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The American  
Indians' two greatest  
resources—  
their children and  
their land—  
are threatened by the  
Mormon church.

## CULTURAL GENOCIDE

BY JON STEWART AND PETER WILEY

**T**hey came to this land in 600 B.C., fleeing the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem. Led by the great Lehi, who spoke with God, they crossed the great waters and landed somewhere on the West Coast of the Americas, the new Promised Land.

Over the centuries this small band of Hebrews grew great in number. Their culture and religion flourished. They built magnificent temples and cities. So great was their piety and promise that the Son of God appeared before them, following his crucifixion, to teach the principles of Christianity. They were, and are, the Saints. But almost from the beginning they have been a sainthood divided. For the sons of Lehi went their separate ways. Nephi, devout and pure, became the leader of the Nephites, while his brother Laman led his followers, the Lamanites, away from God. Thus, over centuries, the cleaved band of Hebrews warred and reconciled, sometimes reversing the roles of sinner and saint, down through the ages.

Until the fateful year A.D. 421. By then the Lamanites, through "abominations and loss of belief," had been set apart by God from the Nephites by a curse: their skin had been turned brown, befitting their "dark and loathsome" character. They were "full of idleness" and "wild," while the Nephites remained "light and delightful" in the sight of God and man. But in this doomsday year the cursed Lamanites again turned on their lost brethren in a mighty

ILLUSTRATION BY WILSON McLEAN

war in which evil triumphed over good. The Nephites were destroyed to a man, or to a single man, Moroni. It was for this last prophet of God's people to collect the records of his race, inscribed on sacred plates of gold, and bury them in the Hill Cumorah until some far-off time when the true religion might be restored in "the latter days."

The rest, of course, is history. The "latter days" arrived on September 22, 1827, when 21-year-old Joseph Smith of Palmyra, N.Y., having received instructions from the angel Moroni, dug up the plates, translated them, and presented the world with the Book of Mormon. Today the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (L.D.S.), commonly known as the Mormons, is the fastest-growing church in America. Its virtual control of Utah politics and its significant influence in Arizona, Nevada, Idaho, and California would seem to make it a religious power without parallel in America. Its economic holdings, which would place it among the top 100 American corporations, make it the church with the greatest centralized wealth in the United States.

But for all the wealth and power, there remains a flaw—those "dark and loathsome" Lamanites, the lost brothers of centuries ago, whose descendants are today the native "Indians" of the Americas and the Pacific islands. They have forgotten who they are, where they came from. They have taken up strange pantheist religions, and they remain desperately impoverished, uneducated to the wondrous opportunities for creating a reflection of God's world on earth through corporate capitalism. But still they are brothers under that dark skin. They must be saved. They will be saved, by God.

It is hardly surprising that an obsession with Indians should characterize the doctrine of a church founded on the American frontier in the early nineteenth century. When Joseph Smith and his growing band of followers were driven progressively westward by religious and social persecution, the identity with the Indians as lost brothers served them in good stead. Church president Brigham Young, who followed Smith to the leadership and founded Salt Lake City, told a gathering of Utah legislators in 1854: "... Independent of the question of exercising humanity towards so degraded and ignorant a race of people, it was manifestly more economical and less expensive to feed and clothe than to fight them."

Telling the native peoples that "the Book of Mormon is a history of your people," the Saints have recently launched a massive crusade to "save" their lost brothers. Today the church claims some 45,000 American Indians as Mormons. On the Navaho Reservation, the largest Indian reservation in America, church officials proudly boast that nearly 1 in 5 of the 150,000 Navaho are baptized Mormons. Recent missionary zeal in the South Pa-

cific has netted more than 116,000 Poly-nesian to the Mormon rolls (they, also, are considered descendants of the Lamanites) while a crusade among the Indians of Mexico and Central and South America has boosted membership from those Catholic strongholds to a half million. In America no church—save the rather informal Native American church of peyotism—is as visible, as powerful, and as entrenched on Indian lands as the Mormon church.

Why? Why should a basically Anglo-American church, whose vision is shaped by middle-class notions of the good life, be so obsessed with the remnants of a race of people that much of America has consigned to the history books? Church doctrine, certainly, plays a significant role. Indians are lost brothers, cursed and loathsome, perhaps, but nonetheless among the chosen.

Are there other motives? Perhaps. "Indian people are sitting on one-third of the

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A California professor,  
son of a prominent  
Mormon family, claims that  
many Mormons have  
taken advantage of the  
child-placement  
program to supply free labor.

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low-sulfur strippable coal and sixty-five percent of the uranium supply in America," says Gerald Wilkinson, a Cherokee and the director of the Albuquerque-based National Indian Youth Council since 1969. "Some people estimate that maybe one-quarter of the nation's natural-energy resources are on Indian land."

Bill Armstrong, the burly, cigar-chomping Anglo director of the Navaho Reservation's Minerals Department, ticks off the numbers pertaining to Navaho land with nonchalant ease: 2 billion tons of coal under lease, 80 million barrels of oil, 25 million cubic feet of natural gas, from 75 to 80 million tons of uranium, \$20 million a year in royalties.

Ironically, this resource-rich Indian land was once believed to be worthless, which is why the Indians were forced on these lands in the nineteenth century. It was only in the last few decades that the government and mining and energy corporations began to realize what had been given away. And, curiously, it is only in these same years that the Mormon church has revved up its great missionary machine to undertake again the destined task of saving the Indians.

That effort today is two-pronged, aimed at the Indians' two greatest resources—Indian children and Indian land. On the one hand, thousands of young, white Mormon men, aged 18 to 21, roam the reservations in dark suits, ties, and close-cropped hair, spreading the Word and gathering up the Lamanite children for "placement" in white Mormon homes. On the other hand, a small and powerful clique of attorneys, officially tied to the Mormon church in Salt Lake, scour the canons of Indian law, significant parts of which they wrote, searching for ways to "extinguish" Indian land claims, thereby enriching themselves and paving the way for mineral development by corporations to which the church is tied financially. These same Mormon attorneys also represent, as general counsels, many of the Indian tribes in the Southwest, including the Hopi, the Ute, the Gosiute, Paiute, and Shoshoni.

Tom Luebben, a young white attorney in Albuquerque who used to work exclusively on Indian law cases, has confronted the Mormons on both fronts. He characterizes the "extinguishments" as "the biggest land transfer of the twentieth century." The "placement program" for Indian children, he says, is "nothing short of cultural genocide."

"I'm a Nephite, and I'm also a Lamanite. I'm an Israelite." The man of many identities is George Lee, 37, a full-blooded Navaho and the son of a medicine man. Today he is the highest-ranking Indian in the church hierarchy, a member of the Quorum of Seventy, the body that implements and administers the policies formulated by the Council of the twelve Apostles and the First Presidency. Lee's climb to the top began in a humble if significant way: he was among the first batch of Indian children selected for placement in the white Mormon world. As such, he is routinely held up to Indian youth as the shining example of what Mormonism can do for the Lamanite.

Lee's story is worth telling in some detail, because in many ways it is typical of the way the Mormon Placement Program is supposed to operate. One of a large family, Lee was raised on the reservation. His parents were both illiterate, "very traditional and very unexposed to the world. We lived off the land, had a herd of sheep. I was raised on prairie dogs [small rodents] and rattlesnakes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The first six years of my life I ran around naked. Dad taught us the traditional ways, to get up early and pray facing the rising sun, and his prayers were long. We slept on a dirt floor on a sheepskin, no toilets, no electricity.

"And then one day an Anglo couple, traders who lived near us, came over and started talking to us about the Mormon church. Mom and Dad said we should not listen to these people, because they were trying to convert us to their ways. So, whenever they came around, we'd head

for the hills," George Lee recalls.

"So they tried another approach. Next time they came they brought sacks of canned goods, potatoes, and so on from the trading post. Mom and Dad liked that. And finally it came around to religion again. This man helped the government school twenty miles away, recruiting students and signing up the kids for the church they wanted to attend. He was not only a trader, but he was also a missionary for the L.D.S. [Latter Day Saints]."

Thus did George and his brother join the Mormon church and begin attending services at the church near the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) school. Two years later the trader showed up again and convinced George's parents to place their sons in Mormon homes near Salt Lake City, 500 miles away.

"He took us as we were, torn T-shirts, worn-out Levi's, no shoes. On the bus everyone was crying, all the kids, saying, 'I want to go home; I want to go home.' I cried till I fell asleep."

In Provo, Utah, where the bus journey ended, ten-year-old George was picked up by his new foster parents, who immediately began his cultural transformation. He says he didn't speak a word to them for two long months, though they showered him with gifts, new clothes, even a cowboy outfit.

"I had to make a complete transition from one way of life to another. I got sick a lot, because I wasn't used to their food. Back home I never got sick; we were immune to disease. I had hives all over my body."

But George was one of the lucky ones. He adjusted reasonably well, thanks in part to being an outstanding athlete. After high school he went on to Brigham Young University, did a two-year missionary stint back on the reservation, and took a doctorate in education. Then, a few years ago, Church President Spencer Kimball, the "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," was told by God that it was time to put an Indian, specifically George Lee, into the hierarchy. Today George serves as executive administrator of 85 "stakes"—similar to dioceses—each representing from 2,000 to 6,000 Mormons.

Up to a point, Lee's experience with the Mormon Placement Program is fairly typical. Each year since the early 1950s, hundreds and then thousands of Indian children between 8 and 18—mostly Navaho—are bussed from reservations as far away as Canada to live for nine months with a white, middle-class Mormon family and attend a white, small-town or suburban school. The foster families, who are carefully screened by the church, are concentrated in the Salt Lake City area and in Southern California (California now has close to a million Mormons, more than Utah). The children, but not their parents, must be baptized Mormons. They are se-

parated by missionaries and church leaders, and, as is often the case, by government social workers who happen to be Mormons. Those children who complete the program are encouraged to attend B.Y.U. and then to return to the reservations to take professional jobs in the tribal government and continue church "proselyting," the Mormon word for proselytizing.

Church officials in Salt Lake City who are in charge of the placement program refused to talk to us. George Lee, the program's most outstanding graduate, acknowledged that there have been criticisms of the program from Indians, "like the militant groups like AIM [American Indian Movement]," but they are "misinformed." "They criticize not just placement," says Lee, "but they criticize the government, you know, for stealing all their land—they make a stink about every little thing."

Lee contends that his own research shows that more placement kids get ad-

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One Navaho leader says that the Indians must develop a tribal policy to counter the Mormon child-placement program.

If not, she said, "we won't survive. . . . They will literally conquer the Indian people."

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vanced degrees than do Indian kids in BIA or public schools, more go into the military, more get married, more attend church, and fewer end up on welfare. He also refutes the frequent criticism that Mormon placement is "cultural genocide." "The placement program does not rob the Indian kids of their identity. In fact, it reinforces it." Asked whether Indian kids brought up in placement homes undergo a change of skin color, as church president Kimball has claimed, Lee hesitates and then says:

"The Scriptures say, and I'll just stick to the Scriptures, the Lord Jesus Christ himself said that the Lamanites will become white and delightful if they live the gospel and keep the commandments. Yes . . . I agree with the prophet President Kimball. He's our leader, and he receives revelations from the Lord; so I agree." Has his own skin begun to change color? "I don't worry about it. I've never looked upon myself as an Indian."

George Lee, who has never looked upon himself as an Indian, insists that Mormon placement does not affect a child's "Indianess." A lot of Navaho disagree

with him. Claudine Arthur, a Navaho government official and mother of three in the Navaho capital of Window Rock, Ariz., flares up when the subject is broached. "It's dangerous," she declares. "They want children who are emotionally stable, who come from decent, good homes. Those are the children they want to take off to their homes in Utah and brainwash for their own purposes. If they really believe that home and family is good, then they must believe that it's best for children like these to be in their own homes with their own people. They say they don't want kids from broken homes or kids who are having trouble in school. They want the bright, intelligent kids. I find that two-faced."

Another Navaho official, who requested anonymity for fear he might lose his job, knows the placement program recruitment methods from long experience with having to sort out the tragedies. "When you look at the L.D.S. placements on a case-by-case basis, as I have, you see that they're all families who are just barely subsisting on a salary. It's not uncommon for a family with eight or nine kids to have to live on one minimum-wage salary or even less. It's basically income that determines whether a child goes on placement. It's very hard, especially for a single parent, to make that decision."

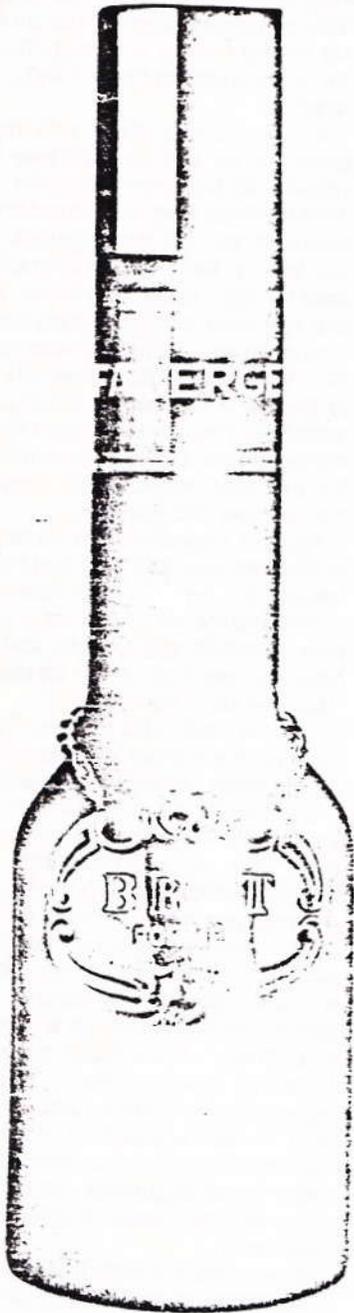
His own 13-year-old son, he said, came to him last year and said that he'd been talking to the Mormon missionaries. "They told me we'd have lots of fun. We'd play volleyball and football, and I could have my own room if I go on placement. 'Dad,' he said, 'can I go?'"

"It's very difficult to counter. There may have been a number of circumstances in my life when I would have said yes."

What about the many rumors concerning Mormon "kidnappings" of Indian children? Do such kidnappings actually occur? "Kidnapping? Well, it all depends on what you mean by 'kidnapping,'" he says. "Anyone who's ever worked in social work knows that you can get anyone who's in a corner to consent to anything, and lots of Indian families are very much in a corner." Some Indian children, born to young, unwed mothers, he said, are signed over to Mormon families right after birth in the reservation's Public Health Service Hospitals. "The Mormon doctors make the arrangements. It's very hard to document, but I know of cases where it's been done."

Beyond the issue of the legality of some placements, critics cite some serious moral issues raised by the program. Joseph Jorgensen, son of a prominent Mormon family and a professor of comparative culture at the University of California, Irvine, claims that in his experience many Mormon families have taken advantage of the program to supply free labor. "It was a form of work on demand," says Jorgensen, who was once employed by the Ute tribe. "It's a fine line between live-in help

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## GENOCIDE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 84

Those kids lived right on that fine line."

While the most blatant abuses appear to have ceased in recent years, more subtle and long-term problems still exist. Dr. Martin Topper, an anthropologist at the University of California, San Diego, studied a group of 25 Navaho children in the church's placement program over a seven-year period. Topper found that the separation from family and tribe experienced by placement children resulted in "serious emotional stresses."

The most wrenching experience, he found, occurs when the children have to return home to the reservation for summer recess. They then have to tear themselves away from the middle-class white world to which they've become accustomed and return to the poverty of the reservation and the realization that they will never be white but are destined to grow into Navaho adulthood and all that implies. Some students, he found, would try to change their reservation home into a typical Mormon home and to "convert or reaffirm the Mormon church membership of other household members. This activity was encouraged by the Mormon missionaries," said Topper.

Others would fall into hysterical seizures and "severe identity conflicts." Topper personally witnessed three such seizures in reservation homes during one summer: "The girls were highly agitated, hyperventilating, and often hallucinating. . . . [They] pushed themselves to the opposite side of the beds on which they were lying [and] would begin to scream and yell that they were being murderously assaulted by the ghosts of dead Navahos or that their family members were turning into ghosts, which were beckoning them into the grave. They screamed and struggled furiously when approached and then fell briefly into unconsciousness. Their insecurity was enormous, and they were expressing a great deal of anger about having to accept a major identity change."

So traumatic was the constant, yearly identity changes forced on the 25 placement children whom Topper studied that 23 of them dropped out of the program and returned permanently to the reservation before graduation from high school. The mounting criticism about the adoption and off-reservation placement of Indian children finally resulted in the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act in 1978. The law was designed, originally, to provide for careful supervision of all placement programs. Has it changed the Mormon Placement Program? "I wish it would, but the answer is no," says a weary and disgruntled BIA social worker in Window Rock, who requested anonymity.

No sooner had the act been passed, he said, than his office received a memo from M. E. Seneca, acting deputy commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, stating

that the church's powerful Washington law firm, Wilkinson, Cragun, and Barker (which Seneca once worked for), was complaining that the act was being "misinterpreted" to the L.D.S. staff people on the reservation. "The L.D.S. program," stated the memo, "is exempt" from the act. "Please have any misinterpretation corrected."

How did the Mormon church escape the restrictions placed on virtually every other public and private program dealing with Indian adoption and placement? Our sources in the Indian Subcommittee of the Senate Interior Committee, which handled the legislation, claim that Wilkinson, Cragun, and Barker lobbied intensively on behalf of the church to change the initial bill, which would have put the Mormon placement program under greater government supervision. They were ably assisted in the effort by Utah Rep. Gunn McKay, brother of former church president David McKay. In fact, the language in the bill exempting the Mormon program "was adopted by the House Subcommittee on Indian Affairs at the specific request of the church . . ." said a letter from Robert Barker to Seneca.

According to the BIA social worker, it is now up to the Tribal Council to come up with a tribal policy that addresses the problems of the placement program. But there is serious doubt that it will ever be enacted. Says a tribal official, "Mormons are tied into what is happening in the leadership of the tribe—both the council and the bureaucracy. I wouldn't be surprised if half the tribal council is Mormon." While that estimate is probably exaggerated, it is incontestable that Mormons are well represented in the council, and that many of them gained their political influence through the very program they will be asked to restrict—Mormon placement.

Said a Navaho woman who works in the tribal bureaucracy, "If the *Dineh* [the word for Navaho, meaning "the people"] doesn't develop a tribal policy [on placement], we won't survive as a tribe. They will literally conquer the Indian people."

Just as Mormon attorneys, legislators, and bureaucrats were able to rewrite the law that would have terminated the church's program for expropriating Indian children, so did they manage to create the law that continues to terminate Indian lands. In fact, much of the history of U.S. government-Indian affairs in the Southwest over the last 50 years has, in very large measure, involved a handful of highly placed Mormon attorneys and lawmakers and the still-growing legions of Mormons in both the federal Indian bureaucracy and the tribal governments themselves. Indeed, in many cases the BIA has literally served as an extension of the church.

The close relationship between the church and the government is most apparent in the recent history of what has happened to Indian land, which, besides

children, is the Native Americans' last great resource. Though once thought worthless, Indian land today is among the most highly valued real estate in the West, thanks to this nation's voracious appetite for uranium, coal, oil and oil shale, tar sands, and the water required to mine and process those resources and to supply the ever-growing cities.

Despite Brigham Young's paternal admonition that it was "less expensive to feed and clothe than to fight them," there has never been a time when the Lamanites have been welcome in the new Zion of the Saints. True, the early Mormon settlers tried, with little success, to convert the neighboring Shoshoni, Bannock, and Ute—even experimenting with placing the reluctant heathens on church-owned farms. But for the most part, the fast-growing body of Saints in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake had no room for anybody who was not of the faith. In fact, in 1857 Brigham Young was able to marshal fully 1,100 Mormon militia to guard the mountain pass east of Salt Lake against a U.S. Army expedition, mounted by President Buchanan, which was seeking to install a non-Mormon governor over the Utah Territory. The territory, as far as the Saints were concerned, was a semi-independent kingdom.

By 1865 the Utah Indians, battling both the Mormon militia and the U.S. Cavalry, had been defeated militarily, cut off from their traditional hunting grounds, and wracked by white man's diseases. The chieftains signed a treaty with the government, negotiated in part by Mormons, in which they were forced to cede their vast landholdings in exchange for reservations in remote areas. The Ute, once the most feared warriors in the Rockies, were assigned to about 2 million acres of majestic but arid land in the Uinta Basin in the mountains of eastern Utah. In one generation they had been reduced to a few pathetic bands of stragglers, their number reduced from 4,500 to about 800. In roughly the same period, the Mormons—infused by a constant flow of new blood from England and Scandinavia—grew from about 50,000 to more than 110,000.

The residue of bitterness is still felt on the Ute reservation today. A young woman tribal employee in Fort Duchesne, the tribal headquarters, tells us that "a lot of things are not recorded in the histories that you read. I remember my grandmother telling me about how her people, who lived in central Utah, would be invited to big feasts by the Mormons. Then the Mormons would slip poison into the Ute's food. There were lots of stories like that." Fact or fantasy, such oral history may reveal more about the tone of Mormon-Indian relationships than do most written histories.

As the plows of the Mormon settlers overturned more and more soil, the original 2.5 million acres that had been granted to all the Ute bands dwindled to about 360,000 acres by the early twentieth

century. Lost in their own land, the Ute died faster than their children could be born.

And so it continued until the 1930s, when President Roosevelt brought about an "Indian New Deal" under the leadership of Harold Ickes, secretary of the interior, and John Collier, who became commissioner of Indian affairs. Sincere and well-meaning for their time, they imposed on the Indian tribes the greatest gift they could conceive—formal, elected government.

For decades Washington did not know how to deal legally and officially with the various Indian bands. How could the U.S. government or, more to the point, certain U.S. corporations execute treaties, land leases, and mineral-exploration contracts with unelected leaders of informal, unofficial bands of Indians? Thus, in order for the tribes to reap the harvest of federal and corporate royalties, on the one hand, and in order for the government and the corporations to reap the Indian land and minerals, on the other hand, the New Deal bequeathed the wonders of elected, representative tribal government to the often reluctant tribes.

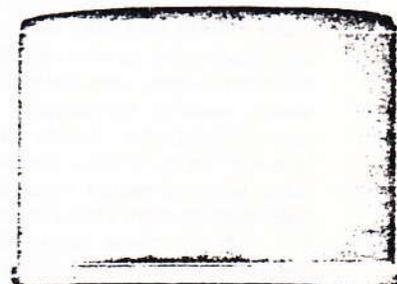
Despite the inherent ironies of the new benevolence in Washington, the period marked a turning point for the Ute, whose new BIA-approved government received \$1.2 million for a million acres that had been appropriated for a national forest. Their future seemed assured, their land base slowly began to grow again, and for the first time in 80 years Ute births began to exceed the number of Ute deaths.

And then the second critical event of the twentieth century occurred for the Ute. The tribe hired young Ernest Wilkinson, an enterprising Mormon attorney whose Washington, D.C., law firm had gained a reputation for its expertise on Indian law issues and would go on to become an energetic official representative of the Mormon church. The tribe wanted Wilkinson to press its other land claims before the government.

Ernest Wilkinson proved so adept in his new role that he established a pattern that Indian-claims law still follows today. Before he could get on with the work of adjudicating Indian land claims—for he had his eyes on not only the Ute claim but also Indian lands throughout the country—Wilkinson had to engineer a neat little piece of legislation. Accordingly, the Indian Claims Commission Act, written in part by Wilkinson, was sponsored by Nevada Sen. Pat McCarran and Utah Sen. Arthur Watkins.

This law, perhaps the most disputed piece of Indian legislation ever passed, called for the creation of an Indian Claims Commission, which would rule on the legitimacy of tribal land claims, then set the date when the land was lost, and finally determine the amount owed the Indians for the lost land based on the value of the land at the time it was taken, which was in most instances anywhere from 50 to

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Wilkinson would later boast in a letter to a Ute leader that "as your attorney, I spent considerable time assisting in the writing of that particular bill." He would go on to call it "the biggest victory ever obtained by the Indians in Congress with respect to settling their claims against the government."

The land claims law was, in fact, the biggest victory ever obtained by the government and by lawyers over the Indians. It was designed to end, once and for all, all legitimate Indian claims to traditional homelands. The claims would be "terminated," not by the restoration of lands, as many Indians had been led to believe, but by allowing the government to "buy out" the claims using land prices that had prevailed several generations back. The law—dubbed the "Indian Lawyers Welfare Act" by its critics—also provided that tribal lawyers would receive settlement fees ranging from seven to ten percent of the total purchase price. Since settlements, even at nineteenth-century prices, often reached into the millions, the lawyers were highly motivated to encourage tribes to sue. According to one authoritative estimate, Indian-claims lawyers, virtually all white, have reaped at least \$60 million by "selling off" Indian lands.

"It also became an incentive for lawyers to prove how much the Indians no longer owned," said one lawyer familiar with the Ute case. "The more land the Indians lost, the more money the lawyers got." At the heart of the controversy over the law was the stipulation that all settlements be made in cash. Time and again Indian leaders have stated that they never understood this provision of the act and that their lawyers, including the most prominent of the Mormon attorneys, led them to believe that by filing a land claim they stood a good chance of actually getting their lands back. Even today traditional Hopi, Paiute, Shoshoni, Gosiute, and others argue passionately that they never realized that in making a claim they were offering to sell their land. Ernest Wilkinson, who would go on to become head of B.Y.U. and one of the most respected and richest elders in the Mormon church before his death in 1978, represented each and every one of them.

In the first claims settlement, the Ute received \$31 million for lost Colorado lands plus oil and gas lease royalties on leases that were worked out by the tribe's Mormon attorneys. They were getting rich, or so it looked. But instead of contributing to tribal prosperity, the funds quickly resulted in widespread unrest among the various bands that occupied the Ute reservation.

Foremost among the causes of that unrest was a new piece of legislation introduced by Utah's Senator Watkins, Wilkinson's old Mormon ally. Watkins, following the lead of the claims act, was determined to carry the "termination policy" to its logical conclusion. Under the

guise of freeing the Indians from the "yoke of federal supervision," termination *à la* Watkins amounted to extermination. The new policy called for the end of all government services to Indians, the imposition of state jurisdiction over all Indian lands, the eventual sale of all Indian lands, and, in the meantime, the transfer of title to an appointed trustee.

In the end, the infamous Watkins policy "terminated" 20 tribes, bands, and remnants of tribes. Watkins would go on to become head of the Indian Claims Commission. Wilkinson's partner, John Boyden, would soon succeed his mentor as one of the nation's most controversial Indian land-claims attorneys.

Salt Lake City attorney Parker Nielson, who now represents the terminated mixed-bloods, says that Boyden was "not intentionally devious, but he had a very myopic view of Indians and their problems. He saw it as a problem of converting them to round-eyed Caucasians and par-

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Indian in the Mormon church  
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ticularly Mormon round-eyed Caucasians. That was the intention of [Watkin's] termination policy, which he helped to design. It contributed to the urban Indian problem. It forced the Indians off the reservation and into the cities. I am told that Paiute (once terminated but recently restored to tribal status) are actually going out and committing suicide by walking under motor vehicles." Nielson calls the whole affair "a cultural tragedy."

Nielson's view of Boyden closely corresponds to that of an official in the Department of the Interior who, after working with Boyden for five years on another Ute case, wrote in an official memorandum that the attorney is "first of all a Mormon, secondly, a very strong state's advocate, and, thirdly, an advocate for Indian people."

Boyden, who began his legal career as a U.S. attorney in Salt Lake City and later was an unsuccessful candidate for governor, soon left the Wilkinson firm to set up his own, known as Boyden, Kennedy, Romney.

Boyden and his son Steve continued to represent the Ute tribe until recently, when our old friend Martin Seneca from the BIA took over as a private attorney. In the early

1970s, the tribal council launched a second effort to fire Boyden as general counsel for his part in negotiating a Ute water-rights deferral that would divert Ute water to Salt Lake City. The expanding city, led by the expanding church, needs the additional water if it is to continue to grow as a western energy center. The tribal council's attempt to dump Boyden was rebuffed by the Department of the Interior's solicitor in Utah, William McConkey, who overruled the tribe.

Ute water continues to be of paramount interest to the church, city, and state (which are inextricably interlocked), but it is not the only Ute resource coveted in Salt Lake. Oil and gas leases from the tribe currently bring in some \$9 million a year to tribal coffers, and the reservation sits on some of the best shale oil land in the West, waiting patiently to be developed in the promised era of synthetics.

The Ute's most significant gas leases were negotiated by Boyden with Mountain Fuel and Gas Supply, the largest gas supplier in Utah. Not surprising, it is also a firm in which the Mormon church has extensive interests and interlocks. The church's first president, Nathan Eldon Tanner, the church's leading business adviser and a former energy entrepreneur in his own right, sits on Mountain Fuel's board of directors, as does church official and former CIA man Neal Maxwell. Maxwell, who is regarded as one of the most important figures in the next generation of church leadership, is also a member of Mountain Fuel's executive committee. Mountain Fuel chairman B. Z. Kastler, in turn, reciprocates the favor by sitting on the boards of two church-owned corporations. According to our research among state legal documents held by the Utah Insurance Board, the five Mormon church-owned insurance companies alone control \$1.5 million worth of Mountain Fuel. It is impossible to calculate how much more extensive the church's financial stake in the company might be, since control of stock can be disguised in many perfectly legal ways and the church itself never reveals an iota of financial information.

Ute council chairwoman Ruby Black (one of the few women ever to head an Indian tribe) was guarded on the subject of their attorney, as were virtually all the tribal leaders with whom we spoke on the record. "There were times when they tended to do things *their way*," she says. "We told the Boyden firm not to go out and do things on their own. We said, 'You sit back and take orders from the tribe now.'" Steve Boyden, she says, was "very loyal" to the tribe, despite tremendous pressure from Uinta Basin Mormon ranchers who called him everything from a "traitor to the faith" to a "Communist," particularly since the tribe forced Boyden to press its claim for jurisdiction over all Ute in the Uinta Basin.

Our own retracing of the Wilkinson-Boyden trail lead us not only through the val-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 163

# GENOCIDE

THE HISTORY OF AMERICA

leys of the Utah Ute, the Shoshoni, the Gosiute, and the Paiute but also south to the high red-rock mesas of northern Arizona, to the very heartland of ancient America.

There, among the gentle Hopi, the direct descendants of the cliff-dwelling Anasazi (the Ancient Ones), we found the Mormon-Lamanite struggle written in high relief. The Hopi, befitting a tribe that has lived centuries on this continent, have a way of speaking of the distant past as though it were the immediate prelude to the present. Nothing is forgotten. Everything is interconnected. Add to this characteristic their intense religiosity, and it is not surprising that their relations with the Mormons past and present should so consume reservation life today.

"To the Hopi these sacred mountains were set up as a village plaza," says Thomas Banyacya, pointing out the rock houses perched precariously on the razor edge of the mesa above us. The village is Old Oraibi, which, with nearby Shungopavy, is considered the oldest continuously occupied community in North America. Banyacya's forefathers lived in this place as long as 1100 A.D. and perhaps 500 years before that.

As an official interpreter of the traditional Hopi leaders, known as the village *kikmoriywis*, since 1948, Banyacya has come to know every detail of the long struggle waged by the Hopi. The last person he tried to tell his story to was President Carter, but the president had more pressing business, and Banyacya delivered to a Carter aide a detailed report on the Hopi problem commissioned by the traditional leaders.

The report he left was a remarkable 200-page history of the Hopi's efforts to survive in the midst of an alien society that imposes its own rules and then breaks them with impunity, a history of struggles against government officials and Mormon attorneys who are determined to turn them into rich, law-abiding Americans, even if it kills them. The background of this struggle is a long history of governmental and white-settler encroachment on Hopi land. A prominent Mormon missionary, Jacob Hamlin, led a Mormon expedition to Hopi mesa tops more than 100 years ago, and the descendants of Mormon settlers still farm on surrounding lands that the Hopi claim as their own. In all, the Hopi have "lost" some 4 million acres of their ancestral lands.

By the late 1940s the BIA was very anxious to finally "extinguish" the Hopi land claims by paying out a monetary settlement so that the energy companies could get on with the work of mineral exploration. But before this could be done, the Hopi had to be made to elect a legal tribal council as well as hire a BIA-approved attorney. Previous efforts to establish a tribal



ART



POTENT PROTEIN



TING

The short but troubled history of a private space transportation company called OTRAG (Orbital Transport and Rockets, A-Gen-gesellschaft) reads like a sizzling spy thriller. These German ex-rocket technicians wanted to offer the world an alternative to government-monopolized space programs. And yet, in its efforts to compete with NASA and the European Space Agency, OTRAG became ensnared in political maneuvering, international propaganda campaigns, espionage, and outright war. Frustrated in its efforts to set up a launching site in Zaire, OTRAG has since built a launchpad in Libya and is reportedly conducting test firings there. *Omni* contributor James Oberg reveals the full story behind this secretive outfit, explaining why the Communist press made up the lie that OTRAG is a front for Neo-Nazis.

Einstein may be the popular image of a physicist, but the king of today's subnuclear explorers is neither fuzzy-headed nor forgetful. Samuel C. C. Ting handles the business of big-time science as easily as the intricacies of quarks. Ting revolutionized our view of matter's core. He discovered particles that shouldn't exist but that may explain the basic forces holding the universe together. We take you inside the head of a genius who jousts with atoms in the June issue of *Omni*.

What people wear and how they decorate their bodies form an important part of social communication. Clothing establishes a persona and transforms it into statements of age, sex, and status. Adornment preserves the delicate boundaries between group identity and the assertion that we are individuals. The power of nonverbal communication is displayed in a rare pictorial study of New Guinea tribesmen by Malcolm Kirk. Painted bodies and clay marks mirror the primal forces still evident in our own societies. You may even see some of yourself in this special feature for June.

Joan Karafotas is among the chosen few. The Illinois housewife is one of eight cancer patients who received the first batches of genetically engineered interferon. This unique natural protein is battling to the forefront in the fight against disease. It has been touted as a cure, or at least as tomorrow's treatment of choice, for ills from leukemia to the common cold. *Omni* associate editor Mike Edelhart examines where interferon research stands today and suggests how this substance will change our lives.

Are you obsessed with space travel in Orson Scott Card's "A Sepulchre of Songs"? heroes are the only free men and women in the world in Michael Crichton's "Angel at the Gate"; a child in a postholocaust society unexpectedly encounters Frank L. Catlow's "Mr. Mouse."

council among the Hopi had met with re-  
sulted defeat, thanks to the traditional  
Hopi leaders, who clung to the nonelected  
theocratic form of government that had  
served the tribe well for more than 1,000  
years.

Without a "representative" council  
nothing could happen. "It does not appear  
that leases acceptable to oil companies  
may be made under existing law unless  
the Hopi Indians will organize a tribal  
council . . .," lamented one Interior De-  
partment official at the time.

Enter John Boyden. By 1950 Boyden  
was well connected, to say the least,  
among the Indian bureaucrats. As a U.S.  
attorney in Utah, he had handled Indian  
cases for more than ten years. With the  
FBI before that he had written a new crimi-  
nal law code for the Navaho Reservation  
and had even sought the job of Indian  
commissioner. With this background,  
Boyden would have no difficulty in getting  
the government to sanction him as the Ho-  
pi's claims attorney; all he had to do was  
get the Hopi to go along.

Since there was no tribal council to ap-  
point him, the BIA decided that Boyden  
should go meet with the people of each  
of the Hopi villages, explain to them the  
meaning of the lands claim, and then con-  
duct an election in each village. If a ma-  
jority wanted him, he would be legally  
recognized as a Hopi attorney and would  
file the claim.

Boyden found only five "progressive"  
villages that would give him a hearing.  
Five other villages, populated by the "tra-  
ditionals," who opposed any monetary  
settlement, refused even to meet with him.  
Despite abysmally low voter turnouts even  
in the progressive villages that would ad-  
mit him, the BIA concluded that "the peo-  
ple from the villages who favor the  
resolution represent the majority of the  
Hopi people." John Boyden had won the  
election to tribal-claims attorney.

The traditional Hopi, outraged by the  
hiring of Boyden and the filing of the land  
claim, decided to file their own claim. They  
pressed the claims court for restoration of  
their entire ancestral lands, adding that  
"we cannot, by our tradition, accept coins  
or money for this land, but must persist in  
our prayers and words for repossession  
of the land itself to preserve the Hopi life."  
The claim soon lapsed for want of any  
BIA-approved attorney to carry it to court.  
Despite the setback, the traditional Hopi  
have petitioned virtually every president  
and high BIA official over the last 30 years,  
demanding restoration of lands and refus-  
ing to accept any amount of money in set-  
tlement. In 1958 the traditional Hopi even  
met with traditional Ute, who were also  
fighting Boyden, and they jointly demand-  
ed that a federal grand jury conduct an in-  
vestigation of Boyden's activities. No such  
investigation was ever held.

The creation of a "representative" tribal  
council proved a long and arduous task  
for Boyden and the BIA. But by 1955 the  
commissioner of Indian affairs finally

granted recognition to a group of nine pro-  
gressive Hopi who claimed to constitute  
a tribal council. The eight other seats that  
make up the constitutional tribal council  
remained unfilled because traditional  
leaders refused to participate.

Six years later, and many more extra-  
legal manipulations later, the new tribal  
council entered into its first mineral-lease  
agreement. As Boyden had predicted, the  
mineral leases would bring a steady flow  
of funds into the tribal coffers. Early oil  
leases in 1964 resulted in a reported \$3  
million. To show its gratitude, the tribal  
council, which Boyden had helped create,  
voted to pay its attorney a \$1 million fee  
for his efforts. His prediction, made a de-  
cade earlier, that oil leases would eventu-  
ally pay his fees, proved correct.

In 1966 the tribal council, guided by  
Boyden, signed a lease that entitled Pea-  
body Coal to strip-mine 58,000 acres of  
the Black Mesa, a mining operation that  
would come to be known in the environ-

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6

The land-claims law  
was the biggest victory ever  
obtained by government  
and lawyers over the  
Indians. It was designed to  
end all legitimate Indian claims  
to traditional homelands.

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mental movement as The Angel of Death.  
In the view of Banyacya and the tradition-  
als, the council and Boyden had not only  
participated in the rape of their sacred  
land but also sold out the Hopi's historic  
duty to protect the earth on behalf of the  
Great Spirit.

"We Hopis have to hold the land for the  
Great Spirit," says Banyacya. "We cannot  
take money for it; the land cannot be  
sold."

Clearly, the Hopi's Mormon attorney  
was eminently successful in opposing the  
interests of the traditional Hopi. But how  
well does the Mormon church fare in the  
Hopi nation in other respects, such as the  
saving of the Lamanite?

Not so bad, at least from a first glance.  
Down the road a piece from Banyacya's  
home is a modest frame house once  
owned by Wayne Sekaquaptewa, the edi-  
tor of the local Hopi newspaper, who died  
shortly after we visited him. Except for the  
government, Wayne was the biggest em-  
ployer on the reservation. He was also the  
most unabashedly Mormon of all Hopi,  
and viewed himself as a reincarnation of  
Jacob Hamlin, the nineteenth-century  
Mormon missionary to the Hopi. The Hopi

religion, he wrote in an editorial, is not  
worth practicing and pursuing. It is time to  
burn up the rest of our supposedly sacred  
altars and ritual paraphernalia."

Wayne was also a member of the Hopi's  
most prominent Mormon family. His broth-  
er Abbot is chairman of the tribal council,  
while his brother Emory has served as ex-  
ecutive director of the tribal council.

For a time, a decade ago, it looked as  
if the Mormon church were going to be as  
successful at gathering Hopi souls as  
Boyden was at gathering Hopi mineral  
leases. The traditional leaders spoke  
darkly of a Mormon conspiracy to take  
over the reservation. Boyden was clearly  
in control of the council and its relations  
with the outside world. Stewart Udall, a  
member of another politically prominent  
Mormon family, had direct interest in the  
Hopi and could make his interests felt as  
the secretary of the interior, who is ulti-  
mately responsible for all Indian affairs. In  
addition, the commissioner of Indian af-  
fairs was a Mormon, as were prominent  
local and national BIA officials. Every-  
where a Hopi looked he saw Mormons,  
and they were inevitably in positions of  
great power.

Nonetheless, there is no evidence that  
the Mormons have won the hearts and  
minds of the Hopi people. Relatively few  
Hopi children enter the Mormon Child  
Placement Program, and even fewer re-  
main in it long enough to become indoctrinated.  
While some Hopi claim that as  
much as 70 percent of the reservation has  
been baptized Mormon, most knowledge-  
able Hopi laugh at such a figure.

And, according to confidential sources  
within the tribal bureaucracy, distrust of  
John Boyden himself was beginning to  
grow in the tribal government. Some of the  
council members, though they were pro-  
gressives, were even beginning to talk se-  
riously of hearing from at least one other  
law firm.

The matter was taken out of their hands  
when John Boyden died late in 1980, leav-  
ing his son Steve in charge of his lingering  
business and his old BIA Mormon friend  
Martin Seneca to take over the Ute ac-  
count. But Boyden had won large cash  
settlements for the Gosiute and the west-  
ern Shoshoni, even though tribal leaders  
from both tribes fought long and bitter bat-  
tles to fire him and get their lands back.  
And his firm won a contract from New  
Mexico's Zuni tribe and was expected to  
file a claim that would lead to the extin-  
guishment of another 6 million acres of In-  
dian land, much of it already settled by  
Mormon ranchers.

The future? Boyden, Wilkinson, and  
Watkins have gone to their Mormon re-  
wards with the angel Moroni. The church  
remains, and Tom Banyacya and Ameri-  
ca's Indians remain. Two visions of life on  
earth, two intensely spiritual interpreta-  
tions of the meaning and value of land and  
mankind, clashing down through the past  
and rumbling like distant thunder in the  
future. O—