

Dakota Tribal Violence Linked to Political Rivalry

By JOHN KIFNER

Special to The New York Times

PINE RIDGE, S. D., July 2—Crouched in a ditch near the side of the road, a lanky young supporter of the militant American Indian Movement gripped his rifle and watched through the darkness for oncoming pickup trucks. It was 1 A.M., and down the hill, under the light of a half moon, stood a teepee sheltering the body of a compatriot slain in a gun battle with agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"Too bad we have to guard our dead like this," he whispered, saying they feared an attack by "the goon squad."

Dick Wilson, tribal chairman of the Oglala Sioux, demurred at the term "goon squad," as a group of his supporters are widely known here. "Actually," he said, pausing from signing multiple forms for a large government grant, "I prefer to call them a group of concerned citizens who don't want those clowns [AIM members] on the reservation."

History of Violence

Behind these elements lies a history of violence that has pitted Indian against Indian on this reservation, rooted in history and crystallized by the occupation of Wounded Knee by armed Indians two years ago. The same frictions were behind the shootout last Thursday night in which two F.B.I. agents and the young Indian were killed.

All week, under the broiling sun, heavily armed F.B.I. men in military fatigues have continued their search for 16 Indians wanted in connection with the gunfight that occurred near a cluster of houses and a tent encampment in a wooded creek bed. Thus far, the search has been fruitless.

Since the beginning of this year, there have been at least eight killings here, along with uncounted numbers of assaults, beatings and outbreaks of gunfire. Random violence has longed plagued this poverty-ridden reservation, and some of those incidents have been attributed by Indians here to alcoholism, described by many as a chronic problem.

But now, much of the violence and terror is tied to the bitter political rivalry that, on one level, pits Mr. Wilson against the American Indian Movement, and, on a deeper level, divides the Indians here along lines of blood, culture and geography.

Fundamental Split

The deepest and most fundamental split on the reservation is between the mixed bloods, centered on the headquarters village of Pine Ridge, who control the tribal government and man the Bureau of Indian Affairs bureaucracy, and the full bloods in the outlying districts who regard themselves as traditionalists.

"The level of violence is ris-

ing dramatically," says Randy Frederickson of the Rapid City office of Senator James Abourezk, Democrat of South Dakota, who has been watching the situation closely. "There's rising frustration on the part of the traditional Indians toward the tribal government," Mr. Frederickson continued. "It's degenerated into almost total anarchy."

Mr. Wilson's opponents here have often accused him of running a corrupt and dictatorial system backed up by the "goon squad." These adherents, most of them employed in government jobs, are said to intimidate or beat up critics.

For his part, Mr. Wilson describes the AIM supporters as "outsiders," "bums" and "hoodlums" and says that he and his supporters—and even his softball team—have been shot at.

Federal concern over the situation has increased sharply this spring, particularly after an incident in March involving a group of lawyers and legal aides from AIM, who landed at the little air strip outside of Pine Ridge. Returning to their private plane, the lawyers said, they found it riddled with bullets. Then, they added, they

were surrounded by a group of men who, acting on Mr. Wilson's orders, beat them up.

A Federal grand jury was convened in Rapid City to investigate the reservation situation.

The jury issued a misdemeanor indictment against Mr. Wilson in connection with the airport incident. Six of Mr. Wilson's associates pleaded guilty to similar charges in tribal court and were fined \$10 each.

The jury also brought felony indictments against several members of the American Indian Movement and issued a preliminary report saying there had been a breakdown in law and order on the reservation because of rivalry between Federal agencies. It made no other mention of the tribal government.

The report did note that, when Mr. Wilson was denied permission to sell a truckload of Coors beer he brought to a rodeo—alcohol is banned from the reservation, although bootleggers thrive—he and a band of supporters broke 20 prisoners out of the jail.

The United States Civil Rights Commission has issued a report saying that Mr. Wilson's narrow re-election victory over Russell Means, an AIM leader, was marked by improprieties. But the commission has no enforcement power.

Meanwhile, partially under pressure from Senator Abou-

reck, the Bureau of Indian Affairs appointed a special commission to hold hearings on the reservation. The commission recommended increasing the tribal court and police force and an increased F.B.I. presence to investigate the 13 felonies that fell under Federal jurisdiction.

Fatigues and Baseball Caps

It was this increase in law enforcement that brought the two F.B.I. agents, Jack R. Ioler and Ronald A. Williams, both 28 years old, to the reservation and led to their deaths.

They were looking for Jimmy Eagle, one of four young Indians accused of holding Jerry Schwarting, 24, and Robert Dinsmore, 14, overnight in a house in the village of Porcupine and, according to the complaint, assaulting them and stealing their cowboy boots.

Both victims are white, Tom Coll, the F.B.I. spokesman, said.

After the shootout, whose details are still murky, about 200 F.B.I. agents and Indian police officers from other reservations rushed to this dusty hamlet.

Most of the F.B.I. men wore olive green military fatigues, although some had camouflage clothes and one unit wore special black fatigues and baseball caps lettered "F.B.I."

They carried M-16 rifles, shotguns and weapons with telescopic sights. They traveled throughout the reservation in the yellow mini-school buses of the tribal Head Start program, and were aided by helicopters and two trained dogs.

Today, their search appeared to be winding down.

Mr. Wilson welcomed the F.B.I. and said that if they did not find the fugitives, he would hunt them down himself. But there are also other reactions.

In Pine Ridge, a woman who takes a distinctly dim view of AIM activities said:

Stares and Hatred

"There's somebody killed here practically every week, and they only send all these F.B.I. when it's one of their own. Soon they'll go away and there'll be more killing, but it will just be Indians."

At many Indian houses, whites asking for directions were greeted with blank stares. In Porcupine, young men looked with hatred at a young woman bringing two white reporters to meet a source.

In Oglala, where the fatal shooting took place, many of the traditionalist Indians regarded the F.B.I. as the allies of the tribal government.

"The full blood faces many enemies—the half-breed, the white man, the Bureau of In-

dian Affairs, the state police, the F.B.I.," said Francis He Crow, sitting outside his small cabin, his eyes puffy from a night of standing guard duty.

Over the weekend, about 60 Indians gathered under a sun screen of evergreen boughs at the Bad Heart Bull Place in Oglala to draw up a petition requesting the removal of the F.B.I. agents and to drive to the site of the shooting, known locally as Jumping Bull Hall after the family who lived there.

Houses Inspected

The Indians walked around the cluster of houses, shaking their heads when they saw the bullet holes. Ten they walked down to the wooded campsite near the river, where Dennis Banks, an AIM leader, and a group of followers had been camped. They took down the tent and tepee.

The body of the slain Indian,

identified as Joseph Stutz, 24, was brought back for burial on a nearby farm on Monday night.

A green Chevrolet station wagon backed up to the tepee the Indians had set up with boughs of sage spread as a rug. The body, wrapped in an Indian blanket, was placed on a rack inside the tent with the head toward the south, the first direction of the Indian pipe ceremony.

He wore new moccasins decorated with porcupine quills. The Indian men lined up and silently moved in and out of the tepee to pay their respects. Then the women followed, much sobbing and wailing. A jet plane flew overhead.

In Los Angeles, Clarence M. Kelley, the F.B.I. director, presented American flags to the families of the two slain agents.

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