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FROM TALKING CHIEFS TO A NATIVE CORPORATE ELITE. By MARYBELLE MITCHELL. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996. 533 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn$49.95.

In an ambitious and epic volume, Marybelle Mitchell presents the reader with, in her words, the first analysis of the "whole history of contact" between European colonists and various indigenous groups who have become known today as Inuit. Leaning heavily on neo-Marxist class theory, she goes beyond providing a "descriptive account," but instead strives to analyze the transformation from an "indigenous mode of production" to a social formation striven with class and nationalist divisions. The result is interesting but rather unorthodox in genre. The historiography covers some five centuries of trade relations, but jumps unevenly to focus upon differing "agents of change," from explorers and whalers to producer co-operatives to land claim corporations (with the second agent playing a privileged role). Mitchell draws concepts from structural Marxist sociology, but her analysis focuses on a single national group that traditionalists of this school would scorn as marginal to an understanding of world history. Although it is devoted to analyzing the fate of a sparsely populated non-European nation and thereby rectifying an ethnocentric bias in the literature, the work relies exclusively upon European written sources and Euro-American theory (and quickly dismisses the usefulness of indigenous oral accounts). By thus situating its technique in between classical historical, sociological, and anthropological methodologies, the book makes a convincing (but not surprising) argument that five centuries of intensive engagement with the agents of capitalist colonialism have produced changes in social practice that are today recognizable as a form of class power.

In arguing that contemporary Inuit society is something qualitatively different from the pre-contact society, Mitchell overturns several common stereotypes. Her most radical argument is that the nation which is arguably most romanticized in both popular and academic works is in fact as obsessed with accumulation and social power as other societies. Most central to the book (occupying one-half of its considerable volume) is a finely documented case of how Inuit producer co-operatives did not in fact grow out of and reinforce a communal spirit, but instead introduced new notions of discipline, familial obligation, monetary exchange, and eventually socioeconomic hierarchy. Instead of portraying pre-contact Arctic peoples as exotic but passive victims of an exploitative world economic system, Mitchell tries to identify certain "seeds of capitalist practice" in the indigenous mode of production which she characterizes as being close to "primitive capitalism." One of Mitchell's unique arguments is that Inuit nationalism, most evident in the negotiations leading to the formation of Nunavut, can be directly linked to the consolidating effect of the pan-Arctic co-operative movement.

Mitchell's argument about the transformed nature of contemporary indigenous society is successful mainly because of her eclectic choice of sources. It is not surprising that many actors in contemporary Inuit society use strategies that bear the marks of capitalist strategy—such as elite control over machines, or a canny desire to control trade. The comparative question, which this monograph does not answer clearly, is to what degree Inuit producers have employed simple commodity production to defend or elaborate the coherence of their kinship networks, their worldview, their sense of aesthetics, or their sense of self. By dismissing oral statements and privileging written archival sources, Mitchell unfairly biases the evidence to show increasing conformity to contemporary metropolitan understandings of power. Drawing heavily upon the writings of one neo-Marxist scholar—Erik Olin Wright—Mitchell succeeds in having the reader imagine that Inuit producers who are active in co-operatives occupy a "contradictory class location"—their activity is formally collectively oriented, but is "actually" exploitative. However, if one were to browse deeper into the theoretical literature (even limiting the search to Marxist anthropology), one might successfully describe other syncretic or articulated types of economic activity in terms that are less ethnocentric. For example, conspicuous by its absence is the famous debate between Eleanor Leacock and Frank Speck (recently summarized by Harvey Feit) on the effect of trade relations on the social organization of Crees. Although Mitchell is careful to defend her argument explicitly in many places against "teleological" or "reductionist" thinking, in the "last instance" concepts such as a "contradictory class location" (or, for that matter, the identification of the "seeds of primitive capitalism") implicitly posit a Euro-American capitalist society as the final measure of development (see especially pages 45–48). Therefore, in both her data and her explanatory framework, she preselects her final conclusion.

Although Mitchell's application of Marxist concepts to the Inuit nation is unique in the English language literature, as she herself notes several times, it is not entirely original. The Soviet ethnographic school not only applied concepts of class and nationality to Siberian Yupiks (*eskimosy*), but excelled in tracing the history of transformation from precapitalist modes of production to capitalist (and socialist) modes. In addition, I know of at least one article by Lev Fainburg that specifically examines the capitalist transition of Greenlandic Inuit. It is ironic that the author single-handedly reinvented the Soviet school of historical ethnography in both theoretical orientation and methodology (except for her lack of interest in ethnogenesis). A truly original Marxist analysis might have gone the extra step of avoiding some of the deterministic pitfalls of the Soviet Marxist approach.

Although there is some methodological unevenness in the application of theory and selection of historical and ethnographic sources, the book is successful, I would argue, because of the covert use of the author's extensive first-hand knowledge of the history of the co-operative movement. The author's disdain for oral history notwithstanding, she brings

to this work ten years of personal experience with the co-operative movement (which we learn about only on p. 163). While this book may be somewhat less than a global view of Inuit history, it is a valuable source of personal reflection on the meaning of the co-operative movement in the latter part of this century. This close, personal relationship is evident not only in the list of primary documents, but also in the author's choice of words. These range from the sublime (such as describing the access to aircraft as a source of power) to the emotive (such as describing the co-operative as a "bastardised" social institution).

The bibliography provides a rich selection of references to government documents and unpublished papers of various Arctic co-operative organizations, although its selection of anthropological material is thin. The index has detailed lists of community names and institutions, but omits references to the names of social theorists (who appear often in the text). The edition in richly illustrated with both humorous cartoons drawn by Inuit artists and historic photographs, although these images stand in silent contrast to the objective and distant tone of this structural analysis.

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THE POLAR REGIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW. By DONALD R. ROTHWELL. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 498 p., maps, index, bib. Hardbound. US$95.00.

In this book, the third in the series Cambridge Studies in International and Comparative Law, Rothwell offers us a thorough survey of the international legal regimes of the Arctic and Antarctic regions. The treatment of the two regions is approximately evenly divided. Seven of the eleven chapters cover common themes, while four chapters (two each) are devoted to specific developments in each region. Rothwell's survey is generally comprehensive, although there is little treatment of the role of indigenous peoples in the Arctic or of the regulation of whaling either within or outside the framework of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). Rothwell justifies the former omission on the grounds that extensive treatment of the issue would be inconsistent with a balanced approach to the two polar regions. He justifies the latter on the basis that the IWC represents a global rather than a regional regime. (Canada is no longer a party to the IWC Convention.)

The book is divided into four parts. Part I introduces the polar regions and their environment and resources (including peoples). Drawing especially on the work of Oran Young, Rothwell makes the case for using regime theory to explain both the evolution of and the differences between the Arctic and Antarctic legal regimes. In Part II, Rothwell devotes two chapters to the evolution of the Antarctic Treaty system (ATS) and two chapters to the Arctic. In the Antarctic chapters, he ably traces the background to the Antarctic Treaty as well as the subsequent evolution of the ATS through the recommendations of the consultative parties, the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals, and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). The mining issue is treated through the stillborn Minerals Convention (CRAMRA) and through the Protocol on Environmental Protection. Throughout, Rothwell emphasizes that which is unique to Antarctica, as well as those legal ideas for which Antarctica has served as a useful testing ground. Thus, he emphasizes the adoption of an ecosystem management approach as part of CCAMLR, the development of liability principles in CRAMRA, and the application of the precautionary approach that underlies much of Antarctic treaty-making and practice. There is a lot of material to cover here, and Rothwell covers it with authority and a sure hand.

Rothwell is equally comfortable in the two chapters of this part that he devotes to the Arctic. He covers some of the traditional problems in the region, including the status of the Northwest and Northeast Passages, as well as some of the more recent initiatives for regional cooperation on environmental matters. Thus, he deals with the Finnish-led Rovaneimi initiative on the protection of the Arctic environment, which in turn spawned the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, as well as some of the background to the Canadian proposals for an Arctic Council. Those proposals eventually came to fruition in September 1996; as a result, the final instrument creating the Arctic Council is not included within Rothwell's survey.

Part III of the book is divided into four chapters under the heading "The impact of the polar regions." One chapter deals with the polar regions and the law of the sea. Another deals with the polar regions and living and non-living resource management, while a third deals with the polar regions and the evolution of international environmental law. The final chapter in this part returns to consider how regime theory helps to explain the very different ways in which the legal regimes have evolved in the two regions. The choice of subjects for separate treatment in this part is sound, but one result is some overlap and bifurcated treatment between Parts II and III of the book, as well as between the different chapters