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In the Spirit of Crazy Horse. By Peter Matthiessen. New York: Viking, 1991 (1983). 645 pages. \$25.00 cloth.

At approximately midday on 26 June 1975, FBI special agents Jack Coler and Ronald Williams approached an American Indian Movement (AIM) encampment in the little community of Oglala on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Within minutes, the agents reported over the FBI radio channel that they were encountering heavy fire from numerous positions and that without immediate backup they would be killed. By the time their comrades finally reached their position, Williams and Coler were dead. They had both been shot at close range by a large-caliber weapon (or weapons).

This book is an account of events leading up to, surrounding, and following the deaths of agents Williams and Coler. Written in support of the point of view of the AIM people involved, it is based on interviews and analysis of government documents, some of which were made available under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. The book was originally published in 1983, but because of lawsuits against the author and publisher totaling \$49 million that were brought by William Janklow (former South Dakota governor) and by FBI special agent David Price, both of whom figure prominently in the book, no copies were available for sale after the initial printing. The lawsuits were ultimately unsuccessful (except to the formidable extent that they made reprinting, a paperback edition, and overseas editions impossible), and this 1991 republication includes a critical new epilogue by Matthiessen and a new afterword by Martin Garbus, the attorney who defended Matthiessen and Viking.

Much of the book is devoted to the case of Leonard Peltier, the Turtle Mountain Ojibwa who was charged with the murder of the two agents, extradited from Canada, tried and convicted, and sentenced to two consecutive life terms in federal prison. Peltier's judicial remedies were exhausted when the Supreme Court refused to hear his case, and he is now incarcerated in Leavenworth. Matthiessen argues—convincingly to this reader—that Peltier was unjustly “railroaded” into prison by questionable and/or illegal practices in the FBI's investigation, in the Justice Department's prosecution, and in the judicial process. The Justice Department's decision to prosecute Peltier rather than others, for example, was “a political decision to give immunity to local Indians and blame the whole mess on ‘outside AIM agitators. . .’” (p. 482). Matthiessen shows that there were other serious (Oglala)

suspects in the FBI's "ResMurs" investigation, but only Peltier and two other non-Oglalas were prosecuted (the other two were found not guilty in a separate trial). And at Peltier's trial in Fargo, Judge Paul Benson would not allow the defense to introduce evidence of coercion of witnesses and other FBI misconduct which could well have made a difference in the decision of the jurors.

Matthiessen's new epilogue adds dramatic material on the Peltier case. It tells of the author's two meetings with a disguised and anonymous "X," who insists that he himself, not Peltier, fired the last fatal shots in 1975—in self-defense against the agents. One of the meetings with "X" was filmed by director Oliver Stone for a planned feature-length film on the Peltier case.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse is not, however, a book merely about the guilt or innocence of Leonard Peltier. Matthiessen insists that the shooting of the FBI agents and the "justice" visited upon Leonard Peltier and other AIM members cannot be understood apart from the historic Lakota struggle (remobilized in the 1970s with AIM's assistance) for sovereignty against the aggression of the United States, the recent planning by corporations and the Interior Department for the development of energy resources in the Black Hills and surrounding areas, and the concerted action of the FBI and the Justice Department to neutralize AIM. Through its demands for the return of the Black Hills and its insistence on the sovereign nation status of the Lakota and other native peoples (which Matthiessen describes in readable detail, including the occupation of Wounded Knee), AIM "placed itself directly in the path of huge energy consortiums that were already moving into the Hills" (p. 32). And the federal government—"reflecting the needs of the great multinational corporations" (p. 106)—carried out a program to harass and emasculate AIM. Thus the "real enemy" of Indian people, as recognized by AIM, is "'the corporate state,' that coalition of industry and government that was seeking to exploit the last large Indian reservations in the West" (p. 406).

Matthiessen is, as mentioned, persuasive in his argument regarding the railroading of Peltier into prison. He is less convincing in his insistence that this and the FBI oppression of AIM were ultimately connected to the interests of the "corporate state" in neutralizing radical Indians so that uranium and coal could be extracted in the pursuit of profits, tax revenue, and general development of the West. This is by no means a fanciful proposition, of course, but Matthiessen does not show us the concrete connections (illegal conspiracy? power-elite influence? what?) between spe-

cific corporate power blocs and specific lines of bureaucratic authority in government. With the current interest in "bringing the state back in" to political economy (i. e., recognizing that government actors have their own, distinct interests and agendas apart from those of business), scholars will be disappointed in Matthiessen's questionable assumption that big business and big government are either the same monolith or inescapably in cahoots with one another. One can, however, easily imagine this as the theme of an Oliver Stone movie.

Native American studies scholars will also be uncomfortable with Matthiessen's assertion that there are two kinds of Indians on Pine Ridge Reservation: good, traditional Indians, or those trying to be; and bad "acculturated" BIA/tribal council Indians. It may be that AIM members and many other Indian people often speak as if this is the way things are, but things are not that simple, and the conviction that things are that simple is part of the divisive, colonial oppression experienced by Indian people. This reader—a member of a profession (anthropology) that is often portrayed as insensitive to Indian people (see p. 406)—wonders why Matthiessen found it necessary to derisively write off the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council as the "U. S. Puppet Government." His AIM consultants no doubt saw tribal governments as comprador bodies, but this view oversimplifies a complex situation, and it is not necessary to support Matthiessen's central thesis. Also, why is it necessary to accuse specific Oglala individuals of being bootleggers and to refer to people of mixed ancestry with the pejorative term *breeds*? In 1991, this kind of writing would (and arguably should—with a healthy concern for issues of academic freedom) get an academic fieldworker into difficulties with university human subjects protection committees, funding agencies, and professional association ethics panels. But, of course, Matthiessen is writing by a journalist's rules, not those of academic scholarship.

These criticisms, however, are not meant to detract from respect for an epic book. As Wallace Stegner wrote in *The New Republic*, this book belongs on the shelf with *A Century of Dishonor*, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, and *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. It is a generally convincing analysis of a critical period and a dramatic series of events—events not yet resolved—in the long history of Indian-white relations in North America.

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