

Within this paper we shall attempt to describe a move for self-determination; a move by a group of on-reservation Navajos to gain greater control over the education their children receive from the white government's schools. We shall first review the situation on the reservation and at the school and then recount the events as they occurred.

The Navajo reservation is located in the arid Southwest in the "four corners" area, comprising portions of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. Only two paved roads cross the large land area, which is about the size of the state of West Virginia. While conditions are changing on the reservation, living conditions there would have to be termed primitive. Few homes have running water or electricity; families must go several miles to haul water. The land is arid and sparsely covered with grass. Jobs are scarce; the unemployment rate is high, while state welfare payments are low. Health conditions are deplorable with tuberculosis and trachoma, a disease of the eyes now prevalent among only American Indian groups in this country, quite common. Malnutrition is often seen, and infectious diseases are not a minor problem.

Despite these economic and health problems, the cultural life of the Navajos, their sense of history, and group feeling is strong, especially in comparison to other Native American groups. Most Navajos still speak their own language, in fact % of the people know no English, a factor that perhaps enhances the economic problems noted above. Traditional religious ceremonies, medicine men, and traditional beliefs are not an artifact of the past, but are a present part of life for a goodly portion of the people.

It is impossible to understand the situation on the reservation apart from an understanding also of the political conditions there and the history of these conditions. The Bureau of Indian Affairs maintains a life-or-death hold on the lives of the Navajos. Only since the late 1930's has the tribe as a whole been allowed to exercise any determination over even a few sectors of their group life.

One area over which the Bureau retains virtually complete control is that of education. Two aspects of this education structure, largely interrelated, directly affect the events to be described in this paper: 1) the bureaucratic structure of the system; and 2) the racism both inherent in and engendered by this structure. The Indian school system is administered through a large hierarchical structure stretching from Washington, D.C. through the area offices, in this case Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Gallup, then Window Rock, and then to the local Agency Office which has contacts with the administration at the local school. Even at the local level several layers of administrative responsibility compound the decision-making process. Thus, the people who make the important decisions are several, if not many, steps removed from those who will be affected by the decision. More importantly, those who make the decisions, even those who carry them out, are not accountable to those whom the decision will affect, the people on the bottom. Thus the policy making of the BIA occurs in a fairly sterile, bureaucratic atmosphere, far removed, both administratively and morally from the recipients of the decisions and their needs and desires.

The other aspect of this educational morass is in many ways related to the first. Historically and to the present the Bureau has operated on a premise of paternalism. Such a paternalistic ethos has led to an entent found

place," to guide him to the point where "sometime" he can begin to govern himself. These policies and attitudes, as we hope to explain in more detail in a later paper, are essentially racist in character with an implicit aim of racial control. The racism is both engendered by the system and then maintained and even rationalized and justified by the system. As will be seen subsequently, both of these factors are reflected in conditions in the schools.

In August, 1969, Walt and I were sent to Sanostee Boarding School, a seven grade institution (including "Beginners," the pre-first grade class for six-year olds), capable of caring for around five hundred to seven hundred students. The school is located on a dirt road about eight miles west of the state highway connecting Gallup and Shiprock. The closest town of any size is the agency town, Shiprock, about thirty to forty miles or an hour's drive away. A few people from the surrounding area are employed in Shiprock, but most manage to subsist on income from their sheeep, the small crops some can grow, handicrafts, primarily rugs, and meager welfare payments. Some seasonal employment outside the community is available and individuals or families may travel to nearby states to help with harvents or leave for several months to work with the railroad.

The first school in the community was built prior to the second world war and accepted only students who could come to the school from home each day(day students). Several years later a larger plant was developed on another site which could care for both boarding students and day students. A bus~~was~~ run was established up the canyon for these day stddents. Finally, in the fall of 1968 the present school was opened with enough facilities to house all children in the surrounding area and thus eliminate the bus run, and the chance for many students to live at home.

The school was administered entirely by the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the local level by a principal, a teacher supervisor, and a guidance supervisor and his assistant who were in charge of the dormitories, and on the agency level and above by numerous middle and upper-range bureaucrats most of whom had presumably worked their way up through the ranks of the structure to their present position. In our school there were no Indian (and obviously no Navajo) administrative personnel, while on the agency level only one Navajo woman was employed as an administrator, in an advisory post labeled "educational specialist."

To understand developments it seems advisable at this point to relate the positions and history of the various personnel at the school. The principal, Mr. Carnal, and his wife, a first grade teacher, had been employed by the BIA for many years, long ago in the Dakotas and more recently on the Hopi reservation, and at Sanostee for at least the last ten years. Apparently Mrs. Carnal had once been a major force in the school, the dominant authority not only over the classrooms but over the dormitories as well. She was well known for her cruelty to child, her belief that Indian children rarely could learn anything well, and her practice for many years of having all first graders automatically repeat that year of schooling. Mr. Carnal, past the customary age for retirement when we came to the school, had apparently been overwhelmed by the expansion of the school to its larger quarters. When we arrived on the scene he seemed to be an exhausted old man, simply waiting for his wife to decide to retire. Mr. Carnal had apparently had several run-ins with the guidance supervisor, Mr. Lockhart, and with an earlier record that was far from free of mishaps and administrative faux-pas was trying to avoid any problems that could force his dismissal.

Lockhart, perhaps the most central force in the disturbances was a man in his mid-forties who entered the education profession fairly late in life. His first job was with the bureau at a school south of Sanostee, and local rumors reported that he had problems at the other school similar to, if not more serious than those at Sanostee, and left there under duress. Several years before we came to Sanostee Lockhart, then at a considerably lower GS rating had apparently decided to transfer from Sanostee to another school. Carnal was aware of Lockhart's failings, but gave him a good recommendation hoping to facilitate the transfer. ~~xxxxxx~~ However, the bureau froze all transfers at about this time and noting the good recommendation which Lockhart had, promoted him to a Guidance Supervisor position, only a level below Carnal, and left him at Sanostee.

Two other administrators also figured in the situation. Ray Ferguson, the teacher supervisor, had worked his way through the system from a teaching position to a place of authority over the teachers and just under the principal. In theory his authority was equal to that of Lockhart's,; however, in reality his impact was secondary, though in some instances just as damaging, for Ferguson was the type of administrator who read the rule books and then used these rules as rationalizations for the existence or creation of situations that did only harm to other people. He was also very wary of damaging or threatening his position of authority and although he could have helped perhaps the complainants aligned himself most solidly with the administration in hopes of bolstering or at least maintaining his own power.

Early Condit was the assistant guidance supervisor, a step below Lockhart, and thus his "flunky," and main connection to the life in the dormitories. Condit, a retired elementary school principal, had many years before spent a year in residence at an Ivy League School of Education. He had also taught

seeing his main purpose on the reservation as educating the Indians to the "realities" and "truths" of Driekerian child guidance. Basically Condit's attitude seemed humane, but his position in the bureaucracy and his delusions about his place in the fate of the people eventually undermined the originally benevolent intent of his actions.

The Anglo teachers at the school were a varied lot. Some had been with the Bureau for many years; they were discouraged and convinced the children would never learn, but felt they had made a sacrifice and done their part "to help the Indian people." Then there were those who had been with the Bureau for only a few years. Some had noticed immense problems with the structure and operation of the school and a few had even attempted complaints or changes. As each was defeated, his enthusiasm began to wane and they became gradually more discouraged and resigned. Finally, each year there were a few teachers new to the system who, relatively naive, were soon to be initiated to the rigors and injustices of a system that seemingly no one could control and were thus to either join the old ranks, or perhaps fight for a while, then become resigned or quit in disgust.

The Navajos at the school had for the most part been employed by the BIA for many years and in all cases had gone through the bureau school system, a prerequisite for hiring. Some of them, such as the Lopes and Mikes, were fairly well-educated, yet had never risen in the system beyond the GS-5 level, allegedly because of lack of qualifications. These people had watched the workings at the school for many years, and they too were defeated, but in a different way. We were to find that underneath their defeat, their beliefs that nothing would change, there existed both a large reservoir of fear of the system and a reservoir of intense distrust and hate of the system that many saw as killing their people.

One other Anglo, Garth Powell, was also employed as a guidance counselor. However, because of his inherent intellectual limitations (He received monthly checks from the government for a mental disability suffered in the military) and his ill-concealed racism, he was usually the object of open disdain from the Navajo employees under his jurisdiction and was virtually ignored or at times used as a ploy by the administration.

At the school Walt and I were technically termed "guidance counselors." In this position we were each placed in a large dormitory in a supervisory position over the employees in the dorm, all Indians. About onehundred and fifty youngsters, both boys and girls, lived in each dorm in dark cubicles each equipped with two bunk beds and sterile concrete walls. Our position usually reduced to administrative busywork, counting laundry, order supplies, and pushing paper clips. It was virtually impossible for an Anglo to do any amount of real counseling for the cultural and language differentials between an Anglo, middle-class counselor and a young Navajo-speaking child from the reservation are immense. Any really effective counseling that we observed took place between two people who shared the same cultural background and understandings and usually the same language. The only innovative aspect of the position, an aspect in which our activities met with continuous opposition was the development of recreational activity programs for the youngsters, an area sorely lacking at the school.

Gradually, both through problems we encountered and from what the employees and children told us about their experiences, ~~which were always~~ which were always much worse than our own, we became more aware of the extent of the racism and degradation pervading and inherent in the bureau educational system. On

the following pages we shall briefly describe some of the events we encountered, events which ~~were~~ are not at all atypical, both of our school and of other bureau schools. We will then go into details of the attempts to change these conditions.

Events prompting our dismay and the general fear and resentment of community members and employees fell generally within two categories both closely related: those affecting the school program and policies and those more directly evident of racism and abuse to the children and adults of the community. Administrators at the school were always intent upon maintaining rigid control of policies, programs, and the lives of the employees. A major instrument for this control was the use of work schedules and tour of duties. Salary levels for most Indian employees of the bureau are extremely low and ~~low~~ in many families both spouses work. Correspondingly a ~~major~~ major instrument for social control used by administrators is the arbitrary enforcement of leave and work schedules assigning opposite schedules and days off to those couples deemed most deserving of reprimand within a certain work period. The assignment of work schedules was completely arbitrary and the punitive nature of these assignments was reinforced by the threats and announcements of the administrators. Most important and most indicative of the racist aspect of this control is the fact that it was always directed toward the Indians. While Walt and I were always given at least one day off together and assured at the beginning of the year that this would be the common practice, when I later prepared a proposed duty schedule that provided the same privilege for the Navajos in my building, Lockhart bluntly informed me that such a consideration should not be made for the Navajo employees and he rewrote the schedule.

A second way the administrators tried to maintain control over the lives of their employees was through granting or refusing to grant leave privileges. On numerous occasions, even though such practice was strictly against civil service regulations, which allow up to three days sick leave without a doctor's statement, Lockhart and company would require written notes from a doctor before an individual would be granted sick leave, even if such leave was to visit a doctor. One woman was refused leave to enter the hospital despite her holding a hospital admittance slip. Another woman feared she had suffered a miscarriage of pregnancy while on duty, but continued working both that night and the next for fear of being accused by Lockhart of lying when she tried to explain what happened.

Such discriminatory practices were directed not only at the adult employees but at the school children, also. Few supplies were available. Children in the classrooms were given paper only by half-sheets. In many classrooms there were no pencils, so the children used broken color crayons. In other rooms no reading textbooks were available for the children so the teacher laboriously copied stories from her one teacher's edition onto large sheets of paper for the class to read in unison. Unfortunately, her supply of paper was rapidly diminishing. This lack of supplies became even more maddening when we realized that offices further up the bureaucratic chain and even in the local administration threw away supplies ~~which~~ for which we were pleading.

Such lack of material goods would not have been as depressing if it were not for the lack of enthusiasm and concern for the well-being and the education of the children. It should be noted that the children, especially the younger ones who had not yet been thoroughly discouraged and beaten down by the system, were anxious to learn. to try activities and learn

As guidance counselors we were responsible for various programs in the dormitories. The dormitories themselves were large, sterile buildings with four children to a room, each room branching off a long dark hallway. For a home for children, the dormitories were certainly not effective. Recreational facilities were especially lacking. There was a large gymnasium on the school grounds but access to the gym was severely limited, primarily to the school sports teams, an activity especially favored by the administrators. Balls, jump ropes, and other equipment were in scarce supply. A few arts and crafts materials, mainly in the form of construction paper and large first grade size crayons were available.

Perhaps even more depressing than the lack of supplies was the lack of personnel to work with the children. Many times only one person was available for every forty children, a ratio hardly amenable to individual attention. Obviously such a situation called for immediate changes and thus the dormitory staffs tried several modes of attack. From our conversations we realized that many of the teachers as well as two educational specialists at the school, one in English and one in Music, were anxious to work with children in the dormitory setting. Thus several programs were attempted: a L-H program, an ESL program in the dorms, and a music program for the children in the evenings. Apparently each of these proved threatening to the guidance administrators and they moved in various ways to halt them, either through extreme verbal harassment of the specialists, teachers and outside personnel working with the projects, refusal to provide necessary supplies even though money was available, and/or simply decreeing the programs could not continue as was done with the music program:

The music specialist worked throughout the school year to establish a

enjoyed working with her and she was enthusiastically pursuing several projects until the middle of February when she told me that she had been forced to give up all her plans for extra work for the guidance supervisors had said that she was getting the children too excited and that here program would not be good for the school or for the youngsters. This statement was prompted by the fact that some unknown people (and from all evidence not the children in the program) had shot beebee holes in some of the windows of the building she used for her program.

While the examples of abuse above are certainly indicative of gross mismanagement and disdain for the education and well-being of the children, the more overt instances of discrimination apparent in the interactions of school personnel with community members and the actions toward the school children themselves are perhaps more indicative of the severe racism and disregard for human life displayed by these bureaucrats and by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a whole. With respect to the community, the administration retained a superior attitude, ignoring the supposed Bureau policy calling for greater community control and involvement in school enterprises and ridiculing the Navajo community school board which was designed to advise the administrators on matters of importance to the school.

During the fall months people in the community like to sell their produce of melons, fruit, and steamed corn to add to their meager funds. Students also liked to buy this produce. In the fall of the year the administrators made it clear that the community people were not to be allowed on campus to sell their wares. However, throughout the year the Anglo milk distributor was freely permitted to sell popsicles and ice cream bars.

Lockhart and Condit stated publicly at the school that the community people deserved to be treated like children. Their actions bear out their statements. Community people were allowed to attend the weekly school movie in the gymnasium if they pay a small fee. However, the parents were treated like children, not allowed to stand in the halls and talk with friends or even to use the restrooms during the film. The gymnasium, supposedly built for community use remained locked during school breaks and summer vacation. Even the children of campus employees were not allowed to use the facilities and were threatened with beatings if they came onto the school grounds.

One of the most disturbing actions toward parents occurred at the beginning of the school year. On Sept. 17 the parents of two children at the school and their aunt who acted as interpreter came to withdraw the children from school because of physical abuse suffered by the boy from his classmates and general unhappiness of the children in the school system. As the parents explained the problems we tried to assure them that we were aware of the difficulties and were trying to correct them. (Condit and Lockhart were also present; Condit had been informed two days earlier of the situation.) However, we were immediately interrupted by Mr. Lockhart who stated that the children were obviously lying because they did not want to attend school and that if anything were happening to the children he would be the first to know. The parents were quickly ushered out of the office and we were prevented from saying anything further. We were subsequently called into Lockhart's office where he said that he would appreciate it if we kept our "mouths shut" in the future and later told ~~Lockhart~~ by Condit that we should never admit anything to the parents or give them any grounds on which to complain.

These general attitudes and tone of administration were continued in the treatment of children with at times virtually identical remarks being directed toward the Navajo adults and the children. Sometime between November and the end of January Mr. Condit explained to me that Lockhart handled meetings in an abrupt and usually rude manner because he feels the Indians fear or respect the white man more and obey orders unquestioningly when given in such a way. Similarly, one Wednesday morning in late January or early February I received a phone call from Mr. Condit relaying the message that Lockhart did not want me to stay in the dorm with sick children on movie nights; that I was to go to the gym because the children behaved better for Anglos than they did for the Navajos, an assertion that from our own observations and experiences seemed blatantly false.

These attitudes were also manifested in many concrete instances including the treatment of runaways; refusing to look for children even when the weather was extremely cold and the children had no coats, severely punishing children with medical disabilities, and refusing to send children to the PHS clinic when they were obviously ill. Only two additional illustrations of the brutality toward children that was common in the school will be given.

On one occasion two boys were caught having been drinking. The boys were taken into an office for interrogation where one of them was struck with great force by Lockhart with his open hand on both sides of the boy's face and head. At the time of the attack and prior to it Walt was present and witnessed no threat of danger to Lockhart from the boy. In fact, Lockhart had to cross the room to deliver the blow. The boy later reported that he had really felt the first hit, but after that he did not feel too much at all.

On another occasion Guidance Counselor Powell was supervising a group of boys cleaning the gym. Some of the boys apparently teased Powell and in the process spilled a little popcorn onto the floors from a box Powell was holding. Powell instantly became furious and began kicking the boys around him, striking at least five of them, one of whom was later treated by the school nurse for a bruise about four inches in diameter. The incident was reported to the administrators, but apparently no reprimand~~s~~ or other action was ever issued.

In late November and December, becoming increasingly distressed over events to that time we began to talk about taking action against Lockhart and company. We sought the advice of people in our buildings and became aware of past attempts at complaints much more substantial violations than any we had witnessed. For example, during the 1968-69 school year an employee at the school, an Anglo, wrote the Interior Department in Washington, D.C. describing an incident involving Mrs. Carnal and one of her students. Mrs. Carnal apparently became upset with a child outside one day and threw a rock at the child striking him in the back or rear of the head. Word came back from Washington through the agency office that Mr. Ferguson was to investigate the situation with Mrs. Carnal. Ferguson apparently investigated by showing the notice from agency to Mr. Carnal, ~~X~~ and the agency was told that nothing serious had happened.

One inexcusable event was reported to the appropriate officials several years earlier, and again the official reaction was to minimize the situation and threaten all involved with retribution if any action was taken.

In the fall term a few years ago one woman at the school was working as a night attendant in a dormitory which also contained Lockhart's apartment.

One night about 2:00 a.m., the complainant was approached on her job by Lockhart who invited her to come to his apartment for coffee that his wife had prepared. (The wife of the prior Guidance Supervisor had established a practice of making coffee for the night aides.) The girl accepted and went to the apartment followed by Lockhart. She noticed that Mrs. Lockhart was not around and asked for her whereabouts. Lockhart did not answer. At this point the girl became nervous and got up to leave. Lockhart jumped after her and grabbed her before she had gotten to the door and held her to him as she struggled. She smelled liquor on his breath. Finally escaping, she ran to her friend in the next dormitory where she spent the remainder of the shift.

The next day the woman went with her mother to Principal Carnal's office where she told her story. Carnal called Lockhart into the office where he denied the whole story and threatened her with court action if he were fired. According to other people employed at the school at the time the girl persisted by taking her experiences to the agency office again seeking redress, but received the same treatment; a complete denial to help her. Apparently the situation ended with a meeting of school employees, administrators, and the girls' relatives with Lockhart vociferously denying the incident and threatening the entire staff with retribution if he were ever punished. The matter died there, a victim of administrative cover-ups and the harassment of an oppressed group of people.

Such actions as occurred that fall were not at all uncommon. We began to realize that the night aides were still receiving periodic visits accompanied by lecherous advances. Two women who had worked at the school the year before

had also been approached by Lockhart on several occasions. They managed to fend off his advances and were subsequently not rehired the following year, even though their work record had no flaws.

We realized that efforts at removal would be difficult but continued to talk about beginning a complaint. All efforts at this time were very quiet so as not to arouse suspicion. Throughout this period we could sense that the other employees had little hope of anything every being changed, of any efforts ever working. Mrs. Hoskie once commented that it seemed as though every Bureau school had some problem like the ones at Sanostee. Mrs. Lope confided much later that she had no real hope until reading the final document submitted to Washington. Immediately before the Christmas break an attempt was made to talk to the night attendants to see if they would be willing to testify. However, they refused to say anything at all, in fact they became afraid that their own jobs were in danger.

After Christmas we concentrated mainly on trying to interest the employees in contacting community officials about the problems at the school. Neither Walt nor I speak Navajo and added to the natural distrust felt by Navajos toward Anglos especially those connected with the school made overtures from us potentially very difficult. The employees we were working with, being naturally afraid of losing their jobs or having other reprisals taken against them and despite the fact that they definitely disliked the administration, failed to contact community leaders.

Meanwhile tension between the administration and us continued to mount. Funds for supplies for the children would be promised then abruptly cut off, extreme rudeness would be shown employees publicly; and numerous other events such as those mentioned earlier continued to occur. (Interestingly enough,

we were told by several people that conditions had been much worse in years past with not only Lockhart being worse but Mrs. Carnal also contributing her share.)

In mid-February Walt and I were called to Lockhart's office for a meeting with him and Condit. Lockhart had sense that we were upset with the situation at the school and asked for an explanation. He appeared to listen to our suggestions and promised to change a few policies. However the following week for no apparent reason the changes were rescinded.

At the end of February we decided that we would try to go to the agency office, see if they could handle the matter, and, if not, that we would have to leave. We had given up on the possibility of any community involvement because of the little success thus far obtained through the surreptitious efforts described. However the day before our appointment with Mr. Monaghan the personnel manager at the agency I had a clash with Lockhart which led to our meeting with Mr. Keller and at Shiprock and further events.

Aware of civil service regulations legitimizing official leave for personnel problems and reaching the depths of despair and frustration with the situation at the school Walt informed the administrators that we were going to the agency office in Shiprock. Lockhart granted permission adding his usual threat that if we went to complain we'd better "make the complaint good." As the other top officials were out of the office that day we met with Alfred Keller, acting agency superintendent and a former EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) Counselor and his secretary. We told Mr. Keller about conditions at the school. He agreed that the situation did indeed seem serious and said we were justified in coming to the agency. He also told us that a joint complaint against the administrators could be filed by all employees; no jobs or promotions of the complainants would be threatened; and names of the complainants would be kept confidential.

Mr. Lockhart requested (demanded) on Feb. 26 the day of our meeting with Mr. Keller that I be in his office at 9:00 a.m. the next day. Mr. Condit and Mr. Carnal also attended the session which was held in Mr. Carnal's office. For the major part of the hour and a half session Lockhart listed things he did not like about me personally occasionally adding threats about duty assignments, etc. Throughout the entire episode Mr. Carnal merely listened to Lockhart, rarely if ever asking me questions or questioning Lockhart or Condit further. Carnal repeatedly stated that he hoped the matter would go no further, that it could be settled locally.

Lockhart then stated that he would itemize some complaints against me and presumably against Walt also and give us a copy by Tuesday or Wednesday, March 3 or 4. This was never done. He also intimated that he would take the complaint against me or us to the agency as soon as possible. The entire episode seemed mainly designed to scare or threaten men. Neither Carnal nor Condit gave me any support throughout the episode. They did not explain my rights to me nor seem to feel that Lockhart was ever anything but right. The only conclusion that could have been reached from the meeting was that I was to be punished by being moved to another dorm and by having a complaint of unknown charges (since the ones mentioned were not substantial enough) filed against me.

On the same day Walt was called into a meeting with Lockhart and Condit. He too was threatened with a complaint and, in addition, was forbidden to enter any dormitory other than the one where he worked, an obvious attempt to cut down on employee communication and a restriction never applied to Mr. Powell the other guidance counselor.

On the afternoon of the 27th Walt and I met with Mr. Monaghan, the personnel representative for the agency. His general attitude was discouraging. He was vague and would not give clear answers even to strictly policy or procedure questions. He said that people should go through channels and that he hoped we would get this situation taken care of by meeting with Mr. Carnal despite the fact that we had just informed him of Mr. Carnal's long history of suppressing complaints. Monaghan stated that formal written complaints took a long time and that very few cases ever got to that stage showing as the folder of a written complaint started in November, 1969. He admitted that the fact that the investigation had taken so long was partly his own fault, a statement that certainly gave no confidence as to his fairness or competence.

We then asked about incidents such as corporal punishment. Monaghan replied that if everyone who had ever struck a child in the BIA were removed then we would only have a few employees left. His statements implied that only a pre-meditated beating would receive any action from the Bureau. We asked about supervisors using foul language. He said that he was sworn at almost every day, a statement which he then retracted, but added that there were no regulations that forbid using swear words. Again the implication was that nothing would or could be done through his office.

Monaghan said again that one must go through channels and that Mr. Renk the acting agency school superintendent would be the next person to see after Mr. Carnal, (It took thirty minutes to find out that channels went from Carnal to Renk) again urging that the complaint be settled at the local level. We asked if others might add their complaints to our own as supporting evidence. In contrast to Mr. Keller's statement of the previous day Mr. Monaghan replied that if it were done this way, he would throw it out. Each individual had to file a separate complaint in writing.

and in appropriate for, a practice that seems especially discriminatory toward Navajos, and if the incident went to a hearing the complainants would have to seemingly "fight it out for themselves" with the accused supervisor at that time.

Monaghan's whole tone indicated that he really did not want any complaints in his office. He declined to give clear answers and implied with gross verbosity how length and futile the routines of making a complaint were. Immediately after our appointment with Monaghan we went to Mr. Renk's office to set up an appointment time to air our grievances with him. Mr. Renk's secretary understood the basic nature of the problem and said that she would inform Mr. Renk and that someone from the office would call us on Monday, March 2 to set up an appointment. ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ Mr. Renk's office never called back. ^{us} However, throughout this time period the agency office and the local administrators remained in close contact. During my meeting of February 27 in Carnal's office Mr. Renk telephoned and the obvious topic of conversation was the current activity at Sanostee.

On either the evening of the 26th or the next day Mrs. Mike, an employee in my dorm told us that her husband, a kindergarten teacher at the school, was active on the Community Action Committee at the chapter house and could get community support for our case. Peter Blackhorse also in my dorm told us of legal help he had received at DNA, an OEO sponsored legal aids service, and their interest in helping people fight the bureau. These suggestions proved to be the most important ones in the entire series of events.

Meetings were held with Eddie Mike, Diana's husband, and with Elmer Barber the local representative to the Navajo tribal council. They both agreed that pursuing the complaint through agency channels would likely be futile and thought that both community and legal support was necessary and

attainable. Within a few days an open Community Action Committee meeting was held with members of the community, legal representatives from DNA, and some school employees present. The community people voiced their support, the lawyers suggested ways the complaint could be handled, and the CAC voted to support the move. Within a few days the Navajo school board followed suit and the turning point in the case was reached.

The developments at this point should perhaps be made more explicit, for the complaint here instead of following the rigid structures and outlines developed by the agency jumped outside these boundaries. According to the agency personnel managers and the school administrators the only way we as employees of the school could complain about the mistreatment we and others had suffered was to each individually present a statement in writing of our allegations against the administrators. Then either these disagreements would be handled by the school principal or if this proved unsatisfactory the complainant and the respondent would meet in an open verbal hearing at the agency office where the accusations would be handled and most likely suppressed.

The alternative method, suggested by our lawyers and used in at least two other off-reservation cases, was a class-action suit filed jointly by school employees, parents, community members and members of the Navajo School Board against the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the school itself. Such a suit filed under the Equal Employment Opportunity Laws would bypass the local administration going directly to the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C. Another obvious advantage was that all wronged parties in the community could unite their efforts against the school.

Although we informed Mr. Carnal that we had decided to drop our actions with the agency officials, they were not informed of the second tactic. They were though obviously aware that all was not quiet. Numerous attempts were made in the next weeks at the school to arouse fears in employees, to create

On March 2 a general staff meeting was scheduled for the guidance department. ~~xxxxxxx~~ A local school board member and a parent came to attend the meeting to learn more about what was happening at the school. Lockhart, ignoring the tribal resolution creating the school board which gave board members power to participate in the total management of the school, ordered the people out of the room. During the remainder of the meeting Lockhart and Condit repeatedly told the employees that if they had a complaint they "had better do it right," which according to them meant going through channels to the agency office. The meeting ended with a threat by Lockhart that he still controlled schedules of tours of duty and that some people would likely be moved in the near future.

On March 5 around 10:00 a.m. Mrs. Bowman, an employee in my building, related to me that Lockhart had called her into his office around 9:10 a.m. and asked her if she were happy in the dorm. He then said that he was going to move people around and that even Mr. Wood might be moved out of I-8, his building., another obvious attempt to instill fear and dissension.

Not only threats but changes in policies and procedures were hastily devised as harrassment measures. On thursday, March 5 I was called at home during my break by Mr. Condit who asked that both Walt and I come to his office as soon as possible for a meeting on new staffing patterns. He seemed to feel that the matter was quite urgent and set the meeting time for one-half hour later at 3:00 p.m. At the meeting in Carnal's office Lockhart presented a new staffing pattern for the guidance department which would transfer many of the duties of the guidance counselors to the Supervisory Aides, change the schedules of the counselors to a straight shift Monday through Friday, and move the counselors out of the line of authority.

Walt and I discussed the proposal with the supervisory aides and we all came to the conclusion that the proposal was mainly a move to bring the dormitories more directly under the control of the office and produce more pressure for the dormitory personnel, a far from desirable situation. We all agreed that the program would be excellent, but not with the present administration. Mr. Powell was also against the proposal, primarily because he felt the aides would no longer respect him if he had no given authority. However, after visiting with Mr. Condit the evening of March 5, he decided to support the suggestion.

At a meeting the next morning Lockhart seemed quite upset that we were not wholly in favor of the idea and announced that we would meet again on Thursday, March 12. At Mr. Condit's urging the 5's would be allowed to attend that meeting. Lockhart announced that he would be ready to compromise at that meeting, but that we better be ready to do so also. (At a later staff meeting Lockhart announced that he had had to "go Back" on this plans to change the job descriptions, apparently because he feared the views of higher authorities on his plans.)

On March 19 a general staff meeting, perhaps the most dramatic in the series was held for all guidance personnel. Mr. Lockhart opened with a few details and then stuttered around and said that he was getting down to the "nitty-gritty" of the meeting. He stated that he was aware of a petition with about thirty-five names being prepared against him. He said he was also aware of DNA or someone assisting community or the people involved with this complaint. He said, "This doesn't bother me a bit. I think I know the people involved and I couldn't care less. If you think ~~you~~'re

shaking me up, you're wrong." He stated that people were wrong if they though he wouldn't ever see their names and that in an ad hoc committee they would have to stand up and face him. He said that he was taking leave on the next day to hire a lawyer, and added, "You people load your pistol with your best shot, because I'm going to do the same. And I'm sure that I can get a lawyer just as good as one from DNA." He continued in this vein for several minutes in a forceful threatening tone. The attitude seemed to be daring anyone to go ahead with a complaint and that he would take them to a court of law. This general type of statement was reuttered about three different times during the meeting. Lockhart also stated that he had notified Carnal of the petition and that Carnal was going into the agency office that day to notify them and tell the officials to "go down to DNA and tell them that they want everything out in the open."

At the end of the meeting Lockhart turned the floor over to Mr. Condit who stated in his usual eloquence that if one signed a "petition" that he was legally responsible and might well have to go to court. He told people not to sign anything unless they knew positively what they were getting into, a statement obviously designed to back up Lockhart's threats. As a postscript Condit announced that March 26 was Tribal Leader's Day and added that we didn't really have to pay too much attention to it but that he supposed it was good for "public relations."

Such open meetings however were not enough and the next morning more individual pressure was put on Walt. He was approached in the dormitory by Condit and asked if he had "something against wearing neckties," which he had not done regularly since January. He replied that he didn't think they were appropriate in dealing with community people; it would appear that those people who wore neckties were merely "putting on the dong." Mr. Condit left abruptly and Walt was soon called by Condit saying that Mr. Lockhart wished

A little after 10:00 a.m. they met in Mr. Lockhart's office. Lockhart's opening statements implied that not wearing neckties was another indication that he was trying to cut his throat at every possible instance. When getting to the obvious point of the session Lockhart stated that he wanted to get the whole thing out in the open. He asked if the complaint that we had talked about with Mr. Carnal earlier had been dropped. Walt replied that it had and that Mr. Carnal was correct in saying that we had informed him that no complaint was being filed at that time. Lockhart then attempted to call Mr. Renk in Shiprock. He said that he was going to get me to bring the supposed complaints out in the open and that he thought I would have to talk with some officials, apparently with personnel. Walt replied that since there was no written complaint going through channels there was nothing to talk about.

During the conversation Lockhart also stated that what the community did wasn't bothering him as they didn't know much, if anything, about his job. Condit agreed that the community didn't know much and wasn't actually involved with the school. Finally Lockhart said that he could certainly make it rough for Walt using his legal authority, again inferring a change of building assignment. He ended by saying that he would find out if there was any way to make me talk and said that a memo would be out on Monday.

In response to the threat of March 20, a memorandum was issued on Monday March 23 which involved detailed instructions on the duties and activities of the guidance counselors with stipulations forbidding trips outside of the dormitories, visits to classrooms or with teachers except in the dormitories when the children were present, obviously an impossible situation, talking with aides other than the one directly below us in the pecking order, and a refusal to allow any Navajos to participate in counseling, forbidding

paper work

As promised the week before the memo was an obvious attempt to put the counselors aside, give them papers to fill out, keep them away from the teachers, prevent him from working with the students, and thereby make him feel useless so maybe he would quit and go away.

The threats given in the open meetings and the harassment of the counselors were ~~xxxxxx~~ far from the only harassment encountered. An oft-used tactic was for an administrator to call a Navajo into his office for a private chat and there warn him firmly of the dangers of participating in a complaint. Others were repeatedly called on the carpet for situations quite apart from their work situation and threatened with firing if situations did not change, a threat that was usually hard to separate from the on-going political situation.

Throughout March and the first part of April facts and statements were gathered and compiled by the legal representatives. By mid-April the complaint was written and ready for signatures. Meetings were held with community officials to explain the complaint and many community people readily signed. ~~xxxxxxx~~ As described above for the past weeks the employees had been severely threatened that all sorts of reprisals would befall them if they became involved in the complaint. Thus several who had provided statements for the complaint itself were reluctant to sign it in its finished form. One lady who did sign it confessed to me after the investigation that she wished she had not signed it but merely given her testimony. She was afraid that she would be unable to ever get a promotion or transfer with the complaint on her record, an experience confirmed by many others before her.

Tensions remained high at the school throughout this period. Not only were there the aforementioned administration-employee tensions but many employee-employee tensions erupted and remained high as the feasibility of complaining, even the right of complaining was debated. Only about a week and a half after the complaint was filed and news of the seriousness and extent of the brief had sifted back to the local level did feelings begin to change, for at this point the administrators were on the defensive, at least for a short period of time.

The first emotion on the part of accused administrators seemed to be anger. On hearing of an article in the Gallup newspaper describing the complain (one of the few instances of media coverage received), Carnal reportedly said something to the effect that he couldn't see how they discriminated, they hired all kinds of Navajos. Condit reportedly commented, "Oh, the Gallup paper always gets things mixed up." In perhaps a natural reaction to those involved with the complaint we were personally vilified in numerous ways with accusations ranging from political views and attitudes toward the children to type of mail received, Mrs. Carnal being the local expert on personal mail.

Recovering from their first shock the administrators reinforced their efforts to suppress the complaint eventhough they were obviously aware by this time of the illegality of such actions. On May 6 a regularly scheduled school board meeting was expanded to include an explanation by Peter, the lawyer, on the progress of the complaint. Before the meeting Lockhart asked one of the office secretaries if she were neutral in the complaint. The secretary, Mrs. McCurtain, had asked if she could go to the meeting. She didn't know what Lockhart meant by neutral so she didn't answer. Lockhart stated quite seriously that if Mrs. McCurtain were not involved

asked Mrs. McCurtain before the meeting if she had signed the complaint; and ~~Sanstik~~ again asked her after the meeting when he was once again informed on regulations regarding harassment.

The previous week Mr. Lope had requested a meeting with the school board to discuss discipline. The meeting was first forbidden by administrators but after a small hassle and explanation of regulations it was rescheduled and expanded to include an explanation of the complaint. By this time complainants were confident enough to begin numerous counter maneuvers and announcements of the meeting were made over the Navajo radio show inviting community people also. At the meeting Peter explained the complaint and Dan Deschimey, a legal aide at DNA, served as translator. Questions were answered and in the Navajo tradition comments and personal feelings were explained.

Two of these stand out in my mind. Mr. Gurley, a school board member and a rather elderly gentleman with kind watery eyes stood and related his views. He explained how a long time ago white men had come to the area the Navajos call home. These white men said they were going to help the Navajos. However, they often only helped themselves. They cheated, lied to, and hurt the Navajos. He had signed the complaint because he felt this should change. Eddie Mike, the kindergarten teacher, a Navajo and active in the complaint also stated why he had signed. He said that Sanostee was his home. He was born here and he would probably die here. He cared what happened to Sanostee and to the school; and he wanted it to be good.

The meeting was significant by being conducted mainly in Navajo, the first language of most of the people present. Previously the principal had

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demanding that all school board meetings be conducted in English, despite the fact that most members were far from comfortable in the tongue. The meeting was also presided over by the school board with the administrators sitting quietly on the front row, seemingly overwhelmed, and mainly quiet. (Powell asked one question and Carnal, trying to appear conciliatory, promised help to the investigator and suggested that some had signed the complaint and others had not, but that they should try to get along. The paternal attitude of so common among bureau administrators once again appeared in an ~~awkward~~ only barely disguised divisive statement.)

For perhaps the first time since our arrival the Anglo administrators had been publicly subjugated to a Navajo run meeting. The effect however was not permanent for the next day at a guidance staff meeting Condit opened with comments about the meeting with the school board. In a response to a specific request within the complaint that jobs within the school be redesigned and that training be given to allow the Navajos to advance within the structure from the dead-end jobs now held by all of them Condit stated, "These jobs cannot be redesigned down to your level," going on about the large amounts of schooling necessary and the impossibility of any Navajos without years of further work ever attaining the posts.

With respect to the complaint itself he first warned the employees to "be careful" and then in what seemed an attempt to relieve himself of all responsibility said "I don't hold anything against any of you people that signed this complaint. Now, I'm only speaking for myself; I'll not speak for the other administrators in the office. . . . I'm not a tricky supervisor. . . ." He later tried to relieve himself of all responsibility regarding leave policies and pass all guilt to either his superiors or inferiors in the pecking order.

In mid-May the investigator a Mr. Montgomery from the Department of Outdoor Recreation in Washington, D.C. arrived at the school. He asked for a meeting with complainants and one was held in the chapter house. A large number of people attended, though as usual it took a while for them all to gather. Because of the continuing up to the time of that meeting including one against our lives we had requested that the respondents be temporarily reassigned elsewhere during the investigation. It was felt that only if this were done would the people be able to give the full story of their experiences. The community members were especially insistent that this move be taken. We had been assured by Mr. Shelton director of the OERO that if any threats were made after the filing of the complaint that this reassignment would be carried out.

Montgomery approached this first meeting in a jovial, joking mood. He seemed blissfully unaware of the fact that he was facing a group of people who had perhaps never met an official of the US government whom they could trust. He failed to realize or take into account the seriousness and intensity with which the complaint and its possible consequences on individual lives were viewed. And he also ignored the traditional Navajo way of approaching a serious matter with a serious demeanor. The threats that had occurred in the recent days and promises earlier made by Shelton were explained to Montgomery. Montgomery claimed that Shelton could make no such promises, but stated he would talk to Graham Holmes, Area Director, and ask for their removal. From such actions and the general context of his statements Montgomery was obviously trying to shift the balance of power and the responsibility for the investigation and outcome of the complaint back to the local level, precisely where past and present experiences had shown no

Either that afternoon or the next day Montgomery returned with the news that Holmes had said the removal would be impossible and that testimony would have to be taken. (We had been told by the lawyer that Montgomery himself did have the power to remove the respondents or recommend strongly that such action be taken. Unfortunately at this time there was a shift in legal counsel as one of the attorneys went on an unavoidable trip and these legal points were certainly not emphasized as they could have been.) There followed a period of distress with several people expressing strongly to Montgomery their disappointment with the procedures thus far and trying to communicate the fear felt by the employees toward their supervisors. The community had felt especially strongly that the respondents must leave before testimony was taken and a dilemma ~~xxxxxxxx~~ developed between wanting to support the community in their demands and yet wanting to give testimony and supposedly, according to Montgomery, provide additional grounds for reassignment. Finally, testimony from numerous people encountering harassment was given Montgomery and he promised to take this to Holmes and again ask for reassignment. Although this was supposedly done, Holmes refused again to reassign the men. (It should perhaps be noted that a precedent for such reassignment had occurred about a month previously in a Denver case where the Commissioner himself stepped in and removed the harrasing administrators. Reportedly the White House disapproved of the Commissioner's sympathetic acts and accordingly in this case the word was to "go slow.")

Montgomery's attitude throughout the investigation was varied. He would state that the case was extremely deep and would require several subsequent investigations and then would tell us that we should have never complained in such a way but have given notations of activities at the school to Commissioner Bruce after a period of several years. He told both Mrs. Mike and me that

been handled entirely differently. Perhaps his attitude was the only logical one that a government employee could sane hold; nevertheless it is a discouraging one. After about two weeks Montgojery left the area leaving x Dan from DNA to finish collecting the testimony. Dan was extremely busy as were all the people in the office and was unable to collect all the information that was likely available. Similarly the task of translating and transcribing the reams of testimony proved extremely difficult. Finally, many potential respondents were left to write their own testimony, something which they had ~~xxxx~~never done before and which, as products of the Bureau educational system would be an extremely difficult. Thus the amount of testimony collected, though substantial, was far from the amount available.

Some mention should be made of the place of the Anglo employees, the teachers, throughout the situation. A few teachers openly supported the movement contributing testimony of their own. Others at least supported the movement in spirit, talking to the investigator and verbally giving him their opinions but lacking the courage or commitment to place their views and experiences, often very damaging to the system, onto paper. Other teachers, though they had obviously had extremely unhappy experiences with the administrators and the bureau as a whole and had even perhaps tried complaining themselves before refused entirely to participate claiming that or fearing that their participation would harm future chances of promotion or transfers. Finally there were those teachers who tried to sink into the woodwork throughout the proceedings, usually those who feared that they were next on the list of those who were harming the children and should be removed.

At the end of the investigation or gathering of testimony, uncertainty still gripped the atmosphere. Lockhart had left about one week after the investigation started. It was rumored he was looking for a small school in Oklahoma and Condit stated that Lockhart would be back by the first of August. Powell had left about the same time taking all his cars and his family. The principal was scheduled to retire around the first of July and Condit seemed to be staying but was going on vacation around the same time. Rumors also had it that Ferguson was being advised by the agency personnel to request a transfer as soon as possible. Greatest fear among complainants centered about agency and area offices. Complainants feared that no transfers or promotions would ever be given once one's name had been put on the "black list," a reasonable fear in view of past experiences.

Agency officials did nothing to alleviate these fears during the coming months. Montgomery reviewed the evidence and according to the federal transcripts of the testimony and his report submitted his findings to the Department of the Interior in early July (late June?) ~~1970~~ 1970. Montgomery's findings were for the most part favorable to the complainants including the uncovering of many violations not mentioned above including falsification of government documents, misuse of government funds and property, violation of federal EEO statutes and numerous other offenses. In a few instances such as occasions involving child abuse relevant testimony was overlooked and the conclusions reached were not as the integrity of the testimony would have indicated.

Unfortunately, in true bureaucratic fashion the findings were seemingly ignored while Carnal and his wife were allowed to retire quietly. Lockhart, who only a few days before had been declared guilty of numerous infractions all capable of dismissing him from governmental service, was promoted to the

school. By August it appeared to the embattled complainants that their demise, as anticipated, was shortly to come.

The social conditions at the school and the social-psychological conditions of the employees must be kept in mind in viewing such transactions. The process of complaining, then testifying, and openly defying the system which had oppressed you for so many years yet upon which you were dependent for your livelihood is a terrifically depleting and exhausting process, one which drains an individual of emotional strength and fortitude and also strains social relations to extremely tight positions. The Bureau's refusal to first remove the officials during the investigation despite their obvious harassment and the earlier promises of the Washington officers and ~~the~~ its refusal to act upon the recommendations of the report, its promotion of Lockhart and the apparent allowance of his continuing harassment of the employees, the remembrance of all former complaints and their sad end, plus the dismissal of one complainant of what appeared to be contrived charges all added to the stress and strain that compounded the situation.

Finally, perhaps in hopes that by this time the will of the complainants had been broken, an assistant to the commissioner of the BIA was sent from the Albuquerque office to the local area to try to convince the complainants to drop their case if the respondents were transferred from the area. James Hena, assistant to the Commissioner, met with the complainants in late August. At this meeting the original plea for relief in the complaint was reviewed and pressure was brought upon the complainants to drop the case in return for the transfer of the respondents. For a month and a half following this meeting the BIA remained silent while Lockhart stayed at the school and, according to one of the attorneys for the case, ~~it~~ continued "to make life miserable for the complainants, several of whom are rapidly losing heart."

Toward the end of September the bureau officials seemingly wanting to settle the matter, yet unwilling to change conditions basic to the problem called the local law firm and said that the area officials, known by the employees to be long-time "Indian-haters" wanted to meet with the complainants and try to settle the issue. According to the attorney

That seemed to Dan and me to be a fairly blatant effort to intimidate the complainants and keep the commissioner's office out of the affair, but Dan told him he'd ask the complainants. We met with a group of them Sunday night, and they refused to meet with the area big shots. . . .

Finally, on October 8 a meeting was held with the few remaining brave complainants (Many had been effectively scared off by the months of continuing harassment and pressure) and representatives of the BIA. On October 11 Guidance Supervisor Lockhart was finally reassigned according to Shelton "with his concurrence." It is interesting to note that no concurrence was solicited from the Navajo who was denied his job only a month earlier.

Gradually the respondents in the case were transferred from the school and other officials were moved in. A Navajo principal was moved to the school, the acting school superintendent was replaced with a permanent Navajo, the local school board was given more power, and the personnel officer for the agency...

By August, 1971, the personnel at the school as well as the community people with whom we talked seemed pleased with the way activities were going. They approved of the participation of the new principal in the community activities and felt that her work was aiding the school. Likewise, a new academic supervisor, an Anglo, was appointed who rejected the old ideas of Navajo children being naturally "slow" and the children were allowed to move more quickly through the grades if they so desired.

Despite the improvements in the local situation it must be emphasized that the problems of the total system are far from solved. While conditions are perhaps temporarily eased at one location the scourge that infects the total system remains. Anglos still totally outnumber Indians in the administration levels of the Bureau bureaucracy. Community officials are given a voice in school affairs at only a few rare locations. Racist insensitive teachers and administrators remain immersed within the system. And most importantly, the institutional structures and the bureaucratic regulations that tie Indians to the bottom of the social strata ~~xxxxxx~~ have not been altered. The BIA moved to answer the cries of oppressed individuals in one instance, but it did little to alleviate the certainty of increasing anguished cries from numerous other areas of the system.

To summarize, oppressive events at Sanostee, A Bureau of Indian Affairs Boarding School, led in years past to attempts by employees and parents to challenge and change practices of the administration. Each time these events met with failure and further suppression. The final attempt, complaining to agency authorities was also headed for failure when the Community Action Committee, the Navajo School Board, and the employees joined forces in enacting a legal complaint against the school and the bureau. Several circumstances, each missing from at least one of the previous attempts, enhanced this effort: appeal to the top level of the bureaucratic structure thus avoiding the "channels" within the BIA, outside legal help, participation in the complaint by parents and community people, encouragement of off-reservation Indians who had filed similar complaints, and, finally, complete dedication to the effort by a few employees to the point where they were no longer concerned with job security.

The acts of the government in responding to the complaint may be seen in the light of the two general themes mentioned earlier: the bureaucratic structure of the system and racism inherent in and engendered by this structure. The bureaucratic problems perhaps best showed themselves in the "buck-passing" and the suppression and harassment encountered early in the complaint when we were continually told to go to different people to air our grievances and at the later stages when the complaint was redirected towards the bottom layers of the bureaucracy.

Yet these moves also held an element of racism. The delays, the seemingly conscious moves to suppress the complaint, to refuse to handle it on the national level, to allow harassment to continue, to conduct an incomplete investigation by refusing to create conditions amenable to the gathering of testimony all illustrated not only a desire by the government to find as little wrong as possible, but a desire to say to the Navajo complainants, "We still control the show; your rights aren't as important as our jobs; you are just dumb Navajos who shouldn't be complaining." More importantly, the reaction of government officials, even those at the highest level, was to ignore and to deny the true nature and the extent of racism within the system by ^{statements like} claims that "We can't redesign these jobs down to your level!" (Condit) or "This complaint doesn't really involve discrimination;" (Montgomery) or even more telling, "The problems are really management problems [i.e. those of the bureaucracy]" (Shelton). One thing appears certain: the worst injustices within the BIA and its treatment of Native Americans have not changed; and precisely because of the bureaucrats failure to see the involved nature of racism within these structures largely because of their own involvement within the system, the injustices will continue.