of these writers treated their wives with utter disdain, explaining their extra-marital affairs as a necessary form of artistic expression.

Biel explores these tensions with a critical but sympathetic eye. He appreciates the courage of his subjects whose politics and lifestyles, at least for a time, left them on the margins of American society. Like others who were part of the Old Left, they took up unpopular causes on behalf of unions, civil liberties, and educational reform. In so doing, they left a healthy and intriguing body of writing which will endure for generations still.

But they could also be self-righteous, intolerant, hypocritical and wrong. In reading this book, I was struck, uncomfortably, by the ways in which the New Left of the 1960s played out its own version of these earlier struggles. Though most 60s activists rejected the Communist Party, and kept up their affiliation with universities, there were other political perceptions — and illusions — which they shared with their leftist predecessors. They romanticized the political orientation of the working class, viewed it monolithically, and also failed to forge an effective partnership with it. Like middle-class radicals of other eras, including Biel's subjects, they could not quite decide whether they should attempt to lead or follow working-class organizations to the promised land. If the former, they risked elitism of their own; if the latter, they rendered meaningless the special role of intellectuals in political and labour movements.

Furthermore, as historian Patricia Jasen has noted, the New Left insisted on the virtue and necessity of intellectual autonomy, while, paradoxically, privileging with the university an ideology of social change. ["In Pursuit of Human Values (or Laugh When they Say That): The Student Critique of the Arts Curriculum in the 1960s," in Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid, eds., *Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education* (Montreal 1989) 247-271]. Thus university curricula should be "relevant" and political. But did this leave room for the non-aligned (independent) student, teacher, poet or artist? New Leftists had not satisfactorily resolved this intellectual dilemma before the movement went into decline. In the end, the sense of disillusionment that many New Leftists experienced echoed the political frustrations of socialists and ex-Communists of earlier times, as Biel's study reveals.

Along with idealism, the Left — old and new — brought naiveté and a poor sense of its own history to the world of political engagement. This seemed especially true of radical intellectuals. If the Left has a future that is to be more enduring than its past, it should learn some lessons from nearly a century of activism. Biel's book is a reasonable place to begin that exploration.

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Augie Fleras and Jean Leonard Elliott, *The Nations Within: Aboriginal-State Relations in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand* (Toronto: Oxford University Press 1992).

This study begins with the observation that very little comparative analysis has been done in studies of aboriginal politics and the authors intend to rectify that situation. Unfortunately, however, the book promises more than it delivers; neither specialists nor general readers will come away from it with a much better understanding of Native politics in any of the three countries selected for comparison. The authors ask all the pertinent and difficult questions about improving the situation of aboriginal peoples but do not offer much in the way of analysis or potential solutions. Indeed, in the conclusion, they offer the observation that, "Reform is inevitable" (231), leaving the reader more than a little perplexed about how the many hurdles that they have noted will be overcome.

The authors are sociologists with an interest in the position of ethnic groups in modern liberal democracies. Because their focus is contemporary, it might seem unfair to criticize their use of history, but they do make frequent references to the importance of history in understanding the issues. Unfortunately, historians will be distressed at the authors' use of history. More often than not, the authors simply assert that the history is important without providing any of it as evidence. When they do make statements of historical "fact," these are often gross generalizations that are easily challenged. For example, we are informed

that in the American War of Independence, the Natives all sided with the British. (138) And like so many non-historians, the authors frequently refer to Native culture before the colonial period as "traditional," as if no changes occurred in Native history until the Europeans arrived. There is no attempt at historical interpretation and analysis which could be very helpful in explaining *why* changes in aboriginal-state relations have occurred over the last two hundred years.

Sympathy for aboriginal aspirations for a greater measure of self-government is the engine that drives the discussion here, so readers will not find much critical analysis of contemporary Native politics. In those politics at the moment, there is a great deal of posturing, often expressed in emotional, symbolic terms that the authors tend to accept at face value. In particular, they assume the truth of accusations about secret government agendas and duplicity at the Department of Indian Affairs. At one point, they even imply that a conspiracy is afoot to keep the American public uninformed about the legal status of Native Americans. (168) Surely such provocative assertions require some evidence. The authors point out that the settler societies created myths about aboriginal peoples that need to be recognized for what they are; they should also recognize that First Nations politicians are just as creative in developing their own myths.

There is another form of one-sided discussion in this survey. In the Canadian section of the book, there is a lengthy consideration of aboriginal aspirations for self-government, but the perspective is almost entirely that of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) with its interest in province-like powers protected in a constitutional base. Of course, the AFN's position is probably the best-known because the AFN has the ear of the Canadian mass media, but there are other ideas being expressed by Native peoples across Canada that ought to be given equally serious consideration. The brief section on the Sechelt experiment in B.C. could have been expanded to include a discussion of alternatives to the AFN perspective.

One perplexing aspect of this book is the question of intended audience. Some sections are devoted to good basic background information to assist the novice, while in other sections, the authors assume that the reader has a detailed and sophisticated knowledge of the subject. Newcomers to the field will be baffled by the latter while initiates will be bored by the former. Neither is well served as a result. Even in some cases where background is provided, the organization of the material is counter-productive. For example, in the New Zealand section, issues arising from the Treaty of Waitangi are discussed before an explanation is provided about the origins and purpose of that treaty. The reader must shift back and forth in the text to sort it out. Perhaps this was really intended to be a post-modernist analysis!

Ultimately, the most disappointing aspect of this book is that the authors really have nothing new or original to say. Their sources are mostly secondary and journalistic; the ideas are drawn primarily from these. Although a comparison is promised, it is never developed (the book consists of separate sections on Canada, the United States and New Zealand) and the reader is left to draw the comparisons for her- or himself. The idea of "nationhood" is never defined or explored, even though it is the central construct of the discussion and there is an interesting new body of literature available on the subject. The concluding observation that liberal democracies require a "paradigm shift" to accept the ideas of collective rights and cultural pluralism is hardly a new insight, and has been more fully developed elsewhere.

The most useful part of the book is the survey of recent developments in New Zealand aboriginal affairs which remain largely unknown in North America. In the end, though, readers will find a quick review of the standard sources on contemporary Native politics just as helpful as *The Nations Within*.

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Paul Le Blanc, *Lenin and the Revolutionary Party*. Introduction by Ernest Mandel (New Jersey and London: Humanities Press 1990).

In Stalinist Poland, there was a joke about the schoolboy who comes home puzzled over a lesson his teacher had given on democratic centralism. Happy to play the tutor, the lad's