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Taos Factionalism

OMER C. STEWART

Myths and legends world-wide, as well as ancient history, suggest that conflict, schism or factionalism existed universally in communities of all sizes. Edward Spicer (1962:492) wrote: "It seems very doubtful that what modern men know as 'difference of opinion' existed for more than very short periods in any communities of the Indians in northwestern New Spain before the coming of white men." Persistent dissenters were banished. The tempting problem is to explain why the factionalism occurs in general and in any particular case. In her famous book, *Patterns of Culture* (1934:80-88), Ruth Benedict developed a very attractive picture of Pueblo Indian culture producing a mild, non-aggressive, friendly and accommodating personality in Pueblo Indians, which she labelled "Apollonian" and contrasted the Pueblos with the aggressive Plains "Dionysians." Finding considerable factionalism in Taos Pueblo has tempted Benedict and a number of other scholars to try to explain why it seemed to occur there more frequently than among other Apollonian communities practicing the Pueblo culture. I am motivated to write this paper because of my conviction that ethnohistorical research has brought to light important information which suggests that the previous explanations of Taos factionalism were incomplete. That Peyotism, a new and distinct religion based on use of a slightly intoxicating, spineless cactus found only in south Texas and Mexico, was accepted only at Taos seems to have prompted several students of Pueblo culture to attribute to Peyotism that Taos appeared more disturbed and split than the other Pueblo communities where Peyotism was not practiced.

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Spicer recorded schisms resulting from differences of opinion concerning indigenous religions and introduced religions. He also documented cases where the acceptance of new religions had not produced disruption. For example, Catholicism had been added to Eastern Pueblo ceremonial life for three hundred years with only slight difficulty, yet Spicer (1962:178), and a number of others, have implied that the introduction of Peyotism led to strong opposition and conflict at Taos. Besides correcting some published misstatements as to the nature of Peyotism, I will present evidence to support the view that the Peyote religion was accepted at first and, after an interruption, was again accepted by Taos Indians as a new minority religion. Peyotism, like Catholicism, could be compartmentalized and accommodated by the Pueblos (Spicer 1962:508). Thus, factionalism at Taos resulted primarily from interference in Taos Pueblo affairs by officials of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and other outsiders.

Historical documents, published and unpublished, provide the evidence to support the above conclusion. Informant testimony produced a number of different dates for the beginning of Peyotism among Taos Indians. A letter dated Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indian Agency, July 13, 1896, found in the Denver Branch of the U.S. National Archives, gives the names, as visitors to Oklahoma, of three well-known Ute leaders and six from Taos. Among the names was Ute chief Buckskin Charlie and Taos leader Lorenzo Martina [Martinez], identified by E. C. Parsons (1936:64; 1939:1094) as an early and strong "chief" of Peyotism. Merion Miller (1898:26) learned from informants in 1896 that Ute and Taos Indians travelled to Indian territory. Oklahoma Indians returned with the party. Since both Buckskin Charlie and Lorenzo Martinez are remembered as the first leaders of the Peyote religion on their respective reservations, I am confident in setting the date of 1896 as the time of introduction to Peyotism to the two tribes. Parsons (1939:1094) dated the family feud between Lorenzo Martinez and the Mirabels to 1896, but then wrote (1939:1095): "When peyote was first used at Taos, there was no opposition" In a report back to Carlisle in 1911 Lorenzo reported he was farming successfully and was employed as an interpreter for the BIA. In a 1912 report he said he was a BIA policeman to help suppress the liquor traffic.

Although the BIA expressed opposition to Peyote as soon as it was first reported in Oklahoma (Hall 1886:130), the earliest date

of such U.S. government opposition to Peyote at Taos is in a letter dated August 15, 1921 from Taos attorney F. T. Cheetham to Government Farmer Bolander. Cheetham wrote that he first learned of Peyote at Taos in 1914 when he was a U.S. Commissioner there. He reported it to the BIA and received "later a letter from Washington, asking me to do all in my power to prevent its introduction." In a letter of the same date, from Bolander to Northern Pueblo Superintendent Horace J. Johnson, Taos Pueblo Governor José Guadalupe Lucero is reported to have said Peyote was introduced "about 1910" and named Lorenzo Martinez among the eighteen leaders. Parsons (1936:62) published what appears to be a verbatim quotation from Lorenzo Martinez about leading a group to Oklahoma in 1907 to visit friends he had made during his years at Carlisle Indian School, February 2, 1884 to July 8, 1889.

Informant testimony reveals individual personal and family conflicts at Taos which might have been strong enough, and supported widely enough by allies of opposite sides, to have justified paying no attention to outside influences. Other writers appear to have done just that.

Parsons (1936:62-69), acknowledging that much of her information had been recorded by Leslie White (who spent summers interviewing members of several different Pueblos during the 1920s and published on several of them—but not on Taos—1928-1935), reproduced narratives about Peyote which were inconsistent and contradictory. Her description of the Peyote ritual of the Taos Pueblos, along with that of E. Curtis (1926:53-59), is one of the most complete of any not based on participant observation. Since the publication of her monograph, *Taos Pueblo*, her account of the factionalism there has been an important source for theoretical articles. Only a long quotation can convey the feeling produced by troubles at Taos, which are left hanging without explanations. Parsons wrote (1936:66-67) [Parsons' use of the word "peyote" is not consistent.]:

The Peyote men always insist upon the dignity and decorum with which they conduct their meeting. They resent very much any accusation of behaving in a violent, drunken manner. 'Peot boys do not use bad words; they are always kind and clean.' The non-peyote townspeople admit this, but they say that one becomes 'crazy' after eating peyote.

Controversy

In the early years the cult met with little or no opposition; but sometime before 1918 the hierarchy was bitterly opposed to it and was set to rout it out. Three peyote men were turned out of their kiva memberships—Lorenzo Martinez from Big-earring kiva, José Romero from Water kiva, and Teles Rena from his Kuyukana society in Feather kiva. Lorenzo Martinez was chief of the Big-hail People and was dispossessed of that chieftaincy. The Big-earring man or chief did not support him; furthermore the Big-earring man made his own son withdraw from the Peyote cult. The son of another powerful chief, Manuel Herero, . . . chief of the Black Eyes, was also a 'peyote boy' and his father did not oppose him . . . I infer in fact that Manuel Herero supported the cult. In 1921 Herero died. When Teles Rena took to peyote his kiva chief sent for him to smoke klaana as a punishment. His mother Xaneu was afraid he would be suffocated and appealed to the District Court in Fernandez de Taos. The interpreter was in a pickle. How explain the case without betraying pueblo custom? He happened to fall in with a Mexican who was a member of the Penitentes. The Mexican remarked that for his part he would rather die than explain his religious practices in court. That decided the Taos interpreter and he proposed to the judge that the case be withdrawn, each side paying half the costs of bringing it. So the case was withdrawn. Then Teles was expelled from his Kiva group, and Xaneu was shut out of dancing Konli. Now the chiefs were saying, 'It [peyote] does not belong to us. It is not *the work given to us*. It will stop the rain. Something will happen.' Opposition, in highly characteristic Pueblo Indian terms; and the 'peyote boys' on their part were asserting that eating peyote brought rain. In the drought of 1922 it was said, 'Now it is so dry this summer because the peyote boys can't have their meetings; they used to bring so much rain.'

The preceding winter while one of the regular Saturday night meetings was being held in the tipi outside

of town, a raid was made on the meeting, by order of the Governor, and all the blankets and shawls of those present were confiscated. This affair created much bitterness. *Tsi'li*, calico rags, the raiders were called 'because we took away their blankets,' also *koltsina*, gluttons, and *beuntana*, greedy things. It was said that Porfirio Mirabal, the medicineman, would not treat a 'peyote boy.' Peyote was interfering with his practice. On the other hand, some women who were midwives at one time declared that they would not attend the people who had been mean to their sons and 'cousins,' peyote boys; 'no matter what they paid they would not go to help those mean people.' The feud disturbs even kinship and marriage. I heard of one peyote man who no longer visited the house of his cousin. Antonio Romero who died of tuberculosis in 1926 had wanted to try peyote for his sickness, but his wife who hated peyote would not let him.

While I was in Taos in the summer of 1923 the peyote eaters were thinking of calling in a Mexican lawyer to defend their rights. That autumn the situation became acute. Two 'peyote boys' were whipped by order of the Governor, by his Lieutenant-governor, Anton Mirabal, one man getting twenty-five lashes. They were Juan Gomez and Geronimo Sandoval, the 'half Apache.'" They were whipped, according to a peyote factionist, for singing at Glorieta, up the river, the same songs the boys sing at the town bridge. A report on this affair was sent to the American Court. The reporters were betrayed by a Mexican, and three peyote men were fined by the Council \$700, \$800, \$1000, in land or personal property. 'They made me poor,' said one of them. 'I said I would pay, but then I would fight in the American Court. I did, and the judge decided that the Governor had no right to fine so heavily, he had to make a return. The Governor and officers did that, then they resigned from office.' For a time there were no secular officers at Taos because nobody wanted to take up the controversy.

In the autumn of 1924 it was reported that the peyote situation had quieted down; but in December, 1925 an

Isletan visitor to Taos told me that he had noticed three or four men in the pueblo wearing American shoes and hat, contrary to the rule of going in Indian habit. These men were 'peyote boys' who were dressing this way 'just to make fun of the people' during this period of 'staying still.' There are about twenty-four 'peyote boys.'

In recent years the peyote people have been let alone by the hierarchy; for one reason because the arch fighter among them threatened to report on Porfirio Mirabal as an Indian doctor. But the hierarchy has not relented as the decision of a Council meeting in December, 1931 made quite clear. The blankets and shawls that were confiscated ten years ago had not been distributed among the officers as is usual with confiscated property but had been kept in a bundle and handed on from Governor to Governor. One of the peyote men, their arch fighter, had wanted to appeal the matter to the Agent, but the others were afraid. Now, however, a council was called to settle the affair. As the retiring Governor was brother of one of the Peyote chiefs, it was probably thought that now the controversy could be amicably settled. At any rate the peyote men went in a conciliatory spirit to talk peaceably with their 'brothers' and 'fathers,' and offered to pay a fine of \$10 if the property was returned and the Council would give them a signed agreement to molest them no more. The Council refused to give this assurance and insisted on a payment of \$25 apiece for the return of the blankets and shawls. The meeting adjourned without coming to any agreement."

Although BIA Circulars requesting information from all agencies regarding Peyote were periodically distributed from 1909 to 1910, not until 1916 was its use officially reported from Taos—but no mention was made of factionalism. Deputy Special Officer Antonio Romero wrote that there were twelve Indians "using Peyote" and that Antonio Luhan and José Ignacio Bernal were the leaders. On August 1, 1921 Dr. J. J. Bergmans, a BIA contract physician at Taos, wrote: "During the last 10 years or more . . ." Peyotism had been practiced by a few in the Pueblo.

Without attributing his information to any particular source Spicer (1962:175) wrote: "Sometime during the 1890s the Native American Church, a religious organization which based its rites on the use of peyote, gained converts in Taos and continued to exist there with a small group of practitioners." In a statement recorded by Telesfor Romero in 1936, Geronimo Gomez said: "It has been 38 years I have been using peyote," which would place the start for him at 1898.

The first report of conflict at the Taos pueblo was made by George Vaux, a member of a special review group called the Board of Indian Commissioners, who visited Taos in 1919 and wrote that one Peyotist caused difficulty at Taos by refusing to adhere to the dress code decreed by the tribal authorities. Parsons (1936:66) placed the date of the beginning of opposition as "sometime before 1918," based on informant recall. Also in 1936 Parsons reports in an interview that Geronimo "Star Road" Gomez said: "About 1917 we had about the same trouble which we have today. At that time Domencon Cordova was Governor" [date confirmed]. Parsons (1939:1094-1095) concluded that the 1917 incident was an expression of the ancient grudge between the Mirabel family and Lorenzo Martinez. The grudge flared up again in 1921 and again most spectacularly in 1934.

The only outside influence against Peyote at Taos pueblo before the 1917 conflict was the request in 1914 by the BIA to attorney Cheetham, mentioned above, and the 1916 questionnaire which indicated BIA opposition by the manner questions were asked. In any event there appears to have been at least twenty years of peaceful practice of Peyotism before the conflict over its presence appeared. For the next twenty years numerous documents record factional troubles between Peyotists and those attempting to suppress it. Since 1937 Peyotism has peacefully co-existed with the aboriginal Kiva religion and with Catholicism. The question becomes: What were the new circumstances which may have caused the conflict over Peyote at Taos pueblo from 1917 to 1937?

First was the national climate of opinion. A vigorous campaign was intensified in 1916 by the BIA, although it started in 1886, and by several Christian missionary organizations for the enactment of a national prohibition against the possession and use of Peyote. One other important event occurred: Mabel Dodge established her home in Taos in 1916.

In 1914 Mabel Dodge arranged to take Peyote in a mock Peyote

ceremony in New York City under the direction of M. R. Harrington. The experiment led to frightening disorientation of one participant and caused Mabel to fear and disapprove of any use of Peyote (Luhan 1936:265-279). In 1916 Mabel Dodge met American Indians for the first time when she started living in Taos and soon fell in love with and later married Antonio Luhan, leader of the Peyote religion at Taos pueblo. A condition of the marriage was the abandonment of Peyotism by Tony, who soon became an active foe of the Peyote religion under the guidance of his wife, as she reveals in her *Intimate Memories* (1937). Mabel had called John Collier when she was frightened by the adverse reaction to Peyote in 1914 and Collier became a guest of Tony and Mabel in Taos in 1920 (Reno 1963:1-3).

Fourteen letters in the U.S. National Archives tell of the active opposition to Peyotism at Taos in 1921. In July it was a letter from the Catholic Missionary reporting that the Governor of the Pueblo came to him to complain against the Peyotists and to ask the missionary to preach against it.

Parsons (1936:66) connected the increased activity in 1921 against Peyotism with the death of a powerful Taos pueblo leader who was friendly to Peyotism. In my opinion opposition might also have been encouraged by the arrival of a new superintendent for the Northern Pueblo Agency. He was Horace J. Johnson who had made himself well-known as an enemy of Peyote at the Sac and Fox agency by publishing an anti-Peyote leaflet in 1918.

During August 1921 ten letters were exchanged between Dr. Bergmans, Superintendent Johnson, the BIA and U.S. Farmer Bolder. After a meeting with the Pueblo tribal council Dr. Bergmans reported to Johnson that the council wished to suppress Peyote. Johnson wrote to Bergmans that the council's effort met with his approval and that the council had been informed it had the legal authority to do so. He said "Tony" had told him the Peyote matter was under control.

Although Bodine (1968:146) appears to place the date of arrival in Taos of Mabel a decade or so too early, his characterization of the event is apt: "In 1898 the first Taos artists took up residence in this small 'Mexican' town and soon ethnicity-seekers, led by a former empress of Greenwich Village and the salons of Florence, Mabel Dodge, arrived in Taos." As the "hostess with the mostest" everyone who was anyone who stayed in Taos was made aware of Mabel Dodge Luhan. Most famous was D. H.

Lawrence who settled in Taos in 1922. Frank Waters arrived in 1937 and dedicated his *The Man Who Killed the Deer* to "Mabel and Tony." Waters' false and derogatory story of Peyotism at Taos fits that of Mabel. It is probably not an exaggeration to conclude that nearly every official, artist, author or scholar who remained in Taos any length of time from 1920 to 1960 came to know Mabel Dodge Luhan and, if interested in Peyote, learned of her conviction that Peyote was an evil, harmful, dangerous and disruptive influence in Taos. (Mabel died in August 1962—*New York Times* Obituary).

BIA officials continued the opposition to Peyotism documented above in 1921 by Superintendent Johnson. In 1923 Superintendent Crandall informed the BIA in Washington, D.C. that he was attempting to keep Peyote away from Taos and in 1924 reported, "I feel that the governor and his council have a perfect right to prohibit their people from using Peyote, even if there is no law governing the use of this drug." On February 28, 1928 BIA Commissioner Burke wrote to T. F. McCormick, Superintendent, Northern Pueblo Agency, ". . . it is suggested that [the pueblo] council make appropriate ordinances to prevent the introduction of peyote into the pueblo." In January 1929 Superintendent McCormick sent to State Senator Ed Safford a model bill against the use of peyote and requested Safford to introduce it into the New Mexico State Legislature, which occurred during the 1929 legislative session, so that Peyote became illegal in New Mexico.

John Collier was a collaborator with Mabel Dodge Luhan in opposition to the Bursam Bill, sponsored by Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall in the 1920s, by which lands of the Pueblos would have been lost to the Indians. At the same time BIA Commissioner Burke was trying to further destroy American Indian religions by means of BIA Circular 1665. At a Hearing before a congressional committee in 1923 Collier revealed his support of Taos Peyotism at the time the BIA commissioner was doing all he could to prohibit it. A quotation follows:

Mr. Leatherwood. You have mentioned a great many things that are affecting the Indians in New Mexico. I will ask you whether the use of peyote, which I understand is common among the Indians of Oklahoma, has extended into New Mexico among these Pueblo Indians?

Mr. Collier. There is one Pueblo where peyote is

used, and that is Taos. At Taos, as far as I could find out, there were 52 users of peyote out of a population of 635.

Mr. Leatherwood. Do you think the traffic in that drug—if it is a drug—should be prohibited?

Mr. Collier. I would not be prepared to express an opinion. I have not myself the knowledge and I have an impression that nobody has the knowledge on which radical action could yet be based.

Mr. Leatherwood. With reference to the prohibition of the use of peyote?

Mr. Collier. Yes; I think more knowledge is needed.

Mr. Gensman. Among the Indians in general?

Mr. Collier. On anybody; as to whether it is a habit-forming drug and as to whether it is a destroying drug.

Mr. Gensman. Before we take any action?

Mr. Collier. Before any radical action is taken I think we ought to get a fact basis. However, I am prepared to give you my own observation of it. I have tried to read what has been printed about peyote and I have talked with many doctors.

[Collier goes on to write.]

This may be interesting, because it may come up again: My contact with peyote has been on the Pueblo of Taos, and there I think I know personally all the members of what they call the peyote church. It is a kind of cult. The thing was first called to my attention in this rather interesting way: That the orthodox group of Indians on the Taos Pueblo—that is, the old men who represent the old magical, pagan religion of the Pueblos—were very bitter against the Peyote people, because the peyote church was like a heresy brought into the pueblo. It had its own cult, its own creed, and moral system. So there was a great deal of bitterness between the two groups. Later the Indians came to me—this was last fall—a group of the Peyote users with the peyote chief, as they call him, the head of the church, and said this: ‘Last spring very unpleasant things happened to us because we were using peyote;

that is, the old men jumped on us and they even beat us.' They said, furthermore, 'We have heard that it is a destructive drug; we have been told that.' They said: 'Will you arrange for us to be studied?' I spent four or five hours with those Indians explaining just what would have to be done to find out whether peyote was hurting them or not, just how they would have to be examined; I explained they would have to be examined when they were taking it in a group and when they were beating the tomtom; that they would then have to take it in solitude, when there was not any psychic stimulation, and how they would have to be examined day after day.

I went through all the clinical procedure that was necessary and they seemed to understand, and they renewed their request. 'Will you arrange for some competent scientist to find out whether peyote is hurtful or not?' And in my talks with them, this is what they told me; they said, 'It is very difficult to get peyote; sometimes we have it and sometimes we do not have it, and we use it for two purposes, we use it in our religious ceremonies, when we all sit around together, sing and beat the tomtom; then we use it to cure sick people.' I said, 'Do you ever sit around and beat the tomtom when the peyote has given out and there is no peyote?' 'Oh, yes,' they said. I said, 'Does it feel just as good?' 'Oh, yes,' they said. Then, I said, 'This is the most serious question,' I said, 'Do you treat sick people by the peyote technique at times when you have not the peyote nuts or peyote beans?' 'Oh, yes,' they said. I said, 'Do they get well?' 'Oh, yes,' they said.

I thought they were telling me the truth, and that gave me the feeling that peyote probably had no real effect but was merely used as a part of a very interesting form of religious psychology, auto-suggestion, or Coueism, if you like, and that the element of the drug is not so important. That is why I felt and feel, on the basis of various documents, I have read, that a further clinical study ought to be carried out to determine whether it is a habit-forming drug, whether it ought to be classed with morphine, because if it is classed with

morphine and it is made a crime for a man to have it in his possession it means the sending into the Indian country of quite an army of detectives, prohibition officers, and spies, and inasmuch as peyote is a secret society and cult it is going to be pretty difficult to get at it, and I should think the Government would hesitate to launch upon such a thing, with all of the disturbance it would involve and all the expenditure of money, until it knew it needed to do it. I simply give that for the committee's information.

The most prolonged difficulty over Peyote at Taos started in May 1934 and continued until the summer of 1937. The spark which set this off in 1934 was the action by Taos Governor Santiago Martinez who had been elected to office in spite of the fact that he was a well-known Peyotist leader as well as an official in his Kiva. Former Governor Santano Sandoval objected to the Peyotist Governor returning land and goods confiscated for holding Peyote meetings some years before, and forced the Peyotist from office. On May 15, 1934 Mabel Luhan wired her friend BIA Commissioner John Collier as follows:

In defiance of Council of former Governors and war captains the present Governor and war captain set up Peyote teepee on reservation Saturday night which was first time any officer ever did this.

Three (3) delegates were sent to this meeting to crash it and were not allowed in. Instead they were arrested for alleged drunkenness by war captain and thrown in jail there. There is now overt opposition in Pueblo to war captain and Governor who is his tool.

Long heated meeting last night. Another follows tonight. Fearing a showdown ending in violence Whiteman [name of Indian service school teacher] and I think well to advise you of situation. Tony is away I am glad to say. Possibly you will decide to handle this mixup yourself. We wish to avoid catastrophe.

The telegram reproduced above was the start of a political drama which was outlined and explained in 269 pages of reports, memos, letters, etc. dealing with Taos Peyotism, copies of which were furnished to me from the U.S. National Archives. Before the drama ended in the summer of 1937 with the U.S. Senate

vote against S. 1399, which had been introduced by New Mexico Senator Dennis Chaves February 8, 1937 to outlaw Peyote, the Senate had published 147 pages of *Hearings on Peyotism* and the BIA had distributed twenty-two pages entitled *Documents On Peyote* with statements against the bill from Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, Ales Hrdlicka, J. P. Harrington, M. R. Harrington, Weston La Barre, Vincenzo Petruccio, Richard Evans Schultes, Elna Smith and Osage Chief Fred Lookout. A nine-page explanation appeared in *Indians at Work*, November 15, 1936. The role of Mabel Dodge Luhan is explicit or implied by the actions of her attorneys H. A. Kiker and F. T. Cheetham and by her Taos Pueblo henchmen Antonio Luhan and Antonio Mirabel.

A few examples: Collier wired on May 15, 1934 to the Superintendent of the Northern Pueblos Agency, C. E. Faris, at Santa Fe and received a reply that "the Taos matter has been under close observation and Tony Mirabel and Mr. Whiteman were here yesterday" On June 14, 1934 Superintendent Faris wrote to the Taos Governor that Peyote was against New Mexico state law and it was all right for Taos Pueblo authorities to suppress Peyotism. On October 27, 1934 Faris invited Luhan's attorney Kiker to observe a Pueblo election and Kiker wrote to Collier that all was well at Taos. On October 17, 1934 national officers of the Peyotist Native American Church (NAC) in Oklahoma, wrote to the BIA the following letter, which was sent on to Superintendent Faris who was asked to explain.

We the members of the Native American Church chartered in the State of Oklahoma appeal to you for advice regarding the religious freedom of Indians in the State of New Mexico.

A group of Pueblo Indians affiliated with the Native Church have been imposed upon by the Governor and Counsel of the Taos Pueblos. They have forbidden the use of their religious sacrament, the earthly herb, peyote. Their meetings have been disturbed by drunks. The governing body has fined and jailed the religious participants rather than the disturbers.

A band of worshipers who are affiliated members of our organization have appealed to the mother church for aid in their predicament of not being able to worship God as they see fit. In compliance with their request we have had two special conferences to discuss

the merits of the case. Rather than go to a big deal expense and undesiring notoriety the members in conference decided to appeal to you, because you have the authority to inform all tribes coming under your guidance, the constitutional rights both civil and religious of all Indians in any state on tribal or federal matter, concerning their individual rights.

Therefore the Native American Church in special conference respectfully request that the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs inform the Governor and Counsel of the Taos Pueblo Indians of the constitutional rights of all Pueblos under their control the right to worship God as they see fit. We sincerely believe this will settle the case and any further disturbances by non-adherents of this faith.

We the special committee appointed by the Native American Church to present this appeal and to discuss the case, if you so desire, request your immediate attention in this matter. We know it will be appreciated by the many members of this faith not only in the State of Oklahoma, but other States where Indians hold services according to the Rituals of the Unwritten code as given to them by their Maker the Creator of the Universe, the Great Spirit, God Almighty. [Signed] The Committee, Francis M. Cayou (Omaha), Edgar McCarty (Osage).

In January 1935 NAC President Alfred Wilson wired Collier that persecution of Peyotists at Taos continued and again Faris was asked to explain. His reply includes an account of the all-day visit of Dr. Harold D. Lasswell to Taos (December 13, 1934: 232-47) and the favorable impression Lasswell received of the "fairness of these [Pueblo] officials." By March 6, 1936 Faris was no longer in charge; and G. F. Stevens wired the BIA in Washington that three Taos Peyotists had been jailed and the Taos situation was difficult due to "outside interference." Commissioner Collier asked Stevens to be explicit about "outside interference." On May 7, 1936, "Through Dr. Sophie D. Aberle, Superintendent," Stevens wrote to the BIA that the outside interference was "Tony Luhan and his wife, Mabel Luhan. Through some investigation made for my department, I find that

Tony Mirabel visits the Luhan house daily and if he does not visit them, Mabel Luhan sends for him."

The trouble had worsened in February 1936 when BIA Special Officer and police for the Taos Council, Antonio "Tony" Mirabel, arrested, then, serving as judge and jury, fined several Peyotists and jailed them. The testimony and complaints against such treatment were accumulated by Telesfor Romero in Taos and sent to the BIA in May 1936. By serving as interpreter with stenographer Edith R. Mirrales, Telesfor Romero recorded twenty-six pages, single spaced, of testimony from the Peyotists who had been arrested in Taos by Tony Mirabel. From Sam Marties was received: "I belong to the Kiva and to the Native American Church and to the Catholic Church I pray to God in my own language because that is the language God gave to me."

On May 22, 1936 Sophie D. Aberle, Superintendent of the United Pueblo agency, forwarded to the BIA in Washington a petition from the Taos NAC council and seventy-five members of NAC. After stating their support for Superintendent Aberle they said, in part:

The wife of Tony Luhan, Mabel Dodge Luhan, [is] doing a lot of trouble making in our village. . . . It is only Tony Mirabel and Tony Luhan who have objection on Dr. Aberle's work. The reason is because Dr. Aberle won't do what Mabel Dodge Luhan wishes her to do. . . .

In a BIA report of the meeting of the All-Pueblo Council on June 6, 1936 is the following:

John Concho of Taos stated that the Peyote Association of his Pueblo caused Antonio Mirabel to be fired by the Government.

Thereupon Antonio Luhan of Taos explained that his wife, Mrs. Luhan, had helped the Indians even when the Bursum Bill was current topic [1920s] of argument; that she had obtained outside help to fight the bill, and she never interfered in matters concerning Taos Pueblo or any other Indian matters unless she was asked to do so and it was for the good of the Indians. He objected on behalf of Taos Pueblo against Dr. Aberle because she is a "lady."

On July 25, 1936, in a memo to Harold L. Ickes, Collier reported that an agreement he had negotiated between the governor of Taos and the peyotist was blocked because "an outside influence" is controlling the Governor. "This outside influence is Mrs. Luhan who, in turn, is being advised by a lawyer named Kiker."

On August 28, 1936 the Taos NAC wrote to Oklahoma Senator Elmer Thomas, who was known as a protector of Peyotism in Congress, in part, as follows:

If we do not have the outside influences come into our pueblo we would not have so much trouble.

We want for Mabel D. Luhan and her Indian husband to keep away from our pueblo also Judge Kiker Antonio Luhan was one time a member of this Peyote religion as well as our old religion in the Pueblo. But since he married to this white lady, he loose all his religion. He also belonged to the Catholic Church. But he loose that too.

On September 18, 1936 Commissioner Collier prepared a report which contained the following:

The Native American Church uses peyote as its sacramental bread.

The members of the Native American Church at Taos are faithful kiva men, observers of the archaic religion, and impeccable in their performance of their community duties

In addition, they, like other Taos Indians, are members of the Roman Catholic congregation.

Collier visited Taos often and in 1923 testified that "I think I know personally all of the members of what they call the peyote church."

Commissioner Collier had been asked by his son Donald why Chaves introduced the bill to prohibit Peyote. On April 2, 1937 he wrote Donald: "Chaves' motive in putting in the peyote bill is just to get back at Ickes and me to satisfy Kiker. He thinks that we might be embarrassed somehow by the bill."

For this phase of my analysis of Taos factionalism it appears appropriate to quote Mabel Dodge Luhan directly. On November

18, 1936 she wrote a letter to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes in which she said, among other things, the following:

Do you really mean that you are defending *self-government* when you take the side of a few drug addicts against the efforts of the pueblo officers to eradicate the usage of the peyote drug? These officers are trying to deliver the Indians from their bondage to a narcotic and you try to encourage them in their use of it. The Catholic Church does not recognize the Native American Church Would you stand for hashish, cocaine, or morphine and defend them on the grounds of religious liberty?

Except for the errors made by Frank Waters in three publications (1942, 1950 and 1971) as a result of reiterating ideas of Mrs. Luhan, I find nothing to attribute to her after the defeat of the of the Chaves bill in 1937.

The change in the climate of opinion of the BIA toward Peyotism actually began on January 8, 1934 when Ickes approved BIA Circular 2970 which instructed all BIA employees that no interference with aboriginal American Indian religions or ceremonies would be tolerated, which reversed the BIA policy which began in 1886. The liberal policy of religious freedom for Peyotism supported by the appointees of Franklin D. Roosevelt took many years to introduce on reservations because of anti-Peyote Civil Service employees, like C. E. Faris, and T. F. McCormick who had BIA jobs until retired because of age. There were anti-Peyotist BIA agents still active in the 1950s. Locally at Taos the return to conditions of 1934 when there was a Peyotist Governor recurred in 1941, 1950, 1953, 1964 and 1966. Peyotist Lt. Governors were elected in 1956, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1963 and 1965. Peyotists Secretaries were elected in 1948, 1954, 1961 and 1964. By using the list of top Taos officials 1940-1966 published by M. Estellie Smith (1966) and the knowledge of Telesfor Romero in 1972 to identify Peyotists on the list, it is evident that Peyotists were pueblo officials fourteen of the twenty-seven years, notwithstanding the fact that Peyotists constitute less than a fourth of the population.

Further evidence of change in New Mexico regarding Peyote was the issuing of papers of incorporation to the Native

American Church on June 15, 1945 and the repeal of the New Mexico State law against Peyote in February 1959. Telesfor Romero invited me to attend a Peyote meeting at his home near Taos on August 9, 1975. I was able to attend the very typical Peyote ritual in the tipi in Telesfor Romero's yard.

I now turn to anthropological literature and cite, first, the misconceptions and fallacies about Peyote which are perpetuated in some anthropological writing about Taos. The earliest such report on Taos Peyotism is in E. S. Curtis (1926:46-47). He made the mistake of writing that Peyote "threatens the integrity of the old ceremonial system." As a matter of fact there is no known instance of Peyotists discouraging converts from participating fully in any and all other religious ceremonies of their group. The opposite is the case. Peyotists have frequently been recognized as leaders also of Navajo Sings, Sun Dances, Christian Churches, Kiva activities and in practicing shamanism in addition to their Peyotism. Taos Peyotists have always been active in their kivas and Pueblo administrative activities, as well as continuing as practicing Catholics.

Benedict (1934:85) perpetuated the error of making the vision the central attraction as follows: "And it is the Dionysian experience of the peyote trance that constitutes its appeal and its religious authority." As early as 1896 Mooney made clear that curing was the appeal: ". . . the attention of the writer was directed to the ceremonial use of a plant [Peyote] for which were claimed wonderful medical . . . properties . . . numerous and important are its medical applications . . ." My own experiences in twenty Peyote meetings, including Taos, revealed no instance of trances or emphasis on visions.

H. D. Laswell (1935), who spent one day in Taos on December 13, 1934 with Superintendent Faris (who went there to investigate trouble), cited Benedict (1934) and may have followed her into writing (p. 237): "A cardinal feature of the peyote cults is the vision The spread of the peyote cult signified an autistic reaction of cultural blocking."

In 1947 Bernard Siegel spent the summer at Taos (1949:562) and wrote two articles (1949 and 1952) and about half of a book (1966, with Beals). In addition to his own interviews he cites only Parsons (1936 and 1939), Lasswell (1935) and W. N. Fenton (1955 and 1957). Siegel's misunderstanding of Peyotism is most glaring in his latest report (p. 139): "The meetings of the peyote cult

were held on Saturday nights, and the young men would be unconscious most of the following day." It is unfortunate that Siegel dismissed the other literature available on Peyotism, such as La Barre, to quote, almost word for word, a false assertion of Fenton (1957:327). Fenton repeats an ancient fallacy by designating members of the NAC "Peyote addicts." Fenton reported (p. 301) field work in Taos during June 1950 but it is doubtful that any Peyotist would have supplied him with the misinformation he published. In the *Documents On Peyote* (U.S. BIA 1937), cited above, nine anthropologists reported Peyote nonaddictive.

Since 1957 no one but Siegel seems to have followed Fenton into the error concerning the nature of Peyote and the reaction to its use in ceremonies. Two Ph. D. dissertations on Taos have featured Peyotism, but neither Estellie Smith (1969) nor John J. Collins (1969) repeat Fenton's mistakes, although listing him in their respective bibliographies. Collins (p. 99) mentioned the passed "bitter controversy" between Peyotists and the political hierarchy but placed the end of such conflicts as 1936 as a result of efforts for peaceful co-existence exerted by the BIA.

Collins' (1969) principal contribution is a very detailed description of the NAC ritual, based on ethnographic interviews with leaders of the Peyote religion. The similarity of the Peyote ceremony recorded by Collins and those published by Curtis (1926) and Parsons (1936) are truly remarkable. Furthermore, Collins' description corresponds very closely to the details of the Peyote meeting I observed at Taos as a guest of Telesfor Romero on August 9, 1975. So far as I have been able to discover no other anthropologist has been a participant observer of a Taos Peyote meeting.

The conclusion I have reached and which I have tried to support with the evidence presented is that Peyotism *per se* contributed little or nothing to the factionalism at Taos. Without opposition to the NAC projected into Taos from non-Indians outside the Pueblo, the peaceful accommodation of Peyotism, Kiva religion and Catholicism which existed from 1896 to 1916 and from 1937 to the present would have always existed in Taos Pueblo.

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