

Book Review

I Will Live for Both of Us: A History of Colonialism, Uranium Mining, and Inuit Resistance. By Joan Scottie, Warren Bernauer, and Jack Hicks. University of Manitoba Press, 2022. 264 pp.

By Gertrude Saxinger

Joan Scottie's writing is intense. It immerses the reader in the land, caribou hunting grounds, rivers, and dense atmospheres of meetings, protest gatherings, and court rooms. Throughout her story, I felt as if I were travelling through time with her in Nunavut. *I Will Live for Both of Us: A History of Colonialism, Uranium Mining, and Inuit Resistance* is an exceptional autobiography of a strong and brave woman who was given the name Paningaya'naaq when she was born. The book charts her anger with the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and Inuit institutional bodies over their failure to genuinely protect the environment, and Inuit interests and culture. Scottie and many other Inuit in Nunavut had expected that the land claims agreement would protect the integrity of their lands and waters, and their cultural practices, traditional livelihoods, values, and many other aspects of Inuit life. Instead, the Nunavut government turned out to be mining-friendly and accepting of corporate conduct opposed to Inuit values.

Scottie narrates her semi-nomadic childhood living on the land, her relationship with her father (who was a thorn in the side of colonial government forces), and the complex process of her family becoming sedentary and settling settling at Aglirnaqtuq on Ferguson Lake. The first two chapters give the reader valuable insights into Inuit traditional life and the outright and subtle forms of colonial and missionary pressure on Inuit communities.

Joan Scottie dedicated her life to the fight against uranium mining on inland Inuit homeland. The book's title *I Will Live for Both of Us* refers to her sister, who passed away as an infant and on whose behalf she protested. Inuit activists twice defeated mining proposals for the Kiggavik uranium deposit located eighty kilometres west of Baker Lake. Gold mining in the Kivalliq region had already shown that industrial operations involving toxic materials posed a substantial threat to caribou. It was clear that uranium mining was more dangerous and could not be harmless to the environment as argued by proponents.

The German company Urangesellschaft increased uranium exploration there from the 1970s. In 1990, ninety percent of Baker Lake residents voted “No” in a plebiscite on the Kiggavik proposal and Urangesellschaft withdrew the project. Years later, AREVA Resources (now Orano Canada) resumed prospecting after acquiring Urangesellschaft’s licence. It used intense lobbying to promote its mining proposal, which was echoed by the Canadian government based on their specific development interests. The plans even had partial Inuit support after the Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Inuit organization issued policies supporting uranium mining in 2007. The book illustrates how Joan Scottie and many other residents challenged state and corporate pressure for residents to accept uranium mining over so many decades. The minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada finally rejected AREVA’s mining proposal in 2016 after many years of Inuit opposition and the launch of residents’ protest committees. AREVA ceased exploration, but left enormous waste on the land, including dangerous materials.

The book goes to the heart of these events. It is sometimes hard to read because of the disturbing state and corporate violence. At other times, the book is full of hope, power, and collective strength. The conclusion ends with the phrase “YOU CAN WIN.” Joan Scottie’s picture on the cover conveys the book’s overall message. She sits in Inuit regalia on a rock next to the river’s turbulent currents. Her picture conveys a kind person with dedication, significant life experience, and intense resolve.

The researchers and allies to Inuit interests, Warren Bernauer and Jack Hicks, contextualize Joan Scottie’s storytelling with careful historical data on the state authorities’ fierce measures to impose a colonial regime during the twentieth century, including resettlement and forced attendance at residential schools, which brought about intergenerational trauma. The contributions of the three co-authors interlace to produce a powerful and insightful story.

Besides being an excellent piece of academic scholarship, it is a very comprehensible, poignant good read. I recommend this book to the general public from Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds, and to activists and experts in the field. In particular, it will be insightful for corporate actors from employee to CEO levels, and from junior exploration to major production companies. It should be a must-read for state and other political actors, as well as Nunavut Inuit representative agencies and politicians to reflect on the process leading to the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The book shows how long-term and everyday politics and policy-making affect the spaces and environment in which Inuit people secure their livelihoods, values, social relations, and culture.

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