

BOOK REVIEWS

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH: Aboriginal Women Speak Out

Janet Silman (recorder). Toronto:
Women's Press, 1987.

Loretta Meade Kocsis

This book was published at a time when emotions in the Native community were running high. Bill C-31, the federal government's legislation removing gender bias from the *Indian Act*, had recently been proclaimed. Unfortunately, many of the First Nations, who were just beginning to exercise a modicum of self-government, resented this as being an infringement of their governing power to decide who is an Indian. In the middle were the women who had lost their status. For the most part they have been forgotten, despite the fact that it was they who precipitated this legislative change. *Enough is Enough* is an attempt by the very participants in this historical development to have their stories told.

The format of this book is straightforward and is divided into two parts. Part One undertakes the task of providing the reader with an insight into reserve life. Personal accounts of individual women, and their experiences of growing up on the reserve, are used in accomplishing this task. Part Two describes the many events that led to the legislative changes of the *Indian Act*. Personal accounts of the women are effective in demonstrating the many obstacles they faced in their attempts for change. It is quite evident that the author was unable to decide whether the book should be educational or expressional. There were instances of both throughout the book; however, there is insufficient information for it to be truly educational.

The Introduction sets out a good description of the *Indian Act*. However, the

author's historical analysis of the Act is too short. What is needed was a more detailed account of what the laws were and how they affected Native People, and how these women were treated differently from the status women in the day-to-day reserve life. Furthermore, the author could have provided the reader with a bibliography of reference material in order that future research and understanding of the reinstatement issue could be realized. The book raises many questions regarding the *Indian Act* and reinstatement but yet fails to give further direction to the reader.

The author's use of a chronology of events proves quite useful in putting together an overall picture of activities. However, the author fails to provide a clear image by assuming the reader is knowledgeable about particular details in the history of the *Indian Act*.

The author is better able to portray the expressional aspect of the book: the thirteen women were able to present their personal perspectives. Although the points of view are clearly expressed, it is difficult to fully understand their positions if one has no knowledge of Native affairs. The differences between being status versus non-status is not completely described, nor is the effect of losing status adequately stated.

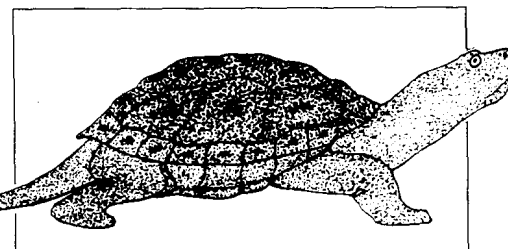
Overall, I found this book quite interesting. Being Native, it served me as a reminder that, although reserves differ in many ways, we as Native people face many of the same problems.

The book does quite well in both its attempts to demonstrate what reserve life is like and the impacts the *Indian Act* has on Native people. It would be unrealistic to think that one could fully describe such a lifestyle in one book.

However, the author's lack of reference material makes further research difficult. Its easy reading makes the book accessible to the lay person. Unfortunately, due

to the lack of more background information, I only recommend it to those who already have knowledge in the issues.

Nonetheless, this book is an important step for Native women in educating the public about Native issues. I sincerely hope this book will lead to greater public awareness and will initiate discussion.



CHILDREN OF THE SUN: Stories by and about Indian Kids

Adolf and Beverly Hungry Wolf. New
York: Quill William Morrow, 1987.

Aki-Kwe/Mary Ellen Turpel

This recent book by Adolf and Beverly Hungry Wolf is offered as a collection of short stories "by and about Indian kids." The authors state that their intention in collecting *Children of the Sun* was to create a record of traditional tribal childhood and adolescence which would be of value in educating children to be proud of their ancestry. It is not, they suggest, intended to create a longing for bygone days or nostalgia for the past ways which have been somehow lost. The authors reveal that they "began to study the material in this book some years ago as part of our own efforts at living as a united family, following a simple life-style and practising some Indian traditions." They made the selections for the book based on the enthusiasm received for the stories by their own four children.