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Why Don't They Give Them Guns? The Great American Indian Myth. By Stephen E. Feraca. New York: University Press of America, 1990. 250 pages. \$19.75 paper.

Stephen Feraca has written a book that is nothing if not controversial. *Why Don't They Give Them Guns* is not history and not anthropology, as the author readily admits. It is, rather, "a survey of and commentary on the unique combination of national guilt and what is contempt for Indians and things Indian pervading the attitudes of individuals at all social and economic levels of American society" (p. ix). The book's thesis is that this sense of guilt has generated a whole range of misperceptions, stereotypes, myths, and clichés about Indians and their societies and that these erroneous views have done and are doing much harm to succeeding generations of Indian people. By accepting and internalizing misconceptions about themselves, Indians are perpetuating what has been called "hostile dependency," making adjustments to contemporary conditions more difficult and resulting in sociopsychological problems for individuals.

Over the course of eight chapters, Feraca develops numerous arguments to support his thesis. Among them are the inadequacy of blood quantum as a criterion of Indianness; the guilt associated with the (in his view) erroneous belief that "we took their land"; the hysteria about treaty rights; the assumptions about what constitutes an adequate land base for community development; the reasons why jobs alone will not cure all of the problems on reservations; the reasons why Indian preference is a mistake; and the fact that Indian traditions frequently turn out to be "white men's folklore about Indians." The last chapter is devoted to the author's opinions on various issues, including his personal prescriptions for solving the "Indian problem." Feraca's arguments are supported by accounts of his experiences during twenty-five years as an employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and his own study of the history and ethnography of different tribal groups across North America. He has come to believe that the myth of the "Noble Savage" persists in American thinking and continues to inform or misinform contemporary views about Indian people as well as Indian policy. This makes Indian people into superhumans on the one hand, or subhumans on the other. What Feraca wants to do, then, is to set the record straight and get a few things off his chest at the same time.

Despite the fact that Feraca could be taken to task on many of his individual arguments, his book does point to many unresolved issues, dilemmas, and incongruities, matters which in the 1990s require the tribes' attention and leadership. The experiences he details are, no doubt, actual instances, and there is a need for reassessment, rethinking, and serious study. Tribes do have the tasks of grappling with enrollment criteria, ensuring their members' welfare and the welfare of the next generations, mapping out the future and ways to get there, protecting natural resources including wildlife, and recovering their individual cultures and histories to the extent possible. They do have to inform themselves better and separate the make-believe from the genuine. This is a formidable agenda, requiring diligent and hard work.

Unfortunately, Feraca uses his data selectively; that is, he tells us only of those experiences that support his viewpoint. His illustrations therefore are *ex post facto* and do not establish his conclusions. In more than two-and-a-half decades, the author must have had positive experiences as well, but he does not tell us about those.

Apart from his selective use of data, there are several other serious problems with Feraca's argument. One consists of the way in which he links different phenomena, how he attributes causality. There is nothing new in arguing that American society suffers from guilt about and contempt for Indians and things Indian, nor is it new to present the pervasive stereotypes and myths about Indians and their societies. Vine Deloria said as much almost twenty years ago ("The Problem of Indian Leadership," in *Race Awareness*, ed. R. Miller and P. J. Dolan, 1971). However, is it the internalized stereotypes and misperceptions or the expropriation and forced deculturation that whites feel so guilty about, together with racism and prejudice that have caused "hostile dependency," difficulties in sociopsychological adjustment, and identity problems for Indian people? Apart from that, Indians, like anyone else, will utilize and manipulate guilt and misperceptions to their advantage. For that matter, whites do not have a monopoly on opportunism, acting out of self-interest, greed, posturing, and ignorance.

Another charge that can be made against Feraca is a total lack of historical perspective on the problem he addresses. From the beginning of European takeovers, the unfolding historical events

saw native peoples placed in a permanent structural position of powerlessness over their own affairs. One might add here that it made precious little difference to the indigenous people whether the intruders were Spanish, English, French, or, lastly, American. The results were the same. Yet Feraca chastizes Indian people for having lost their culture and language, for being on the dole, and for being ignorant of their own history. He does not acknowledge that the fault must lie with those who had the power to force their understandings and misunderstandings on the powerless. Feraca's piece, therefore, is a classic example of blaming the victim. It should also be pointed out that the Indians' continual collective blaming, with attendant abrogation of responsibility, is as much a dysfunctional indulgence as is collective guilt.

Feraca allows the frustrations on the interpersonal level to interfere with sound analysis on the societal level. He can be criticized for faulty methodology and for using a one-sided theoretical perspective. Other than that, he is entitled to his opinions. In the end, though, Feraca's arguments turn out to be those of a disillusioned man of the establishment. So it behooves Indian people and their tribes to systematically and conscientiously inform themselves and come to grips with the reality that is their historical legacy. Some tribes are in the process of doing just that, not least through the efforts of some tribal colleges, which Feraca, along with other observers, "views with great suspicion" (p. 223). How would Indian colleges fare under state jurisdiction? Does Feraca think Indian people will learn about their history and culture, including language, in schools of the dominant society—the very same society that produces all of the myths and clichés that, according to him, have such harmful effects on Indian people? Or is it that there is little left worth saving, since too many "paper tribes" exist, for which genuine tribes also get the blame? Should Indians simply forget about their heritage and become like everyone else?

Apart from the criticisms one can level against the book, Stephen Feraca does raise some issues that are worthy of serious study and consideration. Who should address these issues? The dominant society, together with its arm, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and, not incidentally, special interest groups at the local and national levels have assuredly done their share in bringing about "reservation subcultures of a poor-white type." The "dole" is

not the answer and neither is state jurisdiction. Notwithstanding all of the problems, tribal people continue to exist, and they simply do not want state jurisdiction, just as they did not want allotments. Would it not be a fair move to allow Indian people to attempt to solve their own problems and, while feeling their way, to make mistakes? Given the centuries of unilateral policies in areas that counted, namely the infrastructure of tribal communities, it is now time for tribes to painstakingly rebuild what has been systematically destroyed. States beset by ignorance, misinformation, and clichés cannot and, one can anticipate, will not do this. It must be left to the Indian people themselves to define the issues as well as the solutions.

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Sand Creek and the Rhetoric of Extermination: A Case Study in Indian-White Relations. By David Svaldi. New York: University Press of America, 1989. 382 pages. \$21.95 cloth.

Month of the Freezing Moon: The Sand Creek Massacre, November 1864. By Duane Schultz. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990. 229 pages. \$19.95 cloth.

At a number of levels, the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians in what was then called Colorado Territory has come to symbolize the manner in which Euro-America "settled" the entirety of the western United States. More than the comparable slaughters that ensued along the Washita River, Sappa Creek, Bear River, Wounded Knee, and hundreds of other sites throughout the Plains and Great Basin regions, Sand Creek had everything necessary to commend it as an archetypal event: A massive white population, moved by gold fever, knowingly tramples upon legally binding treaty provisions by invading Indian country; the federal government, rather than attempting to honor its own existing treaty obligations to protect the Indians' solemnly guaranteed national borders, engineers a second—utterly fraudulent—instrument purporting to legitimate its citizens' illegal occupation of the Cheyenne-Arapaho homeland; a