these moments are preceded and influenced by long histories of Indigenous peoples' struggle against the Canadian state, its historical dispossessions and contemporary policies. As well, Hedican maintains a consistent critique of Canada's land claims policy throughout the book and how its many administrative and political failings tend to exacerbate unequal and oppressive relations between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples. Beginning in 1974 through to 2009, Hedican provides a comparative analysis of ten well-known instances of Indigenous resistance including Oka, Gustafsen Lake, Burnt Church, Caledonia and Grassy Narrows. By his own admission this is not intended to be an exhaustive or necessarily in depth account of Indigenous resistance. Rather, Hedican uses these brief vignettes in order to draw out some of their general similarities when looking at the broader picture of Canada-First Nations conflict. Argued with precision, Hedican concludes that, "in every case reviewed here, it has *not* been the use of force that eventually led to a resolution of conflict. On the contrary, negotiation and mediation have shown the best results."(140)

Following these broad overviews that historically situate Canadian Aboriginal policy Hedican begins his in depth analysis of Ipperwash and the inquiry. Here Hedican is strongest in his historical account of colonial dispossession of the Wiiwkwedong (Kettle Point) and Aashoodenong (Stony Point) First Nations, as well as in his analysis of Canada's implication in the settler colonial project. As such, Hedican provides a overview of the events of Ipperwash, how it was mismanaged by Mike Harris' Provincial Government as well as how these events were themselves influenced by and implicated in individual and institutional forms of contemporary racism. For Hedican, the death of Indigenous protestor Dudley George at the hands of the OPP should not be understood as a singular discriminatory event, rather as an outgrowth of the more general 'tragic failure of Canada's Aboriginal Policy.' Finally, as a remedy Hedican normatively encourages the Canadian State to adopt some of the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry namely better communication between the police and protestors facilitated by negotiators during reclamations, and the establishment of an *impartial* body dedicated to resolving treaty claims in Ontario. While decidedly optimistic, Hedican suggests that it is too early to determine whether the recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry will be adequately taken up and is concerned the Inquiry will be forgotten.