

Will the Begade Shutagot'ine have an opportunity to negotiate a modern treaty of reaffirmation? If they do, Kulchyski's book will provide scholarly and intimate witness to the strength of their position. In the meantime, given its accessible style, *Report of an Inquiry into an Injustice* will be of interest to both academics and readers more generally for its reflections on academic allyship, its insights into Canadian legal institutions, and its heartfelt documenting of the words and lives of contemporary Begade Shutagot'ine.

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Residential Schools and Reconciliation: Canada Confronts Its History. By J. R. Miller. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. 368 pages. CND \$39.95 cloth and electronic.

More than twenty years have passed since J. R. Miller published *Shingwauk's Vision* (1996), a ground-breaking history of residential schools. In many respects, *Residential Schools and Reconciliation: Canada Confronts Its History* can be viewed as a companion volume that examines the residential school legacy from the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) to the 2015 Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In his conclusion to *Shingwauk's Vision*, Miller addressed the question of culpability, which at the time was under discussion among school survivors, the courts, churches, and government. While he ultimately concluded that the federal government and Canadians as a whole bore this responsibility, beginning in 1996 it was actually the United, Anglican, and Roman Catholic churches that first offered apologies for their complicity in operating the schools. From that point onward, Miller argues in *Residential Schools and Reconciliation*, Canada "has moved haltingly towards reconciliation between Indigenous and Immigrant peoples" (5).

Using archival documents, interviews, and literature produced by government, churches, and other institutional bodies, Miller takes us on a compelling but frustratingly bureaucratic journey, tracing the evolution of the reconciliation process through major policy statements and actions which include the apologies, RCAP, major class-action lawsuits, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Act (IRSSA), and the TRC. In doing so, it becomes apparent that apologies represent only one part of the survivors' quest for justice. The other part—the process of reconciliation—not only requires public acceptance of the "truth" as told by historians and survivors, but the political will to implement actionable policies that will effect genuine change. On this last point Miller remains cautiously optimistic.

Organized into three sections, part 1 is a brief introduction to the changing role of churches from educators to advocates, the indigenous rights movement, and the dismantling of the residential school system. A number of tense standoffs led to the creation of the RCAP: the largest inquiry into the history and conditions of indigenous peoples in Canada and, in Miller's view, a pivotal moment in the reconciliation process. Devoting an entire chapter to residential schools, the 1996 RCAP report

challenged dominant historical narratives and contained a Statement of Reconciliation in which the government of Canada apologized. But as Miller outlines in part 2, transforming apologies into action proved to be much more difficult. Church officials and their lawyers negotiated responsibility, and survivors increasingly resorted to the courts seeking healing, compensation for cultural loss, and an opportunity to tell their truths. After several attempts at dispute resolution, the courts approved a flawed but comprehensive Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) that settled all class actions in 2006.

Demonstrating that survivors were often not the sole focus, Miller describes the motives and perspectives of each party involved in the settlement and adjudication process, taking the reader through the government's refusal to compensate for culture and language loss or include Métis in the agreement. It is difficult to read about the complex application process, predatory behavior of some lawyers, and instances in which the government and churches prioritized shifting liability, cost containment, and public palatability over survivors. In the third part of the book, Miller praises the victim-centered approach of the TRC and its focus on survivors, families, and communities; however, he is also not alone in problematizing the commission's limited mandate (see Emilie De Haas, "A Commitment to Reconciliation: Canada's Next Steps in the Post-TRC Phase," 2017). Interestingly, Miller questions whether the commission engaged the public enough to create the political will necessary to transform ninety-four recommended calls to action into meaningful reforms.

As a historian, Miller is particularly aware of lingering stereotypes and myths that he sees as a major obstacle to reconciliation, but other considerations receive little or no attention. Former Ontario Lieutenant Governor James Bartleman is quoted as stating that reconciliation must be precipitated by "economic and social equality," but this requires major systemic changes including self-government and the restoration of land and resources (269). On these points, Miller does not engage a large body of literature written by indigenous advocates and scholars like Glen Coulthard, Taiaiake Alfred, Roland Chrisjohn, Tanya Wasacase, and others who do not see decolonization as either a goal or outcome of the current national reconciliation discourse. This is surprising, given that many contributed to a research series listed in the bibliography published by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (speakingmytruth.ca), an indigenous organization that Miller praises extensively throughout the book.

Similarly, social advocates and postcolonial historians may find the book wanting, in that Miller tackles this highly politicized subject as an objective observer. In a tone familiar to readers of his previous books, he chooses his words carefully, preferring instead to let the evidence speak for itself. Discussions of the intimate and intrusive evaluation methods used by Independent Assessment Process (IAP) adjudicators and the policy to round injury amounts *down* to the nearest dollar are tragic and poignant and need no further comment. In other cases, however, Miller's analysis of major stakeholders appears inconsistent. He is quite clearly critical of the Catholic Church's obstinacy and refusal to pay compensation, but describes former Prime Minister Stephen Harper's record as "acting contrary to the views of Aboriginal leaders" (197). Even though he briefly mentions the failed Kelowna Accord and Harper's assertion

that Canada did not have a history of colonialism, the role of the conservative government's antagonistic relationship with indigenous peoples could have been explored in greater depth.

This is not a book about residential school survivors. Rather, Miller privileges the experiences of "central players" (5), principally bureaucrats, church officials, lawyers, judges, and indigenous leaders intimately involved in shaping official reconciliation policies and processes. Though his investigation into the IAP is strikingly detailed and moving, as are the examples he provides of healing and ceremony that occurred during the Alternate Dispute Resolution and TRC consultations, this top-down focus means that survivors often appear as merely another stakeholder group in the reconciliation process.

Overall, Miller concludes that we have made only "modest progress" (243) in the last thirty years and despite focusing on institutional responses to reconciliation, maintains that "small gestures" (271) have the best chance of dispelling historical myths and changing Canadian attitudes. He makes it very clear that the enormity of the task of atoning respectfully and sufficiently for a system described by the TRC as "cultural genocide" has just begun. And while our understanding of the impact of government residential schools and survivor experiences has grown exponentially, many aspects of their operations and impact require further research. In what appears to be the first concise study of reconciliation policy in Canada, *Residential Schools and Reconciliation* is a laudable but "official" contribution to our understanding of this process and of the survivor's quest for justice.

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Sovereign Acts: Contesting Colonialism Across Indigenous Nations and Latinx America. Edited by Frances Negrón-Muntaner. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2017. 408 pages. \$39.95 paper.

What does it mean to be sovereign? What are its limits, and how does such an unruly concept serve as the continued locus of desire and a tool for continued domination by a settler state? How and when can sovereignty be conceived as liberatory, and what is its relationship to both the nation and the political realm? These are some of the larger questions addressed in *Sovereign Acts*, an ambitious and thoughtful collection that grapples with the unruly, amorphous, and compelling aspects of the concept of sovereignty.

While some edited collections suffer from a sense of incoherence, disjointedness, or forced thematics due to a diversity of authors, *Sovereign Acts* uniquely benefits from the diversity of perspectives. The near-cacophony that results from the polysemous nature of sovereignty allows for a rich discussion of an idea that can mean many things to many people simultaneously. Rather than impose a singular order or theme upon understandings of sovereignty, Negrón-Muntaner and the contributing authors wisely lean into this tapestry of conflicting and often incommensurate meanings. Such a decision not only deconstructs the idealized idea of political sovereignty based upon