



Edited by Wassaja (Dr. Montezuma's Indian name, meaning (Signalling') an Apache Indian

Vol. 8, No. 21

ISSUED MONTHLY

November 1922

THE ONLY WAY TO GET THE INDIANS OUT OF THE CONTROL OF THE INDIAN BUREAU, IS TO GET THEM OUT OF THE CONTROL OF THE INDIAN BUREAU

### Excerpts from Paper Read at Kansas City Conference by Robert Hamilton

The question has been asked time and again by all classes of people, including the Indian himself, as to "what prompted the natives of this country to organize The Society of American Indians?"

Second question is, "does the Society receive recognition by the Indians, whether actual members or not, and does it enroll enough membership to establish a national scope of its existence?"

I wish to answer these questions through the columns of your paper, as a medium of its conveyance to the public.

In reply to the first question, I desire to state that the Society of American Indians was organized at Ohio State University, April 1, 1911, because the philanthropic people saw that the welfare and interests of the Indians have not been honestly, considerably, conservatively and economically administered for the good of the race, prompted the educated Indians to convoke as many Indians as possible into a convention to devise ways and means to organize a national Society of American Indians, to institute a national plea for justice and a square deal, and therefore, it was so dedicated to such a worthy cause, because it was, and is more evident that the employees under the Bureau of Indian Affairs are guilty of breach of trust to which has become a common practice, and it is obvious that the guardianship through the "System administering Indian" is not only repugnant to American principles, but inimical to the Indian's constitutional rights to liberty, life, and the pursuit of happiness, protection of vested property rights, opportunity to develop vocational ambitions as well as mental and spiritual interests.

When Congress vested the President, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of their vested property rights without consent of the Indians, Congress intended that the quality of the guardianship should be equal to the personal discretionary judgment of such executives upon the conclusive presumption that their ability and Christian compassion assured a righteous adjudication.

But since the administrative officers have formulated oppressive and un-American-like policies, it became necessary, "in the course of human events" for the enlightened Indians to organize themselves into a Society to devise a united effort to enforce laws, moral principles, and to institute legal proceedings in the proper tribunals to adjudicate the wrongs committed against the Indians' property and constitutional rights.

The charter membership of this Society also realized that the appropriation of Indian funds by congressional enactment without the consent and knowledge of the native is simply usurpation and confiscation of Indian property which is equivalent to "a taxation without representation," which caused revolutionary war against the King of England, who was acting as a self-constituted guardian and

trustee over the property of the colonies. If it were wrong for the King to confiscate the property of the colonies and to deprive them of a voice in the administration of their affairs, it is equally abominable for the Bureaucrats to assume that attitude toward the natives.

The essential qualifications of the officers of the Society should be men of unswerving honesty, untiringly industrious, supremely desirous of serving their race and the whole country, intensely human, courageously patriotic, and unlimited patience.

The said officers have performed their duties to the best of their ability and integrity, and governed by what they consciously believe to be right and wholesome for the race.

The next question is the general recognition of this Society: The Indians of this country, and the answer to this question is plain and clear, in the affirmative. Active, Indian Associate, Associate, Junior and Honorary members who pay membership fees, and in some instances donate to meet the current expenses of this Society, and especially to maintain an office with necessary officers in Washington, D. C. Every intelligent Indian who has a comprehensive conception of the relationship of the Indian with the United States Government, not only recognizes and encourages the existence of this Society, but depend upon it for redress of grievances.

After a careful, diligent and extensive investigation into the whole machinery of the System and Combinations, The Society finds that laws enacted to advance the Indians in civilization; to recognize his vested rights; to assure his future prosperity have been grossly violated by the officials in charge of the Indian affairs.

It is the System to which every Indian objected, and resented the grafters and arbitrary *Octopus* who manipulate and operate Indian property to the detriment of the Indian, but not to Uncle Sam's good laws and form of government so universally respected and loved.

The public has been and is being deceived by false and mis-leading statements given to the press with official sanction. It is not difficult to discover why such is so and the method by which the public is misled into believing that the interests are safeguarded, the natural resources are conserved, developed and commercialized for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Indian.

As soon as the Bureau felt the firm attitude of the officers of the Society towards the grafters and Indian Office despots, the employees under the Bureau began to make a systematical propaganda to weaken this organization, forbidden to recover, denied the right to a defensive force in law, drained of every atom of its economic strength to satisfy the revenge of white men, to keep him disunited and prostrate, denied the privilege of going to Washington to reveal his grievances; corralled to be robbed and starved by the hostile guardians for fear he might expose the sham protection and prosperity he is enjoying on paper in print.

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Let not the Bureaucrats make you believe that \$400,000,000.00 appropriated by Congress upon the recommendations of the Indian Office and expended by them in education and civilization of the natives since 1832 when the Indian was bureaucratized, is all charity, because it is not a drop in the bucket to the extent of the territory ceded by the various tribes of Indians to the United States Government who proposed and wrote every term and the treaty stipulations which was never carried out in good faith by this government; and in proportion with the amount of Uncle Sam's vast wealth derived from the lands our forefathers once owned. The said \$400,000,000.00 spread over a period of ninety-nine years and expended for support of three hundred thousand Indians in round numbers would mean about fourteen dollars a year if pro-rated among them.

Equality doesn't mean rounding-up the natives of this country and then driving them into a corral wherein they cannot help themselves, and then reduce them to the level of common beggars, which is used as an argument to make the public believe that the Indians need supervision forever at the expense of the taxpayers. It means raising the poor, enlightening the ignorant, until there is no longer any poor to raise and any ignorant to enlighten. In a republic, equality in democracy concerns matters of opportunity and protection from predatory interests. It would be a short-sighted democracy that used its university graduates for street-cleaning work. It is a short-sighted democracy which permits Bureaus to operate under inconsistent conditions, because this institution has not given the Indian laws a liberal interpretation, but such constructions are rather sharp, adverse to the welfare of the Indians.

Under the Bureau management the 'citizenship and civilization of the aborigines of this country is not only backward, but it is retrograding, so it is conclusive presumption that when a trustee becomes domineering to crush the interests of its subjects there can be no democracy in any proper sense.

### "The Indian Bureau—the Slaughter House of the Indian People"

The matter of our people's welfare has always been a serious matter with me; others may feel indifferent, but with me I realize that to do my country the most good and be worthy of my race, I cannot be blind to what is right, and to what is not right. I still, as of old, proclaim that our people are not free; they are enslaved on reservations by the Indian Bureau System. They are not citizens of their native country—they are wards. I still proclaim there will be no freedom or citizenship for our people until Congress abolishes the Indian Bureau.

In Chicago, in 1872, I was alone in the world, as an Apache Indian. The year before that I was scaling the rocks, playing like a kitten with things first discovered. I was happy in the rugged chasms of the Superstition Range of Mountains. At Urbana, in 1878, I was informed of Lieutenant R. H. Pratt taking Apache children to Carlisle for schooling. The country thought there was something loose in Pratt's head. I came to Chicago in 1884 for my medical examination. For my information I wrote to Lieut. Pratt, asking how the Apache children were progressing. I gave him my history. From that time on, now Gen. R. H. Pratt, we have been striking on the same note relative to the welfare of our people.

My co-workers, the cry of our race to help them echoes back five hundred years, "Up and be doing. We must count the cost and enter the fray, regardless of what we may encounter or suffer to gain freedom and citizenship for our people.

I do not know that the Indians' rights and benefits are excluded from the same rights and benefits which the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Secretary of the Interior, and the host of Indian Agents in the Indian Service are enjoying as free men and citizens. I know my people should be as free as air; instead of that they are on reservations like prisoners, kept as wards, nonentities, and denied of their God given rights as human beings. The Indian Bureau is a detriment to humanity, and a mockery to God. Its existence is a dark monument in freedom's land. This self-appointed guardianship of the Indians appears very suspicious. It would seem as though it were an intrigue to keep the Indians in ignorance, so as to gradually take America away from them. It was done, anyway.

In attendance at the Lawrence Conference there were representatives of the Indian Bureau, the Indian Rights Ass'n, the Indian Division of the Y. M. C. A., and the Indian Missionaries from different denominations. For years before the birth of S. A. I. they worked with the Indian Bureau harmoniously—in Indian matters there was an understanding between them that "you do for me and I do for you." They did not look to the best interests of the Indian people, but rather mostly to their own interests. These good people do not attend our conference any more. The responsibility fell on the Indians to carry on the Society. The "fall outs" did everything in their power to discourage and smother the Society. The President was the "goat." The vicious rumors spread that the Society was dead; it was no good. Sloan was not an Indian; he cheated the Indians. He ran for the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, running for the very thing he opposed—shows his selfishness. The Society was used politically. Bishop was a dirty creature. Sloan has made a total failure, and the Society of American Indians is no more. Such false and poisonous dirt throwing have been freely credited to the Society of American Indians for the past three years. If it were something else besides the Society of American Indians it would have surely died and been buried long ago. Not so, the Society still survives.

This bombarding the Society of American Indians with devilish and jealous motive came because the Society of American Indians were on the right track and facing the Indian Bureau, and spreading to the public to have Congress pass a bill to free and give citizenship to our people, and they are the ones who were loyal to Indian Bureau and wobbled when their people's freedom and citizenship were at stake.

You cannot kill a principle that rings with salvation, that rings of freedom, that rings for citizenship, that rings for human rights for our race, that reaches to God. That is the embodiment of the Society of American Indians.

My good friends, after this conference you will be confronted with propositions to form a new organization. Organizations are well enough, but when the suggestion has the earmark of "once a member of the Society of American Indians" you can put it down that that person does not sympathize with the Society of American Indians and its object. The Society of American Indians has been smeared with filth and dirt of all description. Its first members have forsaken it and fled. They have used their influence to drag the Society of American Indians into nonentity, and the Indian Bureau smiles upon them and takes a part in the jeering and smearing of the S. A. I.

You may say the Indians on reservations are not conscious of their treatment. It is not so. The enslaved Indians understand the Indian Bureau too well. They crave to be free, they yearn to be men and citizens, but no one takes notice of them. By force of habit they linger in their ignorance. They dare not make a step; they cannot, they don't know how. Take an Indian from a reservation, and you tell him to do that. Does he do it? No. He waits for you to show him how. He has not enough confidence in himself to do the same thing without being shown. Indians are dumb-heads on the reservations, but look out when they have been given a chance to develop themselves. A live

of the Indian on the reservation, but that does not give them freedom and citizenship. Indian in the whirl of the world's industry, is a living monument against the contention of the Indian Bureau.

About the time when H. H. Jackson wrote "Century of Dishonor" and "Ramona," about the time when Carlisle School was taking root to defy the country's wrong sentiment of the Indian race, there was a wave of public sentiment in behalf of the Indian people. Good souls, with philanthropic hearts, in Philadelphia, co-operated and supported the newly-formed Indian Rights' Association. Their good object was to defend the Indians' rights in their mistreatment by the Government.

Prominent white men and women were much interested in the Association, and contributed to it generously. The Association devoted itself most actively to securing prominent members throughout the country. At first it was active, and did much practical work for the Indian people. There being no other organization to help the Indians, they were looked up to as an authority on Indian matters. When I went into the Indian Service in 1889, the Indian Rights' Ass'n approved General T. J. Morgan as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. During Roosevelt's administration, Leupp was taken from the Indian Rights' Ass'n to be Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The well known Mohawk conference had great confidence in the Indian Rights' Ass'n. General Pratt never did have any use for the Association, because it did not stand out clearly in the open to state where they stand to help the Indian people practically. The General did not fancy the officers who catered to the rich and the Indian Bureau, and forgot the Indian people. The Indian Rights' Ass'n heart got so soft after a while that they were afraid to hurt anybody's feelings; they believed favors bestowed should be returned. So you see today, the Indian Rights' Ass'n and the Indian Bureau are thicker than molasses. The prevailing view that we can work with the Indian Bureau and accomplish more in that way for the Indian, is the belief of the Indian Rights' Ass'n.

In an under-current way the Indian Rights' Ass'n has been against the freedom and citizenship of the Indian people. In a way, the Indian Rights' Ass'n is working with the Indian Bureau.

The intention of the Indian Rights' Ass'n to tell the truth of the whole matter is that they have been too closely connected with the Indian Bureau. Their pride prevents their confessing that they have been working with the Indian Bureau—the Bureau that have not profited the Indian, but ruined them to the lowest depth of human existence. It is sad to know that such a high and noble object association has turned in with the enemy, and thus frustrated the great object of its mission. The Indian Rights' Ass'n hates the Society of American Indians.

The abandonment of the Carlisle Indian School was the greatest calamity to our race. The founder of that once grand institution was the grandest friend and helper to our race. We may as well say that he was the first benefactor who was sacrificed for striking the keynote of Indian freedom and citizenship. He was tactically and humiliatingly removed from Carlisle, where his heart centred, where his spirit moved the school, and where he expected to die. The school was handed over to other hands, who ran it without the least heart interest, and as a machine. The great friend of the Indians who first spoke of doing away with the Indian Bureau, was deposed, but the school stood there. It was a living monument, whose principles were against the Indian Bureau. The school was educating the Indians too fast. The war came on. There were overflowing sentiments of patriotism, and the outcry "do all you can to help win the war." That wave touched the Indian Bureau. Without consideration of the Indian people, that monument of light, as on a hill, for Indian education—Carlisle Indian School was emptied of its Indian pupils; it was ruthlessly taking away the foundation of Indian education. The two most ruinous effects that hindered the Indian progress in America was first when General Pratt was dismissed from his Carlisle Indian School; secondly, when the Carlisle Indian School

was abandoned for a base hospital; far better that all other Indian schools be turned over to the War Department for base hospitals, than the hope and life of the Indian race be ruthlessly taken away from them and be left alone without that monument of life where they could point out to their children and say to them: "There is where we first received the light."

The Indian Bureau may put away Gen. R. H. Pratt, they may shut out the light of Indian education by turning the Carlisle Indian School into a base hospital. With all of that the Society of American Indians still lives; will live to carry on the same work, for we are stepping in the same path that Gen. R. H. Pratt made, and look forward to the goal of freedom and citizenship of our people.

Keep in mind that as we gather here for the best interest of our people, we are only re-echoing those same principles of freedom and citizenship which actuated and kindled the hearts of Red Jackets, of Pontiac, of Blackhawk, of Logan, of Tecumseh, of Osceola, of Setting Bull, of Hollow Horn Bear, of Chief Joseph, of Geronimo, and many others of our blood.

As we come here, let us equip ourselves to help the Society to carry on its work for the highest principles that man yearns to become a good citizen.

Western Indians came to Washington with their complaints, presented their wants, and signed treaties. Our people became so unsophisticated they never knew the importance of their affairs. In their bright and gay regalia they were feasted and told to go home, and that everything would be adjusted rightly for them. At this they gave grunts; they were satisfied. Today, as we advance from darkness to light, we see things differently; the old Indians of fifty years ago were not like the Indians of today. They sought food for their stomachs. The Indians of today are in position to receive more light of truth on our rights than our fathers of seventy-five years ago on the Indian Bureau System. They oppose our rights, therefore we seek our rights as men, because we see we are debarred from the rights and benefits that other human beings enjoy. We have been fooled all these years, when we could have been men and women. The Indian Bureau has not helped us to that goal.

If this awful criminal perpetration was forced upon any other race besides the Indians, they would go mad, and work their heads off with the public and Congress until they had obtained the same rights as other human beings enjoy on the American soil since Columbus discovered America.

All the Indians of fifty, forty, thirty, and ten years ago should have gone out into the world and followed in the same footsteps as our farmers and frontiersmen—suffered and succeeded with them, their children attend the same public schools as other children, the young men follow the plow or used their hands in factories, or wherever they were needed, they would have been willing helpers, taking part in the irresistible tide of the coming of civilization. It was a mistake to keep the Indian from their possibilities as human beings by a System that worked just the opposite of what was intended.

It is regretful to state that in our public schools the children are taught in books that the Indian is a cruel, savage creature. This spurious teaching in the public schools has done its dirty work upon the status of our race. The white children are not taught that the Indians were generous, kind and true friends. They were as children—you were welcome to their homes. What belonged to them was yours. They were not greedy, but generous. To them everything was free as air. No race was ever truer and natural than the Indian race.

Some friends inform us that we are missing the mark. It is education that you want to aim at. Another one tells us that it is christianization that you want for the Indian people—when you convert the Indians to be Christians they will want to be free and become citizens gladly. Another whispers into our ear: You want to reform the Indian Bureau and co-operate with the Government, and thus improve the condition of the Indian people. We may say that it is the duty of the Indian Bureau to improve the condition

Improving does not tear the barriers down and free the Indian.

Here comes another: "Doctor, you are cruel, and inconsiderate for your people. The solution of your people must come from a high and exalted ideals of the Indians; get the public interested in the aesthetic side of your race. Place a high mark on your people's history. What is civilization anyway? Geographically, the American Indians enjoy better civilization than we enjoy today. Their art must be appreciated. Just imagine his contribution to civilization. He is a natural-born artist. His designs on his native industries prove it. It would be a pity to see the pottery, the blankets and the baskets vanish as has the buffalo. His religion is better than our civilized religion. Why perplex his God with dogma and creeds. Freedom—no, he needs protection. Keep him away from the white man. Citizenship, no. That would mar his personality, his art, and everything else. The Indian—let him alone in his contentment; improve his industries and keep him separate in the realm of his forefathers' grandeur and exaltation. Let the white man learn from him, and not he from the white man. We do not appreciate the Indian's grandeur and his noble ideas. Do not mar his very being by the corrupted civilization."

The churches are shy to defend the Indian cause. They are asleep; they have quenched the spirit of doing for the Indian race as they would for themselves. They have turned away from the truth and shut their ears to the cry of the Indian people, and they say—"not yet, not yet." If the churches be against us in our fight for freedom and citizenship, where is there hope, where are we to gain our cause? Shall we go to the devil? Has the churches given way to the Golden Calf? Has the spirit of God been made secondary in our churches? God forbid, God forbid! I believe in my heart the churches when they understand our sincere motive, they will come to our aid and do more than we think.

You may ask "if we abolish the Indian Bureau, what substitute have you for it?"

My brothers, have you lost your faith in the constitution and laws that govern America? Would it be constructive for the other fellow, and be destructive to our race to be given the same freedom and citizenship? Is that your belief? If that is your belief you are on the wrong road to gain freedom and citizenship for our race. We do not ask for extra laws to rule us when we are free and citizens; when we no longer have the Indian Bureau to rule us we will naturally abide by the laws that govern all citizens in America.

For this country to spend millions of dollars on Indians it is all froth. The money has done more harm to the Indians than good. What the Indian Bureau has destroyed in our race are possibilities, that cannot be measured by dollars and cents. Does it pay and is it right to make paupers out of strong men and women; can you conceive freedom without being free; can you conceive citizenship without being citizens. These are moral rights, not money or property. The statistics of the Indian Bureau does not mean anything. It is laughable to read and hear what the Indian Bureau has done for the Indians in dollar and cents. It is a vast amount to anybody that has no interest in the Indian, but my friends, you cannot compare the destruction of the possibilities of a human race and human rights debarred, by dollars and cents.

You cannot mix oil with water. It is a hard thing to connect Indian art craft and Indianism with the great cause of Indian freedom and citizenship. This Indian craft and Indian industries is something like helping the Indian. It is nothing more or less than infatuation. The wave of interest will last as long as the infatuation survives. Sooner or later it will be up against it, because there is less interest taken, and machine competition will be too much. It paid well at first when the Indians' time and labor did not mean anything to the Indian. It is difficult to connect Indian art, Indian shows, Indian this and Indian that with freeing the Indians. Give them their citizenship and let them take up the modern trade of the country among the masses. It is the modern, and not the dead industries that the Indian should be taught.

To gain the greatest and highest object for

the Indian race is not by having Indian shows; it is not by feathers and paint; it is not by promoting native industries; it is not by celebrating Indian Day, which should not exist until the Indian is free; it is not by Indian songs and art; it is not by digging into his grave and treasuring his implements of by-gone days. These are the things of the past, and the Indians have no use for them. The greatest and highest object for our race is freedom and citizenship. The blockade that stands between the Indian people and their freedom and citizenship is the Indian Bureau. The Indian Bureau lives and thrives by keeping the Indian in slavery and as wards.

Hon. Kelly of Pennsylvania, on the floor of the house said: "The overthrow of the Indian Bureau System depends upon public sentiment, and I propose to do my part in moulding that sentiment into a just decision."

The Indian Bureau is sustained by Congress, and Congress by the public. It is necessary that the public should be educated more about the Indians. The public now thinks that the Government is treating the Indians on the fat of the land, and that all the Indians are wealthy. Congress appropriates Fifteen Million Dollars for the Indians, and the Indians do not get a smell of it; they do not spend any of it; the money all disappears when it reaches the Indians.

The only way to make our Society powerful is to have its executive force composed of fighting individuals, working loyally and unselfishly, and for an agreed positive object. To make our Society a powerful organization it must be started by two or more leaders, and these leaders must at every moment keep absolute control, the same as a captain controls his ship or a general his army. To do this, the greatest care must be used in selecting every Associate needed to help. Otherwise, no head commands and every one shoots away at his own convenience. The Society of American Indians can be organized at this meeting as a powerful organization; it must be organized under the powerful open slogan: "Abolish the Indian Bureau" or to the same end, but more diplomatically expressed, "Freedom and citizenship to the American Indian." With this title there must be an indomitable fighter as President, and until he knows and has tested his immediate associates this President must be the supreme boss. All selfish interests, such as office seeking, etc., on the part of the fighters must absolutely be never thought about. The only thought—day and night—is to be "to make that organization powerful for its one purpose—abolish the Indian Bureau." The logical president should be "he who stands firm and true as steel"; his record should be a continuous fighter for Indian freedom, and never wobbled. He should have power to choose his associates, and remove them at his pleasure. This would be accomplished by choosing tried and true friends as directors, with a tight, fighting organization. There would be no real trouble in getting unlimited money for a publicity campaign, and this is what is most needed—money for fighting activities in other directions could as easily be obtained once the Society of American Indians is a tight, hard and fast, fightingly organized. If we are not thus organized we dissipate our forces, and go to pieces. Otherwise, if we gain temporary strength, we will grow stronger and stronger in the field of usefulness for our race.

From where the Society stopped off with the S. A. I. Journal, it is paramount that we pick up the threads and journey on with the Society's Journal, as a Society without a journal nobody would know whether we were living or not, but for everyone to receive it regularly it would give light and spirit to the cause with which we are entrusted. We will know where the office is located and what is being done by the organization of which we are a part.

Members of the Society of American Indians, if the world be against us, let us not be dismayed, let us not be discouraged, let us look up and go ahead, and fight on for freedom and citizenship of our people. If it means death, let us die on the pathway that leads to the emancipation of our race; keeping in our hearts that our children will pass over our graves to victory.