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Author(s): F. P. Prucha

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F. P. PRUCHA

A GREAT many persons—not excluding some notable historians—have adopted a "devil theory" of American Indian policy. And in their demonic hierarchy Andrew Jackson has first place. He is depicted primarily, if not exclusively, as a western frontiersman and famous Indian fighter, who was a zealous advocate of dispossessing the Indians and at heart an "Indian-hater." When he became President, the story goes, he made use of his new power, ruthlessly and at the point of a bayonet, to force the Indians from their ancestral homes in the East into desert lands west of the Mississippi, which were considered forever useless to the white man.[1]

This simplistic view of Jackson's Indian policy is unacceptable. It was not Jackson's aim to crush the Indians because, as an old Indian fighter, he hated Indians. Although his years in the West had brought him into frequent contact with the Indians, he by no means developed a doctrinaire anti-Indian attitude. Rather, as a military man, his dominant goal in the decades before he became President was to preserve the security and well-being of the United States and its Indian and white inhabitants. His military experience, indeed, gave him an overriding concern for the safety of the nation from foreign rather than internal enemies, and to some extent the anti-Indian sentiment that has been charged against Jackson in his early career was instead basically anti-British. Jackson, as his first biographer pointed out, had "many private reasons for disliking" Great Britain. "In her, he could trace the efficient cause, why, in early life, he had been left

The author is professor of history in Marquette University.

[1] Typical examples of this view are Oscar Handlin, *The History of the United States* (2 vols., New York, 1967-1968), I, 445; T. Harry Williams, Richard N. Current, and Frank Freidel, *A History of the United States* (2 vols., New York, 1964), I, 392; Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic* (3rd. ed., New York, 1966), 269; Dale Van Every, *Disinherited: The Lost Birthright of the American Indian* (New York, 1966), 103; R. S. Cotterill, "Federal Indian Management in the South, 1789-1825," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XX (Dec. 1933), 347.

forlorn and wretched, without a single relation in the world."[2] His frontier experience, too, had convinced him that foreign agents were behind the raised tomahawks of the red men. In 1808, after a group of settlers had been killed by the Creeks, Jackson told his militia troops: "[T]his brings to our recollection the horrid barbarity committed on our frontier in 1777 under the influence of and by the orders of Great Britain, and it is presumeable that the same influence has excited those barbarians to the late and recent acts of butchery and murder. . . ."[3] From that date on there is hardly a statement by Jackson about Indian dangers that does not aim sharp barbs at England. His reaction to the Battle of Tippecanoe was that the Indians had been "excited to war by the secrete agents of Great Britain."[4]

Jackson's war with the Creeks in 1813-1814, which brought him his first national military fame, and his subsequent demands for a large cession of Creek lands were part of his concern for security in the West.[5] In 1815, when the Cherokees and Chickasaws gave up their overlapping claims to lands within the Creek cession, Jackson wrote with some exultation to Secretary of War James Monroe: "This Territory added to the creek cession, opens an avenue to the defence of the lower country, in a political point of view incalculable."[6] A few months later he added: "The sooner these lands are brought into markett, [the sooner] a permanant security will be given to what, I deem, the most important, as well as the most vulnarable part of the union. This country once settled, our fortifications of defence in the lower country compleated, all [E]urope will cease to look at it with an eye to conquest. There is no other point of the union (america united) that combined [E]urope can expect to invade with success."[7]

Jackson's plans with regard to the Indians in Florida were governed by similar principles of security. He wanted "to concentrate and locate the F[lorida] Indians at such a point as will promote their happiness

[2] John H. Eaton, *The Life of Andrew Jackson, Major General in the Service of the United States: Comprising a History of the War in the South, from the Commencement of the Creek Campaign, to the Termination of Hostilities Before New Orleans* (Philadelphia, 1817), 18.

[3] John Spencer Bassett, ed., *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson* (7 vols., Washington, 1926-1935), I, 188.

[4] Andrew Jackson to William Henry Harrison, Nov. 30, 1811, *ibid.*, 210. See also Jackson to James Winchester, Nov. 28, 1811; Jackson to Willie Blount, June 4, July 10, and Dec. 21, 1812; Jackson to Thomas Pinckney, May 18, 1814, *ibid.*, I, 209, 226, 231-32, 250, II, 3-4.

[5] For the part played by desire for defense and security in the Treaty of Fort Jackson, see Jackson to Pinckney, May 18, 1814, *ibid.*, II, 2-3, and Eaton, *Life of Jackson*, 183-87. Eaton's biography can be taken as representing Jackson's views.

[6] Jackson to James Monroe, Oct. 23, 1816, Bassett, *Correspondence*, II, 261.

[7] Jackson to Monroe, Jan. 6, 1817, *ibid.*, 272. See also Jackson to Monroe, March 4, 1817, *ibid.*, 277-78.

and prosperity and at the same time, afford to that Territory a dense population between them and the ocean which will afford protection and peace to all."[8] On later occasions the same views were evident. When negotiations were under way with the southern Indians for removal, Jackson wrote: "[T]he chickasaw and choctaw country are of great importance to us in the defence of the lower country[;] a white population instead of the Indian, would strengthen our own defence much." And again: "This section of country is of great importance to the prosperity and strength of the lower Mississippi[;] a dense white population would add much to its safety in a state of war, and it ought to be obtained, if it can, on any thing like reasonable terms."[9]

In his direct dealings with the Indians, Jackson insisted on justice toward both hostile and peaceful Indians. Those who committed outrages against the whites were to be summarily punished, but the rights of friendly Indians were to be protected. Too much of Jackson's reputation in Indian matters has been based on the first of these positions. Forthright and hard-hitting, he adopted a no-nonsense policy toward hostile Indians that endeared him to the frontiersmen. For example, when a white woman was taken captive by the Creeks, he declared: "With such arms and supplies as I can obtain I shall penetrate the creek Towns, untill the Captive, with her Captors are delivered up, and think myself Justifiable, in laying waste their villiages, burning their houses, killing their warriors and leading into Captivity their wives and children, untill I do obtain a surrender of the Captive, and the Captors."[10] In his general orders to the Tennessee militia after he received news of the Fort Mims massacre, he called for "retaliatory vengeance" against the "inhuman blood thirsty barbarians."[11] He could speak of the "lex taliones,"[12] and his aggressive campaign against the Creeks and his escapade in Florida in the First Seminole War are further indications of his mood.

But he matched this attitude with one of justice and fairness, and he was firm in upholding the rights of the Indians who lived peaceably in friendship with the Americans. One of his first official acts as major general of the Tennessee militia was to insist on the punishment of a militia officer who

[8] Jackson to John C. Calhoun, Aug. 1823, *ibid.*, III, 202. See also Jackson's talk with Indian chieftains, Sept. 20, 1821, *ibid.*, 118.

[9] Jackson to John Coffee, Aug. 20, 1826; Jackson to Coffee, Sept. 2, 1826, *ibid.*, 310, 312. See also Fred L. Israel, ed., *The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, 1790-1966* (3 vols., New York, 1966), I, 334.

[10] Jackson to Blount, July 3, 1812, Bassett, *Correspondence*, I, 230.

[11] General Orders, Sept. 19, 1813, *ibid.*, 319-20.

[12] Jackson to David Holmes, April 18, 1814, *ibid.*, 505.

instigated or at least permitted the murder of an Indian.[13] On another occasion, when a group of Tennessee volunteers robbed a friendly Cherokee, Jackson's wrath burst forth: "that a sett of men should without any authority rob a man who is claimed as a member of the Cherokee nation, who is now friendly and engaged with us in a war against the hostile creeks, is such an outrage, to the rules of war, the laws of nations and of civil society, and well calculated to sower the minds of the whole nation against the united States, and is such as ought to meet with the frowns of every good citizen, and the agents be promptly prosecuted and punished as robers." It was, he said, as much theft as though the property had been stolen from a white citizen. He demanded an inquiry in order to determine whether any commissioned officers had been present or had had any knowledge of this "atrocious act," and he wanted the officers immediately arrested, tried by court-martial, and then turned over to the civil authority.[14]

Again, during the Seminole War, when Georgia troops attacked a village of friendly Indians, Jackson excoriated the governor for "the base, cowardly and inhuman attack, on the old woman [women] and men of the chehaw village, whilst the Warriors of that *village* was with me, fighting the battles of our *country* against the common enemy." It was strange, he said, "that there could exist within the U. States, a cowardly monster in human shape, that could violate the sanctity of a flag, when borne by any person, but more particularly when in the hands of a superanuated Indian chief worn down with age. Such base cowardice and murderous conduct as this transaction affords, has not its paralel in history and should meet with its merited punishment." Jackson ordered the arrest of the officer who was responsible and declared: "This act will to the last ages fix a stain upon the character of Georgia."[15]

Jackson's action as commander of the Division of the South in removing white squatters from Indian lands is another proof that he was not oblivious to Indian rights. When the Indian Agent Return J. Meigs in 1820 requested military assistance in removing intruders on Cherokee lands, Jackson ordered a detachment of twenty men under a lieutenant to aid in the removal. After learning that the officer detailed for the duty was "young and inexperienced," he sent his own aide-de-camp, Captain Richard K. Call, to assume command of the troops and execute the order of removal.[16] "Captain Call informs me," he wrote in one report to Secretary of War

[13] Jackson to Colonel McKinney, May 10, 1802, *ibid.*, 62.
[14] Jackson to John Cocke, Dec. 28, 1813, *ibid.*, 415.
[15] Jackson to Governor of Georgia, May 7, 1818, *ibid.*, II, 369-70.
[16] Jackson to Calhoun, July 9, 1820, *ibid.*, III, 29. See also Jackson's notice to the intruders, *ibid.*, 26n.

John C. Calhoun, "that much noise of opposition was threatened, and men collected for the purpose who seperated on the approach of the regulars, but who threaten to destroy the cherokees in the Valley as soon as these Troops are gone. Capt. Call has addressed a letter to those infatuated people, with assurance of speedy and exemplary punishment if they should attempt to carry their threats into execution." Later he wrote that Call had performed his duties "with both judgement, and prudence and much to the interest of the Cherokee-Nation" and that the action would "have the effect in future of preventing the infraction of our Treaties with that Nation."[17]

To call Jackson an Indian-hater or to declare that he believed that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" is to speak in terms that had little meaning to Jackson.[18] It is true, of course, that he did not consider the Indians to be noble savages. He had, for example, a generally uncomplimentary view of their motivation, and he argued that it was necessary to operate upon their fears, rather than on some higher motive. Thus, in 1812 he wrote: "I believe self interest and self preservation the most predominant passion. [F]ear is better than love with an indian."[19] Twenty-five years later, just after he left the presidency, the same theme recurred; and he wrote: "long experience satisfies me that they are only to be well governed by their fears. If we feed their avarice we accelerate the causes of their destruction. By a prudent exertion of our military power we may yet do something to alleviate their condition at the same time that we certainly take from them the means of injury to our frontier."[20]

Yet Jackson did not hold that Indians were inherently evil or inferior. He eagerly used Indian allies, personally liked and respected individual Indian chiefs, and, when (in the Creek campaign) an orphaned Indian boy was about to be killed by Indians upon whom his care would fall, generously took care of the child and sent him home to Mrs. Jackson to be raised with his son Andrew.[21] Jackson was convinced that the barbaric state in which he encountered most Indians had to change, but he was also convinced that the change was possible and to an extent inevitable if the Indians were to survive.

Much of Jackson's opinion about the status of the Indians was governed

[17] Jackson to Calhoun, July 26, Sept. 15, 1820, *ibid.*, 30-31, 31n.

[18] Note this recent statement: "President Jackson, himself a veteran Indian fighter, wasted little sympathy on the paint-bedaubed 'varmints.' He accepted fully the brutal creed of his fellow Westerners that 'the only good Indian is a dead Indian.'" Bailey, *American Pageant*, 269.

[19] Jackson to Blount, June 17, 1812, Bassett, *Correspondence*, I, 227-28.

[20] Jackson to Joel R. Poinsett, Aug. 27, 1837, *ibid.*, V, 507.

[21] See Jackson to Mrs. Jackson, Dec. 19, 1813, *ibid.*, I, 400-01; Eaton, *Life of Jackson*, 395-96.

by his firm conviction that they did not constitute sovereign nations, who could be dealt with in formal treaties as though they were foreign powers. That the United States in fact did so, Jackson argued, was a historical fact which resulted from the feeble position of the new American government when it first faced the Indians during and immediately after the Revolution. To continue to deal with the Indians in this fashion, when the power of the United States no longer made it necessary, was to Jackson's mind absurd. It was high time, he said in 1820, to do away with the "farce of treating with Indian tribes."[22] Jackson wanted Congress to legislate for the Indians as it did for white Americans.

From this view of the limited political status of the Indians within the territorial United States, Jackson derived two important corollaries. One denied that the Indians had absolute title to all the lands that they claimed. The United States, in justice, should allow the Indians ample lands for their support, but Jackson did not believe that they were entitled to more. He denied any right of domain and ridiculed the Indian claims to "tracts of country on which they have neither dwelt nor made improvements, merely because they have seen them from the mountain or passed them in the chase."[23]

A second corollary of equal import was Jackson's opinion that the Indians could not establish independent enclaves (exercising full political sovereignty) within the United States or within any of the individual states. If their proper status was as subjects of the United States, then they should be obliged to submit to American laws. Jackson had reached this conclusion early in his career, but his classic statement appeared in his first annual message to Congress, at a time when the conflict between the Cherokees and the State of Georgia had reached crisis proportions. "If the General Government is not permitted to tolerate the erection of a confederate State within the territory of one of the members of this Union against her consent," he said, "much less could it allow a foreign and independent government to establish itself there." He announced that he had told the Indians that "their attempt to establish an independent government would not be countenanced by the Executive of the United States, and advised them to emigrate beyond the Mississippi or submit to the laws of those States."[24] "I have

[22] Jackson to Calhoun, Sept. 2, 1820, Bassett, *Correspondence*, III, 31-32. See also Jackson to John Quincy Adams, Oct. 6, 1821; Jackson to Calhoun, Sept. 17, 1821, Walter Lowrie and Walter S. Franklin, eds., *American State Papers: Miscellaneous* (2 vols., Washington, 1834), II, 909, 911-12.

[23] Israel, *State of the Union Messages*, I, 310. See also Jackson to Isaac Shelby, Aug. 11, 1818, Bassett, *Correspondence*, II, 388.

[24] Israel, *State of the Union Messages*, I, 308-09. Jackson dealt at length with this question in his message to the Senate, Feb. 22, 1831. James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation*

been unable to perceive any sufficient reason," Jackson affirmed, "why the Red man more than the white, may claim exemption from the municipal laws of the state within which they reside; and governed by that belief, I have so declared and so acted."[25]

Jackson's own draft of this first annual message presents a more personal view than the final public version and gives some insight into his reasoning. He wrote:

> The policy of the government has been gradually to open to them the ways of civilisation; and from their wandering habits, to entice them to a course of life calculated to present fairer prospects of comfort and happiness. To effect this a system should be devised for their benefit, kind and liberal, and gradually to be enlarged as they may evince a capability to enjoy it. It will not answer to encourage them to the idea of exclusive self government. It is impracticable. No people were ever free, or capable of forming and carrying into execution a social compact for themselves until education and intelligence was first introduced. There are with those tribes, a few educated and well informed men, possessing mind and Judgment, and capable of conducting public affairs to advantage; but observation proves that the great body of the southern tribes of Indians, are erratic in their habits, and wanting in those endowments, which are suited to a people who would direct themselves, and under it be happy and prosperous.[26]

Jackson was convinced from his observation of the political incompetence of the general run of Indians that the treaty system played into the hands of the chiefs and their white and half-breed advisers to the detriment of the common Indians. He said on one occasion that such leaders "are like some of our bawling politicians, who loudly exclaim we are the friends of the people, but who, when the[y] obtain their views care no more for the happiness or wellfare of the people than the Devil does—but each procure[s] influence through the same channell and for the same base purpose, *self-agrandisement.*"[27]

Jackson was genuinely concerned for the well-being of the Indians and for their civilization. Although his critics would scoff at the idea of placing him on the roll of the humanitarians, his assertions—both public and private—add up to a consistent belief that the Indians were capable of accepting white civilization, the hope that they would eventually do so, and re-

of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents (11 vols., Washington, 1897-1914), II, 536-41. See also Jackson to Secretary of War [1831?], Bassett, *Correspondence*, IV, 219-20.

[25] Draft of Second Annual Message, Series 8, vol. 174, nos. 1409-1410, Andrew Jackson Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress). This statement does not appear in the final version.

[26] Draft of First Annual Message, Dec. 8, 1829, Bassett, *Correspondence*, IV, 103-04.

[27] Jackson to Robert Butler, June 21, 1817, *ibid.*, II, 299. See also Jackson to Coffee, June 21, 1817; U. S. Commissioners to Secretary Graham, July 8, 1817, *ibid.*, 198, 300.

peated efforts to take measures that would make the change possible and even speed it along.

His vision appears in the proclamation delivered to his victorious troops in April 1814, after the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa River. "The fiends of the Tallapoosa will no longer murder our Women and Children, or disturb the quiet of our borders," he declared. "Their midnight flambeaux will no more illumine their Council house, or shine upon the victim of their infernal orgies. They have disappeared from the face of the Earth. In their places a new generation will arise who will know their duties better. The weapons of warefare will be exchanged for the utensils of husbandry; and the wilderness which now withers in sterility and seems to mourn the disolation which overspreads it, will blossom as the rose, and become the nursery of the arts."[28]

The removal policy, begun long before Jackson's presidency but wholeheartedly adopted by him, was the culmination of these views. Jackson looked upon removal as a means of protecting the process of civilization, as well as of providing land for white settlers, security from foreign invasion, and a quieting of the clamors of Georgia against the federal government. This view is too pervasive in Jackson's thought to be dismissed as polite rationalization for avaricious white aggrandizement. His outlook was essentially Jeffersonian. Jackson envisaged the transition from a hunting society to a settled agricultural society, a process that would make it possible for the Indians to exist with a higher scale of living on less land, and which would make it possible for those who adopted white ways to be quietly absorbed into the white society. Those who wished to preserve their identity in Indian nations could do it only by withdrawing from the economic and political pressures exerted upon their enclaves by the dominant white settlers. West of the Mississippi they might move at their own pace toward civilization.[29]

Evaluation of Jackson's policy must be made in the light of the feasible alternatives available to men of his time. The removal program cannot be judged simply as a land grab to satisfy the President's western and southern constituents. The Indian problem that Jackson faced was complex, and various solutions were proposed. There were, in fact, four possibilities.

First, the Indians could simply have been destroyed. They could have been killed in war, mercilessly hounded out of their settlements, or pushed west off the land by brute force, until they were destroyed by disease or starvation. It is not too harsh a judgment to say that this was implicitly, if not

[28] Proclamation, April 2, 1814, *ibid.*, I, 494.
[29] Israel, *State of the Union Messages*, I, 310, 335, 354, 386-87.

explicitly, the policy of many of the aggressive frontiersmen. But it was not the policy, implicit or explicit, of Jackson and the responsible government officials in his administration or of those preceding or following his. It would be easy to compile an anthology of statements of horror on the part of government officials toward any such approach to the solution of the Indian problem.

Second, the Indians could have been rapidly assimilated into white society. It is now clear that this was not a feasible solution. Indian culture has a viability that continually impresses anthropologists, and to become white men was not the goal of the Indians. But many important and learned men of the day thought that this was a possibility. Some were so sanguine as to hope that within one generation the Indians could be taught the white man's ways and that, once they learned them, they would automatically desire to turn to that sort of life. Thomas Jefferson never tired of telling the Indians of the advantages of farming over hunting, and the chief purpose of schools was to train the Indian children in white ways, thereby making them immediately absorbable into the dominant culture. This solution was at first the hope of humanitarians who had the interest of the Indians at heart, but little by little many came to agree with Jackson that this dream was not going to be fulfilled.

Third, if the Indians were not to be destroyed and if they could not be immediately assimilated, they might be protected in their own culture on their ancestral lands in the East—or, at least, on reasonably large remnants of those lands. They would then be enclaves within the white society and would be protected by their treaty agreements and by military force. This was the alternative demanded by the opponents of Jackson's removal bill—for example, the missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. But this, too, was infeasible, given the political and military conditions of the United States at the time. The federal government could not have provided a standing army of sufficient strength to protect the enclaves of Indian territory from the encroachments of the whites. Jackson could not withstand Georgia's demands for the end of the *imperium in imperio* represented by the Cherokee Nation and its new constitution, not because of some inherent immorality on his part but because the political situation of America would not permit it.

The jurisdictional dispute cannot be easily dismissed. Were the Indian tribes independent nations? The question received its legal answer in John Marshall's decision in *Cherokee Nation* v. *Georgia*, in which the chief justice defined the Indian tribes as "dependent domestic nations." But aside from the juridical decision, were the Indians, in fact, independent, and

could they have maintained their independence without the support—political and military—of the federal government? The answer, clearly, is no, as writers at the time pointed out. The federal government could have stood firm in defense of the Indian nations against Georgia, but this would have brought it into head-on collision with a state, which insisted that its sovereignty was being impinged upon by the Cherokees.

This was not a conflict that anyone in the federal government wanted. President Monroe had been slow to give in to the demands of the Georgians. He had refused to be panicked into hasty action before he had considered all the possibilities. But eventually he became convinced that a stubborn resistance to the southern states would solve nothing, and from that point on he and his successors, John Quincy Adams and Jackson, sought to solve the problem by removing the cause. They wanted the Indians to be placed in some area where the problem of federal versus state jurisdiction would not arise, where the Indians could be granted land in fee simple by the federal government and not have to worry about what some state thought were its rights and prerogatives.[30]

The fourth and final possibility, then, was removal. To Jackson this seemed the only answer. Since neither adequate protection nor quick assimilation of the Indians was possible, it seemed reasonable and necessary to move the Indians to some area where they would not be disturbed by federal-state jurisdictional disputes or by encroachments of white settlers, where they could develop on the road to civilization at their own pace, or, if they so desired, preserve their own culture.

To ease the removal process Jackson proposed what he repeatedly described as—and believed to be—*liberal* terms. He again and again urged the commissioners who made treaties to pay the Indians well for their lands, to make sure that the Indians understood that the government would pay the costs of removal and help them get established in their new homes, to make provision for the Indians to examine the lands in the West and to agree to accept them before they were allotted.[31] When he read the treaty negotiated with the Chickasaws in 1832, he wrote to his old friend General John Coffee, one of the commissioners: "I think it is a good one, and surely the religious enthusiasts, or those who have been weeping over the oppression of the Indians will not find fault with it for want of liberality or jus-

[30] For the development of the removal idea see Annie Heloise Abel, "The History of Events Resulting in Indian Consolidation West of the Mississippi," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1906* (2 vols., Washington, 1908), I, 233-450; Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834* (Cambridge, 1962), 224-49.

[31] See, for example, Jackson to Coffee [Sept. 1826?], Bassett, *Correspondence*, III, 315-16.

tice to the Indians."[32] Typical of his views was his letter to Captain James Gadsden in 1829:

> You may rest assured that I shall adhere to the just and humane policy towards the Indians which I have commenced. In this spirit I have recommended them to quit their possessions on this side of the Mississippi, and go to a country to the west where there is every probability that they will always be free from the mercenary influence of White men, and undisturbed by the local authority of the states: Under such circumstances the General Government can exercise a parental control over their interests and possibly perpetuate their race.[33]

The idea of parental or paternal care was pervasive. Jackson told Congress in a special message in February 1832: "Being more and more convinced that the destiny of the Indians within the settled portion of the United States depends upon their entire and speedy migration to the country west of the Mississippi set apart for their permanent residence, I am anxious that all the arrangements necessary to the complete execution of the plan of removal and to the ultimate security and improvement of the Indians should be made without further delay." Once removal was accomplished, "there would then be no question of jurisdiction to prevent the Government from exercising such a general control over their affairs as may be essential to their interest and safety."[34]

Jackson, in fact, thought in terms of a confederacy of the southern Indians in the West, developing their own territorial government which should be on a par with the territories of the whites and eventually take its place in the Union.[35] This aspect of the removal policy, because it was not fully implemented, has been largely forgotten.

In the bills reported in 1834 for the reorganization of Indian affairs there was, in addition to a new trade and intercourse act and an act for the reorganization of the Indian Office, a bill "for the establishment of the Western Territory, and for the security and protection of the emigrant and other Indian tribes therein." This was quashed, not by western interests who might be considered hostile to the Indians, but by men like John Quincy Adams, who did not like the technical details of the bill and who feared loss of eastern power and prestige by the admission of territories in the West.[36]

Jackson continued to urge Congress to fulfill its obligations to the Indians who had removed. In his eighth annual message, in December 1836,

[32] Jackson to Coffee, Nov. 6, 1832, *ibid.*, IV, 483.
[33] Jackson to James Gadsden, Oct. 12, 1829, *ibid.*, 81.
[34] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II, 565-66.
[35] Jackson to Coffee, Feb. 19, 1832; Jackson to John D. Terrill, July 29, 1826, Bassett, *Correspondence*, IV, 406, III, 308-09.
[36] Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years*, 269-73.

he called attention "to the importance of providing a well-digested and comprehensive system for the protection, supervision, and improvement of the various tribes now planted in the Indian country." He strongly backed the suggestions of the commissioner of Indian affairs and the secretary of war for developing a confederated Indian government in the West and for establishing military posts in the Indian country to protect the tribes. "The best hopes of humanity in regard to the aboriginal race, the welfare of our rapidly extending settlements, and the honor of the United States," he said, "are all deeply involved in the relations existing between this Government and the emigrating tribes."[37]

Jackson's Indian policy occasioned great debate and great opposition during his administration. This is not to be wondered at. The "Indian problem" was a complicated and emotion-filled subject, and it called forth tremendous efforts on behalf of the Indians by some missionary groups and other humanitarians, who spoke loudly about Indian rights. The issue also became a party one.

The hue and cry raised against removal in Jackson's administration should not be misinterpreted. At the urging of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, hundreds of church groups deluged Congress with memorials condemning the removal policy as a violation of Indian rights; and Jeremiah Evarts, the secretary of the Board, wrote a notable series of essays under the name "William Penn," which asserted that the original treaties must be maintained.[38] It is not without interest that such opposition was centered in areas that were politically hostile to Jackson. There were equally sincere and humanitarian voices speaking out in support of removal, and they were supported by men such as Thomas L. McKenney, head of the Indian Office; William Clark, superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis; Lewis Cass, who had served on the frontier for eighteen years as governor of Michigan Territory; and the Baptist missionary Isaac McCoy—all men with long experience in Indian relations and deep sympathy for the Indians.

Jackson himself had no doubt that his policy was in the best interests of the Indians. "Toward this race of people I entertain the kindest feelings," he told the Senate in 1831, "and am not sensible that the views which I

[37] Israel, *State of the Union Messages*, I, 465-66.

[38] See the indexes to the *House Journal*, 21 Cong., 1 Sess. (Serial 194), 897-98, and the *Senate Journal*, 21 Cong., 1 Sess. (Serial 191), 534, for the presentation of the memorials. Some of the memorials were ordered printed and appear in the serial set of congressional documents. Jeremiah Evarts' essays were published in book form as [Jeremiah Evarts,] *Essays on the Present Crisis in the Condition of the American Indians; First Published in the National Intelligencer, Under the Signature of William Penn* (Boston, 1829).

have taken of their true interests are less favorable to them than those which oppose their emigration to the West."[39] The policy of rescuing the Indians from the evil effects of too-close contact with white civilization, so that in the end they too might become civilized, received a final benediction in Jackson's last message to the American people—his "Farewell Address" of March 4, 1837. "The States which had so long been retarded in their improvement by the Indian tribes residing in the midst of them are at length relieved from the evil," he said, "and this unhappy race—the original dwellers in our land—are now placed in a situation where we may well hope that they will share in the blessings of civilization and be saved from that degradation and destruction to which they were rapidly hastening while they remained in the States; and while the safety and comfort of our own citizens have been greatly promoted by their removal, the philanthropist will rejoice that the remnant of that ill-fated race has been at length placed beyond the reach of injury or oppression, and that the paternal care of the General Government will hereafter watch over them and protect them."[40]

In assessing Jackson's Indian policy, historians must not listen too eagerly to Jackson's political opponents or to less-than-disinterested missionaries. Jackson's contemporary critics and the historians who have accepted their arguments have certainly been too harsh, if not, indeed, quite wrong.

[39] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, II, 541.

[40] *Ibid.*, III, 294. See the discussion in John William Ward, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (New York, 1955), 40-41.