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Warrior Women: Indigenous Women, Gender Relations, and Sexual Politics within the American Indian Movement and at Wounded Knee

Matthias André Voigt

The main purpose of this article is to describe and analyze Indigenous women's participation in the prolonged takeover of Wounded Knee in 1973.¹ Indigenous women's grassroots activism was fundamental for sustaining and keeping the occupation alive, yet women's contributions were largely eclipsed by the actions of their media-savvy, male comrades-in-arms. What is more important, Indigenous women in the American Indian Movement (AIM) frequently claimed that they were in a state of "double oppression" or "double colonization"—first, through colonial domination and racial inequality, and second, through male privilege and female subordination—itsself, part of the legacy of colonization and the imposition of dominant white patriarchal masculinity.² Nationalist struggles such as that of the anticolonial AIM tend to replicate the very structures of male dominance that they struggle against. While women have been included in public discourse, they have been largely left out of political decision-making.³

At Wounded Knee, Indigenous women took on a series of interrelated roles and responsibilities that kept the occupation alive. Indigenous women skillfully renegotiated their gendered position of power within the masculinist organization, constructing femininities that shifted between domesticated motherhood and female comrades-in-arms. In so doing, they both reaffirmed and challenged sexist and chauvinist attitudes

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within AIM. They were well known as long-standing community organizers, and their active participation at the Wounded Knee takeover was a viable step in their quest for female empowerment.

THE RED POWER MOVEMENT AND INDIGENOUS WOMEN

The prolonged occupation of Wounded Knee is closely tied to the Red Power movement, the radical edge of the movement for Indigenous rights. An early generation of scholars—Troy Johnson, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne—have conceptualized the Red Power era as a nine-year period of activism that commenced with the prolonged occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969 and concluded with the Longest Walk in 1978.⁴ Red Power protests sought to air grievances and bring national media attention to Indigenous issues. The prolonged occupation of Alcatraz Island (1969–71) inspired numerous demonstrations and takeovers and fostered a pride in being Indigenous.⁵ More recently, scholars have considerably extended the Red Power framework.⁶ According to historian Sam Hitchmough, the Red Power movement can be divided into three waves: an initial phase (from World War II through the late 1960s) during which Indigenous activism focused on decolonization and sovereignty; a second phase of pan-Indigenous protest (1969–78); and a final phase (mid- to late 1970s and 1980s) when protests became concerned with multiple issues, such as religious rights, environmentalism, decolonizing museums, repatriation, and so forth.⁷

The term *Red Power activism* has been applied to a wide variety of Indigenous struggles, and it has also been utilized in a myriad of different ways, as historian Bradley Shreve has pointed out.⁸ Dependent upon context, “Red Power” can refer to various aspects of nation-building such as self-determination, nationalism, sovereignty, or decolonization.⁹ During the Red Power era, Indigenous men and women protested for a myriad of causes—the recognition of their civil and treaty rights, the acknowledgment of their religious freedoms, a call for economic relief and political reform, a demand to halt termination policies, and a general insistence to maintain their cultural integrity. The Red Power movement has been highly significant for the remaking of self and society and for fundamentally restructuring Indigenous-settler colonial relations, leading to a limited degree of self-determination and an ongoing cultural renewal across Indian country.¹⁰

The Indigenous women’s activism that concerns this article falls into what can be regarded as the second wave of the Red Power struggle. Between 1969 and 1978, Red Power activists orchestrated an estimated seventy property takeovers.¹¹ The tactic of the takeover fueled personal empowerment, celebrated ethnic pride, and ultimately sought to prod the federal government into responding to Indigenous grievances.¹² During this period, the American Indian Movement (AIM) was widely recognized as a key political actor, leading, organizing, or participating in all major protests. AIM’s origin in 1968, its peak as a national organization in 1973, and its final demise after 1978 roughly paralleled the classic era of pan-Indigenous protests.¹³

Even though several books examine various aspects of AIM, a comprehensive study about gender relations and sexual politics within AIM remains absent.¹⁴ Indigenous

women's involvement in AIM is a field of research whose surface has barely been scratched. Early writings on Indigenous women's activism in the 1960s and 1970s come from feminist scholars M. Annette Jaimes (Juaneño and Yaqui) and Theresa Halsey (Lakota). They debunk dominant myths of traditional Indigenous societies as "male-dominated," arguing that during precolonial times, Indigenous women occupied roles and responsibilities equal and complementary to their male counterparts—such as directly participating in military activities and making key political and socioeconomic decisions. The authors highlight Indigenous women's ongoing resistance against colonial oppression, in particular by those women active in AIM.¹⁵

Other scholars have covered various aspects of Indigenous women's involvement in Red Power activism. Historian Donna Hightower Langston (Cherokee) offers a broad overview of Indigenous women's activism at the Alcatraz occupation, the fish-in movement, and the Wounded Knee siege.¹⁶ Historian Devon Abbott Mihesuah (Choctaw) analyzes some of the gendered and racialized dynamics within AIM.¹⁷ Both Mihesuah and Elizabeth Castle cover additional ground on Indigenous women in AIM, offering valuable insights into gender relations and the interplay between Indigenous women and Western feminism.¹⁸ Similarly, in her comparative analysis of women's participation in the male-dominated Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement, Castle points to women of color's struggle for racial and sexual equality and their dedication to community.¹⁹ Several scholars have highlighted Indigenous women's significance as long-time community organizers and cultural leaders.²⁰

Within the last twenty-five years, feminist scholars have published pathbreaking works on Indigenous women and their marginalization in settler colonial societies.²¹ This historiography has emphasized new approaches to address Indigenous women's empowerment and decolonization strategies.²² Conceptualizing theories and practices of Indigenous feminism has remained controversial, however, as women of color have asserted that mainstream feminism remains essentially a white, middle-class phenomenon that does not take into account US colonization and the imposition of Western gender concepts and patriarchal structures.²³ Indigenous studies scholar Joanne Barker (Lenape) points out that critical Indigenous gender, sexuality, and feminist studies "confront the imperial-colonial work of those modes of indigeneity that operationalize genocide and dispossession by ideologically and discursively vacating the Indigenous from the Indigenous."²⁴ The field of Indigenous feminism has arisen from Indigenous women's activism of the 1960s and 1970s against gender discrimination, the quest for social justice, and women's efforts to counter their marginalization vis-à-vis dominant society. It is this history of protest and empowerment that has remained very much overlooked.

This article focuses on Indigenous women's involvement in the Wounded Knee occupation, highlighting their much-overlooked contributions to the takeover and their gendered perspectives on the anticolonial endeavor and nation-building project. Indigenous women within AIM frequently complained about unequal gender roles and the sexist, chauvinist, and misogynistic behavior of some Indigenous men. A close examination of gender relations and sexual politics helps to broadly contextualize their positionality within AIM and lays the groundwork for describing and

analyzing Indigenous women's participation at the occupation. In following this approach, I examine the conditions, circumstances, and influences that made possible specific performances of femininity in which some Indigenous women members chose to engage at Wounded Knee. Further, I examine Indigenous women's response to Indigenous men's toxic inculcation with hegemonic notions of masculinity and gender. In so doing, I seek to add fresh perspectives on Indigenous women at Wounded Knee, within AIM, and within the Red Power movement more generally.²⁵

THE WOUNDED KNEE OCCUPATION

On December 29, 1890, Wounded Knee, South Dakota had gained nationwide notoriety as the site of an infamous massacre committed against 250 to 300 Lakota men, women, and children by the US Cavalry.²⁶ By the 1970s the tragic incident was well-known to Indigenous activists, to whom the locality of Wounded Knee contained a powerful, multilayered symbolism related to the violent demise of the Ghost Dance, a spiritual revitalization movement, and the massacre itself. It also came to symbolize economic and cultural exploitation by the owners of the Wounded Knee Trading Post.²⁷ At the same time, the very place that represented the destruction of a people's way of life was also a site where political sovereignty and cultural identity could be restored and reaffirmed and where the United States government could be compelled to reexamine the 1868 treaty, as in Indigenous nationalist movements elsewhere.²⁸



FIG. 1. Wounded Knee with hilltop church and cemetery (to the left of the church) with arch entryway. The photo shows activists bulldozing ground, erecting bunkers and fortifications, and flying the AIM flag from the church tower. The Wounded Knee cemetery contains a mass grave with the remains of those killed in the 1890 massacre, a monument, as well as the graves of many Lakota war veterans from World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Richard Erdoes Papers, Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

The violent confrontation that erupted at Wounded Knee in 1973 was an intratribal conflict over political rule on the Pine Ridge reservation, South Dakota.²⁹ Tribal governance on Pine Ridge had been set up under the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA) and was implemented in 1935. The IRA-sponsored form of governance constituted a form of indirect colonial rule that deepened existent sociocultural and sociopolitical rifts. The growth of an Indigenous population of mixed heritage (through intermarriage)—that is, an English-speaking, Western-educated Indigenous elite that sought to dominate traditional Indigenous people—made tribal politics increasingly a matter of Indigenous identity.³⁰ Intratribal conflict on the Pine Ridge reservation erupted over the highly controversial leadership of tribal chairman Richard Wilson. Wilson curtailed civil rights of reservation residents, set up his own police force, and issued a ban on AIM on the reservation—measures that led to open division and contention.³¹ By 1972, AIM began a series of protests over border-town racism in the violent deaths of Raymond Yellow Thunder (Lakota) and Wesley Bad Heart Bull (Lakota).³² Intratribal conflict was further catalyzed through the cultural alliance between urban AIM activists and reservation traditionalists that soon turned political and anti-Wilson.³³

The occupation of Wounded Knee commenced on February 27, when a fifty-four-strong car caravan packed with a total of roughly 300 men, women, and children captured the tiny hamlet at Wounded Knee in what was to become the longest act of civil disorder in United States history.³⁴ AIM and local reservation residents occupied Wounded Knee to provoke a crisis and protest against Wilson's governance.³⁵ Indigenous and non-Indigenous veterans alike set up and maintained the defense/occupation.³⁶ In response, the occupation of Wounded Knee triggered a massive buildup of military hardware and personnel from the nation-state. Soon, the occupiers found themselves surrounded by tribal police and law enforcement officers from various federal agencies.³⁷ The standoff was characterized through bunkers and roadblocks, Vietnam-era weapons, intermittent firefights, ongoing negotiations, and a government blockade.³⁸

On March 11, the occupiers declared the Independent Oglala Nation (ION).³⁹ Plans for the new form of tribal governance—supposedly in tune with “the Indian way”—envisioned the abolishment of the IRA-style government and its replacement through a reinvented form of the traditional *tiospaye* (extended family unit).⁴⁰ A little later, on March 16, the occupiers granted citizenship to the new residents of ION: Oglala, other Indigenous people (to hold dual citizenship, including Chicanos), and non-Indigenous people. This included 182 Oglalas, 160 other Indigenous persons, and seven whites.⁴¹ It can only be speculated whether the incorporation of non-Lakotas was representative of its “imagined” character. There is also uncertainly whether the establishment of the ION reflected traditional Lakota values that based Lakota-ness on a willingness to be Lakota. Apparently, reservation residents and AIM activists welcomed others based on their willingness to embrace “the cause,” rather than racial attributes, national belonging, or citizenship.⁴²

At a Senate hearing in the causes and aftermath of the Wounded Knee takeover, Indigenous activists stated that the ION was intended to consist of a three-layered form of government. Built from the bottom to the top, this included tribal communities

(*tiospaye cikala*), districts (*tiospaye*), and people's councils (*oyate omniciye*).⁴³ The plans for the ION called for self-governance under traditional chairmen and headmen who were selected instead of elected by local people. The newly envisioned form of tribal governance constituted an attempt to return to the concept of tribal sovereignty prior to 1871, when the US Congress unilaterally ended treaty-making on a nation-to-nation basis.⁴⁴ In the words of AIM leader Russell Means, they envisaged "the establishment of separate states under a protective status for all Indian nations" similar to the status of San Marino in Italy.⁴⁵ However, legal scholar Edward Lazarus has pointed out that the "Wounded Knee occupiers . . . , many (if not most) of whom were not Sioux, were in essence asking for an outside power (the United States) to intervene in Sioux internal affairs and install a government of 'traditional chiefs.'" A return to the treaty-making era and the Second Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868) would entail a Bureau of Indian Affairs superintendent who controlled reservation affairs and the tribal council. This was nothing short of a form of direct colonial rule, rather than tribal self-governance and sovereignty.⁴⁶

The nation-building project of the Independent Oglala Nation highlighted distinct concepts of governance—Indigenous and Western—and combined them in complex and contested ways. Indigenous nationalists stressed the inherent right to tribal sovereignty (through the concept of *tiospaye*) and peoplehood (a sense of Lakota-ness through a communal connection to sacred history, land, ceremony, and language). Whatever their exact plans, it seems as if Indigenous nationalists sought to end indirect colonial rule under the existent IRA-style form of tribal governance, cast off government dependency and paternalism, and seek a return to tribal sovereignty—yet they failed to articulate their vision properly. At the same time, they continually stressed Western concepts of nationalism (through rhetoric, symbolism, and governance) and repeatedly claimed they sought to establish a nation separate from the United States.⁴⁷ The setup of the ION points to the complexities and ambiguities of Indigenous nation-building endeavors in larger encompassing society.

Parallel and intertwined with the declaration of the Independent Oglala Nation, the occupiers set up a warrior society (AKA security force), imagined as a guardian and protector of the ION.⁴⁸ These dual actions suggest a close connection between manhood and nationhood in which nationalist warriors rallied in defense of a newly proclaimed nation.⁴⁹ AIM's leaders and members were heavily influenced by real and imagined warrior society ideals of Plains Indian societies.⁵⁰ While grounded in Lakota values, the ION had a pan-Indian outlook and was inclusive to all Indigenous persons.⁵¹

On May 8, 1973, the prolonged standoff finally ended through a negotiated settlement and the surrender of the remaining 100 supporters.⁵² The siege resulted in two dead activists—Frank Clearwater and Lawrence "Buddy" Lamont (Lakota)—and a severely injured US marshal, Lloyd Grimm.⁵³ During the takeover, 500,000 rounds of ammunition were fired into the hamlet, and the Wounded Knee Trading Post was seriously damaged.⁵⁴ The US government promised to investigate charges made against the Wilson administration and complete a review into the 1868 Fort Laramie treaty.⁵⁵ However, the Wounded Knee takeover was inconclusive in terms of upsetting the balance of power in the tribal council, and it did not create a sovereign nation.⁵⁶

The founders of the American Indian Movement—Dennis Banks, Clyde Bellecourt, George Mitchell, and others—came from various Ojibwe reservations in Minnesota. Others, such as Russell Means (Lakota), Carter Camp (Ponca), Vernon Bellecourt (Clyde's brother), or Ted Means (Russell's brother) joined later. AIM drew most of its membership from the young, urban Indigenous population of the Twin Cities, and although AIM's urban members were overwhelmingly Ojibwe (a Woodland tribe), they heavily referenced their Indigenous identities to the Lakota (a Plains tribe), the hereditary archenemies of prereservation times.⁵⁷ The multitribal urban membership of AIM, much like other Red Power organizations, emphasized a pan-Indian identity as a source of pride and basis for mobilization. Cultural borrowing from the Lakota aided AIM activists in their efforts to reclaim their Indigeneity and assert their right to difference.⁵⁸

In relating to the term “warrior,” I primarily refer to the Lakota and their understandings and meanings of warriorhood.⁵⁹ The term “warrior women” refers to those Indigenous women who participated in the Wounded Knee takeover and embraced a warrior persona. Some of these women were local reservation residents, while others were outside activists. These warrior women took up a gun, (wo)manned a bunker, or aided as medics. Although not all women inside the hamlet embraced such a persona, they kept the occupation going. Outside the hamlet, Indigenous women supported the occupation by organizing supplies, ammunition, and guns for the takeover, by guiding supporters in and out of Wounded Knee, by offering “safe houses,” and by collecting information.

GENDER RELATIONS AND SEXUAL POLITICS WITHIN AIM

Indigenous women within the Red Power movement frequently reflected on their “invisibility” in the anticolonial struggle by referencing their “behind-the-scenes work” on behalf of their tribal communities and nations.⁶⁰ Within their tribal structures, they were less concerned with Western perspectives on women's liberation (which categorized women in terms of mother and housewife and sought to break away from this).⁶¹ Rather, Indigenous women perceived their place and position from a cultural perspective in which womanhood and motherhood were traditionally respected and seen as an integral part of tribal society. Indigenous womanhood is thus frequently regarded as the source of cultural persistence against the relentless assimilationist onslaught of various settler colonial policies.⁶² As such, Indigenous women activists eschewed Western feminism in favor of an Indigenous reproductive activism and asserted their obligation to bear children in order to revive the Indigenous population.⁶³ It should be noted that while there is certainly a group of Indigenous feminists who prioritize mothering in their identities and politics, there are also those who question the centrality of motherhood, the supposed stark division between Indigenous and “white” feminisms, and complicate some of these patterns.⁶⁴

Indigenous women were involved in virtually every protest event in the 1960s and 1970s.⁶⁵ In fact, historiography suggests that Indigenous women constituted the backbone of AIM, but when men entered the scene, “they were pushed out of the



FIG. 2. AIM leader Russell Means (Lakota) giving an interview in front of a cameraman. AIM's male leaders sought the media limelight, frequently pushing Indigenous women and their concerns into the background. Richard Erdoes Papers, Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

picture and into the kitchen,” in the words of AIM lawyer Kenneth Stern.⁶⁶ Within AIM, Indigenous men's and women's joint struggle against colonial oppression often overshadowed another, equally significant struggle, namely that of gender equality. Social movements have a tendency to prioritize the struggle against class and racial oppression over the struggle against gender oppression, and in masculinist politics, the struggle for equal rights is often reduced to a struggle against class and racial oppression, but not gender equality.⁶⁷

Indigenous women commonly state that they constitute the backbone of the nation in resisting settler colonialist policies, as they devote their energies primarily to grassroots issues. In consequence, they have paid considerably less attention to the struggle for gender equality than women in other social movements for change.⁶⁸ AIM activist Lorelei DeCora (Winnebago and Lakota) expressed the sentiment of many Indigenous women as follows:

We are *American Indian* women, in that order. We are oppressed, first and foremost, as American Indians, as peoples colonized by the United States of America, not as women. . . . Our survival, the survival of every one of us—man, woman, and child—as *Indians* depends on it. Decolonization is the agenda, the whole agenda, and until it is accomplished, it is the only agenda that counts for American Indians. It will take every one of us . . . to get the job done. We haven't time,

energy, or resources for anything else while our lands are being destroyed and our children are dying of avoidable diseases and malnutrition. So, we tend to view those who come to us wanting to form alliances on the basis of “new” and “different” or “broader” and “more important” issues to be little less than friends, especially since most of them come from the Euroamerican population which benefits most directly from our ongoing colonization.⁶⁹

Like other revolutionary movements for change, AIM found itself incapable of simultaneously confronting racial oppression and addressing issues of gender equality. AIM’s male leadership rhetorically embraced gender equality, yet, in practice, never followed up on it.⁷⁰

Indigenous men within AIM frequently utilized what Mihesuah has called “the colonialism excuse” to partially justify and explain their inherent sexism toward Indigenous and non-Indigenous women.⁷¹ Male AIM leaders personally knew little about traditional women’s place in tribal communities, and, when told, showed little inclination to adjust their behavior accordingly. Instead, many had a reputation for verbally and physically abusing women.⁷² AIM activist Mary Crow Dog (Lakota) expressed how internalized notions of male privilege played out within AIM: “The AIM leaders are particularly sexist, never having learned our true Indian history where women voted and participated in all matters of tribal life. They have learned the white man’s way of talking down to women and regarding their position as inferior.”⁷³ She also expressed dismay at the fact that women, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, were willing to serve the needs of AIM’s male leaders—from providing sex to catering in the kitchen.⁷⁴ Crow Dog’s statement points to the loss of traditional gender roles and the toxicity in adopting dominant values that have contributed to spousal abuse.

The sexual and gender dynamics in AIM played out in different ways. For one thing, casual affairs were not unique to AIM; after all, the sexual revolution served as a social backdrop to the protest politics of an entire generation. At the same time, “some of the AIM leaders attracted quite a number of ‘wives.’ We called them ‘wives of the month,’” Crow Dog/Brave Bird recalled.⁷⁵ Woody Kipp (Blackfeet) “lost” his girlfriend to AIM leader Russell Means (Lakota).⁷⁶ By 2016, AIM leader Dennis Banks (Ojibwe) had twenty children with seven women, and eighty-nine grandchildren.⁷⁷ Male AIM leaders had no qualms about exploiting their exposed position.

Many Indigenous men were inculcated with the concepts of male privilege and patriarchy of dominant society. Indigenous men abided by the very ideals they struggled against, even though this contributed to their own subordination as a group.⁷⁸ According to Indigenous scholars Robert Alexander Innes (Plains Cree) and Kim Anderson (Cree and Métis), many Indigenous men were/are caught in a cycle of dysfunction: “As non-whites, Indigenous men’s privilege is ultimately subordinated by white male privilege, so they are then confined to achieve their privilege through the oppression of those who are perceived from a hegemonic male perspective as being weaker and more vulnerable than they are.”⁷⁹ Indigenous men within AIM had firsthand experiences with boarding schools, the military, and the judicial system—gendered and engendering institutions that promoted conformity, adaptation, and

assimilation into dominant society. They had also experienced cultural loss, social alienation, and self-destructive behavior at the intersections of reservation and urban life.⁸⁰ Indigenous men's adherence to hegemonic ideals of masculinity thus placed them in an ambiguous position, putting them in direct opposition to their own liberation and the oppression of Indigenous women. This is what Mary Crow Dog/Brave Bird (Lakota) alluded to when she said that "our men were magnificent and mean at the same time. . . . They had to fight their own men's lib battles. They were incredibly brave in protecting us, they would literally die for us, and they always stood up for our rights—*against outsiders!*"⁸¹

In practice, masculinist protest politics played out in similar ways to other minority movements for change. "By equating liberation with manhood," Castle writes in her comparative study of Black and Indigenous women's activism in the Black Panther Party and AIM, "women found themselves not only struggling for the cause but also competing with oppressive notions of masculinities."⁸² Thus, the status of Indigenous women within the Red Power movement was that of a "double colonization": first, through racial inequality and white colonial domination, and second, through male privilege and female subordination—itsself part of the legacy of colonization and the imposition of white heteropatriarchal masculinity.⁸³ Women of color active in the Black Panther Party and AIM felt that women's liberation advanced the goals of white, middle-class feminism rather than women's issues within their own racial communities.⁸⁴ Indigenous women in particular viewed cooperation with white feminism not only as a diversion from their primary concern (the struggle against racial oppression) but, worse, as complicity with colonialism, which, as feminist scholars have pointed out, kept them oppressed in the first place.⁸⁵

GENDERED NATION-BUILDING AND INDIGENOUS WARRIOR WOMEN AT WOUNDED KNEE, 1973

Nation-building—whether the making of empire or its undoing through anticolonial endeavors as spearheaded by AIM—is a highly gendered process. As the testimonies cited above show, nationalist projects tend to associate masculinity with the militarized defense and protection of nation and family (the smallest unit of the nation) and femininity with domesticated motherhood and support of their husbands, or—alternatively—as icons of nationhood.⁸⁶ Various feminist scholars have pointed to the inextricable connection between masculinity and nationalism in the making and unmaking of nations.⁸⁷ Nationalism tends to subordinate women to male privilege while leaving little or no place for unmanly or gay men.⁸⁸ Given their formative experiences with dominant society and institutions, it is unsurprising that during the initial stages of the Wounded Knee occupation, Indigenous men cast themselves as defenders and protectors and women as the protected—that is, until Indigenous women challenged the sexual division of labor and power.⁸⁹

From its inception, the staunchest support for the Wounded Knee takeover came from Indigenous women, who stood at the center of grassroots activism.⁹⁰ According to Bob Anderson, a white Vietnam veteran who participated in the takeover, "Women



FIG. 3. Two male occupiers in front of at the hilltop Wounded Knee church with rifle and binoculars. From the church tower flies AIM's national flag. Left of the church is a signpost indicating the position of the Hotchkiss gun battery during the 1890 massacre. Both the declaration of the Independent Oglala Nation and the setup of the AIM warrior society went hand in hand. Richard Erdoes Papers, Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.



FIG. 4. Unidentified Indigenous woman with gun at Wounded Knee. Stanley Lyman Photograph Collection, J. Willard Marriott Digital Library, University of Utah.

were actually the backbone of the way things ran and were organized. . . . They had a strong role in the community.”⁹¹ Local grassroots women formed the Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Organization (OSCRO) in opposition to the dominant reservation politics.⁹² According to Ellen Moves Camp (Lakota), an OSCRO member, “Our men were scared, they hung to the back.”⁹³ By directly appealing to their manhood, Moves Camp shamed men into taking action and occupying Wounded Knee. Moves Camp is frequently quoted as saying: “You AIM people, what are you going to do? You are supposed to be warriors. . . . If you men can’t do it, then we women will.”⁹⁴ During the Wounded Knee siege, local reservation residents Gladys Bissonette (Lakota) and Moves Camp were some of the primary negotiators with the government.

Within the masculinist nation-building project of the ION, women thus took on highly significant yet largely overlooked roles that shifted between domesticated motherhood and female warriors standing side by side with their male comrades-in-arms as near-equals.⁹⁵ While Indigenous women’s pivotal part in the occupation was frequently overshadowed by that of their male, attention-seeking counterparts, the male defenders of Wounded Knee were utterly dependent on women’s efforts in maintaining the occupation. Yet they preferred women to stay in the background, a stance partially due to their own internalized notions of patriarchy, which superseded knowledge of women’s traditionally strong position in tribal communities. Media coverage almost completely ignored Indigenous women, partly due to widespread gender and racial bias, and partly due to the hypervisibility of Indigenous warriors.⁹⁶

Throughout the siege, women frequently took on domestic chores—housekeeping, laundry, and cooking—or cared for the sick and injured; yet they also played a key part as participants in planning, maintaining, and resupplying the Wounded Knee community. Inside the Wounded Knee hamlet, “we did the shit work, scrubbing dishes or making sleeping bags out of old jackets,” Mary Crow Dog stated.⁹⁷ Non-Indigenous women grew aware of what they perceived as the inferior tasks and subservient duties of their Indigenous counterparts. Crow Dog recalled: “At one time, a white volunteer nurse berated us for doing the slave work while the men got all the glory. We were betraying the cause of womankind, was the way she put it. We told her that her kind of women’s lib was a white, middle-class thing and that, at this critical stage, we had other priorities. Once our men had gotten their balls back, we might start arguing with them about who should do the dishes. But not before.”⁹⁸ Indigenous women recognized the necessity of this work at the time, as it contributed to the overall goals of liberation. Yet at the same time, they realized that their relegation to supposedly minor roles also reflected the masculinist culture of ION and the gendered division of labor. Her statement of “our men getting their balls back” directly relates to her previous statement that Indigenous men—just like Indigenous women—were fighting their own liberation battles.

Gender studies scholar Anne McClintock argues that there is no nation that offers men and women equitable access to rights and resources in the nation-state,⁹⁹ while gender studies scholar Nira Yuval-Davis states that, within nationalist struggles, women occupy a number of interrelated functions as biological, normative, ideological, and cultural reproducers of the nation as well as active participants.¹⁰⁰ At Wounded

Knee, women embodied all these iconic roles—from giving birth to marrying to organizing the communal kitchen, housing, medical care, and supplies, to participating in defense and in government negotiations.¹⁰¹ As one woman recalled, “Most of our underground work was handled by local reservation women: hiding people, feeding them, hiding rifles, hiding and packing supplies. When our group was trying to get back into Wounded Knee one night, we stopped at three different women’s homes. We got directions, found the way was clear, had coffee, and departed.”¹⁰²

As stated, nationalist struggles tend to replicate the very patriarchy they struggle against, with women of color suffering the most. Indigenous women struggled with “a double oppression” through racial domination and gender inequality. While Indigenous women prioritized the struggle against US colonialism over the struggle for gender equality, they also took on roles as warriors. Gender scholar Cynthia Enloe describes the nation as a highly masculinized space, but women can overcome their marginalized status and gain entry into masculinist politics, according to Enloe, if they “convincingly cloak themselves in a particular masculinized style of speech and action.”¹⁰³ At Wounded Knee, some Indigenous women successfully renegotiated their way into this masculine landscape. By joining their male counterparts in the armed revolutionary struggle, they established a link to cultural and warrior traditions that had laid dormant for decades. In an interview, Regina Brave (Lakota), a Navy veteran and one of the female defenders, put it this way: “Wounded Knee showed the general public that there were Indian women who were warriors. Throughout history we had Indian women who were warriors. But since it was non-Indian people who wrote the history, the idea of women taking up guns and taking up arms to fight beside their men was unheard of by the general public, especially . . . non-Indian women.”¹⁰⁴

Just like their male counterparts, Indigenous women occupied bunkers, took part in roving patrols, exposed themselves to lethal gunfire, and were wounded.¹⁰⁵ *Akwesasne Notes* reprinted the experiences of another Indigenous woman, named Kathy: “Being in Wounded Knee taught us a new kind of bravery: being shot at as you sit in a bunker—bullets and tracers whizzing and zinging by—or dodging from foxhole to foxhole or running out with a stretcher to bring back the wounded, or manning—womanning—a bunker all day or night.”¹⁰⁶ Kathy attributed her ability to handle fear of firefights to her experiences as an Indigenous woman.¹⁰⁷ Throughout the siege, women played a pivotal part in hitchhiking in and out of Wounded Knee, bringing in much needed food supplies, ammunition, and manpower; providing the besieged with crucial information; and occasionally taking up arms.¹⁰⁸

At Wounded Knee, Indigenous women who took up arms referenced their decision to do so with cultural traditions, real or imagined. For example, Regina Brave pointed out that during the prereservation period, it was not uncommon for Indigenous women to assume a warrior identity to protect their communities. She also pointed to Brave-Hearted Women, a women’s society whose members participated in war parties as both medics and warriors, and apparently directly took part in the Battle of the Little Bighorn (June 25–26, 1876).¹⁰⁹ Indeed, there are several incidences among Plains Indian societies during prereservation times that Indigenous women took on the roles and responsibilities of warriors. For example, at the Battle of the Rosebud

(June 17, 1876), a Northern Cheyenne woman named Buffalo Calf Road Woman (AKA Brave Woman) saved her wounded warrior brother; her act helped rally the Cheyenne warriors—allies of the Lakotas—to win the battle.¹¹⁰ Regina Brave took pride in defending her community, and she saw it as her right and duty not to leave this role and responsibility solely to men.

During prereservation times, within Lakota culture, there were two basic kinds of fraternal organizations: policing-military societies and civil societies, both of which played an integral role in their respective tribal communities.¹¹¹ Male warrior societies were tasked with policing hunts, maintaining order on the move and in camp, preparing ceremonies, and sponsoring feats. They also helped foster a martial ethos by promoting social gatherings with songs, dances, feats, and the redistribution of property through giveaways.¹¹² Lakota male civil societies were eminent voluntary organizations; composed of accomplished elder tribal leaders, they made significant political decisions.¹¹³ By contrast, women's societies were mostly centered upon artisan interests, such as quilling and tanning, the performance of rituals, and the honoring and recognizing of successful hunters and warriors. Women frequently joined men's warrior societies as singers, honoring and celebrating the victories of their male relatives.¹¹⁴

Jaimes and Halsey rightfully claim that “military activity—including being a literal warrior—was never an exclusively male sphere of endeavor [prior to reservation confinement].”¹¹⁵ There are indications of warrior women among Plains Indian societies, such as the Piegan and Blackfoot in Canada and the Cheyenne in the United States. What remains unclear, though, is the actual extent of women's participation in military activities among Plains Indian societies.¹¹⁶ There is also some controversy about female sodalities among the Lakotas. For example, anthropologist Raymond DeMallie has found that “there was no developed tradition of warrior women in Lakota society.”¹¹⁷ A case in point is the Brave-Hearted Women society, which might have been more concerned with retrieving the wounded and fallen from a battlefield and helping the families rather than engaging in war and warfare. However, Indigenous women—activists and military veterans alike—claim the existence of female warrior societies among the Lakota and point to the differences within the various *tiospayes*. Apparently, a woman could assume her male relative's or husband's place in a warrior society.¹¹⁸ The oral voices of Indigenous women also give credence to the existence of prereservation warrior women. While there was no institutionalized tradition of warrior women sodalities among the Lakotas, there were warrior women among the Dakotas who shared the same language.¹¹⁹

However, I have found no historical evidence or names of individual Lakota women who assumed a warrior persona during prereservation times (while there are names of women with other tribal affiliations). Contemporary negotiations of cultural systems and gender identities are often conditioned by the variety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous discourses. Scholars of the Red Power movement should thus be cautioned against attempts to romanticize and homogenize the prereservation period, but instead should recognize the multiplicity of Indigenous tribal-specific gender systems and the intertwined roles and responsibilities.¹²⁰

At Wounded Knee, the taking up of manly functions by Indigenous women did not pass unopposed by their male comrades-in-arms.¹²¹ Two veterans—Carter Camp (Ponca) and Stan Holder (Wichita)—organized the defense of Wounded Knee. Camp admitted that the occupiers had a “training class in weaponry for some women who wanted to do that.”¹²² As he reflected, “For one thing, our Indian leaders frown on women taking that sort of a role. We believe that women have a role and they play that role and the men play their role as warriors.”¹²³ Carter’s statement reveals just how much gender relations among the occupiers were influenced by dominant norms and beliefs. The male defenders felt threatened by the female occupiers taking up arms because it put the functions of male protector and female protected into jeopardy and directly challenged male superordination and female subordination. “I think men were threatened more than anything,” Regina Brave put it. “Instead of looking at these women as partners, they looked at them as rugs or playthings or something [akin] to a little trophy to put on the shelves.”¹²⁴ Another perspective came from Bob Anderson, a white Vietnam veteran, who shared the following observations about Wounded Knee:

Some of the guys thought that that was not a cool thing. They weren’t crazy about it. But there wasn’t much resistance to it [either]. Everybody just sort of said: “Come on out and join,” and so . . . one of the bunkers . . . was predominantly staffed by women. . . . [T]hey started taking positions and roles in the leadership of the security, and they were always in the negotiations that were held up in what we called the DMZ zone.¹²⁵



FIG. 5. *Two Indigenous women in front of the Wounded Knee Trading Post. Denver Public Library.*

Indigenous warrior women had to renegotiate themselves into the masculinist movement culture through their commitment and their displays of competency. Regina Brave realized that many of AIM's rank and file were young, inexperienced, and incapable of handling their weapons properly: "They didn't have the experience of fighting for their people. . . . None of them had ever been in the military. . . . In fact, they were from urban areas. . . . And so, I thought these young men could cause the death of a lot of people, because they could easily panic, which happened; and these guys were stingy with their guns."¹²⁶

Soon, Indigenous women realized the threat these untrained militants posed for the entire community. Although Indigenous women helped the new arrivals to break down their weapons, clean them, and handle them properly, two shooting accidents occurred. It was only through an appeal to reason that the men finally started taking the women seriously. As Brave recalls, "So, then I went in to argue. And they were trying to deny me, because I was a woman. Yet my argument was: 'Hey, you know I didn't hear of any women [shooting] a hole through their foot. I again never hear of any women [shooting] a hole through their hand.' Plus, I had the experience. I had already been in a military service—I'm a Navy veteran and, plus, I grew up in the country out here. And we hunted for a living."¹²⁷

Indigenous women figured that the military inexperience and behavior of the male weapon-carriers put everybody at risk. During a firefight, the inexperienced men would panic and run for cover. Realizing the implications of this, Brave made the decision to defend the hamlet: "And I figured: 'Okay, I'm gonna carry a gun. I'm going to join a squad. I'm going to be a part of this . . . because this is serious business. Those people are firing [at] you [with] real-life bullets. I used to stand on the hill and watch the tracers come in. Thousands of bullets coming into Wounded Knee."¹²⁸

A group of four Indigenous women carried guns while also engaging in the day-to-day tasks within the small community. Warrior women carried their guns and coffee pots to the different bunkers to supply the defenders, stood trench duty, did the cooking and cleaning and the laundry, chopped wood, and hauled water. For Brave, that commitment translated into a willingness to put her life on the line: "I thought to carry a gun. And I thought, 'If I'm gonna go down, I'm gonna take someone with me."¹²⁹ Other than Indigenous men who regarded armed women as a threat to their masculine position of power, Indigenous women considered their function as complementary. "It was almost like the women have always had not just one role . . . we had several," Brave said. "And we were good at every one of them. And we took care of our men. At Wounded Knee, we stood with them."¹³⁰ Some women became so accustomed to the siege that some slept through firefights due to exhaustion.¹³¹

While many Indigenous men at Wounded Knee sought to portray themselves as modern-day warriors fighting for the cause, their people, their homeland, and their rights, few non-veterans actually lived up to their own ideals. Local Wounded Knee resident and US Army veteran Walter Littlemoon (Lakota) shared the following observation: "What disappointed me at the time was to hear the members of AIM holler, 'This is a good day to die!' However, when the shooting started, they'd run and hide, even pushing

women out of the way. They did not attempt to protect even their own members.”¹³² Claims to warriorhood and the reality of combat thus diverged considerably.

Female nationalists were not afraid to confront male leaders and veterans when things were not in the general interest of the ION community. Toward the final stage of the occupation, as fewer supplies and ammunition came in, an AIM leader apparently started hoarding supplies while the community starved. During an ensuing confrontation, Dennis Banks pointed his gun at Madonna Thunder Hawk and Lorelei DeCora, but gave up his supplies when a number of veterans uncocked their rifles and pointed their barrels at him. Thunder Hawk recalled that “it shocked me to think that one of our leaders would be hoarding food.”¹³³ However, she also attributed much of the stress to the unfolding of that situation.

In general, warrior women might have found it considerably harder than their male counterparts to take up arms in the defense of the hamlet, in particular given the chauvinist attitude of AIM’s male leadership. The historiography of the Red Power movement suggests that, in many contexts, Indigenous women regarded themselves as warriors, just like their male counterparts.¹³⁴ However, the media’s fascination with what Thunder Hawk called “warrior type” imagery meant that women’s militancy was frequently ignored.¹³⁵ Among the very few images of armed women taken at Wounded Knee that made the front pages across the country was a picture of Regina Brave guarding a bunker and holding a rifle. It seems that the Wounded Knee takeover only briefly upset gender dynamics within AIM. Brave recalled, “Our men, they were proud of their women. They stood back and said: ‘Hey, the women woke up. But we never went to sleep. We were always there. We were just not recognized in that manner, because our men have bought into this other society’s idea of what women should be. So, we took our places back.”¹³⁶

In the wake of the takeover, however, Indigenous women once again found themselves subordinated within the masculinized movement culture. “We were doing what Indian women did for thousands of years, which was to stand behind the men and prop them up,” recalled Margo Thunderbird (Lakota). Together with Anna Mae Aquash (Mi’kmaq from Canada), she worked on behalf of AIM in Minnesota and California.¹³⁷ As she stated: “We wanted to present an image, and the angry Indian man was better than angry Indian women. . . . The men were show-time.”¹³⁸

Accounts by Indigenous women widely state that the mainstream media largely ignored them and instead focused on Indigenous men. From early on, AIM’s male leaders realized that militant actions—property seizures, marches, demonstrations, and more confrontational tactics—attracted considerable media attention.¹³⁹ However, the media often focused on spectacle rather than message.¹⁴⁰ AIM’s male leaders sought to utilize their cultural-racial capital to their own advantage; yet, when “playing Indian,” they also tapped into colonial ambivalence and mimicry.¹⁴¹ For one thing, Indigenous men quite intentionally drew on warrior imagery, because these images were most readily recognized by a wider audience. For another thing, the news media often focused on these stereotypical images in order to sell news stories.¹⁴² While Indigenous men utilized the performance of warrior masculinity to the point of being media-savvy, they genuinely considered themselves as real warriors in the struggle



Fig. 6. Anna Mae Aquash (Mi'kmaq) and Nogeeshik Aquash (Ojibwe) in front of the Wounded Knee Trading Post. The long occupation and periods of boredom were occasionally punctuated with firefights. Here, the occupants seem to find some distraction by using a pogo stick. Anna Mae and Nogeeshik were married during the occupation by Wallace Black Elk (Lakota) on April 12, 1973. Anna Mae participated in the Mayflower protest on Thanksgiving 1970, the Trail of Broken Treaties protest and the subsequent, weeklong takeover of the BIA headquarters in November 1972, and the Wounded Knee takeover. Stanley Lyman Photograph Collection, J. Willard Marriott Digital Library, University of Utah.

against colonial domination.¹⁴³ AIM's male leaders consciously sought to put forth the image of martial manliness and barred those women activists who did not fit these images from television cameras.¹⁴⁴

Although Indigenous men occupied the media limelight, the centrality of Indigenous women in the Wounded Knee takeover may not be overlooked. What kept the community together in the first place was the work of Indigenous women, rather than that of the media-recognized male AIM leaders who, in the words of Castle, "more often than not appeared as media window dressing."¹⁴⁵ For example, local Oglala grassroots women made critically important decisions and developed crucial strategies—such as protesting the election of tribal chairman Richard Wilson, calling in AIM for support, prodding their men into action, participating in the takeover, defending the tiny hamlet, sustaining the takeover, and negotiating with law enforcement officers. Throughout, these Indigenous women felt themselves as the protected but also as the imposed-upon, and made difficult decisions. Many local Lakota women stayed in Wounded Knee throughout the seventy-one-day siege and were heavily

engaged in community organizing. Gladys Bissonette, Ellen Moves Camp, and Lou Bean were involved in government negotiations from the takeover's inception.

Indigenous activists considered their anticolonial resistance both a political battle for Indigenous rights and a cultural struggle for maintaining their indigeneity. As they protested for their rights, they reached out into their cultural heritage, remaking their gendered and cultural subjectivities. Frequently, Indigenous activists claimed that they were part of a cultural and spiritual movement that was concerned with the revival of traditional culture(s). Dorothy Ninham (Oneida), a participant at the Wounded Knee siege, put it this way: "What we set out to do . . . was to bring back our culture, bring back our traditional ways, and to revive them. We've always been a spiritual movement." Traveling from Wisconsin to South Dakota to help in the defense and bring in supplies, she reflected that "this is the first time we really felt pride. Our people are back there and they're fighting. . . . It affected people all over the country."¹⁴⁶ Indigenous women continually stressed the intergenerational significance of survival of their culture, language, and heritage for their children, families, and tribal communities.

In an interview about her activist years with AIM, Phyllis Young (Lakota) described Indigenous women as follows: "I am a Lakota patriot first. . . . I am a spoiled American [second]. I drink Coca-Cola and I like the elevators and other things."¹⁴⁷ Her personal view on Indigenous women's cultural-political identity closely parallels that of Indigenous men. However, for Indigenous women, identity politics seemed to have different implications, as women frequently tied their anticolonial resistance to grassroots activism in their families and communities, whereas men had a tendency to get more involved in political protests. Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of Lakota women was the preservation of a land base, a distinct culture, a spirituality, and a language for their children and future generations.¹⁴⁸ As Young put it, "We had to create lives that were acceptable for our children. We fought so we could have choices. We didn't have those choices. . . . Our choice was taking back our culture and keeping it for ourselves, keeping it for our children. Because they need an identity. They need a language. They need a culture to survive."¹⁴⁹

Regina Brave credited AIM with the idea of "bringing back the spirituality of the people and the sun dances which were denied to us, our religious rights which were denied." She considered Wounded Knee as "a rebirth of spirituality, of dignity, and certainly sovereignty." Wounded Knee helped "to gain back our pride and dignity," that it was instrumental for the survival of Lakota culture and language, and that of future generations.¹⁵⁰ Brave considered militancy necessary to draw attention to Indigenous issues. As she recalled: "We were militant. We were radical. . . . We knew that the only language this country would understand was violence, because that's the only language they knew." Female nationalists like her struggled to achieve the recognition of Indigenous rights, not personal validation. As she stated, "none of us ever were looking for recognition. We weren't looking for fame. We were just a part of a group of people that were standing up for our rights." Indigenous women like her were trying to make a positive future for their children, grandchildren, and later generations: "And that's what we're fighting for. All our lives we've fought for survival—not only survival of who we are, but survival of our language, our culture, and our very heritage."¹⁵¹

What made women become warriors in the anticolonial struggle was thus their willingness to stand by their men and children. “Hey, we are part of this, too. We could not have survived for over 500 years if the men and women did not stand together,” as Brave put it.¹⁵² The Wounded Knee occupation made Thunder Hawk realize that Wounded Knee was indeed part of a larger, intergenerational struggle against settler colonial encroachment upon their lands and livelihood that reached back from the past and extended forward into the future. The realization that “I knew I had to raise my children and grandchildren to continue the struggle” strengthened her resolve to help carry on the struggle into the next generation and beyond.¹⁵³

After Wounded Knee, Indigenous women sustained the anticolonial struggle through the establishment of alternative schools, through legal action against illegal sterilization and natural resource pollution by corporate interests, by securing healthy food for Indigenous communities, and by contributing to a growing international Indigenous movement. Such efforts played an integral part in the ongoing struggle for Indigenous identity, rights, and lands.¹⁵⁴

INDIGENOUS WOMEN’ STRUGGLES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION, SOVEREIGNTY, NATION, AND DECOLONIZATION AFTER 1973

From mid-1973 through late 1976, a campaign of political repression and physical violence rocked the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. As the US government and its surrogates sought to incapacitate the Indigenous nationalist movement, the situation on Pine Ridge spiraled into a low-level civil war. The US Counterintelligence Program ultimately cost the lives of as many as sixty-nine AIM members and supporters.¹⁵⁵ Among those killed were twenty-one women and two children.¹⁵⁶ Amid this escalating violence and rampant paranoia, a firefright erupted on the Jumping Bull compound on June 25, 1975, that left two FBI agents—Ronald Williams and Jack Coler—and one AIM activist dead. In the ensuing manhunt, the FBI swept the reservation in a massive search for the suspected killers. Ultimately, Leonard Peltier (Ojibwe, Lakota, and Dakota) was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment, despite evidence of overwhelming government misconduct.¹⁵⁷

The most prominent female victim of the “reign of terror” was Anna Mae Pictou-Aquash, whose body was found on February 24, 1976. AIM initially claimed Aquash had been murdered by the FBI, yet later admitted to her killing.¹⁵⁸ Aquash certainly fell victim to paranoia induced within AIM and “bad-jacketing.” Her killing was in fact an inside job conducted by those who believed she was an FBI informant.¹⁵⁹ Two AIM members—Arlo Looking Cloud (Lakota) and John Graham (Southern Tutchone Champagne and Aishihik First Nations)—ultimately confessed to the murder, having apparently acted at the behest of someone else from among AIM’s male leadership. *New York Times Magazine* journalist Eric Konigsberg claims that several women who participated in the takeover of Wounded Knee—the “Pie Patrol,” consisting of Madonna Thunder Hawk, Lorelei DeCora, and Thelma Rios, among others, all of whom had close ties to AIM’s leaders—were implicated in Aquash’s murder, charges that have since been vehemently denied by Thunder Hawk and DeCora.¹⁶⁰ In 2010,



FIG. 7. Mary Crow Dog/Brave Bird (Lakota) at a rally to support the release of her husband, Leonard Crow Dog (Lakota), medicine man from Rosebud Reservation, from prison. Following the Wounded Knee occupation, the federal government began prosecuting AIM leaders on various charges. Leonard Crow Dog served nearly two years in prison. Richard Erdoes Papers, Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Thelma Rios pleaded guilty to the kidnapping of Aquash and received a five-year sentence, most of which was commuted due to her poor health.¹⁶¹ In death, Aquash has become a symbolic movement figure for Indigenous female activism.¹⁶²

In the aftermath of Wounded Knee, much of the ongoing grassroots struggle for Indigenous rights can be attributed to the commitment of Indigenous women.¹⁶³ In 1974, Indigenous women established their own organization, Women of All Red Nations (WARN). Their primary concern remained the struggle for Indigenous cultural and political empowerment. Yet they also began to increasingly contest male privilege, thus battling their state of “double oppression” on multiple fronts.¹⁶⁴ Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo) expressed that many Indigenous women found the sexism and chauvinism of their male counterparts off-putting: “We’ll show you who the real warriors are here. We are! You think you’re so big. You haven’t done nothing and you can’t do nothing without us. Every Indian knows that. You want something done, call a woman. . . . But the situation is such, that [when] the white world wants things Indian, . . . you know who they call. They call the men.”¹⁶⁵

According to Lorelei DeCora, Indigenous women developed “an awareness of the distinctive gendered experience of Indian men and women at the hands of the US government.”¹⁶⁶ WARN became active in the areas of education, health care, treaty rights, and putting an end to domestic violence, forced sterilization, and uranium mining. “Indian women have had to be strong because of what this colonialist system has done to our men. . . . And after Wounded Knee, while all that persecution of the men was going on, the women had to keep things going,” was how DeCora expressed

the overall female sentiment.¹⁶⁷ WARN activists also sought to educate children to carry on the Indigenous struggle into the next generation.¹⁶⁸ Indigenous feminists point out that “Indigenous feminism remains an important site of gender struggle that engages the crucial issues of cultural identity, nationalism, and decolonization particular to Indigenous contexts.”¹⁶⁹ Within this larger context, further female-organized movements formed, signifying a stirring empowerment of Indigenous women.¹⁷⁰

In recent years, many Indigenous women veterans of the 1973 Wounded Knee takeover were present during the Dakota Access Pipeline protests on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in 2016–17. The controversial construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline close to the reservation drew a massive grassroots movement that once again saw Indigenous people fighting for their rights, their lands, and their resources. Yet this time, the No Dakota Access Pipeline (NoDAPL) protests emerged as a women-led, grassroots movement. The NoDAPL protests pointed toward new directions in the defense and protection of Indigenous people, lands, and rights, with the media, transnational and transcultural alliances, and legislative efforts becoming the most potent weapons. They also indicated that Indigenous women took the lead as another kind of warrior in what was a deeply intergenerational struggle.¹⁷¹ For example, Regina Brave, a key leadership figure in the NoDAPL protests, received the ACLU’s highest honor, the Roger N. Baldwin Medal of Liberty. Embodying the warrior woman heritage outlined here, she was among the last protesters to be arrested when police cleared the camp in early 2017.¹⁷²

Indigenous women played a key part in the gendered nation-building attempt at Wounded Knee. They occupied ambiguous and complex positions during the takeover, simultaneously reaffirming male privilege and challenging it. At times, female activists joined their male counterparts as comrades-in-arms in the firefights, thus successfully renegotiating themselves into AIM’s masculine microculture and nationalist ideology. In taking on a female warrior subjectivity, Indigenous women reconnected to a tradition that had been in existence prior to the reservation period—or so they claimed. More so, in taking up arms, Indigenous women directly challenged male privilege and the patriarchal nature of the American Indian Movement. Male nationalists felt somewhat threatened by the participation of women in the armed confrontation, yet for their part accepted it out of pure necessity. In the Wounded Knee aftermath, Indigenous women in AIM began to embark on a female quest for empowerment, self-determination, and decolonization.

NOTES

1. Methodologically, this article features an ethnohistorical approach. It relies on the otherwise “hidden” voices of Indigenous women who participated in the Wounded Knee takeover. These oral voices come from memoirs, newspaper articles, alternative news media publications, and publicly available oral interviews. This methodology incorporates large passages from Indigenous women’s testimony to bring to the forefront their otherwise marginalized voices. With regard to its theoretical foundations, this article draws from Indigenous studies as well as the fields of gender studies, nationalism, Indigenous feminism, and postcolonialism.

In 2019, filmmaker Christina King and historian Elizabeth Castle utilized the term *Warrior Women* as the title for a documentary. This article carries the same title and looks at the same women; yet concentrates on their involvement a singular event, the Wounded Knee takeover. Christina King and Elizabeth Castle, *Warrior Women* (Vision Maker Media and ITVS, 2019).

2. Elizabeth Castle, "Black and Native American Women's Activism in the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement," in *Visions and Voices, American Indian Activism and the Civil Rights Movement*, eds. Kurt Peters and Terry Strauss (New York: Albatros Press, 2009), 85–99; here: 86, 96; M. Annette Jaimes and Theresa Halsey, "American Indian Women at the Center of Indigenous Resistance in Contemporary North America," in *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, ed. M. Annette Jaimes (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 332; Devon A. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 162–71.

3. Joane Nagel, "Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations," in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 2 (2010), 242–69; here: 251ff; Joane Nagel, "Nation," in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, eds. Michael Kimmel, Jeff Hearn, Jeff and Raewyn Connell (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005), 397–413, here: 400; Cynthia H. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014, 2nd ed.), 87ff.

4. Troy R. Johnson, Joane Nagel, Duane Champagne, "American Indian Activism and Transformation: Lessons from Alcatraz," in *Contemporary Native American Communities*, ed. Troy Johnson (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1999), 283–314; Joane Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Troy Johnson, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne, eds., *American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

5. Troy Johnson, *The American Indian Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Red Power and Self-Determination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 217–21.

6. Bradley Shreve, *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Native Activism* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 6–8; Paul McKenzie-Jones, *Clyde Warrior, Tradition, Community, and Red Power* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015); Daniel M. Cobb, Sarah Berger, and Lily Skopp, "A Sickness That Has Grown to Epidemic Proportions': American Indian Anti- and Decolonial Thought during the Long 1960s," *Comparative American Studies* 17, no. 2 (2020): 199–223. Daniel Cobb and Loretta Fowler have begun to broadly contextualize twentieth-century Indigenous activism. Daniel Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008); Daniel Cobb and Loretta Fowler, *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism since 1900* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research, 2007). For an overview, see Lucie Kýrová and György Ferenc Tóth, "Red Power at Fifty: Re-evaluations and Memory," *Comparative American Studies* 17, no. 2 (2020): 107–16, here: 109–11.

7. Sam Hitchmough, "Performative Protest and the Lost Contours of Red Power Activism," *Comparative American Studies* 17, no. 2 (2020): 224–37, here: 225; Kýrová and Tóth, "Red Power at Fifty," 109.

8. Shreve, *Red Power Rising*, 6–15.

9. For definitions, see Leah Sneider, "Complementary Relationships: A Review of Indigenous Gender Studies," in *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration*, eds. Robert Alexander Innes and Kim Anderson (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 65.

10. Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal*.

11. Johnson, Nagel, Champagne, "American Indian Activism and Transformation," 283, 297–310.

12. Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal*, 163–75.
13. Timothy Baylor, *Modern Warriors: Mobilization and Decline of the American Indian Movement (AIM), 1968–1979* (PhD thesis: University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1994), III–IV.
14. Authoritative studies on AIM are: Davis, *Survival Schools*; Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: New Press, 1996); Rolland Dewing, *Wounded Knee II* (Chadron: Great Plains Network, 1995).
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16. Donna Hightower Langston, “American Indian Women’s Activism in the 1960s and 1970s,” *Hypatia* 18, no.2 (Spring 2003), 114–32.
17. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 119.
18. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 116–171; Elizabeth Castle, “Keeping One Foot in the Community: Intergenerational Indigenous Women’s Activism from the Local to the Global (and Back Again),” *American Indian Quarterly* 27, nos. 3 and 4 (Summer and Fall 2003): 840–61; Elizabeth Castle, “The Original Gangster: The Life and Times of Red Power Activist Madonna Thunder Hawk,” in *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 267–84.
19. Castle, “Black and Native American Women’s Activism,” 85–99.
20. Davis, *Survival Schools*, 6. Susan Applegate Krouse, “What Came Out of the Takeovers: Women’s Activism and the Indian Community School of Milwaukee,” *American Indian Quarterly* 27, nos. 3 and 4 (Summer and Fall) (2003): 533–47.
21. Sarah Nickel and Amanda Fehr, *In Good Relation: History, Gender, and Kinship in Indigenous Feminism* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2020); Joanne Barker, ed., *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017); Joyce A. Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Second Edition) (Nova Scotia and London: Fernwood Publishing, 2017); Cheryl Huhndorf, Shari M. Suzack, Jeanne Perreault, Jean Barman, eds., *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010); Kim Anderson, *A Recognition of Being* (Second Edition) (Toronto: Women’s Press, 2016); Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005); Lee Maracle, *I Am Woman: A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism* (Second Edition) (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1996); Nancy Shoemaker, *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).
22. Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill, “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy,” *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 8–34; Renya Ramirez, “Race, Tribal Nation, Gender: A Native Feminist Approach to Belonging,” *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 7, no. 2 (2007): 22–40; Andrea Smith, “Native American Feminism, Sovereignty and Social Change,” *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 116–32; M. A. Jaimes Guerrero, “‘Patriarchal Colonialism’ and Indigenism: Implications for Native Feminist Spirituality and Native Womanism,” *Hypatia* 18, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 58–69; M. A. Jaimes Guerrero, “Civil Rights versus Sovereignty: Native American Women in Life and Land Struggles,” in *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, eds. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty (New York: Routledge, 1997), 101–22.
23. Huhndorf and Suzack, *Indigenous Feminism*, 2.
24. Barker, *Critically Sovereign*, 7.
25. A note on terminology: The term “Sioux” itself is a colonial imposition. Admittedly, there is no umbrella term that captures the subgroups of the Siouan-speaking people (or Lakota, Dakota, Nakota), and Native Americans themselves utilize the word *Sioux* for lack of a better term (e.g.,

as in “Oglala Sioux Tribe”). Similarly, when referencing their tribal group, terms such as *Ojibwe* or *Anishinaabe* are utilized interchangeably, while other terms such as *Chippewa* (referring to the same tribal entity) are avoided due to a colonial past. The word *tribe/tribal nation* signify a historically grown relationship between tribal community and the federal government, and point toward political sovereignty. Guy Gibbon, *The Sioux, The Dakota, and Lakota Nations* (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 2–9; Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), IX–X.

26. The Wounded Knee massacre has produced its own historiography. For a starting point, see Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and US Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 338–360.

27. Akim D. Reinhardt, *Ruling Pine Ridge: Oglala Lakota Politics from the IRA to Wounded Knee* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2007), 189–202.

28. Maureen Trudelle Scharz, *Fighting Colonialism with Hegemonic Culture: Native American Appropriation of Indian Stereotypes*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2013, 31ff.; Ty P. Kāwika Tengan, *Native Men Remade: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Hawai‘i* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 1–32.

29. George Pierre Castile, *To Show Heart: Native American Self-Determination and Federal Indian Policy* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 129–33; Reinhardt, *Ruling Pine Ridge*, 19–41, 126–63, 166–70; Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, 171–93; Dewing, *Wounded Knee II*, 29–51.

30. Reinhardt, *Ruling Pine Ridge*, 88–96.

31. Reinhardt, *Ruling Pine Ridge*, 129–88.

32. For border town racism and AIM protests, see Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, 171–193; Dewing, *Wounded Knee II*, 29–51; Reinhardt, *Ruling Pine Ridge*, 126–63, 166–70. For the Raymond Yellow Thunder case, read Dewing, *Wounded Knee II*, 29–33. Reinhardt, *Ruling Pine Ridge*, 126–29; Warrior and Smith, *Like a Hurricane*, 112–26. For the Bad Heart Bull case, see Dewing, *Wounded Knee II*, 40ff; Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, 183ff.

33. Reinhardt, *Ruling Pine Ridge*, 159–63; Dewing, *Wounded Knee II*, 33, 37–51.

34. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices from Wounded Knee, 1973: In the Words of the Participants* (Third Edition) (Rooseveltown: Akwesasne Notes, 1976), 31.

35. Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, 194–268.

36. Tom Holm, *Strong Hearts, Wounded Souls* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 176–79; Al Carroll, *Medicine Bags and Dog Tags: American Indian Veterans from Colonial Times to the Second Iraq War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 163–72.

37. Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, 194–268; Dewing, *Wounded Knee II*.

38. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*.

39. For a key primary source, see Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 55–58, 76, 81, 130–132, 161ff.

40. US Congress, Senate, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Indian Affairs of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Occupation of Wounded Knee: The Causes and Aftermath of the Wounded Knee Takeover*, 93rd Congress, June 16, 1973, Pine Ridge, South Dakota, and June 17, 1973, Kyle, South Dakota (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1974) [henceforth *Wounded Knee Hearing*], Statement of Louis Bad Wound, 233.

41. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 81.

42. For the ION, see: Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 65–87.

43. *Wounded Knee Hearing*, Statement of Louis Bad Wound, 232-236, esp. 233. See also Anonymous, “An Overt Act of Good Faith,” *Akwesasne Notes* 5, no. 3 (Early Summer 1973), 27.

44. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 54–64.

45. *Wounded Knee Hearing*, 141, 148.

46. Edward Lazarus, *Black Hills, White Justice: The Sioux Nation versus the United States, 1775 to the Present* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 309.
47. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 53ff.
48. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 76–77. For a key primary source on the ION and the AIM warrior society, see Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 60–64, 76ff, 194–201 (on the new warrior society), 55–58, 76, 81, 130–132, 161ff (on the Independent Oglala Nation). See also Carroll, *Medicine Bags and Dog Tags*, 147–172 (on warrior society); Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, 194–268 (esp. 200 on ION); Holm, *Strong Hearts, Wounded Souls*, 176–179 (on Vietnam veterans); Matthias André Voigt, “Warriors for a Nation: The American Indian Movement, Indigenous Men, and the Nation-Building at the Takeover of Wounded Knee in 1973,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 45, no. 2 (2021): 1–38 (masculinity and nation-building).
49. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 55–58, 65–90, 153–174, 194–201, 246–248; Voigt, “Warriors for a Nation.”
50. Carroll, *Medicine Bags*, 170.
51. Voigt, “Warriors for a Nation,” 12ff.
52. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 240, 249–258.
53. Dewing, *Wounded Knee II*, 99, 119ff.
54. Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI’s Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1988), 196.
55. Akwesasne Note, *Voices*, 245–61.
56. Philip D. Roos, Dowell H. Smith, Stephen Langley, and James McDonald, “The Impact of the American Indian Movement on the Pine Ridge Reservation,” *Phylon* 41, no. 1 (1980), 89–99.
57. Julie L. Davis, *Survival Schools: The American Indian Movement and Community Education in the Twin Cities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 1–9, 42–51.
58. Reinhardt, *Ruling Pine Ridge*, 159–63.
59. Among the Lakota, the term *akíçita*, or warrior, entails notions of protecting people, homeland, and rights; providing for family, kin, and tribal community; and keeping the peace within the tribal community, thus alluding to personal and social abilities. J. R. DeMallie and Raymond Walker, *Lakota Society* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 28–34, 38–39, 58–60; Catherine Price, *The Oglala People, 1841–1879: A Political History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 13–18.
60. Ramirez, “Race, Tribal Nation, and Gender,” 22–40.
61. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 159–71; Castle, “Black and Native American Women’s Activism,” 89–96; Jaimes and Halsey, “American Indian Women,” 331–34.
62. Castle, “Black and Native American Women’s Activism,” 93.
63. Mary Brave Bird and Richard Erdoes, *Obitika Woman* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1993), 58–59. Mary Crow Dog, née Mary Allen Moore, was married to Leonard Crow Dog. After their divorce, she changed her name to Mary Brave Bird.
64. Nickel and Fehr, *In Good Relation*.
65. Langston, “American Indian Women’s Activism.”
66. Kenneth Stern, *Loud Hawk: The United States versus the American Indian Movement* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 112.
67. Michael A. Messner, *Politics of Masculinities: Men in Movements* (Thousand Oaks and London: Sage Publications, 1997), 70–80.
68. Jaimes and Halsey, “American Indian Women,” 311.
69. Quoted in Jaimes and Halsey, “American Indian Women,” 314.
70. Castle, “Black and Native American Women’s Activism,” 86.
71. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 169–71.

72. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 108, 163.
73. Mary Crow Dog and Richard Erdoes, *Lakota Woman* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990), 191–92.
74. Crow Dog, *Lakota Woman*, 65–66, 69, 78, 138.
75. Crow Dog, *Lakota Woman*, 78.
76. Woody Kipp, *Viet Cong at Wounded Knee: The Trail of a Blackfeet Activist* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 105–6. The male misogynistic behavior has been variously criticized across Indian country. For example, see Indigenous feminist Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo) as quoted in Judith A. Antell, *American Indian Women Activists* (PhD thesis: University of Berkeley, 1990), 170.
77. Eric Konigsberg, “Who Killed Anna Mae?,” *New York Times*, April 25, 2014.
78. Robert Alexander Innes and Kim Anderson, *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, and Regeneration* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 11, 15.
79. Innes and Anderson, *Indigenous Men and Masculinities*, 11.
80. Davis, *Survival Schools*, 31–51; Matthias André Voigt, “Between Powerlessness and Protest: Indigenous and Masculinities in the Twin Cities and the Emergence of the American Indian Movement,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 11, no. 2 (2021), 221–41.
81. Crow Dog, *Lakota Woman*, 69. For Indigenous attempts to “decolonize” see: Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 81–112.
82. Castle, “Black and Native American Women’s Activism,” 86.
83. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 16.
84. Castle, “Black and Native American Women’s Activism,” 86–88.
85. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 162; Castle, “Black and Native American Women’s Activism,” 91–94; Jaimes and Halsey, “American Indian Women,” 331–334.
86. For the role of men and women in nationalism, see: Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997), 2; Joane Nagel, “Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 2 (2010): 242–69, here: 251–54.
87. Nagel, “Masculinity and Nationalism”; Nagel, “Nation,” in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, eds. Michael Kimmel, Jeff Hearn, and Raewyn Connell (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005), 397–413; Cynthia H. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Second Edition) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 83–124; Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*.
88. Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory*, 178–179.
89. Voigt, “Between Powerlessness and Protest,” 225–234.
90. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 22–32; Jaimes and Halsey, “American Indian Women,” 311–314.
91. Personal interview with Bob Anderson on August 12, 2009 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
92. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 14–32.
93. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 31.
94. Banks and Erdoes, *Ojibwe Warrior*, 160.
95. Enloe, *Bananas*, 87.
96. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 119.
97. Crow Dog, *Lakota Woman*, 138.
98. Crow Dog, *Lakota Woman*, 131.
99. Anne McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,” *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993): 61–80.
100. Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, 4.
101. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 57, 67–73, 160, 164, 170–176, 201, 220, 228, 249ff.

102. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 201.
103. Enloe, *Bananas*, 30–31.
104. Regina Brave, interviewed by Elizabeth Castle, February 17, 2005, accessed online July 1, 2020. At the time of the writing of this article, the full oral interviews by Elizabeth Castle were posted on YouTube on the Warrior Women Project website (<https://www.youtube.com/@warrior-womenproject7937>); but they have since been removed. The complete interviews are in the author's possession. Those who are interested in them should contact Castle.
105. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 161ff, 165, 201.
106. Akwesasne Notes, *Voices*, 201.
107. *Ibid.*
108. Madonna Thunder Hawk, "Madonna Thunder Hawk on Wounded Knee," extended interviews by Emily Kunstler and Sarah Kunstler for the documentary *William Kunstler: Disturbing the Universe*, produced and directed by Emily Kunstler and Sarah Kunstler (Disturbing the Universe, Independent Television Service, 2010).
109. Regina Brave interview.
110. John Stands in Timber and Margot Liberty, *Cheyenne Memoirs* (Second Edition) (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 181–90.
111. For men's solidarities, see: Gibbon, *The Sioux*, 127–130; Royal B. Hassrick, *The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 15ff.
112. William C. Meadows, *Kiowa, Apache, and Comanche Military Societies: Enduring Veterans, 1800 to the Present* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 1–13.
113. Gibbon, *The Sioux*, 129f; Hassrick, *The Sioux*, 25ff.
114. For women's sodalities, see Marla N. Powers, *Oglala Women: Myth, Ritual, and Reality* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 25–27, 73–74, 86–87, 139.
115. Jaimes and Halsey, "American Indian Women," 316.
116. Beatrice Medicine, "Warrior Women: Sex Role Alternatives for Plains Indian Women," in *The Hidden Half: Studies on Plains Indian Women*, eds. Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), 267–77.
117. Raymond DeMallie, "Male and Female in Traditional Lakota Culture," in *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women*, eds. Patricia Albers and Bea Medicine (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1983), 237–65, here: 242.
118. Lakota women veterans claim that there were female warrior sodalities among the Lakotas. Madonna Thunder Hawk claims that there were four warrior societies among Lakota women. Jaimes and Halsey, "American Indian Women," 316 (see endnote 28, page 337); The Lakota Women Warriors, www.lakotawomenwarriors.org (last accessed September 14, 2022). The website has been taken down.
119. With the Dakotas, women who had achieved war honors were called *winoxca* (the female equivalent to the male *akíčita*). Medicine, "Warrior Women," 274.
120. Sam McKegney, *Masculindians: Conversations about Indigenous Manhood* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014), 2ff.
121. Personal interview with Bob Anderson on August 12, 2009 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
122. Art Kunkin, "The Legal Case for Wounded Knee: An Interview with Carter Camp and Mark Lane," *Los Angeles Free Press*, June 6–24, 1973.
123. Kunkin, "The Legal Case for Wounded Knee."
124. Regina Brave interview.
125. Personal interview with Bob Anderson on August 12, 2009 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
126. Regina Brave interview.
127. *Ibid.*

128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
131. Madonna Thunder Hawk and Choach Means, interviewed by Elizabeth Castle, February 2, 2005, accessed online July 1, 2020. At the time of the writing of this article, the full oral interviews by Elizabeth Castle were posted on YouTube on the Warrior Women Project website (<https://www.youtube.com/@warriorwomenproject7937>); but they have since been removed.
132. Walter Littlemoon with Jane Ridgway, *They Called Me Uncivilized: The Memoir of an Everyday Lakota Man from Wounded Knee* (Bloomington, iUniverse, 2009), 73.
133. Madonna Thunder Hawk and Choach Means interview.
134. Jaimes and Halsey, "American Indian Women."
135. Thunder Hawk, "Madonna Thunder Hawk on Wounded Knee."
136. Regina Brave interview.
137. Konigsberg, "Who Killed Anna Mae?"
138. Ibid.
139. Baylor, *Modern Warriors*, 179.
140. Baylor, *Modern Warriors*, 206.
141. Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998); Schwarz, *Fighting Colonialism*, 24–33.
142. Baylor, *Modern Warriors*, 189ff.
143. Voigt, "Warriors for a Nation," 1–38.
144. Famed writer Gerald Vizenor (Ojibwe) recounts one incident in 1972 when AIM leaders barred an Indigenous woman, Bonnie Wallace (Ojibwe), from a room with television news reporters, because "the militants did not want her light face tones shown on television news reports." Gerald Vizenor, *The Everlasting Sky: Voices of the Anashinabe People* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2000), 56.
145. Castle, "The Original Gangster," 280.
146. Dennis Banks, *Remembering Wounded Knee*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToFctSG7PJI> (Part 4) (undated, last accessed September 21, 2020).
147. Madonna Thunder Hawk and Phyllis Young, interviewed by Elizabeth Castle, January 27, 2005, accessed online July 1, 2020. At the time of the writing of this article, the full oral interviews by Elizabeth Castle were posted on YouTube on the Warrior Women Project website (<https://www.youtube.com/@warriorwomenproject7937>); but they have since been removed.
148. For an in-depth discussion on Indigenous women, feminism, tribalism, and activism, see Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 159–71.
149. Madonna Thunder Hawk and Phyllis Young interview.
150. Regina Brave interview.
151. Ibid.
152. Ibid.
153. Duane Noriyuki, "The Women of Wounded Knee," <http://www.dickshovel.com/lisa21.html> (last accessed September 21, 2020).
154. Medicine, *Warrior Women*; Castle, "The Original Gangster"; Castle, "Keeping One Foot in the Community."
155. The number of AIM members and supporters killed differ depending on the source. In an early count, Ward Churchill arrives at sixty to sixty-four dead; in a later count, he arrives at sixty-nine dead. The FBI arrives at fifty-seven names. See Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *The COIN-TEPLRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars Against Domestic Dissent* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 249; Churchill and Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression*, 175. Federal Bureau of

Investigation, *Report for Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota: Accounting for Native American Deaths, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota* (Report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Minneapolis Division, May 2000), https://www.fbi.gov/minneapolis/about-us/history-1/copy_of_report-for-pine-ridge-indian-reservation-south-dakota, accessed December 19, 2015.

156. Jaimes and Halsey, "American Indian Women," 328.

157. Jim Messerschmidt, *The Trial of Leonard Peltier* (Boston: South End Press, 1983); Leonard Peltier, *Prison Writings: My Life Is My Sundance* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1992).

158. Adding to the conspiracy theory that Anna Mae Aquash's murder was engineered through the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) was the fact that an initial autopsy missed the gunshot wound to her head (Churchill, *Agents of Repression*, 206–211). On a press conference held on November 3, 1999, at the steps of the Denver FBI office, AIM leader Russell Means admitted that the killing was conducted by AIM members at the behest of AIM leader Vernon Bellecourt. For a clip of a 1999 press conference, see Anonymous, "Gun in Her Mouth," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pm1Ic9A4aU&t=428s> (uploaded February 12, 2011, last accessed September 18, 2022). See also Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 125–27; esp. 202ff.

159. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 9–13, 115–142.

160. Konigsberg, "Who Killed Anna Mae?"; See also Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 126.

161. Konigsberg, "Who Killed Anna Mae?"

162. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*, 127 (see 115–42 for an in-depth discussion). For a documentary, see *Annie Mae: Brave-Hearted Woman*, written, directed, and produced by Lan Brookes Ritz (1980). For theater plays, see Alexander Pettit, "A Legacy of Furious Men: The American Indian Movement and Anna Mae Aquash in Plays by Tomson Highway, E. Donald Two-Rivers, Yvette Nolan, and Bruce King," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 27, no. 2 (Summer 2015), 29–61; and Yvette Nolan, *Annie Mae's Movement* (Toronto: Playwrights Union of Canada, 1999).

163. Noriyuki, "The Women of Wounded Knee"; Thunder Hawk, "Madonna Thunder Hawk on Wounded Knee."

164. Jaimes and Halsey, "American Indian Women," 329.

165. Quoted in Antell, *American Indian Women* 170–71.

166. Lorelei De Cora Means, "Women of All Red Nations," *Red Power: The American Indians' Fight for Freedom*, eds. Alvin M. Josephy, Joane Nagel, and Troy Johnson (Second Edition) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 51ff.

167. Means, "Women of All Red Nations," 51ff; Winona LaDuke, "Words from Indigenous Women's Network Meeting," *Akwesasne Notes* 17, no. 6 (Early Winter 1985), 8–9; Anonymous, "Women of All Red Nations (WARN)," *Akwesasne Notes* 10, no. 5 (Winter 1978), 15.

168. Jaimes and Halsey, "American Indian Women," 329; Castle, "The Original Gangster," 275–78; Winona LaDuke, "Words from Indigenous Women's Network Meeting," *Akwesasne Notes* 17, no. 6 (Early Winter 1985), 8–9; Anonymous, "Women of all Red Nations (WARN)," *Akwesasne Notes* 10, no. 5 (Winter 1978), 15.

169. Huhndorf, *Indigenous Feminism*, 1ff.

170. Smith, "Native American Feminism"; Huhndorf, *Indigenous Feminism*, 9.

171. Nick Estes, *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Traditions of Indigenous Resistance* (London: Verso, 2019); Nick Estes, *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019).

172. Delilah Friedler, "Get the Hell Off!": The Indigenous Fight to Stop a Uranium Mine in the Black Hills," *Mother Jones* (March-April 2020), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2020/05/the-black-hills-are-not-for-sale/>.