

Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian," 1880-1900. Edited by Francis Paul Prucha. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973. Pp. vii, 358. Bibliographical note, index. \$12.50.)

Marquette University Professor Francis Paul Prucha has added to the growing body of information on Indian assimilation by linking together some forty primary sources (reports, speeches, articles, etc.) penned by the "friends of the Indians" for the years 1880 to 1900. Quite deliberately Prucha has qualified "friends" with quotes. His card stacked collection attempts to prove that the policies advocated, and in part effected, by these well intentioned white reformers—largely WASP educators, government officials, and authors, including people such as Henry L. Dawes, Lyman Abbott, Carl Schurz, and Thomas J. Morgan—proved "to be a disaster for the Indians, and therefore for the nation" (p. 10).

Prucha quite correctly flays the aggressive ethnocentrism of Gilded Age reformers; yet for all their purblind cultural egoism these Americans genuinely sought to "elevate the Indian." While it now seems disgusting that they wanted to turn him in a cultural sense into a white man, it should never be forgotten that their blunderous assumptions were predicated on ultimate sociolegal equality for the shattered native.

Prucha notes this but fails to emphasize how many other citizens really believed "the only good Indian is a dead Indian." How did Buffalo Bill and the diverse commercial groups (probably beginning with the Mountain Man and extending to today's TV writers looking for a "good show") link the Indian with the dominate culture? Colonel Cody, for example, armed his Indian actors with guns and urged them to "yell like hell—look as murderous as you can." In marked contrast the "friends" gave them tools and books and counselled the Indians to prepare themselves for inescapable absorption into the white world. Instead of making money on the Indian, they raised and expended vast sums to protect and advance him along the path of the white man. In fact, the "putting out system" found the "friends" enjoining their fellow whites to "bring an Indian youth into your home."

Prucha's selections painfully confirm that the reformers' elementary assumptions were naive, ignorant, and riddled with racism, but to saddle them with the major burden of guilt for breaking "down the [Indians'] heritage and cultural pride" (p. 10), is anachronistic. Before most of these reformers even had been born, the cruel cutting edge of the frontier had eroded much of the indigenes' accustomed way of life. Almost from the initial red-white contacts in the sixteenth century, aboriginal peoples found themselves irresistably attracted to the invader's power, be it his gun, his bottle, or his iron pot. Indeed, anthropologists have now speculated that well before the founding of Jamestown, European imported diseases had laid waste millions of North American Indians. Certainly Indian contemporaries of the "friends," warrior leaders such as Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, cursed saloons and stores with far greater frequency than they ever did schoolhouses.

For readers desiring source material to lay bare the cultural myopia of Victorian America, here is a well edited, heavily weighted instrument. On the other hand, readers seeking a more balanced account of the complex intercultural tragedy produced by the red-white cultural collision—already fixed on its disastrous course by 1860—should look elsewhere. An excellent place to begin is Francis Paul Prucha's classic *Broadax and Bayonet*.

San Jose State University,
San Jose, Calif.

Ted C. Hinckley

Taylor University: The First 125 Years. By William C. Ringenberg. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973. Pp. 184. End papers, notes, illustrations, figures, index. \$5.95.)

When Oliver Cromwell sat for a portrait and the artist was disposed to be overly solicitous about omitting certain facial blemishes, the tough old Puritan protested that he wanted to be painted "warts and all." The author of this book about Taylor University's century and a quarter history has not glossed over the passages of crisis and dissension in telling the story. He has, however, written in an obvious spirit of deep affection for the school and profound respect for its uniquely Christian mission in higher education.