

THE SEARCH
FOR AN
AMERICAN
INDIAN
IDENTITY



Modern Pan-Indian Movements

HAZEL W. HERTZBERG

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY PRESS

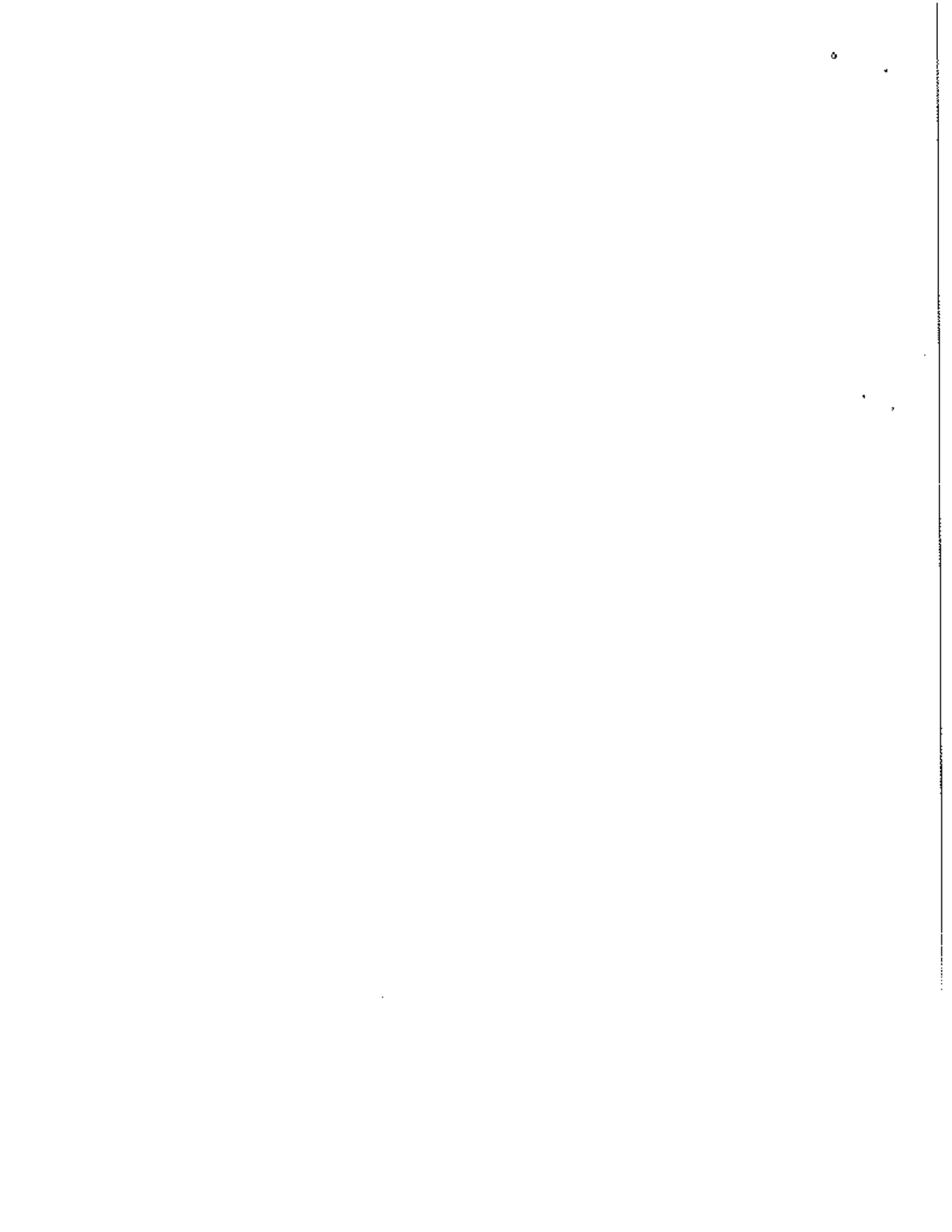
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Arthur Parker's speech was an attempt to clarify the operations of the SAI as he saw them.¹⁷ First, Parker said, though few in number the Society might legitimately speak for the Indians. People "very seldom as a body speak for themselves. It is the interested few who do," he added. "If there had been such an organization fifty years ago, the interest of the Indians would have been advanced one hundred years today. It is for us to choose and not the white man whether we shall live on the reservation, and it is for us to continue to pursue the paths of wisdom and to improve upon the knowledge we have gained through our association with the ruling race."

Parker next took up the question of why the Society did not hold its conferences on reservations, as Francis LaFlesche had previously suggested. The white race, Parker said, needed to be enlightened. Indian councils held earlier had brought no results. "The newspaper people were not able to understand what they wanted. The people need not only to express themselves, but to get publicity." Meeting in a distant city, Parker continued, developed "one of the great qualities which is inherent and necessary to leadership—that of sacrifice." In addition, "on any one reservation an excess of local delegates could swamp the conference and create an unbalanced condition of organization." Finally, "the Indian does not need to be taught as much as the white race needs to be awakened to our needs."

However, Parker warned, the organization's value did "not lie in our ability to kick. . . . If we would win recognition, when we complain of a wrong we should at the same time offer a sane suggestion for a better condition, if possible, to replace it. . . . I believe in the long run fair play and a square deal will come if the American people are once awakened, but we cannot get a square deal unless we tell them how to give it to us and then work to get it."

Parker was determined that the SAI should be run by Indians. He intervened several times during the conference when it seemed that associates might be given the privileges of active members. When Denison Wheelock, a Wisconsin Oneida and Carlisle graduate, suggested that the platform committee be composed of three active and three associate members, Parker successfully opposed this on the ground that "if we allow our associate members to formulate our platform, then we are no longer primarily an Indian Society giving vent to Indian ideas."¹⁸ When Judge Hughes of Columbus took the floor to comment on a speech



against former Commissioner Robert Valentine. "It was Mr. Abbott who broke up my campaign for protecting the Indians from peyote which had become so successful that its use had been practically annihilated. The headquarters of the peyote cult was in Nebraska and the politicians wanted to control the Indian vote in that state," Johnson charged. Whether or not he knew it, several important leaders of the Nebraska peyote cult were present in his audience.

Johnson concluded this oration with a ringing tribute to "the Indian," from whom whites had much to learn, including "his sense of truthfulness," "sense of logic," "instinct for poetry and art," and above all, "his reverence for sacred things."

On the motion of Carlos Montezuma, Acting Commissioner Abbott, whom Johnson had so bitterly attacked, was also invited to speak. Abbott's remarks were made during a discussion of the government subsidy to Hampton, which had recently been withdrawn by congressional action. Abbott strongly supported the reinstatement of the Hampton subsidy. However, he added that "Indians ought to push for a position to get Indian children into public schools." But Indian school attendance would raise certain problems, Abbott declared with unerring tactlessness: "It has come down to this, a question of your home conditions. I know there is no selfish prejudice, so far as I am able to find it. They claim I took my girl where they can't bring an Indian boy or girl into. Now, the only prejudice in that school, the only reason why the Indian children on the reservation do not attend the public school, is because their home conditions are such that the children are not as clean as the average white children. . . . At some places, the home conditions are better than the home conditions of the white children. Clearly there is no prejudice."²⁴

At this, Dennison Wheelock and Frederick E. Parker, Arthur Parker's father, rose to defend Indian cleanliness. Rosa LaFlesche favored public schools for Indian children but cited instances in her own experience in attending public school where the Indian children's habits were not the same as the white children's due to their home environment. Charles Keeler of Wyoming strongly advocated reservation day schools where "Indian children will learn more" from an Indian teacher, and attacked reservation boarding schools as "the curse of the United States." Whereupon Sherman Coolidge defended government boarding schools. Carlos Montezuma declared that in Chicago public schools where there were

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It was the nomination of Charles Daganett as second vice-president on membership which provoked the debate; for Daganett occupied the most senior position held by an Indian in the Bureau.²⁷ Daganett strongly defended the role of Indian Bureau employees in the Society and their right to participate. "If the Society declares itself against Indians in the Indian Service, it is going to drive a good many Indians from the Society and cause them to lose interest. There are hundreds of progressive honest men and women in that service who are loyal to their race first of all," he asserted.

Daganett's nomination was strongly supported by Thomas L. Sloan. Before the nomination was considered further, a vote was taken on the question of whether employees of the Bureau might be officers of the Society. The result was 30 for, 31 against. At this point Parker intervened, pointing out that "there were sixty votes reported from over 150 who were asked to vote. The vote is not conclusive evidence since it is not complete, some members here not voting; this by way of explanation." Nevertheless, Daganett was then elected second vice-president by a much smaller vote of 16 to 9, and in this case no question was raised as to whether the vote was representative. Obviously the active members were deeply divided on the general question, and Daganett himself did not have much support. Whether Daganett's unpopularity was due to his position in the Bureau, or to other causes, is impossible to determine. The remaining officers chosen were Dennison Wheelock as vice-president on legislation and Laura Cornelius Kellogg as vice-president on education. Both were Oneidas.²⁸

The most notable absentee from the convention was Charles Eastman. For some years Eastman, after his initial activity, took little hand in the affairs of the Society, though he remained a member. Evidently he did not believe that the organization was sufficiently representative, for he urged that it be transformed into an elected intertribal body, an Indian congress of official tribal delegates.²⁹

The conference adopted a platform which dealt with six major areas: status, the relationship of Indians to the Bureau, the investigation of complaints, education, health, and American Indian Day.³⁰

First, the Society demanded a clarification of Indian status through the creation of an Indian Code Commission which would codify Indian law and set forth clearly "the privileges and disabilities of the several

southward as it affirmed its sympathy "with our blood brothers, the struggling peons of Mexico, and we express our profound sense of gratitude to the President of the United States for his attitude on the Mexican situation. The cause of the Mexican Indian is our cause. They are attempting by force of arms, we by force of public opinion, to obtain equality before the law."

The conference also commended "much of the good that has been accomplished by the present administration of the Indian Bureau" and praised Commissioner Cato Sells, while adding that "great needs" were not yet relieved on the reservations and "great fundamental changes" were necessary in national legislation, policies, and administration. Whether Carlos Montezuma, who was present, openly attacked this resolution cannot be determined from the truncated account printed in the *Journal*. Also adopted was a measure for "assistant secretaries to represent each considerable tribe in each state" who would "serve in a measure as field agents, with the special object of enlisting new members in the Society." This decision, however, does not seem to have been implemented.

To advance its legislative program, the conference sought a meeting with President Wilson to place directly before him a memorial on Indian affairs. Dennison Wheelock was made chairman of the memorial committee which included Professor McKenzie, Henry Roe Cloud, Hiram Chase, and William J. Kershaw, plus the executive committee.

All incumbent officers were reelected, including several who did not attend. Charles Daganett had resigned in September because he believed that his activity on behalf of the Society was being misconstrued as evidence of Indian Bureau domination. Apparently the Society chose to disregard this abdication. Arthur Parker also sat out the Madison conference. He gave his reasons in a letter replying to a congratulatory message at his election:

"It is an honor that I did not anticipate to have been called again to serve in the capacity of general secretary. The work during the past year has been extremely arduous and required practically all of my time. With such heavy responsibility and only slight response and encouragement from the vast body of the membership, I almost felt that my administration was not to the liking of the Society. Mr. Daganett, myself and a few others, including of course, our good president, have shared very largely in the financial responsibilities. My personal feeling was that

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assisted with the Executive Committee. The Board of Directors of the Society of American Indians, Inc. was organized in 1908.

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domestic reform as an overriding concern of the American people, discussion of public issues became more heated. Public and private tempers grew more irascible and less tolerant. People feared plots and spies. The feverish climate encouraged drastic solutions, high-flown hopes, and quixotic crusades. The spirit of moderation languished.

The atmosphere of the country reinforced and accentuated a similar atmosphere within the Society of American Indians and the pessimism and bitterness of its president-editor, who was in such deep conflict as to what course the movement should take and so torn between differing conceptions of his present role in it.

Parker's conception of the Society had always contained a strong Iroquoian element transmuted into a Pan-Indian one. Like the old Iroquois Confederacy, the Society should provide a forum for discussion within a framework of agreed principles and procedures but it should not be permitted to change either principles or procedures in any drastic fashion or to act in ways which would seriously endanger them. Leadership should by right continue to be vested in those who adhered to the basic consensus and denied to those who did not. Those unwilling to continue to accept the consensus were thereby enemies who no longer merited the protection of the organization. Such a conception was of course by no means exclusively Iroquoian, but it seems to have been the one which largely guided Parker in the ways in which he sought to counter the efforts of the dissidents.

Parker moved against them on two fronts, the one public, the other private. In the first issue of the *American Indian Magazine* for 1917 Carlos Montezuma and Dennison Wheelock, who was currently in Montezuma's favor, were summarily dropped as "contributing editors." A new "Board of Managers" appeared on the masthead with Coolidge as President of the board, Mrs. Coolidge and Mrs. S. A. R. Brown, both of whom were white, replaced Wheelock and Montezuma.³ For the first time the direction of the Society's publication was not entirely in Indian hands.

At the same time Parker was maneuvering to scuttle the Society of which he was president in order to create a new organization subservient to the magazine. He wrote Coolidge³ that he was casting about for an acceptable alternative to "the real work we set out to perform" which was "a moral task which consisted of bringing about an awakening of the race from within. . . . Certainly we have demonstrated that it is

the grounds that it represented an interference with the constitutional right of the Indians to religious freedom. Those opposed to the order maintained that the secret ceremonials to which the objections were made could by no stretch of the imagination be considered immoral or indecent, but were, on the contrary, beautiful and moving rituals of a deeply religious character.

Thus by 1923, Indian governmental policy was under attack from both the older and newer reformers. Although many tribes were endangered by the fateful direction of administration policies, the Pueblos emerged as the symbol of the Indian and of the injustices forced upon him. The coherence and dignity of the Pueblo societies and the reverence of their ceremonials evoked widespread public sympathy and support which might have been less easily extended to tribes whose ways of life were not so colorful and appealing. In any case, public support for the Pueblos helped to focus attention on the values of tribal culture.

In the wake of intense pressure from so many and so diverse forces, the new Secretary of the Interior, Herbert W. Work, who had replaced Fall in 1923, invited an eminent group of Americans to review and advise on Indian policy. The group summoned to Washington by the Secretary consisted of some of the most distinguished men and women in public life. The Committee of One Hundred included Bernard M. Baruch, Nicholas Murray Butler, William Jennings Bryan, David Starr Jordan, General John J. Pershing, Mark Sullivan, Roy Lyman Wilbur, William Allen White, Oswald Garrison Villard, and many others. Invited also were the leaders of all the Indian defense organizations, including M. K. Sniffen and John Collier, a number of clergymen, and such old friends of the Indian as Fayette McKenzie.

Most of the Indian members of the Committee of One Hundred had been leaders of the Society of American Indians in its heyday: Henry Roe Cloud, Sherman Coolidge, Charles Eastman, Father Phillip Gordon, Arthur C. Parker, Thomas L. Sloan, and Dennison Wheelock. But only Sloan and Gordon were still active in the Society.

One of the more interesting aspects of the committee's composition was the strong representation of anthropologists, a factor both indicating and foreshadowing the increasing importance of anthropology in the formulation of Indian policy. There were nine anthropologists in the group, including such eminent men as Frederick W. Hodge, Alfred L. Kroeber, Warren C. Moorehead, and Clark Wissler.³⁷

The Committee of One Hundred, after a series of smaller preparatory

meetings, met on Decem-
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ington. Fayette McKenzie was selected to pre-
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meetings, met on December 12 and 13, 1923, in Washington. Arthur Parker was selected to preside over the committee sessions, while Fayette McKenzie was made chairman of the resolutions subcommittee.

Despite the wide variety of opinions represented, the Committee of One Hundred agreed on a series of resolutions. The group strongly urged better-quality Indian education, admission of Indians to public schools, and the provision of government scholarships in high schools and colleges for able Indian youth "with a view to fitting them for positions of native leadership." More adequate health and sanitation facilities were advocated, as was the opening of the Court of Claims to the tribes.

On the delicate question of Indian dances and ceremonies, the committee stated that "all lawful ancient ceremonies, rites and customs of the Indian race" might be cultivated as the "privilege and liberty of the Indians, not to be curtailed or infringed." But if the ceremonies were unlawful or contravened "the interests of morality" they should be "discontinued and discouraged." At the same time, the committee urged the encouragement of "the characteristic native arts and crafts."

The committee took up several other controversial matters. On the subject of peyote, the group recommended a National Research Council study. If peyote were thereby shown to be "fundamentally detrimental" to the health or morals of the users, appropriate congressional legislation should be enacted prohibiting its use, sale, and possession. Unfortunately, the study was never made.

The committee flatly recommended the suspension of all court proceedings under the "Executive Reservation Order" and the enactment of legislation to secure Indian title to their lands. This problem was later partially resolved by a ruling of the Attorney General that Fall's original order was illegal. On the question of the Pueblo lands, the committee urged "the most prompt and vigorous action by the Department of the Interior and the Department of Justice to hasten the rendering of decisions" of certain test cases affecting Pueblo land titles in the courts, and just compensation to the Pueblos and to settlers who had occupied the lands in good faith. The Bursum Bill, which had originally set off the controversy, had already been defeated.

The Committee of One Hundred did not take a position on Indian citizenship, evidently because it was feared that the immediate acquisition of citizenship would endanger the status of Indians protected by the federal government.³³

The results of the committee's deliberations showed that it was now

possible for persons of widely varying views, whether white or Indian, to arrive at reasonably satisfactory compromises on important aspects of Indian policy. The shaping of a new consensus had begun.

Commenting on the resolutions of the Committee of One Hundred, Fayette McKenzie wrote, "It would be interesting to compare the platform of this conference with the positions taken in earlier years by the Society of American Indians. In general it was a summarization of those positions but in more general terms and in places with less accuracy of statement or policy."⁴⁰ McKenzie was right. The reformulation of Indian policy began from a position very much like that of the old SAI. The reform Pan-Indianism of the preceding decade came to partial fruition in the twenties. But the process thus begun would result in a position quite different from its starting point.

Some of the old SAI leaders, like Parker, who helped to launch this reexamination of policy were themselves disillusioned with Pan-Indianism. Eastman's position had always been somewhat equivocal. Sloan and Gordon still labored ineffectively and unsuccessfully in Pan-Indian affairs. Sherman Coolidge had now become involved in a different brand of fraternal Pan-Indianism characteristic of the spirit of the twenties.

Of all the old SAI leaders, the man who most deeply affected the reformulation of Indian policy was probably Henry Roe Cloud. Roe Cloud, together with the Society's founder, Fayette McKenzie, was a member of the Brookings Institution research group which in 1926 began a massive and authoritative study of the administration of Indian affairs. The study was an outgrowth of the Committee of One Hundred's activities and was undertaken at the request of the Secretary of the Interior. The report was issued in 1928.⁴⁰ Known as the Meriam Report after its chief, Lewis Meriam, the study helped to lay the groundwork for the reform administration of Commissioner Charles Rhoads and Assistant Commissioner J. Henry Scattergood under President Hoover, as well as for the Indian New Deal under the commissionership of John Collier.

How radically the viewpoint of informed persons interested in Indian affairs had changed was demonstrated in a debate and symposium which appeared in the pages of *Forum* magazine in the spring of 1924. Two opposing articles on the Indian question were published, one by Flora Warren Seymour, upholding the early Dawes Act perspective in uncompromising fashion, and the other, by Mary Austin, strongly favoring

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2. The text of the provisional constitution is not available. The amended constitution as adopted by the 1912 conference, together with the debate on its adoption, is included in the 1912 conference proceedings, *Quarterly Journal*, I, 2 (1913). The text of the constitution is on pp. 223-29, and the debate on pp. 211-12, 146-49. I have assumed that the executive committee's constitution and the constitution as adopted by the next conference are the same except for the minor changes noted in the 1912 proceedings.

3. For membership lists, see *First Proceedings*, pp. 180-82.

4. Arthur C. Parker to Albert Hensley, April 2, 1912, Parker Papers, NYSM.

5. Arthur C. Parker to Joseph Keppler, June 4, 1912, Keppler Papers, MATL.

6. The text of Gladden's speech is carried in the *Quarterly Journal*, I, 1 (1913), 13-19.

7. *Ibid.*, 18.

8. See *ibid.*, I, 2 (1913), 110-25, for Hill's speech.

9. *Ibid.*, 125.

10. *Ibid.*, 127.

11. *Ibid.*, 134-35.

12. *Ibid.*, 135.

13. *Ibid.*, 136.

14. *Ibid.*, 138.

15. *Ibid.*, 139.

16. The text of Roe Cloud's speech is in *ibid.*, 149-55.

17. *Ibid.*, 140-44.

18. *Ibid.*, 126.

19. *Ibid.*, 171.

20. *Ibid.*, 135-36.

21. *Ibid.*, 197-204.

22. This was probably a reference to the work of Charles Dagnanell of the Indian Bureau in getting off-reservation jobs for Indians.

23. *Quarterly Journal*, I, 2 (1913), 204-208.

24. *Ibid.*, 177-81, contains Abbott's remarks and the discussion that followed.

25. *Ibid.*, 183-85.

26. *Ibid.*, 218.

27. See *ibid.*, 220-21, for the debate over Dagnanell. It is difficult to evaluate Parker's estimate of "over 150" presumably active members present. The list of active members at the conference (45) given in the *Journal* is obviously incomplete, since more than this number voted on the question. The debate on this issue is not fully reported in the *Journal*.

28. In addition, an advisory board to perform "purely advisory" functions was elected with Henry Roe Cloud as chairman. A number of its members were graduates of Carlisle or Hampton or were at that time associated with these schools. The members, in addition to Roe Cloud, were: John M. Oskison, Mrs. Emma D. Goulette, Mrs. Marie L. Baldwin, Howard E. Gansworth, Mrs. Rosa B. LaFlesche, Dr. Roland Nichols, Mrs. Angela-Decora Dietz, Horton G. Elm, the Reverend Joseph K. Griffin, the Reverend Asa R. Hill, Charles D. Doxon, Oliver Lamere, Michael Wolfe, and the Honorable Charles B. Carter. See *Quarterly Journal*, I, 2 (1913), 222. Although its functions were honorary, the composition of the advisory board's membership throughout SAP's history indicates the elements in Indian life associated with the organization.

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of history University. Longhouse: accompanying an *Culture: Homespan* (1965). She is a biology and anthropology science education at the University of Oklahoma.

Kansas City, organized in 1921. It was a nonpolitical, nonreligious organization composed of about 250 Indians living in the city. The group encouraged Indians to leave the reservation and migrate to the city. In 1921 and 1922, Madison was also associate editor of the *American Indian Teepee* and its successor, *American Indian Teepee*, II, 4 (1921-22), and *American Indian Advocate*, III, 1 (1922).

34. Accounts of the conference are carried in the September 23, 25, and 27-30 issues of the *Chicago Tribune*, 1923. The stationery of convention lists sponsors and committees. See Anne Fitzgerald to Arthur C. Parker, August 25, 1923, Parker Papers, NYSM.

35. See *Indian Rights Association 39th Annual Report*, pp. 41-44, and 40th *Annual Report*, pp. 15-19, for an account of the Fall controversy.

36. *IRA 41st Annual Report*, pp. 26-27.

37. This number includes archaeologists. It also includes men like George Heye, the founder of the Museum of the American Indian. Franz Boas was not invited, though he was one of the most important anthropologists in America. The membership of the committee is given in Herbert W. Work, *Indian Policies* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1924), which contains an account of the meeting.

38. See Parker's explanatory letter in *IRA 41st Annual Report*, pp. 45-46.

39. *Southern Workman*, LIII, 3 (1924), 966-99.

40. Lewis Meriam, *The Problem of Indian Administration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1928).

41. The debate between Mrs. Seymour and Miss Austin is carried in *Forum*, LXXI, 3 (1924), 273-88, while letters commenting on it are in LXXI, 4, 551-58; LXXI, 9, 426; and LXXI, 10, 711-14.

42. M. K. Sniffen to Arthur C. Parker, March 10, 1925, Parker Papers, NYSM.

43. Jennings C. Wise, *The Red Man in the New World Drama* (Washington, D.C.: W. P. Roberts, 1931), p. 574.

44. I am indebted for this information to the anthropologist Donald Collier, John Collier's son. The *American Indian Defense Committee Bulletin* also occasionally carried news of the National Council.

45. *Indian Newsletter*, No. 5, July 10, 1930.

9—INDIANS IN THE CITIES

1. *Teepee*, *teepee*, and *tipi* were used interchangeably as spellings. To avoid confusion, *teepee* is used in this chapter.

2. The purpose and rules of the Order are set forth in a mimeographed document entitled "Teepee Order of America founded by Red Fox James—Blackfoot Indian" (n.d. but probably 1915), Parker Papers, NYSM.

3. Besides the names mentioned here, he also called himself the Reverend Barnabas Skiuhushu and the Reverend Dr. Barnabas, Ph.D., Arch-Herio-Monk. See, for example, a letter using the latter signature in the *American Indian Magazine* (Oklahoma), V, 3 (1931), 4. According to St. James, "Barnabas" was the name by which he was "known by the members" of "The Holy Orthodox Eastern Church under the Seven Ecumenical Council," in flyer, "Dr. Skiuhushu—Ethnologist" (n.d. but post-1930), Museum of the American Indian Library. To minimize confusion, he will be referred to hereafter as St. James.

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