

**Anthony D. Brown, et al. *New Directions in Federal Indian Policy: A Review of the American Indian Policy Review Commission.* (Los Angeles: American Indian Studies Center, University of California, 1979) 134 pp., \$10.00.**

This volume consists of an introduction and ten articles which were originally presented as papers at the second annual conference (sponsored by the American Indian Studies Center, UCLA) held to examine contemporary issues of importance to Indian Americans. The conference of 1978 focused on a review of the recently completed work of the American Indian Policy Review Commission (AIPRC), which Congress had created in 1975 in order to study past Indian/federal government relationships and to recommend new national policies and programs.

The ten articles (all relevant to the exploration of solutions to cultural oppression as experienced by Indians) are mostly critical of the AIPRC. The essays run from three to sixteen pages in length. All but three of the articles have endnotes; there is no index. The volume constitutes a book of reviews by scholars who vary considerably in maturity and background. For most students, however, the volume is probably the best publication available on its subject.

Anthony D. Brown in the Introduction, and reviewers Mark Thompson and Donald A. Grinde, Jr., explain that five of the eleven AIPRC commissioners were Indian and how the National Tribal Chairman's Association attempted to block their selections because the five did not truly represent the Indian tribes. True - the Indians chosen were not from the largest tribes, nor those with the most pressing problems.

Cecilia Gallerito's essay setting the issue of Indian health in an evolutionary perspective is good, but perhaps too broad a subject to escape criticism; she seems to credit President Nixon's statement on Indian "self-determination" with more good results than occurred.

Susan Guyette and Margaret Baba Cooper state that Task Force Eleven slighted the problem of drug abuse. Grayson Noley is also convincing when he states that the report on Indian education lacked new data, that site visits were inadequate, and that little was added to existing literature.

David L. Beaulieu charges that the urban Indian task force did not detect their concerns, much less translate data into creative policy recommendations, and Joseph H. Straus adds that the task force on non-reservation Indians utilized only limited sources and failed to interpret available data, but he does praise some commission recommendations.

Jerry Muskrat explains that the Supreme Court in *Santa Clara Pueblo v. Martinez* confirmed commission recommendations with reference to the Indian Civil Rights Act. He is optimistic about future legal matters.

Al Logan Slagle's essay on repercussions and aftermath wraps up the prevailing thought of the authors that the negative aspects of the AIPRC outweigh the positive. The authors substantiate this view. The AIPRC was expected to be important, to make a comprehensive study, to find new directions for federal Indian policy, and to inspire positive and constructive Congressional action. As of 1984 it has failed. Yet the effort may be praised. The Meriam Report of 1928 was criticized because Indians participated little in the preparation. The AIPRC included Indians as full commissioners and as the majority of staff members. The AIPRC made 206 recommendations. By the time of publication, however, the mood of Congress had shifted to the usual indifference mixed with desire to exploit Indian-owned natural resources. Even Indians are apprehensive about possible changes. As copies of the AIPRC report gather dust, a new Indian policy seems as far beyond reach as ever.

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**Joseph Bruchac, ed. *Songs from This Earth on Turtle's Back: Contemporary American Indian Poetry*. (Greenfield Center, NY: The Greenfield Review Press, 1983), xvi, 294 pp., \$9.95.**

Poetry by American Indians may be traced to the writings of John Rollin Ridge, a Cherokee who came to California in the early 1850s, edited several northern California newspapers, and helped create the legend of Joaquin Murieta, and to the works of Alexander Posey, a Creek who wrote romantic nature poems and dialect stories in the style of the local colorists. Nonetheless, few Indian poets existed prior to the 1970s. Since then, there has been a tremendous surge in the numbers of Indians writing poetry, and their work has received a great deal of critical acclaim, as evidenced by the attention given to James Welch's *Riding the Earthboy*, Wendy Rose's *Lost Copper*, and Maurice Kenny's *The Mama Poems*, which garnered the American Book Award for 1984.

Much of this surge may be accounted for by the development of small presses, such as the Strawberry Press, the Blue Cloud Abbey Press, and the Greenfield Review Press, which have taken a proprietary interest in the promotion of American Indian poetry. Joseph Bruchac and the Greenfield Review Press, especially, are to be commended for *Songs from This Earth on Turtle's Back*. Bruchac, himself an Abenaki Indian and an accomplished poet, has brought together fifty-two Indian writers into a