



Dennis Banks

URGENT APPEAL

A.I.M. Founder Threatened

Dennis Banks, a Native American of the Ojibwa tribe and a long-time militant of the American Indian Movement, is seeking political asylum on the Onondaga reservation in upstate New York. Public support is urgently needed to prevent Banks' arrest and extradition to South Dakota where he is wanted on a 1973 riot charge.

(Banks was in fact away from the area of conflict when South Dakota police started a street brawl by manhandling an Indian woman, Sarah Bad Heart Bull, whose son had recently been murdered. Banks was in a nearby public building attending a meeting on the killing of the young Indian).

Banks has been protected from a South Dakota prison term — and probable death — for the last several years by former California governor Jerry Brown. Banks has been pursued by South Dakota's current governor, William Janklow, for the last nine years after the activist brought charges that Janklow raped at gunpoint a 15-year-old Indian girl, Jancita Eagle Deer, who had been babysitting his children. Janklow was then South Dakota's chief legal officer and no state case was brought against him, but the Sioux tribal court at Rosebud reservation found "probable cause" to believe the charges. Four months after testifying in the trial at Rosebud, Jancita Eagle Deer was found dead on a little-used reservation road.

Considering the numerous murders of A.I.M. leaders in the western states in recent years, and the attempted murders in prison of Indian militants Leonard Peltier and Russell Means, it is unlikely that Dennis Banks would survive even a short stay in a South Dakota prison. A Native American spokesperson in Washington told *Emancipation*, when discussing the danger Banks would face if returned to South Dakota, "It is just unbelievable that these acts of violence against us can still be going on today — but they are. It

is, of course, because they want what little land we have left."

Banks was a key figure in both the 1972 occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs building here in Washington and in the take-over (and resulting 71-day siege) at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973, both important actions in the revival of the Indian rights movement. He is presently under the protection of the Onondaga tribe.

Persons wishing to help Dennis and the Native American struggle for cultural and economic autonomy and just land claims should send urgent appeals to New York's governor to refuse the South Dakota extradition order and extend protection to Banks in the state. Write to Gov. Mario Cuomo, Executive Chamber, State Capitol, Albany, New York 12224.

Letters of support and any assistance may be sent to Dennis Banks, c/o Onondaga Nation, Nedrow, NY 13120.

