UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

American Indians, American Justice. By Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle./The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty. By Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford Lytle.

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1th5d1tq

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 9(1)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Slagle, Al Logan

Publication Date

1985

DOI

10.17953

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

for multiplicative -s to suffix to uuyi. Finally, if the -s of uyis is actually an adverbializing element, that could account for both the verb-like and the locative case-like properties of uyis. The nominal characteristics of uyis would also surface without the need to resort to a zero 'nominalizer.' All of this falls out from a recognition of the componential morphological and semantic structure of uvis.

Beyond the wealth of linguistic and cultural data this book contains, there is much to commend in Malotki's work. His insistence on the centrality of metaphor in human cognition is welcome (p. 13), as is his call for using the vernacular as the primary tool of ethnological research (p. 631). Having demonstrated that Hopi does exploit the temporal domain linguistically, Malotki shows his balance by pointing out that Hopi temporal reality is not the same as ours, either (p. 632). In summary, Professor Malotki has done an excellent job. His book promises to be a valuable source for various kinds of studies, both cultural as well as typological, since many of the observations he makes for Hopi are related to phenomena in other Amerindian languages. Finally, Professor Malotki's book contains a solemn warning about the dangers of letting our theoretical presuppositions determine the way we perceive the data that confronts us.

Eugene H. Casad Summer Institute of Linguistics

American Indians, American Justice. By Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle. Austin: University of Texas, 1983. 262 pp. \$19.95 Cloth, \$9.95 Paper.

The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty. By Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford Lytle. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984. 293 pp. \$10.95 Paper.

This writer has longed for a fresh analysis of trends in federal-Indian law, one evidencing a scholarly mastery of important historical details, but more importantly, a practical understanding of what these signify, and what long-established patterns may suggest about the future. The field does not need another summation or righteously indignant moral lecture, but works which will illuminate the past, and lead us to anticipate problems in light of our 400 years' collective experience, and allow us to respond with strategic canniness. As Deloria and Lytle remark, the basic task facing Indians today "is tracing the roots of the idea of self-government to discover how and where it relates to the present aspirations of Indians and Indian tribes" (*The Nations Within*, p. 15). Their books state the problems of Indian sovereignty and Indian administration as economically and substantially as anything presently available to the non-specialist in federal-Indian law. They have taken the field a step from its lingering stagnation, beyond the 1982 revision of Felix Cohen's *The Handbook of Federal Indian Law*; a step which the appearance of the new *Cohen* virtually demanded.

Felix Cohen's Handbook of Federal Indian Law (revised edition, 1982) is a research tool intended primarily for specialists. These works fill gaps in scholarship, not because their matter is new or unavailable in other sources (including the current critical works, casebooks and handbooks cited below), but because the authors have attempted to examine and explain the trends of Indian post-Discovery history, acknowledging Indian as well as non-Indian perspectives and in light of opposing priorities. Readers will find the political pragmatism of these authors' new works more valuable for those interested in trends and development of policy than in most other contemporary works, by eschewing defects in other works, particularly one-sided advocacy, or sterile recitation of past failures in federal-Indian relations.

This is not to say that pro-Indian advocacy or the examination of defects in Indian administration are wrong, for there certainly has been very slow progress in creation of significant reform legislation based on the 260 recommendations of the American Indian Policy Review Commission' *Final Report* of 1978. That report recommended that future policy determinations be based on: a reaffirmation and strengthening of the doctrine of tribal sovereignty and the trust relationship; increased financial commitment to the economic development of tribes; consolidation of Indian programs in a new Indian department or agency; greater encouragement of tribal participation in planning and budgetary processes; and federal recognition of terminated and other nonfederally recognized tribes, including extension of federal services to them (*Cohen* 1982: 205–206).

Deloria and Lytle have reviewed the events before and since that Report, showing the basis for these recommendations, and have spoken to their audience as Cohen did to his in the 1940's, speaking, not the mere letter of the law, but of the evolving spirit of the law and federal-Indian relationship. Many aspects of their insights regarding the cyclical character and problems of federal-Indian relations and trends in law have appeared elsewhere in the last ten years, but never combined or resolved into a coherent unity. The present stagnation in federal-Indian relations makes their statements all too timely.

American Indians, American Justice offers a compact review of the relations between tribal individuals and the Tribes to judicial bodies, state, federal and tribal, in the United States, from discovery to the present (1983). It describes the milestones in case law, legislation, and administrative acts which have set the standards for our present judicial system and process, and shows the relevancy of these things to the general pattern of jurisprudential evolution. Important insights into the political climate informing the intent of actors in this centuries-long historical drama give it a depth and concreteness too often missing in other treatments of this material, which seem obtuse in comparison. Thus, this brief but thorough overview, not exceptional in its basic content, avoids the usual if informative regurgitation of similar works.

In preamble, the authors treat federal responsibilities and sources of power over Indian affairs, the concept of Indian Country, and the evolution of tribal government in individual chapters. The main burden of the work are chapters on: Indian judicial systems; the roles of those delivering legal services to Indians; the civil and criminal justice systems and jurisdictional issues in Indian Country; public policy, and on major trends in the development of the rights of individual Indians to civil liberties and entitlements from various governments. They provide a concise, thoughtful history of the struggle for rights of individual Indians, consider the backlash legislative proposals of the 70's and 80's, and include a brief but satisfying overview of Indian water rights. The authors complement the text with a number of tables and summaries of elements of major suites of legislation, doctrines and institutions. Their table comparing sections of the 1968 Indian Civil Rights Act and equivalent U.S. Constitutional Articles (p. 129), and their assessment of the tribal court systems' strengths and weaknesses (pp. 136-138), make their points Reviews 131

quickly accessible. The book is ideally suited for the classroom in law, history and political science.

Tribes continue to enjoy the right to flourish or perish given their resources and options, even after two centuries of foreign "pupilage" under the United States and its predecessors. The Nations Within conducts one through the sequence of major interactions between tribes, local governments, and the United States, leading one to a working understanding of how the concepts of "retained tribal sovereignty," and "plenary authority" of the United States over Indians actually evolved. In three succinct chapters, the authors summarize how the notion of "domestic dependent nations" evolved form the time of the Cherokee cases to limit tribal sovereignty and to help lay the basis for federal "plenary authority," while leaving tribes a degree of sovereignty superior to that of states. The concept of tribal sovereignty as a limited form of self-government as distinct from nationhood is the heritage of that process. The following three chapters deal with the periods following conquest, confinement to reservations, and the dissolution of retained land bases in the Allotment period. In the chapter on early reform movements of this century, the authors cite important events, cases and legislation which, though not widely known or cited, represented the change in political climate surrounding the Indian Reorganization Act and illfated Collier Bill. The chapters on "The Vision of the Red Atlantis," neatly present the kernels of the Indian studies, the deliberations, the conclusions of task forces and Indian interest groups that led to the IRA and the Collier Bill. An analysis of the "sinking and reemergence of the Red Atlantis"—the failed promise of IRA of 1934, the cyclical trend of commitment to resolving Indian problems (particularly those directly linked to sovereignty issues), to the present day dispensation of "Self-Determination" and Indian Nationalism—lead to their concluding contemplative chapter on the "Future of Indian Nations." An appendix compares the Collier Bill and the Wheeler-Howard Act, the better to illustrate the point that there is nothing in today's policies that has not been thought of before, and that even the most hard-won compromises of the past have died a-borning, fallen to the inexorable tides of "public sentiment," which turn too often to bureaucrats' incompetence, legislators' hostility or indifference, miscellaneous corruption, waste and private greed. The authors illustrate dramatically how tribes struggle to maintain

sovereignty, and how acts on the part of federal and local non-Indian governments, though sometimes benign in appearance, constitute an erosion of those powers. On the other hand, there is a "judicial temperment" living in these pages, a sense of fair play, an understanding that federal-Indian policy was intended to benefit all Americans. This book is an excellent treatment of the nature and extent of tribes' retained sovereignties.

One must recall here that in areas of regulatory and other types of jurisdiction, the means of getting redress in courts and halls of legislature are hard, but the prospects are perhaps less bleak than they were even a year ago, since, for example, the Navajos have won the right to tax oil extraction from their lands without officious Secretarial interference. But how do indigent tribes and individuals get a day in court? Low-cost legal services for Tribes and individual Indians are harder to finance. The Reagan Administration and Congress show great continuing reluctance in funding services directed toward Indians, including health and legal services, and every funding cycle requires renewed cries not to cut away from this resource, which always has comprised the sheerest of safety nets. Tribes are in a low bargaining position, more desperate in some cases than others. At best, the demand for their finite mineral and other resources shows no sign of abating, for their natural resources, the heritage of generations, is, in the eyes of non-tribal interests, a heap of so many bargaining chips. The battle for enforcement of trust obligations of the United States toward Indians rages, notwithstanding such reinforcements of the principles of trust responsibility from the Seminole v. U.S. case in 1942 to the last U.S. v. Mitchell case. There is mixed comfort in knowing, as the authors can show that there is little in the Self-Determination policy, from Nixon to Reagan, that Collier and his contemporaries did not conceive decades ago.

Al Logan Slagle University of California, Berkeley