

The Bloody Wake of Alcatraz: Political Repression of the American Indian Movement during the 1970s

By *Ward Churchill*

From the beginning of European contact in the late 15th century, American Indians have resisted the theft of their land and their rights to sovereignty. The U.S. government continues to illegally appropriate land and violate the legal rights of Indigenous Peoples. Formed in 1968, the American Indian Movement (AIM) was one of the most successful efforts to defy federal authority, and thereby suffered the most tragic consequences. The essay below provides a brief introduction to the background and legacy of AIM. It is excerpted from a longer chapter “The Bloody Wake of Alcatraz” in American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk (The University of Illinois Press, 1997). It is ideally read in conjunction with the subsequent article by Leonard Peltier about the FBI siege at the Oglala Reservation.

The reality is a continuum which connects Indian flesh sizzling over Puritan fires and Vietnamese flesh roasting under American napalm. The reality is the compulsion of a sick society to rid itself of men like Nat Turner and Crazy Horse, George Jackson, and Richard Oakes, whose defiance uncovers the hypocrisy of a declaration affirming everyone’s right to liberty and life. The reality is an overwhelming greed which began with the theft of a continent and continues with the merciless looting of every country on the face of the earth which lacks the strength to defend itself.

—Richard Lundstrom

In combination with the fishing rights struggles of the Puyallup, Nisqually, Muckleshoot, and other nations in the Pacific Northwest from 1965 to 1970, the 1969–71 occupation of Alcatraz Island by the San Francisco area Indians of All Tribes coalition ushered in a decade-long period of uncompromising and intensely confrontational American Indian political activism. Unprecedented in modern U.S. history, the phenomenon represented by Alcatraz also marked the inception of a process of official repression of indigenous activists without parallel in its virulence and lethal effects.

The nature of the post-Alcatraz federal response to organized agitation for native rights was such that by 1979 researchers were describing it as a manifestation of the U.S. government’s “continuing Indian Wars.” For its part (in internal documents intended to be secret), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)—the primary instrument by which the government’s policy of anti-Indian repression was implemented—concurred with such assessments, abandoning its customary counterintelligence warfare. The result, as the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights officially conceded at the time, was the imposition of a condition of official terrorism upon certain of the less compliant sectors of indigenous society in the United States.

In retrospect, it is apparent that the locus of both activism and repression in Indian Country throughout the 1970s centered squarely on one group, the American Indian Movement (AIM). Moreover, the crux of AIM activism during the 1970s, and thus of the FBI’s campaign to “neutralize” it, can be found in a single locality: the Pine Ridge (Oglala Lakota) Reservation in South Dakota. The purpose of this essay, then, is to provide an overview of the federal counterinsurgency program against AIM on and around Pine Ridge, using it as a lens through which to explore the broader motives and outcomes attending it. Finally, conclusions will be drawn as to the program’s implications, not only with respect to American Indians, but concerning non-indigenous Americans as well.

Background

AIM was founded in 1968 in Minneapolis by a group of urban Anishinabe (Chippewa), including Dennis Banks, Mary Jane Wilson, Pat Ballanger, Clyde Bellecourt, Eddie Benton Benai, and George Mitchell. Modeled loosely after the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense established by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, California, two years previously, the group took as its first tasks the protection of the city's sizeable native community from a pattern of rampant police abuse and the creation of programs for jobs, housing, and education. Within three years, the organization had grown to include chapters in several other cities and had begun to shift its focus from civil rights issues to an agenda more specifically attuned to the conditions afflicting native North America.

What AIM discerned as the basis of these conditions was not so much a matter of socioeconomic discrimination against Indians as it was their internal colonization by the United States. This perception accrued from the fact that, by 1871, when federal treaty-making with native peoples was permanently suspended, the rights of indigenous nations to distinct, self-governing territories had been recognized by the United States more than 370 times through treaties duly ratified by its Senate. Yet, during the intervening century, more than 90 percent of treaty-reserved native land had been expropriated by the federal government, in defiance of both its own constitution and international custom and convention. One consequence of this was creation of the urban diaspora from which AIM itself had emerged; by 1970, about half of all Indians in the United States had been pushed off their land altogether.

Within the residual archipelago of reservations—an aggregation of about 50 million acres, or roughly 2.5 percent of the 48 contiguous states—indigenous forms of governance had been thoroughly usurped through the imposition of U.S. jurisdiction under the federal government's self-assigned prerogative of exercising "plenary [full and absolute] power over Indian affairs." Correspondingly, Indian control over what had turned out to be rather vast mineral resources within reservation boundaries—an estimated two-thirds of all U.S. "domestic" uranium deposits, one quarter of the low sulfur coal, 20 percent of the oil and natural gas, and so on—was essentially nonexistent.

It followed that royalty rates set by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), in its exercise of federal "trust" prerogatives vis-à-vis corporate extraction of Indian mineral assets, amounted to only a fraction of what the same corporations would have paid had they undertaken the same mining operations in nonreservation localities. The same principle of underpayment to Indians, with resulting "super-profit" accrual to non-Indian business entities, prevailed with regard to other areas of economic activity handled by the Indian bureau, from the leasing of reservation grazing land to various ranching interests, to the harvesting of reservation timber by corporations such as Weyerhaeuser and Boise-Cascade. Small wonder that, by the late 1960s, Indian radicals such as Robert K. Thomas had begun to refer to the BIA as "the Colonial Office of the United States."

In human terms, the consequence was that, overall, American Indians—who, on the basis of known resources, comprised what should have been the single wealthiest populations group in North America—constituted by far the most impoverished sector of U.S. society. According to the federal government's own data, Indians suffered, by a decisive margin, the highest rate of unemployment in the country, a matter correlated to their receiving by far the lowest annual and lifetime incomes of any group in the nation. It also corresponded well with virtually every other statistical indicator of extreme poverty: a truly catastrophic rate of infant mortality and the highest rates of death from malnutrition, exposure, plague disease, teen suicide, and accidents related to alcohol abuse. The average life expectancy of a reservation-

based Indian male in 1970 was less than 45 years; reservation-based Indian females could expect to live less than three years longer than their male counterparts; urban Indians of either gender were living only about five years longer, on average, than their relatives on the reservations.

AIM's response to its growing apprehension of this squalid panorama was to initiate a campaign consciously intended to bring about the decolonization of native North America: "Only by reestablishing our rights as sovereign nations, including our right to control our own territories and resources, and our right to genuine self-governance," as Dennis Banks put it in 1971, "can we hope to successfully address the conditions currently experienced by our people."

Extrapolating largely from the example of Alcatraz, the movement undertook a multifaceted political strategy combining a variety of tactics. On the one hand, it engaged in activities designed primarily to focus media attention, and thus the attention of the general public, on Indian rights issues, especially those pertaining to treaty rights. On the other hand, it pursued the sort of direct confrontation meant to affirm those rights in practice. It also began systematically to reassert native cultural and spiritual traditions. Eventually, it added a component wherein the full range of indigenous rights to decolonization and self-determination were pursued through the United Nations venue of international law, custom, and convention.

In mounting this comprehensive effort, AIM made of itself a bona fide national liberation movement, at least for a while. Its members consisted of "the shock troops of Indian sovereignty," to quote non-AIM Oglala Lakota activist Birgil Kills Straight. They essentially reframed the paradigm by which U.S.-Indian relations are understood in the late 20th century. They also suffered the worst physical repression at the hands of the United States of any "domestic" group since the 1890 massacre of Big Foot's Minneconjou by the 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee.

Prelude

AIM's seizure of the public consciousness may in many ways be said to have begun in 1969 when Dennis Banks recruited a young Oglala named Russell Means to join the movement. Instinctively imbued with what one critic described as a "bizarre knack for staging demonstrations that attracted the sort of press coverage Indians had been looking for," Means was instrumental in AIM's achieving several of its earliest and most important media coups: painting Plymouth Rock red before capturing the Mayflower replica on Thanksgiving Day 1970, for example, and staging a "Fourth of July Countercelebration" by occupying the Mount Rushmore National Monument in 1971.

Perhaps more important, Means proved to be the bridge that allowed the movement to establish its credibility on a reservation for the first time. In part, this was because when he joined AIM he brought along virtually an entire generation of his family—brothers Ted, Bill, and Dale; cousin Madonna Gilbert; and others—each of whom possessed a web of friends and acquaintances on the Pine Ridge Reservation. It was therefore natural that AIM was called upon to "set things right" concerning the torture-murder of a middle-aged Oglala in the off-reservation town of Gordon, Nebraska, in late February 1972. As Bill Means would later recall, "When Raymond Yellow Thunder was killed, his relatives went first to the BIA, then to the FBI, and to the local police, but they got no response. Severt Young Bear [Yellow Thunder's nephew and a friend of Ted Means] then...asked AIM to come help clear up the case." Shortly, Russell Means led a caravan of some 1,300 Indians into the small town, announcing from the steps of the courthouse, "We've come here today to put Gordon on the map...and if justice is not immediately forthcoming, we're going to take Gordon off the map." The killers, brothers named Melvin and Leslie Hare, were quickly arrested, and a police officer who had covered up for them was

suspended. The Hares soon became the first whites in Nebraska history sent to prison for killing an Indian, and “AIM’s reputation soared among reservation Indians. What tribal leaders had dared not do to protect their people, AIM had done.”

By fall, things had progressed to the point that AIM could collaborate with several other native rights organizations to stage the Trail of Broken Treaties caravan, bringing more than 2,000 Indians from reservations and urban areas across the country to Washington, D.C., on the eve of the 1972 presidential election. The idea was to present the incumbent chief executive, Richard M. Nixon, with a 20-point program redefining the nature of U.S.-Indian relations. The publicity attending the critical timing and location of the action, as well as the large number of Indians involved, were calculated to force serious responses from the administration to each point.

Interior Department officials who had earlier pledged logistical support to caravan participants once they arrived at the capital reneged on their promises, apparently in the belief that this would cause the group to meekly disperse. Instead, angry Indians promptly took over the BIA headquarters building on November 2, evicted its staff, and held it for several days. Russell Means, in fine form, captured the front page of the nation’s newspapers and the six o’clock news by conducting a press conference in front of the building, while adorned with a makeshift “war club” and a “shield” fashioned from a portrait of Nixon himself.

Desperate to end what had become a major media embarrassment, the Nixon administration agreed to reply formally to the 20-point program within a month and to provide \$66,000 in transportation money immediately, in exchange for a peaceful end to the occupation. The AIM members honored their part of the bargain, leaving the BIA building on November 9. But, explaining that “Indians have every right to know the details of what’s being done to us and to our property,” they took with them a vast number of “confidential” files concerning BIA leasing practices, operation of the Indian Health Service (IHS), and so forth. The originals were returned as rapidly as they could be photocopied, a process that required nearly two years to complete.

Technically speaking, the government also honored its end of the deal, providing official—and exclusively negative—responses to the 20 points within the specified timeframe. At the same time, however, it initiated a campaign utilizing federally subsidized Indian “leaders” in an effort to discredit AIM members as “irresponsible...renegades, terrorists, and self-styled revolutionaries.” There is also a strong indication that it was at this point that the Federal Bureau of Investigation was instructed to launch a secret program of its own, one in which AIM’s capacity to engage in further political activities of the kind and effectiveness displayed in Washington was to be, in the vernacular of FBI counterintelligence specialists, “neutralized.”

Even as this was going on, AIM’s focus had shifted back to the Pine Ridge area. At issue was the January 23, 1973, murder of a young Oglala named Wesley Bad Heart Bull by a white man, Darold Schmitz, in the off-reservation village of Buffalo Gap, South Dakota. As in the Yellow Thunder case, local authorities had



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In memory of the occupation of Alcatraz, Native Americans regularly return to the Island. Walkers arriving for a ceremony on Alcatraz before the Long Walk for Survival from Sacramento to Washington D.C. in 1980.

made no move to press appropriate charges against the killer. At the request of the victim's mother, Sarah, Russell Means called for a demonstration at the Custer County Courthouse, in whose jurisdiction the crime lay. Terming western South Dakota "the Mississippi of the North," Dennis Banks simultaneously announced a longer-term effort to force abandonment "of the anti-Indian attitudes which result in Indian-killing being treated as a sort of local sport."

The Custer demonstration on February 6 followed a very different course from that of the protest in Gordon a year earlier. An anonymous call had been placed to the main regional newspaper, the *Rapid City Journal*, on the evening of February 5. The caller, saying he was "with AIM," asked that a notice canceling the action "because of bad weather" be prominently displayed in the paper the following morning. Consequently, relatively few Indians turned out for the protest. Those who did were met by an amalgamated force of police, sheriff's deputies, state troopers, and FBI personnel when they arrived in Custer.

For a while, there was a tense standoff. Then a sheriff's deputy manhandled Sarah Bad Heart Bull when she attempted to enter the courthouse. In the melee that followed, the courthouse was set ablaze—reportedly by a police tear gas canister—and the local Chamber of Commerce building was burned to the ground. Banks, Means, and other AIM members, along with Mrs. Bad Heart Bull, were arrested and charged with riot. Banks was eventually convicted and sentenced to three years of imprisonment and became a fugitive; Sarah Bad Heart Bull served five months of a one-to-five-year sentence. Her son's killer never spent one day in jail.

Wounded Knee

Meanwhile, on Pine Ridge, tensions were running extraordinarily high. The point of contention was an escalating conflict between the tribal administration headed by Richard "Dickie" Wilson, installed on the reservation with federal support in 1972, and a large body of reservation traditionalists who objected to Wilson's nepotism and other abuses of his position. Initially, Wilson's opponents had sought redress of their grievances through the BIA. The BIA responded by providing a \$62,000 grant to Wilson for purposes of establishing a Tribal Ranger Group—a paramilitary entity reporting exclusively to Wilson, which soon began calling itself Guardians of the Oglala Nation (GOONs)—with which to physically intimidate the opposition. The reason underlying this federal largess appears to have been the government's desire that Wilson sign an instrument transferring title of a portion of the reservation known as the Sheep Mountain Gunnery Range—secretly known to be rich in uranium and molybdenum—to the U.S. Forest Service.

In any event, forming the Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Organization (OSCRO), the traditionalists next attempted to obtain relief through the Justice Department and the FBI. When this, too, failed to bring results, they set out to impeach Wilson, obtaining signatures of more eligible voters on their petitions than had cast ballots for him in the first place. The BIA countered by naming Wilson himself to chair the impeachment proceedings, and the Justice Department dispatched a 65-member Special Operations Group (SOG, a large SWAT unit) of U.S. marshals to ensure that "order" was maintained during the travesty. Then, on the eve of the hearing, Wilson ordered the arrest and jailing of several members of the tribal council he felt might vote for his removal. Predictably, when the impeachment tally was taken on February 23, 1973, the incumbent was retained in office. Immediately thereafter, he announced a reservation-wide ban on political meetings.

Defying the ban, the traditionalists convened a round-the-clock emergency meeting at the Calico Hall, near the village of Oglala, in an effort to determine their next move. On February 26, the Oglala elders sent a messenger to the newly established AIM headquarters in nearby Rapid City to request that Russell Means meet with them. One of the elders, Ellen Moves Camp, later said, "We decided we needed the American Indian Movement in here.... All of our older people from the reservation helped make that

decision.... This is what we needed, a little more push. Most of the reservation believes in AIM, and we're proud to have them with us." Means arrived on the morning of February 27, then drove on to the village of Pine Ridge, seat of the reservation government, to try to negotiate some sort of resolution with Wilson. For his trouble, he was physically assaulted by GOONs in the parking lot of the tribal administration building. By then, Dennis Banks and a number of other AIM members had arrived at the Calico Hall. During subsequent meetings, the elders decided that they needed to draw public attention to the situation on the reservation. For this purpose, a 200-person AIM contingent was sent to the symbolic site of Wounded Knee to prepare for an early morning press conference; a much smaller group was sent back to Rapid City to notify the media and guide reporters to Wounded Knee at the appropriate time.

The intended press conference never occurred because, by dawn, Wilson's GOONs had established roadblocks on all four routes leading into (or out of) the tiny hamlet. During the morning, these positions were reinforced by uniformed police, then by elements of the marshals' SOG unit, and then by FBI "observers." As this was going on, the AIM members in Wounded Knee began the process of arming themselves.... By afternoon, General Alexander Haig, military liaison to the Nixon White House, had dispatched two special warfare experts—Colonel Volney Warner of the 82d Airborne Division and Colonel Jack Potter of the 6th Army—to the scene. In his book *Blood of the Land*, Rex Weyler writes:

Documents later subpoenaed from the Pentagon revealed Colonel Potter directed the employment of 17 APCs [tank-like armored personnel carriers], 130,000 rounds of M-16 ammunition, 41,000 rounds of M-40 high explosive [for the M-79 grenade launchers he also provided], as well as helicopters, Phantom jets, and personnel. Military officers, supply sergeants, maintenance technicians, chemical officers, and medical teams [were provided on-site]. Three hundred miles to the south, at Fort Carson, Colorado, the Army had billeted a fully uniformed assault unit on 24-hour alert.

Over the next 71 days, the AIM perimeter at Wounded Knee was placed under siege. The ground cover was burned away for roughly a quarter-mile around the AIM position as part of the federal attempt to staunch the flow of supplies—food, medicine, and ammunition—backpacked in to the Wounded Knee defenders at night; at one point, such material was airdropped by a group of supporting pilots. More than 500,000 rounds of military ammunition were fired into AIM's jerry-rigged "bunkers" by federal forces, killing two Indians—an Apache named Frank Clearwater and Buddy Lamont, an Oglala—and wounding several others. As many as 13 more people may have been killed by roving GOON patrols, their bodies secretly buried in remote locations around the reservation while they were trying to carry supplies through federal lines.

At first, the authorities sought to justify what was happening by claiming that AIM had "occupied" Wounded Knee and that the movement had taken several hostages in the process. When the latter allegation was proven to be false, a press ban was imposed, and official spokespersons argued that the use of massive force was needed to "quell insurrection." Much was made of two federal casualties



Kathleen Cleaver speaking at "No Extradition For Dennis Banks Rally." San Francisco, 1976. Right: Lee Brightman.

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supposed to have been seriously injured by AIM gunfire. In the end, it was Dickie Wilson who perhaps summarized the situation most candidly when he informed reporters that the purpose of the entire exercise was to see to it that “AIM dies at Wounded Knee.”

Despite Wilson’s sentiments—and those of FBI senior counterintelligence specialist Richard G. Held, expressed in a secret report prepared at the request of his superiors early in the siege—an end to the standoff was finally negotiated for May 7, 1973. AIM’s major condition, entered in behalf of the Pine Ridge traditionals and agreed to by government representatives, was that a federal commission would meet with the chiefs to review U.S. compliance with the terms of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty with the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho nations. The idea was to generate policy recommendations as to how the United States might bring itself in line with its treaty obligations. A White House delegation did, in fact, meet with the elders at the home of Chief Frank Fools Crow, near the reservation town of Manderson, on May 17. The delegates’ mission, however, was to stonewall all efforts at meaningful discussion. They promised a follow-up meeting on May 30 but never returned.

On other fronts, the authorities were demonstrating a similar vigor. Before the first meeting at Fools Crow’s house, the FBI had made 562 arrests of those who had been involved in defending Wounded Knee. Russell Means was in jail awaiting release on \$150,000 bond; OSCRO leader Pedro Bissonette was held against \$152,000; AIM leaders Stan Holder and Leonard Crow Dog were held against \$32,000 and \$35,000, respectively. Scores of others were being held pending the posting of lesser sums. By the fall of 1973, agents had amassed some 316,000 separate investigative file classifications on those who had been inside Wounded Knee.

This allowed federal prosecutors to obtain 185 indictments over the next several months (Means alone was charged with 37 felonies and three misdemeanors). In 1974, AIM and the traditionals used the 1868 treaty as a basis on which to challenge in federal court the U.S. government’s jurisdiction over Pine Ridge; however, the trials of the “Wounded Knee leadership” went forward. Even after the FBI’s and the prosecution’s willingness to subvert the judicial process became so blatantly obvious that U.S. District Judge Fred Nichol was compelled to dismiss all charges against Banks and Means, cases were still pressed against Crow Dog, Holder, Carter Camp, Madonna Gilbert, Lorelei DeCora, and Phyllis Young.

The whole charade resulted in a meager 15 convictions, all on such paltry offenses as trespass and “interference with postal inspectors in performance of their lawful duties.” Still, in the interim, the virtual entirety of AIM’s leadership was tied up in a seemingly endless series of arrests, incarcerations, hearings, and trials. Similarly, the great bulk of the movement’s fundraising and organizing capacity was diverted into posting bonds and mounting legal defenses for those indicted.

On balance, the record suggests a distinct probability that the post-Wounded Knee prosecutions were never seriously intended to result in convictions at all. Instead, they were designed mainly to serve the time-honored—and utterly illegal—expedient of “disrupting, misdirecting, destabilizing, or otherwise neutralizing” a politically objectionable group. There is the official concurrence with this view: As army counterinsurgency specialist Volney Warner framed matters at the time, “AIM’s best leaders and most militant members are under indictment, in jail or warrants are out for their arrest.... [Under these conditions] the government can win, even if nobody goes to [prison].”

A Legacy

It may be, as John Trudell has said, that “AIM died years ago. It’s just that some people don’t know it yet.” Certainly, the evidence indicates that it is no longer a viable organization. And yet there is another level to this reality, one that has more to do with the spirit of

resistance than with tangible form. Whatever else may be said about what AIM was (or is), it must be acknowledged that, as Russell Means contends:

Before AIM, Indians were dispirited, defeated, and culturally dissolving. People were ashamed to be Indian. You didn't see the young people wearing brands or chokers or ribbon shirts in those days. Hell, I didn't wear 'em. People didn't Sun Dance, they didn't sweat, they were losing their languages. Then there was that spark at Alcatraz, and we took off. Man, we took a ride across this country. We put Indians and Indian rights smack dab in the middle of the public consciousness for the first time since the so-called Indian Wars. And, of course, we paid a heavy price for that. Some of us are still paying it. But now you see braids on our young people. There are dozens of Sun Dances every summer. You hear our languages spoken again in places they had almost died out. Most important, you find young Indians all over the place who understand that they don't have to accept whatever sort of bullshit the dominant society wants to hand them, that they have an obligation to stand up on their hind legs and fight for their future generations, the way our ancestors did. Now, I don't know about you, but I call that pride in being Indian. And I think that's a very positive change. And I think—no, I know—AIM had a lot to do with bringing that change about. We laid the groundwork for the next stage in regaining our sovereignty and self-determination as nations, and I'm proud to have been a part of that.

To the degree that this is true—and much of it seems very accurate—AIM may be said to have succeeded in fulfilling its original agenda. The impulse of Alcatraz was carried forward into dimensions its participants could not yet envision. That legacy even now is being refashioned and extended by a new generation, as it will be by the next, and the next. The continuity of native North America's traditional resistance to domination was reasserted by AIM in no uncertain terms.

There are other aspects of the AIM legacy, to be sure. Perhaps the most crucial should be placed under the heading of "Lessons Learned." The experience of the American Indian Movement, especially in the mid-1970s, provides what amounts to a textbook exposition of the nature of the society we now inhabit, the lengths to which its government will go to maintain the kinds of domination AIM fought to cast off, and the techniques it uses in doing so. These lessons teach what to expect, and, if properly understood, how to overcome many of the methodologies of repression. The lessons are applicable not simply to American Indians but to anyone whose lot in life is to be oppressed within the American conception of business as usual.

Ultimately, the gift bestowed by AIM is, in part, an apprehension of the fact that the Third World is not something "out there." It is everywhere, including behind the façade of liberal democracy that masks the substance of the United States. It exists on every reservation in the nation, in the teeming ghettos of Brownsville, Detroit, and Compton, in the *barrios* and migrant fields and sharecropping farms of the Deep South. It persists in the desolation of the Appalachian coal regions. It is there in the burgeoning prison industry of America, warehousing by far the largest incarcerated population on the planet.

The Third World exists in the nation's ever-proliferating, militarized police apparatus. And it is there in the piles of corpses of those—not just AIM members, but Black Panthers, Brown Berets, Puerto Rican *independentistas*, labor organizers, civil rights workers, and many others—who tried to say "no" and make it stick. It is there in the fate of Malcolm X and Fred Hampton, Mark Clark and Ché Payne, Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt and Alejandina Torres, Susan Rosenberg and Martin Luther

In the quiet before the pow wow, Russell Mean braids his son's hair. Omaha Annual Pow Wow, Macy, Nebraska, 1992.

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King, George Jackson and Ray Luc Lavasseur, Tim Blunk and Reyes Tijerina, Mutulu Shaku and Marilyn Buck, and many others.

To win, it is said, one must know one's enemy. Winning the sorts of struggles these people engaged in is unequivocally necessary if we are to effect a constructive change in the conditions they faced and we continue to face. In this, there are still many lessons to be drawn from the crucible of AIM experience. These must be learned by all of us. They must be learned well. And soon.

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