AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURE AND RESEARCH JOURNAL 20:2 (1996) 155–172

COMMENTARY

Debating the Origins of Democracy: Overview of an Annotated Bibliography

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Since the early 1990s, I have kept a running bibliography of commentary on assertions that the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and other Native American confederacies helped shape ideas of democracy in the early United States and Europe. By late 1995, the bibliography had reached 120 tightly packed pages, roughly 550 items from more than 130 books, as well as newspaper articles and book reviews numbering in the hundreds, academic journals, films, speeches, documentaries, and other sources.

The bibliography was assembled with the help of friends (especially John Kahionhes Fadden and Donald Grinde), searches of libraries and bookstores, and personal involvement in various skirmishes of the debate. The number of references exploded during 1995, in large part because I began to use computer-aided searches of databases, such as LEXIS, which allows nearly instant access (using a legal-style key-word system) to most of the major newspapers in the United States, Canada, and England.

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What emerged from these databases fascinated and intrigued me. Heretofore, I had been acquainted with the spread of the idea on a more personal level, especially through debates in academia that have been chronicled with Donald A. Grinde, Jr. in *Akwe:kon Journal* and *the American Indian Culture and Research Journal*. I was watching the idea expand in popular consciousness, as a grand cacophony of diverse voices debated the type of history with which we will enter a new century (on the Christian calendar, at least).

I watched as the idea become part of the written record in several academic fields, as well as in many journals of popular discourse. Everyone—from Tom Hayden to Patrick Buchanan—seemed to have taken a stand on what had become a very hotly contested issue. At the same time that the idea became a horror story of political correctness to many conservative commentators, it also played a role in Canadian debates over a new constitution. I found it being applied to contemporary problems by a wide range of thinking people, from historians, to lawyers and judges, to political scientists, artists, musicians, and engineers.

Although most of the debate has occurred since 1987 (when Cornell University held its watershed conference on the issue), I also found some much older references. President John F. Kennedy advocated Iroquois influence on Benjamin Franklin; in 1919 Charles Eastman, the Lakota Sioux author, made the case for Native American shaping of democratic thought.

What follows is a brief anecdotal tour of some of the more interesting entries in the bibliography. I have steered clear, for the most part, of the familiar academic players on both sides, concentrating on the spread of the idea to unanticipated places, by unexpected people.

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In 1919, at the depth of a period that some commentators called "the era of the vanishing race," Lakota Sioux author Charles Eastman raised the "influence" issue in a speech to an audience of Native American leaders. Eastman said, in part, "We Indians laid the foundation of freedom and equality long before any Europeans came and took it up, but they do not give us credit.... We were [of] that character, that original American character.... We must keep our heads and our hearts together, [and] keep our old characteristics that we have contributed to this country—those contributions which have been put into the Constitution of the United States itself."[1]

In 1961, William Brandon *published The American Heritage Book of Indians,* which includes an introduction by President John F. Kennedy, in which he stated that "the League of the Iroquois inspired Benjamin Franklin to copy it in planning the federation of States." The coffee table version of the same book, with copious artwork, in a large format, also includes the Kennedy assertion that Franklin used the Iroquois League as a model of American confederation, as well as observations by Brandon on the appeal of liberty in the European and colonial image of American Indians. Brandon describes the Iroquois League and its formation and notes its use by Frederich Engels *in The Origin of Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884). Brandon also notes Native American notions of liberty in the Tammany Society and the philosophy of Rousseau.[2]

President Bill Clinton's admiration of John F. Kennedy is well known. One subject on which both agree is that American Indians had a role in shaping democracy. On 29 April 1994, Clinton related Native American concepts of democracy to the U.S. Constitution in a speech before several hundred tribal leaders at the White House: "So much of who we are today comes from who you have been for a long time. Long before others came to these shores there were powerful and sophisticated cultures and societies here—yours. Because of your ancestors, democracy existed here long before the Constitution was drafted and ratified."[3]

Before the "influence" idea became widely popular, it was part of the script for "Night of the First Americans," a stage play that was performed 4 March 1982 at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. The script was written by Choctaw filmmaker Phil Lucas and included performances by a number of well-known Indian and non-Indian actors and artists, including Lorne Greene, Will Sampson, Jonathan Winters, Vincent Price, Paul Ortega, Ironeyes Cody, Martin Sheen, Dennis Weaver, Loretta Lynn, Dick Cavett, Hoyt Axton, Will Rogers, Jr., Kevin Locke, and Wayne Newton. The performance contained a substantial segment outlining the Iroquois role in the formulation of U.S. democracy.

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The idea of Iroquois influence on the development of democracy has drawn a large number of conservative critics who have turned the idea into a purported horror story of what they believe can be

wrought by multiculturalism and "political correctness." Many of these critics reduce the assertion to a kind of shorthand (for example, by denying that the founders "copied" the "Constitution" from the Iroquois), with little or no reference to the fact that the issue has engaged a scholarly debate. Judging from their writings, few of the conservative critics seem to realize that a number of books and articles have been written on the subject. Rather, these critics breeze in and out of the subject as if it were cocktail party conversation.

In his *Forbes* column "Keeping Up," Daniel Seligman takes aim at "political correctness," describing it as "a movement driven by truly totalitarian impulses, [which] is embodied in thought police who endlessly endeavor to suppress data. . . ." Seligman then hauls the issue of Iroquois influence on the Constitution out as his primary exhibit of "politically correct" thought, linking it to a general decline in American educational levels. He calls assertions of influence "fatuous."[4]

Like a number of his ideological bedfellows, Seligman quoted Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s *The Disuniting of America* (1992), a short polemic turned out quickly by a liberal historian whom conservative reviewers embraced fervently. In *The Disuniting of America,* Schlesinger took issue with "history for self-esteem," or "feel-good history," by which, he said, self-interested minority groups seek to express their points of view in school curricula. His primary target here was the New York State "Curriculum of Inclusion," which included a Native American study guide entitled *Haudenosaunee* [Iroquois]: *Past, Present, Future.* By 1992 this curriculum guide had been the object of a bureaucratic ideological battle within the State Department of Education for at least five years. Wrote Schlesinger:

> In New York, the curriculum for 11th-grade history tells students that there were three "foundations" for the Constitution: the European Enlightenment, the "Haudenosaunee political system," and the antecedent colonial experience. . . . How many experts on the American Constitution would endorse this stirring tribute to the "Haudenosaunee political system"? How many have heard of that system? Whatever influence the Iroquois confederacy had on the framers of the Constitution was marginal; on European intellectuals, it was marginal to the point of invisibility. No other state curriculum offers this analysis of the making of the Constitution. But then no other state has so effective an Iroquois lobby.[5]

Schlesinger's book contains no footnotes or endnotes, so it is unknown what works he consulted before composing the above statements. He read *Forgotten Founders* in 1982 and endorsed it: "*Forgotten Founders* is a tour-de-force of ingenious and elegant scholarship offering justice at last to the Indian contributions to the American Constitution."[6]

In 1991, George Will addressed "feel-good history" in his syndicated newspaper column, bringing the New York State Haudenosaunee curriculum guide into his argument as an example. Regarding references in the guide to Iroquois contributions to the Constitution, Will wrote, "Such fictions are supposed to nurture minorities' 'self-esteem'. . . on the basis of scant evidence."[7] Will's use of the word *fiction* rather clearly indicated that he had done little factual reading on the subject. Nevertheless, Will did the same thing two years later in his *Newsweek* column, where he lambasted new explorations in African and Native American history:

> Religious fundamentalists try to compel "equal time" in school curricula for creationism and evolution. But they are less of a threat than liberals trying to maintain "fairness" for dotty ideas that make some "victim groups" feel good—ideas such as that Greek Culture came from Black Africa [an allusion to Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*], or that Iroquois ideas were important to the making of the Constitution.[8]

In its most extreme form, this political correctness horror story is sometimes held responsible for just about every uncivilized evil to befall Europe since the barbarians took down the Roman Empire. Perennial presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan turns a debate over the origin of democratic ideas into campaign fodder. "The cultural war is already raging in our public schools," Buchanan wrote in *The Atlanta Constitution* during 1992.

> In history texts, Benedict Arnold's treason at West Point has been dropped. So has the story of Nathan Hale, the boy patriot who spied on the British and went to the gallows with the defiant cry, "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country." Elsewhere, they teach that our Constitution was plagiarized from the Iroquois, and that Western science was stolen from sub-Saharan Africa.[9]

Buchanan was quoted in the *Orlando Sentinel:*

> When you see the idiocy that somehow the American Constitution is a direct descendant of the Iroquois Confederation documents—this is all trash and nonsense. The effort is to turn future Americans into people who despise their own history and background. . . .[10]

Dead European White Males (DWEMs) roll in their graves at the sound of the "influence" issue, according to some English commentators. In a review of Schlesinger's *The Disuniting of America,* Ambrose Evans-Pritchard wrote in the *London Daily Telegraph* that DWEMs are suffering at the hands of "the American race-relations industry, [which is] amply subsidized by the public purse." "Education in America is becoming a form of therapy," he wrote, using this example: "Black school children in Portland, Oregon, are taught that Africans discovered America. In New York, the curriculum guide for 11th-grade history tells students that the Haudenosaunee political system of the Iroquois Indians was the inspiration for the American constitution. . . ."[11] The proposed curriculum over which Schlesinger and this writer are knashing their teeth was drafted but never implemented by New York State.

Into the "influence" debate, like a bull, lumbered *Orlando Sentinel* columnist Charley Reese, who wrote that ideas such as Iroquois influence on democracy lay a claim on gullible Americans because they do not know their own history. His version of history is simple: "All the institutions of American government are derived from our European culture. None comes from Africa or Asia or American Indians." Reese calls "ignorant" the assertions in the Turner Broadcasting series *The First Americans* that "our forefathers derived the idea of the U.S. Constitution from the Iroquois Confederation." Reese is just getting warmed up. "It's not even worthy of comment, except to point out that only a person 100 per cent ignorant of American and European history could make such a dumb statement." Before leaving the scene, this bull leaves a twenty-four-carat nugget of sheer denial at the door: "The superbly educated authors of the American Revolution had nothing to learn from a primitive tribal alliance."[12]

In *Forbes* magazine, Dinesh D'Souza, a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, targeted "a new barbarism—dogmatic, intolerant, and oppressive" that he asserted had "de-

scended on America's institutions of higher learning . . . a neo-Marxist ideology promoted in the name of multiculturalism." He quoted William King, president of the Black Student Union at Stanford University, who had cited a number of items of multicultural history before that school's faculty senate, including "that the Iroquois Indians in America had a representative democracy which served as a model for the American system."[13] D'Souza later authored *The End of Racism*.[14]

Washington Times columnist Richard Grenier very nearly split a gut over multiculturalism—three times. On 27 March 1990, Grenier sparred with notions of multicultural education, as follows:

> African-Americans claim that Queen Nefertiti of ancient Egypt was black. Iroquois Indians have induced New York State education officials to include in their 11th-grade syllabus the dogmatic assertion that the Iroquois Confederacy was a major influence on the U.S. Constitution.[15]

Grenier labeled such assertions unfactual and racist. If the Iroquois can claim to have influenced the Constitution, then people of Mongolian descent have the right to insist that Genghis Khan "was a principle influence on the United States Constitution," he proclaimed.[16]

In the 23 July 1990 issue of *National Review*, Grenier came back for more. He took aim at a speech by Czechoslovakia's president Vaclav Havel that urged American academics to become more politically involved. Grenier replied that on American university campuses, "a new breed of treasonous clerks has emerged" who express "hostility to the ideals that underlie American democratic institutions [which] has become both blatant and grotesque." The "treason" is that standard European-derived fare in humanities departments now faces competition from "a hodgepodge of world cultures." First on Grenier's list of such transgressions is "the constitutional principles of the Iroquois."[17]

Grenier was not finished flaying the idea that the Iroquois might have had something to do with the invention of democracy. Once again in the *Washington Times*, on 15 November 1991, Grenier attacked the notion that

> New York State, as its official educational policy, now honors the Iroquois Nation as a prime cultural influence on American civilization.... Why does the U.S. Constitution, on which the Iroquois are now credited with having a powerful influence, not provide for such well-established former Iroquois

> traditions as raiding and murder of rival tribesmen, old people, and children too small to be useful? Why doesn't it guarantee the right to rape. . . ?[18]

Grenier asserted that the Indians cast in the movie *Black Robe* were "bracingly authentic." He defined "authentic" as "[d]irty, cruel, they brutalize, [and] torture."[19]

Laurence Hauptman's *Tribes and Tribulations: Misconceptions about American Indians and Their Histories* contains a chapter (the third) titled "Speculations on the Constitution," in which Hauptman writes that "this misconception [Iroquois influence on democracy] has become a shibboleth,"[20] as he cites the U.S. Senate resolution of 1988 supporting the idea. Hauptman speculates that the Iroquois invented an oral history to support the idea that key ideas were borrowed from them. He concentrates mainly on James Wilson, arguing that Wilson was too materialistic and Eurocentric to appreciate the Iroquois example. Reading of James Wilson as Hauptman constructs him, one wonders why he took the trouble to side with the revolutionaries at all; why did Wilson agitate against British rule if he wanted to recreate it in America? As Hauptman makes his case, he ignores this statement from Wilson at the Constitutional Convention: "The British government cannot be our model. We have no materials for a similar one. Our manners, our laws, the abolition of entails and primogeniture, the whole genius of the people are opposed to it."[21]

The "influence" idea has been worked into the mainstream of discourse in a number of academic fields, among them Native American studies, American history, anthropology, law, education, and political science. In American history, R. David Edmunds, in "Native Americans, New Voices: American Indian History, 1895–1995," surveys developments in American history relating to Native Americans during the century since the *American Historical Review* began publishing in 1895. Edmunds comments, "Recently, claims by some Native American historians that the Constitution of the United States was modeled after the Iroquois Confederacy have attracted the public's attention and engendered considerable controversy." In a footnote, Edmunds writes that "Grinde and . . . Johansen argued that the political theories of the 'founding fathers' were heavily influenced by their familiarity with the political structure of the Iroquois Confederacy. Their assertions have created considerable debate, and have attracted both the media, the public, and the Congress [sic]."[22]

James A. Joseph, in *Remaking America: How the Benevolent Traditions of Many Cultures Are Transforming Our National Life* (1995) begins the first page of his first chapter by quoting from *Exemplar of Liberty* [1991]: "The native peoples lived in confederations so subtle, so nearly invisible, as to be an attractive alternative to monarchy's overbearing hand." The author then writes, "The advanced democratic practices of the Iroquois, for example, fitted very well with the abstract principles of democracy already forming in the minds of the European settlers."[23] Joseph also cites Karl Marx on Iroquois governance, as well as Benjamin Franklin and Tom Paine. Joseph was president and chief executive officer of the Council on Foundations, an umbrella group for U.S. charitable foundations, when he wrote this book. In July 1995, Joseph was nominated ambassador to South Africa by President Clinton.

The "influence" thesis has been incorporated to some degree in the general study of American colonial history. An example is provided by Arthur Quinn's *New World: An Epic of Colonial America from the Founding of Jamestown to the Fall of Quebec* (1995). In this book, Quinn, a professor of rhetoric at the University of California, outlines the founding legend of the Iroquois Confederacy and argues that it helped shape the United States. He presents events involving Benjamin Franklin and the Iroquois in some detail, beginning with Canassatego's advice that the colonists unite on an Iroquois model in 1744.

Quinn makes a point of the fact that Franklin publicized the Onondaga sachem's advice by printing the treaty on his press. Quinn also points out that Franklin's 1751 letter to his printing partner, James Parker, advising the colonists to unite as had the Iroquois was not private correspondence—it was also published and publicized. "The Iroquois, strange to say, were not only providing the opportunity for this [colonial union]; they had long been providing by their example the method—or so Franklin thought."[24] Quinn states that the Iroquois model provided proof that a confederation need not result in the type of oppressive centralized authority that was much feared in the colonies. Since 1751, Franklin had been looking for a way to express his ideas for colonial union, and he found his forum in the Albany Congress of 1754.

Within the scholarly literature of law, Renee Jacobs reviewed the Iroquois Great Law of Peace in relation to "how the founding fathers ignored the clan mothers." She made a case that, as the founders adapted some aspects of Iroquois law, they were nearly

totally blind to the equity of the sexes that was woven into Haudenosaunee fundamental law and political life.[25]

One illustration of the idea's disciplinary flexibility was its use by John Lienhard, a professor of engineering at the University of Houston, who is known as the host of the eclectic National Public Radio program *The Engines of Our Ingenuity*. The program aired its one thousandth broadcast during 1995. Lienhard mastered a stutter to broadcast his program, which includes a wide range of subject matter. He broadcasts over thirty National Public Radio affiliates in the United States. An article in the *Houston Chronicle* lists a number of segment titles:

> Another dealt with what the U.S. Constitution owes to the political system of the Iroquois nation. . . . [T]he transcript of [this segment] is the most requested Lienhard episode to date.[26]

The "influence" thesis has been taken up in some unusual places. In the magazine *Sassy*, which is intended mainly for teenaged girls, author Mary Kaye tucked a reference to Native American democracy among articles with titles like "Axl Rose: Clothes Horse," and "Beauty Tips for Procrastinators." The article was headlined (on the magazine's cover) "Why Our Screwed-up Planet Needs Native Americans." Although most of the article related the author's personal experiences among the Navajo, Kaye adds, "These days the brainwashing is more insidious . . . textbooks virtually ignore Native American contributions (did you know, for example, that parts of Iroquois law were incorporated into the American Constitution?). . . ."[27]

In a letter to the editor of the *Washington Times*, Elisibeth Forrest, who lives in Alexandria, Virginia, took issue with an item in the *Times* editorial page column "Inside the Beltway" (26 October 1995) that criticized Admiral Jeremy Boorda, chief of naval operations, for sending a message to all commands "to honor the North American Indian's contribution to the form of government that we practice today." In "Inside the Beltway," an unnamed "senior veteran" is quoted as saying that this is an example of "the silly season of PC [politically correct] admirals," making him wonder "if I should laugh or cry." Forrest writes that Boorda said in his message that "concepts such as freedom of speech, the separation of powers in government, and the balance of power within government were patterned after the political systems of our Native American Indian nations."[28]

The "influence" issue has played a bit part on the rap music stage. A 1995 piece in the *Indianapolis Star* described the opinions of Litefoot, a twenty-six-year-old member of the Cherokee Nation, who plays Little Bear, an Onondaga who is taken from 1761 to the present in the movie *The Indian in the Cupboard.* Litefoot, who calls himself the "first Native American rap artist/motivator," is described in this interview as "fiercely devoted to promoting cultural identity and awareness among young Native Americans." Bonnie Britton, author of the article, wrote, "He's no fan of Custer (a punk) or George Washington (an Indian killer) or Benjamin Franklin, who he says plagiarized from the Iroquois Confederacy 'and put it in the Constitution.'"[29] The "influence" issue also is mentioned briefly in the script of the movie.

Litefoot was not the first rapper to raise the issue. Zack de la Rocha, lead singer of Rage Against the Machine, told Peter Howell, an entertainment reporter for the *Toronto Star,* "It [capitalism] is a machine that will do anything to keep going. It has no moral understanding or any true sense of the word 'freedom,' or 'democracy.' The only true democracy ever experienced throughout the Americas was the one the Iroquois Indians had."[30]

Rap musicians have not been the only stage performers to pick up the idea. Singer Buffy Sainte-Marie, who has been engaged in efforts to educate Native American young people, especially using computer technology, has publicized a belief that American Indians practiced ecology and consensus-building a long time before both became popular in other cultures. She is quoted as saying, "The Iroquois Confederacy used the kind of decentralized decision-making that modern 'network' organizations use today, just as the founding fathers of the United States borrowed key ideas from Iroquois statecraft when they framed the Constitution."[31] On the road in Toronto, Sainte-Marie was quoted as saying, "Right now, people all over the world are dissatisfied and looking for new ways of government. They could learn, for instance, from the Iroquois Confederacy, from which the American Constitution derives." Sainte-Marie added that the U. S. Constitution "didn't go far enough. The Europeans couldn't handle the female roles in the Iroquois system and chose to ignore them. From there, it's a short jump to ignoring the rights of females altogether."[32]

Oneida singer Joanne Shenandoah opened the three-day 1994 Woodstock music festival, a reprise of a similar event in 1969, with a Haudenosaunee delegation before about 250,000 people. Jim Davis, environmental director of the Wittenberg Center, Bearsville,

New York, told the press that his group had been working to get an indigenous voice in such events, and that "[n]ot enough people realize that Franklin and Jefferson started our democracy after studying the Iroquois model."[33]

Native American democratic traditions have played a role in Canada's contemporary debate over what form of federalism will serve its people best in the future. Joe Clark, president of the Privy Council and minister responsible for constitutional affairs, told the annual meeting of the Canadian Manufacturer's Association that Native Canadians have the right and responsibility to govern themselves, pointing to the Iroquois. Clark supported this case by arguing that Native Americans in North America had democratic self-government while most of Europe was still feudal. He described the Iroquois Confederacy's emphasis on consensus: "That system was so impressive that it served as a model for Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin as they grappled with designing the American Constitution. The separation of powers, the concept of impeachment, the design of the American confederation itself—these find their parallels in the aboriginal governments of that day."[34] Clark reminded his audience that the word *caucus* is not Latin but Algonquin.

Also in 1992, representatives of the three federalist parties in the Canadian House of Commons signed the report of the Special Joint Commission on the Renewal of Canada. The report contains a strong statement supporting Native American self-government. A 1993 report by Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Partners in Confederation: Aboriginal Peoples, Self-Government, and the Constitution,* considered alternatives to Canada's present confederation and native peoples' roles in Canadian governance. Iroquois models of government were presented, and *Exemplar of Liberty* [1991] was cited. The report argues that the Canadian confederation has come more to resemble the Iroquois League over time, moving gradually from exclusive reliance on its British origins.[35]

At about the same time, Voyce Durling-Jones, a member of the Canadian diplomatic corps gave a speech in Vancouver, B.C., titled "Doing Business with Aboriginal Canada." The speech mentions several Native American contributions to general North American culture, including, "In the United States, the Iroquois Confederacy served as a model for the new colonial government's federal system—paradigm shift—though the true history of the Americas has still not been truly comprehended or proper acknowledgement yet given to the First Peoples of the Americas. . . ."[36]

American Indian (especially Iroquois) democratic precedents have been used in the United States to support political decentralization as a way to disassemble the "special-interest state." Tom Hayden, a founder of Students for a Democratic Society in the 1960s and a California state senator in the 1990s, called for a decentralization on "a Jeffersonian, or Quaker, or Iroquois" model in an economy based in an ecosystem balanced for generations to come. A market-driven model is not adequate for such a future, writes Hayden. In politics, he says, "inspiration for such a vision can be taken from certain of the writings of Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson, not to mention the Iroquois and other tribes that preceded the European arrival."[37]

Martin W. Lewis debunked the Iroquois example as a model for decentralization in his *Green Delusions: An Environmentalist Critique of Radical Environmentalism* (1992). Lewis, an assistant professor of geography at George Washington University, argues that participatory democracy may not eliminate social repression. Instead, he believes it perpetuates "a tyranny of long-winded individuals [who are] immune to boredom." Lewis believes that the inefficiency of participatory democracy uses more of the earth's resources for decision-making than other forms of government. "Unable to hold up their own or their forebears' experimental efforts in communal living," writes Lewis, "they [eco-radicals] have turned instead to indigenous American social organization. One popular model of participatory democracy is the Iroquois Confederacy. . . ." Lewis finds the Iroquois to be

> a particularly ill-considered exemplar. Admiring the Iroquois political system of that era for its democracy is akin to praising Nazi Germany for its enlightened forestry. The Five Nations not only engaged in a highly successful campaign of ethnocide against their competitors in the fur trade, the Hurons, but they also raised the torture of war captives (those whom they chose not to adopt, at any rate) to a high art.[38]

By the 1990s, even as New York State declined to publish the Haudenosaunee curriculum for its own students, the "influence idea" was permeating school curricula across the United States. Literature published by the second National School Celebration stressed America's patriotic heritage for several million elementary school children, taking a decidedly multicultural tack. The 1992 celebration was held exactly a century after the first,

for which the Pledge of Allegiance was written. The booklet contains an essay by Elizabeth Christensen ("Our Founding Grandfathers") observing the Iroquois roots of American democracy. The booklet also lists month-by-month themes for school celebrations. The theme for October is "How did the political and social order of Native Americans influence American democracy?"[39]

James W. Loewen spent a year at the Smithsonian surveying the twelve leading high school history textbooks and concluded that none of them makes history interesting. He set out to do just that in *Lies My Teacher Told Me,* published in 1995. One of the themes that Loewen describes (asserting that conventional histories usually ignore it) is the influence of the Iroquois system of government on the framers of the Constitution. Loewen devotes a chapter to portrayals of Indians in high school texts, calling them "the most lied-about subset of our population."[40] Over the course of this chapter, he devotes considerable space to the historical circumstances that initiated Iroquois influence on U.S. political institutions; in a footnote, he takes issue with Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s argument in *The Disuniting of America* that Europe was "also the source—the unique source—of those liberating ideas of individual liberty." Comments Loewen, "He offers no evidence, only assertion, for this claim, and apparently does not know of Europe's astonishment not only at Native American liberty but also at religious freedom in China and Turkey."[41]

The "influence" idea has been used to motivate Native American young people in Kansas City. A front-page story in the *Kansas City Star* contrasted the number of Indian-derived names around Kansas City (such as "Arrowhead Stadium, home of the Chiefs") with the poverty and neglect of seven thousand Native Americans who live in the urban area. It describes the work of Visible Horizons, which "works to help Indian youths claim their piece of the American Dream and reclaim pride in their heritage."[42] Part of the program is educational, with a purposeful effort to raise students' self-esteem. The article describes a class taught by Carol Lee Sanchez-Allen at the Bader Memorial Christian Church, in which she outlines Native American contributions to American culture, including "that the Iroquois Confederacy's concept of Grand Council influenced Benjamin Franklin's ideas for the U.S. Constitution."[43]

Native American democracy has been described rather frequently in Europe as well as in North America. An article in *The*

Warsaw Voice, a journal for Americans of Polish descent, described the activities of the Polish Friendship Society, a group of Poles who study American Indian history and issues, publish books, and edit a journal. The group also organizes peaceful protests on behalf of Native American people and causes, such as freedom for Leonard Peltier. The publishing house, called Tipi, has issued about a half-dozen titles, and the journal, *Tawacin Quarterly*, has published since 1986. Waleria Mikolajczyk described its contents:

> The quarterly includes materials about the Great Peace Law, which is a discovery for the Polish reader. The law made it possible for the confederation of five Iroquois nations to function in harmony for several centuries. The editors stress that this law was taken by white colonists as a model for the United States constitution... and a model for democracy, but later the colonists forgot for long years both the Indian original and its authors.[44]

In a similar vein, at a ministerial meeting of the twenty-one-nation Council of Europe at its headquarters in Strasbourg, Germany, Raul Manglapus, Philippine foreign secretary, challenged the industrial world's assumptions about European primacy in shaping democracy: "The democratic value that is the heart of the constitution of the Council of Europe is indigenous not only to the northern societies, but to all human cultures...," Manglapus said, according to this account, "citing democratic republics like Licchavis, developed on the Indian subcontinent 600 years before Christ, [and] the Iroquois Confederacy that preceded the United States Constitution...."[45]

Despite its caricature as a horror story of political correctness and the jarring nature of some of the debate over the issue, the idea that Native American confederacies practiced an important early form of democracy has become established in general discourse. "History" is made in many ways, by many people; the spread of the idea that Native American confederacies (especially the Haudenosaunee Confederacy) helped shape the intellectual development of democracy in the United States and Europe is an example of how our notions of history have been changing with the infusion of multicultural voices. It is fascinating to watch the change in all its forms—and the debate over it in all its cacophonous variety—from a "ringside" seat.

NOTES

1. Charles Eastman, *American Indian Magazine* 7:3 (1919): 145–52.
2. William Brandon, *The American Heritage Book of Indians* (New York: American Heritage / Simon & Schuster, 1961), 7, 175–76.
3. Bunty Anquoe, "President Offers Hope," *Indian Country Today*, 4 May 1994. See also William Clinton, "Guest Essay," *Native Peoples* 7:4 (Summer 1994), 5.
4. Daniel Seligman, "Measuring PC: Those Influential Iroquois," *Fortune* (19 April 1993), 159.
5. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 96–98.
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