

THE AMERICAN INDIAN FEDERATION

Okmulgee, Oklahoma, August 3rd, 1936.

Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Candidate for President of the United States,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Roosevelt:

PERSONAL

A number of American Indians addressed you as President of the United States during the year now closed. Among these were a number of Indian Ministers of the Gospel who protested against the order of your Commissioner of Indian Affairs, forbidding them to hold religious services for the benefit of Indian children attending Government schools. For some reason you did not show them the courtesy of a reply, even to acknowledge receipt of their letters. Your attention was also called officially to the fact that John Collier, your Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for whose official acts we feel that you are responsible, is attempting to return the Indian citizen, far beyond your "horse and buggy" days into the dim past of the teepee and the Buffalo chase. Your attention was invited to the fact that Nathan Margold (born Margulies in Roumania) now Solicitor General in your Interior Department, was formerly chairman of the Indian Committee of the American Civil Liberties Union and that it was he who wrote the Wheeler-Howard and the Thomas-Rogers bills, both of which are Communist in intent and effect, but which you signed. Your attention was called to the fact that you Commissioner of Indian Affairs exalted Francisco Ferrer, the Spanish anarchist, in a poem; that Collier before a Committee of Congress expressed confidence in and admiration for Roger N. Baldwin, the ex-convict now at the head of the American Civil Liberties Union and who advocates or upholds the right of an alien to advocate the overthrow of the Government by force and violence; that Commissioner Collier pretended to be ignorant of the fact that he is a member of the American Civil Liberties Union. In fact, you were told that Communists and their friends or dupes are practically in control of the Indian Bureau.

As President, you ignored all pleas, and letters remained unanswered. We do not criticize the President or even hold this against him, because we do not believe that the President ever saw any of these letters but that they were purposely kept from him by persons whose loyalty to the Civil Liberties Union may possibly be greater than the allegiance they feel that they owe to the Government.

We now address you as the candidate of the Democratic Party for the Presidency of the United States and in that capacity, we assume that you will appreciate our intelligent support; that you would not ask us to vote for you and your ticket blindly. In order that we may know definitely what position to take in the November elections and what we may expect in the event of your election, we are respectfully asking you to define your position now and in the case of your re-election on these points:

Will you continue in office, men who, apparently believing that the Indian is fertile soil in which to plant Communism, deliberately undertake to foment race hatred? Will you sign bills into law which have been prepared by such organizations as the Civil Liberties Union? Will you permit subordinates in the future as in the past to employ teachers in Mexico who are required to take oaths repugnant to an American citizen, or will you permit the Indian to live and educate his children and worship his God as the American Citizen which Congress has declared him to be? Will you permit your subordinates to employ citizens of Turkey to supervise Indian activities, or place such work in the hands of sure-enough American citizens? Will you permit your subordinates to spend the money of future tax-paying generations to print and circulate such literature as "INDIANS AT WORK"?

You are quite aware of the fact of course that it was only 70,000 Communists who reduced Russia in 1917 and changed the destinies of one hundred and seventy million people. You must be aware of the situation in France and Spain, due to the power of a Communist minority. If these things could take place abroad, what can the MILLION Communists in the United States do to us at a time selected by them? Baldwin, whom your Commissioner Collier commends so highly, says in so many words "Communism is the Goal"; he has other tools than Collier in the Government service.

If you are elected President again, what steps will you take to lessen the danger to American institutions?

Are you favorable to any amendments to the Constitution? Will you tell us what changes you would or will recommend?

The American Indian Federation is a nation-wide organization. It is non-political and non-sectarian. It is composed of "First Americans" who are thoroughly satisfied with the present order and bitterly opposed to being retrograded or ostracised politically and socially, as the two bills which became law in 1934 will inevitably do to us. As American citizens we are of the sincere opinion that those two measures are merely opening wedges to place the whole country on a Russian basis and that such is the sinister plan of those who wrote them. They are heralded by propagandists as means of "self-government" for the Indians. As a matter of fact, they place the Indian under a dictatorship (Secretary of the Interior) just as austere and unjust and complete as that which obtains in Russia. A subversive Congress and an ambitious President might easily extend these laws to include all citizens; and if not, why make examples of the Indians? A million people in the United States who deny the existence of God; scoff at Jesus Christ and his teachings; believe in the overthrow of the government by force and violence are a menace to law and order, peace, happiness and prosperity and we are hopeful, Mr. Roosevelt, that you will give us a hearty assurance that you will use the power and influence of your office as President, if you are elected, to make Communism utterly impossible for at least four years.

We are enclosing herewith an authentic copy of a Resolution unanimously adopted at our convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, July 23, 1936, at which convention delegates were present in behalf of 42 tribes of Indians.

Awaiting your reply, we are,

Most respectfully,

THE AMERICAN INDIAN FEDERATION,

By Joseph Bruner President.

JB-ak
enclosure

No reply has been received from the above letter, not even an acknowledgment.

This 16th day of September, 1936.

Joseph Bruner
Joseph Bruner, President

THE AMERICAN INDIAN FEDERATION