

J. R. Miller

Residential Schools and Reconciliation: Canada Confronts Its History

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. 348 pp.
and

John S. Milloy

A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986

Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017. 464 pp.

First published in 1999, John S. Milloy's *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* lays bare the "physical and philosophical underpinning of a [colonial] school culture that stretched across vast geographies and multiple generations" in Canada (xvii). This 2017 reissuing of the 1999 volume includes a new forward by Mary Jane Logan McCallum. Milloy's book exposes the violence of Canada's assimilation program, weaving documents that informed his work for the 1991–96 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) into an impassioned narrative. J.R. Miller's *Residential Schools and Reconciliation: Canada Confronts Its History* is similarly timed to follow a major commission. Writing in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, J. R. Miller chronicles Canada's responses the aftermath of the violent Indian Residential Schools (IRS) system. Where Milloy details the physical, sexual, and emotional abuse endured by Indigenous youth, Miller explains the bureaucratic hurdles that complicate both Indigenous and settler recovery from that violence. In their unique analyses of the (mis)management of Indian schooling, both Milloy and Miller deepen readers' understandings of church and state accountability, bureaucratic violence, failed Canadian state-Indigenous relations, and citizen responsibility for change.

Milloy and Miller both detail the church-state partnership that was activated through the development and operation of IRS. Miller explains that the "churches ... operated the schools and the state ... authorized and largely financed them (11). Milloy assigns greater responsibility to the state for the delivery of Indian schooling, arguing that Canada had a supervisory role, not just a financial obligation. Both authors make it unquestionably clear that the IRS system resulted from mutually compatible goals: Canada desired Indian assimilation; many Christian sects longed to convert Indigenous populations. While there is evidence of joint responsibility for Indian schooling, it is Miller who makes explicit the link between historically shared interests and recent evasions of responsibility. Miller charges that both church and state have, at times, "become delusional with their combined education efforts" (11). It is Miller's special focus on the litigation stages of the IRS system that allow him to observe this.

Despite joint church-state responsibility, both authors make it clear that the partnership was (and is) fraught with tension. Milloy reveals that Canada and the churches disagreed on the effectiveness of a per-capita funding model in the early

1900s. Canada associated IRS debt with “bad and extravagant management” and demanded better accounting, whereas school operators blamed chronic underfunding and demanded grant increases (66). By exposing (dis)agreement between church and state, Milloy suggests that the IRS persisted despite internal discord about operating costs and procedures. Miller highlights more recent conflicts between the churches and state. He details differences in timing and the perceived genuineness of the various churches’ apologies, compared to the timing of the federal government’s apology issued by Stephen Harper. Conflict, which is addressed in both books, indicates that settler institutions have failed to define best practice in Indian schooling—a failure that demands Indigenous involvement in remediation and future policy work.

Milloy and Miller demonstrate that failure has been accompanied by violence. Both authors associate violence with Canada’s focus on policy and procedure rather than on the well-being of Indigenous peoples. Indeed, Milloy continuously argues that the Canadian government set guidelines for how Indian Residential Schools were to be run but did not invest the financial or human resources needed to check or maintain these standards, to the detriment of Indigenous youth. The history of corporal punishment in IRS is one telling example. The state indicated that corporal punishment was to be a last resort when dealing with the children. In practice, corporal punishment was unregulated in IRS due to lack of funds. This allowed abuse to occur despite federal guidelines. Milloy also associates substandard housing and nutrition at IRS with insufficient funding. He argues that the federal government underperformed in the role of guardian of Indigenous peoples that it legislated for itself, failing to keep students protected, fed, and clothed. Milloy reveals that although Canada did not deliberately harm Indigenous children, money was diverted away from Indigenous youth and invested elsewhere. Rampant abuse thus reflects federal neglect and funding priorities rather than bloodlust.

Like Milloy, Miller exposes the violence that was present in IRS. Shifting his focus to the reconciliatory period following the closing of the residential schools, Miller reveals how the state has continued to inflict harm on Indigenous peoples. One main example he draws on is the federal government’s refusal to recognize and address the loss of language and culture experienced by IRS victims. Throughout the extensive ongoing settlement process, Miller argues that the government’s refusal to address this has been a major impediment to reconciliation.

Another example Miller makes worth mentioning is the 2006 *Compensation Rules* in the Independent Assessment Process, a compensation program that was part of the settlement agreement. The rules were created by Canada to address cases of severe abuse. They allocate points based on the severity of abuse experienced by victims ranging from “being singled out for physical abuse by an adult employee or other adult lawfully on the premises” to “repeated, persistent incidents of anal or vaginal intercourse” (145). Miller argues that this federal point system re-traumatized many IRS survivors. Trauma could be relived and sometimes funding was still denied. Other survivors stated that monetary handouts, regardless of the amount, could not take away lived pain. Milloy and Miller read well together because both authors contextualize violence experienced by IRS survivors. In so doing, they remind their

non-Indigenous readers that Canada has treated—and continues to treat—IRS survivors harshly.

Milloy's work, more than Miller's, incites in non-Indigenous readers a sense of responsibility. In the preface to the 2017 re-issue of *A National Crime*, Mary-Jane McCallum draws readers' attention to Milloy's title. He chose to call the schools criminal and encouraged readers to label state and church (in)action the same way. Milloy's choice to describe the schools as criminal positions the text as advocacy work that seems to demand justice for survivors. The inclusion of individual stories of abuse humanizes the victims of IRS, trying to spark an empathetic response from readers. He concludes his text with a call to action. He charges readers to bring Indigenous history to the forefront of Canadian history in order to halt the epidemic of violence against Indigenous peoples. Milloy writes:

It is essential... that while healing proceeds, [the history of IRS and companion policies] become part of a new sense of what Canada has been and will continue to be if our historical record is not recognized for what it has meant to Aboriginal people and repudiated generation by generation (305).

According to Milloy, then, Canadians have a responsibility to monitor the state, address violence, and demand redress of historic crimes. Milloy suggests that citizens who fail to act are complicit in state violence. He argues that education and awareness are needed to combat colonialism.

Contrasting Milloy's work, Miller does not have a narrative arc that brings the reader to an incited sense of responsibility. He does not directly link readers to the history of IRS or make them feel complicit in state or church violence. Instead of direct calls to action he brings mainly historiography. He describes the factors that have shaped how Canadian history has been studied. Past educators and public figures, it seems, are to blame for a "whitewashed" version of Canadian history that excludes colonialism and discrimination (259–60). Miller does not ask that his reader actively seek out alternative histories, but rather uses historiography to lay out the problems with how Canadian historians have misrepresented Canada's Indian policy as "beneficent, kindly, and effective," particularly when compared to American relationships with Native Americans (264). Laudatory histories have overshadowed Indigenous understandings of the colonial past that are starker. Scholars who read Miller may feel nudged towards post-colonial theory as they approach future research. General readers are subtly induced to reflect on how they may be absorbing or perpetuating misinformation about Indigenous peoples. Despite the varying degrees of duties they assign to their readers, both Milloy and Miller agree on the importance of revising whitewashed Canadian history. Both argue that Indigenous histories deserve a place in national narratives people tell about Canada.

In reading the Milloy and Miller books together, it becomes obvious that Canada must reckon with its colonial past and colonial present. Learning history, for Milloy, is the first step towards a national reckoning. He demands an emotive response. He demands action. Miller, by contrast, asks readers to reflect on the history of Indian

education and its redress. His work reminds readers that even well intentioned action (i.e. compensatory schemes) can cause harm because of the state's colonial past. A better future—both Milloy and Miller suggest—requires relationship building. A decolonized future recognizes Indigenous peoples as partners, not subjects, of church and state.

Shannon Van der Woerd, Matthew Midolo, and Brittany Luby

University of Guelph

Lynne Taylor

In the Children's Best Interests: Unaccompanied Children in American-Occupied Germany, 1945–1952

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Lynne Taylor's new book, *In the Children's Best Interests*, examines policy toward unaccompanied children in the American occupation zone of Germany over the course of seven years between 1945 and 1952. She examines how the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration's (UNRRA) initial belief that all children should be reunited with their families and repatriated to the countries of their origin was complicated over time by the reality of the unaccompanied children they found in Germany. Taylor places her study at the nexus of work on refugees, on children in war, and on the American occupation of Germany, but sees herself as primarily in conversation with Tara Zahra's book, *The Lost Children* (2011). Taylor claims that Zahra missed a "key factor in the calculation of welfare workers when determining what was 'best' for unaccompanied children" by failing to recognize one of the child welfare workers' central concerns, namely "the need for a legal identity based on citizenship" (11–12).

Taylor begins her book with an overview of the origins of UNRRA and the debates over who should care for unaccompanied children in post-war Germany. She details the tremendous struggle child welfare agents faced in searching for unaccompanied children, especially those who had been brought to Germany as part of the Nazi "germanization" program. She stresses the constant lack of resources that compromised efforts to carry out searches and the struggle between UNRRA's wider goal of resolving the refugee situation—ideally through the repatriation of refugees in displaced persons' camps—and UNRRA child welfare workers, whose search for children demanded time and resources. She bases her analysis on records left behind by UNRRA and the Office of the Military Government United States (OMGUS) rather than drawing on prior historical works and the accounts of UNRRA child welfare workers. Consequently, Taylor's discussion of the early era falls short of its full potential.

Taylor's analysis deepens when she turns to the struggle between UNRRA child welfare workers, who saw the search for children as a way to reverse Nazi racial policy,