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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
Bureau of American Ethnology  
Bulletin 164

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Anthropological Papers, No. 56

FACTIONALISM AT TAOS PUEBLO, NEW MEXICO

By WILLIAM N. FENTON



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# FACTIONALISM AT TAOS PUEBLO, NEW MEXICO

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By WILLIAM N. FENTON

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## THE PROBLEM

Which American Indian tribes are ready for self-government and are to be turned loose from Federal control is a question that the United States Indian Service has been trying to decide for several years. Self-government inevitably flows from accustomed ways of behaving politically, and the old ways of political leadership and followership shine through and modify the forms of government that are imposed on tribal society. If this hypothesis is correct, the study of native forms and understanding traditional ways of governing are fundamental to determining the present status of American Indian tribal governments and to measuring how effectively they function before deciding which tribal organizations can stand the shock of release.

Native political systems, the nature of leadership and of followership, and the operation of social sanctions behind the law are topics to which social anthropologists are paying increasing attention. The Iroquois or Six Nations of New York first aroused my interest in these topics. I carried the field perspective of Indian politics over to the search in libraries and archives for materials on Iroquois political history, and the opportunity to lecture in various universities on primitive politics forced me to compare the Iroquois kinship state with other forms. The comparative method for formulating and testing hypotheses is standard scientific method in the social sciences. With a view to increasing my perspective and in hopes of making a contribution to science and to the governing of men, during the summer of 1950 I proposed to officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs that I test the preceding hypothesis by visiting three tribal communities located in

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<sup>1</sup> The fieldwork for this study, during June 1950, was made possible through the cooperation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U. S. Department of the Interior, and the Smithsonian Institution, where the writer was senior ethnologist, Bureau of American Ethnology. Travel and subsistence in the field were reimbursed by the Indian Bureau; salary and incidental field expenses by the Smithsonian Institution. The writer particularly wishes to thank his former chief, Dr. M. W. Stirling, director of the Bureau of American Ethnology, and the then officials of the Indian Bureau: Dr. John Provinsé, assistant commissioner; Dr. Willard Beatty, the director of education; and D'Arcy McNickle, chief of tribal relations. The report was filed in 1951 and permission was granted to publish it.

separate administrative areas and having different traditions of political organization. I had in mind a Pueblo in the Southwest, a reservation community in Oregon where aboriginally chieftainship was weakly developed and where now the Indian community is enmeshed in industry, and I wanted to study a typical Plains tribe which had accepted a constitution under the Indian Reorganization Act.

I sought to investigate the problem of the impact of native patterns of leadership and followership on the interpretations and operations of written constitutions. The problem thus defined rested on six pre-suppositions or expectations: (a) Americans generally assume that governments do not exist before constitutions are written and the machinery of legislation is set up; (b) participants in Western culture lacking the intercultural viewpoint fail to recognize the diffuse sanctions and informal systems of social control which often are at work in building a body of custom law and which may function in societies lacking true government; (c) what then are the sanctions that were operative and what were the forms of social control formerly; (d) how did sanctions continue to operate after formal machinery was set up; (e) how have existing patterns of political leadership and followership affected the carrying out of administrative policies; (f) how does implementation of policy differ from place to place because of different traditions of political organization and social control which preceded it.

Typically the problem shifted as the project advanced through the planning, consultation, and the initial field approach stages. Possibly I could only phrase a problem for further investigation, and defining the problem might be of some value to social anthropology. In general, political organization is an undeveloped field in social anthropology, at least in the United States. The problem was bound to touch the acculturation process, both as White and Indian cultures interacted and as drift occurred over a span of time within both cultures.

Beyond such theoretical considerations, the project, it was thought, might discover some implications of value to the Indian Service. Agency superintendent and the day-school teacher daily met the problems engendered by a conflict of purposes between tribal political values and administrative regulation. Why is it that policies or organizational changes in the Service which make good administrative sense in Washington fail to be accepted by the Indians? What are the vested interests in the old law ways and in outmoded governmental forms which frustrate democratic action under a sound paper constitution? How advance understanding between Indian leaders and Indian Service personnel?

During preliminary conferences in Washington it helped to see how officials in the human resources branch of the Indian Bureau sized up "the problem." Conversations with Indian Bureau officials enabled me to test the problem as I saw it against "administrative reality." There was a good deal of choice among Indian communities where self-government functions under written constitutions. I wanted to see a community that had not voted to come under the Indian Reorganization Act, one having a constitutional government drafted independently of I. R. A., and a representative I. R. A. community. A fourth possibility suggested a community having a long tradition of constitutional government, as among the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma, but such a control was not a crucial consideration in the present research, since the writer had long familiarity with the Seneca Nation of New York. Choice gradually narrowed to three trouble cases—Taos, N. Mex., Klamath, Oreg., and Blackfeet, Mont.—which fulfilled research specifications and were "hot spots" to the Indian Service. Valuable suggestions on places to study and the initial approach to tribal leaders came from D'Arcy McNickle, Dr. Willard W. Beatty, and Dr. John Provinse of the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and from my colleagues Dr. Edward A. Kennard (formerly of the Indian Service like myself) and Dr. George L. Trager, then staff members of the Foreign Service Institute, United States Department of State.

In only one area was there a difference of opinion as to what community to select for study—in the Southwest. I preferred Taos Pueblo, which lies on the border of the Pueblo and Plains culture areas, and has the reputation of being the toughest pueblo for an anthropological investigation. Here was a challenge. Parsons (1936) had written the basic ethnography, and Trager had published a grammar (Trager, 1946). Taos had been a constant "problem" to the Indian Service for several years; it is rent with factions, and tension had reached a crisis in 1949. Any suggestion bordering on constitutional reform meets bitter opposition from the elders. Because conditions were so tense at Taos, Isleta Pueblo was suggested instead. Isleta had passed through the narrow ground of tension and factionalism to a makeshift compromise (French, 1948), and the writing of its I. R. A. constitution was still fresh in the minds of Indian Service personnel and was being reported by Robert Bunker of United Pueblos Agency, who kindly let me read his manuscript on Pueblo government. For these reasons alone I felt the Isleta experience was history, but Taos politics awaited a chronicler.

The case history of Taos factionalism forms the present paper. The findings of the entire study were presented in two companion

papers which were read at international meetings in England and Austria during the summer of 1952.<sup>2</sup>

Although the decision of which pueblo to study was deferred until after reaching Santa Fe, where I was to lecture at the Indian Service Summer School, the way to Taos had been opened by Dr. Kennard who was teaching there, and who introduced me to the Taos Day School staff. Among these teacher-students was a member of Taos Pueblo who was to guide me throughout the field session. No other nearby pueblo was represented among the students. Between classes and during free periods I prepared myself for visits to Taos Pueblo without removing to the uncertainties of residence in Taos village. The final decision was taken in consultation with the Superintendent of United Pueblos Agency and his staff.

Although Taos has no I. R. A. constitution, its progressive element, in an effort to segregate church and state, had written a constitution and bylaws for conducting civil affairs. A year had passed since the Taos crisis, giving time for the community to settle itself and for individuals to gain some perspective on the recent past. The day-school principal reassured me that fieldwork was possible, and I made two preliminary visits to Taos Pueblo, one to see the place, and the second to attend a "Corn Dance." By Wednesday, June 14, I decided that I could do limited fieldwork by remaining in Santa Fe and commuting to Taos Pueblo several days a week. That day it was tacitly agreed with Indian Service officials that I approach the Taos elders on the structure of their government, find out what I could do about the basis of factionalism—its relations to certain white political parties—and explore what possibilities the old men might see for rapprochement with the dissident element within the pueblo and with the United Pueblos Agency. This was a difficult assignment and I was prepared to fail, although I hoped for partial success.

### METHOD

The initial approach to fieldwork may predetermine success for the investigator. I was especially cautious about making my first contact at Taos because field conditions there are notoriously difficult. The dilemma lay between observing government protocol and working informally. I could either formally approach the governor and council, which would involve making an issue of my fieldwork in the pueblo, or I could contact directly key men whom Lincoln Steffens (1931, p. 627) called "principals" in the local political setup. There were advantages in either approach, and disadvantages. Something was to be gained by meeting the governor and his staff in council,

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<sup>2</sup> These papers have been published since this manuscript was written (Fenton, 1955 a and 1955 b).

although in such contacts American Indians have a way of formally introducing an official and then bowing him out of the community without letting him hear or see more than what transpires within the confines of the meeting. That is the protocol due a commissioner, an area director, and persons of consequence. I was prepared to go through the governor and council and explain how as a historian and scientist I could be interested in the structure and procedure of Pueblo government and say I wanted to learn how decisions are reached; I could assert candidly that I was not then an Indian Service employee; I could request their cooperation in my study and volunteer my good offices for composing their own feuds and improving relations with United Pueblos Agency. I had seen the formal approach fail in groups whose temper I knew better: A white man asks an Indian council for permission to do something for their good, he thinks; they vent their aggression against whites by making an issue of the request and saying no.

My experience as a fieldworker told me to avoid making an issue of the work, to work informally with principals commencing with the most conservative, not to take up residence at the Taos Day School where I would be as effectively isolated as the school and hospital personnel, and to stay at Santa Fe and make periodic visits to Taos as a tourist. Persons who knew the situation thought this decision wise.

"If you go to the governor and state your business he will surely call a council. They will set a date and the council will hear you. Bringing up the question of the Taos government will surely open up the recent trouble with the young men—the boys. They will deny your request."

The best approach then was on the informal level through individuals. It was agreed.

Who, then, is the principal conservative and how approach him? I would talk first to the old men, by their leave to the boys, and last to the principal reformer. There is an established and recognized way of meeting individuals in the pueblo without bothering the governor's office. It is going in by the front door, but it is a casual entry, a daily occurrence. One simply takes his family and makes a formal call on another family in the pueblo, being very careful to stop and ask the guide, who is the governor's deputy in the plaza, for directions. He registers you in the book, you pay the parking fee, and you are qualified tourists. The second or third time he merely waves you on.

Whether nine such visits supplemented by a dozen informant interviews, a day of reading agency records, and reading the manuscript of a book, besides the printed sources, constitutes an adequate sample

of available sources can scarcely be argued. A month would be far better than 2 weeks, 20 informants would give better balance than a handful of principals. Informants should be seen more than once on different days to provide a measure of individual outlook and a check on information. But field conditions being what they are at Taos—a façade of polite affability and a wall of reticence, which are the psychological counterparts of the sunlit plaza and the wall bounding and screening Pueblo culture from the outside world—one does one's best in the time available and gets out. There is some advantage in being one of 20,000 tourists, for numbers bring anonymity. It would be advantageous to see the community after tourist season during the late autumn when comes the period of ceremonial retreat.

### THE HIERARCHY PUTS DOWN "THE BOYS"

The political struggle at Taos Pueblo centers on the issue of how long the hierarchy of priests can go on dominating the maturing generation. "The boys" now comprise some 104 veterans of the last war and as the liberal element in the pueblo they enjoy the sympathy if not the leadership of a few old men; they call themselves "the people's party." The hierarchy controls the council, they oppose all innovations from the outside world, they consider the uninitiated boys upstarts, and they are against the Federal Indian Agency. Tension radiates beyond the wall to the people of Taos village where the resident artists, writers, and tourist entrepreneurs line up with the hierarchy, exhibiting a proprietary if not precious attitude toward the Indians of Taos Pueblo. Support for the young men is diffuse, although they enjoy the confidence of veterans' organizations. The Agency attempted unsuccessfully to maintain a neutral position in the struggle, which reached and passed a climax in the roadblock incident in May 1949, producing a stalemate which I found a year afterward.

But the Taos situation is not a simple age grade struggle between generations vying for control of village politics in order to introduce or exclude certain innovations in the economy. It is rather a Fascist revolution in which one old man of the hierarchy by virtue of status and a strong personality dominates the society. Big Earrings Man, BEM as I shall call him in this report, occupies the apex of the Taos power structure. As leader of Big Earrings kiva group he holds the most important religious status in the village hierarchy and nominates, in fact, the civil officers. His status as leader of his kiva is next to that of Cacique, but the present Cacique is a weak man. BEM's position as conductor of village ceremonials alone would satisfy the ordinary Pueblo Indian man with all the responsibility he would care

to assume, but Big Earrings Man, taking advantage of an otherwise equitable society, aggressively reaches out to control every power position in the community.

"Go see BEM," I was advised, "he is everything. When you reach the pueblo, ask the guide to direct you there. Take the family and make an informal personal call. He will be flattered."

#### BASIC DATA

Taos is the northernmost Pueblo Indian town and the most spectacular settlement on the Rio Grande (pl. 74). Built at the edge of a mountain range, which screens the Pueblo world from the southern plains, its twin four- or five-storied apartment houses rise from the plaza on the north and south sides of a mountain stream. Some 800 persons seek shelter within the pueblo when they are all inside the wall for the winter period of quiet.<sup>5</sup> In summer, more and more Taos Indians occupy scattered houses built outside the wall but in close proximity, and a few families move out to distant ranches for a day or two at a time. Trager noted a tendency for families to live outside, in the summer houses, all the year around. It is as if the intensity of town life during winter ceremonies, capped by prying summer tourists, drives people to the suburbs and even to the country for relief. Acoma, Isleta, Laguna, Santo Domingo, and Zuñi all exceed Taos in population, but Taos, nevertheless, is a large society for an American Indian town and life is intense.<sup>4</sup>

Farming has been the mainstay of Pueblo Indian economy, which the Taos people supplement by hunting. They keep horses and cattle besides other domestic animals—poultry, cats, and dogs. Of late years one-half of the people, if not more, work in town at labor, commuting daily, the men as filling station attendants, gardeners, models; and the women as cooks and maids. The tourist business has been increasingly important, becoming, in fact, the main source of political revenue. Fifteen years ago the town treasury was kept stuffed into 10 leggings, and it came mainly from the tourist collection. The Pueblo fund and whether it should be kept stuffed in leggings or deposited in the bank has been a source of contention for more than 20 years. The history of this fund, its innovation, investment, decline, and corruption, belongs to the case history of a progressive governor, to which we shall return.

#### VALUES

Certain traditional patterns and values are basic to an understanding of Pueblo Indian politics. Of these, cooperation, unanimity, and

<sup>5</sup> 921, official agency census; about 120 must be away.

<sup>4</sup> The term "community" has been applied to the maximal group of persons who normally reside together in face-to-face association. Such communities rarely embrace more than 1,000 individuals (Murdock, 1950).

considerateness are here discussed. Community work exerts a strong claim on the loyalty of every Pueblo Indian male. Even the young veteran who wants the franchise manifests willingness to work for the community. And those few who shirk community work by way of civil disobedience must experience considerable personal discomfort and anxiety at withdrawing from active participation in joint efforts. As in other societies, a man's conscience at Taos reflects the social sanctions. A man knows that community work is his responsibility. If he can't go he hires someone to work for him. The officials set aside one ditch for delinquents who fail to show up the first time community work is called for ditch cleaning. The few delinquents take longer cleaning one ditch, and they are conspicuous examples to the pueblo. What really disturbs the old men, however, is that certain young men fail to take part and defy time-honored sanctions.

Parsons (1939, pp. 107-109, 111) has remarked how the cooperative person is highly esteemed and how the spirit of cooperation reaches from the household to the hierarchy. At fiestas each woman sweeps the space before her door, snow removal is called from the housetops, and of all communal undertakings, work on irrigation ditches takes precedence at the annual spring cleaning and throughout the farming season. Why do people cooperate, Parsons speculates? She dismisses an automatic or magical sanction, noting the general motivation when everybody is helping. She ascribes the root to the principle of mutual aid—"Because at any time anyone may need help, therefore, all help one another."

A better approach to understanding the present situation, perhaps is Malinowski's identification of law with the withdrawal of reciprocal services by a party to an agreement when another party has failed to observe a social norm. The young men will not work because the old men will not give them a hearing in council; the old men will not hear them because they have devalued the council in gossip; the young men embarrass their "fathers" by not taking part in saint's day dances. The old men will not admit the young men to political participation until they have been initiated and have worked up through the ranks to the council.

Unanimity is an accepted principle in Taos decisions. "Let us move along together . . .," say the chiefs on reaching an agreement after much discussion. Conformity is the outward manifestation of unanimity in all Taos doings from dress to house types, to participation in dances and community work. As in other societies where unanimity is the rule, the council can more easily apply a negative than a positive sanction. Unable to reach agreement, no decision follows or a request is denied. In fact, the council cannot function in the

face of a large area of disagreement. Anciently, a disagreeing faction might remain in possession of the pueblo while the conservatives removed to found a new town. No one can quit the present situation—those who want peace have nowhere else to go. So the faction in power produces a quasi-unanimity by simply not calling eligible councillors who are known to disagree. A few dissenters oblige by not attending council.

The rule of considerateness is the other face of political sovereignty (Bunker, MS.). "For the source of Pueblo sovereignty, day by day, is the will and the continued interest of its individual members. They will delegate power only as they can exact concessions from those who will govern them" (Bunker, MS.). Pueblo sovereignty allows some measure of individual variation within set forms so long as the innovator does not threaten the structure; so much the better if he makes obeisance to authority. It is customary usage for men to wear their hair parted and bound in two "braids," to affect leggings and the blanket, and to remove the heels from shoes or to wear moccasins. Most younger men wear shoes and trousers. But on St. Anthony's feast day my guide went back to the house before going down to the plaza and loosely wrapped a pink cotton blanket around his trousers. The gesture was out of consideration for his father who, as a councillor, would be singing. The rest of the time he goes about in shoes and trousers. He would not deny the Pueblo's considered requirement of some minimum adaptation to its standards. Those militant younger veterans who consistently deny minimal standards get nowhere. Officials, too, are bound by this rule to reflect in their official capacities and in personal behavior the considered wishes of the people. When the rule is broken by the most exalted member of the hierarchy, the pueblo seethes with gossip from the elders to the smallest child. "Big Earrings Man has argued *ad hominem* in council," say the elders; "BEM must have got hungry for steak," say the children when he has gone again with a delegation to Albuquerque. "Most of all," they say, "BEM is a bastard."<sup>5</sup>

#### DIFFUSE SANCTIONS

Gossip is a most powerful sanction at Taos. "Since the character of the chiefs should be above suspicion and a man's behavior affects the validity of his ceremony," writes Parsons (1939, p. 154), "town gossip . . . is not idle or barren; it is public opinion bringing pressure upon those whose behavior or character is believed to be vital to the efficacy of ritual . . ." Children are urged not to gossip. "A little thing gets big," said my guide. Oftentimes scandalous tales reach such proportions that the matter lands in the governor's office.

<sup>5</sup>Under Spanish law a bastard may not hold civil office.

One of the sparks, as we shall see, which ignited the crisis of 1949, arose from gossip among the young veterans that the council was inefficient.

Public criticism and the scorn of one's neighbors was all the punishment meted out to the informants of E. C. Parsons. BEM's zealotry in religious matters stems from anxiety and guilt over Parson's exposé. In 1939 when Parson's monograph "Taos Pueblo," written in 1936, first appeared in the village and was interpreted to the old men, they were aghast and shocked that "secrets" had been divulged to a white person. An inquisition was held, and all that kept guilty parties from physical punishment was that they were strong politically. BEM's in-laws, his wife and her people, were Mrs. Parson's principal informants. Social status gave them a certain immunity from punishment, but not from the sanctions of gossip and public opinion. It was punishment enough to hear themselves openly censured in council.

My guide said that joking to make fun of each other is not taken seriously, but I suspect that any criticism bites deep. Note that during the winter ceremonials clowns called the Black Eyes put on a backwards dance, in which some of the men appear as transvestites and imitate dress and dancing of Santa Clara Pueblo men and Navaho women; they become the objects of practical jokes, indicating perhaps how seriously Taos people take remarks about their appearance and demeanor.

Apprehensiveness is a Pueblo trait which ethnologists generally have noticed. Parsons (1939, p. 67) cites the case of a Taos victim of witchcraft who feared to make reprisals on the witch: "Fear of witchcraft, fear of ridicule, fear of public opinion!" One avoids a public stir. Pueblo officials whom I interviewed would release pent-up tensions and pour out information for several consecutive hours. Then often I could not get a second interview because individuals would feign some other business, or they simply would not keep appointments. Indeed persons must be swept with waves of guilt and suffer anxiety at having revealed something. In a closed social system almost any admission is a breach of security.

There is some suggestion at Taos, as at Hopi, that the wealthy individual is open to suspicion. Kennard, in his Santa Fe lectures, observed that suspicion takes the form of jealousy with witchcraft becoming the covert channel for release of aggressive impulses.<sup>6</sup> Whereas no legal sanctions are imposed by the hierarchy on individual self-improvements, since they neither create new roles relative to the community nor set up authorities rival to community law (Bunker,

<sup>6</sup> I once mentioned to my guide that I had photographed a certain person on my first visit. "Oh yes, he is a noted sorcerer," was his only comment.

MS.), diffuse controls intervene to keep the individual from distinguishing himself propertywise from his neighbors. I am not aware how much open stealing occurs at Taos, but a "keep out" sign on one corral forewarned trespassers, and I observed that persons of property padlocked outbuildings, including hencoops. Trager's informants said the padlocks were proof against Mexicans, which I suspect is a convenient euphemism for certain persistent offenders in the pueblo. A third person expressed fear that the windows in his new place would be broken. I wonder, under what circumstances do individuals resort to stoning a person or his property? In this case the individual has set himself up as a trader outside the pueblo but within the reservation, catching the tourists before they come under the eyes of the governor's staff.

Taos society has an ample reservoir of aggression, and a certain proportion of it is free floating and gets projected or transferred to other persons. There is first the enormous repression from the hierarchy to make youth conform which is protested in various ways and ultimately accepted. Every Pueblo official comes in for a full share of abuse, but the total welfare of the pueblo as manifest in its most public group activities is not questioned. Any white man is a convenient target, and United States Indian Service personnel get the full blast, with choke barrel reserved for the superintendent or area director. "Get behind them and push them," BEM told me; "when we see what you have done in that direction, we will be ready to talk further."

Accommodation to Pueblo ways is the other face of Pueblo character. From dress to ritualism one conforms ultimately. Resist white ways of change and accept the stability of Pueblo ways. The escape lies through ceremony, by going on down to the end together. The relationship between cause and effect is not considered; the ceremonies have a kind of arbitrary magical sanction of their own, like "work" in our own culture (Parsons, 1939, p. 97).

In view of all this, two questions stand unresolved: (1) How explain Taos violence in view of Pueblo values which suppress it?<sup>7</sup> The shooting of BEM's cows in trespass, threatened use of firearms by the boys against the hierarchy, and the roadblock at the bridge burst by the veterans—bespeak violence. What is the frequency of overt acts?<sup>8</sup> (2) How does BEM maintain his power in the face of diffuse

<sup>7</sup> One reader of the manuscript report, Dr. George L. Trager, supplies an answer to the first question: "In Taos, I think violence, per se, is not ideologically undesirable. There is to be no violence within the group, but violence as a weapon against outsiders is there all the time, and dissidents are outsiders. The dissidents, themselves, expecting violent resistance, use violence in anticipation."

<sup>8</sup> A second reader, himself a member of the Taos Pueblo, pointed to three historical incidents which are precedents for violence. "The reoccurrence of violence may be noted in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, in the shooting of Governor Bent at Taos in the mid-19th century, and the physical clash between officers of the Pueblo and the 'Peyote Boys' about 1920."

sanctions? Answers to these questions await further fieldwork, but there are hints where to look. Taos has a dominantly Pueblo pattern of culture, but anthropologists see with Parsons Plainslike attributes in Taos culture which give it an almost schizoid character. The very physical appearance of the people and their dress suggests the southern Plains. They love to sing Plains war songs to the tambourine drum. When the Kiowas visit them, the Taos engage in horseplay, threatening and sometimes throwing an unsuspecting Kiowa giant into the stream. Threats of physical force are not Pueblo-like. The "boys" threaten gunplay on the Council, and it is unwarranted to assume as Pueblos that they would not raid the Governor's office and seize the canes of office. When a Taos says that violence was barely avoided when several respected elders dissuaded the boys from an outbreak, the Indian Service should listen. The boys did drive through a human roadblock at the bridge.

We suspect that BEM maintains his prestige in the face of criticism because of his fundamental integrity with respect to the religious duties which he exercises in the community. In the eyes of the people of Taos Pueblo, he is their most effective representative at Albuquerque; having made a reputation for standing off officialdom, he is treated with respect and feared. Personally, he is fearless. He is not afraid to back up the instruments of Pueblo government with legal sanctions, with the threat or even use of physical force. He is decisive. Moreover, Pueblo society has no way of dealing with the individual who stands out above criticism.

#### STRUCTURE

In the development of Taos society, social control has not been left entirely to value system and to diffuse sanctions, but certain control jobs have been delegated to specified units of the social structure. Taos society places the organized force of the community behind certain individuals and has given them the job of determining and enforcing general social policy. Some individuals have more than one job. Accordingly, the individuals whom Indian Service officials meet at Taos are acting in the capacity of civil officials. In these roles they are puppets manipulated by their other selves or by other persons who may not be present. The inner covert system is a theocracy; its outer façade is civil government. The men of authority are priests, or they are nominated and controlled by priests. The Indian Service seldom penetrates beyond the Taos concept of the wall, a kind of iron curtain, which delimits the inner society and screens it from the outside world. Are the functions of church and state separable? How in this situation does the personal element enter to allow a strong man to come to power? How can the Indian Service

get inside the wall to reach the people? Can the people get beyond their own wall to reach the Indian Service? <sup>9</sup>

The structural outlines of Pueblo government have been described (Laswell, 1936; Parsons, 1936, 1939; Aberle, 1948). This report, therefore, treats certain aspects of structure in some detail and attempts to interpret these data in the light of a problem set forth in the above questions.

If we in Washington shall understand the "problems" of the pueblo, we must first understand its government. I put this proposition to a headman who replied:

Way back in the time when the Indians emerged from the ground here in North America, they had the form of government which they now have. When the Spaniards came a civil front was overlaid on the old government and the man called Governor was awarded a cane by the Spanish colonial ruler. The cane was the symbol of office. The Government which the Spanish set up was like that of any other Spanish community: Governor, Lt. Governor, Sheriffs, and Fiscales. But the old Indian government continued at Taos behind the facade of the Governor and his staff. The Governor's staff includes ten men, as follows [we enumerated these on our fingers to be certain that I would remember them and that we had the proper number]: First, Governor; second, Lt. Governor; third, Sheriff, an Assistant Sheriff, and a third man who is an Assistant Sheriff; sixth, the Fiscal; seventh, the Assistant Fiscal; and three Deputy Fiscales'

—making 10 in all who comprise the governor's staff and who are to all intents and purposes the civil government of the pueblo.

The governor's staff has jurisdiction over matters happening within the "wall" of the pueblo. The sheriffs are peace officers; they maintain order, answer complaints made to the governor, investigate, and bring to trial persons guilty of misdemeanors and other crimes. The governor's staff is a municipal court with a jury of eight men: The governor and the lieutenant governor, one of whom presides, the second usually being prosecutor, and the jury consisting of the other eight. In the meetings of this court, the lieutenant governor renders final decision and assesses the fine. The sheriff is called "Mexican" governor and is third in line. There is a device of his taking the disputants into a sideroom and suggesting that they settle out of court without going before the governor and his officers. No

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<sup>9</sup> My Taos reader makes these observations: (1) How get inside the wall? The United Pueblos Agency could easily reach most of the people by direct mail, a distribution of information to which the Pueblo government does not object. Mail is not restricted to the governor's office and the council. Mail is delivered in town at the post office. Thus UPA could inform the people it serves.

(2) How get over the wall? Special trips to the Agency by a few families would be effective. A few families at first would dare to go to Albuquerque to complain. A few soon snowballs into many. But the Agency discourages them and maintains a hands-off policy. Heads of families formerly could have raised complaints as questions to council. This practice was a means of sanction on the governor and council at the Pueblo, and it prevented people from going outside and complaining of the shortcomings of their government.

(3) The Catholic priest is a key person and has the sanctioned privilege of delivering sermons. The priest has tenure and the high respect which the Indians have for religion would vouchsafe his person.

fine is assessed. It is easier and less time consuming. It reduces tension. But this is not the whole government of the pueblo. This is the government which was again confirmed by President Lincoln in 1863, after the territory was taken over from Spain, on which occasion a second set of canes was given to the governor and the war captains.

The war chief or war captain and the lieutenant war captain and their staff of 10 men number 12 in all, a carryover from earlier days. Their duties are to protect the village from outside aggression, and, in recent years, they have jurisdiction of lands outside the wall; they oversee use of land for hunting, supervise control of crops, watch out for trespassers, supervise maintenance and repair of fences, control grazing rights on forest lands, and serve as fire wardens. Just as the *fiscales* direct community work in the village and keep up the irrigation ditches, so the war captains take care of the fences and grazing rights. But questions of land use repose in the council. The governor's office is specifically charged with maintenance of irrigation ditches. Now since Mexicans live below Indian lands, the governor's office has the job of settling disputes arising over water rights from irrigation ditches. The council and the governor have jurisdiction also over parceling out of lands, over rents, and over selling of lands. The war captain's staff of 12 plus the governor's staff of 10 never meet as a council of 22.

The concept of the "wall" epitomizes the primary functions of government: internal security and protection from outside aggression. The Taos wall which formerly fenced out enemies—now the whites—is both a physical entity and a psychological screen. It makes a convenient division of labor between the staffs of the governor and the war captain. The first is called "inside" chief, the latter "outside" chief (Aberle, 1948, p. 38). But the governor's staff, in addition to having jurisdiction over all happenings inside the wall and directing community work—clearing ditches, sweeping the plaza, planning dances, repairing churches, plastering—conducts external political affairs of the pueblo, maintaining relations with the Agency, greeting and guiding tourists through the pueblo, levying parking fees and camera permits, and, in general, protecting the Cacique and headmen within from the whites outside.

It would appear that the governor's and war captain's staffs have overlapping functions outside the wall, and I am not quite clear how the Taos people themselves make the distinction. If I am not mistaken, the governor's staff is far busier and the war captain's staff has fewer jobs to perform now than formerly. The practice of the war captain's office differs markedly from the ideal concept of "outside chief" (Aberle, 1948, p. 38). Actually the war captain's staff has

some duties inside the wall. At the St. Anthony's Day dance (June 13) I noted the presence of a staff of men atop both north and south sidehouses. The governor and his staff were on the north pueblo; and the war captain and his staff on the south housetop. For community work the staff is split between the two houses.<sup>10</sup> Community work is called from the housetops; the governor or one of his staff goes aloft and cries out what work is to be done and when, and on the day appointed a crier goes up again to call the people out. Attendance is checked and sanctions imposed on delinquents. Summons to council are called in the evening, sometimes following a dance in the plaza.

A full council of the Taos Pueblo comprises four classes of members: (1) The governor of the year and the lieutenant governor (sometimes including the eight members of his staff); (2) the war captain and lieutenant war captain (and possibly the 10 members of his staff); (3) councillors or *principales*<sup>11</sup> who are the veterans of the first offices in the above classes; and (4) the Cacique and the six kiva chiefs or headmen. The latter are priests and heads of associations and they are frequently of the third class, occasionally accepting offices of classes 1 and 2. Class 4 constitutes the covert government of Taos, for the Cacique and his staff control all policy within the Pueblo wall and those who front for them outside make no fundamental decisions. When one of the headmen feels impelled to accept the governorship or goes along on delegations to the Agency or to Washington, he represents the hierarchy and is in fact the government of the Pueblo. As long as the headmen remain disinterested, more and more authority diffuses to the governor and his staff. At such times the staff have been considered proper members of the council. It is a fact, however, that the governor and war chief and their officers serve entirely without compensation. Hence no one really seeks the office, observes my Taos reader.

The total council numbers between 29 and 40. Its size depends on whether the fiscal and assistant fiscal, sheriffs, and how many helpers of the war captain are called. The number seems to vary. Both the governor and war captain have secretaries, who are often staff members. Quite likely the staff of the year is called, and the following persons who have served in previous years: War captain and the war captain's first three helpers; governor, lieutenant governor (governor's right-hand man), head sheriff (governor's left-hand man), and head fiscale (Aberle, 1948, p. 47). I stress this point of variation because it gives rise to misunderstanding: men who have served in junior

<sup>10</sup> Actually, for community work there is no division of the staff according to a Taos reader. The war chief and his staff are responsible for getting the Southside people to the dance group. The staff is merely split north and south by convenience during community work.

<sup>11</sup> Not to be confused with Steffens' "principal," although they may be the same.

capacities feel neglected for not being called to council. While the constant appointment of new officers theoretically multiplies the number of the council, minor offices are accorded to younger men, and when they are not moved up to lieutenant grade, they do not become bona fide members of the council, say the old men. Also, the operation of factionalism contributes to and is fostered by passing the offices around in a narrow kinship group. Just what degree of limit kinship imposes on Taos government I was unable to find out.<sup>12</sup>

The council proper of the old men or *principales* is presided over by the Cacique, who in final analysis could be the real governor of the pueblo. But he is not for several reasons. His office is hereditary in the male line. Traditionally he has upheld the Pueblo ideal of considerateness, listening only when the others have reached a decision, epitomizing the delegated sovereignty of the people, and intervening only when convinced the public will is being violated. "Nothing is brought to their attention on which there is not unanimous agreement," writes Bunker (MS). Hope might lie in this office and person but for one thing. The present Cacique at Taos is a weak man, I am told, and "he is like a child," one leader said, and easily influenced. Theoretically when any issue affecting the whole tribe arises the Cacique is spokesman of the whole tribe. The present Cacique served once as governor (about 1940), and he is surely known to all members of the pueblo; but he leaves executive matters to his staff, to Big Earrings Man in particular.

The six kiva leaders may have equally important religious offices in conducting the ceremonies, but evidently four function more fully in politics. Two kivas are not represented among the so-called headmen. This is interesting, since Parsons says there were formerly 8 kivas at Taos, and it would look as if the present 6 are dwindling to 4. Kiva affiliation is without regard to residence on the north side or the south side of the pueblo, but a true moiety system functions ceremonially. The moieties are named sexually, "male" and "female," and directionally, "north" and "south," corresponding to the two sides of town. On the north side are Big Earring people, Day or Snow people, and Knife people kivas; Feather, Old-Axe, and Water people kivas are on the southside, as may be seen in the diagram of the political structure of Taos Pueblo (pl. 75). The heads of Snow and Feather kivas still sit on the council but are not among the headmen. And actually Old-Axe and Water people kivas are south of the wall. Every initiated adult male belongs to a kiva group, but the number and composition

<sup>12</sup> With reference to this statement, Trager (personal communication) comments: "This is consonant with a general impression I have always had that Taos differs from other pueblos in actually having more choices of action available. These are prescriptions, true, but there are ways around them. Factionalism is, as it were, at home in the culture. One doesn't go out and start a new pueblo (in the old days), one simply fights or tries deviousness or takes on power."

of kiva groups vary. Beyond this and the discussion in Laswell (1936) and Parsons (1936, 1939) of how youths are assigned by their parents to kivas and trained, I got no further information.

The picture of how the kivas function in electing the governor of the year, however, is fairly clear if a bit schematic. The headmen of the kiva groups serve as staff to the Cacique and they are the covert government of the pueblo. "Formerly the Taos Council consisted only of the chiefs of kiva societies and was probably less conspicuous," writes Parsons (1939, p. 146). As "grandfathers" they occupy the top of the hierarchy. Of the present four headmen, two are more important than the others. Traditionally, "the chief of the Big (or Abalone) Earring people is the chief of the three kivas on the north side of town. He is town chief and president of the council." Alternately he and Water Man, who is chief of the three southside kivas, direct the education of youths and lead the sacred August pilgrimage to Blue Lake. Water Man may be Cacique (Parsons, 1939, p. 121), but he is not at present. Parsons noted a tendency for the office of headman like that of Cacique to pass in the male line of primogeniture or to the nearest kin, by an officeholder giving a son to a kiva and training him for the role; this tendency was confirmed only for Cacique by my Taos critic.

As in all of the Rio Grande pueblos, it is the town chief and the "grandfathers" at Taos who appoint the governor and his staff and all other secular officers who since the Spanish Royal edict of 1621 have stood between the true government of the Pueblo and foreigners. Parsons (1939, p. 147) contends that even the secular offices are carefully apportioned by ceremonial groups. Obviously, Big Earrings Man holds the key position in the power structure. To quote informant D: "Nominations for civil officers are made by four headmen, leaders of the ceremonies, on the last day of December. Each of the headmen has the right to name a man. Members of the council don't know who will be nominated, and as many as four names may be submitted if each headman has a candidate. Then they vote, and the two with the majority of votes are voted on again. Cacique conducts the election, which is really a caucus."

The Taos caucus system offers one of the most interesting examples of the operation of checks and balances in primitive politics and is quite unknown to the literature of social anthropology. If the system functioned as it has evolved in theory, the people of Taos would be protected from domination by the hierarchy. But Taos is a theocracy, and the priests are politicians, and they have perverted the system to their own ends. But there is an ideal pattern.

The hereditary Cacique holds a moiety system in balance. The moieties, as we have seen, consist of six kiva groups oriented north and south and ascribed to "male" and "female" categories. The latter

are comprised within caucus lines, as in the diagram. The first two north-side kivas, Big Earring people and Day people are linked as female with Feather people kiva, which is No. 4, on the south side. These three female kivas comprise a caucus, which meets underground at Big Earring kiva, on the north side, under the chairmanship of its headman, to advance a candidate for governor. The second, or male caucus, is comprised of the third north side (Knife people) kiva and the two remaining on the south side of town, Old-Axe and Water people, which meet as a caucus in Water people kiva under its headman to find a candidate. Likewise the Cacique by himself may think of a third candidate. Actually, the Cacique, being of the Water people kiva, knows what is going on there and may in theory also be its headman, and might even accept candidacy, and be elected governor of the year. So the leader of the female caucus may report through the Cacique or directly at the convention which now always takes place underground in the main female kiva of the Big Earring people. The headman or religious leader of the Big Earring kiva presides over the convention, since he is host. The first round of voting eliminates one of the candidates, if there are three, and the two remaining become the candidates for election. When a tie occurs, it is broken by appealing to the first passing member of the public, even a little child, that is encountered by a messenger sent up the ladder from below. He says in effect, "The grandfathers are locked in argument and cannot agree between A and B for Governor of the Year. Who shall it be?" The first response settles the issue. And the public may look with fond pride upon some boy who elected the governor that year. My Taos critic, now a grown man, enjoyed this honor.

It is easy to understand how the system itself plays into the hands of the religious leader of the first kiva. He has the edge on all caucuses which meet in his kiva, since as host he initiates the speaking. While in theory his opposite balances his power, and the Cacique is supposed to maintain an equilibrium between the two moieties, we shall see how two weak personalities are dominated by a strong man in a key position. It may be a footnote on personal history that the religious leader of the male moiety was a reasonably liberal person until he became religious leader of the south side; then he tightened up. New-found conservatism supported the position of his opposite number in the north side moiety. The latter holds office despite two alleged anomalies—that he is a bastard, and that one who has drawn blood may not hold office in the Pueblo religion. The facts, nevertheless, are most difficult to ascertain.

Informant D stated that the Cacique's sole job is to conduct the election and swear in the officials after the perfunctory validation

by the county clerk, and that he has no other functions. The December caucuses, moreover, according to this informant, ideally are held at the Cacique's house and he presides. The headmen sit in the center and the councillors range around the room. The caucus is conducted after the manner of council meetings, described by another informant, A.

Four possible types of council meeting including various personnel were described to me: (1) Cacique and the six headmen; (2) the governor and his staff; (3) the full council, "whole body of the council," which treats civil affairs; and (4) a factional council, when Big Earrings Man tells the governor to call only a few men to hold a "secret gathering." There are no meetings of the women, but there seems to be some mechanism for consulting the women before reaching a decision on certain issues. When the Commissioner of Indian Affairs visits Taos, type 2 or type 3 meeting is convened, depending on whether he wants to meet the governor's staff or the whole council. In August 1949 the then Commissioner met the governor's staff, which, of course, comprised the factional henchmen of Big Earrings Man. It was clear that a factional council denied the GI's a meeting on the veterans' program because certain other members of the council were present waiting for a meeting with the superintendent at the day school.

Although in final analysis the hierarchy dominates the council and the town chief leads the conservative faction, the Taos Pueblo Council may be a more democratic organization and not the totalitarian theocracy that White and Parsons have described. In full council the councillors can sanction a nomination by any of the headmen by supporting or not supporting it. Arguments may get intense. Councillors have learned how to make their own will and the considered will of the pueblo prevail over the headmen. That Big Earrings Man resorts to not calling the full council shows how powerful are these sanctions and how bureaucratic and totalitarian methods destroy democratic action. Some of my information on the council is indeed untrustworthy, and it needs testing in the field. Remember that I did not experience a council. In fact, Big Earrings Man seemed as anxious as I to postpone a meeting as long as possible. He would tell the governor what he needed to know.

#### IDEAL OPERATION OF THE COUNCIL

"Before Big Earrings Man came to power, the council used to work wonderfully. They were very cooperative among themselves and they worked well with the Agency. (Ordinarily the council meets at the governor's house, but Cacique can call a meeting at his own house.) The governor used to have his secretary read any pending matters of business to the council and turn the matter over to the Cacique.

Cacique has an interpreter who serves all members of the council. The council, seated around the room, one by one speak their minds on the problem. Each man gave his opinion and spoke impersonally to the question, never to a personality, followed by the next man on his right. Cacique sits in a certain place—the side of the room is not important—and his staff, the headmen, near him. Friends confer with neighbors en route to council and sit adjacently in conference. The circuit of speaking goes to the right and returns to the Cacique, who keeps track of the debate in his head. He proclaims a decision. When only half are agreed, he resubmits the question; someone may meanwhile be called in to interpret whether the innovation is good or bad. The decision is turned over by Cacique to governor and staff who have been present during the debate. Meanwhile governor's secretary is taking notes. If the matter involves sending a delegation, the Cacique may so decide and name the party and appropriate money for travel; a detail like a telegram or a letter is left to the governor."

"This is the way it used to be."

The governor's secretary and the interpreter occupy positions of potential influence in Taos affairs since many of the councillors are illiterate and most of them know English quite imperfectly. Both offices, like that of treasurer, result from white contact. The question of misinterpretation has arisen frequently in recent councils; Big Earrings Man has employed a series of interpreters who serve as long as they do his bidding. The interpreter likewise can become the instrument of Agency policy.

The roles of secretary and treasurer may be combined. Before 1935 and maybe now, the tribal money was kept in some 10 leggings—"two dollar bills of the old large issue and hundred dollar bills all rumbled up and stuffed in the legging." One treasurer insisted before he took office that the moneys be deposited in a bank. "No," they said, "that is the white man's way and we can't trust the banks." The method explained of depositing and checking out funds on order of the council remained unconvincing until the council asked a neutral third party who confirmed. Then a later treasurer got to drinking. The governor did not discover how the tribal funds were being drawn on until nearly the end of the year, when the embezzler took to the bush and could not be found for an accounting to the retiring governor and council. The shortage of funds at the new year occasioned a "grand jury" investigation. Characteristically, the council, which is the court, wanted to try members of the retiring administration individually, and equally characteristically, the defendants insisted on collective security: They would all be present in the council chamber during the trial. By winning the concession that they all be present

and by pleading that the shortage of funds was the work of an individual under the influence of alcohol, a young reformer got them off, but incurred the enmity of Big Earrings Man. This case started a rift between the boys and the old men.

Resuming the statement of ideal procedure, the council reserves all policy questions affecting the whole pueblo, and it delegates only the minor business of the community to the governor and staff. Similarly, the governor refers matters of policy to the councillors for consideration and recommendation before taking action. Although the governor and lieutenant governor are the officials with whom the Agency in Albuquerque is concerned, in effect the council is the true government of the pueblo. And most delegations going outside the pueblo therefore include the governor and lieutenant governor, who are merely fronting for the council, and one or two councillors, presumably to witness their behavior and attest to the council how they behaved. When it has been expedient to send only one or two men, BEM usually goes along with the governor to tell him what to say. In this respect BEM reminds me of the Government official in our own society who likes to travel, refuses to delegate authority, and enjoys the roles attached to power statuses.

#### THE JOB OF GOVERNOR

“The governor of the year,” as he is called, is then the surrogate for the council. If at first glance he appears to have authority, such is begrudged him by the council, and he seems equally unable to delegate it to his staff. He still must bear the irksome details of law enforcement, domestic relations, community work, and arrangements with outsiders, including the Federal Government. He is the “fall guy” for the Pueblo: there are jobs to do, authority is begrudged him, and he is being continually undermined by public opinion and checked from above, and he is not paid. But Bunker (MS.) has noted four techniques which are peculiar to Pueblo governors and which enable them to survive: (1) self-deprecation; (2) infinite resourcefulness in changing the subject; (3) quick, almost impersonal countering of personal attack; and (4) a sense of timing. These can be substantiated for Taos, but certain maneuvers, noted by Bunker, I can only infer, not having attended councils. Distance is underlined by sitting farther from the superintendent at each meeting; the superintendent’s role is construed as one of technical assistance, not policymaking; the self is subordinated to public responsibility; one year’s officers berate their predecessors for failures, diverting attention from themselves.

What it means to be Governor of Taos and a sense of why such men accept office repeatedly or give up in discouragement can best be

gained from the account of the political experience of one man, D, which follows:

What is it like to be Governor of Taos?

The governor job is hard work and it is a tough job to accomplish anything; it takes thinking and talking. There are a lot of problems undone.

*Tourist collection.*—In 1928 I created the tourist collection which has become the principal source of revenue in the pueblo. When I came to office as Lt. Governor we had but \$50 in the pueblo fund. I thought this tourist collection up as a means of building up the treasury. I put ——— in as Governor, and I was Lt. Governor, and all the people knew that for four years I had been trying to raise money for the pueblo. After we were installed, the Governor asked me what was my idea of how to raise the money. He asked the question before the other officers. I spoke: "We are having trouble and we have no money. I think that we should charge 25 cents for tourist parking and a license fee of \$1.00 for still cameras, and \$2.00 for movie cameras, graduated according to size. People shall register in the Governor's office and leave the money there." And then we put the question of that collection before the ten officials of the Governor's staff. "I don't want public money for myself," declared the Governor. (Before that the preceding several Governors had charged as much as \$2.00 for tourists and kept the money for themselves.)

I also proposed that commercial buses in the Indian Detour business should pay 25 cents a head for passengers coming into the pueblo—the same for hacks and stages. One concessionaire objected, saying that it was a free country and that he could drive anywhere. I told him to stay away unless he was willing to collect and pay the fee. His boss intervened. "We are not your monkeys," I said. "Our reservation is private property." The matter was deferred 2 days until the Council could convene and hear the case. The Council met at 8 p. m., and the then Agent backed us. The bus people came through under pressure. Dude ranches followed suit.

When in the preceding discussion the Governor put the question to his staff, BEM, who was then a second Lt. opposed the idea. The other nine were for it. Then when we had decided we called the Council and we explained what we had in mind. These four ex-Governors who had collected for themselves were the only opponents to the new policy. The rest agreed. Carried. This was 1928.

By the first of August, 1928, we had \$1,500 which we had collected!

*The Cooperative Thresher.*—Now the next step: I suggested that we buy a threshing outfit. I said that we had threshed long enough with horses and that it was high time we had our own machine. We called the Council. Council thought it a lot of money. It belongs to all of us, they said. Some were for distributing it per capita; others saw the sense of the cooperative argument. The Governor suggested calling the people together outside by the wall [mass meeting]. The Governor explained. They voted and the four ex-Governors were alone in wanting to divide the money per capita.

When the majority agreed I wired again to the Superintendent to come up—that we had decided to buy a \$1,500 threshing outfit. The agent suggested that besides we would need from two to three hundred dollars of operating capital. I explained our source of income. He told us the legend of the Golden Goose. He thought my collection plan from tourists the best idea he had ever heard.

We bought the outfit; for we knew that if a crooked Governor came to office he could make away with the funds but not the machinery.

Then I realized that I had made a mistake. The guide who collects the money had to serve 2 days, and the tourists entering the Governor's office, his house,

tracked in mud. Late in the fall there are no tourists and in spring until May the guide wastes his time.

When we turned over to the new Governor that December we recommended that the Governor is entitled to 10 percent for his house, and that 15 percent should go to the guide. Each guide gets 2 days and all that nine from Lt. Governor down serve as guides on 2-day shifts.

They all agreed. It ran smoothly. The Council bought implements out of the fund, and we used the fund in land fights up to 4 years ago (1946).

In 1946 a Governor closed his door, and he turned out the guide with his book on the Plaza, but the Governor still gets 10 percent without the use of his house. BEM followed in office and he too closed his door and collected the 10 percent.

What is more, the next Governor sold the community binder worth \$150 together with \$100 worth of new parts to his own son for \$15.

*The public granary.*—"When things were going badly back in 1938 I was elected Lt. Governor when ——— was Governor again. At that time I had in mind a plan to help the old and needy. My idea was a community granary. I got ——— to draw up the plan. The plan was to build the granary (out of tribal funds) and to buy surplus grain from the people—wheat (some of the original stock was purchased as certified seed), oats, peas, beans, corn—what we raise here at Taos. Moreover, we built bins on both sides. In the spring we would lend out grain to able people and charge 50 pounds for 100 pounds that had been borrowed, so that people paid back 150 pounds. The 100 pounds went back into the first granary and the 50 pounds was put into a different bin. This latter was used to take care of widows and orphans. The annual surplus would be divided among widows and orphans, and the original loan would go back into the pool. This was the plan which we proposed to the Council. The Council agreed and the plan was put into operation.

The next Governor and his administration sold all the grain and bought flour and lard for distribution in the pueblo. [The old idea of equitable distribution, each individual taking his share in hand, prevailed over social security.] I was discouraged and I quit. [As an innovator D. was fighting alone; only occasionally could he muster the Council to support his plans.] This happened in 1938 that we had the granary, and in 1939 they sold out. [Ardent granary partisans have been in political limbo since.]

Since 1939 I would go to no meetings.

In 1948, nearly 10 years since I had been to a Council, someone came to notify me that I was elected to Governor. I accepted the duty. I began immediately the fight for the voting business. (In this I had the advice and support of many prominent white lawyers.) Under the New Mexico State law we must vote in order to qualify for the old age pension. We brought suit and got the right.

Later, this BEM wanted me to stop the people from voting. "I can't do it," I said, "it is illegal to prevent a citizen from exercising his right to vote." BEM went to the late Judge ———, an old friend, who supported me: That the elders could not be in the position of preventing members of the pueblo from voting. BEM told me to call a Council. He misled the Cacique and the Four Groups [Kiva leaders who with Cacique dominate council]. I told them that as Governor I had sworn to support the Constitution of the United States and the State and Federal laws. I had no power to stop anyone from voting. "Now I am going to resign," I said, "I would like to see someone stop the people from voting and be arrested." [Possibly it was here that BEM consulted the Judge; such had never happened before.]

The people continue to vote. I vote. So do others, but BEM tells them that they will soon have to pay taxes and the pueblo will go the way of Mexican towns.

The preceding case history calls for comment. The process of acculturation and how the people have reacted to it can be held responsible for factional difficulties at Taos. The pueblo has divided into two camps on how they will meet crises imposed by the world outside the wall. French (1948) found a parallel situation at Isleta, and Laswell (1936) has described the Taos reaction to culture contact as "collective autism." My own data indicate two reactions on the part of the pueblo people: a cooperative and aggressive reaction organizing to meet the threat from outside the wall; and autism, a withdrawal behind the wall and opposing new groupings within the pueblo that threaten the existing sovereignty of the hierarchy. The former reaction regards sovereignty as residing in the people, the latter reaction imputes it to the organization. Means have become ends.

My informant as governor was a cooperator and an innovator. The tourist collection was an aggressive move against the whites, which had as its purpose raising funds to recover lands from the whites. The innovator sought to do this systematically and fairly, charging what the traffic would bear. The cooperative reaction met acculturation in the field of technology by proposing the investment of capital funds in a binder and thresher. These innovations also reveal the mechanism for appealing to the sources of sovereignty when the council cannot agree. Issues originate in the governor's staff, where they are threshed out before being referred to the council for a policy decision. A minority of one dissenter in the governor's staff meeting may find four supporters in the council. This happened in the case of the tourist collection and in the matter of the public granary. When the council agrees, the governor or his lieutenant caps it with a plan of action. But when unable to agree, there is a mechanism by which the council can appeal to Pueblo society, the ultimate source of its sovereignty, by assembling the people in a mass meeting "outside by the wall." The governor appeals to the town meeting to sanction publicly a proposed course of action. Society votes. A minority of four dissenters, ex-governors, who can obfuscate such an issue in council, fades before the popular will.

Beyond appealing to public sanction for a course of action, each pueblo administration faces the limits of its own term. Revenues raised must be expended or turned over to a new administration. There is a tendency to spend the money knowing that the next administration may be unfriendly to policies adopted and distribute the funds per capita. To offset this centrifugal tendency an administration can establish precedents: it does things, gains public expectancy, and hopes for continuity.

A sense of fairness makes allowances for time spent and awards percentages of the tourist collection to the guide for his services and to the governor for the use of his house and for abiding the nuisance value of tourists.

The autistic reaction to acculturation, on the other hand, denies white society outside the wall and refuses to make adequate provision for tourists within the wall. Crowds of tourists flock to Saints' Day dances and are not controlled. Autism regards collective endeavors to meet the problems of the pueblo as threats to the sovereignty of the council, bowing only to the sanction of a public meeting which it avoids at all costs. It does not deny, however, individual acquisitiveness. A minority of previous governors feathered their nests and charged inconsistent rates for tourist parking. They are now back in power and the guides again chisel tourists by not returning change. With the rise of graft, offices pass in a restricted kinship group. Equity in a percentage of the tourist registration continues, but the governor's door is no longer open to the public. A governor has sold the community binder and parts to a close relative.

When the cooperative faction reacted to the need of social security arising from a general economic depression by starting the public granary, the next autistic governor sold the grain and distributed the proceeds. The innovator responded by withdrawing from public life. Small wonder that he absents himself from public meetings and escapes into alcoholism.

From this case history we can almost draw a syllogism. Cooperative and autistic administrations alternate in office. The cooperative reaction to crises imposed from without when frustrated leads to individual autism. Collective autism leads to graft and facism. The strong man is eventually turned out when public reaction revolves full cycle. (The latter process is now going on.)

A man once disillusioned accepts office again, emerging from personal withdrawal, when summoned by a duly appointed representative of the pueblo. This time he accepts the governorship. The innovator and the cooperators campaign for civil rights and social security, gains which were lost when the granary project was liquidated. But participation in external politics constitutes a threat to collective sovereignty in the pueblo. The hierarchy impeaches the governor who resigns.

### FACTIONS

When the old men of Taos forced a progressive governor into resigning in the fall of 1948 and installed a puppet regime to complete the year, Indian Service administrators were faced with a whole complex of disagreements. The progressive governor had enabled

members of the pueblo to register and vote in State and National elections, thereby qualifying themselves for social security benefits. BEM threatened impeachment, and the council acted apparently without full membership and without accepting the governor's resignation. In this act, BEM had the advice of counsel. The Agency did not intervene. The coup d'état focused attention on a long history of factionalism at Taos.<sup>13</sup>

What is a first-class administrative problem to the Indian Service may be a fairly common occurrence to ethnologists. Internal division into factions, usually two in number, is a recurrent feature in American Indian communities (Linton, 1936, p. 228), and such twofold factional divisions are quite widespread in the primitive world (Murdock, 1949, p. 90). Almost no research has been done on this problem until quite recently (French, 1948; Adair and Vogt, 1949). Murdock even says that factionalism is so common a feature of community organization as to be scarcely accidental. He employs the concept of ethnocentrism to suggest a possible common function, reasoning that a dual organization of a community . . . may provide a sort of safety valve whereby aggression generated by ingroup discipline may be drained off internally in socially regulated and harmless ways instead of being translated into outgroup hostility and warfare. What makes this hypothesis seem valid is that factions are most characteristic of peaceful societies like the Pueblos and warlike communities which are frustrated from going on the warpath. The latter is certainly true of Iroquois among whom factionalism became most bitter after the American Revolution and before going on reservations; it is also true of Blackfeet; and possibly the Klamath among whom factionalism is the status quo.

Crisis situations at Taos reach back into traditional times. Tradition speaks of an old factional dispute which occurred at the building of the first Catholic church; the people quarreled and some of them left Taos, going east to a new site. In such splits it is always the conservative faction that migrates, seeking a place in which to perform the ceremonies in peace and leaving the hotheads in possession of the old town (Parsons, 1939, pp. 15, 108, 1094-1097).

The return of four Taos lads from Carlisle about 1910 began a series of modern crises over innovations (Parsons, 1936, p. 118). One deviant worked as a printer, resisted letting his hair grow, and stuffed his trousers before whippings. He was actually put out of his chief-

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<sup>13</sup> Siegel, in 2 recent almost identical articles on culture change at Taos (1949; 1952), discusses patterns of authority and leadership, anticipating much of my analysis, but speaks of factions as something quite new at Taos (1949, p. 577). Siegel deems it "highly desirable to undertake a comparative study of emergent factionalism at Taos with factionalism at other pueblos where it has occurred" (1949, p. 577; 1952, p. 140). While the present paper leaves this problem to be researched, I have treated factionalism generally in a paper to the Vienna Congress (Fenton, 1955 a).

taincy and ceremony. But the revolt brought the introduction of white man's clothing: pants, shoes, and hats. Leggings, moccasins, handmade shirts, and blankets have never quite regained the favor they enjoyed exclusively before the Carlisle incident. Social dysphoria, however, was nowhere nearly as marked then as now.

The Peyote controversy rivals the present dysphoria. Sometime after 1907 lads, now old men, visited the Kiowa near El Reno, Okla., and brought Peyote back to Taos. That it took here and not in the other pueblos is a clue to Taos character structure. The Peyote controversy has been treated by Parsons (1936, 1939) and analyzed by Laswell (1936). My notes add few details. The important thing is that the Peyote boys were innovators. They threw off repressions of their own training and the authority of the hierarchy by going out and bringing back what proved a threat to the constituted religion of the community, although Laswell makes a great point that even Peyote was carried out by groups in a characteristically collective autistic fashion. The innovators who were then Peyote boys are now among the older progressives and are eligible to be councillors. Even the present governor, though in BEM's faction, belonged to the cult, if he was not a charter member.

Reaction then, as now, came from the council. And the council was backed up by diffuse sanctions originating in family conflicts. The Peyote boys met on Saturday nights, and individuals who attended were unconscious all day Sunday. For years Sunday had been the day for family weekend picnics up the creek and at neighboring ranches. Tension developed between generations of the same family and between in-laws over the Peyote addicts. Organized opposition to the cult centered in one family, that of the progressive governor of 1948.

Impeachment is the function of the council. Since at the time both governor and his lieutenant were members of the cult, responsibility for calling the council shifted from governor to Cacique. The council waited until the Peyote group was in session before the Cacique ordered the sheriff and his staff to raid the meeting and arrest all members present. They were held in jail on the north side of the Pueblo to cool off pending trial individually. (Note that the council sought to avoid imposing its will on a group by trying such deviants one by one.) For some reason the governor was not impeached, although Parsons implies that he resigned. But the then lieutenant governor, the present governor, was impeached by the council and resigned, along with all the other officers (Parsons, 1939, p. 1095). In such cases Cacique presides and one of the six headmen prosecutes. Councillors may individually ask further questions to clarify a point. "Are you willing to leave the Peyote cult and go along with the rest of

us?" Only the lieutenant governor was unwilling to renounce Peyote. He was impeached. Cacique polls the council and each councillor gives his opinion. The final decision rests with the Cacique.

Punitive fines which amounted to land confiscation were levied against individual members of Peyote. The Cacique's court, like the governor's court, can determine such fines and exact them. Land thus confiscated by the court may be awarded to individual officers to use. I am uncertain of the extent to which confiscation resulted in abuse of power. The lands were returned when the Peyote Church got its charter.

We are not concerned here that Peyote did not die out at Taos following the trial, with the group's successful fight through the courts for recognition, or with its status today. I am told there are actually between 10 and 14 families who are today active Peyote adherents. Allowing 5 to a family, 50 to 70 people may be involved. The present governor, the erstwhile lieutenant governor impeached, is alleged to be still a member. The net effect of the Peyote innovation was to break up family solidarity. Informal sanctions within families drove some individuals to renounce Peyote, but schisms and tensions remain. There are embittered individuals who oppose the hierarchy. Peyote faced toward Oklahoma, not inward on the plaza of Taos; it exalted individual experience, albeit in a meeting, as against collective ritual, and above all it demonstrated that the wall around the hierarchy can be breached by innovation.

Peyote bears further relation to the present power structure. A source of BEM's power arose out of the Peyote trouble. It is unlikely that he was yet headman and acting prosecutor. But he was on the way up to be lieutenant governor in 1939, governor in 1944. A renounced member of Peyote, however, became governor in 1941, following the Cacique. The impeached lieutenant governor of Peyote days is now governor, as BEM's candidate. Peyote has not been an issue for 10 years.

The Parsons exposé, already mentioned, came in 1939. BEM's in-laws were involved, but he used his position in the hierarchy to get them off without penal sanctions. Diffuse sanctions, as we have shown, bite deeper.

Preceding the Parsons affair and following Peyote, had begun the reforms of the progressive governor who had opposed Peyote. The reforms, which may be characterized as internal and external social security, followed and alternated with reactionary administrations down to 1948.

Then came the GI bill of rights and the roadblock incident.

The most recent Taos crisis summoned the forces for progress (those oriented outward) to join the returned veterans (who this

time were the "boys," the innovators) to test the strength of the hierarchy. Of course, the latter were not altogether old men, and the "boys" were not all young. Nor does it matter that the hierarchy put down the boys. For the time being those who face toward the plaza have put down those who look over the wall. The latter include the resigned progressive governor, another ex-governor himself a reformed Peyote boy, and at least one lieutenant governor whose sons went to war. The head of an extended family at Taos represents his sons before the governor's court and in council. Councillors who gave sons to the war would attend council to hear questions discussed affecting their sons. The regular way of calling a council is for the governor to call every eligible man from the housetops. But BEM works on the governor, his stooge, to call only a certain few, carefully omitting opposition. By such "snaky" tactics BEM frustrates complete discussion of the issue—"even to the boiling point."

Another tactic is to jump up in council and brand as "outlaw faction" whoever voices the Agency point of view. That councillor is not called again. Men get dispirited at being interrupted, at being done out of their turn in the ritualized circuit of polling the council, and apparently Pueblo individuals are horrified at being attacked personally in meeting. From not knowing what to do with BEM's type they have gone on to inaction and disinterest. Taos society seems to make no provision for handling the boss.

"This is the kind of meeting we have now. This is how he came to be the only speaker when Commissioner —— was out here."

What then are the sources of BEM's power? They are of three kinds: status resources, personality, and political action. First, as headman of the Big Earrings People Kiva he is ritual holder for the pueblo and he has charge of the education of the young men. He has the privilege of nominating civil officers; only two headmen may nominate, and the caucus is held in his kiva, where he speaks first. As an ex-governor of at least two terms, he has worked up through the ranks to achieve the status of *principale*, or councillor. Elevation to religious office came to him unexpectedly and rather early in life from a position in the hierarchy at a minor level until just a few years ago. Then he sat about four seats down from the head of his kiva. One winter, the three men ahead of him died in rapid succession. BEM suddenly came to power as the head of that kiva at the prime of life, and the office which membership ascribed to him carries strong responsibilities in the ceremonies, and ultimately in the political life of the Pueblo.

The people of Taos revere his office. Fear on the part of the other councillors that BEM will quit the position that he holds in the

ceremonies is a weapon that he wields to its limits. Unless he is accorded privileges of office it is feared that he will decamp from duties on which the welfare of the pueblo depends. Threat of withdrawal of reciprocal services constitutes a powerful sanction. So the Taos people tolerate political shenanigans so long as ceremonial obligations are fulfilled.

BEM impressed me as being a very sincere person and quite devout, although others who know him better cautioned that he is foxy, that he agrees to one thing today and does the opposite tomorrow. But these are his political enemies. He is secretive, outwardly fearless, and incessantly active. Part of this activity in ceremonies and even in politics may reflect aggression generated by anxiety that he is not doing his best, that he is criticized, or may be an attempt to offset talk that his wife's people were Parsons's informants. His attack on others in council may spring from the same source. Whatever the source of energy, the Taos strong man brooks no opposition, as the following incident will illustrate.

A few years ago one of the sparks that led to the present difficulties arose from the attempt of a householder to hook up to the Taos Day School waterline. The householder's water had begun to smell toward the middle of summer. He arranged permissions with the proper officials: the principal and the superintendent. One day three men were digging a ditch and BEM happened to pass by and asked what they were doing. He told them to stop and threatened them. He went promptly to the governor's house and said, "We are going to Albuquerque." He and the governor went to the superintendent and protested. Permissions were canceled. Meanwhile the young veteran sat in his house waiting with a gun on his knees for the sheriff's party to come and take him.

The waterline was an innovation over dipping water from Taos River. Just how it threatened the sovereignty of the pueblo I cannot fathom.

BEM is secretive. He does not talk clearly in council. His point of view is veiled by operations behind the scenes of which he informs the governor only in part. My visit illustrates the point. "I will tell the governor and the council what they have to know, what I have decided." He identifies with persons in authority or persons who may confide knowledge to increase his personal power. BEM wants to shield the pueblo from change and projects his own shortcomings on innovators, and on Indian Service officials in particular. He may genuinely hold at heart a sincere interest in the welfare of the pueblo. He said that he was willing to talk all afternoon with me on matters affecting the pueblo, that he never tired when working for the people. But seeing me again he would not talk until I had demonstrated that

I had done something for the people. I suspect that he felt guilty for already having told me something of Taos organization.

What he does is what counts. (He is also held accountable for public indifference or apathy that has overcome the pueblo of late. This attitude has become a negative factor in his power position; no leadership arises to face him down.) By political manipulation, by use of his position in the hierarchy, by conscientious attendance at all meetings, and by branding as outlaw all suggestions of improvement or ideas counter to his own interests or which he interprets as threats to the power structure, he holds the pueblo in his grip. It is a maxim of political administration that control of budget and appointments means power. In Taos, control of nominations, elections, and consequently of tribal funds amounts to the same thing. As long as his counterpart on the south side does not choose to oppose him, and as long as the Cacique who is the check to the balanced positions of headmen, remains a rubberstamp, BEM will remain in control.

### CRISIS

What were the sparks leading to the recent Taos crisis? How did the dissident group arise? These are the questions which I addressed to BEM and to representatives of the progressive faction. Despite the tension, these questions were welcomed by both groups. They accepted me as a neutral person standing in the middle, as BEM put it, who might use his good offices to improve relations between the pueblo and the outside, with the Agency in particular. BEM said, "We need friends. We need them badly, because we feel that the younger men and the dissidents, the dissatisfied people, have been supported in their views by outsiders who have gained favorable publicity and have put me in a bad light." I gathered from other informants that the number of dissidents in the pueblo is greater than BEM would have me believe. I asked him how the dissident group arose. He said that they came up in the following way:

In World War I the Pueblo men were considered farmers and were allowed to stay home. When World War II came along, a great many of the boys, being unwilling to do their work in the pueblo, and unwilling to submit to the ceremonial obligation of initiation and performance of rites, had fled the pueblo or had been driven out by public opinion and were living on the outside. Many of these men enlisted. When the Government officials came to the pueblo to inquire about the draft, it was already apparent that many of the men were in the Army. It was also considered expedient by the council to allow the men to be drafted or to volunteer since the people

might fare much worse under the Japanese or the Germans than under their American friends. Accordingly, some 100 men went into the armed services and were scattered over the seas. Now it is important that many of the men who went out from the pueblo were initiated and are now still loyal to the present form of Pueblo government. There is the son of BEM himself and the interpreter. However, a number of others came back dissatisfied with the old Pueblo way. They said, "Let's forget all this. Let's give up these ceremonies. Let's be as white men. Let's get electric lights, water, etc."

It is quite apparent in all this that there is no fundamental objection to individual improvements coming into the community. What BEM and his party in the council object to is the injection of new things which threaten the corporate identity or sovereignty of the Pueblo state. The young men have consistently refused to do their work, they have defied the authority of the headmen, and they have turned outside the pueblo to the whites for help, which in itself is a cardinal sin.

The behavior of the boys after the war runs contrary to their training. During the discussion of the veterans I tried to draw BEM out on how young men are educated in the Pueblo way. On what happened during the Kiva training he was discreetly silent, but he related his long conversation with Selective Service officials at the opening of the war, which conveys something of his attitude. He quoted himself at this meeting as saying:

"I will let my young men go. They are well-disciplined and well-behaved boys. If you promise to return them to me in the same condition." BEM asserts that he was given solemn assurance that the young men would be returned by the Army properly disciplined so that they could return to the Pueblo fold. (Of course what he anticipated and the Selective Service official chose to ignore was the disruptive effect of war experience on their personalities and the consequent inability to readjust to "civilian" Pueblo life.) What really bothers BEM is that the boys got outside, they saw things of which he has no knowledge, and many of them who were previously dissatisfied with conditions in the pueblo have come home increasingly dissatisfied. I did not succeed, however, in getting him to tell me how young men are actually brought up in the Pueblo way, how they are trained to take their places in Pueblo religion and society.

The following sparks ignited the Taos crisis:

(1) As governor, BEM wanted for his relatives the patronage at the day school where a number of Indians were employed in custodial positions. He came to the principal of the school, himself an initiated and educated Taos Indian, saying, "Son, this is what I want you to do." It was difficult for the old priest to understand that the

jobs were beyond the control of his putative kinsman. Appointment and removal of personnel lay in Albuquerque.

(2) Next came the question of religious training during school hours. There had been a Supreme Court decision about the use of schooltime for religious training and time off for such instruction. The Indian Service had regularly let students off during their term of training in the kivas. But some question arose about the Catholics being excluded from such participation. Whatever the issue, BEM and the elders took the affair as a personal affront and interpreted a high-level decision as local discrimination. The Indians let the issue pass.

(3) For some reason BEM next decided to evict outlanders who had married into the pueblo. These persons included members of other neighboring Rio Grande Pueblos, 2 Zuni men, 2 Indians from Oklahoma, 5 Anglos (white men, of whom 1 lived in), an American woman, and 2 English war brides, perhaps 16 in all. Friction arises in mixed marriages with persons from outside Taos Pueblo. The husbands do not attend community work, even if willing, for they do not understand the language. Misunderstandings arise. When children get into fights, the older people say: "You are not Mexicans!" The Mexicans are reputed to be quarrelsome. Outlanders threaten the all-important peace of the pueblo. The English war brides created the biggest stir in the community, but the disturbance is indeed two-sided. The war brides were scarcely prepared for life in an American Indian pueblo, and the Indians of Taos found them difficult to assimilate. One English girl had had three children by a Taos Indian husband by 1950. Before the council decided to eject Indians married in from other reservations, BEM approached a Pueblo member of the civil service who had married a non-Taos Indian to interpret for him. The civil servant naturally refused to be a partisan to the action without higher authority. The inconsistent action by BEM and council to evict outlanders by marriage was sustained by the Federal court.

(4) Allotment checks coming into the pueblo during the war created new statuses and roles. The literate who could file papers for illiterate old ladies and wives of GI's, began displacing the old men as advisers, a role which they accepted cautiously. Some few dependents followed advice and bought land, houses, farm equipment, and household goods. Others spent it on a single spree. Of the some 106 GI's, all but 7 returned. It is significant that the pueblo never acknowledged the return of the GI's by celebrations such as were held among Plains and Eastern Woodlands groups where warfare is honored. Whenever there were "regular doings" (stated ceremonies) the old men would mention the war record of the young

men, however, but no special occasion was made for them. On several occasions some special prayers were offered for their safe return. It appears that the headmen really missed an opportunity.

(5) The returned GI's found no welcome for their experience or new knowledge. The council was neither interested, nor welcomed advice. BEM and his followers wanted them back the way they went away, but they were a transformed lot of men. They began openly to criticize the council. The real spark that kindled the flame of resentment was when the council learned that the young men gossiped that the old council was ineffective. This angered the council, but they dared not arrest anyone.

(6) The veterans now constituted a threat to the sovereignty of the Pueblo Council. They organized a post as a basis for appealing to a State Veterans' Administration for aid in a program of rehabilitation. They learned that they needed a minimum of 15 acres of farmland per man as a basis for an agricultural extension program. Arrangements were made for a training program under the GI bill of rights which would utilize shop facilities and tools of Taos Day School where an instructor would come to teach welding and related trades. School and Agency authorities agreed, but the school is on Pueblo property.

(7) The young men now went to the governor asking his signature to their applications. And they went to the council appealing for land. BEM and his faction in the council, piqued at their audacity, "threw them out." "Don't come here (to the council) until you are properly initiated by the Kivas," they were told; mature men are expected to have served in the ceremonies and to have a record of having worked up through the offices of the governor's staff before appearing in council. The veterans were "boys," both ceremonially and politically. Had the young men demonstrated a better record of community service, participated in ceremonies, and had they refrained from gossiping openly about the council's deficiencies, the issue might not have been drawn on the lines of age and achievement. Naturally, the councillors were quite unwilling to recognize achievement outside the wall.

(8) The veterans wanted electric lights and good drinking water. They experienced electricity and its power-driven conveniences in their service outside the wall, and they learned of sanitation. That the Taos River is polluted everyone knows, and no person who has not acquired active immunity dares drink its water, or the water that runs sparkling down the irrigation ditches, for fear of dysentery and less serious alimentary complaints. Even though sacred Blue Lake high on Taos Mountain is the source, contamination enters before Taos River flows through the pueblo. The old men shut their eyes

to the annual death rate among babies, and why there are not more cases of typhoid I have no competence to say. Recall the incident of the veteran who started to connect to the day school waterline (even water from the line had to be boiled in 1950), and when frustrated did not hesitate to write to the Taos Star, which was the liberal pro-Indian paper (Morris, 1950). *El Crepusculo*, which the Indians call "El Creeps," is the conservative organ, and reflects the views of the council and its backers, the artists and writers of Taos who consider themselves the custodians of the ancient tradition. As is usual in Indian factionalism, whites can be found at the polar extremes. The movement to bring electricity to Taos and abandon the old practice of dipping all water from the Taos River in buckets, even though the progressive faction at the pueblo advocated installing lights in the homes but outside the twin pueblo apartment buildings, badly scared the Taosenos, the inhabitants of the neighboring town, who have an economic stake in either the tourist business or an emotional one in art subjects at the pueblo. Besides the revolutionary change which the coming of electricity would bring to Pueblo life, the council perceives the entrance of a public utility on their ancient domain as a threat to their sovereignty: rights-of-way, easements, unsightly transmission lines, freedom of access for servicing, monthly bills, installment payments. Even the progressives put great stress on the "peace" of Pueblo life, but both factions resort to constant pressure and bickering which creates tension. And the council in its communications to "El Creeps" makes much of happiness in the pueblo which they seek to protect from innovation that might make the people as unhappy as they appear to be in cities.

(9) These sparks kindled a series of protest meetings of veterans and heads of families who used to sit on the council which resulted in demands directed against alleged dictatorial methods of the present council. The faction which is out of power calls itself the People's Party, a label so frequently adopted by the out-of-power faction in Indian communities as far away as New York. The People's Party commenced to agitate for: (a) A written charter (which would secularize the government); (b) the right to a voice in choosing the council; (c) more progressive management of Pueblo affairs; (d) a periodic audit. These general demands, susceptible of expansion into a detailed list and suggestive of appeal to the Constitution and Bill of Rights, if they apply at Taos, colored an analysis of the Taos situation by the area director in May of 1949 which reports the road block incident. The analysis indicted the Taos government for: (a) Failure to alternate political parties in office; (b) unseating council members who disagree; (c) refusing a hearing to important elements within the pueblo; (d) deciding every variety

of civil case on political issues. (Hagberg to the Commissioner, 5/16/49.) The first has been the political practice and may be custom law; the second charge, although clearly a violation of Pueblo law ways, is tempered by absenteeism and the strain for unanimity; the third failure may be defended on grounds of qualifications but it ignores the public meeting as the ultimate locus of sovereignty; and the final charge cannot be denied.

(10) The meeting at the school and the governor's roadblock: The veterans decided to have a meeting of the people at the Taos Day School to discuss the benefits which would accrue to the village from the program for training GI's in agricultural and manual arts under the GI bill of rights. They decided to invite the superintendent. The council, dominated by BEM's faction, fearing that the intrusion of these enterprises would change the existing power structure within the pueblo, were opposed to a meeting being held at the school. When the governor received the superintendent's wire that he would attend a mass meeting to be held in the school auditorium to hear the discussion of the proposed program, the governor summoned the council whose decree was dictated by BEM. The governor replied that any meeting which was to receive the superintendent would be held in the governor's office as usual, and should not be held in the school. The council's decision that the place of meeting should be the governor's house in the pueblo, that there would be no meeting off the pueblo, or on the school grounds or in its assembly, denied the possibility of summoning the pueblo to meet outside near the wall and ignored the fact that the pueblo has no community hall. The veterans decided to proceed anyway. The conservative faction blamed the superintendent principally for fomenting the trouble which followed. But an inflammatory press was responsible for arousing the whites of northern New Mexico to watch what happened in Taos, and the artists and writers of Taos rushed into the act. In espousing the cause of the veterans, somebody alleged that democracy and freedom of assembly must prevail even in a totalitarian state. Several veterans' associations became active, and the conservatives cite as evidence of white interference the large number of automobiles from Taos village which had come into the pueblo for the meeting at the school. Just what happened and the sequence of events are not clear nor are they vital to this report. The superintendent came as far as the hotel on Taos Plaza where he ordinarily stops. There he was met by BEM and the governor, who told him to come no farther and advised him to return to Albuquerque. The superintendent stood firm in Taos. At first some information implied that he and his party drove out to the pueblo where he was turned back by a human blockade at the bridge leading up to the day school. More reliable sources state that the

road blockade was intended to keep the GI's from getting to town. A conservative source said that when the council found itself over-ridden by the superintendent's resolution, the war chiefs and fiscales were sent to blockade the road at the bridge leading from the village to the school. Effectively both sides were stymied.

But there is another back road to town by which the GI's circumvented the blockade. A moderate found an English car which someone from town had left at the school, and started to drive it to town. At the barrier he was asked: "Where are you going?" "To Taos," he replied. "Are you going to the meeting there?" "No, I am taking this car to town to deliver it to its owner who can't get here." Although many bypassed the blockade, several cars pushed through. In one car rode the progressive governor who had resigned. "This is like France all over again," remarked a veteran of Normandy, as he put the car in low gear and breached the human barrier. The war chief's men held hands until they fell away on both sides of the bridge.

There has been no effective government in Taos Pueblo since the incident described or since the meeting of the veterans and their superintendent in Taos Plaza. A long and bitter debate followed in the public press. Claims and counterclaims have reached the Halls of Congress. In perspective I believe that the superintendent and the Albuquerque staff never fully appreciated the heat of the controversy generated from these sparks, nor the tension at the time. A Taos Indian who read this report commented: "The only thing that prevented an armed insurrection was the lack of rifles among the young men. There was one night that the council was meeting when the hotheads wanted to crash the governor's house and snatch the canes of office." Their own leaders and the progressive governor reasoned with them. When informed of this potential danger, the superintendent is quoted as replying, "Nonsense!"

Both of the latter are amazing statements in view of the firearms which I observed at ready in Pueblo homes. Every house I visited had a rifle or two on antlers above the door. No, I think the young men were held back by diffuse sanctions; they did not wish to breach the peace. Insurrection is not the way to settle anything, even at Taos.

### AFTERMATH

In the year that had passed since the incident of the bridge the breach had widened between the factions, and matters had not improved during the year following my visit. Most of the troubles at Taos Pueblo, said a leader of veterans, could be solved in a single morning if the elder councillors would sit down with the veterans' group and take up their program point by point. The grievances of

the People's Party, which were made manifest in a petition to the Commissioner after the bridge incident (Petition, People's Party to Commissioner, 9/7/49), comprise some eight major heads. Most of these specific grievances relate to government.

1. Government:
  - a. Membership in council controlled by select few.
  - b. Right of appeal.
  - c. One man dominates the council. Ousted members are not called.
  - d. A select council reaches decisions affecting the Pueblo.
  - e. Misinterpretation; the good interpreters have quit.
2. The right to vote.
3. Land.
4. Tribal funds; tourist collection; accounting.
5. Bus transportation.
6. Indian Service employees.
7. Misuse of office: sale of capital goods to relatives of officials; joyriding in the community truck.
8. Council refuses advantages of GI benefits to veterans.

By the spring of 1950 the Progressive Party had reached the Congressman of its New Mexico district. The same grievances now appeared in new guise. What had originally been phrased in terms of Pueblo political practice and which suggested that the checks and balances in their own system of custom law had been contravened, now appeared in the cloak of George Mason's bill of rights, which seems irrelevant to local affairs in an Indian Pueblo. The fact remains that the People's Committee were in close touch with a New Mexico Congressman, although the leaders of the conservative faction had also called on him. The House of Representatives heard the charges: *individual* rights are being neglected at Taos, and *individuals as citizens* are being prevented from exercise of rights accorded them under the Bill of Rights (Congressional Record, 96: 7379, 5/18/50). A progressive who read his Congressman's article in the Record secretly hoped that the program would not be enacted into law and that he would not be forced to exert his individual rights as a citizen at the expense of the Pueblo (his group). Referring to the road blockade the article appealed to "the right of assembly" because the veterans were forced to organize and attend classes off the reservation in defiance of tribal authorities who prohibited it. "Freedom of worship" alludes to the council taking children who are members of other religious groups out of school to train them in the kivas. Voting has been mentioned. The article alleges that there is no trial by jury, no adequate appeal, and no adequate courts. (Most jurists, I think, would recognize the governor's court as a true court; and, besides, there is appeal to council.) The charge that the Pueblo Council intervenes in the homes to deny improvements—utilities, water—on the theory that these innovations violate ancient customs of the

pueblo, cannot be denied. (Removal of a telephone is the most recent contention.) Individuals are restricted in improvements on their homes. (But so are they by codes in every community.) More serious is the charge that persons married in the community cannot reside in the community. (The Federal court, at first, sustained the right of the Pueblo Council to eject such persons, a victory to the conservatives and their lawyer, but the decision was afterward reversed. The evicted remain away. The overall effect, however, is that the council may not eject members legally. Thus the United States court has taken away the right of the Pueblo government to decide on citizenship.) The so-called right of self-government, the fact that no popular elections are permitted, seems irrelevant in the selection of a priestly hierarchy such as we have described. The charge gains relevancy only if the government of the pueblo is secularized, which is what the young men want. The same can be said for a written constitution. Although the council does lack a constitution and operates without written ordinances, it does keep minutes and custom law provides sufficient checks for the proper maintenance of the system if allowed to operate. It is true that the council has refused to permit assemblies to discuss such matters, it has harassed and abused its opponents, but we have seen that a public meeting near the wall is possible under Pueblo custom law, that sovereignty rests in the people, and that they give it but grudgingly to the council. Pueblo custom law is being abused, not the Bill of Rights.

A public hearing to thresh out the issues would break on the rock of separating church and state. That is what the old men fear. All of the following program converges on this one issue, that of secularizing the government which is inescapable in any consideration of the Taos problem. The previous demands of the People's Committee may be reduced to the following:

1. Institute regular business procedures.
2. Build a community hall for public meetings.
3. Right of a hearing for selected improvements.
4. Sever economic dependence of Pueblo on Taos village.

The young men want to institute regular business procedures to account for the large sums of money which are collected annually from tourists for admission to the plaza, for parking, and for sale of camera permits. We have seen that this collection is the largest single source of revenue to the Pueblo government. No official accounting is made for the fees collected; there is no turnstile, nor are there numbered tickets. The young men advocate replacing the present guide system with a corps of instructed guides or docents, who could be instructed how to answer tourist questions without revealing ceremonial secrets. Ticket stubs would be turned in to the treasurer,

giving the total receipts for the day. The present governor's registration book is open to serious abuse.

From the parking proceeds, youth recommends erecting a community hall on the plaza. At present there is no adequate community building on the whole reservation. There is no place that will shelter a meeting of the adult members of the pueblo. Such a hall would bring the meeting by the wall into a townhall and get the rump council out of the governor's house. As it is, when BEM has the governor call a meeting of the select few to meet in the governor's house, the interested public has to stand outside and listen through the wall. The young men want the privilege of hearing the full council meet in a building ample enough to destroy the excuse of calling a minority of councillors to meetings stacked in favor of the faction in power.

The insularity of the older men is a burden to youth. Most of the older men and nearly all of the women have never been away from the pueblo. BEM's daughter quite naively told my wife that Taos is the last Indian community where the Indians still hold their lands and old customs, that the Indians back east had all lost their lands when they forsook the old way. She was equally astonished and unprepared to believe that other Indian communities have survived white civilization to the eastward. The war provided travel for about 100 young men to see places and experience other civilizations beyond the horizon of Taos, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque. Most of the boys who came back respect the pueblo and appreciate its commercial value to the Indians. They want to keep the old three-storied apartments, but recommend families moving out to ranches. They believe that they have the right to a hearing to consider certain selected improvements—pave the road to Taos, bring electricity to the reservation but not to the apartments, install a telephone for emergencies, institute programs in the arts and agricultural extension, already discussed. As it is, the men are going outside the pueblo for training in the trades over the protest of the council, and the son of a principal conservative is learning welding at Haskell. Contrast the Blackfeet whose tribal delegates lobbied in Washington for the same program which Taos veterans were denied by their own council.

Sever the economic dependence of the pueblo on Taos village, say the young men. Their leader advocates building a cooperative store on the reservation, if not at the pueblo, where people could trade without going to town. As it is, people walk, ride, drive cars, or take the buses operated by Indians under franchise to the council. The bus interests and the Taos merchants oppose a cooperative Indian store at the pueblo. The younger leaders contend that the money earned by Taos artists from the sale of paintings abroad in the land

is all traceable to Taos Indian culture and to Taos Indians themselves, who receive but 50 cents an hour as models. This extreme view, of course, discounts the skill of the artist and his service in publicizing the Indian. The same may be said of writers. But the attack is pointed and aims principally at the fringe of Taos colony—"The culture plunderers" who seek to escape the modern world and who take it out on the Indians.

#### FORCES FOR SELF-CORRECTION IN THE SOCIETY

Any solution of the present factional difficulties will have to originate within the Taos community and have the support of a substantial number of its residents. Within the community a successful compromise will have the best chance of success if it has the blessing of powerful elements in the hierarchy. As long as BEM remains in power, the present stalemate, which gives every indication of settling into feud lines between the generations, may continue. BEM himself constitutes the principal negative force opposing self-correction. Like many autocrats he identifies himself with the public, so that it is first of all necessary to distinguish between his personal hates and his aptitude for identifying Pueblo opinion with his own. He says, "My people feel this way"—when he himself feels that way. By domineering a powerful minority and through his position he controls public opinion—so to that extent what he effectively represents is public opinion. He symbolizes the opposition to the United States Indian Service in the pueblo if he does not constitute it, projecting on the Service every manner of fault. He is always devious, posing as a solution to a problem—such as getting better rapprochement with the Agency—dismissal of persons not present.

Disillusionment has overcome the rest of his generation. In characteristic Pueblo fashion they withdraw from the reality of settlement. The people both admire BEM for getting results in the past and act defeated by his boss rule. I could detect but slight hope of his defeat at the next election.

As if to clinch his position by action, during the autumn of 1950 he sent the sheriff to demand the removal of a telephone from the trading post of a young veteran called back to service. The telephone violates Indian custom, it is alleged. The governor has forbidden use of gasoline-motored washing machines in the pueblo. And he has forbidden children to attend school in communities outside the pueblo. Washing machines except by analogy with electric machines certainly do not threaten the sovereignty of the council. They may disturb the peace. The women in our society would not stand for such infringement on personal liberty; in Taos they are used to repression.

Positive forces among the older men are few. A progressive governor has retreated into drink. A moderate person who has thought a great deal about reform in the pueblo is occasionally called to the governorship. While there is danger that fear and the drive to conformity may paralyze action, a governor may test opposition by resorting to the sounding board of public opinion by calling the people to meet by the wall. What hope is there that a moderate man may again become governor?

The answer to the election lies with the "college of cardinals" who are the Cacique and the heads of the kiva societies who may heed BEM again or nominate a more progressive administration. But BEM's strategic position in the hierarchy, the fact that the caucus takes place in his kiva, where by courtesy he speaks first, coupled with his untiring devotion to politics and his tough character make a hard combination to beat. But he has to be careful because occasionally heads of other kivas or the Cacique will overrule him. If the Cacique were a stronger character there would be some hope of self-correction within the existing structure. I am told that the interpreters are at fault in the Cacique's misunderstanding; they appeal to his fears: taxes, abolition of present government, etc. The Cacique does have the power if anything goes wrong with the government to call a council. He can tell the governor what to do, can censure the conduct of an officer, and the headmen can prevail on him to institute impeachment proceedings. Cacique has the power of nomination, if he chooses to exercise it.

At the next level in the council several of the *principales*, or former governors, oppose BEM's policy. But there is a tendency to avoid issues of disagreement because they know that if they take a stand it will end in a "fight." Taos is torn between a desire to thresh things out (Plains) and pacifism (Pueblo). Nothing is brought to the attention of the Cacique which is disagreeable, and since he symbolizes considered public opinion, the council dislikes to discuss controversial issues. On this BEM depends. The Cacique hates to have an impeachment. So the desire for peace is strong in the pueblo. Much of the opposition to BEM can be dismissed as precampaign talk.

The recent actions of the old men do not bespeak compromise.

The hope of getting a mass meeting to discuss issues remains dim so long as the faction in power prefers the small caucus in the governor's office to the larger democratic meeting which is difficult to control. Some personalities are simply unsuited to democratic action or free discussion of issues and prefer the small meeting of "cronies" in a closed room.

The boys are a repressed minority, and their political fortunes are linked to one or two farseeing older progressives from whom they

derive as much liability as good advice. The wise older men have long since retreated into feud lines against BEM and his faction, sallying forth to the attack whenever reform has a chance of success. It is natural that they identified their political fortunes with the veterans. While the conservative older men will say that the younger men are no good and will not turn out when called, I am convinced that the most progressive of them are willing to serve the community and do whatever community work is required of them if called. They have some ideas of their own, and the only older persons who would hear them are the progressive ex-governor and one or two others. They believe that the Pueblo must look outward over the wall, that it must expand its dealings with the modern world, of which it is inevitably a part. They believe that in order to achieve a more realistic adjustment to Southwestern society Taos Pueblo must secularize its government. This they are willing to strive for despite the opposition of the hierarchy, and they believe that separation of church and state is possible in the face of the opposition. Consistent with their outward orientation, the young men are ready and willing to sit down with the older men and with United States Indian Service officials to talk out their difficulties.

I am not aware that any of the veterans are on the council, but several councillors who were just above the age limit to go to war and who are now in their early forties ally their sympathies with the younger men. Several others have served as junior officers on the staffs of previous governors, but this does not entitle them to membership on the council, although they used to be called by courtesy and for advice.

Absenteeism and withdrawal from participation in Pueblo affairs, as with the older men, saps the cause of the younger men. The young men are supposed to turn out when they are called to dance on the saint's days. Four appeared on St. Anthony's Day (June 13), but there was only one male dancer on St. John's Day (June 24). Now it is the function of younger men of warrior grade to dance, just as being a councillor is synonymous with singer, for the council is the choir at these fiestas. But the young men, as we have seen, do not want to dance. The council has denied them certain rights and the only sanction that they can exercise in retaliation is to withdraw their support. Absenteeism is a powerful sanction in most primitive societies, against which the council has almost no recourse because the magical sanction of ceremony itself is supposed to be sufficient. The council can call the young men into the governor's office. The governor has announced who is supposed to dance and the public consequently knows who is delinquent. If a man is called and fails to show at three successive saint's day dances, a piece of work may be set

aside for him. Even the middle-aged men feel uncomfortable about the boys' not taking part. "It is a hard problem we have up there. They can set a piece of community work aside for them: Fix fence, road, clean the village. I hope they do. The village needs it—there are tin cans everywhere!"

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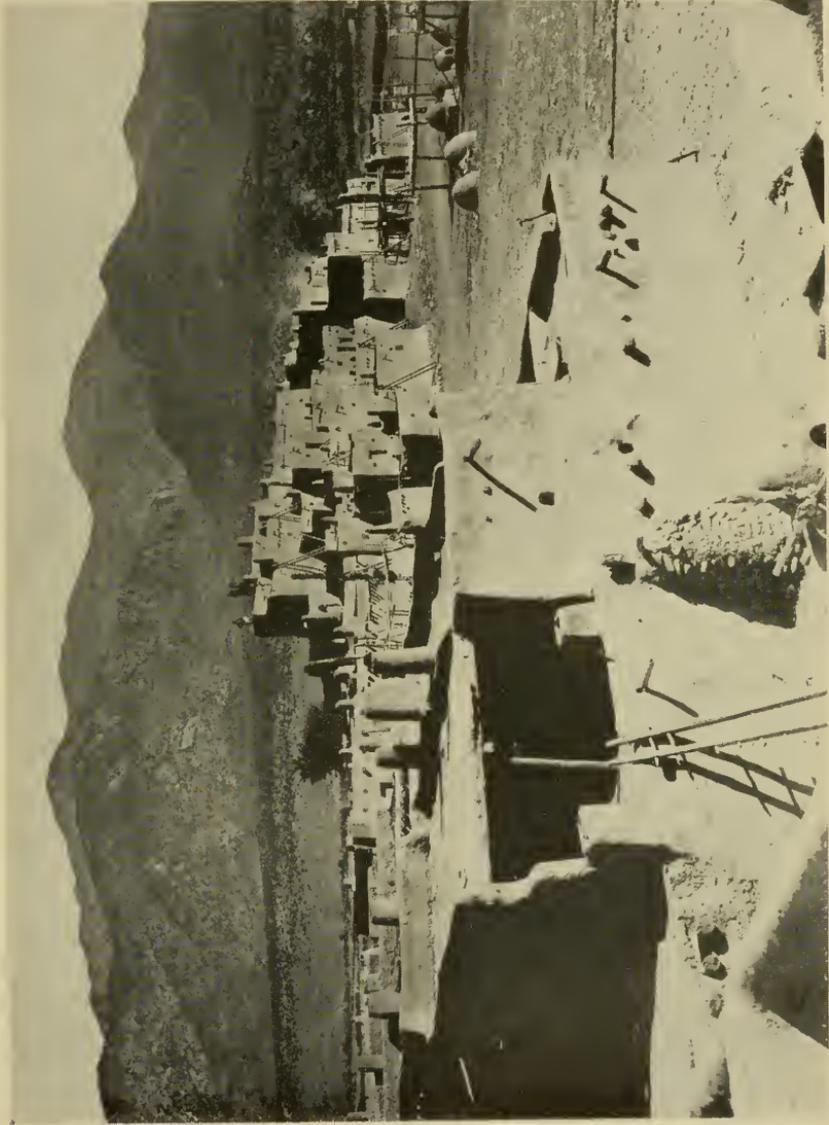
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(Photograph by J. K. Hillers.)

Taos Pueblo, 1879.

# POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF TAOS PUEBLO

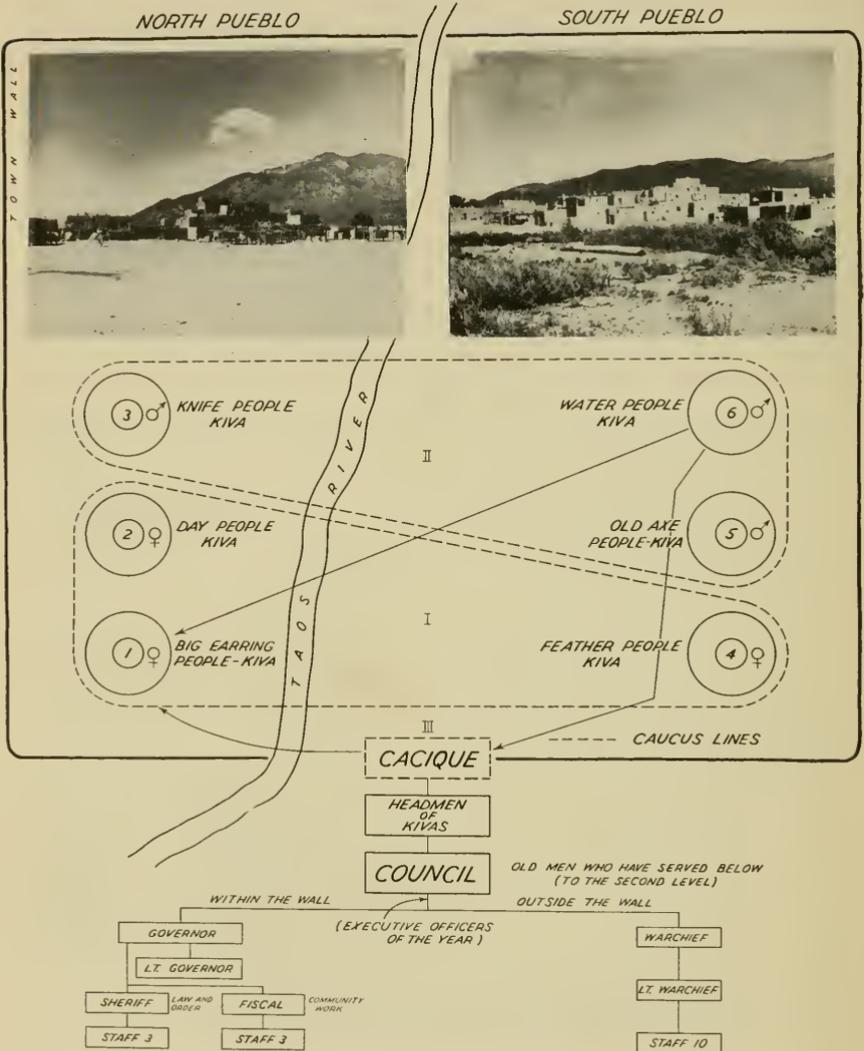


Diagram of the political structure of Taos.