

An indian's view of indian affairs: a speech by chief joseph

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Sunju Han History 152 Document Analysis During the late nineteenth century, many changes have occurred during the Industrial Revolution. The living conditions in America were deteriorating for anyone who wasn't in the upper social economic classes. Many complaints were arising from the masses. Of the population, two primary documents have been observed to express the point of views of particular groups they represent. One of these documents was from Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Indians, from the Indian point of view. The other document was from the Populists Party, largely representing the farmers and working classes of the 1890s.

The time period of both documents roughly range from the 1870s through the 1890s. Chief Joseph's speech was called " An Indian's View of Indian Affairs". In his speech, he speaks from the Indian's perspective of how they are treated and handled. One of the many issues he brings up is about the treatment of his people. He felt that his people are treated like animals and outlaws, being shot down or driven from country to country. The whites who have encroached on their land have driven off their cattle and horses. They also stole from the Indians. For example, whites would brand the Indian's young cattle so that they can claim it as their own.

Chief Joseph also felt the whites were causing problems on purpose in order to start a war between the whites and Indians. He pleads his case by stating how the Indians didn't kill off the first white settlers that were having trouble surviving. Now they repay their thanks by causing trouble because they have the power to conquer the Indians. In the beginning, the Indians gave up some of their land foolishly believe they would be left alone but the more they gave, the more that was taken from them. He complains that his people

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aren't getting treated like humans. Many whites saw them as savages that don't know any other way than violence.

In his speech he is taking an emotional approach in order to gain the sympathy of law enforcers, Congress or the President, or from the population. As Chief Joseph was stating how his people were treated, he also stated a general outline of the future he envisioned for his people. The future he envisioned consisted mainly of equality. He dreams of his people being treated like all the other men from the states. He pleads that everybody follows the same set of legislation in the land that they all share. He believes that anyone born on the earth was born a free man and should be given liberty.

He wants his men to have an equal chance at life in general. The simple liberties like freedom to travel, work, trade where ever they choose, choice of teacher, or even following the religion of their fore fathers. The basic liberties stated in the very foundation of our country are what Chief Joseph is advocating for his people. He states that they will follow whatever laws set before them if they can get a chance of being treated like a real man in this country. Joseph did indeed believe that Native Americans and whites could coexist in the United States.

When the first white settlers appeared, he believed that they would all have the same set of morals and values. This was the basis of his belief in the coexistence of Indians and whites. His speech also depicts the very possibility of coexistence in exchange for equality. He believes that the Indians would have no problem or reason to cause conflict or trouble if these basic requests were met. He also believes that any man born in the same

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earth are all granted equal rights from the moment they were born. He states that he is simply reclaiming those rights in order to help better the living conditions his people are living in.

He also believes that much of the bloodshed and war can be avoided if each party can be more honest with each other and compromise. The Populists were the first political insurgency, meaning that they were the first to radically go against the ideas of our nation's political policies. They were the first political party that appealed to the farmers and the "producing class", which included the industrial workers to the miners. They were the first party to bring up any political platform on issues that were for the general working class. Many of the other political parties would try to cover up the many problems present in our economy.

They were the radicals that went against all the other political platforms, bring up issues that the big companies and industries try to overlook or cover up. The Populists believed that the nation found itself on the brink of "moral, political, and material ruin". During those times corruption, bribery, and despotism was rampant everywhere around the whole world, not just the United States. The newspapers were bribed to be silenced, the public opinion didn't matter anymore, and there was corruption in the ballot boxes. The laborers were denied the freedom to form unions anymore. The currency flow was restricted by the mega-millionaires.

There was no way of controlling the huge businesses to better the lives of the working class. These were some of the main issues that caused the Populists to believe that we were on the brink of "moral, political, and material ruin". The two proposals put forth by the Populist Party that were <https://assignbuster.com/an-indians-view-of-indian-affairs-a-speech-by-chief-joseph/>

significant were the right to form labor unions and the ownership of all transportation to the government. The right to form labor unions would become a sort of balancing process for the big companies. It would restrain the rampant companies from making their workers suffer from unfair and unjust working conditions.

It would also provide a system of control that the large industries didn't have before. The ownership of the railroads, telegraph, telephone, and post-office systems would create a universal fairness for the masses. Since it is a crucial public necessity, a monopoly on any of these items could impact the whole country greatly. The government ownership of these systems would be for the general welfare of the people and create fees that can be affordable to the general masses and population throughout the United States. These are some of the issues and solutions stated in both Chief Joseph's speech and the Populist platform.