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The society of American Indians: Too many chiefs and not enough Indians

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THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN INDIANS:
Too Many Chiefs and Not Enough Indians

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by
Gwin E. Gover
June 1989

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee

Name	Department
<i>Tommy R. Thompson</i>	<i>History</i>
<i>David J. Dillman</i>	<i>Geography</i>

Michael L. Tate
Chairman

June 20, 1989
Date

DEDICATION

To Gary Lee Gover

Bud

June 20, 1942 - January 10, 1988

PREFACE

The friends of the Indian set about with good intentions to stamp out Indianness altogether and to substitute for it a uniform Americanness, to destroy all remnants of corporate existence or tribalism and to replace them with an absolute rugged individualism that was foreign to the traditions and to the hearts of the Indian people.¹

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries most Indian reform groups were church-centered and were run by whites who had long been involved in the formulation of Indian policy. These people, whom one historian has labeled "old campaigners," thought of themselves as the "Friends of the Indian," and their individual interests focused on specific facets of national Indian policy. Founded in 1879, the Boston Indian Citizenship Committee sought political advancement for Indians. In 1882, the Indian Rights Association emerged to protect Indians' legal rights. A year later, the Women's National Indian Association was founded to build missions and promote prohibition.²

Between 1883 and 1916, representatives of these and other groups met annually at Lake Mohonk, New York, to discuss proposed changes in national Indian policy. Their goals for Indians remained constant throughout the era: (1) acculturation through contact with "civilized" white society; (2) abolition of reservations; (3) termination of the

Indian as a government ward; (4) economic security through the acquisition of private property; (5) abolition of the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and (6) eventual assimilation of Indians into mainstream society.³

Congress, in responding to the reformist spirit, had created the Board of Indian Commissioners in 1869 as a watchdog over the administration of Indian affairs. It was strictly an advisory group with no definite authority, and, as time passed, it was dominated by the ideas of reformers and missionaries. Within a few years the membership was composed almost entirely of clergymen and educators. The Lake Mohonk Conference became an extension of the Board of Indian Commissioners, and a commissioner was usually selected president of the Conference each year. Commissioners included Merrill E. Gates, president of Amherst College, and Quaker spokesman Albert K. Smiley, host of the Lake Mohonk Conferences. Other "old campaigners" who greatly influenced the Board were Amelia S. Quinton, president of the Women's National Indian Association; Samuel M. Brosius, Washington lobbyist for the Indian Rights Association; and Frank Wood and Joshua W. Davis of the Boston Indian Citizenship Committee. Affiliated with no organized groups but of more independent natures were Lyman Abbott, Congregationalist minister and editor of The Outlook, and Richard Henry Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.⁴

As all of the groups prepared their specific organizational platforms, petitioned Congress and the President, and launched publicity campaigns in the press, they came closer together in their strategies.

All of their methods shared the common themes of de-tribalization, individualization, and education. Well-intentioned though they were, their plans for the betterment of Native American lives ran counter to thousands of years of Indian culture. They had a single-mindedness amounting to tunnel vision. In a frightening ethnocentrism, showing no appreciation for Indian culture, they sought to eliminate those features which they considered "backwards." They wanted to replace broad tribal bonds with a new social organization which emphasized the nuclear family and individualism. To accomplish this metamorphosis in character, the reformers focused on the education of Indian children who would then return home and change their parents into white men.⁵

The reform groups all had Christianity in common. Between 1883 and 1900 more than one-fourth of those attending the Lake Mohonk Conference were clergymen or their wives, or representatives of religious groups. They believed that American civilization was founded on Christianity, and they tried to force Indians into a mold of themselves as Anglo-Saxon Protestants. In the late 1800s Protestantism and Americanism were synonymous in the minds of reformers. Americanism was threatened by millions of European immigrants, many of whom were not Anglo-Saxon Protestants. The rapid industrialization and urbanization in the East ran counter to the ideal American rural Protestant culture. Even the reforming "Friends of the Indian" viewed the vast reservations of untilled lands as a barrier to the spread of American culture in the West. The reservations must be broken up and the land divided among individual Indians, contended the reformers. In their minds farming

became the great panacea, despite the fact that few Indians were by tradition farmers and that they lacked the capital to obtain farming equipment.⁶

Reformers stressed the need for Indians to be self-reliant and self-supporting, and they sought a policy that would deal with Indians as individuals, rather than as part of a tribe. The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887 was a result of this drive toward individualism. Under its terms, reservation lands were allotted to Indians who, in theory, became self-supporting citizens. Remaining reservation lands were then sold to whites. In practice, the Dawes Act victimized Indians and eroded the total Indian land base by ninety million acres over the following three decades. Furthermore, an amendment to the Act allowed Indians to lease their allotments to whites and live off the proceeds. Reformers also advocated the gradual payment of tribal funds to individual tribal members, money which soon found its way into the hands of white speculators and merchants. They likewise attacked the issuance of government rations and the payment of annual cash annuities to reservation inhabitants under treaty terms, because these practices supposedly destroyed individual initiative and incentive to work.⁷

Along with the drive to make farmers of Indians was the idealization of the home and family. Reformers did not understand or appreciate the broad extended family which made aunts and uncles equal to parents, or cousins as equals to brothers and sisters, a point further confused by the matrilineal kinship lines of many tribes. American Protestantism emphasized individual salvation, so the Indian

was expected to break away from his communal life and free himself of tribal connections. The new white Christian Indian farmer was to be part of a closely-knit nuclear family rather than part of a band or tribe, and he was expected to adopt the Puritan ethic of hard work and thrift as a means of supporting his family. The Women's National Indian Association even organized a Home Building Department to help young Indian couples build traditional American farmhouses.⁸

The whole thrust of reformers' Social Darwinist philosophies was to reduce the Indian to the lowest common denominator and then force him to save himself. If Indians lost their allotments to white land grabbers, then they would be forced to find another means to support themselves. If they squandered their share of tribal funds, then they would have to work for a living. Predictably, there were a few isolated voices in opposition. Senator Preston B. Plumb of Kansas argued that most Indians wanted neither land in severalty nor a white education. In 1885, Dr. Thomas A. Bland, who had previously supported the reformers in the pages of The Council Fire, organized the National Indian Defence [sic] Association to preserve Indian culture. He attempted to slow the process of allotment in severalty and the granting of citizenship. He correctly believed that the elimination of tribes would, in fact, slow the civilization of Indians, and allotment would result in the loss of Indian land to unscrupulous whites. He warned that a white education for Indian children, though it would help those children, would in no way help their parents. His ideas, which were relentlessly opposed by

both the Indian Rights Association and Senator Henry L. Dawes, seem, in retrospect, more reasonable than those of the reform groups.⁹

Collectively, the reformers stressed education as a means to achieve assimilation, and they sought compulsory attendance laws for Indian children. As an adjunct to this policy, several boarding schools were founded in the East as a means of taking children off the reservations and away from tribal influence. The ultimate goal of this movement was the elimination of Indian schools and the assimilation of Indian children into white public school systems where they supposedly would profit from close association with white children. Eventually there were more than twenty boarding schools and dozens of agency schools.¹⁰ One result of this drive for assimilation through education was the emergence of a group of educated, acculturated, professional Indian young adults who were thoroughly indoctrinated in the beliefs and policies espoused by the "old campaigners."

The nineteenth century white reformers lost dominance after 1900. No longer could they get their favored bills through Congress and they lost influence with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the executive branch in general. However, the by-products of their educational goals, the young professional Indians, emerged and continued their fight into the twentieth century. Some of these joined together with the broad aim of improving all Indians' lives by awakening the public to the needs of reservation Indians and by securing legislation to advance their goals. So began the organization known as the Society

of American Indians--the first Pan-Indian reformist organization in American history.

While I alone am responsible for the content of this thesis, many people contributed to its completion and I am pleased to acknowledge the help I have received from the following people and institutions.

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ENDNOTES

¹Francis Paul Prucha, The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indian, Volume II (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p. 626.

²John F. Berens, "Old Campaigners, New Realities: Indian Policy Reform in the Progressive Era, 1900-1912," Mid-America: An Historical Review, 59 (January 1977), 51-52.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., and Prucha, The Great Father, p. 618.

⁵Prucha, The Great Father, pp. 610, 764, and 772, and Frederick Eugene Hoxie, "Beyond Savagery: The Campaign to Assimilate the American Indians, 1880-1920" (Doctoral dissertation, Brandeis University, 1977), p. 175.

⁶Prucha, The Great Father, pp. 619 and 623-624.

⁷Berens, "Old Campaigners," pp. 54-56.

⁸Ibid., pp. 57-58, and Prucha, The Great Father, pp. 614 and 621.

⁹Prucha, The Great Father, pp. 613 and 628-629.

¹⁰Hoxie, "Beyond Savagery," p. 147.

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CHAPTER I

Their Voice in Civilization

". . . a very important part of the solution of the Indian problem must come from the Indian himself."

-- Fayette A. McKenzie

On April 3, 1911, a group of educated Indians and concerned whites met in Columbus, Ohio, to form a secular group to promote the cause of Indians of all tribes. Present were Charles A. Eastman, and Carlos Montezuma, both medical doctors; Thomas L. Sloan, attorney; Charles E. Dagenett, Superintendent of Employment for the Indian Bureau; Laura M. Cornelius, aspiring playwright; and Henry Standing Bear, Oglala Sioux from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. All were American Indians, though their level of education and degree of intimate contact with white society made them atypical of their race. They met at the invitation of Dr. Fayette A. McKenzie, professor of economics and sociology at Ohio State University, a white man who had done extensive research and writing on Indian-white relations and who perceived the need for an organization of professional Indians.

The time was right for a new approach. Many Americans agreed with Frederick Jackson Turner's pronouncement that the frontier as a place and process had ended during the 1890s. Furthermore, Progressive Era reformers had refocused national attention on social problems. The

United States had just begun its greatest period of immigration from foreign countries, and with these vast waves of humanity came the need for jobs, homes, and education. Blacks, free from slavery for only a few decades, faced the increasing threat of second class citizenship guaranteed by Jim Crow segregation and new patterns of racial violence. Women began their last push for the vote and were only beginning to look beyond suffrage to other goals. Labor unions organized to better members' lives through collective bargaining and strikes. However, it was a dichotomous process--the drive to achieve collective goals directly opposed American traditions of individualism and self-reliance. In addition, unspoken racial biases produced emotional guilt by contravening the American belief that all men are created equal. Even liberal reformers felt threatened by minority influences and sought to eliminate them.

While they were not the focus of the largest reform movement, Native Americans attracted their share of groups dedicated to improving their lot. Most of these were organized and run by whites, were usually church-centered, and they adhered to the ideals of American individualism. The two largest groups--The Indian Rights Association (IRA) and the Friends of the Indian which sponsored the Lake Mohonk Conferences--were centered in the East, and while they had some Indian members, they were primarily groups of whites approaching Indian problems from their own ethnocentric viewpoints. They meant well, and accomplished some good, but they generally remained out of touch with reservation realities and unsympathetic to the continuation of Indian cultural values.

The Native American was an enigma to whites. When Europeans arrived in North America there were an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 unrelated Indian languages in use.¹ In addition, the closest counterpart in the white experience to the Indian social and political structure was the Greek city-state. Tribes were loosely organized, composed of individual bands. The bands sometimes coalesced into a single unit to resist a common tribal enemy, but they also fought among themselves in intra-tribal feuds. Individual bands had different beliefs and followed different customs than other bands within the tribe.² Thus the true locus of identity was the extended family rather than the tribe, and Indians frequently distrusted anyone outside their band. Tribes and bands usually had different leaders in peacetime than in wartime. Whites drew from the European tradition of a single hereditary leader, or the American version--an elected official or legislative body--and usually insisted on negotiating with such a person. Sometimes Indians tried to adapt their system to what whites expected and they selected a "chief," but that role was actually a white concept, not an Indian tradition.³

To further complicate Indian-white relationships and negotiations was the difference in methods. Indians possessed an oral tradition which required direct personal negotiation with all members of a band or tribe. They also believed in unanimity among the group. Whites had a written tradition which allowed negotiation through documents with one spokesperson representing an entire group. In addition, whites relied on majority rule, or decision-making by elected or appointed leaders, and could not comprehend the concept of each group

member having an equal voice and one single dissenting member having the power to halt any proceedings.⁴

While there was little tradition of long lasting Indian confederations, complete with authoritarian leadership roles, there were precedents for inter-tribal cooperation. In 1763, when the French surrendered Canada to the British and Louisiana to the Spanish, Ottawa chief Pontiac seized the moment to inflame an armed resistance against the English. For a short time, Pontiac persuaded several tribes to lay aside tribal jealousies and unite against a common enemy. He eventually helped lead the Ottawas, Chippewas, Hurons and Potawatomis, and inspired at least twelve other tribes to revolt. In this instance, inter-tribal jealousies proved a two-edged sword. While they motivated some tribes to attack forts near them so as not to be out-done by neighboring tribes' successes, they also eventually caused the conspiracy's failure.⁵ Indeed, the Chippewa tribe took Fort Michilimackinac after learning of Pontiac's victories, but the action angered the Ottawas who then alienated the Chippewas when they demanded a share of the booty and prisoners.⁶ There was never a unified command except in the vicinity of Pontiac's camp outside the besieged Fort Detroit, even though many tribes viewed Pontiac as the nominal leader since he had started the rebellion and had sent war belts to other tribes urging them to action.⁷ After his conspiracy failed, Pontiac was assassinated by a supposedly friendly Peoria warrior in 1769.⁸

Taking advantage of British-American animosity before the War of 1812, the Shawnee leader Tecumseh inspired a pan-Indian confederacy to protect the Indian land base in the lower Great Lakes area. His

moderate success at attaining a united Indian front was wrecked when some Miami, Potawatomi, and Delaware chiefs signed away three million acres in the 1809 Treaty of Fort Wayne. Determined not to lose that land, Tecumseh met with Governor William Henry Harrison the following year. When Tecumseh informed Harrison that he was "the acknowledged head" of the northwestern tribes, members of the Wyandot, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Winnebago tribes assured Harrison that Tecumseh spoke for many of their people.⁹ Unfortunately for the allied Indian cause, Tecumseh's effort at including southern tribes in the confederacy met with little success. Though some Creek warriors joined him, the more highly acculturated Chickasaws and Choctaws refused to ally with their traditional enemies, the Algonquian-speaking tribes north of the Ohio River. Tecumseh's confederacy began to fail after the Indian loss at the Battle of Tippecanoe on November 7, 1811. Though led in his absence by his brother, the Shawnee Prophet, Tecumseh's forces were never again as strong, nor were his followers as loyal. Even when faced with a common enemy, the various tribes were unable to fully set aside their tribal differences and act in concert. Tecumseh was killed by American forces at the Battle of the Thames in Canada during the War of 1812.¹⁰

In both cases, Indians responded to the pressures of their changing lives by turning to a holy man who urged them to purify themselves and return to the lifestyle of an earlier, simpler time. Pontiac was influenced by the teachings of a messianic holy man named the Delaware Prophet. Tecumseh's followers had originally been attracted by the trance-induced teachings of his brother, Tenskwatawa,

who demonstrated his magical powers and promised victory against the American enemies. In both cases, Indian leaders looked to white men for help. Pontiac relied on the French to help him against the English, while Tecumseh turned to the English for aid in resisting the encroaching Americans. Both Pontiac and Tecumseh had to battle Native American individualistic traditions, and inter-tribal rivalries to pursue their vision of Indian unity.

Given the differences and distrust among Indians, it is not surprising that no leader had emerged, as had Booker T. Washington or W. E. B. DuBois among the Blacks, to unite Indians in a common cause by the early twentieth century. Because Indians were divided into different bands and tribes, spoke different languages, and were subject to both intra- and inter-tribal antagonisms, unification behind a single leader was most unlikely. What was needed, contended many Indians and their white colleagues, was a group whose membership was Indian, with its own unique experience and viewpoint.

The idea grew into a movement known as Pan-Indianism which advocated laying aside tribal differences to present a united front to the white man. The concept was more complicated than it sounded. Indians had little tradition of inter-tribal cooperation and were caustically described by one reformer who said the Indian, "by tradition, by training and by hereditary institutions, . . . is clannish, is a bundle of tribal and race prejudices, and so is not concerned with the welfare of his neighbors and neighboring tribes and peoples."¹¹ Nevertheless, since disunited tribes had always lost in their dealings with whites, some thought that perhaps an organization

representing all tribes could succeed. Logically, the Indians who had the greatest chance of success in dealing with whites were those most like whites--those who had been educated in his schools and who had lived in his world. However, Pan-Indianism gave these same Indian leaders a sense of place because most had found that they truly belonged neither in the white world nor in the Indian world. Pan-Indianism offered them the goal of creating a society in which they did belong.

McKenzie was certainly not the first to express the need for an Indian-run organization; he was merely one of the first to act. In his book, The Indian Today, Charles Eastman said that as early as 1900 he, his brother John, and the Reverend Sherman Coolidge, an Arapaho living in Oklahoma, had discussed the possibility of an organization of professional Indians. On further reflection, however, they decided that since numerous "progressive" Indians worked for the government and were not "sufficiently independent of the Bureau to speak and act with absolute freedom," the organization they envisioned would antagonize the Indian Bureau and be misunderstood by a majority of Indians and by whites alike.¹² As it turned out, they were right. McKenzie had corresponded in 1904 with General Richard Henry Pratt, hailed as the father of the Indian school system, suggesting a "Fraternity of American Indians" open to all English-speaking Indians recommended by a school. Pratt had replied that the whole idea of organizations went against his belief in Indians' individual responsibility for their own lives. Nevertheless, McKenzie persisted in his efforts.

The founders were well aware of the obstacles that lay between themselves and the attainment of success, not the least of which was the

Indian himself. Dagenett wrote to McKenzie that tribes

. . . differ equally as much temperamentally as they do in character and in material interests and it seems to me that right there will be the greatest obstacle,--the holding of a successful general Indian Conference. It must be remembered that there is not now and never have [sic] been a unity of interests or feeling among the various tribes of the North American Indian.¹³

Another obstacle was the Indian Bureau with which they had to strike a delicate balance between cooperation and total independence. The Bureau controlled the lives of most Indians and it was the largest single employer of educated Indians in the country. If they were to remain independent of the Indian Bureau, they had to obtain a broad base of support, both to attract members and to obtain funds. They recognized those obstacles, but did not realistically face other concerns which ultimately contributed to their downfall. In fact, like the classic tragic hero, the group failed because all the elements of its failure were contained within its own character. Thus the ultimate importance of the Society of American Indians rests more upon the reasons for its failure rather than upon the strength of its meager accomplishments. It never disentangled itself from the Indian Bureau, and the founders were a fractious, incohesive, personally-ambitious lot. Discounting other Indian viewpoints and believing that their vision was the only one for all Indians, they made prospective members and the general public suspicious of their motives and methods.

The record shows that the Bureau was involved in the organization's formation from the planning stages. The association began in November, 1909, when, acting on Dagenett's suggestion, McKenzie

initiated an extensive correspondence with Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert G. Valentine. Though he made it clear that the Bureau could provide no financial support, Valentine was initially receptive to the idea, especially when McKenzie asked him to suggest "Indians worthy and competent to be invited."¹⁴ Later, when the two disagreed on the parameters of the meeting, McKenzie ignored Valentine's guidance, asserting that the conference should be neither pro-government nor anti-government and that, while he was inviting only "sober and intelligent" Indians, any who wanted to attend would be welcome.¹⁵ For that reason, he said, there would probably be much criticism of the government, but he believed that free discussion would dissipate bitterness and discontent. Valentine, who had previously instructed Indian Office superintendents to inform "enlightened Indians" of the possibility of a national conference, lost some of his enthusiasm for the project.¹⁶ He favored it, he told McKenzie, only if "the proper element of the Indians" attended, and if it brought "together really progressive Indians" and the "wise members of the race."¹⁷ Thus McKenzie unwittingly laid the groundwork for Bureau entanglement that was to prove a divisive element throughout the life of the group.

The founders created another problem for themselves with one of their first actions. They passed a unanimous resolution inviting General Pratt to become their first white associate member. They thanked him for his life's work for Indians and asked for his encouragement. Pratt was anathema to the Indian Bureau. His dictum, "To civilize the Indian, put him in civilization and keep him there," was diametrically opposed to most Indians' perception that the Bureau

was determined to put them on reservations and keep them there. His endorsement would be a mixed blessing. It would attract members from among the hundreds of former Carlisle Indian School and Hampton Institute students, but it would also antagonize the Bureau which could greatly impede the progress of any Indian organization.¹⁸

Pratt's influence cannot be overemphasized. He was the one white man in the country whose life had touched, changed and shaped the greatest number of Indian lives. He believed in total assimilation of the Indian race into the dominant white race. Almost as if following a script by Pratt, Eastman, Montezuma, and Coolidge spent their early childhoods living traditional Indian lives, and then, while still young and malleable, were torn from those lives and thrust into white civilization. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca of New York, the Society's first secretary-treasurer, editor of its Quarterly Journal for several years, and president for one term, called himself "A Product of the Pratt Ideal," not because he had attended Carlisle, but because, on Pratt's advice, he had remained in public school and in competition with whites.¹⁹

Pratt was biased, dogmatic and unyielding, firmly convinced that he alone knew what was best for Indians, and that their success could result only from his plan for them. Moreover, personal desire for his approval and the founders' respect for him sometimes got in the way of their better judgment. In a conciliatory letter to Commissioner Valentine, McKenzie assured him that though the founders honored Pratt's record of service to the Indian, they knew the solution to the problem must come from Indians themselves, and they realized that "a Conference

under the auspices of an association formed to advocate his policies could [not] succeed in establishing a sufficiently broad basis of discussion and action."²⁰ Thus the two strongest early influences on the organization--the Indian Bureau and General Pratt--advocated exactly opposite plans of action to solve the Indian "problem."

The founders were a remarkable group, and several of them shared decidedly similar backgrounds. Eastman was a Santee Sioux who was named Hakadah (The Pitiful Last) because his mother, the daughter of a white army officer and a Santee woman, died when he was born.²¹ When he was four his band renamed him Ohiyesa (The Winner) after he won a contest at the annual Midsummer's Feast. He retained that name and used it interchangeably with his white name throughout the rest of his life. Until the age of fifteen, he was raised to be a warrior and hunter and, when the time was right, to avenge the death of his father who was thought to have been hanged after the Minnesota Sioux Uprising of 1862. His father's reappearance ten years later as a "civilized" Christian farmer, took Eastman from his Indian world into the white man's world. There he experienced a devastating culture shock. During his father's absence his uncle and paternal grandmother had instilled in him a knowledge of his heritage and a hatred for whites. He wanted to please his father by learning English, acquiring an education, and living as a white man, but his grandmother constantly reminded him of his Indian heritage. His father and grandmother maintained a contest of wills, and young Charles (the Christian name he chose for himself) was torn between their antithetical demands.

Eastman began his white education with two years at the Flandreau, South Dakota, mission school. From there he went to the Santee Normal Training School in Nebraska, and then to the preparatory departments at Wisconsin's Beloit College and at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. Having decided that he could best serve his people as a doctor, he obtained a scholarship to Dartmouth College, originally founded during the 1750s as a school for Indians, in Hanover, New Hampshire. There he met Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wood whom he later called his white parents. The Woods were involved in Native American reform through the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian, the Indian Rights Association, and the Boston Indian Citizenship Committee. Acting on their advice he performed a year and a half of preparatory work at Kimball Union Academy in Meriden, New Hampshire, before enrolling at Dartmouth in the fall of 1883. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1887 and entered Boston University School of Medicine. By 1890 he was ready to return to help his people. Meanwhile, through correspondence with the Wood family, he remained knowledgeable about legislation affecting Indians. He favored the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, believing as his father had taught him, that adopting the white man's life was the only way for most Indians to survive.

His first job after medical school was as Indian Service physician at Pine Ridge, South Dakota. He assumed his duties with positive expectations by declaring that, "the government physician can be the most useful civilizer among the force of government officers placed in any Indian Reservation if he could understand the language and the habits of the people."²² He further remarked that to best serve

them the physician "must feel at home with them, and must put forward no claim of superiority, but rather sympathy and kindness in action and feelings."²³ His appointment resulted from Wood convincing Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas Jefferson Morgan that Eastman was "the finest object-lesson of what Christianity and education will do for the Indian that can be found in this country."²⁴

Eastman began his duties at Pine Ridge Reservation on November 1, 1890, less than two months before the battle at Wounded Knee. He was the first physician to reach the bloody site, and soon realized that the "battle" had actually been a massacre. He said later, "all this was a severe ordeal for one who had so lately put all his faith in the Christian love and lofty ideals of the white man."²⁵ The first test of his loyalties had occurred, and Eastman recognized that his identity could no longer be defined in one culture or the other. Two years later Eastman resigned from the Indian Service after a long and bitter controversy with the Pine Ridge agent in which Indian Service officials, Senator Henry L. Dawes, Frank Wood, Herbert Welsh, Civil Service Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt, and several Eastern newspapers had become embroiled. Secretary of Interior John W. Noble decided that unless Eastman resigned or accepted a transfer, he would be removed in order to maintain the agent's authority on the reservation. At the same time Noble said, "I do not take this action in condemnation of him."²⁶ Eastman resigned. He returned to the Indian Service in 1900 as physician at Crow Creek Agency, South Dakota, but resigned less than three years later after an ugly dispute with the agent.

Following his second resignation, until about 1910, he worked under the direction of the Indian Bureau to establish permanent family names for the Sioux, thus helping to assure a legal descent of their property. In 1911, he was the American Indian representative to the first Universal Race Congress in London. A contemporary said of him, "He is generally recognized as the foremost man of his race to-day, and as an authority on the history, customs, and traditions of the native Americans."²⁷ It was a truly remarkable achievement for one who did not begin to learn English until he was fifteen and who, in just seventeen years time, had learned the language and had acquired an education, including degrees from two of the finest universities in the country.

Though he presented the original six-point statement of intent to the Temporary Executive Committee of the Society of American Indians (SAI), Eastman became only a sometimes-member. The disastrous first annual conference of 1912 dampened his enthusiasm. A speech he had presented in London was harshly criticized, and when Parker tried to soothe his feelings, the two quarreled. During the next few years, while Parker virtually ran the SAI, Eastman remained distant from the organization. Furthermore, he was unwilling to disregard his own personal financial security for the sake of the organization, and he frequently cited his writing or lecturing commitments as reasons for not performing various SAI functions. However, his election as president in 1918 marked an important turning point in SAI policy.

Carlos Montezuma's life was similar to Eastman's in many ways. He was born in Arizona to Yavapai parents, though later he was most frequently called a Mohave-Apache. His parents named him Wassaja,

meaning Signaling or Beckoning.²⁸ He entered the white man's world at a much younger age than Eastman when, between the ages of three and six, he was kidnapped by a raiding band of Pimas and sold to a traveling photographer named Carlos Gentile. Gentile raised him as his own son, had him baptized a Christian, and changed his name to Carlos, after himself, and Montezuma, perhaps as a link to his Indian heritage. His elementary education was begun in Chicago and Galesburg, Illinois, where, because of ill health, he stayed for two years with friends of Gentile's, and later completed in Brooklyn, New York.

After Gentile's business failed, Montezuma lived with other people for awhile before becoming the ward of William H. Steadman, a Baptist minister in Urbana, Illinois. Steadman and Baptist missionary representative George Ingalls decided that Montezuma should become a doctor and practice medicine among his own people. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Illinois and then entered Chicago Medical College, while simultaneously working in a drug store and washing windows to support himself. He completed medical school in 1889 and, after a short unsuccessful attempt at establishing a private practice, became the Indian Service physician at Ft. Stevenson, Dakota Territory. The offer of employment from Commissioner Morgan came at Richard H. Pratt's urging. The two had corresponded ever since Montezuma had been a medical student. As an Indian Service physician he worked at Fort Stevenson, the Western Shoshone Agency in Nevada, the Colville Agency in Washington, and at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. After seven years he left the Service because he felt that he was not gaining in his profession and because, as he said,

". . . I believe I can do more good for my people by being their voice in civilization and their missionary in Chicago."²⁹

Montezuma's experiences in the Service shaped his view of the Indian Bureau and of reservations--the focus of his later work for reform. While he hated reservations, calling them "a monument to the want of knowledge of human nature on the part of those who have been instrumental in perpetuating [them]," he eventually returned to the Fort McDowell reserve when he knew he was dying of tuberculosis.³⁰ During the last several years of his life he had remained in close contact with the Yavapais of Fort McDowell, where he had located his relatives. He advised tribal members in their disputes with the Indian Bureau, including one involving a pipeline through the reservation to provide water to nearby Phoenix. He applied for and was denied enrollment in the tribe at the San Carlos reservation. In letters to his wife he began to refer to himself as an Indian and to sign his name as "Wassaja." He called Fort McDowell home and he died there on January 31, 1923, in a traditional brush shelter erected by his relatives. Thus he made of his death a symbol to the Yavapais that he was with them in death and, having been buried nearby, would always be with them. Perhaps he planned for his grave to be a continual thorn in the side of the agent with whom he disagreed on everything concerning the welfare of the tribe. Perhaps he was simply returning to his roots, since being an Indian had affected everything he had ever done in the white man's world.

Montezuma had refused to attend the first annual Society of American Indians conference when he learned that Commissioner Robert

Valentine was to speak. After the 1915 Lawrence Conference failed to take a definite stand against the Indian Bureau, he began in 1916 to publish at his own expense, Wassaja, a small monthly newsletter aimed at the abolition of the Bureau and reservations. In the pages of Wassaja, he frequently criticized the SAI when he was at odds with it, and promoted it among his readers when he was in sympathy with its efforts. After Eastman's election as president in 1918, when the SAI finally came out against the Bureau, he wholeheartedly endorsed the Society in Wassaja and worked for it. But in the meantime, he had created so much confusion and ill-will toward the SAI among his readers, that he had done it irreparable damage.

Arthur C. Parker, though not present when the SAI was founded, became its "chief intellectual influence" from 1911 to 1918.³¹ He was born on the Cattaraugus Seneca Indian Reservation in New York, son of a Seneca father and a Scottish and English mother. His father, Frederick, a New York Central Railroad accountant, was a graduate of Fredonia State Normal School; his mother, Geneva Griswold Parker, was a former teacher on the Cattaraugus and Allegheny Reservation. On his mother's side he was descended from missionaries, and on his father's side from Seneca leaders. His great-uncle, General Ely S. Parker, was an aide to Ulysses S. Grant during the Civil War and became President Grant's Indian Commissioner. He was especially close to his grandfather, Nicholson Parker, who for years was chief clerk of the Senecas, and who taught him his bicultural heritage. His grandfather read him Milton, Shakespeare, and the Bible, and "recreated for him the glories and tragedies of the Iroquois and the Seneca, and of the American past with

which these were intertwined."³² He graduated from public high school in White Plains, New York, where, because of his father's job, the family had moved when he was about twelve. He began to study anthropology and became a field archeologist. Later he took the Civil Service examination and was appointed as the New York State Museum archeologist. His work there and later at the Rochester Museum earned him a distinguished reputation as a premiere anthropologist and museologist.

Arthur Parker was one of the first people nominated to the Temporary Executive Committee and he became an active member almost immediately. He served as secretary-treasurer from 1912 to 1915, during which time he was also editor of the Quarterly Journal, and he was elected president in 1916. In fact, for all practical purposes, Parker was the SAI. He disregarded his own personal financial security to work without pay for the SAI when it could not provide him with the promised salary. He also disregarded his health, working for the state of New York by day and for the SAI far into the night. Until 1918, he, more than any other person, kept the organization alive, making policy decisions and setting the tone of the group. He smoothed ruffled feathers, kept the peace, and found ways to accomplish the impossible without money. As early as November, 1913, he informed McKenzie that he might have to resign in order to give better efforts to his state job. He added, "My physical and financial condition is such that all this extra work . . . is only drawing me closer to an ultimate collapse," and that he had exhausted his personal resources.³³ In spite of the

conditions stated to McKenzie, he persisted and remained the driving force of the SAI for five more years.

Though not on the Temporary Executive Committee, the Reverend Sherman Coolidge served as the first SAI president and was active in Pan-Indianism from the early twentieth century until his death in 1932. He was an Arapaho, born in 1863, but raised and educated as a white from the age of seven when he was adopted by the family of Army Lieutenant C. A. Coolidge. He received his B.D. degree in 1884 from Bishop Whipple's Seabury Divinity School and, a year later, became a Protestant Episcopal priest. He served in Wyoming with the Shoshone and Arapaho for awhile and was in charge of the Indian Protestant Episcopal missions in western Oklahoma in 1911 when the SAI was founded. Like Eastman and Montezuma, he married a white woman, Grace Wetherbee.³⁴ He seems to have been a compromise choice for SAI president since he only possessed a short record of government service, but a spotless reputation.

Thomas L. Sloan, who was raised by his grandmother on the Omaha reservation in Nebraska, was one-sixteenth Indian. At age seventeen, he was incarcerated on the reservation as a result of a dispute with the agent. He graduated from Hampton Institute at age twenty-six, read law under his friend Hiram Chase, and was eventually admitted to the bar. After working for the Indian Bureau on the Omaha-Winnebago reservation for several years, he returned to his law practice and specialized in Indian cases.

Though he had originally opposed the peyote religion and had worked to have it banned in Nebraska, Sloan later changed his position and advocated it. This, along with the rumors that he had exploited his

Indian clients through his law practice, made Sloan a controversial figure, one whose reputation could seriously damage the SAI. He was elected president in 1919 and initiated policy changes with which many of the original founders could not agree, causing most of them to resign.³⁵ SAI leaders had always opposed the use of peyote and had stated their opposition formally in their published literature, but Sloan favored its use. The Society had always abhorred the exploitation of Indian culture and tradition, but under Sloan's presidency members began wearing native dress at the annual conferences, creating what many founders considered a carnival atmosphere that was counterproductive to the group's stated goals. Sloan remained president until the organization finally passed out of existence in the mid-1920s.

Laura M. Cornelius, later Mrs. O. J. Kellogg, was among the most colorful of the founders, but she created dissension and bad publicity with her questionable reputation and with a much-publicized scrape with the law. Dennison Wheelock, an Oneida attorney, wrote Parker early in 1912, cautioning him against allowing her to play a prominent role, saying that while he had had no personal dealings with her, the Oneida tribe felt that she was untrustworthy and that she had an unsavory reputation among them. Furthermore, he said he had newspaper clippings documenting that she had performed bogus Indian dances "almost in the nude" to raise money for the Oneidas--money the tribe never received--and that her own brother had admitted to several people "that she was a 'professional sport'."³⁶ Wheelock continued that he made it a point to avoid contact with Cornelius and her brothers so as not to cast doubt on his own integrity among tribal members. The record shows that she was a

constant disruptive element at Executive Committee planning meetings and at the annual conferences. She criticized Parker as being too slow and he scolded her, telling her she should get busy and "stop kicking against other members."³⁷ At the same time, the press frequently referred to her as the "Indian Joan of Arc," and Coolidge praised her as "unquestionably one of the most brilliant women of our race."³⁸

Before the 1913 Denver conference, she had split completely with the officers, whom she considered "too soft" on the Bureau question, and was, according to Parker, determined to go "to Denver and start a scrap for blood."³⁹ In the meantime, frequently unable to lead the SAI in the direction she thought it should follow, she had become involved with another new national Indian organization that was highly suspect to other SAI officers, The Grand Council of American Indians. In 1913, while serving as an SAI vice president and head of the education division, Cornelius and her new husband, who had been passing himself off as a popular writer of the time, were indicted by a federal grand jury for fraud in connection with Osage oil lands in Oklahoma. The Rocky Mountain News of Denver reported that the public attributed the indictments solely to Bureau animosity toward the Kelloggs, and a federal judge ruled Kellogg innocent, saying the case should never have reached court. Unfortunately, the publicity coincided with that year's national conference in Denver where some of their alleged illegal activities had occurred. Parker announced that both would be expelled from the SAI, and he expressed fears that the notoriety would diminish the group's influence and impair its work.⁴⁰

The turn of events could not have been a total surprise to SAI officers. While running the temporary office at Ohio State University, Rosa B. LaFlesche voiced suspicions of Cornelius' motives. Shortly before the second annual conference, Parker wrote that the group should be most cautious about her, saying, "her threats last year to quit and start her own society and her narrowness . . . make me apprehensive as to what her policy will be. . . ."41 Several years later, Kellogg made overtures for a reconciliation with the SAI. She contacted Montezuma and others, but the reconciliation never came about.

Charles E. Dagenett was either one-quarter or one-half Indian, of the Peoria tribe from Oklahoma. He graduated from Carlisle in 1891 at age nineteen, having been trained as a printer. Later, he graduated from Eastman College in Poughkeepsie, New York. In 1894, he went to work for the Indian Bureau where he progressed through the ranks until, as Superintendent of Employment, he was the highest ranking SAI member in the Bureau.⁴² His position made him both the object of praise and the target of criticism. He was a role model to help other Indians advance in the Bureau, and yet he was decried by those who believed Indians in government service had betrayed their race. Pratt took the latter track, saying he had been disappointed in Dagenett over the years and accusing him of taking credit for the work of his subordinates.⁴³

Dagenett appeared to be a champion of women's rights and demanded that women be equally represented with men on the Executive Committee, yet he later faced allegations of sexual harassment within his office at the Bureau.⁴⁴ Parker confided to Coolidge that Dagenett's unwelcome advances had precipitated the resignation of a particularly

efficient secretary from the SAI office in Washington. Always the pragmatist, Parker determined that he would stand by Dagenett against those who were collecting evidence to expose him and have him dismissed from the Bureau because he was a worker and not a constant source of criticism and dissension.

During all of this, McKenzie played the devil's advocate in an effort to build Indian leaders. As an expert on Indian-white relations, he saw himself as a bridge between the two races, and he was frank both with Indians whose reputations he felt might injure the young organization and with whites who sought to assume some sort of control over it. Recognizing that he was incurring enmity from both sides and was in danger of being "crushed between the two races," he felt it would be a small price to pay for "the miracle of race salvation."⁴⁵ Believing that "irregularities" could be found in the lives of most "able Indians," he rationalized that "The circumstances surrounding [able Indians] have been almost such as to compel irregularities."⁴⁶ Everyone, he believed, should be charitable toward any Indian who had surmounted obstacles and made something of his or her life. He counseled patience toward those who strayed while waiting for their return to the fold. Although convinced that SAI officers should be "above suspicion," he also knew that the charges hurled among themselves and by outsiders were often merely charges, colored by personal biases.⁴⁷ Believing that one's weaknesses were another's strengths, he asserted that leading SAI members balanced each other and that no one should be ostracized because the strengths of each were needed to hold the weaknesses of the others in check. After the second

annual conference, he confided to Pratt, who was seldom so generous:

"It is because I believe the present balance is so nearly correct that I urge so strongly immediate strengthening of the organization."⁴⁸

ENDNOTES

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⁶Ibid., p. 163.

⁷Ibid., p. 180.

⁸Ibid., p. 311.

⁹R. David Edmunds, Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1984), p. 134.

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¹¹Richard Henry Pratt to Rosa B. LaFlesche, September 6, 1911. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in The Papers of The Society of American Indians, ed. John W. Larnier, Jr. (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1987). [Hereafter cited as PSAI.]

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¹⁸Thomas L. Sloan, Henry Standing Bear, Charles A. Eastman, Laura M. Cornelius, Carlos Montezuma, and Charles Dagenett to Richard Henry Pratt, April 4, 1911. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

¹⁹Arthur C. Parker to Richard Henry Pratt, August 24, 1916. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

²⁰Fayette A. McKenzie to R. G. Valentine, February 28, 1910. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, General Correspondence and Other Records of the Bureau, 1801-1939, Central Classified Files, 1907-1936 (CCF), in PSAI.

²¹Raymond Wilson, Ohiyesa: Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), p. 13. Unless otherwise indicated, all information about Eastman in this section comes from this biography.

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²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 40.

²⁵Ibid., p. 61.

²⁶Ibid., p. 76.

²⁷Eastman, The Indian Today, p. viii.

²⁸Peter Iverson, Carlos Montezuma and the Changing World of American Indians (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), p. 3. Unless otherwise indicated, all information about Montezuma in this section comes from this biography.

²⁹Carlos Montezuma, "The Reservation is Fatal to the Development of Good Citizenship," The American Indian Magazine, II (January-March, 1914), 69.

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³¹Hazel W. Hertzberg, "Arthur C. Parker, Seneca, 1881-1955," American Indian Intellectuals, 1976 Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society, ed. Margot Liberty (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1978), p. 131. Unless otherwise indicated, all information about Parker in this section comes from this source.

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CHAPTER II

Our Hopeful Task

". . . the time has come when the American Indian race should contribute in a more united way . . ." -- Charles A. Eastman

In his efforts to give impetus to an Indian-run organization, Fayette McKenzie arranged, in 1910, for Carlos Montezuma, Charles Eastman, and Sherman Coolidge to deliver guest lectures at Ohio State University. There he hoped to discuss with them their thoughts on such a group, and to gain support from the academic community. The locale set the important precedent that many future SAI conferences would be held on college campuses to highlight the members' educational attainments, to gain academic credence in the white community, and to emphasize to Indians that their salvation lay in education.

When McKenzie began his correspondence with Indian Commissioner Robert G. Valentine in 1910, a conceptual disparity became apparent almost immediately. Valentine, thinking on a much larger scale than McKenzie, favored an immediate national conference, while McKenzie envisioned a small meeting of prominent Indians individually invited to discuss the feasibility of a national organization. McKenzie informed a correspondent that Valentine believed \$5,000 would be needed for a conference of 150-300 Indians.¹ In the end, McKenzie prevailed, and the

April, 1911, organizational meeting was composed of only six Indians. They became the Temporary Executive Committee, with the duty of planning a meeting of delegates from all tribes at which they would present a plan for a national organization.

On the first day, Charles Dagenett defeated Thomas Sloan for the chairmanship and Laura Cornelius was elected secretary. Sloan suggested that they call themselves The Progressive Indian Association and Dagenett suggested The First American National Forward Movement. Decision on a name was tabled temporarily. Realizing the great amount of work to be done, they considered additional Executive Committee members, mentioning, among others, Arthur Parker; Gertrude Bonnin, a Sioux writer living in Utah; Rosa LaFlesche, a Chippewa living in Montana; and Henry Roe Cloud, a Winnebago and the first Indian graduate of Yale University. The next day, at Cornelius' suggestion, they voted to call themselves The American Indian Association. Eastman presented a six-point written statement of their objectives, and a declaration that ". . . the time has come when the American Indian race should contribute in a more united way, its influence and exertion with the rest of the citizens of the United States in all lines of progress and reform, for the welfare of the Indian race in particular, and humanity in general."²

They were determined to anticipate the problems that would surely arise. They invited General Richard Henry Pratt to become their first white associate member and scheduled their national conference in October, slightly ahead of the Lake Mohonk Conference, so those attending could progress from one meeting to the other. Dagenett requested that Lake Mohonk chairman Albert K. Smiley give their

representative ten to fifteen minutes on the program to outline the Association's goals.³ Acceptance by the Lake Mohonk Conference could greatly strengthen them and would undoubtedly increase their associate membership. Commissioner Valentine even urged the immensely popular former President Theodore Roosevelt to attend, calling the conference "the first real effort I know of to create an Indian public opinion. It marks an epoch."⁴

When members of the Committee adjourned and returned to their homes to prepare for the national conference, one of their continuing duties was to prepare lists of possible prospective members from their individual geographic areas and to inform them about the Association. No possible avenue of interest was left unexplored. They contacted church groups, business and professional groups, social groups, and university faculties in their search for members and revenue. Their efforts produced only limited success for, by September, the number of associate members equaled the number of active members. McKenzie arranged with Ohio State University president, Dr. William O. Thompson, for office space on campus from May through October and LaFlesche quit her Bureau job to run it. Her letters and memos to McKenzie made it clear that he, and not Chairman Dagenett, was directing her work. In one letter she complained that she had not heard from Dagenett for awhile and that some matters required immediate attention and could not wait for his direction. She had her hands full just trying to keep the peace among Executive Committee members. She complained that Eastman was assuming too little responsibility, while Cornelius and Montezuma created innumerable problems.⁵

In July, LaFlesche wrote McKenzie that for once Cornelius and Montezuma agreed on something since neither saw the need to ask for white assistance. While saying she was disregarding Montezuma's thoughts on the matter, she did admit that there had been no response to her costly mailing of 100 letters to club women.⁶ Yet, during the following week, she sent 150 letters to superintendents of Indian Bureau departments. By August she said, "The only obstreperous ones on the Committee are Miss Cornelius and Dr. Montezuma," adding, "they have not learned to wait. If they had been in the government service as long as I have . . . they would be trained to wait until the end of time."⁷

Shortly thereafter, LaFlesche wrote to McKenzie that Cornelius was irritated because her personal ambitions, which LaFlesche considered impractical for the first meeting, were being ignored.⁸ She went on to say that no committee member was disruptive "but Miss C. and Dr. M."⁹ She warned McKenzie against urging Cornelius to greater effort, saying Cornelius would insist on staying in the best hotels at Association expense, and refuse to cover any of her own expenses.¹⁰ She concluded by stating that members' donations should not be used in that way.¹¹ LaFlesche accomplished a prodigious amount of work, much of it thankless, and in the end asked to be reinstated as a Bureau employee since she could no longer afford to work for a group that could not pay her.¹²

In the meantime, the Executive Committee met again in June, 1911, at Cornelius' home in Seymour, Wisconsin, to continue planning for the October conference. At that time they decided to send out two letters announcing the conference--one version to Indians and another

version to interested whites. McKenzie's proposal was addressed "To the Progressive Indians of the Country:--," but seemed to suggest an international vision. It called for a multi-purpose national conference to consider problems affecting Indians, to recommend solutions to the public and the government, and to develop leadership for all North and South American Indians.¹³ McKenzie listed religion, education, industry, and government relations as possible topics for discussion, and promised to try to raise money to cover the expenses of those persons who could not otherwise afford to attend or who could pay only part of their expenses. In the aforementioned letter fragment, he inquired of his correspondent if it might be possible to interest millionaire philanthropist Andrew Carnegie or a peace association in contributing since ". . . substantial justice and appreciation of the red man will contribute immensely to our reputations among the nations to the south, will strengthen our international positions on the continent, and work powerfully in the direction of world peace."¹⁴

Bureau involvement almost killed the organization at the first conference. When Montezuma learned that Valentine was to speak, he resigned and declined to attend. An article in the campus newspaper, The Ohio State Journal, was headlined "Indian Conference Splits on Politics," and it went on to claim that the Bureau controlled the meeting. The article asserted that for this reason no constitution was adopted and permanent officers were not elected.¹⁵ It reported further that Sloan's election as chairman of the Executive Committee engendered charges by an Eastman-led group that Sloan had cast his lot with those who favored government methods in order to get elected. Sloan's

supporters countercharged that Eastman was trying to dominate the entire proceedings. Sloan offered to resign, assuring that Dagenett, a Bureau employee, seemed likely to replace him. Cornelius, who hated the Bureau, threatened to withdraw if that happened and proposed a constitutional prohibition on government employees holding office. Debate on that issue prevented adoption of the constitution, and it gave the SAI an anti-government reputation that kept away many potential members over the next few years.¹⁶ The first conference ended with Sloan presiding as chairman and Dagenett as secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee, which also included Coolidge, Cornelius, Parker, Standing Bear, and Judge Hiram Chase, an Omaha from Nebraska. It fell to them to write a constitution that could be approved by the next conference.

At the end of the first conference, the future of Pan-Indian unity was in question. Montezuma was totally estranged, and when Parker tried to soothe Eastman's feelings, Eastman derisively called him "an ethnologist," implying that he was incapable of understanding the Indian.¹⁷ Eastman did not attend the second conference. Cornelius was determined to keep government employees, some of the best educated and most capable Indians in the country, from holding office, so many declined to join the organization. Some felt that the two top officers should both resign, Sloan because he was suspected of dishonest dealings, and Dagenett because of his Bureau connection. Parker wrote that Sloan was "considered a disturbing factor and many persons . . . are afraid of him and think he stands in the way of our success."¹⁸ He likewise asserted that both should resign for the good of the Society,

adding, "The time will come when they can prove their integrity."¹⁹ On the whole, it seemed unlikely that the organization would ever flourish. The schism was definitely not an auspicious beginning to an organization which proposed such idealistic goals. In a November, 1911, letter to Dagenett, Parker asked:

Do you think that there are so many elements and so many stages of advancement represented that we will have a difficult time in effecting harmony? The ideas of the educated Indian, his methods of thought, his viewpoint, his foresight and his needs are all so different from his undeveloped brother that there may be trouble We should . . . see that new members come to us indoctrinated with correct principles Our members at the conference seemed to have many views, many plans and all came to no plan.²⁰

However, some business was accomplished at that initial meeting. The delegates voted to rename the group the Society of American Indians (SAI). They decided to establish an organizational headquarters in Washington, D.C., from which business would be conducted and an eye could be kept on the progress of pending legislation. They appointed a committee to select a symbol or emblem for the Society. Furthermore, the founders now knew exactly what problems they faced and exactly how much each might have to compromise in order to reach agreement.

When the Executive Committee met in January, Dagenett resigned as secretary-treasurer and Parker was selected to fill that position. Parker was the best possible man for the job--a calm, middle-of-the-road peacekeeper, a prodigious worker, and one willing to make personal sacrifices to get the job done. He returned to his vocation as an anthropologist for the state of New York in Albany and devoted four to

five hours each evening to SAI business, writing letters and outlining an agenda that kept a clerk busy all the next day.²¹ He supervised every aspect of SAI activity and pursued a myriad of ideas to promote the Society and its membership drive. He lured the interest of family friend Jacob Riis, the celebrated photographer whose work did so much to advance organized labor and other social movements.²² He attempted a fence-mending correspondence with Montezuma. He tried to infuse SAI literature with the group's strong ties to Christianity to gain more support from the religious community.²³ While Parker was not pro-government, he was pragmatic about Bureau involvement and sought to open channels of communication. To McKenzie he confided that he admired Valentine as "a commissioner who thought as well as acted," though he realized that some members would misunderstand every effort Valentine made for the SAI.²⁴

One disservice Parker may have done the Society stemmed from his apparently ambiguous financial perceptions. He seemed to believe that dues should be the Society's primary source of income, but he failed to consider that the majority of Native American people whom he hoped to enroll were so poor that most could not afford the two dollar annual fee. When Cornelius offered to obtain a \$10,000 loan for the Society, Parker opposed the idea, asserting that it would be harder to repay than most thought, and that it would disrupt the entire group and place it under the lender's control. Instead he avowed ". . . a healthy conservatism [sic] in internal matters and an aggressive campaign for members will place us on a proper footing" ²⁵ Every member, he believed, should commit to recruiting twenty other members or to raising

\$40.00 for the Society in some other way. He asked each member to feel that his two dollar dues were only the start of his financial commitment to the group. His own contribution included the creation of the Loyal Order of Tecumseh as an adjunct to the second conference, for "people of remote Indian ancestry who come into the Society and wish to advance their social standing thereby by registering in the new patriotic order"26 With their ten dollar fees, he proposed to create a sustaining fund for the Society.

He appealed to all members for donations or small loans to cover current expenses, while also trying to build a solid foundation for future needs. Furthermore, he believed that a totally Indian-financed organization would do much to dispel the widely-held belief that Indians would always be dependent on charity, unable to do anything for themselves. McKenzie was a bit more pragmatic and endeavored to raise money among whites. However, when approaching whites who had experience working with Indian groups, he encountered a wariness best exemplified by Pratt who hesitated to endorse the group. He allowed his name to be used in membership drives but not in fund-raising drives, saying that if the Society really worked for Indian citizenship and education, thousands would join and money would not be a problem. Pratt did not seem to recognize that money was necessary to accomplish the work that would attract members.²⁷

Parker paid many SAI expenses without hope of personal reimbursement. He met publishing and mailing costs for Society literature and paid his clerk from his own pocket. The time he had previously given to lecturing and writing, which had produced a

significant portion of his income, was now devoted to his SAI work. McKenzie, alarmed at the personal debt into which Parker was falling and at the professional sacrifice he was making, campaigned among white associate members to raise money to cover the Society's financial commitment to him, even saying that it must be met each month before other bills were paid. Parker confided to Pratt that he was willing to forego his comfort and "future welfare . . . and even to inconvenience [his] wife and children" for the sake of his SAI work.²⁸ It was just as well that he felt that strongly about what he was doing because the Society was never able to compensate him.

Parker may also have limited Society growth by his opposition to branch chapters. He feared that members of local groups would diffuse SAI efforts, causing the organization to lose its focus on national legislation and to expend energy on local squabbles. On every reservation were educated Indians--physicians, teachers, government workers--who might have led residents and built a strong grass-roots support for the national organization. Parker saw such groups as divisive and discouraged them at every opportunity.

One of Parker's first joint accomplishments with Oneida attorney Dennison Wheelock was to write a bill to be introduced by Congressman Charles Carter, a Chickasaw from Oklahoma, calling for a codification of Indian laws. He then wrote to every member of Congress urging their support of the bill. The correspondence between Parker and Wheelock is an invaluable aid to understanding the young organization. Wheelock offered Parker his assessment of the first conference and of the pitfalls facing the SAI when he wrote:

I fear that the Society is exhausting its energies too much in discussing the form of the organization, which are [sic] merely incidental, and leaving out of consideration the broader questions of the needs of the Indian, which is [sic] paramount. So that while the society is debating as to the qualifications of officers or who shall be eligible to hold office, where the headquarters shall be, and where the conventions shall be held, are being hotly debated, the real questions affecting the Indians and their needs, which needs [sic] immediate attention and consideration are relegated to the back-ground.²⁹

The correspondence between the two men is revealing also in that, at the same time Wheelock was writing Parker warm and friendly letters, he wrote to Pratt criticizing Parker's speeches and essays as "but the echo of the Indian Rights Association, Lake Mohonk, and such other paper shooters."³⁰ The contrast between what Wheelock wrote to Parker and what he wrote to others about Parker illustrates once again the deep distrust between Indian leaders.

Another source of disagreement in the interim between the first and second conferences was the selection of an organizational emblem. The committee, consisting of Parker, Winnebago artist Angel Decora-Deitz, and Cherokee journalist John M. Oskison, was charged with finding a symbol long used by all tribes. They chose an ancient bird figure discovered in a Peoria, Illinois, mound which they called the Thunder Bird and which Valentine labeled "one of the best examples of native drawing and workmanship" and a design "almost universally used" by Native Americans.³¹ Asking Tuscarora ethnologist John N. B. Hewitt for his thoughts on the bird, Parker commented that it would almost certainly be opposed by Eastman who believed the Illinois work to have

been done by Indians' predecessors and not by Indians. He further remarked that "It might be well, however, not to oppose him too much now for the sake of keeping peace in the house."³² Hewitt suggested an eagle as the SAI symbol, saying it was "far more dominant in the arts, adornment and symbolism of the American Indian than the chimerical beast called the Thunder Bird."³³ Of Eastman he said, ". . . it is always useless to argue with bigots."³⁴ Parker agreed with his eagle suggestion and speculated that perhaps an eagle feather in copper or silver would be the ideal Society pin. The eagle symbol was finally adopted, though it appeared on the Society lapel pin and on the stationery letterhead as the same figure Parker originally called the Thunder Bird.³⁵

Much more concrete business was accomplished at the second conference in October, 1912, than had been accomplished at the first. Henry Roe Cloud reported to his parents that the conference was ". . . not notable for the number in attendance but for its serious enthusiasm and the quality of thought contributed."³⁶ Its most important accomplishments, he continued, were the adoption of a constitution and the election of officers. He believed Coolidge's election as president would insure "the moral backing of the Indians and the Whites who are looking for something of real worth to the Indian cause from this organization."³⁷ He further remarked that Sloan and Dagenett were elected vice-presidents by small margins only because eastern Indians, who did not know them, predominated over the five western Indians who were present.

The new constitution stipulated that only Indians could be active, voting, office-holding members. Whites interested in the welfare and advancement of Indians could become associate members and attend meetings as observers. All tribes were invited to select delegates, though nontribal delegates could participate with special executive committee approval. Such nontribal delegates were designated Indian-Associates, a category that included Indians from the Western hemisphere not living in the United States, or not on any tribal roll, or people of less than one-sixteenth Indian blood. It outlined seven goals: 1) to advance Indian understanding; 2) to provide a forum for discussion of differing opinions; 3) to present to whites an accurate picture of Indians and their history; 4) to obtain citizenship for Indians; 5) to provide legal advice and assistance for Indians; 6) to oppose anything felt to be detrimental to Indians; and, 7) to remain a free and independent organization, unencumbered by personal or political entanglements. To assure a forum for discussion of differing opinions, Article VII of the constitution stated that a conference of the general membership was to be held annually for the consideration of topics pertaining to Indians and for the presentation and discussion of papers on Indian subjects. In addition, the Society voted to publish a journal. With the fifth purpose in mind, leaders proposed formation of a legal aid branch to provide Indians with reasonably priced legal services.³⁸

The second conference ended with the SAI at last firmly established. It was the first such organization, run by a group whose level of education should have ideally suited them to provide leadership

for all Indians. Furthermore, because of the members' familiarity with the white man's world, the group should have been able to dictate a course of action that would ultimately result in the greatest good for all members of its race. As a result of the conference many problems were resolved, and there was a unity of purpose, at least for awhile. In a letter to Pratt, McKenzie contrasted "the happy harmony of the present organization" to the "disharmony which one year ago threatened the very existence of the Society."³⁹

Believing the SAI firmly established, Parker considered resigning his New York state job to work full time as secretary-treasurer. He planned a tour to study reservation conditions in Minnesota, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. He planned to finance the trip from membership dues and donations collected along the way, and McKenzie labeled it "a faith mission."⁴⁰ However, convinced that Parker must travel to increase membership and to strengthen the Society, McKenzie tried to solicit contributions to pay his monthly salary so that he could work full-time for the Society and travel as needed. McKenzie believed that the tour was necessary because without an increased membership, the possibility of SAI domination by one forceful leader or by a small group was possible--something he feared even more than governmental control.⁴¹ Parker asked Commissioner Valentine for a letter of introduction to use when traveling so that both agents and Indians would know that he represented a legitimate organization. Valentine provided the letter and wished him success in attracting members with divergent views.⁴² He even suggested that Parker send

SAI literature to the regent of the Boston Daughters of the American Revolution as a means of enlisting their support.

When F. A. Abbott was appointed Acting Commissioner, Parker immediately sought to establish the same friendliness by writing, "I believe that there should be cordial relations established and that we should understand that our aim is to co-operate and to help in all good measures."⁴³ Abbott later gave permission for an SAI representative to observe hearings and investigations conducted by his office or to receive the records of such proceedings. He further suggested that the SAI contact individual congressional committees for permission to attend their sessions.⁴⁴

One of the most ambitious results of the second annual conference was an effort to influence the choice of the new Commissioner of Indian Affairs. It was not an organized or officially sanctioned effort since different members favored different candidates. Though the SAI did not endorse any one candidate, there was much behind-the-scenes maneuvering and campaigning by individual members, making it clear that Society members were certainly not apolitical. Indeed, how could they be? Members were firmly convinced that they knew what was best for all Indians, and since the Commissioner of Indian Affairs directly affected the lives of all Indians, who better to determine the choice than educated Indians themselves? Most members favored the appointment of Bureau employee Edgar B. Meritt, while a few wanted Acting Commissioner Abbott. At first Pratt suggested that McKenzie seek the post. He speculated to Parker that if McKenzie's administrative abilities and legal expertise equaled his grasp of Indian problems, he would be the

ideal Commissioner.⁴⁵ Later he decided that Thomas Sloan was probably the best of the five frequently-mentioned possibilities because of his Indian blood, because he was an attorney and a capable administrator, and because he had been involved in the Indian fight for many years.⁴⁶ At the same time, Pratt revealed that President Grover Cleveland had asked him to name a man for the job of commissioner, but that he had refused because he worked for the Bureau at the time.

Thomas O. Moffett, Superintendent of the Presbyterian Department of Indian Missions, informed McKenzie of Sloan's bid for the appointment, saying it was unlikely he would get the position because of his clouded reputation.⁴⁷ Thomas Sloan caused major problems for the Society and his candidacy served as a divisive element in the new SAI unity. Part Omaha, he was among the best known of the few Indian attorneys in the country at the time and was in partnership with Hiram Chase under whom he had read law. He was suspected of taking advantage of uneducated Omaha Indians, and that reputation was at least partly responsible for the controversy following his election as chairman at the first annual conference. If many Indians believed that Sloan had used them or others badly, they could hardly have confidence in an organization that he headed.

The election of Coolidge at the second conference had helped to dispel those suspicions, but even as a vice-president, Sloan's reputation continued to cause problems. Henry Roe Cloud, in describing the second conference to his parents, expressed the widely-held belief that Sloan and his friend Dagenett were only in the Society for personal gain.⁴⁸ William E. Johnson of The New Republic magazine, commented to

McKenzie that while he believed SAI members were virtually unanimous in advocating Meritt as the next Commissioner, a rift had developed over Sloan's candidacy.⁴⁹ In reality, there was little likelihood of Sloan's appointment because he was an Indian, though only one-sixteenth, and because of his reputation. Cato Sells was appointed Commissioner and for awhile he earned the wary approval of both Parker and Montezuma.

A second failed effort following the second conference was McKenzie's pet project, the Legal Aid proposal, designed to give Indians legal services at reasonable prices. The previous year Congress had considered a bill which allowed attorneys adjudicating Indian claims to charge a maximum 25% rate. The Society proposed a ceiling of 6% for the Legal Aid services, to be paid to the SAI treasurer who would then pay the attorneys involved. Parker had previously been referring Indians to Dennison Wheelock for legal advice. Wheelock offered his services, free except for his expenses, to the Legal Aid department because he believed competent attorneys could prevent the Secretary of the Interior from making arbitrary decisions, and because tribes frequently were not allowed to hire their own lawyers.⁵⁰ He told Parker in confidence, however, that he believed giving Indians inexpensive legal aid hurt them in the long run because they came to expect it and hired incompetent or crooked lawyers because they were cheap, rather than hiring more expensive but honest attorneys.⁵¹

In an effort to raise funds for the project, McKenzie sent letters requesting gifts or loans at 5% interest. However, after receiving only \$350 of the needed \$2000, he revised his plan and asked contributors if he should return their money or if they would support

the revision. He proposed hiring a law student to spend the summer in Washington, D.C., to make contacts and gather facts to draft "a carefully safeguarded bill to open the United States Court of Claims to Indians."⁵²

Pratt did not support the revised plan and asked that his contribution be returned. He believed the Court of Claims battle "too deep and involved to send an inexperienced boy into," when he personally knew several ex-Congressmen who had tried and failed to effect exactly what McKenzie was proposing and who had given up "in disgust."⁵³ Furthermore, if the second conference marked a new harmony in SAI leadership, Pratt had already made it clear that he was not feeling so harmonious. He had informed McKenzie that he would attend no more conferences even though he had been invited because, due to the constitutional provision that white associate members could attend the business sessions only as observers, he had been denied permission to participate in decision and policy-making.⁵⁴ McKenzie assured him that keeping whites out of such sessions was a way of avoiding government control.⁵⁵ Pratt expressed his doubts, saying that the presence of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and several of his assistants indicated plainly to him that the Bureau intended to control the Society just as it controlled Lake Mohonk and various other Indian organizations.⁵⁶

McKenzie pointed out that Pratt's attitude would probably emphasize to the officers the need for political caution and independence, since they longed for his endorsement and approval.⁵⁷ Confidentially, he suggested to Parker that associates be made "consulting members" on committees as a means of assuaging Pratt's hurt

feelings.⁵⁸ McKenzie believed that the Society had achieved a balance of independence from the Bureau, as well as freedom from personal ambitions and factionalism, and, therefore, it warranted Pratt's support.⁵⁹ That support finally came as a result of the major outgrowth of the second annual conference--The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians.

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CHAPTER III

The Magazine

". . . and the other side of the story
may be told . . ." -- Arthur C. Parker

A more successful result of the second annual conference was the resolve to publish a magazine. To be called The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians, it was to present the immediate needs of Indians, to announce the Society's actions, and proclaim its policies and views to the world. It was to provide a forum of opinion on all matters concerning Indians, and it subsequently has become the most reliable public record of the Society's activities.¹ It was expressly prohibited from publishing historical or anthropological pieces or fiction unless there was a need to fill space. The resolution creating it also stipulated that the Journal was not to be used as a personal forum for any member or to endorse private businesses. The masthead proclaimed "The honor of the race and the good of the country shall be paramount." Parker was named editor, a position he retained until 1918. He assured one associate member that even if the Society published only one issue it would have "a certain historic interest."² In the first issue he declared, "We 'poor wretches' have a press and the other side of the story may be told. . . . Never before has an attempt

been made on the part of a national Indian organization to publish a periodical devoted to the interest of the entire race."³

The Journal was the most far-reaching result of the harmony that grew out of the second annual conference. Prior to that time there had not been the unanimity of effort to produce a publication and there had been no money to support it. Since the magazine was published in English, it was clear that only educated Indians could read it or contribute to it; but then, the SAI was an organization of educated Indians. Indeed, Gertrude Bonnin told Parker in 1917 that many illiterate Utes on the Uintah-Ouray reservation received the Magazine, saying it was wasted on them while many Indians who could read did not receive it.⁴ An early advertisement claimed

The most interesting Journal in the United States is making its first appearance. It is devoted to a great social and economic problem and concerns the destiny of an entire race. Every American will wish to read:

The Quarterly Journal
of the Society of American Indians

The Journal is edited by Indians who are university men and actively engaged in professional life. The contributors are Indians and the friends of the race who know the right side of the Indian's story.⁵

For his readers, Parker described the SAI as an all-Indian organization founded to produce united Indian opinions on reforms and a more honest and efficient administration of Indian matters. He went on to say that the group was free of political or religious ties. He stressed Indians' responsibility and capability. Calling them the "coming race," he avowed that they were not, as some people claimed, "a vanishing people" because they were adapting their lifestyle to

modern realities.⁶ This theme of the Indian adjusting in order to live in the white man's world was a constant throughout the life of the Society, as was the idea that the Indian must deal with his own problems instead of waiting for the Indian Bureau to solve them. In an early issue the editor announced that the main object of the Society was "to awaken the Indians to a knowledge that they themselves must learn to fight their own battles, transact their own business and become valuable men in a valuable country."⁷

It was the Journal that finally earned Pratt's support for the organization. Upon receiving the first issue, he urged his former students to join the SAI, calling the Journal, "the best exponent of the Indian and his cause now published."⁸ To McKenzie he confided, "If the high standard the Journal sets up in its first number is maintained I shall feel it an honor to be a member of the Society in any capacity whatsoever."⁹ He emphasized his statement with a \$100.00 pledge for the Legal Aid branch and a promise to try to double that amount.

After an auspicious beginning, the Journal survived largely because Parker was determined that it should. Printing and postage fees were the Society's largest single expense. When applying for a second class mailing permit, Parker indicated that the Journal would neither run advertising nor seek to raise money. It is obvious therefore that the plan was to support it out of the \$1.50 a year subscription fee and donations. Soon after that, all members were given a subscription with their paid-up \$2.00 a year dues, leaving the support of the magazine to non-member subscribers. To accomplish this goal, Parker endeavored to sell subscriptions to libraries nationwide. The fourth annual

conference in 1914 considered discontinuing the Journal, and neither budget plan submitted for approval by the budget committee provided for publication costs. Continued publication was in doubt at that time because of the turmoil created by what came to be known as The Godfrey Letter.

Under the title "Does Godfrey Tell the Truth? Some Suggestions for an Investigation in Oklahoma," the Journal had published a letter from a Chickasaw Indian named Godfrey, leveling charges that Senator Robert L. Owen was guilty of thousands of counts of land fraud against members of the Five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma. The letter asserted that Owen had repeatedly introduced legislation in Congress to legalize his land dealings retroactively and, having failed to get the legislation passed, he had finally succeeded in having an associate appointed United States attorney for the eastern district of Oklahoma so that he would try the suits against Owen. SAI president Coolidge and vice-presidents Dagenett and William J. Kershaw informed Parker by letter that they would apologize to Owen, a powerful Senator whose support they believed was vital in securing effective Indian legislation.¹⁰ Furthermore, they said it was rumored that Godfrey had been paid by Owen's political enemies to cast aspersions against his integrity even after the Senator had refuted the charges against him and had been returned to the Senate by a large majority of Oklahoma voters.

Parker informed Coolidge that he understood political expediency, but intimated that the officers had not investigated Godfrey's charges against Owen thoroughly enough to know whether they were true or false.¹¹ The Journal, true to its commitment to air all

sides of an issue, would publish the officers' apology to Owen, Parker said, though he personally believed Owen guilty. He had published Godfrey's letter, he assured Coolidge, only after verifying its claims with non-partisan people who had investigated the situation and who assured him of Owen's guilt. Furthermore, he asserted that if Owen's support of Indian legislation was contingent upon an SAI apology, the man was without integrity. In a letter to Coolidge a few months later, Parker referred to a slander suit against him and to the 600-page document of affidavits and court records which he believed showed Owen to be guilty.¹² He inquired of Coolidge why Owen did not sue him and Godfrey unless he feared exposure in court, but continued saying he would remain Journal editor unless forbidden to print more on the matter or unless the officers apologized to Owen again. Apparently the officers did not attempt to censor his copy and a subsequent issue contained a statement by Godfrey that his charges against Owen were valid as clearly shown by the county and court records mentioned in his previous letter. Nevertheless, Parker resigned his SAI office and editor's position.¹³

The issue of the Godfrey letter cast a cloud over the 1914 conference in Madison, Wisconsin. Parker did not attend. He believed that the officers' apology to Senator Owen had been "a virtual surrender to the enemy" and had announced he would not accept his office if reelected.¹⁴ Much time was consumed in debate over whether the SAI membership as a whole should apologize to Senator Owen and refuse to reelect Parker, or whether they should reelect Parker and not apologize to Senator Owen. In describing the scene to Parker, Dennison Wheelock

said that he finally asked for a closed meeting of Indian members in which those attending were "unanimous" in their praise of Parker and his efforts, though they felt publication of the Godfrey letters had been a mistake.

While wanting to support Parker, the membership feared the harm that Senator Owen could do to their cause. Their solution was to apologize to the Senator and to reelect all officers unanimously. Wheelock continued that he had been instructed to assume Parker's duties temporarily if Parker declined to serve, as Coolidge and others fully expected him to do. Urging Parker to accept the office and to retain the Journal editorship, he explained that as a result of the closed session and as evidenced by the \$1300 in cash and pledges given afterwards, he believed the SAI had been revitalized by the controversy. Furthermore he believed Parker's refusal to serve would injure the Society in the eyes of whites who regarded Parker "as the father of the movement" and "as the main pillar."¹⁵ Surely, if Parker withdrew from the Society, whites would believe Indians to be incapable of appreciating a man of his caliber and commitment.

Parker agreed to resume his work as secretary and as editor, but the problem of financing the Journal continued and publication remained on a year-to-year, even issue-to-issue basis. In January, 1916, Parker informed John W. Clark, editor of The Indian's Friend, that he could not renew the Journal advertisement in that publication since he was not sure it would be published that year.¹⁶ In May he wrote Pratt saying that the Society was "totally bankrupt."¹⁷ By August, he called the

most recent issue of the magazine "our last shot," saying the treasury contained only twelve cents.¹⁸

Believing that the title, The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians, implied heavy reading and reduced popular appeal, Parker decided to change the magazine's name. He searched for a title that would appeal to more readers, facilitate newsstand sales, and broaden the publication's scope. He suggested to Pratt that The American Indian Advance with The Quarterly Journal centered below in small print, might attract more subscribers.¹⁹ Pratt countered by suggesting Advance of the American Indians or Indians of America Advancing.²⁰ Following a polling of the contributing editors, the officers, and the Advisory Board members, Parker renamed it The American Indian Magazine, with A Journal of Race Ideals centered below in smaller print.²¹ Parker patterned the new name, he confided to Pratt, on the National Geographic magazine, a publication of a society but not containing the words Society or Journal in its title.²² Some members criticized Parker as high-handed for making the change without polling the entire membership. The fact is that Parker was beginning to consider the Magazine as separate and apart from the Society, and all matters relating to it subject entirely to his discretion.

In April, 1916, Montezuma began to publish a small newspaper/newsletter as a counterpoint to the Magazine. He was still estranged from the Society because it would not take the strong anti-Bureau view he espoused. If the country's only national Indian publication would not demand immediate abolition of the Bureau, he would produce one that would. He advertised his publication in the American Indian Teepee as

"a little spicy monthly paper" and said it was a continuation of War Whoop which had been published by Father Philip Gordon, a Catholic priest, and which, claimed Montezuma, had treated the Indians' souls as well as their bodies. When War Whoop was not well received, Montezuma had acted on Gordon's suggestion that he rethink the idea and continue the publication.²³ The masthead of the first issue showed an Indian lying crushed under a huge log labeled "Indian Bureau," and proclaimed that it was "Freedom's Signal for the Indians." It went on to say that it existed only to hasten abolishment of the Indian Bureau and that it would be published monthly so long as the Bureau existed.²⁴ Montezuma proposed to publish the paper at his own expense and with the income from subscription sales, though he occasionally asked his readers for donations. In addition to criticizing the Bureau and pointing out its abuses of the Indian, it was clear from the beginning that the SAI, the Magazine, and editor Parker were all to receive a large share of Montezuma's criticism as well. That criticism created confusion and disillusionment in the minds of many Indian subscribers and kept many prospective members from joining the SAI.

It is not readily apparent exactly when Montezuma lost faith in Parker. Selected as secretary-treasurer by the Executive Committee in January, 1912, Parker soon earned Montezuma's confidence as "the right man" for the job.²⁵ A year later Montezuma was still praising Parker, writing to McKenzie that he was irreplaceable. The feeling was mutual. Parker favored Montezuma's election as Society president that year, telling Pratt that though they disagreed on "minor particulars," he believed they could work well together.²⁶ Pratt wholeheartedly

concluded, citing Montezuma's growing influence with all tribes. As late as 1914 Parker still addressed letters to "Dear old Monte." Montezuma undoubtedly turned on Parker because he would not take an anti-Bureau stand, the latter believing pragmatically that an effort at cooperation with the Bureau would accomplish more in the long run than would a breach with the power structure. While assuring Montezuma that he was "jumping on the Bureau with my hobnailed moc's . . .," he did not advocate its abolition because, he said, he did not know what would replace it to protect Indians.²⁷ As Rosa LaFlesche had noted years before, Montezuma had no patience and he wanted action now, not in the long run. He seemed to feel that while some Indians might be hurt by withdrawal of Bureau protection, it would be a small price to pay for the freedom of all Indians, and that the rest would quickly learn to function on their own once the Bureau was abolished. It was simply a difference in personalities: Parker was cautious and deliberate; Montezuma was passionate and possessed of a singleness of purpose that amounted to tunnel vision.

Montezuma renounced the entire SAI as a result of the 1915 conference, labeled by one witness as a "stormy session."²⁸ The conference refused to take a definite stand against the Indian Bureau, so Montezuma charged that the officers were controlled by the Bureau. Parker, as Journal editor, was the most publicly visible officer and so he bore the brunt of Montezuma's attacks. Parker was somewhat bewildered by it all since he frequently praised Montezuma's efforts.²⁹ He lauded Montezuma's editorial entitled "Our Repression," as "his best article, more logical and more dispassionate" than previous work.³⁰

Nevertheless, Montezuma had nothing good to say about Parker. In Wassaja Montezuma began to refer to cooperation with the Bureau as "Parkerism" and to lump the SAI with other groups he felt were pro-Bureau--the Indian Rights Association, the Friends of the Indian, and various missionary groups.³¹ He unfairly hinted that the Bureau had promised Parker a lucrative job once Parker had done all the damage he could as an SAI officer and as the Journal editor.

In the second issue of Wassaja, Montezuma asserted that the SAI did nothing but meet and talk and that the Journal's purpose was simply to "tickle its readers."³² At the sixth annual conference in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, that year, Montezuma openly quarreled on the floor of the conference with ex-president Sherman Coolidge, directing his remarks critical of the Indian Bureau at Coolidge personally. When Coolidge replied to some of the charges, Montezuma leapt to his feet and shouted, "I am an Apache and you are an Arapahoe. I can lick you. My tribe has licked your tribe before."³³ The next issue of Wassaja claimed that the SAI was "arm in arm" with the Bureau on certain issues and accused that their election of officers was suspect.³⁴ Of Coolidge's assertion that he could serve both Indians and the Bureau, Wassaja inquired, "if he serves God and the Devil the same way."³⁵

Soon afterwards Wassaja shifted the focus of its criticism, saying that the "S.A.I. is all right but the officers are all wrong," charging that they were out of touch with the realities of most Indians' lives.³⁶ Montezuma was not the first to make that charge. Many people questioned whether government employees, dependent on the Bureau for their income, could work for Indian rights and welfare without bowing to

pressure to retain their jobs. Parker, perhaps naively, believed that an Indian in a Bureau job could help improve other Indians' lives. Montezuma compared the Society to a ship, saying it was not at fault if it was steered in the wrong way. In the same issue Wassaja said that there could be no doubt that the Magazine's editor was working with the Indian Bureau. Montezuma further objected to being quoted in the Magazine without being allowed to proofread his copy, asserting it put him in the worst light, making him appear illiterate and ignorant. He urged his readers to attend the 1917 conference, saying he was not against the Society, he was just against its officers. His comments on the SAI continued in that vein for some time. In early 1918 he said:

There is a faction in the Society of American Indians. It is clear-cut. One side favors the Indian Office, its domination over the Indians and its reorganization. (They are in power now.) The other side is for the abolishment of the Indian Office, for freedom and true citizenship for all the Indians. Wassaja may say that the same faction occurs on all reservations.³⁷

Because there was no Society conference in 1917, ostensibly because of the War, Wassaja asserted that the officers were not doing their duty, and it called for a meeting in the West "where THERE ARE INDIANS" to form an organization that would do a better job of representing Indians.³⁸

In 1918, Montezuma urged his readers to attend the Pierre, South Dakota, SAI conference to prevent the Bureau from destroying the Society. The results of that conference finally earned his approval. Eastman, with whom Montezuma had been allied on a number of issues, was elected president, and Father Gordon, a strong opponent of the Bureau,

was elected vice-president. Montezuma told his readers that while no one had criticized the SAI more than he in the past, and while many had not joined the organization because of his criticism, that at last he was able to urge them wholeheartedly to join the Society.³⁹ He had, he said, renewed his lapsed membership. He praised the new officers as the "most loyal of the Indian race."⁴⁰

The 1918 conference marked a turning point in the SAI. Held in South Dakota--Sioux country--it became known as the "Sioux coup" when Eastman and Bonnin, both Sioux, were elected president and secretary-treasurer, respectively. As president, Eastman favored changing the focus of SAI action. Though he had formulated the original statement of intent to the Temporary Executive Committee years before, he had since come to believe that the Society should be composed of delegates from all tribes working together as a social service organization and should avoid involvement with governmental Indian affairs.⁴¹ This, of course, was in direct contrast to all the Society's previous efforts to influence legislation and government action and policy. With her election as secretary-treasurer Bonnin emerged as the single most powerful SAI officer and effectively engineered the resignation of both former treasurer Marie Baldwin, with whom she had feuded for some time, and of Parker, her former ally. She also became Magazine editor, further increasing her power.

Some years before, the duties of secretary and treasurer had been divided between two people to lighten Parker's work load so that he could devote most of his time to the Magazine. At that time, Marie Baldwin, a Chippewa attorney, was elected treasurer. The change in

structure created chaos. Baldwin was in Washington, D.C., and Parker in Albany, New York, and the process of paying bills became cumbersome. When Parker was elected president and Bonnin, who lived in Utah, secretary, the problem was aggravated by the increased distance between the officers. Parker himself had eventually realized that the separation of powers had actually made his job more difficult, and he had recommended that the Society recombine the two offices under one person. Of course, he had no way of knowing he would soon be voted out of office.

Parker, who had rankled Eastman's feelings after the 1911 conference, tried for awhile to retain control of the Magazine. As early as 1915 Parker and Coolidge discussed the need for a consistent editorial policy should the Society's officers change from year to year. To achieve that Parker wanted to separate the publication from direct SAI control and to contract with the Society for copies for every member.⁴² He believed the Society should limit its conferences to every third year so more money could be allotted to the magazine and less used for conference expenses. In 1917 he had attempted to separate the Magazine from the Society, and when it became clear that the Society could no longer support it, he notified Bonnin that so far as he was concerned, the Magazine was independent of the Society and that he would begin charging members for their copies.⁴³

In a 1918 letter to Grace Wetherbee Coolidge, Sherman Coolidge's wife, Parker thanked her for her donation for Society work and her support of the Magazine, saying the Society had not published his Philadelphia speech to the Federated Conference of the Friends of the

Indian in pamphlet form but that the speech had found publication in the Magazine. He asserted his belief that the Society was slumbering under Eastman's presidency and that it was up to him, through the Magazine, to continue its work. Parker's attitude was that the SAI, under Eastman and Bonnin, had temporarily lost sight of its purpose, but that the Magazine would adhere to and promote its original goals, until new officers were elected by the next conference. Assuring Coolidge that her donation was enabling him to carry out his purpose, he continued that SAI "publications are the most quoted of any literature on Indian programs. The SAI must live on in spirit strong, if weak in body. Its very name and record is worth while."⁴⁴

For several years Parker and Bonnin had enjoyed a warm working relationship. Early in 1916 he had taken pains to remind then-treasurer Baldwin, to file two copies of the latest Magazine containing a poem by Bonnin, with the Bureau of Copyrights to protect the work.⁴⁵ Later that year Bonnin praised Parker as "the head, heart and soul of our endeavor to save our race."⁴⁶ When Parker was elected president he continued as Magazine editor, and Bonnin, though living in Utah, greatly reduced his work load. She addressed her letters to him as "Dear Seneca President" or "DSP" and signed herself "Sioux Secretary" or "SS." However by early 1918, Bonnin's letters to Parker became stiffly formal. She addressed them to "Mr. Parker" or "Arthur C. Parker, President," and signed them "Gertrude Bonnin, secretary." One can only speculate that the cool reserve resulted from her dissatisfaction over his handling of her feud with Baldwin.

After the 1918 conference, Eastman and Bonnin requested that Parker submit copy to a board of editors for approval before publication. Calling the board a "committee of censors," Parker replied that such a procedure would make his work too cumbersome and he insisted that the officers should give him full authority and endorse his decisions.⁴⁷ He suggested that Bonnin, who had moved to Washington, D.C., issue a secondary publication from there under the old title, The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians. Instead, Bonnin informed him that she was assuming editorship of the Magazine. Parker resigned his office and terminated his SAI membership. Though Eastman had a very different view of the Society's purpose and function than had Parker, the Magazine continued in much the same vein under Eastman's presidency and Bonnin's editorship. Bonnin wrote articles on water rights, the importance of Indian retention of a land base, and on female Indian leaders. Prior to that, female contributors had limited their subject matter to traditional gender concerns such as community centers, health care, education, and an occasional biography of a male Indian leader.⁴⁸

Bonnin apparently viewed her SAI position as a means of achieving some personal goals that had long been dormant. As a child and young adult, she seemed an ideal product of the policy of acculturation through education. Her formal schooling made her unsuited for the realities of reservation life, yet it did not make her comfortable in the white world. Born in 1876, Gertrude Simmons was a Yankton Sioux. She left the reservation when only eight years old to attend the Quaker-run White's Manual Institute in Wabash, Indiana.⁴⁹

When she entered White's, she could not speak English, but so well did the Institute do its job and so well did she absorb its policies that when she returned to the reservation three years later, she felt completely alienated from her Indian surroundings. White's advocated the Bureau policy of keeping children away from the reservation and from their parents as long as possible, and Bonnin returned there four years later for awhile before entering Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, where she remained for two years. At Earlham she sharpened her public speaking skills and she began to write.⁵⁰

In 1896, Bonnin won second place in the Indiana State Oratorical Contest for an essay that both defended the Indian right to avenge the injustices done him by the dominant culture, and asserted her pride in the United States. This dualism dominated Bonnin's life. Her mother and relatives on the reservation believed that she had betrayed her heritage by obtaining a white education. Her mother disinherited her and the issue remained a constant source of conflict. Her colleagues at Carlisle Indian School, where she taught for awhile, criticized her for being too Indian because her published short stories celebrated the Sioux culture. She published under the name Zitkala-Sa (Red Bird) which she had assumed after a family argument about her choosing a white education. One article entitled "Why I Am a Pagan," was sharply criticized by Carlisle's The Red Man & Helper, because its message was directly opposite from the assimilationist views taught by the school. After eighteen months at Carlisle, Bonnin moved to Boston where she was welcomed in literary circles for her essays which appeared in Harper's Monthly and The Atlantic Monthly.⁵¹

As a result of her celebrity status in Boston, Bonnin began to see herself as a spokesperson for all Indians, but in 1901 she made two decisions that changed her life. She left Boston and returned to the reservation to gather additional material for her work, and she rejected her suitor, Carlos Montezuma. In later years she probably considered both decisions to be mistakes. Living with constant criticism from her mother and others, she was unable to write on the reservation. Within two years she married Raymond Bonnin, a Sioux man considerably younger than she. Soon after the birth of their son, he entered government service on the Ute reservation in Utah, and, for the next thirteen years, Bonnin, unable to obtain a teaching position on the reservation, was a farm wife. Finally she and Montezuma began corresponding again, and in 1913, she confessed to him his "narrow escape" and her "stupidity" in not recognizing his "true worth" in the past and in allowing herself to lose someone who was irreplaceable.⁵² To her old friend and former beau she further unburdened herself by stating, "I seem to be in a spiritual unrest. I hate this eternal tug of war between being wild and becoming civilized. The transition is an endless evolution--that keeps me in a continual Purgatory."⁵³

In the SAI Bonnin finally saw a way to pursue once again her former goals. She organized a community center on the reservation and reported its activities in the Journal. She took an active part in Society conferences and was elected secretary in 1916. Soon afterwards she and her family moved to Washington, D.C. She moved SAI headquarters from a rented office into a room in her home, both to save money for the Society and to exert more influence in SAI business. This action

exacerbated her feud with treasurer Marie Baldwin. As SAI secretary-treasurer and as Magazine editor, Bonnin undoubtedly thought that the time to accomplish her life's goals had come at last.

At the 1919 conference, however, an entirely new slate of Society officers was elected and Bonnin resigned her membership. Thomas Sloan was elected president and he decided to edit the Magazine as well. He changed the name once again, this time to the American Indian.⁵⁴ He made plans on a grand scale, informing Pratt that the first issue under his editorship would have a printing of 15,000 copies and that it would match the standard set by the National Geographic magazine. Sloan also ignored the policy disallowing advertising, saying ad fees for a printing of 25,000 copies would make the Magazine independent, and he aimed a sales campaign at the Stetson Hat Company, Colt, Winchester, and Kodak. He justified the disregard of official policy by citing the power of a large publication to affect public opinion, insisting that it would result in the American people demanding a solution to the Indian problem. Sloan assembled a board of associate editors, including ethnologists and experts from various museums. His first issue was a slick, glossy publication emphasizing an anthropological study of Indians and was not the forum for opinion that the Magazine previously had been. Pratt protested to Sloan, that

The whole force and power of the magazine seem to have been committed into the hands of those who make their living through study and writing upon the alleged past of the race, and through exploiting his alleged peculiar qualities

If this indicates what the Society and its magazine is developing into, I have not vision

to see how it is practicable for me to cooperate or to in any way encourage my friends among the Indians and our own people to cooperate.⁵⁵

That issue of August, 1920, was the last, even though the annual conference that Fall appointed a committee to formulate a new editorial policy that would endorse Sloan's changes after the fact. It suggested, among other things, that the publication be renamed Teepee.

Montezuma disliked the new direction as much as Pratt. A year after that last issue, he editorialized in Wassaja that the SAI should publish a journal. He seemed to have concluded, as Parker had years before, and possibly as a result of his experience with Wassaja, that the real power of the Society to reach the public lay in its publication. He asserted that "editorial changes"--the new title, appearance, and focus of the publication--had harmed public perception of the Society. Montezuma disliked the name, the American Indian, and he favored a return to The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians, "because it sounded dignified and conveyed precisely the object of the publication."⁵⁶ To Pratt he complained that the one issue Sloan published had shown him to be in the hands of the Bureau of Ethnology which was, he claimed, even worse than the Indian Bureau because it distorted public perception of Indians by publishing false and misleading information about them. For several years Montezuma continued his attempts to resurrect the defunct publication. He urged Bonnin to revive the magazine and to serve as editor, believing she could increase membership. Failing along those lines, he proposed in Wassaja that Indians be allowed, from funds held in trust for them by

the government, to publish a magazine themselves to articulate their case for citizenship.⁵⁷ His efforts were to no avail.

The Magazine's demise ended the most invaluable public record of Society activities. In addition, those who held office during the SAI's last few years either were not the voluminous letter writers that earlier officers had been or else they did not preserve their papers as had their predecessors. There is little documentation of either Society activity or of the group's internal machinations between 1920 and 1924, the last year a slate of officers was elected. But it is profitable to examine closely the contents of the Magazine for what they reveal about the organization and about the beginnings of an important American movement.

ENDNOTES

¹The title, The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians, was changed to The American Indian Magazine in 1916. In this paper the names Journal and Magazine will be used interchangeably, depending on the publication date of the article cited. The writer will call the publication the Magazine in general reference.

²Arthur C. Parker to Mrs. Susan Janney Allen, July 1, 1913. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, from The Papers of the Society of American Indians, ed. John W. Lerner, Jr. (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1987). [Hereafter cited as PSAI.]

³The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians, I (January-March 1913), 1-2. Parker quoted the "poor wretches" from George Washington who said of Indians, "They, poor wretches have no press through which their grievances are related." [source and context not cited]

⁴Gertrude Bonnin to Arthur C. Parker, January 15, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁵Advertisement, April 1913. Roe Family Papers, 1802-1977, including Henry Roe Cloud Papers, 1907-1952, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

⁶The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians, I (January-March 1914), 2.

⁷The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians, II (January-March 1914), 42.

⁸Richard Henry Pratt to Former Students, April 23, 1913. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

⁹Richard Henry Pratt to Fayette A. McKenzie, April 24, 1913. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

¹⁰Sherman Coolidge, William J. Kershaw, and Charles E. Dagenett to Arthur C. Parker, February 21, 1914. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

¹¹Arthur C. Parker to Sherman Coolidge, February 25, 1914. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

¹²Arthur C. Parker to Sherman Coolidge, May 14, 1914. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

¹³Arthur C. Parker to Sherman Coolidge, September 26, 1914. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

¹⁴Dennison Wheelock to Arthur C. Parker, October 15, 1914. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Arthur C. Parker to John W. Clark, January 19, 1916. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

¹⁷Arthur C. Parker to Richard Henry Pratt, May 22, 1916. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; in PSAI.

¹⁸Arthur C. Parker to Richard Henry Pratt, August 14, 1916. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

¹⁹Arthur C. Parker to Richard Henry Pratt, November 3, 1915. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

²⁰Richard Henry Pratt to Arthur C. Parker, December 14, 1915. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

²¹Arthur C. Parker to Sherman Coolidge, April 24, 1916. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

²²Arthur C. Parker to Richard Henry Pratt, April 25, 1916. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

²³Wassaja, III (May 1918), 1.

²⁴Wassaja, I (April 1916), 1.

²⁵Carlos Montezuma to Fayette A. McKenzie, September 17, 1912. Fayette A. McKenzie Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

²⁶Arthur C. Parker to Richard Henry Pratt, September 29, 1913. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

²⁷Arthur C. Parker to Carlos Montezuma, January 6, 1914. Papers of Carlos Montezuma, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin; and Arthur C. Parker to Carlos Montezuma, October 11, 1915. Papers of Carlos Montezuma, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, from The Papers of Carlos Montezuma, M.D., ed. John W. Larner, Jr. (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1984). [Hereafter cited as PCM.]

²⁸Chauncey Yellow Robe to Richard Henry Pratt, January 15, 1916. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

²⁹Arthur C. Parker to Richard Henry Pratt, March 21, 1916. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

³⁰Arthur C. Parker to Richard Henry Pratt, May 12, 1916. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

³¹Wassaja, II (January-February 1918), 2.

³²Wassaja, I (May 1916), 3.

³³"Attack on Bureau System Stirs Blood of Indians in Sessions of Tribes Here," Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, 28 (September 1916), in PSAI.

³⁴Wassaja, I (October 1916), p. 3.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Wassaja, I (January 1917), p. 3.

³⁷Wassaja, II (March 1918), p. 3.

³⁸Wassaja, II (July 1918), p. 2.

³⁹Wassaja, II (October 1918), p. 3.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Raymond Wilson, Ohiyesa: Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), p. 157.

⁴²Arthur C. Parker to Sherman Coolidge, November 4, 1915. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴³Arthur C. Parker to Gertrude Bonnin, March 7, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴⁴Arthur C. Parker to the Reverend and Mrs. Sherman Coolidge, February 6, 1918. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴⁵Arthur C. Parker to Marie Baldwin, February 23, 1916. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴⁶Gertrude Bonnin to Arthur C. Parker, November 27, 1916. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴⁷Arthur C. Parker to Gertrude Bonnin, November 14, 1918. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴⁸Deborah Welch, untitled manuscript on women of the SAI, March 1985, in author's possession.

⁴⁹Dexter Fisher, Foreword to American Indian Stories by Zitkala-Sa (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), p. x. The foreword was first published under the title "Zitkala-Sa: The Evolution of a Writer" in American Indian Quarterly, 5, no. 3 (August 1979), 229-238.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. xi.

⁵¹Deborah Welch, untitled manuscript on women of the SAI, March 1985, in author's possession.

⁵²Gertrude Bonnin to Carlos Montezuma, May 13, 1913. Carlos Montezuma Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, in PCM.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Wassaja, V (April 1920), 4.

⁵⁵Richard Henry Pratt to Thomas Sloan, September 1, 1920. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

⁵⁶Wassaja, V (April 1920), 4.

⁵⁷Wassaja, VIII (October 1922), 4.

CHAPTER IV

The Power of the Press

"To civilize the Indian, put him in
civilization and keep him there."

-- Richard Henry Pratt

During its lifetime The American Indian Magazine published several series of articles to delineate Society goals and to keep readers abreast of developments affecting Native Americans. It argued contrasting views about the effects of wild west shows on both viewers and participants, the creation of American Indian Day, whether or not Indians should serve in World War I, and the use of peyote by members of the Native American Church. It also addressed the issues of clarification of Indians' status, education, reservations, and the Indian Bureau. From the beginning the editor's purpose was to report, to instruct, and to raise both Indian and white consciousness. As these themes developed over seven years, they also revealed the Society's shifting focus and its internal struggles.

In an early issue the publication criticized wild west shows for degrading Indian participants and perverting the public's perception of Indians. It asserted that the performers were forced into a burlesque to conform to white ideas of Indian behavior. It continued that participants were frequently abandoned without sufficient money to

return home when shows went bankrupt, and revealed that one group was stranded in Europe when World War I broke out.¹ Furthermore, the writer maintained that show promoters and recruiters visited reservations in the spring when young Indians should be in school, and when older Indians should be in the fields or engaged at a trade.² The SAI decried special privileges that the Indian Bureau allowed the shows, fairs, or motion picture makers for commercializing Indians. It especially hated the movie version of the Wounded Knee massacre, The Last Great Battle of the Sioux, calling it "a disgrace and [an] injustice." It further charged that it perverted children's perceptions of Indians, and that it gave both whites and Indians distorted ideas of each other's nature and lives.³

Through its publication, the group advocated creation of American Indian Day to celebrate Native Americans' accomplishments. Though his effort was not sanctioned by the SAI, the Journal reported that one member, F. Red Fox James, rode his horse from state to state conferring with governors and mayors and addressing church congregations and Y.M.C.A.s to gain support for the idea. He received endorsements from the governors of seventeen states. Finally, escorted by Boy Scouts and SAI officers, he personally presented his petition to President Woodrow Wilson.⁴ When national legislation or an executive order was not forthcoming, SAI president Sherman Coolidge, by order of the Executive Council, issued a proclamation that the second Saturday of each May would be American Indian Day.⁵

The publication mounted propaganda campaigns aimed at white and Indian readers alike. Interspersed throughout its pages were short

items of a few sentences or a few paragraphs designed to instill certain white values in Indians or to impart knowledge of Indians to whites. Through these entries the Magazine promoted the SAI belief that Indians must stress cleanliness of body, clothing, mind, spirit, and surroundings as the beginning of the road toward civilization.⁶

One moderate approach was Winnebago Oliver Lamere's call for a synthesis of the best of Indian and white values. In his article entitled "The Indian Culture of the Future," he urged the Indian to preserve his art and his love and knowledge of nature. Asserting that Native American ethical and moral teachings were on a par with Christian beliefs, he urged their preservation. He continued, however, that the Indian must give up the "open life," superstitious rites, and the role of warriors and warfare.⁷ Usually these didactic articles were more radical and made acculturation sound like a painful ordeal. Their tone was best illustrated by Charles H. Kealear, a Sioux, when he said, "the more education that is pounded into us the further we will wedge into the better standards of life."⁸

Predictably, the Magazine sent mixed messages. At the same time that it urged Indians to become more like whites, it also sought to instill ethnic pride by telling Native Americans that "something fiery" should rage in their breasts at the sight of cigar store Indians, "grotesquely carved figures" garbed as no Indian had ever dressed.⁹ Another series of articles stressed that Indians should cultivate white attitudes about money and property, as laborers were instructed to save part of their earnings for future use. One article asserted that "all great nations leave for their children the result of their thrift."¹⁰

Certainly, these were white, not Indian, values. Elsewhere the editor exhorted Indians to practice thrift and not to waste their money on frivolities. It concluded by asking, "How are you going to own your home and a neat little bank account?"¹¹ The possession of a home and a "neat little bank account" was the goal of most white Americans and so the Society urged Indians to make it their goal as well.

Improvement of the Indian educational system was one broad theme continuously developed over the life of the Magazine. The Society's Education Division had the broadest duties since it was charged not only to educate members, but also to study and recommend improvements in the Indian educational system, to study problems of Indian public health, and to encourage the study and preservation of Indian history, art, and literature.

One concern was that Indian schools offered only an eighth grade education, yet upon completion of the program the student was supposed to return to the reservation and to serve as a role model and instructor for his people. Many Indians were between eighteen and twenty years old when they finished their eighth grade program; by contrast whites usually completed eighth grade at around thirteen years of age. The Indians, though older, were in no way prepared to handle the reservation inhabitants' many requests, which often included helping them with government claims or dealing with the agents.

In addition to the legalistic problems, Indian boarding schools were breeding grounds for tuberculosis and trachoma, Indian health problems of monumental proportions. Teachers frequently had no professional training and were hired because of personal connections.

Some administered brutal punishments for minor infractions of rules. Administrators came under the same criticism that the Society heaped upon most Indian Service employees. The Society called for an independent investigation of the system, the findings of which were to be used as a basis for reform. When the reform should come, according to the SAI, it should include a standardized high school curriculum for Indians and college scholarships awarded on merit; the building of sanatoria in healthy climates for children already infected with tuberculosis and trachoma; and the transfer of Indians to public schools wherever feasible. The Society asserted that Indian children would lead adults toward a better life by demanding the advantages they saw in the homes of their white classmates.¹²

Most of the key SAI figures had been greatly influenced by General Richard Henry Pratt whose dictum, "To civilize the Indian, put him in civilization and keep him there," became the theme of the Magazine's articles on Indian education and the basis of all SAI-suggested reforms of the system. The leaders sometimes seemed to forget their own teaching that some Indians might be proud of their cultural heritage and wish to achieve a level of acculturation built on an Indian foundation. In a Magazine article entitled "Industrial and Vocational Education in Indian Schools," Parker quoted Pratt who said, "The Indian is to save his life only through losing it by quitting all race distinctions and climbing into the great big all containing band wagon of real American citizenship through industrial usefulness."¹³

Similarly, Montezuma saw no need for the Education Division to encourage the study of Indian history, art, and literature. In a 1914

address entitled "The Reservation is Fatal to the Development of Good Citizenship," which he delivered to a regional SAI meeting in Philadelphia, he asserted that the study of Indian basketry, blanketry, pottery, art, and music was "foolish" and asked, "where does this help the Indian children into the ways of civilization?"¹⁴ The thrust of the Society's position on education was to take young Indian children away from their reservation-bound families and put them in the best schools and in the homes of carefully chosen white families. The latter was the basis of the "outing system" at Carlisle, and following Pratt's lead, the Society advocated the plan to achieve acculturation.

Another perceived problem in the Indian educational system was that when students returned to the reservation after receiving their eighth grade education, they frequently had no guidance or role models, and so lost motivation and returned to traditional ways. The SAI, recognizing the necessity for an ongoing educational program on the reservations, authorized Gertrude Bonnin to open the first Community Center on the Uintah-Ouray reservation in Utah where her husband was a Bureau employee. This Community Center plan of 1915 was designed to promote educational goals, while also improving the life of reservation inhabitants and increasing Society membership. As early as the 1913 Denver conference, the Denver Times had printed an article decrying the lack of women's social facilities on reservations.¹⁵

Parker frequently used the term "social missionaries" when writing about the Community Center plan. He believed that since neither the Bureau nor the various religious denominations addressed the issue, the Community Center would fulfill the human need to receive support

from other Indians who shared similar experiences. Envisioning a type of consciousness raising, he wrote to Bonnin, "The Indians need awakening from within by some member of their race who is so thoroughly convinced of the truth that he becomes a dynamic force among them."¹⁶ Bonnin believed educated Indians owed the service to uneducated reservation inhabitants "whether appreciated or not."¹⁷ She sent frequent progress reports to Parker, telling him what tactics were successful with her group so that he could pass the ideas on to similar groups at other reservations. Bonnin organized a sewing group to make warm clothing for elderly reservation inhabitants. The recipients paid for materials from their government accounts, but labor was donated free by the Community Center.¹⁸ Early in 1916 she reported that the Center had more requests than it could handle, but that volunteers were making warm patchwork quilts for the aged, and crocheting caps, hoods, mittens and bootees for children and babies.¹⁹

The Center solved a major problem for Bureau employees on the Uintah-Ouray reservation. There Indians gathering at the Agency on ration day customarily ate their lunch in Indian employees' homes. Bonnin pointed out that they were always fed, but that the meals severely strained the budgets of the families providing them. The Community Center therefore began to serve a midday meal for a small fee that covered the cost of the food.²⁰ The ration day meals also provided lessons in community effort to the people who prepared them. Bonnin described their work saying,

I try to cheer them, joining them in little jokes or funny stories; I look upon their degradation and poverty as only temporary

conditions. So we laugh and get busy trying to make some useful thing out of what is within our reach. Later desire for better things will grow; and learning 'to do' for themselves and helping the infirm, and aged, they will continue to advance.²¹

Not only were the Indians developing a new self image as a result of their efforts, but Bonnin told Parker that the agent's attitude was changing. Initially he had been resistant and uncooperative toward her work, but by December, 1915, he had given her the use of a government room and stove. She, in turn, had bought dishes and oil cloth to cover the tables and had borrowed coal until she could afford to purchase some. The superintendent further allowed the Indian men use of a government saw to cut firewood for their wives.²²

Another phase of the Community Center was a Student's Council composed of returned students which Bonnin organized on the reservation in 1916. When she first reported the 46-member group to Parker, she said they had adopted an abridged version of the SAI constitution as their own.²³ Many reservations, she went on to explain, had returned students groups but they were dominated by government employees who spread Bureau propaganda. She wanted her group firmly grounded in the SAI, not in the government camp, and she believed that adoption of the Society constitution would assure that her returned students would eventually become SAI members. Within two months, Bonnin reported that her group had grown to 75 members and that they were working for a membership of 100, with a long-term goal of a 100-member organization on every reservation.²⁴ She believed that if all returned students joined SAI-run organizations, not only would all reservation inhabitants

benefit, but the Society itself would grow into a powerful force for Indian advancement.²⁵

The success of her student group is probably what rekindled her old problems with the reservation agent. Serving meals to hungry Indians on ration day was one thing; spreading SAI (and therefore anti-Bureau) propaganda among the better educated reservation inhabitants was another. By December, 1916, Bonnin reported to Parker that the agent had turned against her because of the success of her work and that he not only allowed others to break into the Community Center and take its tables and dishes, but that he also had killed her son's pet burro and was generally making life hard for her family, including her husband, a government employee.²⁶

Partly because of her feud with the agent and partly to achieve the Society's stated aim of influencing Indian legislation, the Bonnins moved to Washington, D.C. in 1917. While Parker was ill in 1916, Bonnin volunteered to relieve part of his work load that he could forward to her through the mails. In June of that year Parker confided to her that he wished they could devise a plan to keep more closely in touch with proposed Congressional Indian legislation.²⁷ He had always believed that the power of the Society lay in its ability to exert pressure on legislators and other government authorities.²⁸ Bonnin concurred and suggested the necessity of a watchdog in the SAI's Washington headquarters to obtain copies of all Indian bills in Congress and to watch all Indian Bureau activity so that Society members could be kept apprised of that information.²⁹ For awhile after Parker was elected president in September, 1916, he sent her the secretary's work he was

relinquishing and suggestions about how she could best accomplish her chores. The next logical step was for her to move to Washington to work at the national SAI headquarters, to watch the progress of national legislation affecting Indians, and thereby to further the work of the Legislation Division.

The SAI sought reform of the reservation system even though members could not always agree on a unified course of action. Unlike Bonnin's goal of improving reservation life by means of the community center, Montezuma wanted to abolish reservations entirely. In a 1914 speech entitled "The Reservation is Fatal to the Development of Good Citizenship," which he delivered to a regional SAI meeting in Philadelphia, Montezuma pointed out that reservations kept Indians from learning English, the first step in their acculturation, and from interacting with whites or bettering themselves with education or industrial employment. He stressed that only contact with whites would make Indians like whites in thought, speech, and action. Of course, that had been his own personal experience, as well as the experience of most SAI officials. He concluded by saying that Indians could not learn theoretical citizenship on reservations but must "get into the swim of American citizenship."³⁰

The Society contended that reservations fostered pauperism and "race inertia," and forced residents into a narrow life of limited opportunity. Reservations were places set aside for people undergoing cultural transformation, but they were set so far apart from the normal flow of society that they merely became a means of racial segregation. On the reservation everything was done for the Indian and the individual

was not required to cooperate in fulfilling the common needs of the community. Decisions on education and administration were made by others, in direct contrast to the continuing Society theme of individual responsibility. Reservation life was abnormally protected from competition, work, and striving for goals; according to the Society, it was "a place for dependents, a home for weaklings, an asylum from the responsibilities that other men enjoy as manhood-making elements."³¹

The SAI likewise contended that the moral tone of most reservations was degrading. At the conclusion of World War I, Eastman pointed out that though the reservation system had reduced Indians to the status of children, the government had been more than willing to use them in the war effort. However, when the war ended and Sioux veterans returned to their reservation homes, the Indian Bureau said they were not competent to hire an attorney to represent them in their Black Hills claim. Eastman speculated about how returning to the reservation could have reduced them from effective fighting men to a state of incompetency and inability to think for themselves.³² The Society stressed that Indians who had left the reservation and wardship status progressed far ahead of those who remained behind. Of course, that was the elitist experience of SAI members themselves.

While trying to improve the life of individual Indians with community centers and returned student groups and considering ways to improve reservations, the SAI's primary goal was always citizenship for the Indian. Since some Indians were citizens and some were not, the Society demanded a determination of the status of each group or tribe of Indians and a delineation of the steps to achieve full citizenship.³³

The Society contended that, since passage of the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, each Indian's status depended on the individual, his tribe, state law, and Indian Bureau rulings. The Dawes Act, named for Senator Henry M. Dawes of Massachusetts, had allowed for the distribution of tribal lands to heads of families to be held in trust by the government for twenty-five years, at which time the individual Indian was to receive full title and citizenship. While on the surface the Act appeared to give Indians control of their own land, it had, because of their inexperience with ownership of private property, made Indians prey to white land grabbers and had further destroyed Indian culture. The SAI wanted uniform national legislation governing all Indians. They warned Indians, perhaps because of the results of the Dawes Act, against supporting any legislation that did not clearly specify the responsibilities of citizenship and the method of achieving it, saying that such a bill would be "an act of errors."³⁴ They urged Indians to realize that citizenship papers did not mean much, saying that seventy percent of all Indians were citizens but still under Bureau control.³⁵ Correction of that situation, according to the Society, would require passage of a strong citizenship bill, a non-political Indian Bureau, and administrators chosen for their efficiency, not for political or religious reasons.³⁶

The Carter Citizenship Bill, introduced by Congressman Charles D. Carter of Oklahoma, himself part Indian and an SAI vice-president, was the legislation officially favored by the Society because it would have granted immediate citizenship to all Indians.³⁷ Yet members were not united behind the Bill. Some opposed it as

discriminatory because it divided Indians into several classes. Others said it offered too little protection to uneducated reservation residents. The group also urged Indians not to confuse property rights and treaties with citizenship, and they wrote of young Indian men who refused to complete the course required for graduation from Indian schools because they would then become citizens.³⁸ At the same time it believed that mixed bloods living on reservations should be made citizens since many were there to avoid taxes and other responsibilities. If they were forced into citizenship and its responsibilities, the SAI felt that many of these people would leave, enabling the agents to give more aid and attention to the full bloods.³⁹

The Society observed the hundreds of thousands of immigrants pouring into the United States at the turn of the century. Why should these people and their descendents, while retaining their ethnic and cultural distinctiveness, so easily obtain citizenship when it was denied to the "First American," it asked.⁴⁰ At one point Montezuma facetiously suggested that all Indians board ships on the West Coast, sail through the Panama Canal and reenter the country at Ellis Island so that they too could receive the preferential treatment given Europeans.⁴¹ Upon American entry into World War I, the SAI labeled German immigrants dangerously un-American, pointing out that they lived in colonies and retained their own language.⁴² It did not seem to occur to them that the same could be said of Indians.

The Society saw Indian participation in World War I as a means to citizenship. The Magazine told its readers, "If we work loyally we shall win everything that we, as Indians, desire" ⁴³ Stressing

the individual's responsibility to his country, the SAI urged Indians to increase their farm and stock production, drawing a parallel between modern Indians and those who fed the hungry Pilgrims three centuries before. The Magazine further stressed the importance of war bonds and later reported to its readers that Indians had purchased more in proportion to their numbers than whites.⁴⁴ It was delighted with legislation which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to invest all Indian money earning less than 3-1/2% interest in the Liberty Loan, including the millions of dollars in Indian trust funds held in the U.S. Treasury.⁴⁵

The SAI uncharacteristically did not suggest that this was another instance of the Indian Bureau meddling in the affairs of Native Americans without their consent, or that the legislation was in the best interest of the American government and not necessarily of the Indian. Instead the Magazine repeatedly emphasized the story of Jackson Barnett, an oil-rich Oklahoma Indian who, through his guardian, purchased \$650,000 worth of bonds and gave \$50,000 to the Red Cross. Since he was illiterate, he had the newspaper read to him so he could stay abreast of war news. Calling him "an American in fact as well as by blood," the SAI considered him an example of why Indians should be made citizens.⁴⁶ Indeed, the editor filled the pages of the Magazine with tales of Indians' generosity, patriotism, and eagerness to volunteer, and ended each article with a plea for citizenship. The theme seemed to be that the Native American should do much more than expected of him so that he could be rewarded with citizenship at war's end.

When entire tribes notified President Woodrow Wilson that they were loyal Americans ready to serve their country, the President sent their petitions to Provost Marshall Enoch H. Crowder who exempted from military service non-citizen Indians still maintaining tribal relations.⁴⁷ Crowder ruled that such Indians were dependent government wards and must be protected from military service. Campaigning for a revised ruling, the Magazine revealed that some foreign governments had asked certain tribes to serve as spies or scouts in the event of invasion.⁴⁸ The editor apparently believed that if it knew other governments found Indians desirable additions to their forces, the United States military would also utilize Native Americans. In addition, the Magazine pointed to the large percentage of Canadian Indians already serving in that nation's military and the number of Indians who had joined them when rejected by United States authorities. It quoted Canadian officers who recommended that the United States use American Indians as scouts because they were excellent riflemen, possessed with great qualities of endurance.⁴⁹ After opposing Provost General Crowder's exempting of Indians from military service, the Society proclaimed victory in a headline declaring "Indians Same as White Men."⁵⁰

After the government cleared the way for Indian citizens to register for military service, they did so in large numbers. Half of the eligible Cherokees volunteered and all Passamaquoddies of military age followed suit.⁵¹ The Magazine asserted that few Indian volunteers were rejected, stating proudly that flat feet, a frequent cause for rejection among whites, was seldom a problem among Indians.⁵² Stressing

a recurring theme of the craftiness of Indian fighters, it recounted tales of Indians setting bear traps around perimeters to catch enemy prowlers and of Indians serving as telegraph operators when officers suspected that wires were tapped. Surely no enemy listening in could break the "code" of their Native American dialects.⁵³

At the same time the SAI urged Indians to cooperate in the war effort, Parker sought release from his duties as Indian registrar of the New York State Guard so he could better perform his job in the state education department. His request was denied. While the Magazine exhorted Indians to join the Army, SAI officers voiced concerns among themselves. In a letter to Parker, Bonnin expressed her opposition to a proposed all-Indian regiment, calling the idea segregation and asserting that in the proposed regiment Indians would be subservient to white officers. She protested that the Indian race could well furnish its own officers.⁵⁴ She went on to cite the existence of an officers' training camp in Iowa where Black men were training to lead an all-Black regiment. While she opposed the idea of a segregated Black regiment, the government was willing to train black officers to lead it. She expressed her deep distrust of the government to Parker when she said, "Secretly, I wonder if it is not a cute idea to reduce the Negro population. This sounds like treason; so you better not quote me, unless you want me hung."⁵⁵ She felt that the country's Black population was large enough to sustain the loss of an all-Black regiment, but the Indian population was not, and in a war with machine guns, Indians could not risk such a slaughter.⁵⁶ If Indians were incorporated into other regiments, she said, they would suffer no

more dead and wounded in proportion to their numbers than the white population.⁵⁷

Parker informed her that he had assurances from reliable sources that there would be no all-Indian regiment, and added that his opposition to the plan had cost him a strong political ally.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Bonnin persisted in opposition to an Indian regiment, calling on the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells to ask how he stood on the issue. He assured her that he opposed the idea, but when she heard nothing further from him, she went to the secretary-treasurer of the Universal Military Training Association, an SAI Associate Member, who suggested that the Magazine quote Parker's letter to the War Department.⁵⁹

Indians were not united in their opposition to an all-Indian regiment. Bonnin wrote to Parker that ethnologist Francis La Flesche, an Omaha, favored the plan, as did the Tipi Order of America, another Indian organization whose leaders, along with Montezuma and Father Gordon, had met in Chicago with Edward Ayer of the Board of Indian Commissioners. Ayer advocated formation of ten to fifteen Indian regiments under white officers and was gathering endorsements for his plan from Indian educators and Bureau superintendents. He believed Indian soldiers could function well only when surrounded by their peers.⁶⁰ While Montezuma did not campaign for an all-Indian regiment in Wassaja, he did oppose a forced draft and emphasized that if Indians could be drafted to serve in the war, they should surely be given the right to vote.⁶¹ It was rare for Wassaja to print art work with its articles, but that same issue featured an illustration of an Indian

standing on a cloud looking down on tanks and warships. It was captioned,

"A Voice From the Happy Hunting Grounds"
 "Sitting Bull: 'And They Called Us Savages'"⁶²

Montezuma asserted that the SAI was pursuing the wrong course in encouraging Indians to seek citizenship through their war efforts and he warned Indians not to let participation in the European war cause them to lose sight of their most important goal.

The 1917 conference was cancelled, ostensibly because the top officers and many members were involved in military service. The Army asked Parker to deal with problems arising from Indian registration for the draft in New York state. He found that the greatest difficulty lay in the forms' wording. Many Indians maintained that the draft law did not apply to government wards because there was no identification category on the forms for Indians and they simply refused to register themselves as aliens. They found the label "distasteful" and preferred to face possible punishment rather than to voluntarily list themselves in that category.⁶³ Parker suggested a change in the wording, creation of an office to deal solely with Indian registration, enlistment of a volunteer on each reservation to handle the problems of that reservation, and a campaign to reach unregistered Indians doing war work in plants and factories. His report continued with a bid for the Carter Code bill saying, "The undetermined status of the Indians has lead [sic] to this confusion and neglect."⁶⁴

In a letter to tribal leaders on each reservation, he announced that the War Department had granted an extension so that unregistered

Indians could register without penalty. He asked tribal leaders to send the names of unregistered Indians to the SAI which would then contact them, warning them of the possible consequences of their action. Apparently tribal leaders were cooperative and many contacted him, saying that registration had been completed on their reservation. The Onondaga, Tuscarora, and Seneca leaders all said that no additional time would be needed for registration. Walter Kennedy of the Senecas, however, alerted Parker to another problem. Kennedy claimed that some people were being granted exemptions from the draft by falsely claiming to be Seneca, and he said the tribe strongly objected to this deceit.⁶⁵ Parker investigated and sent a list of those suspected of receiving such illegal exemptions to the Adjutant General's Office in Albany, along with the names of several unregistered young men on the Cattaraugus reservation.

When some tribal authorities claimed Indians were outside the jurisdiction of an individual state or of the United States, citing a court decision "that a treaty with an Indian has the same dignity and effect as a treaty with a foreign nation," Parker suggested that the government take advantage of the wording in a November 11, 1794, treaty stating, "Peace and friendship are hereby firmly established, and shall be perpetual, between the United States and the Six Nations."⁶⁶ The government, he suggested, should seek "to re-establish by registration who are at 'peace and friendship with the United States.'"⁶⁷

The SAI continued to campaign for passage of the Carter Citizenship Bill during the war, while Wassaja called the bill "weak," saying it would not result in "total freedom for all Indians."⁶⁸ He

objected to a section giving the Indian Bureau continued control over some Indians while others became autonomous, saying that it created distinctions and degrees of citizenship. In the summer of 1918, Parker, McKenzie, and seven other SAI officials sent a comprehensive list of recommendations to President Woodrow Wilson, including the suggestion that Indians be employed to replace laborers serving in the military, rather than importing 100,000 workers from the Philippines and Puerto Rico as had been suggested in Congress. The group also praised the War Department for prohibiting segregated Indian units in the military.⁶⁹ The list of recommendations ended with a list of the Society's current goals: (a) an orderly system of granting Indians citizenship; (b) a ban on the use of peyote; (c) the development and improvement of the Indian school system, stressing the need to enroll more Indians in local public schools rather than building more large boarding schools; (d) stricter investigations for wrongdoing by Indian Bureau employees; and (e) closing tribal rolls and distributing tribal funds on a pro rata basis.

The following Fall, Magazine acting-editor Bonnin reported that three SAI officers were in the military service. President Parker was "somewhere in America," First Vice-President John Oskison was "somewhere in France," and Vice-President on Membership Margaret Frazier was a nurse at Camp Bowie, Texas.⁷⁰ The government had also called upon Eastman to visit various tribes to explain conscription and the Liberty Loan.⁷¹ Citing these examples, Bonnin exhorted others to "Work, save, produce!"⁷² She urged Native Americans to seek productive employment; to be thrifty with food, money, and clothing; to use resources wisely;

to volunteer their services to the war effort; to buy bonds; to grow corn; and to report traitors, spies, draft evaders, and rumormongers. She continued that when the war was over, ". . . all Indians who have actually done as we here advise will be rewarded as any citizen is rewarded,--by the bestowal of even greater liberty and greater prosperity. Stand by the flag, red men;" she concluded, "it is your flag. Under it there is the only hope you may ever expect for yourself and your race."⁷³

The war ended just as the SAI officers had begun the final period of dissension that was to lead eventually to the group's dissolution. Nevertheless, the Magazine asserted that most minorities worldwide--labor, women, and racial and ethnic groups--were sending representatives to the peace conference in an effort to advance their causes. Who, it asked, would represent the red man in his effort to achieve citizenship? "The American Indian, too," it continued, "made the supreme sacrifice for liberty's sake. . . . What shall world democracy mean to his race?"⁷⁴ It thanked the Literary Digest for a cover entitled "The Warrior's Return," showing Indians welcoming one of their returning soldiers, noting that it was one of the few public acknowledgments of Indians' sacrifice in the war.⁷⁵

From its inception until the 1918 Conference, the Society was under virtually the same leadership and intellectual philosophy. Arthur Parker, as secretary, Magazine editor, and finally as president, had provided a continuity of policy. However, by 1918 many members felt that since the SAI had not yet accomplished its goals under the original leaders, perhaps it was time for new leaders. If public perceptions of

Indians' lives were still as inaccurate as they appeared to be, perhaps it was time for a new Magazine editorial policy. In addition, the mood of the country itself was different. The war had focused attention on international events, and national reform movements had lost impetus as a result. Persons attending the 1918 conference voted in a new president, Charles Eastman; elected Gertrude Bonnin to the recombined office of secretary-treasurer; and, with the moderate and pragmatic Parker absent, finally demanded abolition of the Indian Bureau.⁷⁶

During its first seven years, the Society had refused to advocate Bureau abolition. Instead, the Magazine had frequently criticized the Bureau and had suggested reforms. Among other things, the Magazine asserted that the Bureau had become dedicated to its own preservation, not to the good of the Indian. SAI suggestions for its improvement included testing all prospective employees; the awarding of jobs based on merit; and the hiring of people with high morals, and a knowledge of education and social service. The Society also suggested the hiring of educated Indians, though it asserted that Bureau policies made it almost impossible for educated Indians, including SAI leaders, to work there. It claimed that leaders were labeled "trouble makers" and were suspect by their superiors, or else were never given responsible positions.⁷⁷

This mirrored the personal experiences of both Montezuma and Eastman who said that the Bureau protected corrupt or inefficient employees by reprimanding and then transferring them in cases of proven official misconduct or immoral private lives.⁷⁸ Montezuma described the Bureau in his speech to the 1918 conference as "7,000 men and women, all

drawing healthy salaries at the expense of the nation's taxpayers and of us Indians that may have tribal funds."⁷⁹ Those 7,000 people, he continued, were part of a Bureau that was ". . . a heartless and evil system . . . squeezing the life-blood out of Indians [while] striv[ing] . . . to perpetuate the incompetency of the Indian" in order to keep their jobs.⁸⁰ The local newspaper, in reporting the conference proceedings, described his statements as "somewhat radical" and paraphrased him by saying that he thought the government's policy toward Indians was the result of politics and patronage, and that most Indian Bureau employees would be fired if Indians ever gained control of the Bureau.⁸¹

Perhaps because of this speech, or perhaps because the SAI had called for its abolition, the Bureau denied Montezuma and Eastman entrance to reservations during their summer citizenship lecture tour of 1919. Instead the two lectured in towns near reservations.⁸² The action earned the Bureau a bitter renunciation in the Magazine which editorialized that it was easier for white "riffraff" and "scum" to gain access to reservations than it was for educated and refined Indians.⁸³ It concluded by labeling the policy as racial discrimination, and comparing the Bureau to the Kaiser's government so recently defeated, in part, by Indian soldiers who fought and died for democracy.⁸⁴

The tone of the 1919 conference proceedings was weary and disillusioned, perhaps because of disagreement within the group or perhaps because of the realization that the "war for universal justice" had not accomplished for Indians everything they had hoped. Eastman set the general tone in his opening remarks when he said, "One time we

thought this land was big enough for both the white people and us,-- their kind of civilization and our kind of civilization . . . but the white man has simply cut that out. . . . They are rough, know no law. Rules and laws make no difference to a white man."⁸⁵ He added that in spite of the SAI's eight years of hard work and six years of Magazine publication, the majority of whites he had met on his wartime government lecture tour thought that Indians were well cared for by the government.⁸⁶ A conference delegate pointed out that many Indian veterans could not join the American Legion because they were not citizens, and the group voted to petition Congress for citizenship for every Indian veteran.⁸⁷ Sloan announced that such legislation had recently been passed, but suggested the Society work to have it expanded to include veterans' parents and Indian women war workers.⁸⁸

When calling for Bureau abolition, the 1919 conference issued the following statement which, in comparison to previous statements, was angry in tone:

Indians who attended the Eighth Annual Conference of the Society of American Indians at Minneapolis are firm in the belief that there is no hope of fair treatment, honest reforms, just administration of the laws to their personal and property rights, the enactment of laws for the benefit of the Indians or receiving the rights and benefits of citizenship according to the laws of the land without abolishing the Indian Bureau.⁸⁹

The 1918 election of Charles Eastman as president was a definite turning point in SAI policy and philosophy, but it was only a precursor of things to come. At one time Eastman had been considered a member of

the Society's "radical" fringe. At the 1919 conference, however, with the election of peyotist Thomas Sloan to the presidency, an even more "radical" element gained control of the group and led it into the last few years of existence.

ENDNOTES

¹E. H. Gohl, "The Effect of WILD WESTING," The American Indian Magazine, II (July-September 1914), 227.

²Ibid., p. 226.

³"The Menace of the Wild West Show," The American Indian Magazine, II (July-September 1914), 174 and 225.

⁴"The Ride of Red Fox James for American Indian Day," The American Indian Magazine, II (October-December 1914), 305.

⁵The American Indian Magazine, III (July-September 1915), 223.

⁶"In All Things BE CLEAN," The American Indian Magazine, VI (October-December 1919), 98.

⁷"The Indian Culture of the Future," The American Indian Magazine, I (October-December 1913), 361.

⁸Charles H. Kealear, "What the Indian Can Do for Himself," The American Indian Magazine, II (January-March 1914), 42.

⁹The American Indian Magazine, I (July-September 1913), 259.

¹⁰"Learn to Accumulate a Surplus," The American Indian Magazine, II (January-March 1914), 74.

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CHAPTER V

Too Many Chiefs and Not Enough Indians

"Just because a man is an Indian is no reason to believe he knows what is best for himself." -- Arthur C. Parker

SAI leaders had always been strong-willed individuals who frequently found it impossible to agree on a united course of action. After seven years of relatively stable leadership policies under two presidents, disparate personalities asserted themselves more strongly and rapid changes occurred. The membership demanded action but was torn, unsure whom to follow and what form the change should take. Leaders espoused widely divergent views and the group seemed to look first to one leader and then to another for ways to accomplish its goals. In two years they elected two different presidents. In 1918 Charles Eastman replaced Arthur Parker as president and the conference demanded Bureau abolition. Having taken that first step away from its previous moderate course, in 1919 the Society turned to still another leader and philosophy by electing Thomas Sloan president.

In its Fall 1919 issue, The American Indian Magazine asserted that Thomas Sloan "elected himself" SAI president with a "never to be forgotten" speech against the Indian Bureau.¹ The editor claimed that conference delegates would have reelected the previous year's officers

but for Sloan's "spellb[inding]" eloquence.² Thus this man once again was leading the group, despite the fact that his clouded reputation had hurt the Society so badly in its early days when he served as its first Temporary Executive Committee chairman.³

Charles Eastman, who had gone to Minneapolis confident the conference would signal a new group cohesiveness and unity, resigned his membership after calling Sloan and his associates "a political pressure group with patronage interests."⁴ Montezuma, who had worked closely with Eastman during his presidency, decided to remain active when the 160 delegates present voted unanimously to demand that Congress abolish the Indian Bureau. The delegates named a committee of five attorneys to pursue that end: Thomas Sloan (Omaha); William J. Kershaw (Menominee); Dennison Wheelock (Oneida); Judge Robert Allen (Creek); and Arthur Beaulieu (Chippewa).⁵ Beaulieu was elected vice-president, and Oregon businessman Thomas Bishop, secretary.⁶ However, the unanimity did not extend to other matters, and Eastman blamed Sloan and his friends for causing so much dissension that the conference adopted no platform.⁷

Sloan's election changed the entire thrust of Society policy and methods, as well as further dividing the membership. Within six months Wheelock privately reported that he did not favor the new leadership and that though he was a member of the committee of five attorneys, and though his name was used extensively by Society officers, he was never consulted on anything whatsoever.⁸ In the interim, Sloan called on presidential candidate Warren G. Harding to solicit his support for Indian causes. He promised that in Minnesota where the Chippewa vote could swing a close ballot, the SAI would organize the vote.⁹ To Pratt

he revealed his personal motive that he wanted to gain favor with the man he believed would be the future President in order to influence the choice for the next Commissioner of Indian Affairs.¹⁰ He urged Pratt and his wife to attend the next conference at Society expense so that the meeting would also attract Pratt's former students. A successful conference, he continued, would enhance SAI standing with the future President, who might then even allow Indians to name the new Commissioner.¹¹ What he did not mention to Pratt was that he intended to be the next Commissioner. The conference atmosphere was different from that of previous meetings and contravened the unwritten rule against emphasizing ethnicity. An Omaha circus and vaudeville knife-thrower performed, and many delegates wore tribal regalia.¹² Montezuma later confided to Pratt that he had been "dumfounded" at the sight and that Sloan had obviously been led by the ethnologists who were much interested in the conference.¹³

Sloan's aspirations became clear in September when SAI secretary Thomas Bishop widely circulated copies of a letter to DeWitt Hare, author and former Society vice-president, describing SAI delegation visits to both presidential candidates. The letter made it obvious that the delegates favored Harding and had made a bid for Sloan's candidacy. When the letter's contents became public, many longtime SAI stalwarts were enraged. Representative Charles D. Carter, vice-president for legislation, demanded that Bishop remove his name from the SAI letterhead, calling the letter a "rank and vicious" attempt to drag the Society into politics.¹⁴ Advisory board member Henry Roe Cloud wrote both Bishop and Sloan demanding that his name be removed from the

Society letterhead, and declaring that the Society had not been founded for personal advantage.¹⁵ Roe Cloud had always believed that Sloan would use the SAI to pursue personal ambitions, but opinion on the letter was divided.¹⁶ Pratt described the letter as one of the best Society efforts ever, and he asked for copies to circulate among his former students.¹⁷

Sloan worked for the Republican party in the election, while an associate worked for the Democrats, thus assuring that whichever party won, they would be in a position to demand political recognition for their services.¹⁸ Bishop claimed to have successfully circulated petitions and persuaded hundreds of influential people to write letters recommending Sloan's candidacy.¹⁹ However, a group which included some SAI members and former members worked just as vigorously against Sloan, circulating a petition that claimed Sloan was interested only in personal aggrandizement and that he used politically expedient means. The fact that his 1913 campaign for Indian Commissioner had been as a Democrat and his current campaign was as a Republican, made the charge even more believable.²⁰ Between the two campaigns he had worked strenuously for the abolition of the very organization that he now wished to head.²¹

The petition further asserted that Sloan had exploited Indians, the SAI, The American Indian Magazine, and the Republican party. It charged that he had used Republican Campaign Committee funds to circulate petitions and obtain letters of recommendation, and that he had done it on Republican Party time. Finally, it cited Sloan's history and a specific case of alleged fraud against a senile Indian for which

Sloan had been sharply rebuked by the Interior Department. Included in the petition were letters protesting Sloan's candidacy from Houston B. Teehee, treasurer of the Seamans Oil Company, and from William J. Kershaw and Charles D. Carter, both former SAI vice-presidents.²² The petition, avowed its originators, was instrumental in preventing Sloan's appointment. That claim is debatable but President Harding appointed Charles H. Burke, a former Congressman who had been active in Indian affairs for many years.²³

In the meantime, the Society was faltering. While the 1921 Detroit conference eliminated the carnival atmosphere of the previous gathering, the mayor smoked a peace pipe with SAI officers and directors.²⁴ Describing the conference as "poorly attended," Wassaja suggested that the SAI elect less radical officers, that it publicize the next conference more widely and sooner, and that the group reorganize under a different name. Montezuma also strongly condemned the personal jealousies that were tearing the group apart. He went on to state that though the conference had not decided whether to revive the Magazine, leaders had stated that they expected to publish another issue soon. Since a quorum was not present, the election of officers and the business meeting were postponed.²⁵

Montezuma was determined to save the Society and he consulted Pratt for suggestions. Pratt already thought of the SAI in the past tense and blamed its demise on an Indian Bureau scheme. He advised Montezuma to set aside past differences with Arthur Parker and for the two of them to cooperate in attempting a revival of the group.²⁶ Instead, Montezuma approached Gertrude Bonnin about reviving the

Magazine.²⁷ A few weeks after Pratt recommended that Montezuma contact him, Parker wrote Pratt of Sloan's and Montezuma's presence at the Detroit conference saying, "People with destructive programs always destroy everything they tackle and I am not surprised at the results."²⁸ In the meantime, Montezuma wrote of his plans to many founders and former officers. Charles Dagenett replied that he favored getting the "old guard" behind the SAI.²⁹ Roe Cloud suggested trying to renew Fayette McKenzie's interest and cited the current leadership as destructive to the Society.³⁰ McKenzie, by then president of Fisk University, mentioned three letters he had received immediately prior to Roe Cloud's, each asking him to renew his interest in Indian affairs.³¹

There was much confusion over the date of the 1922 Kansas City conference, with the correct date being announced only two weeks prior to the meeting. Montezuma charged that the confusion was now "characteristic" of the SAI.³² Wassaja criticized the conference, attended only by seventy-five Indians, for reelecting Sloan to his fifth consecutive term as president. Declaring that five years in office smacked of "self-glory," he asserted that a change in officers would have breathed new life into the Society. Montezuma concluded by asking how the current officers would help the Indian anymore than they had in the previous four years.³³ He confided that Sloan had admitted to him that he was sacrificing the SAI, and was using his position as president to gain clout in his effort to reorganize the Indian Bureau.³⁴ To other colleagues, Montezuma mentioned his regret in ever backing Sloan and Bishop. Sloan, he asserted, was reelected by Indians new to the Society who did not know of its decline under his leadership.³⁵

In September, 1923, a few SAI members, including Thomas Sloan, met in Chicago. Montezuma had originally organized the meeting as a Society conference, but when he died the preceding January, no SAI member carried through with the original plans, and the gathering evolved into a conclave of Indian groups known as the Illinois Indian Day Celebration.³⁶ The meeting, which one newspaper labeled a "glimpse of the past," focused on Native American rituals and ceremonies and was primarily a tourist attraction.³⁷ Delegations from the Indian Rights Association and the Friends of the Indian, as well as other white reform groups, attended. Charles Eastman, at that time an Indian Bureau inspector sent to observe the celebration, reported to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that he saw "no trace" of an SAI meeting in Chicago but that Sloan might have attempted unsuccessfully to revive the "defunct" society there.³⁸ Furthermore, he concluded that most Indians in attendance lacked credibility among their people and were outcasts or showmen.³⁹ This was the last SAI conference and it marked the end of the Society.

In retrospect, the SAI remains an interesting enigma. It was a good idea that should have worked. It had every reason to succeed: the time was right; public interest was high; and the best possible people, both Indian and white, were involved. Even though united by similar lives and similar educations, the group never became a cohesive unit, nor did its members lay aside personal agendas to overcome the divisive issues that split the organization. Even though leaders disagreed on issues and methods, there was enough of a balance of radicals and moderates to keep the organization a viable force for a few years.

Members left the group after policy disputes and then returned later with feelings temporarily smoothed over.

The fact that the SAI remained in existence as long as it did can be attributed mostly to Arthur Parker's hard work. But even Parker finally became disillusioned. He was in disfavor by the 1918 conference for his moderate view on abolishing the Indian Bureau and because he wanted to separate the Magazine from the Society and use it as the main vehicle of Pan-Indianism rather than the Society. When he was voted out of office by the 1918 conference, he lost interest in the SAI and was never involved with it again. Once his effort, influence, and support was withdrawn, the organization quickly lost momentum and faded away.

The first divisive issue the Society faced was the Indian Bureau, a controversy that manifested itself in many ways. A common belief in the beginning was that the Bureau would control the organization. That belief aggravated a basic distrust between members of different tribes and fueled charges that the founders were out of touch with the reservation realities experienced by most Native Americans. Many people refused to lend their support for that reason. There was the early controversy over whether or not Bureau employees would be allowed to join the organization or to hold office in it. That issue contributed to the negative publicity over Laura Cornelius Kellogg's arrest before the Denver conference and to the long-standing feud between Marie Baldwin and Gertrude Bonnin. Another manifestation was in the differing opinions over whether the SAI should demand that the Bureau be abolished or whether it should work for Bureau reform. That issue resulted in Carlos Montezuma's leaving the Society for

several years and to his constant criticism of it in Wassaja which kept many prospective members away.

The lines on the Bureau issue were drawn early. Montezuma refused to attend the first conference because the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was scheduled to speak. Cornelius campaigned to have Bureau employees excluded from office, and the issue prevented adoption of a constitution and the election of permanent officers. When Bureau employer Charles Dagenett was elected chairman, Cornelius threatened to resign from the Executive Committee. Dagenett withdrew his name and was then elected corresponding secretary.⁴⁰ Eastman charged that Sloan, previously anti-Bureau, had sold out to government interests in order to get himself elected Executive Committee Chairman.

A less public display of the divisiveness caused by disagreement on the Bureau, but one that had serious consequences on Society efficiency, was the feud between Marie Baldwin and Gertrude Bonnin. In 1915 the Society split the duties of secretary and treasurer to reduce Parker's work load, allowing him more time for the Journal. At that time Baldwin, a Chippewa attorney, was elected treasurer. The change in structure created chaos. Baldwin lived in Washington, D.C., and Parker in Albany, New York, and the process of paying bills became cumbersome. The following year, Parker was elected president, Bonnin, who lived in Utah, replaced him as secretary, and Baldwin was reelected treasurer. The increased distance between the three top officers aggravated the problems in executive level productivity. In addition, the two women were on opposite sides of the Bureau question. Baldwin was a Bureau employee and Bonnin wanted the SAI purged of Bureau

employees. The inability of the two women to work together increased with time, and finally Parker complained to Sherman Coolidge, "Both have been petty and spiteful As good as they both are they are killing our work."⁴¹

Over time Bonnin listed numerous complaints against Baldwin. Soon after she was elected secretary, and while she still lived in Utah, she complained to Parker that Baldwin had not sent her the secretary's books, stationery, SAI literature, or even a complete membership list. Since she did not have the mailing list, she asked his permission to send the 1500 copies of the most recent Society platform to members of Congress.⁴² She suspected that Baldwin had deliberately misplaced funds earmarked for projects that she opposed.⁴³ Parker seemed to have no more success with Baldwin than did Bonnin, and to the latter he confided that he almost suspected that Baldwin was deliberately trying to destroy the Society or to discredit the other officers.⁴⁴

When Bonnin moved to Washington, D.C. in 1917, the friction between the two women increased. Each complained bitterly to Parker about the other and he was inundated by a flood of accusatory letters. Baldwin charged that Bonnin, without giving advance notice, had moved the SAI office into her home so the Society would pay part of her rent. Baldwin took the treasurer's books, saying she would do her Society work from her home until the next conference. Though she avowed she had no desire to be reelected treasurer, she stated that she would continue in that office rather than let both offices go back to one person who would then have "altogether too much power and authority."⁴⁵ She believed that since Bonnin lived only two-and-one-half blocks from the Indian

Office, Wassaja would make much out of the proximity of the new SAI headquarters to the Bureau.⁴⁶ Bonnin countered that Baldwin only wanted to keep the previous office because she stored her law library there and did not want to move it. Furthermore, she asserted that the move saved the Society money, but that she was entitled to compensation for the room occupied by the SAI office since it was open every day during business hours, while the previous office had been closed when Baldwin was at work each day.⁴⁷ The new office, she said, attracted many Indians visiting the Bureau on business, and many of those who visited subsequently joined the Society.⁴⁸

Bonnin objected to Baldwin's hiring part-time clerks to do work that she was willing to do. Those clerks, though they were Indian, were Bureau employees and she had no intention of entrusting SAI work to "Indian Bureau spies and watchdogs."⁴⁹ Parker, trying to juggle the SAI presidency, the Magazine editorship, his job for the state of New York, and his military duties for the state, begged both of them to compromise and to settle their differences.⁵⁰

By the fall of 1917 Bonnin became far less cordial toward Parker. She suggested that he call an executive session to recombine the offices of secretary and treasurer, and to appoint her to the position, thus eliminating her problems with Baldwin. Baldwin retaliated by sending Parker every bill that Bonnin had submitted before paying it, including bills for previously-approved expenses. Even after receiving Parker's approval, she delayed payment as long as possible. Bonnin countered by sending her bills directly to Parker to save time. She asserted that since Baldwin refused to send her the treasurer's

monthly statements, she could not plan further work and she could no longer advance her own money when she had no idea when she could expect reimbursement. She even threatened a lawsuit if she was not reimbursed quickly, realizing that such a suit would "utterly kill" the SAI.⁵¹

She inquired of Parker how he expected her to do her work when she had no money. In a strongly-worded letter, Parker directed Baldwin to put aside her personal feelings and to work for the good of the Society. He continued that if she could not do her job she should send it to him, and if she would not do her job, she should let him know so she could be replaced. Throughout the feud Parker seemed far more supportive of Bonnin than of Baldwin. He informed the latter that the secretary's expenses must be paid first, before all other bills.⁵² He even recognized Bonnin's address as the SAI office in the Magazine so that rent and expenses could be paid from the Magazine fund.⁵⁴

There was no national conference in 1917 because of the war, but at least thirty members met in Washington, D.C., early in 1918 to settle the feud between the two women. After a public airing of grievances on the conference floor the group rebuked both women, each of whom had admitted her wrongdoing, and they voted that each must fulfill her responsibilities as outlined in the by-laws.⁵⁴ An audit showed Baldwin's books to be accurate, though she had not prepared monthly statements in protest of Bonnin's keeping Society money in an office petty cash fund. Within two months after the meeting, Bonnin was again complaining to Parker that Baldwin was not paying her expenses promptly. Parker noted two precursors of future change at the Washington meeting:

(1) Eastman's criticism that the SAI had misdirected its previous efforts, and (2) the growing presence of peyote-supporters within the membership. When the next conference elected Eastman president, he redirected Society goals and that conference demanded Indian Bureau abolition. The following year, peyote advocate Thomas Sloan became president.

Peyote was another major divisive issue that became more important with the passage of time. Most SAI leaders, with the notable exception of Sloan, opposed peyote usage. It was really a question of geography. Peyote was most widespread in the western United States, so members from the West frequently favored, and eastern Indians, among whom it was practically unknown, opposed it. Throughout the era, the Society officially campaigned against peyote and asked individual states to outlaw it, but individual members remained divided and testified on both sides of the issue in Congressional hearings.⁵⁵

In earlier years Sloan had opposed peyote and had worked to have it declared illegal in Nebraska. One explanation for his changed viewpoint is that he came to view the cult as a bridge between traditional Indian society and the unfamiliar demands of a dominant white culture.⁵⁶ However, SAI leaders were divided on their perceptions of Sloan and many were convinced that he would make any accommodation necessary to achieve his personal ambitions. Thus the possibility exists that he changed his peyote views to gain favor with his own Omaha tribe where the peyote religion was already popular.

Sloan sought to make peyote usage a religious issue, and at the 1913 conference, he tried to limit all discussion to temporal affairs in

an effort to prevent the Society from taking a stand against it. Because many saw Sloan's manipulations as an effort to curry favor with peyote users, he was not elected to a Society office by that conference. Most leaders, trying not to alienate any group, sidestepped the issue by avowing that they could not espouse or renounce any one religion. Peyote was occasionally the determining factor in the choice of conference sites, and those who opposed it refused to hold the conferences in areas of high peyote usage such as Omaha or Oklahoma where local advocates could seize control of the proceedings. While the Magazine never gave the issue the coverage it gave to other Society goals, disagreement over peyote usage in religious rites was definitely a major divisive issue. A July, 1913, American Indian Magazine article unfairly declared that Nebraska was headquarters of the peyote cult, and charged that state politicians tried to buy Indian votes by legalizing it.⁵⁷

At first Parker reserved judgment on peyote until he could study the issue, even though his initial reaction was that if it decreased alcohol usage, it might be a good thing or at least the lesser of two evils. As an eastern Indian, he was not as familiar with the cult as were SAI leaders from western tribes where it was more prevalent. Users, he learned, incorporated peyote into the teachings of Christian missionaries. He described the parallels between Christianity and the accouterments used in peyote rites. Eagle wands, he said, contained twelve feathers, one for each of the twelve apostles. Gourd rattles frequently were engraved with likenesses of saints or of the virgin in the belief that their use and the accompanying hymns users sang would

insure special favors from God.⁵⁸ He described the ceremony as a reinforcement of Christian beliefs saying that the hymns suggested good actions which became impressed upon users' minds during their drug-induced trances. Furthermore, he believed the trances gave users hope that their visions might be realized. His main objection was that users tended not to associate with the Christian missionaries, but he believed that peyote caused no physical effects upon the community.

As Parker gathered more information on the issue, his views changed. The superintendent of the Potawatomi Agency in Mayetta, Kansas, who believed peyote to be much more injurious to Indians than alcohol, wrote to Parker asserting, "It makes the users stupid, and they lose their energy." Furthermore, he attributed much of the eye trouble experienced by Indians under his jurisdiction to peyote, saying it affected the nervous system.⁵⁹

Having changed his mind about the effects of peyote, Parker editorialized that its use was for a drug-induced religion which had spread like "wild fire" among Indians west of the Mississippi River and had caused the abandonment of traditional native religions.⁶⁰ He said those Indians had come to regard it as a panacea for all their problems and were using it in combination with alcohol.⁶¹ Claiming it to be the "bitter herb" known to the Israelites, they were organizing congregations and missionaries to spread the cult while the Indian Bureau was trying to suppress peyote as an intoxicant.⁶² Parker called for a study of its effects on the mental and physical conditions of children born to users.⁶³

Over the years, the Magazine accused the "peyote poison" users of neglecting their children, and campaigned with the Indian Rights Association (IRA) to educate Native Americans about peyote's consequences: (1) that young men leading the cult were seizing tribal leadership from older leaders; (2) that these same young men were selling it at a 300% profit; and (3) that its use was spreading in Government Schools.⁶⁴ The Magazine agreed with the IRA that the new cult was a perverted form of an old religious practice in which the hallucinogen was used once a year by a few carefully chosen participants. The new users, they said, were merely eating it out of boredom, to arouse their sexual passion, and to make money.⁶⁵ Furthermore, they were perverting Christian rituals by baptizing users "in the name of the Father, the Son and Peyote."⁶⁶

In 1911, when the SAI was founded, there was no specific legislation against peyote, even though an 1897 legislative act prohibited the sale of intoxicants to non-citizen Indians. Because the Interstate Commerce Commission did not prohibit the sale of peyote through the mails, circular letters blanketed the plains advertising bargain rates. The only tangible government effort against peyote was the inclusion of \$75,000 "for the suppression of the traffic in intoxicating liquors and peyote" in the 1914 Indian appropriations bill.⁶⁷

Realizing that moral suasion was not working and that reservation Indians saw little need to heed the advice of Indians so far removed from their life, some Society leaders sought legal means to combat peyote. During the next several years they asked individual

states and the United States Congress to enact legislation for its suppression. They worked for laws prohibiting its sale and shipment through the mails. They worked to include peyote in the list of banned intoxicants on reservations. They attempted to speed the process by using fear tactics, suggesting that with a wartime national prohibition against alcohol in effect, peyote usage might spread to whites.⁶⁸ Indeed, they said, it had already spread to white troops along the Mexican border who were using it in place of liquor.⁶⁹

Peyote remained an issue throughout the life of the SAI. Gertrude Bonnin told the 1916 conference of a Ute who died of an overdose. Parker came to believe that it was promoted by "some very clever Indians," for personal gain.⁷⁰ Mary Wickham Roe, a missionary for 22 years, addressed the 1919 conference, claiming that peyote caused early deaths by making users susceptible to disease. That conference petitioned Congress to classify peyote as a narcotic. Bonnin was first convinced that peyote was dangerous through her Community Center work.⁷¹ She reported to Parker in 1916 that she and three others, including Henry Standing Bear, had begun an anti-peyote campaign, speaking to groups as they traveled across the Ute reservation where inhabitants were selling their herds to pay for peyote. Standing Bear was from the Pine Ridge Reservation whose Sioux residents had voted against peyote usage on their reservation and had mounted a campaign to eliminate it elsewhere.

Peyote was promoted on the Ute reservation by a tribal elder who was ill and who had used it to kill his pain. Later Bonnin reported that Ute children who attended peyote meetings with their parents were

unable to work in school because of their peyote usage. She said the agent had admitted to her that he realized peyote's detrimental effects, but believed it to be a matter that Indians should be allowed to settle themselves.⁷² Later she hinted to Parker that the agent might be profiting from its sale. In January, 1917, she reported that she had visited with the state senator who introduced the anti-peyote bill in the Utah legislature, and that she planned to ask President Joseph Smith of the Mormon church to promote the bill. The Episcopal bishop was already working against peyote, she added.

After her move to Washington, D.C., Bonnin continued her campaign, testifying in 1918, along with Pratt and Eastman and other SAI members, before a House subcommittee.⁷³ Some Indians, including SAI members, testified in favor of peyote, along with a prominent government service ethnologist who favored it, she believed, simply because it gave him something interesting to write about. She asserted that ethnologist James Mooney was a leader in the drive to charter a peyote church which would be protected under the first amendment to the Constitution. She suggested that the SAI might work to get him fired since he used his franking privileges to spread peyote propoganda in direct opposition to government efforts to halt the spread of peyote usage.⁷⁴

In turn, Mooney berated Parker that none of the SAI representatives who testified had ever witnessed the peyote ceremony. He continued that it was "well known among the tribes that a large portion of the SAI is Indian only by remote ancestry or otherwise out of touch and knowledge of the Indian people as represented by their chiefs and tribal delegates to Washington."⁷⁵ Furthermore, he asserted, peyote

and liquor were "diametrically opposed," and the SAI's efforts to link them were either from ignorance or a "deliberate misrepresentation."⁷⁶

Bonnin wrote President Woodrow Wilson asking that he urge Congress to approve the Hayden Bill (H.R. 2614), which favorably passed out of committee as a result of the hearings. She reminded him that three-fourths of Indians could not vote and so had no means of making their feelings known. It was supported, she informed the President, by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the National Congress of Mothers, the Parent Teachers Association, and the Federated Women's Clubs of Washington, most of which she had addressed in behalf of the bill. The Hayden Bill passed the House but not the Senate, so Pratt urged Parker to persuade members to call on legislators individually during the following Congressional session as that was what peyote advocates had done very effectively the previous year. However an anti-peyote bill introduced in 1919 also failed, as did other bills in subsequent years.⁷⁷ The Society leadership had indeed lost one of its most important battles.

By the early 1920s, as the SAI declined, Montezuma and Sloan represented the only founding members who were still active in the organization. Many prominent former members vehemently opposed the Society's leadership policies under Sloan, especially his advocacy of peyote usage. In addition, the organization could not point to one tangible achievement. Its campaigns to obtain citizenship for all Indians, to abolish the Indian Bureau, and to outlaw peyote usage had been unsuccessful. Former leaders had become disillusioned and turned their energies elsewhere. Arthur Parker left the group after being

voted out of office by the 1918 conference. He had worked with greater singleness of purpose than anyone, even sacrificing his family's financial security and disregarding his health. He had endured constant criticism from Montezuma because he focused his efforts toward Bureau reform rather than toward abolition. He had endured personal humiliation in the Godfrey Letter controversy.

Charles Dagenett, exhausted by controversy over his Bureau connections, had not been active in the SAI for quite some time. Having failed to get her husband elected SAI president at the 1919 convention, Gertrude Bonnin declined her reelection as secretary-treasurer, quit the group, and found other avenues to achieve her ends. In 1921, she persuaded the General Federation of Women's Clubs, with whom she had been working, to form an Indian Welfare Committee. Her work with that group ultimately led President Herbert Hoover to appoint two Indian Rights Association members to the two top Bureau of Indian Affairs offices in 1928. In 1926, she founded the National Council of American Indians of which she was president until her death in 1938.⁷⁸

After his failed bid for reelection to the presidency in 1919, Charles Eastman quit the Society to pursue other interests. He worked for the Bureau as an Indian inspector from 1923 to 1925. In that capacity he investigated reservation conditions and disputes between Indians and government employees. In 1923, he was named to Secretary of the Interior Hubert W. Work's Committee of One Hundred Advisory Council to study and recommend improvements to federal Indian policy. On that Council he served with his former SAI allies and adversaries Sherman Coolidge, Father Philip Gordon, Fayette McKenzie, Arthur Parker, Henry

Roe Cloud, and Thomas Sloan.⁷⁹ Each of these former leaders continued to work for Indian advancement, but within the context of his own individual vision.

One wonders, therefore, if fatigue might not have been just as instrumental in the death of the SAI as any of the divisive issues. Baldwin, Bonnin, Dagenett, Eastman, Kellogg, Montezuma, Parker, and Sloan were all strong-willed people, each firmly convinced that his or her perceptions were the only correct ones for all Indians. In the end, maybe they just got tired of fighting with each other. Over the years the tone of the Magazine changed from one of positive expectations to one of frustration and bitterness. In 1914, an SAI delegation presented a list of the Society's goals to President Woodrow Wilson. The meeting with the President, reported Parker, "marked a new beginning in Indian progress and proclaimed a new day for the red race."⁸⁰ He asked the President, Congress, and the American people to listen to the Indians' requests and to act on them. When Parker resigned from the group four years later, he was still waiting for that action, as was Eastman when he resigned the following year. In the meantime, it had become obvious that The Society of American Indians had not achieved the hoped-for solidarity because its leaders espoused too many antithetical ideas and refused to compromise on their convictions.

ENDNOTES

¹The American Indian Magazine, VII (Fall Number 1919), 143.

²Ibid.

³Arthur C. Parker to Dennis Wheelock, July 9, 1913. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, from The Papers of the Society of American Indians, ed. John W. Lerner, Jr. (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1987). [Hereafter cited as PSAI.] Parker wrote in the letter of the "wide spread" criticism of Sloan that could bring "disaster to the organization." He continued, "His alliance with Mrs. Kellogg makes the danger double and I am constantly compelled . . . to apologize for the presence of these two persons in the Executive Council The confidence of the public has gradually dropped ever since the connection with these people with the work. . . . In this I do not deny in any way the great ability of Mr. Sloan or the fact that he possesses many splendid virtues" He insisted that a "man whose name is clouded should have fortitude enough to leave such work as ours alone and not seek to become one of the leading figures, for it compels the organization nor [sic] only to render him honor but justify his deeds. This causes almost destruction [sic]"

⁴Raymond Wilson, Ohiyesa: Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), p. 162.

⁵"Indians Propose Legal War on U.S. To Escape Bonds of Ward System," Minneapolis Journal, 4 October 1919, p. 1, in PSAI. There is a discrepancy, as elsewhere Beaulieu is referred to as Theodore H. Beaulieu.

⁶"Indian Convention Ends With Election of Officers," Minneapolis Morning Tribune, 6 October 1919, p. 12, in PSAI.

⁷Wilson, Ohiyesa, p. 162.

⁸Dennison Wheelock to Arthur C. Parker, April 9, 1920. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁹Thomas Sloan to Richard Henry Pratt, June 29, 1920. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²"Indians Will Open Convention Tomorrow," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, 14 November 1920, p. 14b; and "300 Delegates Here for Convention of Society of Indians," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, 15 November 1920, p. 6, in PSAI.

¹³Carlos Montezuma to Richard Henry Pratt, November 30, 1921. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, from The Papers of Carlos Montezuma, M.D., ed. John W. Larner, Jr. (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1984). [Hereafter cited as PCM.]

¹⁴Charles D. Carter to Thomas Bishop, September 30, 1920. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, General Correspondence and Other Records of the Bureau, 1801-1939, Central Classified Files, 1907-1936 (CCF), in PSAI.

¹⁵Henry Roe Cloud to Thomas Sloan, October 11, 1920. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, General Correspondence and Other Records of the Bureau, 1801-1939, Central Classified Files, 1907-1936 (CCF), in PSAI.

¹⁶Henry Roe Cloud to his parents, October 8, 1912. Roe Family Papers, 1802-1977, including Henry Roe Cloud Papers, 1907-1952, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

¹⁷Richard Henry Pratt to Thomas Bishop, October 16, 1920. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

¹⁸Clayton Kirk and/or P. H. Kennerly to Charles D. Carter, September 7, 1921. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, General Correspondence and Other Records of the Bureau, 1801-1939, Central Classified Files, 1907-1936 (CCF), in PSAI.

¹⁹Petition Protesting Appointment Application of Thomas L. Sloan as Commissioner of Indian Affairs enclosed in letter from P. H. Kennerly to L. V. McWhorter, May 11, 1921. Lucullus Virgil McWhorter Papers, Holland Library, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington, in PSAI.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Francis Paul Prucha, The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indian, Volume II (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), pp. 790-791.

²⁴"Mayor Couzens Smokes Pipe with Indians," Detroit News, 26 October 1921, p. 32, in PSAI.

²⁵Wassaja, VII (November 1921), 1.

²⁶Richard Henry Pratt to Carlos Montezuma, December 16, 1921. Carlos Montezuma Papers, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, in PCM.

²⁷Carlos Montezuma to L. V. McWhorter, January 16, 1922. Lucullus Virgil McWhorter Papers, Holland Library, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington, in PCM.

²⁸Arthur C. Parker to Richard Henry Pratt, January 21, 1922. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

²⁹Carlos Montezuma to Richard Henry Pratt, February 6, 1922. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PCM.

³⁰Henry Roe Cloud to Carlos Montezuma, March 4, 1922. Fayette Avery McKenzie Papers, Special Collections Library, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, in PSAI.

³¹Fayette A. McKenzie to Henry Roe Cloud, March 8, 1922. Fayette Avery McKenzie Papers, Special Collections Library, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, in PSAI.

³²Carlos Montezuma to Elizabeth Analla, October 4, 1922. Carlos Montezuma Papers, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, Arizona, in PCM.

³³Wassaja, VIII (October 1922), 2.

³⁴Carlos Montezuma to Richard Henry Pratt, November 27, 1922. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PCM.

³⁵Carlos Montezuma to Joseph W. Latimer, November 27, 1922. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PCM.

³⁶Wilson, Ohiyesa, p. 171.

³⁷"Indians To Give Cook County A Glimpse of the Past," Chicago Sunday Tribune, 23 September 1923, Section I, p. 14, in PSAI.

³⁸Charles Eastman to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Report of the Indian Gathering in Chicago, October 9, 1923. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, General Correspondence and Other Records of the Bureau, 1801-1939, Central Classified Files, 1907-1936 (CCF), in PSAI.

³⁹Charles Eastman to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 29, 1923. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, General Correspondence and Other Records of the Bureau, 1801-1939, Central Classified Files, 1907-1936 (CCF), in PSAI.

⁴⁰The feud between Dagenett and Cornelius, by then Mrs. O. J. Kellogg, culminated two years later when she charged that he was responsible for having her and her husband arrested on trumped-up charges shortly before the 1913 Denver conference.

⁴¹Arthur C. Parker to the Reverend and Mrs. Sherman Coolidge, February 6, 1918. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴²Gertrude Bonnin to Arthur C. Parker, January 15, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴³Gertrude Bonnin to Carlos Montezuma, December 6, 1916. Carlos Montezuma Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, in PCM.

⁴⁴Arthur C. Parker to Gertrude Bonnin, March 2, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴⁵Marie Baldwin to Arthur C. Parker, June 2, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Gertrude Bonnin to Arthur C. Parker, June 6, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴⁸Gertrude Bonnin to Arthur C. Parker, September 19, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁴⁹Gertrude Bonnin to Arthur C. Parker, June 2, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁵⁰Arthur C. Parker to Marie Baldwin, June 4, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁵¹Gertrude Bonnin to Arthur C. Parker, January 3, 1918. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁵²Gertrude Bonnin to Arthur C. Parker, January 9, 1918. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁵³Gertrude Bonnin to Arthur C. Parker, September 19, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁵⁴Arthur C. Parker to Sherman Coolidge, February 20, 1918. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁵⁵"Whiskey is Being Replaced by Drug," Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, 28 September 1916, p. 10, in PSAI.

⁵⁶Hazel W. Hertzberg, The Search for an American Indian Identity, Modern Pan-Indian Movements (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1971), p. 46.

⁵⁷The American Indian Magazine, II (July-September 1913), 207.

⁵⁸Arthur C. Parker to Mrs. S. M. Brosius, June 16, 1913. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

⁵⁹G. L. Williams to Arthur C. Parker, June 23, 1913. Arthur C. Parker Papers, Library Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York, in PSAI.

⁶⁰The American Indian Magazine, II (April-June 1914), 100.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., p. 101.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Arthur C. Parker, "The Perils of the Peyote Poison," The American Indian Magazine, V (January-March 1917), 12; "The Peyote Quest," VI (July-September 1918), 67-68.

⁶⁵The American Indian Magazine, VI (July-September 1918), 71; "The Peyote Quest," Ibid., p. 70.

66"Indian Progress Delayed by U.S. Control Method," Philadelphia Press, 22 January 1918, p. 10, in PSAI.

67S. C. Snylin to Arthur C. Parker, March 24, 1913. Arthur C. Parker Papers, Library Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York, in PSAI.

68"Indian Progress Delayed by U.S. Control Method," Philadelphia Press, 22 January 1918, p. 10, in PSAI.

69"Dangerous Drug, Rum Substitute, Menace to Indian," Philadelphia Press, 23 January 1919, p. 16, in PSAI.

70Arthur C. Parker to Gertrude Bonnin, January 2, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

71Gertrude Bonnin to Richard Henry Pratt, May 21, 1918. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

72Gertrude Bonnin to Arthur C. Parker, January 12, 1917. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

73Gertrude Bonnin to Arthur C. Parker, February 23, 1918. Arthur C. Parker Papers (SAI files), New York State Museum, Albany, New York, in PSAI.

74Gertrude Bonnin to Richard Henry Pratt, January 29, 1919. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

75James Mooney to Arthur C. Parker, October 31, 1918. Papers of Richard Henry Pratt, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in PSAI.

76Ibid.

77Hertzberg, The Search for an American Indian Identity, p. 272. The Native American Church was incorporated in Oklahoma in 1918, thus securing First Amendment protection for peyote usage.

78Dexter Fisher, Foreword to American Indian Stories by Zitkala-Sa (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), pp. xv-xvi. The foreword was first published under the title "Zitkala-Sa: The Evolution of a Writer" in American Indian Quarterly, 5, no. 3 (August 1979), 229-238.

⁷⁹Wilson, Ohiyesa, pp. 171-172.

⁸⁰Arthur C. Parker, "The Awakened American Indian," The American Indian Magazine, II (October-December 1914), 269.

EPILOGUE

It was the Society of American Indians' firm conviction that the educated, professional Indian elite who functioned in the dominant white society was ideally suited to lead all Indians to a better life. They never deviated from that view, and the philosophy long survived their demise. When the Society began to decline under Thomas Sloan's leadership in the early 1920s, some founders, especially Carlos Montezuma, considered ways to revitalize the organization. After Montezuma's death in 1923, none of the original founders continued his efforts. The differences among them had become too great and the mood of the country was not as receptive to Indian reform efforts as it had been in 1911. However, in 1946, Fayette McKenzie wrote to former leaders in an effort to create interest for a new organization. He suggested to the semi-retired Arthur Parker that he might now have time "to rebuild" the SAI "on its original foundations."¹

Asserting that the need was as great in 1946 as it had been thirty-five years earlier, McKenzie declared that the Native American had not progressed in the past seventy-five years. He further continued that in 1946 there were far more "educated and envisioned Indians" than there had been in 1911, and for that reason, he believed that an organization based on original SAI principles had a greater chance of success than previously. He praised Parker's work for the SAI and his

"philosophies of racial evolution and of race relations," which he said had proven themselves with the passage of time.²

Parker's reply made it obvious that he was not willing to resume the fight. He labeled the SAI "our hopeful task in organizing the thinking of the Indian people along lines that pointed them toward progress," and stated that while they had not achieved the desired results at the time, some positive changes had occurred in the interim.³ He praised McKenzie's efforts and foresight but declined to organize a new Society. So it seems that thirty-five years after its hopeful beginning, the Society of American Indians was finally laid to rest.

While the reformist views of the late nineteenth century had stressed the ultimate perfectability of Indians, white expectations for Native Americans had been lowered by the early twentieth century, and Indians were regarded by many as incapable of rapid assimilation. Contemporary literature increasingly spoke of them as "backward" and "dependent," and many people no longer believed that these diverse groups could blend into the homogeneous melting pot. Instead, they saw distinctions between groups. The new social science theories began to perceive an American society that was both "pluralistic and hierarchical." Advocates of this view believed that each group was bounded by natural limits and each should fulfill separate functions within the social structure.⁵

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the policy of governmental guardianship over Indians changed. Guardianship originally

provided the government with the structure to oversee Indians' affairs and theoretically to protect them in disputes with whites. However, as time passed, guardianship evolved into a policy under which Indians were banished to the fringes of white society where they lived in an inferior economic and social status. Indians were finally granted universal citizenship in 1924, but the importance of the act was reduced by the fact that all Indians who were allotted before 1906 were already citizens, as were all World War I Indian veterans, and members of tribes enfranchised by special treaties. In addition Indian citizenship was modified by the continued guardianship policy which left them without voting rights in many states.⁶

What has been labeled Progressivism was an amorphous process and at least one historian, John F. Berens, asserts that Indian reform was actually a separate process outside the main thrust of Progressive reform ideology. He maintains that Progressive Era reform was mostly directed toward urban areas, while Indian reform was directed toward reservations in rural areas. Similarly Progressive reformers sought more government involvement in the lives of immigrants and slum dwellers, and demanded government regulation of business, while Indian reformers desired less government control over Indians' lives. Progressives worked in large groups with broad interests, but Indian reformers worked in small groups with a single purpose.⁷

However, the unarguable fact is that modern Pan-Indianism resulted from a period of rapid change in the country. It divided into three branches: religious, fraternal, and reform. Religious Pan-Indians usually maintained strong tribal bonds and eventually organized

the Native American Church. Fraternal Pan-Indians were usually local urban groups, harboring a nostalgia for their reservation homes and a desire for an "Indian community." Reform Pan-Indians, such as Society of American Indians members, worked on a national level and relied heavily on whites for support.⁸ The rise of Pan-Indianism paralleled the growth of several other national reformist ideas that placed Indians in a favorable light: (1) interest in conservation, nature, and camping; (2) interest in sociology and anthropology; and (3) interest in affirming the value of ethnicity.

Increased urbanization produced an almost nostalgic appreciation for the benefits derived from a closeness to nature. In 1906, when the Society of American Indians was five years old, Congress established the National Park Service. This general time period also saw the rise of organizations such as the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and the Camp Fire Girls. The Indian was now treated as the "original American conservationist," and reform Pan-Indians emphasized his oneness with nature to an appreciative public. Even Charles Eastman and Arthur Parker were active in scouting and camping and both stressed the "Indian roots" of these organizations. Likewise, when reformers met annually at Lake Mohonk, they asserted the spiritually rejuvenating effects of its natural beauty.⁹

Fayette A. McKenzie, the white man instrumental in founding the SAI, was a sociologist, and all the Native American anthropologists of the turn of the century were active in Pan-Indian organizations, even though fundamental differences existed in their personal philosophies. For example, Arthur Parker, who had trained under Franz Boas, the most

influential American anthropologist of the era, was a reform Pan-Indian who opposed the peyote religion and the Native American Church. Francis La Flesche, the premiere anthropologist of Indian ancestry, favored them. Many white anthropologists such as James Mooney were also sympathetic to and supportive of the peyote movement. Whatever their differences, the new generation of anthropologists gave a legitimacy to traditional Indian cultural values, especially by espousing the idea that all races were genetically equal, even though molded differently by their environments.¹⁰

Twentieth century Pan-Indianism resulted from the nineteenth century Indian education program which had produced Eastern boarding schools where young Indians were indoctrinated with the beliefs of white reformers. All Society of American Indians presidents but Thomas Sloan had attended non-Indian colleges. In addition, SAI secretary and Magazine editor, Gertrude Bonnin, thought by some to be the most important reform Pan-Indian of the 1920s, obtained a white education. Educated professional Indians such as those of the SAI could see that the hope of late nineteenth century Indians to retain their traditional lifestyle either by warfare or ritualistic escapism was finally dead. Consequently, they believed that all Indians must accommodate themselves to the dominant society, and having both tribal and white connections themselves, they sought to provide a bridge between the two societies.¹¹ They emphasized Indian cultural values that were also valued by whites: dignity, truthfulness, love and reverence for nature, respect for age and wisdom, bravery, and independence. At the same time, they denigrated other traditional values such as the common ownership of land

and the extreme notion of Indian sharing, which had also been belittled by their white, nineteenth century reformist mentors.¹²

In the first issue of The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians, editor Arthur Parker denied that Indians were a "vanishing race." But surely many Indians, including SAI leaders themselves, felt that as a group they were vanishing. They must have felt that their world was simply disappearing around them. Surely, in that moment of crisis, they must have asked themselves, "Who am I? What am I? What is my future?" People always try to restore order out of chaos, and seek a means to control their rapidly changing circumstances. Reform Pan-Indians sought to control, in any way they could, what was happening to them and to their people. Their goal was to create a place for Indians in American society and make an Indian contribution to that new reality so that for all time they could say, "We exist. We make a difference." Reformist Pan-Indian leaders, maintaining a positive and hopeful attitude, trusted the American dream. Hoping to draw from both Indian and white experiences, they sought to create a new Indian who incorporated the best of both worlds.¹³

ENDNOTES

¹Fayette A. McKenzie to Arthur C. Parker, May 3, 1946. Papers of Fayette Avery McKenzie, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

²Ibid.

³Arthur C. Parker to Fayette A. McKenzie, May 8, 1946. Papers of Fayette Avery McKenzie, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

⁴Frederick Eugene Hoxie, "Beyond Savagery: The Campaign to Assimilate the American Indians, 1880-1920" (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Brandeis University, 1977), p. 610.

⁵Ibid., p. 615.

⁶Ibid., p. 612.

⁷John F. Berens, "Old Campaigners, New Realities: Indian Policy Reform in the Progressive Era, 1900-1912," Mid-America: An Historical Review, 59 (January 1977), 51.

⁸Hazel W. Hertzberg, The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1971), p. 302.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 305-306.

¹¹Ibid., p. 300.

¹²Ibid., p. 307.

¹³Ibid.

APPENDIX I

Important SAI Events

APRIL 3-4, 1911--First organizational meeting
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

The Temporary Executive Committee:
Charles E. Dagenett--Chairman
Laura M. Cornelius--Secretary
Thomas L. Sloan
Henry Standing Bear
Charles A. Eastman
Carlos Montezuma

JUNE 20-21, 1911--Temporary Executive Committee meeting
Cornelius home
Seymour, Wisconsin

OCTOBER 12-15, 1911--First Conference
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

The Executive Committee:
Thomas L. Sloan--Chairman
Charles E. Dagenett--Secretary-Treasurer
The Reverend Sherman Coolidge
Laura M. Cornelius
Arthur C. Parker
Judge Hiram Chase

JANUARY, 1912--Executive Committee Meeting
Dagenett resigns and Parker appointed Secretary-Treasurer

OCTOBER 2-6, 1912--Second Conference
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

Officers:

Sherman Coolidge--President
 Thomas L. Sloan--First Vice-President
 Charles E. Dagenett--Vice-President on Membership
 Mrs. Laura Cornelius Kellogg--Vice-President on Education
 Dennison Wheelock--Vice President on Legislation
 Arthur C. Parker--Secretary-Treasurer

JANUARY-MARCH, 1913--First issue of The Quarterly Journal of the Society
 of American Indians

1913--Cato Sells becomes Commissioner of Indian Affairs

OCTOBER 14-20, 1913--Third Conference

Albany Hotel
 Denver, Colorado

Officers:

Sherman Coolidge--President
 William J. Kershaw--First Vice-President
 Henry Roe Cloud--Vice-President, Membership
 Emma D. Goulette--Vice President, Education
 Arthur C. Parker--Secretary-Treasurer

FEBRUARY 14, 1914--Quaker City Meeting

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

OCTOBER 6-11, 1914--Fourth Conference

University of Wisconsin
 Madison, Wisconsin

Main topic of discussion: Godfrey Letter controversy

Officers:

Previous slate reelected unanimously

SEPTEMBER 28-October 6, 1915--Fifth Conference

University of Kansas
 Lawrence, Kansas

Officers:

Sherman Coolidge--President
 William J. Kershaw--First Vice-President
 Charles Carter--Vice-President, Legislation
 Emma Johnson Goulette--Vice-President, Education
 Charles E. Dagenett--Vice-President, Membership
 Arthur C. Parker--Secretary-Treasurer

1915--Memorial to President Wilson

1915--Bonnin begins her Community Center work

APRIL, 1916--Montezuma begins publication of Wassaja
Highly critical of SAI in second issue (May, 1916)

SEPTEMBER 26-October 1, 1916--Sixth Conference
Coe College
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Officers:

Arthur C. Parker--President
John Oskison--First Vice-President
Margaret Frazier--Vice-President, Membership
William J. Kershaw--Vice-President, Legislation
Gabe Parker--Vice-President, Education
Estaiene DePeltquestangue--Vice-President on Membership
Gertrude Bonninn--Secretary
Marie Baldwin--Treasurer

1916--Journal changed to American Indian Magazine

OCTOBER 1917--Conference cancelled because of War
a small meeting of Board members

Officers:

Arthur C. Parker--President
John M. Oskison--First Vice-President
Margaret Frazier--Vice-President on Membership
The Honorable Gabe Parker--Vice-President on Education
William J. Kershaw--Vice-President on Legislation
Gertrude Bonninn--Secretary
Marie Baldwin--Treasurer

SEPTEMBER 25-28, 1918--Seventh Conference
St. Charles Hotel
Pierre, South Dakota

Officers:

Charles Eastman--President
Gertrude Bonninn--Secretary-Treasurer

OCTOBER 2-4, 1919--Eighth Conference
St. James Hotel
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Officers:

Thomas Sloan--President
 Theodore H. "Gus" Beaulieu--Vice-President
 John Carl--Vice-President, Membership
 James Irving--Vice-President, Education
 Thomas G. Bishop--Secretary-Treasurer

NOVEMBER 15-19, 1920--Ninth Conference

Planters Hotel and Missouri Historical Society
 St. Louis, Missouri

Officers:

Thomas Sloan--President
 Theodore H. "Gus" Beaulieu--Vice-President
 John Carl--Vice-President, Membership
 James Irving--Vice-President, Education
 Thomas G. Bishop--Secretary-Treasurer

1921--Charles H. Burke becomes Commissioner of
 Indian Affairs

OCTOBER 25-29, 1921--Tenth Conference

YMCA Auditorium and Lincoln Hotel
 Detroit, Michigan

OCTOBER 17-20, 1922--Eleventh Conference

The Coates House
 Kansas City, Missouri

SEPTEMBER 27-30, 1923--Twelfth Conference

Hotel Sherman and Chicago Historical Society
 Chicago, Illinois

APPENDIX II

SAI Leaders

MARIE BALDWIN (Chippewa)

Temporary Executive Committee
General Committee, 1911-13
Advisory Board, Chair, 1913-14
Treasurer, 1916-18
--Involved in long-standing feud with Gertrude Bonnin

GERTRUDE BONNIN (Sioux)

American Indian Magazine Board, 1915-16; Editor, 1918-19
Advisory Board, 1916
Secretary, 1917-18
Secretary-Treasurer, 1918-19
--Involved in long-standing feud with Marie Baldwin
--Resigned from organization when Thomas Sloan elected president

SHERMAN COOLIDGE (Arapaho)

President, 1911-13
American Indian Magazine, Board, 1913-18 (Chair, 1917)
Advisory Board, 1917-21

CHARLES E. DAGENETT (Peoria)

Temporary Executive Committee, 1911
General Committee, 1911-13
Vice-President on Membership, 1912-13
--Resigned from organization because of dissension over his job in
the Bureau of Indian Affairs

CHARLES A. EASTMAN (Santee Sioux)

Temporary Executive Committee, 1911
General Committee, 1911-1913
Advisory Board, 1911
President, 1917
--Inactive for long periods of time because of policy disagreements
--His presidency marked the first time the Society called for
abolition of the Bureau of Indian Affairs
--Resigned his membership when Thomas Sloan elected president

FAYETTE AVERY MCKENZIE

- Called for first organizational meeting
- White sociologist at Ohio State University
- Later, president of Fisk University

CARLOS MONTEZUMA (Yavapai)

- Temporary Executive Committee, 1911
- Advisory Board, 1911, 1917, 1921
- American Indian Magazine, Board 1913-15, 1918-19
- Broke with Society when they would not call for abolition of the Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Published Wassaja calling for Bureau abolition

ARTHUR C. PARKER (Seneca)

- Temporary Executive Committee, 1911
- Secretary-Treasurer, 1911-18
- American Indian Magazine, Editor General, 1913-18
- President, 1918
- Advisory Board, 1919
- The "chief intellectual influence" on the Society for most of its existence

HENRY ROE CLOUD (Winnebago)

- Temporary Executive Committee
- Advisory Board, 1911-12 (Chair, 1912), 1917, 1919
- Vice-President on Membership, 1911-12, 1913
- American Indian Magazine, Board, 1913-18
- Vice-President on Education, 1916, 1918

THOMAS L. SLOAN (Omaha)

- Temporary Executive Committee, 1911
- General Committee, 1911-13
- Vice-President, 1912
- Vice-President on Legislation, 1916, 1924
- President, 1919-20
- American Indian Magazine, 1919-20
- A Peyote advocate
- The Society declined under his leadership

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