

WE HAVE  
THE RIGHT  
TO EXIST

A Translation of Aboriginal Indigenous Thought

The first book ever published from an

*Ahnishinahbæð'jibway* Perspective

by

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## CHAPTER IV

## INDIAN TREATIES

*Indian* is an English-language word, which came through the Late Latin, Latin, and Greek languages, and originally referred to the River Indus; it comes from the same roots as the word Indo-European.<sup>1</sup> There is also a folk etymology which is gaining currency: the word *Indian* came from the Spanish, *Con Dios*, referring to the Judeo-Christian God. The word Indian is not indigenous to this Continent, and does not refer to the autochthonous peoples of this Continent, who are linguistically invisible in the Western European languages. *Indian* is a euphemism for European subject person. The English word, Indian, is defined by the dictionary<sup>2</sup> as "a. Of or pertaining to India or the East Indians; also, noting, belonging to, or<sup>3</sup> pertaining to the race embracing the aborigines of America . . . " Indians and Aboriginal Indigenous people are not the same people. In the 1950's people admitted this, and many of the same individuals who now vehemently proclaim their Indian-ness, openly referred to themselves as "French Canadians." Neither the Indians, nor the Europeans who created the Indians, have a sense of their own identity. They do not know who they are in the same way that an Aboriginal Indigenous person does.

In the ancient religious philosophy of the *Ahnishinahbæó'jibway*, life is based on a circle: a circle of equals rather than a hierarchy, inter-connected spheres of life in harmony with each other. The Europeans' culture, like all hierarchies, is based on a power struggle. There was no patriarchy in our society, and there was no power struggle. There are no words for war, or peace, in the *Ahnishinahbæó'jibway* language. There is no word for God, no word for Devil, no word for Chip-pewa, and no word for Indian.<sup>4</sup> Our language and our culture

are inseparable from our all-encompassing religious philosophy; for us all time, all thought and all action, is within the non-violent context of Grandfather *Midé* and Grandmother Earth. Our land and our forests are, and have always been, an integral part of our religion, our philosophy and our very identity as *Ahnishinahbæó'jibway*.

One does not sell his/her identity; one does not sell one's relations, one's family burial ground, religion, nor philosophy. In the treaty-making process, the Euro-Americans dealt with *their* subject people, the Chippewa Indians whom they had created through colonization, mythology and genetic engineering. These people were not from here, and had no deep connections to this land. The United States Government expediently dealt with Métis and White Indians who had Western European values rather than Aboriginal Indigenous ones. As Indian Commissioner Thomas Morgan wrote in his 1892 Report to Congress, to suggest that mixed-bloods were not Indians in terms of their right to claim the property of the putative tribe:<sup>5</sup>

. . . would unsettle and endanger the titles to much of the lands that have been relinquished by Indian tribes and patented to citizens of the United States.

The *Ahnishinahbæó'jibway* had no part in any of the U.S. Government's Indian treaties or agreements.

## VARIOUS EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL CLAIMS

The European subject Métis who have been defined as Indian wards of the U.S. Government under trusteeship, have no legally defensible rights. Whatever rights they claim as Indians are administered through Chief Jim Crow and his squaw, A-par-theid. The United States' dealings with their Indians, in treaties and subsequent documents called Agreements, did not relate to the European concepts of eminent domain, consummated national title, and imperial dominion. This cornerstone of the relationship between colonial nations and the territory which was presumed to comprise them (for the sake of brevity referred to as eminent

## CHAPTER V

## INDIAN RESERVATIONS

The United States Government used the authority claimed under the U.S. Constitution and through their Indian treaties to create Indian reservations. The one hundred and two Indian reservations established by the United States at the close of the treaty-making era are the "Indian Country"<sup>1</sup> upon which the Federal instrumentalities of Indian Tribal Governments claim Sovereignty and a "unique"<sup>2</sup> relationship with the U.S. Government.

The Indian reservations have become media showcases in which whatever images of Indians are in vogue at the time, are displayed by the Euro-Indians and Mérits. Until recently, these were usually the vanquished savage of the cowboy and Indian movies, the "End of the Trail" motif still used by the Indians, or the "lazy Indian," "drunken Indian," bashable welfare mother stereotypes. These projected identities were personified by the Euro-Americans' Indians, and then used by Western European civilization to justify the theft of Aboriginal Indigenous peoples land and resources.<sup>3</sup> Since about 1989, the prevailing negative portrayal of Indians in the media has changed. Some of the surviving Aboriginal Indigenous people have gained access to a few English-language media in the past few years, and so many of the images which the mainstream Euro-Americans portray of their Indians have changed to protect their Indian mythology. On many surfaces visible to the general public, the Indian reservations have become living museums promoting the Indians' Federally-controlled arts and crafts,<sup>4</sup> picturesque Indian dances,<sup>5</sup> teepees and tom-toms and other quaint pseudo-historical aspects of the hierarchical Lislakh's American Indian culture. What is

being publicized is not Aboriginal Indigenous culture—and it is not intended to provide a viable economic base for either the Indians or the Aboriginal Indigenous people on the Reservations.

Recently, Indian gaming has been heavily promoted in the media as an "important economic development tool,"<sup>6</sup> touted by the Euro-Indians who run the casinos through the I.R.A. Tribal Councils as the "new buffalo." The focus in the media has oscillated between polarities: casinos providing jobs and income for the Indian [Tribal Councils] and fraud, corruption and possibly organized criminal involvement<sup>8</sup> in the Indian casinos. The institutional structure of so-called Indian gaming is not addressed: the Indian casinos are operated under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of the Interior, through the federal structure of the I.R.A. Tribal Councils under negotiated "Government to Government" agreements with the State, by White management corporations such as Grand Casinos.<sup>9</sup> The only relationship which the *Ah'nishinabwé'jibway* have to the Indian casinos is that they are on our land. If there are any profits derived from these casinos, they do not reach the Aboriginal Indigenous people.

The mainstream media also fosters the illusion that Indians are Aboriginal Indigenous people by extensive coverage of Indian "settlements" on such matters as spearfishing and Indian allotments.<sup>10</sup> These issues are presented by both the Euro-Indians and the White media in a tone which builds a reservoir of potential White backlash.<sup>11</sup>

Indians are defined as wards of the U.S. Government, under Federal Trusteeship.<sup>12</sup> The fee-simple title to so-called Indian land is held by the United States as trustee, and the eminent domain claimed by the United States. Most Indian treaties included a clause in which the presumed Indian rights to the land were ceded to the United States. The grounds on which Indians claim to be "sovereign nations," when they own neither land nor their own identity, is a unique mystery. The Indian identity traps people into an abusive relationship with the United States.

## STARVATION INTO SUBMISSION

"Indian Reservation" is a code word for concentration camp. The Indian policy of the United States, during the 1870's and early 1880's, was the concentration of both Métis and Aboriginal Indigenous people into Reservations, enforced by a kill-on-sight policy outside of the concentration camps, and accompanied by social engineering within what were euphemistically called Reservation communities. This was the implementation of President Grant's peace policy:<sup>13</sup>

Indians who did not go willingly to the reservations would be either driven there by force or exterminated in the process. Once on the reservation, the Christian agents and teachers could help them assimilate the white man's culture.

For the Aboriginal Indigenous people, the killing fields were on the Reservations, as well as beyond the boundaries drawn by the United States Government. At least 75% of my relatives, the *Ahnishinahbæōjibway* alive in 1870 at Red Lake, had been killed by 1885. As Indian Superintendent A.B. Meacham reported to Acting Superintendent of Indian Affairs H.R. Clum in 1871:<sup>14</sup>

Actual experience demonstrates the impracticability of 'consolidating' tribes of Indians, although in theory it looks well; and, if we seek to gratify the wishes of heartless white men, it can be made a complete success, as the weaker tribes are exterminated by the stronger, despite all efforts of agents to protect them. No people are more ambitious for power, nor exercise it with more tyranny, than do *Indians*. Under the present humane policy of the Government, the civilization of Indians is possible. To accomplish it, however, requires . . . men who are thoroughly Christianized, . . . fully comprehending the whole economy of our Government; fired with ambition to do good by elevating a fast-decaying race to the plane of citizenship, and supported with the assurance that their term of office entirely depends on faithfully achieved success. . . . In this way will be found the only approach to successfully combat and supplant their old superstitious ideas and practices of savage religion, medicine, marriage, merchandise of women [sic], and the various inborn

prejudices against our laws, usages, and customs. Then, too, another great hindering cause is the existence of chieftainship and hereditary honors.

The destruction of *Ahnishinahbæōjibway* rice beds by damming waterways, cutting of forests to destroy both permacultural food-plants and game habitat, the slaughter of the buffalo herds were all part of the Euro-American policy of occupation, a continuation of the violent strategy of U.S. colonists' salting the fields and burning the crops of the Aboriginal Indigenous peoples of the East Coast. The Friends of the Indians at the Lake Mohonk Conference in 1890 explicitly discussed "starvation into submission."<sup>15</sup>

Senator Dawes: Do you know that every agent is authorized by law to change the rations into agricultural implements and seeds? . . .

Question: If the rations were stopped, what would they do?  
Mr. Riggs: A great many would starve. . . .

Question: If the rations were stopped, the people would starve, you say. If they can not be taught until they starve, what would you do?  
Mr. Riggs: I fear we should practically have to starve them until we got them taught.

Question: Would it be an advantage to the agent to abandon the ration system?  
Mr. Riggs: I think it would be an advantage to him to stop giving regular rations. That is, he would be free. . . .

Question: Will Mr. Riggs repeat the Lord's Prayer in Dakota?  
Mr. Riggs did so.

Question: Has the time come to stop issuing rations to the Dakota Indians?  
Mr. Riggs: I think not for the full stopping, but for a reduction of it.

Question: If the starving process were tried, would not the people of the United States speedily send help?  
Mr. Riggs: I think they would.

Question: If the plan of stopping rations were adopted, would it not be better to carry out the plan of sub-issue of rations, so that those who are trying to farm land would not be obliged to

By Exception 41, the Red Lake Band does not contend that the Nelson Act is void.

The legal brief of this case also observes that if it were required:

... that a statute or treaties, in and of itself, may not be less than fair and honorable... a host of treaties of cession would be void *ab initio*.

The White man has written volumes and volumes of history, treaties and agreements, laws, and bureaucratic regulations for the Indians, and has tried to include the Aboriginal Indigenous peoples under the same fabricated identity as Indians. The *Ahishinahbæ'jibway* are not, and have never been, Indians.

#### THE GENERAL ALLOTMENT ACT

The General Allotment Act, sponsored by the same Senator Dawes who was advocating genocide at the Lake Mohonk Conference, was passed by the United States Congress on February 8, 1887. This Act of Congress followed the pattern of previous piecemeal allotment clauses in various Indian treaties and agreements. The provisions of the Dawes Allotment Act include "allotment in severalty," meaning that the land which had been held jointly by Aboriginal Indigenous people would, under the alleged eminent domain of the United States (claimed under Roman imperial law), be broken up into allotments, individual land-holdings of 180 acres or less, issued to Indians by the United States Government. The land designated by the White man as "surplus land" on the reservations was opened to White settlement, with some of the income from the sale of this land by the U.S. to be used for what U.S. policy-makers described as the civilization of Indians, including kidnapping Aboriginal Indigenous children from their homes into the boarding schools.

The B.I.A.'s interpretation of the allotment act also established "Courts of Indian Offenses," which are described in a later chapter. The intention behind allotment was twofold: to destroy Aboriginal Indigenous peoples' culture, communities, and

government; and to steal land and resources. The rules under which allotment was carried out were written so that within three generations the land would be gone. The United States Government described allotment:<sup>41</sup>

Through the allotment system, more than 80% of the land value belonging to all the Indians [sic] has been taken away from them; more than 85% of the land value of all the allotted Indians has been taken away.

And the allotment system, working down through the partitionment or sale of the land of deceased allottees, mathematically insures and practically requires that the remaining Indian allotted lands shall pass to whites. *The allotment act contemplates total landlessness for the Indians of the third generation of each allotted tribe.*

#### ALLOTMENT AND BLOOD QUANTUM

The Indian Agents determined who was eligible for allotment on the Reservations. We have researched who was allotted at White Earth Reservation in Minnesota, since a great many Chipewya Indians from White Earth ended up at Red Lake after their allotments were alienated. By 1917, 5,165 people had been allotted at White Earth; with more than three thousand additional allotments issued principally to "mixed bloods."<sup>42</sup> Of these people, about 925 were called full blooded Indians by Dr. Ales Hrdlicka,<sup>43</sup> the anthropologist from the Smithsonian Institute who invented the Bering Strait Theory and boiled up visiting Inuits for their skeletons.

Full blooded Indian, however, does not mean Aboriginal Indigenous person. The list of "Hinton Full Bloods, examined by Doctor Hrdlicka"<sup>44</sup> includes not only Méts people who were categorized as full bloods for political reasons,<sup>45</sup> descendants of Indian Agents, and people who became full bloods because they were helping with the blood-quantum determination process, but also people whose ancestry was Moorish or Sub-Saharan African. The Hinton Roll also includes women who had married non-Aboriginal men, and thus had lost their *Ahishinahbæ'jibway* *Dodems*. The vast majority of White Earth allottees were

either Métis people, or other Lislakhs. Ignatia Broker, a Métis storyteller and historian from White Earth, told us about the anthropologists coming to the boarding school, measuring the childrens' heads, and determining what subsequently had legal status as "degree of Indian blood" by looking at blood samples on microscope slides. "Full brothers and sisters had different blood quantum," she said. The oral history describes Indian enrollments being sold to Whites for a few dollars. Beyond stealing land by allotment to dubiously qualified individuals, the packing of the rolls diluted what little remained of the White Earth *Ahnishinahbæo'jibway* community, to the vanishing point.<sup>46</sup>

#### THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S PHILOSOPHY OF ALLOTMENT

President Theodore Roosevelt endorsed Machiavelli's prescription of keeping non-hierarchical peoples "powerless and dispersed." In his message to Congress, December 8, 1901, President Roosevelt said:<sup>47</sup>

In my judgement the time has arrived when we should definitely make up our minds to recognize the Indian as an individual and not as a member of a tribe. The General Allotment Act is a mighty pulverizing machine to break up the tribal mass. It acts directly upon the family and the individual. Under its provisions some sixty thousand Indians have already become citizens of the United States. We should now break up the tribal funds, doing for them what allotment does for the tribal lands; that is, they should be divided into individual holdings.

Roosevelt also used executive orders to appropriate Reservation lands into the National Forest system. Look at a map which includes both Indian Reservations and National Forests.

#### ALLOTMENT AT RED LAKE

The *Ahnishinahbæo'jibway* community of Red Lake refused allotment. The United States Congress Act of January 14, 1889 specifically provided that *any* Chippewa Indian in Minnesota could be allotted at Red Lake.<sup>48</sup> Métis people from Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin picked out prospective allotments,

along the lakeshore, in prime pinelands, and on proposed farmland. The book listing these proposed allotments at Red Lake was cataloged as missing by the National Archives in 1992, but the older *Ahnishinahbæo'jibway* still know where the immigrants intended to be allotted.<sup>49</sup>

*Ahnishinahbæo'jibway* land is held jointly, through the *Miâé*, and it is against our Grandfather religion to sell Grandmother Earth. We were adamantly opposed to allotment, and the intended devastation of Aboriginal Indigenous communities on other reservations through allotment was becoming apparent. My grandfather's brother, Om-be-ge-shig, acted on the consensus of the *Ahnishinahbæo'jibway* community, when at a meeting between the B.I.A. and the Métis who were contemplating allotment, he walked up to where the leaders of the meeting were discussing their proposal. He took his knife and plunged it into the stack of papers they had on the table. "This," he said to the White and Métis people there, "is what will happen to you if you allot our land." Red Lake is one of only two reservations in the United States which was never allotted (the other is Warm Springs, Oregon). The United States Curtis Act of 1898 unilaterally withdrew recognition from any Tribal Governments which had refused allotment.

#### RESERVATION ECONOMICS

The underlying philosophy of the United States Government's relationship to their Indians is underscored by the economic system fostered by the U.S. on the Red Lake Indian Reservation, which is based on resource exploitation. According to a 1936 review of the "Industrial Development" at Red Lake:<sup>50</sup>

Lumbering and fishing are the principal industries of the Red Lake Indians, the greater part of their income being derived from the activities attendant to the manufacture of lumber from the tree to the finished board, and from the sale of fish. A few of the Indians derive a substantial [sic] income from the sale of berries, wild rice, maple sugar, and snakeroot, as well as the sale of wild hay, although hay has not been much in demand the last two

years.

The sawmill, which was constructed in 1925, was not in operation in 1932, 1933, 1934, and 1935, for the production of lumber, due to lack of marketing facilities and the overstocked condition of the lumberyards. However, the planing mill, box factory and power plant were operated during the mill shut down.

During the period July 1, 1936, to June 30, 1937, the sawmill operation, including logging camp, paid to the Indians a total of \$52,658.91. In addition to the foregoing, \$2,586.04 was paid to Indians on vouchers for miscellaneous services rendered at the sawmill, such as fuel wood, hauling, etc., making the total amount of proceeds to Indians from sawmill activities approximately \$55,250.00. For the period July 1, 1937, to June 30, 1938, the sawmill operation, including logging camp, Indian contract logging and miscellaneous services, paid the Indians \$92,849.07.

On June 30, 1934, the lumber inventory at the Red Lake Indian Sawmill was 10,521,585 board feet, or about twice the average amount of lumber produced annually during the preceding years when the sawmill was in operation. On June 30, 1936, the lumber inventory amounted to 7,792,869 board feet, much of this inventory being of the lower grades and lumber that had deteriorated through stain and rot. On June 30, 1936, the lumber inventory was valued at \$51,417.88, and during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1937, 3,166,707 board feet of logs were converted into 3,414,460 board feet of lumber....

The United States Government continues to exploit the *Ahnishinahbæō'jibway* forests. Truckload after truckload of mostly pulpwood presently goes out of the Reservation, profiting White-owned corporations and yielding a kickback to White Indian timber brokers. It was calculated that in the last thirty years enough lumber had been cut at Red Lake to go around the world twice. There has been no lasting economic development to show for this, although large areas of forest have been demolished, left as clear-cut littered with piles of slash.

Complementing the resource-extraction economics promoted by the United States Government is an unemployment rate on the Reservation which ranges between 50% and 90%, depending

on who is counted as employable and the definition of "employed," and an economic system based on transfer payments: government employment and welfare. Many of the Métis and White Indians have developed a co-dependent relationship with the government based on welfare. Augmented by the Indian programs available to Indian families, some manage a reasonably comfortable existence on a combination of B.I.A. welfare and county payments. The *Ahnishinahbæō'jibway* have a much more difficult time getting welfare, even in cases of genuine need; state and federal welfare regulations are circumvented by throwing these peoples' applications in the trash as soon as they leave the Agency building. The larger problem is not only the economic hardship sustained by the Aboriginal Indigenous people, but that the Reservation has a high percentage of Métis and Euro-Indian welfare recipients. Their use of welfare is used to justify other so-called Social Services Programs, which are shielded from scrutiny both under the cloak of so-called "Indian Sovereignty," and by fallaciously categorizing *Ahnishinahbæō'jibway* as "Indians" and obscuring what is happening to a minority of Aboriginal Indigenous people obscured in the mass of total Indian statistics. Some of the Social Services programs at Red Lake, as they are applied to the *Ahnishinahbæō'jibway*, are in current violation of the International Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. Sustainable and permaculturally-healing economic development, owned by the *Ahnishinahbæō'jibway*, the *Dodems*, is needed.

#### ABORIGINAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

I have spent my life hearing "hey, Chief," and "Indian!" I am neither one of these; what the Lislakhs have created is not my identity. Making it rain, living in a teepee, tomahawks, tom-toms, woo-woo-war-whoops and smoke signals are all Hollywood stereotypes, subsidized as Indian culture by the U.S. Government, and promoted by both the Whites and their Indians—and are as obsolete as Amos and Andy. These stereotypes have nothing to do with the reality of Aboriginal