CANADA’S OTHER RED SCARE:
RIGHTS, DECOLONIZATION, AND INDIGENOUS POLITICAL PROTEST
IN THE GLOBAL SIXTIES

By
Scott Rutherford

A thesis submitted to the Department of History
in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Queen’s University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada
(February 2011)

Copyright © Scott Rutherford, 2011
Abstract

This dissertation examines the histories of Indigenous protest, commonly known as “Red Power,” in the 1960s and 1970s in the town of Kenora, Ontario. Among the themes discussed are the associations of Indian and Métis activists with Third World national liberation movements, Black Power groups in North America and other Indigenous organizations, such as the American Indian Movement. This study pursues numerous themes, including: racialization, transnational decolonization, Canadian national identity and regional history. While previous studies on the era popularly understood as “the sixties” tend to focus on the particularities of the Canadian context, this dissertation suggests that the changing nature of Indigenous protest during the 1960s and 1970s forms a crucial link between Canada and global forces of social change that defined this era. Moments of Indigenous protest in Kenora, were not just singular episodes. Instead, actions such as the main street march in 1965 and the Anicinabe Park takeover in 1974 episode should be placed within the national and global movement of armed standoffs, occupations, and civil disobedience and understood through the broader social, cultural and political frameworks of decolonization during the 1960s and 1970s.
Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge the financial support received from the Queen’s University Graduate Scholarship, The Lower Fellowship and the Social Science and Humanities Council of Canada. For the entire span of my long life as a student, my great Uncle Ernie has generously offered me financial help. Thus, I am deeply grateful for Ernest Craik’s “Education fund.” Donald Colborne generously allowed me to use his private archives. As well, my dissertation committee deserves much praise for reading and commenting on my work. This includes: James Miller, Scott Morgensen, Susan Lord, Barrington Walker, Adnan Husain and Karen Dubinsky. As my supervisor, Karen Dubinsky offered everything and more: sound intellectual advice, guidance through the system, opportunities to work on amazing projects, a strict editorial eye, an ear to hear me gripe and friendship.

The list of family, friends, academic colleagues (and even pets) that have been there for me is too long to recite here. When I tried my best to pretend that the world consisted only of me, my books and my pen, they continued to offer support in the form of money, a bed, homecooked meals, transportation, intellectual advice, friendship, a much needed beer and a caring touch. They gently reminded me that it’s good to go outside everyday. Offering my words of gratitude is not a fair trade, but Thank-You. The same can be said for many people whose names I do not know. Some days there is no difference between a smile from a stranger and a smile from a friend because they both feel good. One smile, however, has meant more than all the others. I do not have the right words to explain the friendship, love, and support Sayyida Jaffer offers me every single
day. She has read each word of this dissertation with care, critiqued them in the way only Sayyida can and added a few of her own when appropriate.

Janet Rutherford and Jim Rutherford are without a doubt two of the most supportive, caring, compassionate, parents in the world. Janet works as the building manager of a doctor’s office. She knits obsessively, likes to be in front of the water at camp, listened to all of my radio shows, and has been my longest serving reader. Jim has worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway for over thirty years, first as a conductor and now as a soon-to-be-retired locomotive engineer (or as he would put it, “the guy who drives the train.”) Watching baseball, cooking and driving across the continent are ways we enjoy spending time together. Neither of them went to university; neither of them questioned my desire to do so and then to keep on doing so. The three of us are now 31 years into an ever-changing relationship. Along with my sister Jessica, who is doing brilliant work of her own, they are the best of what family is. Without them this dissertation would not exist.
Table of Contents

Abstract ii
Acknowledgments iii
List of Abbreviations vi
List of Illustrations and Photographs vii
Introduction: A Town With A Bad Name 1
Chapter One: “We Have Bigotry all right—but no Alabamas” 29
Chapter Two: Canada’s First Third World Peoples 70
Chapter Three: “There is No Che in Canada” 103
Chapter Four: Rumblings of Red Power in Kenora 137
Chapter Five: Liberated Indian Territory 156
Chapter Six: Spy Games 191
Conclusion 228
Bibliography 238
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAPA</td>
<td>Afro-American Progressive Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIM</td>
<td>American Indian Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Archives of Ontario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPP</td>
<td>Black Panther Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>Children’s Aid Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASNP</td>
<td>Canadian Association in Support of Native Peoples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>Canadian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGL</td>
<td>Community Guardian Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPC(ML)</td>
<td>Communist Party of Canada—Marxist-Leninist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIAND</td>
<td>Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>Indian-Eskimo Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IWC</td>
<td>Indian-White Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARP</td>
<td>Native Alliance for Red Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCAI</td>
<td>National Congress of American Indians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>New Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIC</td>
<td>National Indian Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHRC</td>
<td>Ontario Human Rights Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPP</td>
<td>Ontario Provincial Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OWS</td>
<td>Ojibway Warriors Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCMP</td>
<td>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMG</td>
<td>Revolutionary Marxist Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCLC</td>
<td>Southern Christian Leadership Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNCC</td>
<td>Student Non-Violent Co-Ordinating Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Illustration or Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Map of Ontario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Main Street March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cuban Radio Cartoon,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Black Liberation Front of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Louis Cameron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ojibway Nation Poster,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anicinabe Park cartoon,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Anicinabe Park cartoon,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ojibway Warriors Society surrendering weapons,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Anti-Deportation Poster,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>For Native Liberation &amp; Unity Against Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>“Red Power”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction: A Town with A Bad Name

Fig. 1, Map of Ontario.

Growing up in Kenora, Ontario during the 1980s and 1990s meant that I did not live through the era that created its infamous reputation. “The town with the bad name,” as a reporter for Akwesasne Notes once called Kenora, was synonymous across North America in the Sixties for cruel treatment of local Indigenous peoples. In part, because of this, from 1965 until 1975 Kenora was also known as a centre of Indigenous led political protest. This period has two especially dramatic moments. In 1965, on a cold night in late November, hundreds of Indigenous men and women lined Main street and

---

marched to town hall, protesting the hostility they faced in Kenora and the dismal living conditions on their home reserves. Reporters quickly branded it “Canada’s First Civil Rights March,” simultaneously turning Kenora into “Canada’s Alabama.” Fast-forward nine years to 1974 and the scene shifts to a small fourteen-acre lakefront park on the south side of town. There, in July, a forty-one day standoff began as one hundred and fifty young men and women, under the banners of the “Ojibway Nation” and the Ojibway Warriors Society, armed themselves and refused to leave Anicinabe Park until it once again became Indian land. Commentators returned to the airwaves with sensational analogies. Some resurrected Louis Riel (as did the Warriors Society), while other reporters led readers to believe that Anicinabe Park was nothing less than Canada’s version of “Wounded Knee.”

This dissertation tries to make sense of these two events and the nine years in between through an approach that is not limited to, or determined by, national historical narrative. This is a global history written through the windows of local experiences.

As a child in the 1980s and then as a teenager in the 1990s, academic studies were not required reading in order to understand racial hierarchy in Kenora. It saturated daily life. But here I am, using scholarly history as a way expose the hidden assumptions that made racial order seem easily justifiable and to discuss how people responded. Over the past five years this task would have proven more difficult but for the insights of other writers with similar experiences. In his monumental study of whiteness and the American

---

2 Terminology is always a complicated issue. In this dissertation I employ the term Indigenous when referring to the original inhabitants in what is now Canada. This is meant as a general term encompassing those who would identify either as Métis, Aboriginal, Indian, First Nations or Inuit. I also employ Aboriginal to differentiate between status and non-status as determined by the Indian act. The term Indian is used often in my attempt to respect the ways people referred to themselves as such in the 1960s and 1970s.
working-class, historian David Roediger recalled that as children he and a white friend called their knives “nigger giggers.” His anecdote introduces a discussion about the way his family practiced racism in the 1960s and 1970s. And, I think he illustrates that words and actions that make up white racism take shape at a most intimate level, in a place that it is most difficult for white people to examine without defensiveness: ourselves. When he set out to write Wages of Whiteness, Roediger did not immediately recognize the relationship between his own personal biography and the construction of historical narrative.³ It came to life as his work progressed. As a white male born in 1979, I did not see the events that ground this dissertation. As a kid, I did not purposefully undermine Indian treaties or physically attack my Indigenous classmates (though others did). But we were heavily invested in racial order. This investment often came to life through discourse; or, to be clearer, through the words we spoke. Confronting myself, the way my words, thoughts and actions contributed to the dehumanization of another person, may not seem an appropriate task for a historian. Yet I take some guidance here from Paulo Friere who once wrote that “[d]ehumanization…marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it.” This act, according to Friere, “is a distortion of the vocation of becoming human,” and is “but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn

dehumanizes the oppressed.”⁴ Addressing the personal in history is merely a small step towards becoming fully human.

If theory is an attempt to systematically reflect on “our guiding assumptions,” then ignoring the personal is a detriment to producing good scholarly work.⁵ With this said, being theoretically comfortable with this form of history and effectively employing are two different tasks. As I write this introduction (and the successive chapters) a sense of uncertainty lingers over how much personal history to divulge. It is not a case of feeling guilty or of being worried about my embarrassing baggage (though much of it is, undoubtedly, quite embarrassing). Instead the censorship comes from the feeling that the personal can overshadow the main subjects that the historical research is trying to understand, represent and respect. My concern is not unique. At the centre of some of the critiques of the personal in history is the point that memory is sometimes not an accurate representation of historical truth, especially when it contradicts historical documentation.⁶ One might see also see a problem with a white male writing biography into history at the moment when people of colour and Indigenous peoples still struggle to find their way into history not as objects but as subjects. Once again historians have again been able to find a way to make the story about white people.

With these considerations in mind, I make the case that we can use personal experience as a way to enter into social analyses that go beyond the individual. Because of this I spent much time searching for an example of my own that is simultaneously

---

⁵ I am borrowing from Terry Eagleton for this minimalist definition of theory, see Terry Eagleton, After Theory (New York: Penguin Books, 2004) 2.
intimate and open to generalization in a way that demonstrates the production of racial ideology on multiple levels. The challenge though is not in finding one example; instead it is in marking off just one. Racism in a town such as Kenora is a multi-layered phenomenon. At times it seems like an expression of class frustration. When I grew up, white frustration with being working class often finds convenient expression through the bodies of Indigenous peoples. In their economic history of Northwestern Ontario, Robert Wightman and Nancy M. Wightman point out that, like many other towns in Northwestern Ontario, in the post-1945 world, Kenora relied heavily on a natural resource-based economy. By the 1970s, over consumption of resources and a severe global economic recession contributed to a mounting social crisis, right at the time of some of the town’s most conflict ridden moments. Other scholars believe the economic downturn fueled a political frustration expressed through the language of regional alienation. “As a hinterland region,” GR Weller wrote, “northwestern Ontario has material, people and money extracted from it to serve the interests of the metropolis…[a]ll of the key segments of this region’s economy are…based upon the needs of another region and not of northwestern Ontario.” While I agree with both arguments, we should add racism as an expression of this frustration.

For its many blue-collar workers, the region’s precarious economy makes day-to-day life unstable. Yet, even in the moments of economic depression, some of these jobs,

---

7 At the beginning of the 1960s half of Kenora’s population was British, followed by Scandinavians, who, according to S Barry Cottam, were “six times the proportional representation as in the country as a whole,” see S. Barry Cottam, “Federal/Provincial Disputes, Natural Resources and the Treaty #3 Ojibway, 1867-1924,” PhD Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1994: 93.
especially those in Kenora’s Pulp and Paper Mill or on the Canadian Pacific Railway, paid well and had strong unions. It is here I find American journalist Joe Bageant’s insights important. “Working class might be best defined like this,” Bageant writes, “You do not have power over your work. You do not control when you work, how much you get paid, how fast you work or whether you will be cut loose from your job at the first shiver from Wall Street.”\(^{10}\) Thus it is best to think of the interplay between class and racism as not solely motivated by how much money a person has, but also how a person acquires their money. Indeed, a life surrounded by friends and family who worked as paper mill machinists, railroaders, loggers, truck drivers, labourers and secretaries gave me first-hand insight into the daily collisions between racial ideology and working-class vulnerability. Complaints about the “free-ride” (in the form of treaty rights, tax exemption and high rates of social welfare) that Indians supposedly receive from the government circulate widely. Here Bageant is again insightful, arguing that for many white working-people public help is “a sign of failure and moral weakness.”\(^{11}\) For many of us, this sentiment became normalized through persistent repetition. So did other examples. If an Indian drove a new car they must all be driving new cars, if a house burned down on the reserve Indians did not have to worry because the government would just build them a new one. Free education; free housing; free money; their own time even! You name it; they had it. The world was their oyster, as I so commonly heard (and believed). In part, “the Indian” symbolized a deviation from the rules many working-class people endured because they held to the belief that capitalism repays hard work with equal amounts of hard currency. It is impossible to count the number of times that


\(^{11}\) Bageant 29.
someone like myself uttered the statement that the same rules should apply to everybody. Told all of their lives that the only way to receive fair compensation was to put in a hard day’s work, I suspect many saw in “Indians” a crack in such logic. White workers, many whom have had to work for pay lest they would starve, longed for something they believed they could never have, “a free ride.” In doing so, they also longed for a myth.

Ironically, though, “good Indians” were not Indians who rejected their “Indianness” entirely. Instead they were those who took “the free handout” but paid homage to the rules by which whites lived. A free house was okay if that person also had a job. A free education was fine if the person graduated high school. In essence, the “good Indian” took advantage but also abided by the cultural norms governing the relationship white workers had with capitalism: wealth was something you worked for. The “bad Indians” also received, but in the eyes of many whites (and some Aboriginals), remained unable to catch up or unwilling to at least feign respect towards the rules governing the workday.

Here, in this world of “good” and “bad,” of irrational moral judgment, is where materialism and class angst begin to look less like the motor of racism and more like a component of that motor. In other words, the white working-class neither own the means of production nor do they own racism. It is redistributed equally across class divisions. The moral compass governing racism draws its coordinates from a far more intimate place than historical materialism sometimes allows. No matter how “good” you perceived Indians to be, they very rarely made it into your home. And if entering into inter-racial friendship proved uncomfortable, one can imagine the response to more intimate couplings. In mid-twentieth century North America, violence was a common response to
inter-racial physical relations. This in part accounts for the image of the lynched and castrated black male becoming an enduring symbol of Jim Crow segregation in the United States and a powerful shaper of the early black American civil rights movement.12

In Kenora, such transgressions did not, as far as I have learned, provoke the same degree of punishment. The social consequences were enough to scare away the majority of people from white/Indian love affairs, or more mind-numbingly, simple friendships outside of school. Much of this found saliency in the gendered language of race. Ojibwa women, for example, were bad mothers both because they were devoid of proper maternal instincts and moreover they did not know when to stop having children.13

Students of Canadian history will know that heterosexual relationships between white men and Indigenous women were common enough in early British Columbia that the imperial British government flooded the province with white women in the late nineteenth century.14

In his study of Briggs, Michigan, a small-working class suburb of Detroit, anthropologist John Hartigan Jr. found that the town’s working-class character meant that workspace and living space were not distinctly racialized. Blacks and whites worked and lived in close proximity. The same cannot be said of Kenora, especially, as we will see in chapter one, in the 1960s when many status-Indians not only lived on reserves but also

12 Emmett Till was a young black boy who paid for his transgression—whistling at a white woman—with his life. See, Harriet Pollack and Christopher Metress (eds), Emmett Till in literary memory and imagination. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008).

13 On the relationship between perceptions of unfit mothering and Aboriginal women see Mary-Ellen Kelm, Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia 1900-1950 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998) 60-62; Andrea Smith’s work has helped me better understand the relationship between colonization and the construction of Aboriginal women as polluted bodies, see Andrea Smith, Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005) 79-107.

14 The most informative source on this topic is Adele Perry, On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); also see, Sarah Carter, The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada in 1915 (Athabasca University Press, 2008) 6.
were also often denied work in the town’s most lucrative blue-collar industry, the paper mill. Yet, as a small town, Kenora and Briggs do share an important characteristic: people with different backgrounds generally cross paths in the street, in bars, and in hockey arenas on a daily basis. This is a familiarity that can breed contempt as well as hierarchy. On these issues Arif Dirlik insightfully remarks “the Manichean opposition between the two, expressed most importantly in the language of race,” leaves “no doubt as to where each belonged economically, politically, and culturally.” In Kenora, the colonizer and the colonized, though living in a ‘contact zone,’ did as much as possible to avoid contact.

In its most stripped down form history is simply a set of stories we tell about each other; formed as much by the silences we protect as the narratives we expose. Much like others who grew up in small-town Canada, what we knew about our town came from histories infused with a good dose of municipal pride and a sense of national importance. As a young student, I learned that until 1905 Kenora went by the name Rat Portage; the town name comes from the first two letters from three communities: KE (Keewatin) – NO (Norman) – RA (Rat Portage). That the provincial borders of Ontario/Manitoba ran down the centre of Main Street between 1870 and 1884 became not only a history lesson but also a popular point of reference for those of us who believe Kenora would be much more prosperous under a Manitoban flag. In 1907, Kenora won the Stanley Cup as the “Thistles.” Stories about the construction of the railway that dissects the town are also popular, especially when connected to the military intervention against Louis Riel. In an interview I conducted for a previous project, an old railroader told me (several time in the

16 There is a plaque on Main Street commemorating this unique aspect of Kenora’s history.
span of an hour) that his hero was William Van Horne, the man who managed the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Bank-robbers, gold-diggers, and rumrunners also make the list of characters teachers spoke of. But the stories of border disputes and railroad construction illustrate Kenora’s importance in the construction of Canada, and were most popular with school children.

Sure, the provincial border disputes offer a unique story and create “what-if” possibilities for those who dream of better days as part of Manitoba. Yet, it is a different history of borders, one with its own “what-if” possibilities, that has greater significance to the region’s living history. This set of facts are less known, though all the region’s inhabitants still live with them. On October 3rd, 1873, after four years of negotiation, Ojibwa Chiefs and the government of Canada signed Treaty #3. Three years earlier, the government of Canada had purchased the lands of the Hudson’s Bay Company from the British imperial government, signaling the beginning of the negotiations of what are now known as the numbered treaties.17 Because it was a major route connecting the dominion of Canada to the Hudson’s Bay Company lands, the Ojibwa of Rainy River and Lake of the Woods were in a better negotiating position than Aboriginal peoples of the other numbered treaties. S. Barry Cottam suggests that Ojibwa peoples redirected Treaty #3 negotiations by refusing guiding services that were crucial because of the intimate knowledge of land required to travel through the area.18 This forced some concessions not found in previous numbered treaties. While some other western Canadian treaties had included agricultural assistance, Leo Waisberg and Tim Holzkamm note “Ojibwa chiefs were in communication with their relatives in the United States. There, a series of treaties

17 For a comprehensive overview of this history see, JR Miller, Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).
18 Cottam, “Federal/Provincial Disputes” 32.
with Minnesota Ojibwa during the 1860s had included oxen, hoes, harrows, plows and spades.”19 In the end, Treaty #3 established two types of reserves: wild land and farming lands. Soon after, however, significant disagreement took place over the locations for the new reserves. Understandably, Ojibwa peoples wanted fertile land along Rainy River and Lake of the Woods; the government, however, wanted to keep that land available for European settlers.20

Historian Gerald Friesen argues that though they had less autonomy than before signing the treaty, Indigenous of Northwestern Ontario and southeastern Manitoba negotiated “as firmly as they could, won concessions where possible, and produced a settlement that had positive as well as negative features for their group.”21 The signing of Treaty #3, however, did not occur on a “middle ground” nor is it a demonstration of honourable intention from the government. What it does demonstrate, however, is that—like everyone else--Indigenous peoples are not static. In a place such as Kenora, or other towns (or countries) where settler-colonial myth and racial ideologies run side-by-side, seeing the colonized as static is a way to naturalize social hierarchy and power. Without dynamic histories people are left in limbo, unable to move out of whatever place they are in. The common phrase “they have always been like that” explains away lived histories of colonialism, freeing the settler, new or old, from any culpability in creating systems of oppression. In my case, it erased any sense of the historically contested nature of the land I grew up on. It was a lifetime spent driving down Main Street before I knew that it was the site of “Canada’s first civil rights march” in 1965. The same holds true for Anicinabe

20 Waisberg and Holzkamm 182.
Park. Before 2006, it was not the site of an armed protest, but instead a convenient swimming hole in the summer and a quiet place for young lovers in the winter.

These two dramatic moments, and many others like them across the Americas in the Sixties, challenge those who want to dehumanize Indigenous peoples by using the past as a damning commentary on the present. In the Sixties, people were living new histories that challenged the cultural, material and social conditions of everyday life. These were scripts that recast life as the product of history instead of as a naturalized condition. Furthermore, they were not limited to one field of vision. From demands for clean water on reserves to claims about solidarity with decolonization wars in Angola, thought and action were imagined as simultaneously taking shape on multiple geographical imaginaries.

Today leftists commonly employ the term “resistance” to mark acts (both mundane and sensational) that they believe challenge structures of domination. Likewise, the right recently picked up the word to help brand the return of “populist” politics, as I heard late one-night while listening to American talk radio. Whether it is a new “conservative resistance” or resistance in the name of social justice, resistance now describes a wide range of human actions interpreted as challenging the norm. So, it would be easy, and not entirely incorrect, to describe the 1965 march, the 1974 occupation, and a whole range of other Indigenous thought and action from the 1960s and 1970s, as anti-colonial “resistance.” Yet, save for several specific moments, the term finds little purchase throughout the following pages. Several concerns fashioned this absence. In part, the main actors in these histories rarely used the term in the public representations of their actions. As well, resistance may help end colonialism but a post-colonial future has
to be constructed; created by new modes of living or by the recovery of past identities. Sometimes this creation or recovery required challenging the idea of progress, which is a significant conceptual grounding for those who use “resistance” to brand all actions of marginalized peoples. Saba Mahmood reminds us that an important question to keep in mind is does resistance “impose a teleology of progressive politics on the analytics of power”?  

Histories of anti-colonial movements in the Sixties are in themselves demonstrations of the continued need to challenge the living inequalities between Indigenous peoples and settler-colonial societies like Canada and like Kenora. This means awareness that the purpose of land and contestation over it did not end with Treaty #3 (as the park occupation in 1974 demonstrates). It also means being conscious of the way racial violence takes shape in daily encounters. It is not somewhere out there; instead it is right here. The 1965 march was evidence that global racial inequality had its own Canadian flavour. Both of these moments showed settlers to this land that they could not ignore Indigenous peoples and their demands. Remembering these demands is an important task. What if children were taught more about 1965 and 1974 and less about Kenora’s Stanley Cup victory? What if instead of provincial boundary disputes, while important, we spent more time reading about Treaty #3 negotiations? Would different histories have spawned more humane opinions I had of the Other? Here lies the power of history to shape the present as much by what is absent as by what is included.

---

The Global Sixties

Aboriginal protest in the 1960s and 1970s cannot be disconnected from local social conditions, historical narrative, or state policies, both provincially and federally. As important, however, is the global context of these protests. The Sixties were a profoundly global era, both for the way consciousness and action took shape and in the way many actors envisioned change as not being bound by geo-political boundaries. Recently the historiography of this period has undergone significant transformation so as to reflect an expanding vision of the period. Historian Alice Echols launched one of the earliest critiques of 1960s historiography when she claimed that “books by white male new leftists stand as representative of ‘the sixties.’” Their experiences are presented as universal, as defining the era, whereas the experiences of women and people of color “are constructed as particularistic.” To this list, myself and other scholars have added the geographical shortcomings and the narrow temporal bookends of earlier works. Thus we are pointing are eyes away from the universities (i.e.: Columbia, Berkeley), big American and Western European cities (New York, San Francisco, Paris), nations (United States, France, Czechoslovakia), and years (1960-1968), that are the strongest icons of the period. However, they are not being discarded. Nor do I claim that white student radicals had narrowly defined political interests, as attested to by the histories of anti Vietnam War protests and civil rights protests. And, certainly for citizens of the United States, France and Czechoslovakia, 1968 was an unforgettable year. In France, the

---

23 Karen Dubinsky, et, al, eds., New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness (Toronto: Between The Lines, 2009). This book is the result of a four-day conference held in Kingston, Ontario in June, 2007. Attended by over three hundred participants, the conference aimed to establish a new framework that understands the period from the mid 1950s until the late 1970s as a profoundly global experience.

streets of Paris are still remembered as the heart of global 1968, and recent elections illustrate that the memory of 1968 still weighs heavily on the French. Yet as New World Coming argues “if the period is understood only as the global events of 1968, we cut ourselves off from seeing resistance as a continuing process, and instead see it as isolated events now closed off from the present. We also miss the extraordinary array of different locations, both local and international, where resistance took place.” Most importantly over the past five years, we have insisted that theory and action produced in the Third World is central to the new form of global consciousness that emerged during the Sixties, including that of Indigenous peoples in North America.

In popular literature on the period, 1968 is a line in the sand. It is the moment when global solidarity reached its zenith; a small window when many people believed First World revolution possible. When the dust settled, however, instead of a new world built from the values of non-violent mass demonstration there emerged a commitment to armed struggle as the mode of social change. Or so we have been told. Given that my dissertation explores protests from each side of this divide, it is necessary that I remark on the meanings of “revolutionary violence” (or, armed struggle, the term I prefer) in Sixties historiography. “Declension” is the term historian Van Gosse uses to explain the tendency of New Left historians to claim that “picking up the gun” in the early 1970s

---

27 For the most important work on the influence of Third World theory on North American social movements Sean Mills, The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s Press, 2010).
“tarnished” the idealism of the early 1960s, a moment seen as “the closure or death of the New Left.”²⁹ It is not only historians who fall prey to such binary divisions. As Jeremy Varon remarks in his study of New Left revolutionary violence in the United States and Germany, “political violence, especially when committed by agents other than established states, summons strong passions and invites blunt assessments.”³⁰

If we expand the roster of actors who were part of “the Sixties” we also need to expand the range of political strategies employed throughout the period. Make no mistake, guns held by dark arms were a potent representation of Third World decolonization. Revolutionaries mobilized these images in an effort to gather international support for their national liberation wars. Moreover, the gun became one weapon for people who believed anti-colonial liberation needed a First World expression. Let me be clear here. Moving away from “declension” as an explanatory framework is not akin to uncritical praise of revolutionary violence or armed struggle as a tactic of social change. Nor, however, is it a condemnation of such tactics. Several important new histories avoid declension while at the same time demonstrating that armed struggle often contradicted the very goals of that particular movement. In his study of how Third World theory influenced social movements in Quebec, historian Sean Mills argues that the move to violence by the Front de libération du Québec contradicted its own ideas of “popular democracy” because of the “excess of the belief in the possibilities of an individual revolutionary agent” to effect popular change.³¹

³¹ Mills 185.
Not relying on trite judgment of those who engaged in armed struggle or advocated revolutionary violence is an important task for historians of the Sixties. As I explore in chapters four, five, and six, in the early 1970s various groups of Indigenous radicals were amongst those in North America who adopted the gun as both a symbol of their politics and as a tool to effect social change. For white radicals the political violence of the early 1970s may have appeared new, but for people of colour and Indigenous communities, the need for guns was often described as a way to protect communities from historical patterns of colonial violence. As historian Max Elbaum observes, the dichotomy “leads to the short sighted politics of declaring out-of-bounds…any project that takes seriously the possibility of building a strong radical movement anchored in antiracism and solidarity with the Third World.”\textsuperscript{32} In other words we need to bypass moral judgment in favor of deeper historical understanding that begins to more thoroughly assess the particular conditions (local, regional, national and global) that give rise to different forms of protest.

Time also complicates the narrative of declension. As historian Robin Kelley argues, the “story of the shift from civil rights to “Black Power” has been told so many times, in books, documentary films, in African American history courses all across the United States, that it has become a kind of common sense.”\textsuperscript{33} But how accurate is this narrative? Were these two tactics of social change drastically unrecognizable to each other? No, says Kelley. He believes they were more intertwined than previously imagined. This is born out by historians such as Timothy Tyson, whose profile of radical civil rights activist Robert Williams demonstrates that in the late 1950s and early 1960s

the struggle for equality in the nation was not divorced from the idea of armed protection in the Southern United States.\(^{34}\) This is not to deny the differences people had over the two strategies or to flatten histories of the way armed struggle often reinforced gender inequalities, but merely to suggest that linear narratives of the shift from non-violence to violence in social movements is not accurate. In this dissertation we will see that the march on Main Street in 1965 and the armed occupation of Anicinabe Park in 1974, while actions with different political agendas and different tactics, each had to grapple with the complicated and multilayered question of violence.

The United States is the ground on where so much of the debate on the Sixties histories take place. Returning our focus to Canada provides a unique place to explore how the post-1945 language of rights and global anti-colonial liberation movements while global deeply shaped the meaning of local protest. As we will discuss in chapter one and two, the Sixties were also an era where new “Canadian” identities were shaped by the imagined association of Indigenous politics and culture with that of the Third World. This was important because both politically and culturally any claim to a common national identity was an unstable statement. Nationalist resurgence and regional discontent, for example, brought a language of separation to Ottawa from several provinces. As I argue in chapter three, celebrations in Manitoba in the late 1960s still held the idea that Manitoba was its own unique country, a claim that went back to the provisional government called by Louis Riel in the 1880s. Quebec separation, now an everyday fact of federal political life, was in the post-war period a persistent problem for Canadian nationalists. Even Northwestern Ontario, that huge swath of land stretching

from Thunder Bay to the Manitoba provincial border, dabbled in the language of separation: not from Canada but from Ontario. During the Anicinabe Park occupation, Ojibwa protest leader Louis Cameron used his new fame to share his opinion that the region was in a “neo-colonial” relationship with Toronto. Moreover, significant immigration reform in 1967 dramatically challenged the presumption of whiteness that since confederation shaped the Canadian national bodily image. It is politically incorrect now, but as we will see in chapter two, we should not forget the ease with which people used “white” to help characterize their understanding of Canadian citizenship in the early Sixties.

Social movements in Canada, while not nearly as well known as those in other First World states, profoundly challenged this common assumption and the structures it supported. Migration from the Third World, increasing protest on the part of black Canadians in cities such as Halifax, Toronto and Montreal, threats of Quebec separation, American imperialism, and the various demonstrations and protests organized by Indigenous peoples all illustrations the shaky ground that any notion of fixed borders or stable identities stood upon. Radicals, reformers and traditionalists from Indigenous communities were at the centre of calls for justice and recognition of the colonial history and racial order that governed daily life. As we will discover, these challenges, sometimes in the form of dramatic protests, drew symbolic power from the transnational imagination they employed. By the early 1970s non-Indigenous social movement activists also voiced anger over the way colonialism and capitalism continued to oppress Métis, Indian and Inuit peoples of Canada. The rhetoric of a wide array of activists declaring the Indigenous peoples of Canada as part of the Third World (or for some a
Fourth World) grew substantially louder as the 1970s reached its mid-point. Indigenous protest, commonly referred to as “Red Power,” became a powerful symbol that the legacies of the British Empire, of settler-colonialism, of imperialism, had not yet ended. Though the Third World was an identity embraced at times by some of the most well-known Indigenous radicals of the period, including Métis scholar Howard Adams, Salash activist Lee Maracle, and Louis Cameron, a leader of the Anicinabe Park occupation, the idea of an internal Third World also became a way for white radicals to project their hopes of anti-imperial insurrection on the backs of Indigenous peoples. It is a desire that has yet to fade away. As we will see most clearly in chapter six, the involvement of “revolutionary” leftists, primarily Maoists and Trotskyists, in the radical protests of the mid 1970s (especially the Native Peoples Caravan) was a contentious aspect for Red Power movements.

Involvement in Indigenous political protest was also a productive exercise in the creation of new radical identities. As several women’s liberation activists from the era note, it was their participation in Indigenous movements that led them into a more critical analysis of the relationship between gender and oppression. The existence of a Third World within Canada grew out of the argument that national borders did not limit decolonization and anti-imperialism; that the long history of empires (French, Spanish, British and Portuguese) had created a world of global colonization. Anthony Hall demonstrates that the convergence of policies across Empire, and most specifically in Canada and South Africa, regulating the lives of Indigenous peoples for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries requires us to look beyond Canada to understand

---

35 Nancy Adamson and Linda Briskin, Margaret McPhail, Feminist Organizing for Change: the contemporary women’s movement in Canada (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988).
localities within it. “The convergence,” Hall argues, “points to the importance of picturing local histories and the treatment of Indigenous peoples in the context of larger patterns of empire, ideology, and policy making.” In *New World Coming* we argued “that the challenges that citizens made to dominant power structures, cultural systems, and everyday activities…were conceptualized in a global sphere…The local and the everyday were read through a larger transnational lens, and resistance was forged at least in part through the interaction of daily experience with an understanding of global developments.” In Kenora, the connections between the march in 1965, the occupation in 1974 and “global developments” went beyond just how Indigenous actors related to the question of Third World decolonization. My dissertation provides new understandings on why and how movements and moments that took place outside of Canadian borders (black American civil rights, Black Power in the Caribbean, the Cuban Revolution, the American Indian Movement) profoundly influence a ten-year period of Indigenous protest and settler-colonial conflict in a small town on the border of Manitoba and Ontario. The most important argument of my dissertation is that throughout the Sixties, Indigenous protestors and non-Indigenous peoples (whether they were journalists, trade unionists, conservative town councilors, tourists in the Kenora area, federal politicians, or academics,) both often understood this activism through a language that explicitly gestured towards transnational narratives. The consequences of this transnational imagination are complex. There were numerous moments when global analogies obscured specific demands made by Indigenous men and women were making upon their locality. This can be a reminder (to myself as much as anyone) that while we

seek ways of joining together social justice across geo-political borders, there is danger in too broadly collapsing histories merely to fit our own desires. Transnational methodology is not a fad, but it requires that we do not ignore the specificities of the places where we live.

Methodologies

This project came to life because of a short-conversation nearly six-years ago. At the time, a person I barely knew, upon hearing that I grew up in Kenora, asked a simple question: what are your opinions about Anicinabe Park occupation in 1974. In my head, I thought “nothing,” which was the honest answer, but not one that easily escapes the mouth when you are a master’s student trying to impress your potential doctoral supervisor. Yet, when a person literally knows nothing finding ways to begin researching is quite easy. The first set of documents, expectedly, were newspapers and magazines from the period. Before moving to Kingston to begin my doctoral program, I spent part of a summer reading microfilm copies of the Kenora Daily Miner and News in Kenora’s Public Library. From there I have read most of the daily mainstream Canadian publications from the period. Discovering Akwesasne Notes, an important Indigenous periodical from the late 1960s, shaped my entire perspective because it illustrated how protests such as the park occupation were understood as being part of Indigenous protests across the Americas.

Four-years ago I wrote a proposal for this dissertation. It gave my department the confidence there was a method in place to research and write “Canada’s Other Red Scare.” I would disappear into the archives only to emerge a few years later, dust my self
off, and hand over my findings. This is not how things turned out. Censorship prevented access to significant amounts of information. For example, on my desk sits four compact discs from the Library and Archives of Canada. They are the result of a request for RCMP security service files from the 1970s. Only a small portion of the PDF copies on the discs have not been digitally altered to prevent my reading them. The search for accessible documents means this dissertation has an eclectic array of evidence. Stauffer Library at Queen’s University has an impressive collection of radical newspapers from the 1960s, including the Black Panther Party newspaper and Akwesasne Notes.

My research methodology has been, for lack of a better phrase, a work in progress (this is the first project of mine to exceed twenty-five pages!). Having friends who knew people that I needed to know helped. That’s how Don Colborne’s personal files found their way into these pages. As a lawyer for the Ojibway Warriors Society, his documentation takes us inside the tense negotiations during the summer of 1974. Similar friendships with Sean Mills and David Austin led to most of the documentation on Warren Hart and thus much of chapter six.

Other major collections, however, were discovered by accident. At times my research methodology consisted of reading every document possible that referenced Kenora in the 1960s and 1970s. This turned up a lot of dead ends, but it also meant finding gems like the Ontario Human Rights Commission records at the Ontario provincial archives. Their vast collection of documents on Kenora in the 1960s led to the discovery that, even though by then I knew a little more about the park occupation, there was another significant event I was ignorant of: the 1965 march. This discovery fundamentally altered the shape of my dissertation.
Knowing that other scholars who worked on social movements of the Sixties in Canada found valuable documents in the radical history collection at McMaster University led me to have a look as well. This curiosity turned up the Revolutionary Marxist Groups records, which, for the first time in my mind, connected immigrant’s rights protests to Indigenous anti-colonialism in the 1970s.

Finally, this research is also a product of our times. My borderline addiction to the internet, along with the right combination of search words in google, helped turn up the Doris Duke Archives at University of Illinois on the Champaign-Urbana campus. After a sketchy three-hour bus ride into the “heartland” and surviving my first tornado warning (while staying on the top floor of an undergraduate dormitory), seeing these documents allowed for the portrait of daily life in early 1973 that is critical to chapter four.

While there is a wide array of documentation, in this dissertation there is very little evidence attained by personal interviews. Given the time period, this might surprise readers. It surprised me. When this project first began, I intended to interview every one of the main actors from the Ojibway Warriors Society. Here, I failed. Some of the participants, when asked to talk, very rightfully replied by questioning the benefit my project will have for Indigenous people in Kenora. This is not an easy question to answer. Generally I replied that it would not have any. It will not change policy, it will not put more money into people’s pockets (other than mine) and because it is an academic study it is likely that very few people in Kenora will actually read it and change their perceptions. Most of the time this answer ended our conversation. Other times my search for people came up empty. This is partly because the Sixties’ figures I wanted to talk to did not end up teaching in universities or on lecture circuits after they became celebrity
activists; instead they disappeared from the public eye. This made it difficult to move forward. Is it humane to simply walk into a soup kitchen or a homeless shelter looking for a person, only to find them, give them an authorization sheet and imply that signing it is for their own protection, when its real purpose is to protect a wealthy elite institution from being sued. Three years has not been enough time for me to figure out how to ethically do oral history. Unfortunately, sometimes, this question came not to matter. More than once I only met the person on the obituary pages. With all this said, the main reason for the lack of interviews, though four were completed, came from my own issues with returning to the place where I had spent most of my life. There is no one method for oral history. However, it requires an ethical commitment to the communities that your research is intervening into. An oral history is not a simple conversation. It requires time to build trust and to build dialogue. When my home became my research the discomfort this caused was unexpected and profoundly confusing. No one was able to help me make sense of that and thus I did not stay for the period of time required for truly ethical oral history. Of course, this is not how an academic historian is supposed to behave. Maybe the next time it will be different. Eventually I stopped attempting interviews and put my efforts into trying to find every other way to understand the stories of Indigenous protests in Kenora from 1965-1975. Not having oral histories comes with several costs. The focus shifted from a narrative history of the transnational history of Indigenous protest in the Sixties to a more thematic approach. More importantly, however, the voices of participants are only those who were often the most public figures. This means much of the historical record comes from a male perspective on the meaning of colonialism and decolonization.
Chapter Outlines

Chapter one sets us down in Kenora on the brink of a march that grabbed national and international media attention. Using files from the Ontario Human Rights Archives as well as media reports and memoirs, this chapter demonstrates that diverse groups of people made sense of hundreds of Indigenous men and women marching through town by comparing them with black civil rights protestors in the American South. Alongside this was the popular discourse that portrayed Kenora as a town with a racial order believed to resemble Selma, Alabama more than it did a Canadian city. This had two important consequences. First it portrayed racism in Canada as an aberration. The second is that while comparing Indigenous protestors to black civil rights activists garnered attention, the parallel obstructed that the demands of protestors were not only rooted in the language of rights but also in the language of anti-colonialism.

Chapter two focuses on the questions of culture and development by paying close attention to a seminar series in Kenora in the spring of 1967. The cross-cultural conflict series, which took place in a high school gymnasium, brought in world renowned anthropologists and sociologists to speak about Ojibwa culture and the prospects for the future of white/aboriginal conflict in Kenora. Copies of the talks provide the documentary basis for this chapter, helping demonstrate that in the 1960s there existed very little agreement about what constituted “development” in regards to Indigenous people. Moreover, this chapter argues that the seminar speakers employed a transnational language, shaping the perception that colonial conquest was a global phenomenon. Further demonstrating this are examples of the way that politicians mobilized that image
of the Indian as a way to frame debates about Canadian responses to decolonization and apartheid in the 1960s.

Chapter three argues that Third World liberation movements were central to the imagination of both the Canadian public’s perception of Aboriginal political protests in the late 1960s and also to the self-image of Indigenous radicals in Canada. I look at Indigenous film and literature from the period to argue that the Sixties witnessed the birth of a popular discourse which situated Indigenous inequality within a history of empire and that the language of colonization helped create transnational associations between Indigenous activists and non-Indigenous movements. Red Power became a way to make demands not only upon the nation-state (for example, in response to the 1969 White Paper) but also upon injustices across the globe.

Chapter four focuses primarily on in Kenora, 1973 and the manifestations of Red Power locally. By using the extensive field notes of an American anthropologist and Ontario Provincial Police reports, I reconstruct a sense of daily life in the Kenora area in the months leading up to the first public protest of the Ojibway Warriors Society. Here we see how the conditions of reserves, environmental destruction, a renewed sense of common history and a sense of desperation motivated young Ojibwa men and women to use direct action as a way to bring attention to their circumstances.

Using Ojibway Warriors Society literature, media interviews, as well as the private papers of one of the participants, chapter five argues that the Anicinabe Park occupation, one of the few moments of armed insurrection in 20th century Canada, was the result of the collision of these local conditions viewed through the lens of transnational anti-colonialism. The forty-one day standoff provoked extensive debate on
the use of armed struggle as a tactic for political change. The occupation is also a way to explore the gender dynamics of social movements of the early 1970s and how the dual oppression of sexism and colonialism was an underlying conflict within Red Power groups.

Chapter six brings two seemingly distant people together to illustrate the lengths the nation-state would go to in their efforts to delegitimize the claims of Indigenous peoples and people of colour in Canada during the early 1970s. Files from the Revolutionary Marxist Group and a government commissioned inquiry into the actions of the RCMP security service, demonstrate the enormous impact of Douglas Durham and Warren Hart on the politics of state surveillance in the 1970s and for years after.
Chapter One: “We have bigotry all right—but no Alabamas”: Civil Rights and the 1965 Kenora Indian March.

In Northwestern Ontario, the end of November often brings inhospitable evenings. Wind, snow, and freezing temperatures make outside activities, such as a march, a calculated decision. On November 22, 1965, in Kenora, four-hundred Indigenous men and women met at Kenora’s Indian Friendship centre to prepare to do just that: march. Bundled in winter coats, gloved hands linked together, and four people across, they made their way from the Friendship Centre to Main Street. From there, they walked a quarter-mile before stopping at their destination, the town council meeting at the local legion.¹

Upon arrival, Peter Seymour and Fred Kelly spoke for the delegation. As they took turns reading aloud a catalogue of grievances, it was clear that the denigrating nature of racism and a desire to maintain some form of control over their social lives as Indigenous peoples motivated the marchers. Because of the tactics chosen that evening, the Kenora march lent itself easily to comparisons with black freedom marches in the American south that were taking place at approximately the same time. This provokes numerous questions we will explore in this chapter: What were the specific demands of Indigenous men and women in Kenora? Why did demands for black American civil rights in one country shape the understanding of demands for political and social change by peoples in another? How did participants, commentators, and other people understand this comparison? And finally, what are the consequences of this transnational language of

civil rights for understanding the histories of race and racism in Canada? When histories of Indigenous protest, such as that in Kenora in the early 1960s, are understood only through comparisons to “civil rights,” a type of amnesia forms. Moments of racial conflict and the long history of colonialism are excavated from the national memory of Canada and centered onto towns such as Kenora. Thus certain localities become anomalous in the development of an otherwise racially harmonious nation free of the ugly legacies of settler-colonialism. This might help explain the global self-perception many Canadians have of themselves.²

Civil Rights Movements: American Global Political Theatre

Throughout the 1960s, black demonstrators in the United States commonly invoked the language of national citizenship to frame demands for civil rights. In other words, they demanded inclusion into the privileges of American citizenship: education, voting, and the equal opportunity to consume.³ To make this visible they deployed potent symbols of American patriotism. In 1965, in the aftermath of “bloody Sunday” at the foot of the Edmund Pettus bridge in Selma, historian Mary Dudziak writes that “civil rights activists reinforced the idea that their struggle was a quintessentially American struggle.” When a second procession successfully marched from Selma to Montgomery they did so “cloaked with American flags.”⁴

² In a 2005 survey, “94 percent of Canadians believed their country was well liked around the world, the highest percentage of 16 nations surveyed,” see Yves Engler, The Black Book of Canadian Foreign Policy (Halifax: Fernwood, 2009) 4.
Into the twenty-first century the civil rights era has rarely vacated the American national psyche. In January 2009, millions of viewers worldwide watched and listened as Barack Obama spoke life to this patriotic rendition of civil rights history during his presidential inauguration address in Washington, D.C.\(^5\) As he came to the end of his address, Obama spoke these words:

> What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility -- a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character than giving our all to a difficult task.

This is the price and the promise of citizenship.

This is the source of our confidence: the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny.

This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed, why men and women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent mall. And why a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath.\(^6\)

While Obama corralled the memory of his father’s civil rights heritage to tell a specifically nationally bound story about himself, American borders did not fully contain this story. Obama’s father was born in Kenya and by election night television stations

\(^5\) Some commentators confused Obama’s victory with the beginning of a post-racial (or post-civil rights) politic. In Canada, however, Obama represented a way into discussions of race and nation. When I first wrote this chapter, for example, above my desk was a poster advertising a symposium on race and discrimination in Ontario universities. Its image replicated Shepard Fairey’s “Hope” poster, so popular during Obama’s campaign; the difference now is that there is a black female face looking back at me. Yet ever time I look at the poster on my desk I see Obama, which in a way, simultaneously situates me inside and outside my own nation. Days later a taxi-cab ride provided another insight into Obama’s potential transnational influence. Just as I opened to door to exit I heard a faint-voice on the radio asking that now that Obama has been elected President, is it time for an Aboriginal to become Prime Minister? The answer is obvious, isn’t it? But shouldn’t we have considered an Aboriginal Prime Minister long before Obama? And, what about electing a black Prime Minister? For valuable insights into Obama’s meaning for contemporary race politics in the United States see a conversation between Robin DG Kelley and Louis Chude-Sokei, “Martin Luther King’s Legacy in the Age of Obama” 19 January, 2009, http://www.zocalopublicsquare.org/archives_2009.php?event_id=148 (accessed 14 April, 2009)

were as interested in the reactions from Nairobi as they were New York. His ‘Third World roots’, however, are also cast in suspicious terms. For right-wing intellectual Dinesh D’Souza, Obama’s “hatred of business” stems from his anti-colonial heritage. Using as evidence Obama’s admission that Frantz Fanon was one of his intellectual heroes in college, D’Souza argues the President wants to “decolonize” the banking and health sectors, “bringing them under the government’s leash.” To this, Vijay Prashad replies, “Dinesh’s handle on Fanon and neo-colonialism was weak” before “and incoherent now.” The narrative of Obama’s election night victory, not to mention the battle over his real birthplace, his ‘Muslimness,’ and the debates over his anti-colonialism, illustrate the global cultural meanings, and conflicts, US civil rights stories generate.

In the 1950s and 1960s, racism in the United States created difficulty for a nation-state concerned with turning “the hearts and minds” of the non-aligned Third World away from the Soviet Union. American Indians, while not a familiar symbol in Cold War struggles, served duty in unflattering Soviet portrayals of American “democracy.” In

---

8 Vijay Prashad, “The Waning of Obama” Counterpunch 13 Oct. 2010, http://www.counterpunch.org/prashad10132010.html (accessed 20 November, 2010); Historian Gerald Horne notes that amongst the African majority Kenya “was coming to symbolize Africa’s struggle for freedom from European colonialism. It was thought that lessons could be learned from Kenya, symbolized when Malcolm X suggested a “Mau Mau in Harlem” might be necessary. Simultaneously, John F. Kennedy was among those who backed a campaign to bring Kenyans to the U.S. for higher education— included among these students was Barack H. Obama, Sr., who was brought to the University of Hawaii,” see Gerald Horne, Mau Mau in Harlem? The U.S. and the Liberation of Kenya (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) backcover.
1958, for example, Soviet radio explained that American Indians, forced to live on “concentration camp” like reserves, were the “most underprivileged people in the United States.”\textsuperscript{10} Anti-black racism, however, was the most common narrative mobilized to counter the moral ground on which stood America’s global ambitions.\textsuperscript{11} In September 1965, a United States Information Agency study discovered the consequences of these unflattering portrayals. A survey conducted in Dakar, Senegal found that nine out of ten people interviewed held a negative opinion on American race relations.\textsuperscript{12}

At the same time that the images of racial discrimination in the American South helped complicate America’s dreams of Empire, they also provided a convenient distraction for those wanting to ignore similar dramas within their own country. In his 1965 documentary \textit{NOW!}, Cuban filmmaker Santiago Álvarez created a powerful narrative by setting images of black American protest and the corresponding police brutality to the words and music of Lena Horne. \textit{NOW!’s} damning portrayal of American democracy in the mid-1960s, along with other critical films such as \textit{LBJ} (a critique of American imperialism), gained Álvarez an international following amongst New Leftists and those, Cynthia Young calls, “Third World Leftists” in the United States.\textsuperscript{13} Yet as film and media scholar Susan Lord argues, \textit{NOW!} is also an example of a film that projected...

\begin{thebibliography}{13}
\bibitem{Dudziak2} Dudziak 209.
\end{thebibliography}
only in one direction, outward. It used the experience of black Americans as a way to deflect discussions away from the complicated positionality of blacks in Cuba.\footnote{Susan Lord, “Acts of Affection: Cinema, Citizenship, and Race in the Work of Sara Gómez,” in Lessie Jo Frazier and Deborah Cohen (eds) Gender and Sexuality in 1968: Transformative Politics in the Cultural Imagination (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 184; for a comprehensive overview of the most important themes in Cuban cinema in the Sixties see Maria Caridad Cumaná González trans. by Jesús Quiríós Maqueira and Danielle Noibrigga, “Cuban Film and the Burden of Revolutionary Representation,” in Karen Dubinsky et. al. (eds) New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness (Toronto: Between The Lines, 2009): 153-160.}

Many black Americans, expectedly, were not satisfied being the passive symbol of any state’s global political posturing. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the American government sponsored international music tours by black American musicians as an attempt to show-off the racially blind qualities of American liberalism. As historian Penny Von Eschen discovered, the tours of different regions of Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Latin America unintentionally provided an opportunity for black musicians to pursue “civil rights, solidarity, and musical exchange in a transnational arena.”\footnote{Penny M. Von Eschen, Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004) 12; it is important to realize that many musicians were also doing what they could within the United States, often in the form of benefit concerts. For important insight into the relationship between jazz and the civil rights movement see Robin D.G. Kelley Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original (New York: Free Press, 2009).} The state department believed jazz displayed distinctly American values positively to the world; jazz legends such as Duke Ellington, however, had another thing in mind. He told crowds at shows in Africa that his music expressed his African diasporic identity.\footnote{Von Eschen, Satchmo Blows Up the World 154.} Ellington’s frank remarks point to the way that black American jazz musicians were simultaneously making claims on their nation by infusing a global spirit onto their sense of racial identity.\footnote{Von Eschen, Satchmo Blows Up the World 250.}

From black bodies draped in American flags marching into Montgomery to adoring crowds at festivals in Africa, people outside of the United States were deeply
shaped by the iconography of civil rights protests in the United States. The claims non-Americans made on their own nations in the same era made visible this influence. Irish historian Simon Prince argues, for example, that “the American civil rights movement’s foreign impact was probably greatest in Northern Ireland, where black American struggles received considerable media attention and comparisons were easy to draw.”

This involved an appropriation of foreign tactics, such as when Irish students under the name ‘People’s democracy’ “took the precedent of Martin Luther King’s march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965 as the prototype for the long march from Belfast to Derry in 1969.”

While keen to make analogies between towns in Northern Ireland and those in the American South, other groups preferred pressure tactics to the more direct action oriented modes of passive civil disobedience. In other countries, white activists looked to emulate tactics and language of the American civil rights movement, not always in an effort to compare themselves to black Americans, but as a way to bring attention to local inequalities. Writing in 2002, historian Ann Curthoys recalls that in her days as a radical student activist in Australia in the 1960s, she and her white comrades often both invoked the situation of blacks in America and tactics such as Freedom Rides to help raise awareness of the plight of local Indigenous peoples.

---


19 Rolston, 464.


Nevertheless, transoceanic travel is not necessary to find evidence that black rights protesters in the United States shaped social movements outside their own nation. Throughout the early 1960s, Canadians took advantage of their geographical proximity to connect with civil rights protests to the south. No situation drew a response like that of the political mobilization around “Bloody Sunday,” a moment that led historian Van Gosse to call 1965 a “watershed” year in civil rights organizing. In the first months of 1965, Martin Luther King Jr. announced a major push in Selma, Alabama for voting rights. At a demonstration on February 1st, 1965, in front of a Selma courthouse, police arrested King along with approximately one thousand other protestors, which, according to historian Clayborne Carson, included “hundreds of black school children.” Not long after this incident, police killed a twenty-six year old black man while he tried to shield his mother from being hit with police batons. The culmination of events led two of the largest black freedom organizations, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to call for a protest march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. On the first Sunday of March demonstrators gathered and made there way to the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the route leading out of Selma on the way to Montgomery. On this day, instead of a way out of Selma, the bridge marked the end. Hundreds of Alabama state troopers and sheriff’s

---


23 Van Gosse, Rethinking The New Left 32.

deputies were waiting on the other side. As protestors crossed the bridge, policemen bludgeoned them. The only things louder than the screams of injured marchers were the cheering voices of white onlookers. Afterwards, in a display of perseverance and courage, a call came out from civil rights leaders to make a second attempt. On March 21st 1965, with two thousand federal troops “at their side,” thousands of people left Selma. By the time they arrived in Montgomery four days later, the crowd had grown to twenty-five thousand people.

“Bloody Sunday” received extensive coverage by international media, including in Canada. And, as solidarity pickets went up in cities across the United States, so too did they across Canada. In Toronto, sixty-five people held a vigil in front of the United States consulate. The group included people from the Canadian organization Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA), the Friends of SNCC, as well as university professors and even a schoolteacher who brought several of her students. When police arrived, demonstrators


26 Sokol 245-46; Carson, 161. Forty-two years later, on March 4th, 2007, the familiar scenes from the civil rights movement and specifically “Bloody Sunday” were again mobilized for another quintessentially American moment—the race to become the 42nd President of the United States. In Selma, for the first time since Hillary Clinton announced her candidacy, husband and former president Bill Clinton joined her on the campaign trail (perhaps owing to his mythical status as America’s “first black president”). Barack Obama, at the time Clinton’s main competitor in the contest for the Democratic nomination, also spent the day in Selma. Though he spoke about deep connections he had to Selma, this marked his first visit to the city. Throughout the day, Clinton and Obama participated in a game of political mimicry. Individually, each: attended separate church services, sang “we shall overcome,” paid homage to the same civil rights leaders, spoke of associations between themselves and the 1965 Voting Act and used the metaphor of the “march not yet being finished” to symbolize the link between past and present in their campaigns. As the day wound down, another first would take place. At the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the site of bloody confrontation forty-two years earlier, Clinton and Obama came face-to-face for the first time since each announced their candidacy. Joined by hundreds of civil rights veterans, the two foes marched across the bridge. As it had four decades previous, Selma once again took centre stage in American political theatre, demonstrating how the Civil Rights Movement retains the power to inspire and shape national politics at the highest level in the United States, see Jeff Zeleny, “Recalling Struggle for Civil Rights, Democratic Battle for Black Votes,” *The New York Times* 4 Mar. 2007: A1; Patrick Healy and Jeff Zeleny, “Clinton and Obama Unite, Briefly, in Pleas to Blacks,” *The New York Times*, 5 Mar. 2007: A14.

resisted detention by letting their bodies go limp (a response made popular by civil rights activists in the American south). Similar scenes played out across the country. In Montreal and Ottawa demonstrators picketed the United States consulate. In the nation’s capital, New Democratic Party leader Tommy Douglas told two thousand onlookers that Canadians were “shocked” at the developments in Selma. In Winnipeg, Manitoba, a small group held a twenty-four hour vigil before presenting a petition to U.S. Consul General John Morris. Soon after the Winnipeg protest the University of Manitoba Student’s Council, an organization representing nine thousand students, agreed to formally support the demonstrators in Selma. If only briefly, SNCC organizers in the U.S. recognized these actions as part of a transnational network of support. In the spring of 1965 demonstrators in Toronto were in regular contact with the most important SNCC organizers, including Stokely Carmichael.

On the surface these actions may appear merely as moments of transnational solidarity. Yet historians argue that demonstrators in Canada benefited from taking part in actions in support of an “other.” According to historian Roberta Lexier, involvement in American civil rights solidarity taught students in Canada that civil disobedience and direct action were effective political tactics. Historian David Churchill adds that such ‘mirroring’ allowed protestors “to move from mere sympathy to actual participation in

30 Kostash, 11; Churchill, “When Home Becomes Away,” 76
31 Lexier, 6.
the Civil Rights movement.” They were, in other words, practicing a “politics of ‘co-
belonging’…engendered through acts of solidarity and formed localized communities.”

But whose civil rights movement did students imagine themselves a part of? According to Churchill, mainstream news media generally portrayed the protests positively (at least those in Ottawa and Toronto). These actors became examples of the “decency” and consciousness of Canada as opposed to the ugliness of American racism. But there was a nagging question. Were these Canadians who so quickly acted out against injustice in another country turning a blind eye to discrimination within their own? Two of Toronto’s daily newspapers thought so. The Globe and Mail and The Toronto Star both published editorials, cartoons, and letters to the editor arguing that attention needed to be directed towards the plight of “Indians and Eskimos.”

Mainstream journalists were not alone in this critique. A leftist commentator believed that the “solidarity” spurred on by Selma would be instrumental in leading people to question the “Anglo-Saxon superiority attitudes and discrimination in Canada,” including “the system of white supremacy embodied in the Indian Act.” Others were less optimistic. Patricia Clarke of the United Church Observer sarcastically suggested an exchange in which Canadian demonstrators would switch places with those in the Southern United States. The “pretty girls” in Canada could use their trips South to enlist allies for a civil rights struggle in Canada. After seeing pictures of “the slums in Africville” or Indian shacks, Southerners would be lining up “to rescue oppressed

---

33 Churchill, “SUPA, Selma, and Stevenson” 34.
34 Churchill, “When Home Becomes Away” 77.
Canadians.” “We join sit-ins in Alabama restaurants where Negroes can’t get a meal,” Clarke wrote, but who, she asked, “is sitting in Kenora restaurants where Indians can’t get a meal?”

**Kenora, 1965**

No journalistic account brought scrutiny to Kenora more than the exposé written by journalist Ian Adams in the summer of 1965. Writing for the nationally syndicated *Weekend Magazine*, Adams introduced readers to an isolated Northern town where Indians and Métis endured a life of segregation and general dislike. Though no official “Jim Crow” policy existed, Adams believed that everyone in Kenora knew, for example, which laundromat was for “whites,” which was for “Indians,” and which was for “Indian women with white husbands.”

Local industry was another important source of inequality. Adams claimed that few job opportunities existed for Indian men in Kenora’s most lucrative industry, the Kenora Pulp and Paper Mill. And though tourism reportedly injected fourteen million dollars into the local economy, Adams believed Indian men were an exploited class of casual labourers, mainly as fishing guides, who saw little of the wealth they helped generate. Moreover, Canadian readers learned that the Tourist Camp Association used their powerful government connections to try and strip away

---

38 The fact that Adams noted three racial categories is particularly interesting. We might assume that the last, “Indian women with white husbands,” is in reference to Bill C-31 of the Indian Act. In 1965, an Indigenous woman lost her Indian status if she married a non-Indian man. This meant that all of these children also did not have Indian status. Thus the laundromat was a place for non-status Indian woman, not just with white husbands, but with mixed children. For an important discussion on Bill C-31 see Bonita Lawrence, *“Real” Indians and Others: Mixed Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood*. Vancouver, British Columbia: UBC Press, 2004); as well as an interview I conducted with Dr. Lawrence, Scott Rutherford, “Colonialism and the Indigenous present: an interview with Bonita Lawrence,” *Race and Class* 52.1 (2010): 9-18.
Indian fishing rights. Adams claimed the cumulative effect of all of this was a noticeable bitterness, almost seething hatred, of whites, especially amongst young Indians on reserves. Though quiet for now, Adams warned that unless conditions changed, Kenora would soon witness an “Indian uprising.”

While they were not planning an uprising, since at least late 1964 a small group called the Indian White Committee (IWC) met regularly to discuss ways of bringing attention to this situation in Kenora. Representatives from local area reserves and whites and Indigenous peoples from town made up the majority of the group. At the first meeting of 1965, the IWC presented a report from Eric Law, the local Indian agent, regarding the possibility of an Indian advisory committee to Indian Affairs. Also discussed were reports from those who attended the Indian Eskimo Association conference held in London, Ontario in late 1964. Fred Green, Chief of the Shoal Lake reserve and co-chair of the committee, found the conference to be the most impressive he had ever attended. Green specifically noted a talk given by Dr. Clarence Monture. “From his talk,” Green recalled, “a seed grows in my mind. His urging of the Indian people to

---

40 Indian agents were not removed from reserves until 1969.
41 “The Indian-Eskimo Association had its origins in the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) when the CAAE appointed a committee to study the problems of natives in communities when natives were off the reserve. This committee became known as the National Commission on the Indian Canadian and it functioned as a standing committee of the CAAE. In 1960 the Commission withdrew from the CAAE and was incorporated as the Indian-Eskimo Association. Its services, at this time, were expanded to include all people of native origin, both on and off reserves, and the natives of the north who were known as Eskimos. Its first president was Clare Evelyn Clark. The Indian-Eskimo Association was a national citizen's organization with membership open to all people interested in promoting the well-being of Native Americans. Native people formed 25% of the membership and at all times had members on the Board of Directors. Headquarters for the Association were in Toronto and in 1973 moved to Ottawa. When the Association moved to Ottawa its name changed to the Canadian Association in Support of Native Peoples. The IEA was active in fund raising, organizing workshops to discuss native housing, and community and economic development,” see “Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada” Fonds Level Description, Trent University Archives, Peterborough, Ontario.
get up and do things made me feel that our Indians of this District should get together and organize.” (Mrs. Fred) Green drew the readers attention to the issue of Indian women’s organizing. For her the conference showed how “Indians…were able to speak out and express their thoughts.” This came through education and organizing, two tactics Green believed useful in the Kenora area. Moreover she found that “the women’s groups were very active. I talked to women from various Reserves. There were some who made and sold their own products. I think that women’s groups here should be encouraged to be active and revive the handcrafts and other things which Indian women used to do in the past.” Green’s interest in reclaiming the craft tradition offers a brief insight into the cracks in the logic of the emerging parallel between the American South and places such as Kenora. The recovery of many traditions was necessary because state policies in the settler-colonial era made illegal many Indigenous cultural and political practices. As J.R. Miller explains, amendments to the Indian Act in the mid 1880s were efforts to not only “control Indians politically,” but also to “alter them culturally.” The 1960s became a moment for the “general rediscovery of traditional rites, crafts, and arts.” While certain black nationalist movements of the 1960s were interested in creating a culture that borrowed from ancient African traditions, the civil rights movement, to my knowledge, were not motivated by such desires.

Harry Shankowsky, a co-chair of the IWC, provided the most detailed impressions of the IEA conference for readers of Kenora’s daily newspaper. Shankowsky, a member of the New Democratic Party who worked on the railroad, related his joy at meeting so many “sincere” people “striving to solve the Indian problem.” Racism, he wrote, was “a problem of human beings.” It was a product of ignorance, misconception and fear, but he believed, not an experience that could be explained by science. The debate Shankowsky steps into, between a scientific explanation of race (and thus racism) and the social production of racial inequalities, is examined in greater detail in chapter two. For now it is important to note that by calling racism a human problem he challenged the idea that racial inferiority was biologically ordered and thus natural. This reference illuminates another issue: the space between academic theory and everyday knowledge. Though by 1965 academics were generally abandoning the scientific determinants for racial order, Shankowsky provides insight into the way scientific racism still lived on the ground in towns such as Kenora. To prove his point, he drew parallels with a well known place: “I have heard that in the Southern U.S.A. the poorest white is a racist, simply because, he fears that the Negro if given an equal opportunity might some day be a white man’s boss. I agree that these people are a very small minority in Canada, but by their irrationality they are the most dangerous.” That “racial lines were also class lines,” in the words of historian Jason Sokol, meant that economic power was a determinant for keeping a proper racial order. Instead of

___


49 “Indian Problem Termed Mainly a Human Problem-Shankowsky” 4.

50 Sokol 287.
confronting this ‘irrational’ minority who feared domination by non-whites, Shankowsky believed they required education. Racist whites, however, were not the IWC’s only target audience. Their task was also to “generate enthusiasm, interest, and a fervent desire within the Indian” so they could confront and correct their problems.\footnote{“Indian Problem Termed Mainly a Human Problem-Shankowsky” 4.} Support of the IWC in Kenora, Shankowsky argued, would help Indians regain “self-sustainability,” a characteristic they possessed “before we, his conquerors, corralled him” onto reserves and turned them into beggars.\footnote{“Indian Problem Termed Mainly a Human Problem-Shankowsky” 8.}

Amid growing national media interest in Kenora, an increasing pile of complaints gathered by human rights case workers demonstrated that neither the sensational language of journalists such as Adams, nor the more subdued reflections of the IWC, was based on fiction. Daniel Hill, then the chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, gathered the most incriminating evidence. One hotel manager told Hill that he only denied service to those Indians who were already drunk, those who looked too poor to pay, and those who misbehaved. He justified his actions by arguing that his financial livelihood was at stake because “Many American tourists have vowed never to come back to Kenora until we get all the drunk Indians off of the Streets.”\footnote{Indian-White Committee, Kenora, Ontario, 1965, Re: Lake of the Woods Hotel, Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), RG-76-3-0-331, Archives of Ontario (AO), Toronto.} Other hotel manager’s voiced similar concerns when confronted by Hill. Upon hearing allegations that he denied both bar service and room accommodations to Indians, one manager responded that “he had to be very careful about ruining his reputation by serving unsavoury people.”\footnote{Indian-White Committee, Kenora, Ontario, 1965, Re: The Northland Hotel, OHRC, RG-76-3-0-331, AO, Toronto.} This discrimination extended beyond the town and into the many
small fishing lodges that were an important part of the area’s tourist economy (and through their need for fish guides were the largest employer of Indigenous peoples). During the Sixties the small town of Minaki, an hour’s drive north of Kenora, was a popular summer tourist destination. Until the last decade of the twentieth century most tourists came to stay at the Minaki Lodge, an opulent resort that sat on the shore of the Winnipeg River. Accessible by railroad, water (and later road), the resort opened in 1927 after being bought and rebuilt by the Canadian National Railways. Come 1965 ownership had switched to A-T Hotels, a company that also owned the Prince Arthur Hotel in Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay). That summer, while attending a National Young Adults Conference at the lodge, a group of young Indigenous men and women found cards in their room stating that:

> It would be sincerely appreciated if you are using the GUIDE SERVICE to please refrain from offering or giving alcoholic beverages to GUIDES. Our native INDIANS unfortunately have a severe alcoholic problem, and it is a grave disservice to humanity to aggravate this in any way. Please assist us in giving service to you and others. By helping us, we can help others.¹⁵⁵

S.L. Weare, the lodge’s manager, defended the cards because since their inception he claimed he had not fired one Indian guide because of drunkenness. Moreover, he believed that if the delegates “had seen the good those cards have done” no one would have complained.¹⁵⁶

However, it soon became evident that changing the attitudes of local employers and government officials required something more than visits from human rights officers.

---

¹⁵⁵ OHRC, RG 76-3-0-649, Box 41, file 6, AO, Toronto.
That October, the IWC announced they were organizing a conference for November.\footnote{Fred Kelly, “Indian White Committee Plan November Conference At Kenora,” Kenora Daily Miner and News 29 Oct. 1965: 1.} Instead of “just another session for whites to appear and present all of the ‘answers,’” the IWC wanted the meeting to be an opportunity for “Indians to express their views and thoughts”\footnote{Fred Kelly, “Indian White Committee Plan November Conference,” Kenora Daily Miner and News 29 Oct. 1965: 1; “Area Indian Leaders Will Attend Conference Here,” Kenora Daily Miner and News 30 Sept. 1965: 1; “Indian-White Sponsored 2 Day Conference Held Here,” Kenora Daily Miner and News 15 Nov. 1965: 1.} on themes such as equality before the law and alcohol abuse. The overarching concern, however, was to show how the image of the Indian as lazy and unreliable helped create the sense that deplorable social conditions were the Indian’s destiny. To help start a new dialogue, Fred Kelly believed it was important that the general public lend their support to the IWC and the conference.\footnote{Kelly, “Indian White Committee Plan November Conference,” 3.}

Kelly’s hope failed to materialize. The conference took place, but as Kelly noted afterwards: “The Indian White Committee was given the ball…we wanted an audience to hear grievances, but no one was there.”\footnote{“Indians are Frustrated; Uprisings Sure to Follow,” Kenora Daily Miner and News, 17 Nov. 1965: 1.} Out of this disappointment came the idea for a march. Alan Borovoy, then an officer with the Labour Committee for Human Rights, was on the scene in November 1965. “Sometimes,” he recalled nearly twenty-five years later, “injustices are too well entrenched and the facts to well known for surveys to work. In such circumstances, there will be a need for yet additional techniques to attract the necessary publicity.”\footnote{A. Alan Borovoy, Uncivil Obedience: The Tactics and Tales of a Democratic Agitator (Toronto: Lester Publishing Limited, 1991) 30.} In the span of a week, Borovoy and several “local native leaders…visited every reserve in the area. [They] went into people’s homes, attended
churches, and held meetings in community centres. They hiked into the woods and walked across frozen lakes. And, they also tipped off the media.

Borovoy recalls that the local and national media immediately predicted that a violent confrontation fueled by “hatred” would take place the eve of what was now being called “Canada’s first civil rights march.” Headlines in the local media (such as “Indians are Frustrated; Uprisings Sure to Follow,” and “Indian-White Violence Feared Unless Kenora Commits Its Interest”) helped reignite the long held image of Indigenous grievances as naturally prone to violence. Ian Adams’ article in the summer of 1965 forwarded similar claims. “On the surface,” he insisted, “the Indian is amicable, even docile. But feeling rejected by the white world around him, he has retreated into a world that is fearful, loaded with anger and bitter hostility towards white society.” Adding weight was the voice of “A Salteaux” who Adams wrote told him that children on reserves were being taught to “hate and fear the white man.”

These fears were not unique only to Kenora in the 1965. In nineteenth century Canada, public commentary commonly portrayed “Indians” as a “constant threat to the survival of White society, appearing suddenly out of the forest to pillage and slaughter defenseless settlers.” By the mid-twentieth century, if anything had changed it was that this language of hatred appeared to connect together local and global anti-colonialism. Journalist Peter Gzowski used an article about the murder of a man in Northern

---

62 Borovoy 31.
63 Borovoy 32.
64 For important insights into how media discourses portraying Aboriginals as violent detracts from the substance of their grievances see, Sandra Lambertus, Wartime Images, Peacetime Wounds: The Media and the Gustafsen Lake Standoff (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004)
65 Adams, “The Indians” 2
66 Adams, “The Indians” 2
Saskatchewan to suggest the idea that if Indigenous peoples in Canada chose to push back they would become part of “the showdown between the white and non-white peoples of the world.” Indeed, “hatred” of whites and the confrontation between “whites” and “non-whites” were common descriptors for anti-colonial and Indigenous led protest globally. In 1960, for example, Alfred G. Meyer, a prominent American scholar of Soviet and Communist history, wrote, “one legacy of colonialism and dependency is an unbound hatred of the white man.” When two thousand Ecuadorian Indians took to the streets to protest not having been paid by “the hacienda owner,” police responded violently, killing two of the protestors and arresting sixty others. Yet wealthy property owners and other conservatives blamed the protest on local communist agitators directed by Fidel Castro, the era’s most common villain. They accused the communists of “stirring up racial hatred by counseling” Indigenous workers to kill whites. Though these were overstated rumours, according to historian Marc Becker they “indicate the persistent presence of fear and racism.”

In early 1960s North America, black radicals were frequently accused of promoting hatred of whites for their own gain. Malcolm X’s assassination in February 1965 and the subsequent release of his autobiography later that year prompted widespread commentary on the relationship between race hatred and black freedom struggles. In a profile published the day after his murder, the Toronto Star ten times used

---

the phrase “hated whites” in describing Malcolm X’s personal and political views. Malcolm X did not stand alone. In the fall of 1965, another newspaper claimed that “antiwhite poet-playwright, Leroi Jones” was teaching a “‘hate-the-whites’ creed” to actors and playwrights in Harlem. “The late Malcolm X is spoken of reverently,” noted the article; “A photograph of Malcolm hangs over the desk of Jones’ secretary.” His anger was not only racialized, it was also gendered. In Black Power’s “ideological struggle with whiteness,” scholar Algernon Austin believes “white men were redefined as effeminate.” Austin claims Jones expressed this idea stronger than most, citing a 1965 poem of Jones’ where the poet wrote that white American men are trained to be “fags.”

The point here is not to comment on black masculinity, but instead, to highlight the deafening fear of racial hatred over many other possible forms of hate.

As the Kenora march approached, the rhetoric of impending violence insured a large police presence on Main Street. Yet on the evening November 22, 1965, those preparing for bloodshed were let down. John Barbarash, a host for CBC radio’s “Indian Magazine”, recalls the scene: “here were are all of these policemen…and townspeople and so forth expecting violence. And what happened was that the [delegation] filed very graciously into this hall.” The sight of Indigenous men and women marching together strongly challenged images that saturate everyday representations of Indigenous peoples.

---

72 Hollie West, “Anti-poverty in Darkest Harlem: ‘Hate-The-Whites’ Creed Taught by Black Arts Negro Theatrical Group,” Toronto Telegram 30 Nov. 1965: 47. Jones often did not deny, “hating whites,” in this period of his literary and activist life. Yet, by focusing on the language of race what commentators often missed was the deeply gendered and homophobic nature of Jones’ work from this period.
73 Austin, Achieving Blackness 58.
74 This comes from Baraka’s poems “Home:Social Essays”, quoted by Austin, Achieving Blackness 58.
75 Barbarash’s commentary was part of a show in February 1974 to mark the tenth anniversary of Indian Magazine (which became Our Native Land in 1970). I was able to locate this online through the CBC digital archives, found at http://archives.cbc.ca/society/native_issues/clips/15991/ (last accessed April 6, 2010)
in Kenora. These were not the drunken, docile, and lazy “Indians” that town citizen’s invoked so derisively; but neither were these the angry, violent “Indians” that national journalists and local commentators spent autumn 1965 predicting would turn Kenora’s snow laden streets blood red. Betraying each banal stereotype, the marchers came face-to-face with mayor Ed Norton and his town councilors. Looking down from the stage and out across the packed hall, Norton was introduced to the delegation by Peter Seymour and Fred Kelly, two of the march’s main local organizers. The group, however, was not there just to be stared at; they also came with a voice. With formal introductions taken care of, Seymour and Kelly took turns reading out loud a declaration of grievances prepared by the committee that organized the evening’s procession. Reprinted word-for-word in the following day’s local newspaper, the declaration outlined numerous injustices experienced by local Indigenous peoples and possible avenues for their rectification.  

The declaration took an authoritative tone early on by claiming to represent “the voice of Indian people of the area.” Most importantly, it denied that Indigenous peoples were “subjects” of the town, choosing instead to describe “Indians and townspeople” as “neighbours.” This meant that they had “many mutual problems” whose solutions each party was equally responsible to find.

---

76 Borovoy 33.
I have compared the newspaper’s reprint to an original copy of the delegation’s statement found in the Ontario Human Rights Commission fonds. It appears, from my eye, that the newspaper reprinted the brief unedited. For original copy see Submissions to Kenora Town Council Re: Indian-Non Indian Relations, Indian-White Committee, Kenora, Ont, 1965, OHRC, RG 76-3-0-331, AO, Toronto.
If those at council were unaware of these problems, as Mayor Norton claimed afterwards, the brief aimed to enlighten the ignorant. Kelly and Seymour immediately described a world of inequality that existed on local reserves. “In some cases,” the brief claimed, “even where flush toilets have been introduced to the reserve, they serve not the Indian but the white residents.” Moreover, while amenities such as toilets were racialized others were made visible by their complete absence. Not having phone service on one reserve was blamed for not being able to contact medical service, resulting in a woman losing her child soon after its birth.

The brief did not limit its scope to reserves. They described Kenora as a place of immense discrimination, especially in the realm of employment. The brief repeated job statistics first publicized earlier that summer which claimed that out of three thousand Indigenous people only twelve were hired in regular full-time jobs. Almost none of these were in lucrative private sector jobs such as those at the Kenora pulp and paper mill. Even service industry jobs seemed to be only open to white students in Kenora. Much
like the absence of modern amenities on reserves, the lack of stable good paying jobs was an example of institutionalized racism.  

Along with discriminatory hiring practices came unfair wages and exploitation, especially in the seasonal job sector, which consisted mainly of trapping in the winter and fishing (or fish guiding) in the summer. At issue were government regulations that left at least a one-month gap between trapping season and fishing season. This was a period of widespread unemployment for seasonal sector workers. The brief claimed that suggestions made to extend the trapping season were refused on the account of poor fur quality, a conclusion challenged by the delegation. “What are we to do during that month between seasons,” one of Kelly or Seymour asked town council. “We deeply resent the welfare cheque solution. We want to earn our income, not beg for it.”

In the weeks and months leading up to the march, opinions about drunkenness were central to the debate about the “Indian problem.” The marchers, through the brief read at council, attempted to reshape the logic behind this issue. Instead of being a natural condition, it was the result of poverty and the roadblocks to leaving it. As either Kelly or Seymour told the crowded legion, “We live in poverty at home. We cannot get enough jobs outside. Many of us who do get jobs suffer degrading exploitation. Even our traditional occupations meet pressing government restrictions…Is there any wonder that so many of our people turn to alcohol?” Instead of jail, the group recommended treatment, and while doing so, questioned why the urban centres of Ontario seemed to get

---

most of the attention from the Addictions Research Foundation, an Ontario government agency.  

Several more recommendations were added to what is best characterized as a plan of action for the future. The OHRC had recently assisted in establishing a mayor’s committee in Amherstburg, Ontario in response to racial discrimination experienced by local black men and women. The delegation wanted the same thing for Kenora. The Mayor’s Committee would create dialogue with whites, and as a way to “activate…public sympathy” and include representatives from all the local reserves, residents of the town, the Indian-White committee and town council. The second major initiative the delegation recommended was for town council to assist in pressuring provincial and federal agencies for better assistance. More specifically, they advocated that town council address a letter to the Minister of Lands and Forests asking for a reconsideration of the trapping season question and also for the implementation of radio phones (in absence of regular phone lines).  

With their grievances aired and possible solutions outlined, the brief ended by accentuating the fact that Indigenous peoples were not asking for Kenora’s money but instead for time and mutual commitment to finding viable long-term solutions. Moreover, it framed the whole exercise as an opportunity to begin a new relationship. The delegation’s presentation ended with a phrase borrowed from late U.S. President John F. Kennedy: “Let us begin.”  

---

80 Kenora Town Council Re: Indian-Non Indian Relations, Indian-White Committee, Kenora, Ont, 1965, OHRC, RG 76-3-0-331, AO, Toronto  
81 Kenora Town Council Re: Indian-Non Indian Relations, Indian-White Committee, Kenora, Ont, 1965, OHRC, RG 76-3-0-331, AO, Toronto  
82 Kenora Town Council Re: Indian-Non Indian Relations, Indian-White Committee, Kenora, Ont, 1965, OHRC, RG 76-3-0-331, AO, Toronto.
**Canada’s Selma**

Imagining Kenora as a Canadian parallel to other global hotspots of racial conflict provided commentators with a convenient reference for naming what appeared as a new form of political theatre in Canada. The *Times of London* quoted a member of the Indian-White committee, a veterinarian who had reportedly spent time teaching in Africa, as saying that “certain Indian villages around Kenora were worse than some Negro townships in South Africa.” The newspaper thought this was “something that should be a matter of embarrassment to the white population” of Canada.  

83 Journalists from foreign newspapers were not alone in wedding Kenora with apartheid era South Africa. Malcolm Norris, a Métis radical from Saskatchewan who had inflamed government officials in the early 1960s with articles calling for more militant Indigenous protest, argued that the two racisms were different since one was physical (South Africa) and the other born out of indifference (Kenora). But, Norris asked, is this distinction meaningful? Norris also argued that oppression in South Africa had wielded physical resistance from black South Africans. He hoped that Indians in Kenora had learned that racism “must be fought in the same way.”  

84 Other people choose different places to draw out parallels. One American tourist responding to a question about Kenora claimed: “I’m all for the Indians; I treat them like any other colored man. But in this area they are no damned good. Less than one percent will co-operate. Some of the older generation are O.K., but the young ones are no

---

good. But that’s the younger generation all over. Look at the South. Look at what’s going on in Vietnam.”

Quite remarkably this nod to the transnational nature of early Sixties social movements appears almost identical to the analysis of Malcolm X at almost the exact same moment. Said Malcolm X in an interview on WBAI radio in late January 1965, “[I]t is a good example of why our problem has to be internationalized. Now the African nations are speaking out and linking the problem of racism in Mississippi with the problem of racism in the Congo, and also the problem of racism in South Vietnam.”

Despite people who simultaneously linked the situation in Kenora in 1965 to anti-colonial liberation movements and anti-apartheid resistance, most commentators approached the situation through only one comparison: the American south.

With its examples of segregation and inequality, Ian Adams’ grim portrait of Kenora in the summer of 1965 firmly entrenched in popular imagination the association between Kenora and places such as Selma. Thus the march, its perpetrators and its targets, were approached with the American South in mind. Reporting for the Toronto Star, Perry Anglin’s correspondence described the “fear” (whose he did not divulge) that Kenora was “a Canadian Selma, Alabama is in the making.” Poverty, poor living conditions, discrimination, and a lack of education made similar “the plight and resentments of our Indians to the problems of Negroes in Mississippi and Harlem.”

Journalists comparing Kenora to American cities were certainly creating sensational

85 George Miller quoted in Ian Adams, “The Indians” 5.
headlines, but they were not entirely unique. In 1963, journalist Peter Gzowski told Maclean’s readers that Glaslyn, Saskatchewan, a small town north of North Battleford, was “Canada’s, Alabama.” He did so after nine white men were accused of killing a young Ojibwa man. Gzowski’s article described North Battleford as having “Jim Crow” type segregation and an “all pervasive form of unwelcome,” phrases not unlike those used to describe Kenora in 1965. The article ends by offering readers what seems like a contradictory sliver of hope. Gzowski suggests that though the situation in North Battleford appears to be desperately similar to the Southern United States, the citizens of North Battleford still could be saved because they were a “gentle friendly people.”

Only days after the march, amidst the height of Kenora’s new found infamy, a new angle to this story emerged: The Children’s Aid Society (CAS) fired Fred Kelly. The CAS claimed that the timing was just an unlucky coincidence; that before the march they had been planning to let Kelly go from his position as a caseworker. Kelly, on the other hand, claimed that the CAS folded under pressure from the government and from locals who were part of a “hate campaign” against the march’s leaders. News of the firing, while a loss for Kelly, also created a moment of opportunity. The National Indian Council (NIC) pledged a national campaign to raise money so Kelly could keep doing his work amongst Indigenous peoples in Kenora. Gene Lahache, then the NIC’s vice-president, told reporters that this may be a chance to “draw Indian people together for a

---

89 Peter Gzowski, “This is Our Alabama,” Maclean’s, 6 July, 1963: 20-21, 46-49. Thirty-eight years later, Gzowski said had this to say about the above article: “This piece ran in Maclean’s in 1963 under the somewhat melodramatic title “This is Our Alabama,” and caused more than a little stir in the area in which it is set. Nearly forty years later, I’m still not sure I was wrong,” see Peter Gzowski and Edna Barker, (eds), A Peter Gzowski Reader (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2001) 103.
common goal.”

One newspaper suggested that Kelly was becoming a Canadian Martin Luther King, a characterization Kelly did not entirely dismiss. Journalist Tim Traynor reported that the deaths of white and black civil rights workers motivated Kelly’s work and his outlook on being fired. “In a way I was shot down,” Kelly reportedly told Traynor. President of the Children Aid Society’s board, Charles Clark, however, headed in the opposite direction. “We’ve had enough bad publicity,” he claimed, “People here are a bit touchy because this situation is being talked about as another Alabama.” Even officials who were skeptical of the delegation’s claims fell into common tropes of the civil rights era. For example, a Kenora town councilor claimed that the march was a communist ploy organized by ‘outsiders.’ Such attempts at deflection were common in the US south. Sokol argues this allowed political ideology and the particularity of regional identity to replace racism. “Anti-communism,” he argues, “enabled whites to deplore civil rights protests without revising their paternalistic views of blacks.” In Kenora it was a rhetorical strategy that found some traction in 1965. By 1974, the binary of outsiders and locals became an indispensable strategy to counter the claims of the Ojibway Warriors Society during the Anicinabe Park takeover.

The marches, firings, examples of segregation and discrimination and accusations of communist infiltration all lent themselves easily to comparisons with the American South. Yet by the mid 1960s a new element emerged. Because of tourism, Canada’s “Alabama” was beginning to look a little more like the real Alabama. By the mid sixties

---

93 “New march hinted: Kenora ‘Luther King,’ Indian leader fired,” Toronto Star 29 Nov. 1965: 1,2.
96 Sokol 83.
over a million people per year were vacationing in Northern Ontario, making it the
region’s third largest economic sector, behind forestry and mining (in Sault Ste. Marie
tourism was second only to mining). The Ontario government also initiated an aggressive
advertising campaign geared especially towards visitors primarily from American states
such as Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Wisconsin and Minnesota.97 In addition,
major improvements to regional highways expanded the potential for travel and vacation
in Northwestern Ontario.98 Increased access west of Thunder Bay brought important
American dollars into the economy. However, along with their purses and wallets,
American tourists also brought a new form of racial diversity into the region. In turn, it
became clear that regional racial conflict was not limited to a white-Indian affair. In the
summer of 1967 the Northwestern Ontario branch of the OHRC received eight formal
allegations and six informal allegations of discrimination from black American tourists
visiting the region. R.W. McPhee, a human rights worker posted in Northwestern
Ontario, investigated these complaints. While most managers refused to admit they
would not rent rooms to black tourists, some were forthcoming about such practices.
McPhee told Hill this was because the owner feared the acceptance of “negro
guests…would drive away non-negro guests.”99 The owner of the Lakehead Motel in Port
Arthur told a similar tale, claiming that a white American tourist checked-out after seeing
a black American check in.100 At a meeting McPhee organized with the Tourist
Association of the Dryden Chamber of Commerce participants distinguished between the

97 Wightman and Wightman 349.
reception of black guests at motels versus those at tourists camps. At camps “customers must live together and share facilities and this made it difficult to accept Negro people.” At motels, however, “guests were transients and their units were self-contained which alleviated the potential problem of mixing Negro and White guests.” McPhee’s notes illuminate a contentious aspect of the situation in Northern Ontario: as many as 95% of the camps were American owned and operated (a figure McPhee obtained from the Dryden Tourist Association). In his own investigation McPhee commented that “many of the camp owners had Southern accents and the cars were from Southern States.” While the issues of discrimination against black tourists had always been a problem, the Tourist Association noted, it had “increased sharply” in the past two years.101

American ownership of tourist lodges that were charged with discrimination against black American tourists raises an important question: how much of Northwestern Ontario’s “Alabama” flavour was a direct result of American economic interests in the area? Is it possible that the racism brought by Southerners really was significantly different than that practiced by white Canadians in Northwestern Ontario? Some commentators seemed to think so. Maclean’s magazine disputed idea that “Canadians Indians and Eskimos are as ill-treated as the Negroes of Alabama and Mississippi.” Racism against Indians was a private matter, not institutionalized through law like in the United States, the magazine reasoned. They argued “governments of Canada unlike those in Alabama and Mississippi, cannot be accused of doing any recent wrong to the native peoples.” Though they had failed to “bring natives into modern Canadian citizenship”

this was not the “same thing as the outright brutality of state troopers in Selma.” “We have bigotry all-right,” Maclean’s admitted, “but no Alabamas.”  

Defending Kenora against its new identity became one of John Reid’s first acts as a newly elected MP for the Kenora-Rainy River district. Speaking for the first time in the House of Parliament in January 1966, Reid told his colleagues that the march was “an impressive demonstration of solidarity and discipline.” But what he really wanted Parliament to understand was that Kenora was not another Selma. The press, he argued, “came with cameras, with notebooks and with preconceived ideas. There were those who had covered civil rights demonstrations in the United States and they immediately assumed that this was a similar situation. They compared Kenora with Selma, Alabama. They talked to townspeople in that peculiar way the press has, and ended up at times putting words and ideas into the mouths of local residents.”

Local politicians were not alone in efforts to deflect critique away from Kenora. The Western Canadian press, particularly journalists from Winnipeg, claimed that the though this looked like “a kind of local version of the civil rights movement in the southern United States,” this was not the intent of marchers. For her part, Ellen Simmons was not concerned with scheming journalists, nor the intent of the delegation; instead this was a question of motivation. She believed that there was “no racial violence” and “seldom any overt signs of racial discrimination” in Kenora. Thus, unlike in the American South, she understood the Kenora situation as a conflict about the values of capitalism and modern citizenship. Though many of the charges against whites in

---

102 “We have bigotry all right— but no Alabamas,” Maclean’s 17 Apr. 1965: 4.  
104 Reid 189.  
Kenora were valid, ultimately, she argued, they grew out of frustrations of white employers who had hired Indians only to see them not show up for work. Bosses were just frustrated that they had become de facto social workers. If the Indian “is going to get and hold a job,” Simmons claimed, “he has to get used to the white man’s way of doing things…perhaps most important and most difficult, he must learn to yield to the white man’s preoccupation with the clock.” Thus, ultimately, the “race problem” was “organizational” and not born out of white hatred. Moreover, by bringing the tenets of capitalism and modernity to reserves, Indigenous workers would get the jobs they were being denied in towns, and whites would learn to see “the Indian” as a trustworthy worker. Work and ideas about the values of good workers helped create a sense of distance between the situation in Kenora and that in the United States. Organizational problems were just a matter of finding proper solutions, not of recalibrating one’s soul. The economic question, or the age-old trope of modern/anti-modern, eclipsed racism and helped allow Kenora to resist its new identity as Selma.

Imagining difference between the two places did not rely only on the denial of racism in Kenora. The agitations in the US South and that in Kenora, while of similar tactics, sprang from complex desires. Some of those, such as equal opportunity, traveled across national borders. Others did not, including the question of enfranchisement. In the United States, the demand for the rights of national enfranchisement deeply influenced black freedom marches. In Canada the situation was different. Until 1960 only Indigenous war veterans, those who lived off reserve and reserve Indians who accepted taxation had been able to vote federally. Prime Minister John Diefenbaker felt that

107 Simmons, “The Lessons of Kenora” 33.
Aboriginal servicemen and their families sealed “his narrow victory in his first election to Parliament.”\(^{108}\) In 1960, the same year as enacting the Canadian Bill of Rights, Prime Minster Diefenbaker extended the vote to registered Indians. Provincialy, status Indians were still devoid of the franchise in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island until 1963. Quebec denied the vote until 1969.\(^{109}\) For the Canadian government, the offer of citizenship rights was an important symbolic statement to the rest of the world. Ellen Fairclough, then Minister of Citizenship, proclaimed that the Indian vote “will remove in the eyes of the world any suggestion that in Canada race or colour places any citizen in an inferior category to other citizens of the country.”\(^{110}\)

Whether or not to accept the franchise, however, became a point of contestation in several provincial Indigenous organizations, such as in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and as a point of protest from Micmac and Mohawks in Eastern Canada.\(^{111}\) At a moment in twentieth century history when people in different parts of the world were demanding inclusion into the privileges of national citizenship, why were certain Indigenous groups in Canada rejecting such offers? Scholar Anthony Hall insightfully remarks that “the issue of the franchise was, and still is, at the symbolic core of some of the central strategic questions facing virtually all Indigenous peoples in nation-states not of their own making.”\(^{112}\) In the 1960s, popular Indigenous intellectual Vine Deloria Jr. believed


\(^{109}\) Mills 22.


\(^{111}\) Hall 255, 496.

\(^{112}\) Hall 256.
“the most common attitude Indians have faced has been the unthoughtful Johnny-come-lately liberal who equates certain goals with a dark skin. This type of individual generally defines the goals of all groups by the way he understands what he wants for blacks.” Consequently, the “Indian is defined as a subcategory of black.” When this happened people missed key differences between “Red and Black.” For Deloria Jr, a fundamental difference was the way White society had historically treated blacks. While they were systematically excluded from society, Indians were forced to become white through assimilation. Deloria believed that blacks were concerned with getting an equal piece of the pie, while Indians looked for something much different. As Sioux activist Mary Crow Dog captures in her memoirs: “like them we were minorities, poor and discriminated against, but there were differences…The blacks want what the whites have, which is understandable. They want in. We Indians want out! That is the main difference.” Only months after the Kenora march, Indigenous students participating in a workshop at the University of Manitoba described their goals in similar language. They declared that, “unlike the Negro of the southern United States, [we] are not demanding equal rights and assimilation.”

From journalists, to politicians, to intellectuals and protestors, if one were involved in some way with Indian protests in the early 1960s, one had to find a way to make sense of the comparison to black civil rights protests in the United States. The

114 Deloria, Jr., 172.
116 “The Role of the Ontario Human Rights Commission in Northern Ontario” OHRC, RG-76-3-0, AO, Toronto.
comparison is significant because it acted as a tool for the national imagination to erase racism (or the legacies of settler colonialism) from its emerging global identity.

Geographer Jennifer Nelson’s recent book on the razing of Africville, a primarily black community outside of Halifax in the 1960s, illustrates why the naming of lived space is a politically, socially and culturally significant action. Nelson argues that to make sense of how states intervene in communities we need to understand not just policies but also the language used to explain the action. In the early 1960s, journalists, politicians and civic leaders portrayed Africville simultaneously as a threat and a pathological problem; an object (and people) deserving of both pity and scorn. These were people whose poverty, because of its particular racial character, was described as existing outside of “civilized society.” And being uncivilized meant that others determined your future course of development.117

In what ways is this related to the Kenora area and its place within the nation? According to Nelson, the reported inability of black Haligonians to adapt to capitalism profoundly influenced the debates on Africville. The ability to “embrace a fundamentally racialized theory of the defective poor while avoiding the stigma of racism,” Nelson argues, was part of the shift from “biological to cultural rationalizations for racial inferiority.”118 Standards of middle-class morality imposed through language that foregrounded values such as privacy and personal space as “universal standards for a normal healthy lifestyle” were contrasted against the growing common sense that slums, as black neighborhoods such as Africville were labeled, stood for “uncontrolled,

118 Nelson 62.
degenerate and therefore undeserving people.”

Wedded constantly, the language of race and space became part of common sense logic; repeated so often that authority rather than evidence defined Africville’s existence.

Nelson certainly is not the first geographer to link the politics of dispossession with the discursive construction of space. Her work is relevant to this discussion because of the period in which it is set. At almost the same time that bringing modernity to ‘uncivilized blacks’ helped justify the dispossession of a community, similar rhetorical boundaries helped conceptualize the meaning of Indigenous protest in Kenora. Africville was not a lone case in 1960s Canada. The relocation of the Grassy Narrows reserve, a community north of Kenora was also rationalized using many of the arguments put forth for Africville. The relocation, the second for Grassy Narrows, is described as the main catalyst in a now decades long social catastrophe. Moreover, there are similarities between Nelson’s Africville and Kenora in the 1960s. Most obviously, there are parallels in the ways Indians and blacks were imagined as underdeveloped citizens defined by their inability to adapt to capitalism. Yet there is an important difference between the two communities. This difference is located in metaphor. Africville was not like anything. It was a slum, according to experts. Kenora though was like Selma. For this to happen a number of important boundaries needed to be crossed, primarily those of nation and race. A town in Canada became American and Indian became black.

\[119\] Nelson 62-63.
\[120\] Anastasia M. Shkilnyk, A Poison Stronger Than Love: The Destruction of an Ojibwa Community (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). While Shkilnyk’s book is primarily a study of the impact the mercury pollution in the Wabigoon/English river on Grassy Narrows in the 1970s, her work is still the most comprehensive to date in discussing the forced relocation of Grassy residents in from parcel of land to another.
When Kenora became Selma this also erased the existence of black Canadians and their grievances. Few, if any, of the mainstream commentaries on Kenora compared it to black communities in Canada. Instead they looked directly towards the United States. When editorials from the Toronto media criticized civil rights activists in Toronto for ignoring racism at home, black Canadians, not Indigenous peoples, would have been the logical comparison. West Indian writer Austin Clarke offers some insight into this conundrum. Writing for *Maclean’s* in 1963, Clarke debates with himself the advantages and disadvantages of becoming a Canadian citizen. Remaining a West Indian allowed Clarke to rationalize racism as an issue of nation. Canadians, in his words, hated foreigners so there was no reason not to hate him as a West Indian. But, if he became a Canadian citizen he would lose the nation as an explanation, leaving only his black skin as the explanation for discrimination. Since Canadians did not officially sanction racism his experiences were rendered invisible leaving him unable to mount resistance.\textsuperscript{121}

The rhetoric of Kenora as Alabama made racism within Canadian borders a local matter, displacing it from national narratives. The analogy rendered blacks invisible, Indians knowable and whites hierarchically dividable between good liberal cosmopolitan whites and rural working-class whites. Here the use of transnational analogies in fact created new boundaries. In order to displace racism, towns such as Kenora were removed from the national imagination through discourses that suggested the town more closely resembled Selma, an American city, than other towns and cities in Canada. By looking transnationally we see how Canada defined itself as emphatically different than the United States, especially around questions of race. Kenora could be imagined as an

\textsuperscript{121} Austin Clarke “A Black Man Talks about Race Prejudice in White Canada,” *Maclean’s* 20 Apr. 1963: 18-20
anomaly, or essentially non-Canadian. Racism of the type described in Kenora was transnational, not confined, nor determined by Canadian borders. Perpetrators of racial oppression were imaginatively stripped of their citizenship. Yet, as the editorials in the Winnipeg Free Press demonstrate, the debate over calling Kenora our Selma became code for debate over acceptable forms of whiteness in Canada. Kenora could remain part of the national community if racism was rationalized as an act of frustration with the inability of “the Indian” to adapt to modernity; better yet was if racism grew out of a sense of paternalism. It was necessary, however, to describe the town as outside of the nation if violence and segregation were the defining modes of racial exclusion.

**Conclusion: Kenora One Year Later**

The participants whose voices we can still hear through the historical documents, shared a complicated relationship with the comparison to Selma. It helped create interest in the situation in Kenora. It also gave a reference point that tugged at the heart-strings of many well-meaning people. However, as Alan Borovoy remembers, the rhetoric could distance readers from the facts being presented by local protestors. In 1966, the Mayor’s Committee, established after the march, struggled to create dramatic change for Indigenous peoples in Kenora and the surrounding reserves. The committee consisted of local professionals, such as social workers and doctors, staff from the Ontario Human Rights Commission and vocal Indigenous leaders, such as Peter Kelly and Fred Kelly, the latter whom continued to report from the Indian-White Committee. As had been noted in the declaration read to town council, officials tried using a Mayor’s Committee in Amherstburg, Ontario to eradicate racism against blacks. At the first meeting of the
Mayor’s Committee in Kenora, OHRC director Dan Hill promoted Amherstburg as a model. There, Hill argued, the formation of a mayor’s committee came out of “ interracial friction and tension, along with unemployment, poverty and poor living conditions among the Negro minority, climaxed with the burning of a Ku Klux Klan cross and the desecration of a Negro church.”\(^{122}\) The Kenora committee began 1966 with a full agenda of issues: employment, housing, dialogue between whites and Aboriginals and improving the “image of the Indian.”\(^{123}\) The committee cast a wide net, yet there were people who continued to doubt that discrimination was a problem. By the summer of 1966, newly elected mayor, Ernie Carter, admitted having given little thought to the direction of the committee. According to OHRC staff, the mayor had not noticed any “aggrieved Indians coming to see him” and “He said he certainly wasn’t going after them.” When presented with the idea that perhaps the Mayor could do more to encourage dialogue, Carter replied that they “didn’t have to be encouraged to pick up their welfare cheques.”\(^{124}\) By July, only six months after the committee came into existence, Mayor Carter had grown quite defensive, complaining that people were blaming him for the committee’s ineffectiveness. Instead, he suggested blame be put at the feet of Indian Affairs, not at his. Defensive about himself and about Kenora, Carter used the July meeting to suggest a new direction for the Committee. The Mayor’s main goal now was to “protect Kenora from…unfavourable publicity.”\(^{125}\)

\(^{122}\) Meeting of the Mayor’s Indian Committee, January 28, 1966, 1, Mayor’s Committee, Ontario Human Rights Commission, RG RG-76-3-0, Archives of Ontario, Toronto.

\(^{123}\) Meeting of the Mayor’s Indian Committee, January 28, 1966, 1, Mayor’s Committee, Ontario Human Rights Commission, RG RG-76-3-0, Archives of Ontario, Toronto.

\(^{124}\) Meeting of the Mayor’s Indian Committee, July 8, 1966, 2, Mayor’s Committee, Ontario Human Rights Commission, RG RG-76-3-0, Archives of Ontario, Toronto.

\(^{125}\) Meeting of the Mayor’s Indian Committee, July 8, 1966, 3, Mayor’s Committee, Ontario Human Rights Commission, OHRC, RG-76-3-0-631, AO, Toronto.
Chapter Two: Canada’s first Third World Peoples.

Speaking to the general assembly of the United Nations on September 25, 1961, John F. Kennedy proposed that the sixties were going to be a “Decade of Development.” Moreover, Kennedy added that the United States could set the example for how wealthy nations could “freely” share capital and technology “to help others help themselves.”¹ The job now was to take the American example and create a global structure for sending aid to the Third World, especially Africa.² According to historian Larry Scrubbs, a consequence of Kennedy’s and the UN’s new “mission” was that “Africa burst into American consciousness for the first time, signifying an important world region, an object of assistance, a subject of scholarly middle brow working and cold war public policy.”³

At the same time, state officials in North America began to imagine Indigenous reserves as internal, or domestic, Third Worlds. In 1962, for example, the American Peace Corps readied volunteers for their missions to Africa, Asia and Latin America by first sending them to locally impoverished communities that the government believed resembled the poverty and culture of “underdeveloped” countries. While they chose Hawaii for its perceived similarity to Southeast Asia, American Indian reservations in New Mexico were selected for their apparent similarities to Latin American Indian

---

¹ A copy of this speech can be read and listened to at the John F, Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum website: http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Speeches/JFK/003POF03UnitedNations09251961.htm.
communities. Historian Alyosha Goldstein argues that, “[a]gency planners supposed an intrinsic parallel between culturally unfamiliar poor communities in the United States and impoverished countries abroad.” What Goldstein also explains is that organizations such as the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) used the sense American Indians as foreign to insist that they receive technical aid earmarked for Third World countries. This is an example of how local organizations “explicitly sought to draw on the confluences of US policy constructions of the foreign and underdevelopment.”

Chapter two of my thesis examines how Indigenous politics and culture in Canada played an important role in Canadian opinions about Third World “underdevelopment” in the 1960s. While often imagined as an economic question, by paying attention to the way people compared Indigenous peoples in Canada to peoples in the Third World questions of culture cannot be ignored. This chapter begins in the present, discussing how Indian reserves in Canada are often portrayed as Third World. Why this became common parlance is a question of history. As J.R. Miller explains, “[t]he postwar decolonization movement throughout the world raised questions among thoughtful Canadians about how long Canada could go on treating native communities as internal colonies.” In the 1960s Canadian intervention in the Third World was often connected to public opinions about the status of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Canadian foreign aid to the Third World and its response to important political conflicts such as apartheid in South Africa and white-

---

5 Goldstein, 38.
6 Goldstein, 32.
7 Goldstein, 27.
9 J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers hide the heavens: a history of Indian-white relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 223.
minority rule in Rhodesia are two such examples we will discuss. The second part of this chapter examines questions of culture, “underdevelopment,” and Indigenous protest by discussing presentations given during a four-month long seminar series that took place in Kenora in 1967. During “the cross-cultural conflict series,” a diverse group of scholars and experts viewed Indian-white conflict in Kenora through the lens of culture and development, often illustrating their arguments with comparisons to Third World peoples.

Local and Global Third Worlds

 Scholars generally accept that the term Third World emerged from French sociologist Albert Sauvy and his article ‘Trois Mondes, une planète’ published in L’Observateur in August 1952.¹⁰ According to Leslie Wolf Phillips, an important aspect of the ‘Third World’ was the idea ‘non-alignment.’¹¹ If some form of free-market capitalism defined the economic organization of First World states, and centralized state-managed economies were the domain of Second World socialism, the non-aligned Third World was going to find a new post-colonial economic reality that did not adhere to either communism nor capitalism. We would be mistaken however to believe the Third World was only question of political economy as Sauvy also made analogies to the Third Estate. Phillips explains that Sauvy “was alluding to the 1789 oratory of the Abbé Siyès—‘What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been till now in the political

¹⁰ I write ‘generally accepted’ because some controversy exists around the term. Peter Worsley, for one, contests the claim that Third World originated with Sauvy. See Peter Worsley, “How many worlds,” Third World Quarterly 1:2 (1979) 100-08. For an important discussion on such terminology see Robert J.C. Young, Postcolonialism An Historical Introduction (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001) 1-11.
order? Nothing. What does it want to be? Something.”¹² In this context he imagined the Third World as a place of “neglect, exploitation and revolutionary potential.”¹³ This is a set of characteristics the Third World has rarely been able to escape.

From black radicals who looked to Maoist China for inspiration to Quebecois who read Frantz Fanon in cafés in Montreal, to, as we will see in chapter three, young Indigenous men and women who argued anti-colonialism was not contained by geopolitical borders, Third World theory and its revolutionary potential profoundly shaped the imaginations North Americans in the Sixties. Yet it is also important to pay attention to what historian Tina Chen writes about transnational imaginations in this period. Chen questions how historians can reconcile the Third World’s role as a “metaphorical, physical and imaginary space of action” that made both rhetorical and political moves towards global emancipation with the projects of modernization and state-building that almost all Third World nations believed would help unlock their freedoms.¹⁴ “[I]t is easier” Chen argues, “to draw out the promises of transnational and global identifications against hegemonic orders than it is to make sense of the Third World as coeval with nation-state aspirations.”¹⁵

If young North Americans mistakenly looked to the Third World as a physical manifestation of their revolutionary longings, at the same time many in the First World saw the Third World as in need of saving. According to Vijay Prashad during the 1950s

---

¹² Leslie Wolf-Phillips, “Why ‘Third World’? 1312. Wolf-Phillips debated with Worsley (see above) over the origins of the term Third World, see Leslie Wolf-Phillips, “Why the Third World?” Third World Quarterly 1:1 (1979): 105-15. It should be noted that other terms such as “Third Force,” was also commonly used throughout the 1960s. The Sieyès quotation also appears in Rist, 81 fn2.


¹⁵ Chen 429.
and 1960s “images of poverty in the formerly colonized world flooded the magazines and newspapers of the First World.” These images were not unique, but in post World War II era they obtained new importance. Relieved of the “tutelage” of their colonial masters, Third World countries were seen as needing to be saved from “their inability to handle their resources and disasters.”16

Although the term Third World has fallen out of favour as a way to describe the formally colonized territories of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, today it is still commonly used to describe Indigenous impoverishment and political marginalization in Canada. There are many examples that can illustrate this trend. A recent book comparing development projects in Indigenous communities in Australia and Canada has as its title Third World in the First.17 Most recently, the “crisis in Darfur” offered a fashionable Third World conflict by which to frame impoverishment on reserves in “the North.” After a recent trip through parts of Northern Canada, Nick Finney, a director for the non-governmental organization, Save the Children, wrote that the communities he visited reminded him of Darfur because, just like people in Darfur, Indigenous peoples were hopeless and despondent.18 Without denying the difficult circumstances endured by Northern Indigenous communities, the displacement of politics in favour of personal disposition in each location disconnects us from historical conditions that create despair. When all that is known about a place is that its residents are believed to be unhappy or hopeless, a common response is to want to alleviate that state of being, sometimes through aid and charity and not through structural change.

The desire to help fellow humans is vital to social justice. Yet there is a large body of literature that rightfully critiques the structures of aid and the functions of charity in helping maintain global social hierarchies. What might appear as a gesture of kindness also has significant political ramifications. “Save Darfur’s great political victory,” Mahmood Mamdani argues, “has been to thoroughly depoliticize Darfur as an issue.”

This means that structural power or discourses of power, such as for Darfur, the War on Terror, and for Indian reserves in Canada, the legacies of colonialism, rarely appear in the explanations of Third World unhappiness. In the 1960s, the UN’s decade of development, aid to the Third World was an essential aspect of geo-political competition. China and Russia offered aid money in an effort to direct anti-colonial allegiances their way; countered by First World gestures to prevent Third World countries from turning to communists for help. This is why historians such as Odd Arne Westad can state that “through its strategies [America] did much to create the Third World as a conceptual entity: seen from America, these were common areas to be intervened in.” The consequences of this competition were, according to Prashad, the derailment of Third World attention to questions of social transformations in favor of exclusive attention on economic modernization.

Thus naming reserves or Indigenous peoples in Canada as being part of the “Third World” or “like Darfur” cannot be described as a politically neutral act. It is a discourse that invites intervention. Yet, we need also consider that the current popularity of this

---

23 Prashad, *The Darker Nations* 74.
description is because it is politically ambiguous; invoked by the left as much as it is by liberals and conservatives. In the pages of leftist publications one can find the term used with the intention of popularizing decolonization. In the late 1990s, for example, in the leftist magazine Canadian Dimension, Karen Charleson employed the language of a transnational Third World to argue for Indigenous sovereignty. The struggle for self-government remains crucial, she suggested, because “self-government, like independence in the post-colonial Third World,” is the first step towards decolonization. On the other side of the political spectrum, Globe and Mail columnist Lysiane Gagnon appropriated similar language to forward her conservative vision of what Indigenous peoples deserve from the government. She recently tried to brand Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff’s attitude towards Indigenous peoples as paternalistic, comparing his vision to the way First World leaders used to treat the Third World. “Our own Third World people,” Gagnon writes, “deserve to be treated as equals.” For her, however, this means less government responsibility.

With the advent of international aid and development assistance in the 1960s, the question of government responsibility domestically and internationally underwent significant change. In the aftermath of World War II one of the defining features of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King’s foreign policy was to favor Canadian participation in United Nations aid and relief programs over any sort of global military intervention in the emerging Third World. Mackenzie King feared there would be no public support for such intervention, and he feared the recriminations that another military episode would have on national unity, which had been significantly splintered.

during the war years. Choosing intervention with dollars instead of with weapons, however, did not immediately create much interest domestically in Third World politics. Indeed, some have argued that disinterest better defined Canada’s position on Africa. “When a question concerning Africa did impinge on officialdom in Ottawa,” Robert Matthews suggests, “it was usually in the context of the United Nations” and often was not thought of as having direct relevance to Canada. Historian Robert Teigrob offers an explanation for this. He believes that in the early 1950s, because “the nation remained a settler society dominated by British- and French-stock whites…many in Canada continued to defend the practice of colonialism.”

Attention peaked, however, when Third World decolonization collided with Cold War sensitivities.

In the Sixties, Canada significantly increased aid to, and trade with, African nations. Between 1958 and 1966, aid for Anglo-Commonwealth African states rose from $135,000 to $35,000,000. This was part of a ten-fold increase in international Canadian aid between 1951 and 1967 and put Canada in line with other First World nations. Together they accounted for almost 90% of Third World aid between 1956-60. Similar to the assistance program propagated by Kennedy in 1962, Canada delivered technical aid and capital assistance. In certain cases it also provided military assistance. Because of its “ex-colonial sensibilities,” Canada, according to historian Robert Bothwell,

29 Matthews, “Canada and Anglophone Africa,” 105.
31 Westad 32.
32 Matthews 106-08.
established itself as an “interlocutor” between the non-aligned Third World and the free-market championing Americans. Maybe; yet if some see aid as evidence of Canadian humanitarian concern, others suggest it was a method to develop the principles of liberal democracy and free-market capitalism in Africa, or at least to open it up for Canadian business. From a business perspective, aid meant increased profit. “From year to year,” Matthews notes, “upward shifts in Canada’s exports can often be explained in terms of recently negotiated aid agreements.” Moreover, Canadian bureaucrats saw in decolonization a “power vacuum” which they believed the Soviet Union would take advantage through propagandizing the benefits of communism to newly emerging African states. Though Peyton Lyon argues that by the early 1960s the concern about Soviet influence in Africa dissipated greatly amongst Canadian government officials the concern was still evident in 1967 when External Affairs Minster Paul Martin Sr. stated that “had Canada not extended aid” to Tanzania in the 1960s, “China and perhaps one or two other Communist countries would have.”

It is in this moment of debate over foreign aid and development that we can observe connections emerging between Canadian involvement ‘over there’ and what people imagined as an appropriate intervention into the lives of Indigenous peoples ‘here.’ According to P. Whitney Lackenbrauer and Andrew F. Cooper, “Canada’s evolving international role could also be used to embarrass the government for the plight

34 Matthews 95.
35 Matthews 89, 122.
37 Paul Martin Sr., quoted in Engler, 175.
of Aboriginal peoples at home.”

This was particularly popular in the 1960s. In their call for social justice, the Ontario Human Rights Commission claimed that “in many parts of Canada, Indians are penned up in slums reminiscent of the most backwards parts of the world.” Similarly, in their attempt to bring attention to their “war on poverty,” the Roman Catholic Bishops of Canada felt it necessary to comment on the similarity between Third World peoples and Indigenous peoples in Canada: “While we realize that poverty in a rich country like ours is not to be compared with the massive poverty of Asia, Africa and Latin America, which remains our overwhelming concern” there is little done for poor “Indian and Eskimo families” in Canada.

Some were concerned that money spent on international foreign aid would be better used to combat poverty domestically. A reader of Maclean’s, for example, argued that Canadians “support far-away causes, but we turn a blind eye to the extermination of our own Eskimos.” This logic reached Kenora in the days following the march in November 1965. In a letter to the Toronto Telegram, Eleanor Ross chided Canadians for being concerned for “overseas causes” while virtually ignoring “the poverty of Canada’s Indians.” R. Keith Earl, believing that Canada’s mission to create ‘civilized’ Africans was failing, thought a more successful venture would be to direct foreign aid to the Kenora area.

Moreover, Earl believed that even if aid to Tanzania brought successful

---

42 Eleanor D. Ross, “Fellow Citizens,” Toronto Telegram 27 Nov. 1965: 6
43 In 1965, at the urging of the US and Britain, Canada and Tanzania agreed to, what Matthews called, Canada’s “most ambitious program of military assistance,” see Matthews, 110.
development, “the next generation” is going to call us “exploiters and imperialists.”

Clearly, for Earl, there existed little possibility of derisive name calling if aid stayed within the country. E. Frank Litt, a community development worker in Kenora, used similar logic. “We continually hear of young Canadians going abroad to help underdeveloped nations,” he noted, “This in itself is a worth while cause,” but so to would be coming to Northern Ontario to help educate poor Indians.

Apartheid and White Minority Rule

In the 1960s, alongside aid and development in Africa, white-minority rule and apartheid in Southern Africa captured the attention of concerned Canadians. As I argued in chapter one, some commentators drew parallels between the march in Kenora and apartheid in South Africa. Foreign media coverage made sense of the town’s climate by comparing it to slums in South Africa, while Métis militant Malcolm Norris believed the situation in Kenora might be remedied with more anti-colonial physical resistance, like that in South Africa.

Though Canadian politicians tried to create distance from Afrikaner racial policies in the era of apartheid, the system did not emerge out of local idiosyncratic views of race. There is a long historical relationship between Southern Africa and Canada, especially in regards to regulation of “non-white” peoples. Both countries were born from Empire; by World War Two each had dominion status (Canada in 1868; South Africa in 1910) and claimed Commonwealth status. In the nineteenth century, along with Canada, New

---

Zealand, Australia, and South Africa were the British Empire’s “white dominions.” In the same decade as South Africa enacted the first of two Land Acts that ultimately laid the foundations for apartheid, Canada constructed a “White Canada” policy with the 1910 immigration act. The transnational network of racial hierarchy also took shape through each country’s department of native affairs. As historian Anthony Hall writes, The Indian Act, Canada’s most important tool in the destruction of Indigenous cultural identity and of white control of land and resources, “set the direction for its many legislative cousins in the colonies and former colonies of Great Britain.” The regular exchange of information between the department of native affairs in Canada and in South Africa facilitated such common trajectories. Nor did this information-sharing stop after the conclusion of World War II and the global dismantling of colonial empires. In fact, this was a period when the departments of Indian Affairs and External Affairs regularly sanctioned visits by South African officials to reserves in Canada. “From the 1940s to the 1960s,” Linda Freeman argues, “officials both in Canada and South Africa continued their collegial approach, paying close attention to each other’s treatment of aboriginal people.”

Reaction to apartheid policies from Kenora in this period is not well documented. Yet a talk given to Kenora’s Rotary club in the spring of 1965, only months before the town gained its international infamy, offers a glimpse into how people could connect apartheid with Indigenous politics locally. On April 28, 1965 members of Kenora’s elite

---

48 Linda Freeman, The Ambiguous Champion: Canada and South Africa in the Trudeau and Mulroney Years (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 16.
(including an Ontario Provincial Police chief, a future mayor, a high school principal, and the mayor of Port Arthur, who came as a ‘visiting Rotarian’) listened as invited guest Jacob Mare spoke about South African apartheid policies. Mare, a South African who worked at Lakewood high school, told Rotarians that foreigners quickly condemned apartheid policies before knowing all “the facts.” According to Mare, apartheid policies were created for the benefit, not the repression, of black and colored South Africans. He explained that “the average” South African believed in these policies as blacks, as much as whites, did not want to live in a mixed-race country. However, for Mare, economic “facts” were the most important evidence of apartheid’s triumph. For Mare, guards at the South African borders were not enforcing the pass law but instead were preventing jobs from being taken by foreign migrants. On top of this a Bantu trust fund had been set up, a way for black South Africans to enjoy all the privileges of modernity through economic development projects. Moreover, black South Africans, Mare claimed, were privileged to another aspect of modernity because of apartheid: democracy. “They hold free elections and the separate communities favor a policy of separate development in the spirit of forming a democracy. They were breaking the idea of communes and of Communism.” All of this democracy and economic development, under apartheid, had, according to Mare, made South Africa a more successful country than any of the new black led countries, such as Ghana and Kenya. His talk reportedly ended with the message that apartheid had allowed black and whites respect each other’s rights.49

Today it is difficult not to write about Mare’s talk without just simply mocking the fallacies of the “facts” he presented. Mare’s message may have come as a relief, however, to a room full of people whose institutions Indigenous peoples and their allies

around Kenora often claimed were sources of local segregation and racism. Now these acts could be explained as benevolent, not racist, and more over they could be successful in civilizing non-whites. The testimonial from a real South African proved it so.

The reaction to the march had made it clear that Canadians were becoming less tolerant of overt forms of racial discrimination. Yet, the debate, as outlined in chapter one, also demonstrates there was also considerable disagreement about severity of discrimination, or, for that matter, whether decisions based on race should be condemned by a country in the young stages of its own “modernity.” On November 11, 1965, only eleven days before the march in Kenora, Rhodesia declared unilateral independence from Britain. It did so, however, to install white-minority rule under the hand of Ian Smith. Canada voiced its moral opposition to minority rule, refused to acknowledge Rhodesia after independence, and then banned Rhodesian imports to Canada. Robert Matthews argues that three considerations influenced Canada’s reaction to Rhodesia. Compliance with the United Nations Security Council and a desire to have the Commonwealth remain a credible institution were two of these. The third, according to Matthews, was that through the media “the government was made aware of Canadian disapproval. It felt obliged to express in some concrete fashion the public’s abhorrence for racial discrimination.”

Commentary on white minority rule in Rhodesian independence is instructive because it helps us understand that opinions about whether or not Indians were ‘ready’ for self-rule were not created under a nationally bound blanket. For Alan Robertson, writing from Northumberland, England, Canada (along with Australian, New Zealand, and Britain) were united in an “effort to smash white rule in Rhodesia in order to set

---

50 Matthews 74.
incompetent black political gangsters as masters of the white settlers, their lives and possessions,” in essence, the country they had built. For Robertson, “Black domination,” created racial disharmony unlike had ever been previously witnessed between whites and blacks. Challenging Canada’s position on Rhodesia as hypocritical, Robertson asked why no one demands that Canada “hand everything over to the Red Indians,” implying that if they did the same gangster mentality would overrun Canadian civilization.51 Ironically, Canada’s desire to prevent minority rule seemingly would have made this development impossible. Whereas Robertson evidently supported white-rule for its ‘civilizing’ effects, Patrick Walsh from Flesherton, Ontario, thought Canadians should look to emulate the Rhodesia’s example. He explained that Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith, and before him Cecil Rhodes, were responsible for turning Rhodesia into an enlightened white ruled nation that was dedicated to developing black Africans. “This is more than Canadians can say about how we handled the peaceful Indians” chided Walsh; Indians “who were slaughtered like game,” he added.52

The language of development, apartheid and minority rule, took shape around long held notions of biologically driven racial hierarchy. From the letters, documents, and articles I have read, rarely did anyone invoke biological racism as an argument in favour of justice for Indigenous peoples. This made Elmer Trecloar unique. As an American who vacationed frequently in Canada and followed Canadian public debate, Trecloar was exasperated at, what he called, the “sanctimonious” language used by Canadians in discussing South African apartheid. In his travels he had seen widespread discrimination against Indians and had read “year after year” of their complaints about broken treaties.

In his attempt to explain to Canadians why they had no excuse to treat Indians (and Japanese Canadians, he added) unfairly he suggested “the further you are removed from a problem the more tolerant and broadminded you can afford to be.” More specifically, he suggested, “Indians are less volatile than the Negro, and with their lower propensity to crimes of violence there is less justification for Canadian treatment of these minorities.”

At a time when Indigenous peoples served as symbols for political opinion on foreign affairs, perhaps it is not unexpected that foreign commentary about Indigenous politics in Canada might concern officials. For example, in 1959 the South African high commissioner to Canada drew the ire of officials after telling an Ottawa ladies club that South Africa and Canada shared similar opinions on how to treat Indigenous peoples.

Sometimes, however, these connections between Indigenous actors and African leaders took unexpected turns. In the late 1980s, at the height of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney’s attempts to impose further sanctions on the apartheid South African government, a small group of Indian chiefs used the moment to make symbolic gestures, not towards oppressed blacks, but towards the white rulers of South Africa. In 1987, chief Louis Stevenson of the Peguis reserve invited South African ambassador Glen Babb to come tour the reserve. In doing so, Stevenson drew condemnation from the African National Congress, who compared the invitation of Babb to inviting a representative of Hitler to see a reserve during World War II. Many Indigenous representative bodies also opposed Babb’s visit. The Assembly of First Nations, for example, reiterated that

---

their solidarity lay with the majority black population of South Africa. Stevenson, however, was undeterred. His request for ninety-nine million dollars in foreign aid from South Africa, and Babb’s subsequent visit, were an attempt to embarrass the Canadian government. In a debate on the CBC, Stevenson told viewers, “You know, all I want to do is make the rest of the world aware that things aren’t as good as Canada leads the rest of the world to believe in terms of how they treat the aboriginal people. And, I don’t care who comes to our reserve to help us reveal that situation.”

Culture, Development and Aboriginal/White conflict in Kenora

In the early 1970s, historian Palmer Patterson published a wide-ranging history arguing that the experience of other colonized (or formerly colonized) peoples, especially Africans, provided a useful framework for understanding Indigenous history in Canada. Patterson believed this framework was necessary because too many Canadians viewed Indians as an “ethnic” minority and not as distinct nations. Through the global comparison he hoped that “We may begin to see Indians more clearly as colonial people when we study the colonial scene in other parts of the world.” He listed a common set of global themes including how Indigenous groups worldwide had been split through taking sides in colonial wars; the impact of disease; the missionary tradition, which, he noted, 56 Freeman, 180. See also, We Have Such Things At Home, Tamarack Productions, 1997. 57 See also Geoffrey York, The Dispossessed: Life and Death in Native Canada (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989) 242; Pauline Comeau and Aldo Santin, The First Canadians: A Profile of Canada’s Native People Today (Toronto: J.Lorimer, 1990) 49; Hall, The American Empire and The Fourth World, 514; Joan G. Fairweather, “Is This Apartheid? Aboriginal Reserves and Self-Government in Canada, 1960-82,” in David McNab and Nin.D.Waab.Jig (eds) Earth Water, Air and Fire: Studies in Canadian Ethnohistory (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1998) 275-6, 277, 294; Yasmeen Abu-Laban, “The Future and the Legacy: Globalization and the Canadian Settler-State,” Journal of Canadian Studies 35:4 (2001), 269-70; Lackenbrauer and Cooper, “The Achilles Heel of Canadian International Citizenship, 105. 58 Quoted on “Apartheid in Canada? Babb to visit Peguis Indian Reserve” Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 9 March, 1987, http://archives.cbc.ca/politics/international_politics/clips/4143 (last accessed 4 December 2010).
did not always produce harmful results for Indians; indirect rule fostered through imposed political systems (band councils in Canada); the question of land and the attempt to normalize capitalism on traditionally non-capitalist societies.\textsuperscript{59}

By the mid-1960s the final two categories, land and capitalism, were the basis of extensive debate about Indigenous communities. This was part of the globally circulating discourse of development, which, as we have seen, shaped the First World’s interaction with the Third World in the 1960s. It also shaped discussions in Canada about Indigenous politics and culture. By the early 1960s, social conditions on reserves were deplorable. Mortality rates, for example, were double what they were for whites; while welfare rates were nearly ten times higher for status Indians than for others. The government’s Indian Affairs Branch (IAB) decided that the best approach was Community Development. As imagined by the IAB, community development, through combining funding for cultural programs, recreation, non-profit projects and physical infrastructure with leadership training, would create self-sufficiency.\textsuperscript{60}

For some commentators, this move in the early 1960s towards “development” amongst Indigenous peoples in Canada was an “attempt to get away from the implications of colonialism, imperialism, paternalistic administration and assimilation through disintegration.”\textsuperscript{61} Historian Sally Weaver argues the motivation came from “the emerging nationalism of decolonizing third-world countries.”\textsuperscript{62} Here she picks up on a popular narrative from the period. In 1967, for example, anthropologist Antony John

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{59} Palmer Patterson, \textit{The Canadian Indian: A History since 1500} (Don Mills: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1972).
\item \textsuperscript{61} H.B. Hawthorn, C.S. Belshaw, S.M. Jamieson, \textit{The Indians of British Columbia} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960).
\item \textsuperscript{62} Sally Weaver, \textit{Making Canadian Indian policy : the hidden agenda 1968-70} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981) 15.
\end{itemize}
Lloyd wrote that the pressures of modern economic life were parallel conditions shared by both the “underdeveloped nations” of the Third World and by “the native peoples of Canada.”

While scholar Helen Buckley argues that the development approach failed partly because it was a “Third World approach” to a problem in the first world, historian Yassine Essid offers a more useful perspective for understanding its significance. Essid argues that the proponents of the decade of development imagined “a homogenous international system in which a large portion of humanity living in difficult circumstance” believed that a “Western model of growth and development is the only path to end poverty.” He goes on to argue that for those people who were the focus of development maintaining connections with their history and culture is a continual process of negotiation.

This negotiation was the focus of a talk by Fred Kelly at Lakehead University in February 1966. Just three months after the march down Main Street, Kelly told the audience: “Finally the non-Indian is beginning to the listen to the Indian talk.” This particular evening, Kelly spoke extensively about the “Indian problem” and the “clash” between Indian culture and white culture. As he had during the march, Kelly redefined the logic behind the idea of “an Indian problem.” He explained that “The gap between the Indian and white socio-economic standards is not the Indian problem. To insist that it

63 Antony John Lloyd, Community Development in Canada (Ottawa: Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, 1967) 22.
66 Frederick Kelly “Address to The Lakehead University Students” 24 Feb. 1966: 1
is so, is to put the onus of fitting into the main-stream of society upon the Indian alone."

Most importantly, this meant that Indians “have problems because we have failed to assimilate or to become ‘white.’”

The cultural problem, however, was a little more difficult for him to define, both because Kelly denied being an authority on the topic and because in North America there were hundreds of Indigenous societies that spoke many languages and practiced a variety of customs. But, in general, he believed the clash came from several important societal distinctions. White society, he argued, placed self above everything else; were dictated to by the clock and worked for material compensation and believed in property ownership. For Kelly, this last point was the most important factor in the “breakdown of relations.” Indians, for Kelly, were communally oriented (but less and less so), would rather focus on “being” than “becoming” and valued work not for material compensation but for the purpose of completing a task. However, these were not unbridgeable divides. As was often the case in 1965 and 1966, when Kelly ended his talk he made a plea for common understandings. Integration, he argued, needed to be a two-way street. “Remember,” he said, “human history is determined not by what happens in the skies, but by what takes place in the heart of man. And let us not forget that love and tolerance are the most beautiful trees in the forest of happiness.”

In Kenora a similar analysis of colonialism and development began to take place inside the language of “culture.” In 1966, members of the Indian-White Committee along with other Kenora residents developed the idea for a speaker’s series on “knowledge

---

67 Kelly, “Address” 1
68 Kelly, “Address” 2.
69 Kelly, “Address” 3.
70 Kelly, “Address” 5.
about Indians and cross-cultural tensions.”\textsuperscript{71} Though not stated explicitly, the belief that racism in Kenora derived its power not from hatred but instead from ignorance drove this initiative. With assistance from the University of Manitoba, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and the Ontario government, the group drew up a list consisting mainly of academic scholars. In 1967, over a four-month period lasting from February until April, ten speakers from many corners of North America came to Kenora and debated the question of “cross-cultural” tensions.

This was a particularly interesting moment for such a seminar series, both because of the local tensions but also because of transnational debates around the meaning of culture. In the early 1960s, the concept of culture was in the process of undergoing radical reinterpretation as new conceptualizations were challenging modernist definitions that had dominated the first half of the twentieth century. Thus the idea of culture as an everyday process deeply embedded within politics challenged the late nineteenth century notion of culture as an apolitical process, ranging from high art all the way to “primitive societies,” that existed outside of commodity forms.\textsuperscript{72} However, according to cultural theorist Michael Denning, this reconceptualization did not necessarily mean people disposed of all previous definitions. National liberation movements, for example, resurrected the “pluralist anthropological notion of culture as the ways of life of particular people, the foundation for the studies of national character.”\textsuperscript{73} This curious mix between nineteenth century anthropological explanations of “primitive societies” and mid

\textsuperscript{71} “Introduction,” Resolving Conflicts: A Cross Cultural Approach Kenora, Ontario, 10 February-14 May, 1967: 3
\textsuperscript{72} Michael Denning, Culture in the Age of the Three Worlds (New York: Verso, 2004) 5, 77-79.
\textsuperscript{73} Denning, 89.
twentieth century national liberation movements arguments about national character was on display throughout the Kenora speakers series in the spring of 1967.

The program began with one of the mid-twentieth century’s most important scholars of Indigenous politics and culture. Then an anthropologist at the University of Saskatchewan, D’Arcy McNickle was a major figure in American Indian politics throughout the immediate post-war period. In the early 1950s McNickle asserted that parallels existed between “underdevelopment” locally and globally. As the chairman of the Indian Tribal Relations Committee of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) his proposed ten-point poverty reduction program, modeling it after Harry Truman’s technical assistance program. Though mostly ignored by the American government, the NCAI resurrected the plan in 1953 and submitted it to US Congress. Alyosha Goldstein argues that “the terms outlined by the proposal replicated the language supporting technical assistance to impoverished nations abroad, where U.S. policymakers’ focus on technical support and the expansion of industry and market relations was combined with an emphasis on national self-determination in order to attract that participation of newly decolonized states.”

In the first spring months of 1967, in a high-school gymnasium in Kenora, McNickle did not bring with him explicit references to underdevelopment, national self-determination or decolonization. Instead, he made the case that local Indian values challenged the new ideas of global development being implemented from the outside. McNickle was using inside/outside or local/global as a way to describe the cultural differences between Indian and white. By this time people in Kenora also had another

---

74 Goldstein 32.
75 Goldstein 33.
inside/outside relationship with the nation, having already been defined as part of Canada’s Alabama.

The primary focus for McNickle’s discussion was the way Indian “habits and customs” made difficult profit and goal-driven development on reserves. As he had done previously in his references Third World underdevelopment, McNickle situated cultural difference globally. “One could go anywhere in the world where there are native people living…” he told the audience, “and find ways that seem strange.” This included deference to elders even when the young perceived elders to be incorrect, adherence to superstition, and disregard for private property and the profit motive. Rejecting the “habits of capitalism” was simply better understood as a different way of life and not, McNickle insisted, as a rejection of the good intentions of European settlers who were trying to pass on the benefits of modernity. Instead of dismissing Indian values, he encouraged the audience to respect this way of living. From the point of view Indians, they were the ones doing all of the adjusting while whites were allowed to keep their way of life intact. Moreover, what whites framed as apathy, McNickle argued, was instead a withdrawal from a society that Indians thought did not respect them. While the time may have arrived for Indians to begin adapting their cultural values to the patterns of capitalist society, the time had also come for a change in European attitudes. McNickle insisted that the idea of human perfectibility was not universal, nor was the white definition of “the good life.” In the end, Western development schemes would work only if Indians

---

were allowed to be both true to their cultural beliefs while adopting practices of modern life as they saw fit.  

The series’ second speaker was James Howard, an anthropologist who was then the director of University of South Dakota museum. Like McNickle he argued that this series was not about “an Indian problem” or a “white problem” but instead a “community problem.” “Today, in 1967,” he explained, “there is still a basic lack of understanding of the Indian on the part of the White man.” According to Howard, because of media focus on foreign aid, Canadians knew more about Third World cultures than they did about local Indian cultures. This lack of understanding played “a great part in preventing Indian development, which holds back the Indian and keeps him from taking his rightful place in Canadian and American society.” If Indian cultural values were incorporated into Canadian modern life, Howard concluded, it might help further the development of Indian life without compromising identity, and it also might help teach white people to stop being conquerors. The problem for Howard was how to combine respect for Indigenous cultures, which were pan-American and shared the trait of having an intimate relationship to the earth, with a white culture that believed in nation, science and progress; in other words, characteristics to help conquer the earth.

The following week J. Steinbring, an anthropologist from United College in Winnipeg, covered much the same ground as Howard, but with a far more pointed

---


79 Howard, “Indian Cultures: their History and Contributions” 24.

80 Howard, “Indian Cultures: their History and Contributions” 25.

81 Howard, “Indian Cultures: their History and Contributions” 30.
critique. Cultures, he argued, were dynamic entities shaped as much by external factors as they were internal dynamics. External factors such as industrialization and settler-colonialism forced a mobile Ojibwa culture into patterns of permanent settlement. In turn these external factors had wounded Ojibwa culture, forcing upon them worldwide “a money centred system of economic exchange.” This resulted in significantly new relationships to time and space.  

Steinbring, however, saved his strongest critique for the way Western modernity used science and education as tools of assimilation, a process the anthropologist believed contributed to nothing less than Indigenous “cultural extermination.” For the American trained field anthropologist, exterminating culture was akin to the extermination of a people. He followed critiques of residential schools and reserve teachers who were uninterested in Ojibwa knowledge (and according to the tone of Steinbring’s comments there were some teachers in the audience) with a lengthy dismantling of “modern” society’s “faith” in science. “It is a faith,” Steinbring argued, “which has brought us a feeling of power over everything. And, it has not stopped when it comes to people, or to the doors of another cultural world (in which this faith is not proclaimed).” Moreover, to apply scientific theory to people who had “distinctly different cultural configurations” was nothing less than “inhumane.”

As the evening’s talk wound down Steinbring explained that the growing “resistance” from Indigenous peoples was a sign of health for it symbolized a life force.

83 Steinbring, “Ojibwa Culture” 53.
84 Unlike most other speakers, Steinbring refused to use the term Indian, instead employing native. He reasoned “it confuses the native people of Canada with recent immigrants from Central Asia.” This confusion resulted in native peoples further losing title to distinctiveness, Steinbring, 67-68.
The night ended with a call for more culturally sensitive interactions between the “external culture’s” bureaucracy and Indigenous cultures, for more training in inter-cultural professions, an extensive modification to education (including the abolition of residential schools) and, finally, the abandonment of scientifically driven assimilation theories that had “deculturized” Indians in an effort to turn them “White.”

In the months following McNickle’s opening presentation, professionals from across North America converged upon Kenora to talk about “Ojibwa culture,” “Indian values” and development. McNickle’s two-pronged message of cultural autonomy and respect for differences set the tone for many of the lectures. On several occasions, the audience heard about the peculiar habits of Ojibwa culture that made Indigenous peoples resistant to capitalist development. Several speakers argued that the resilience of Ojibwa beliefs made the idea of assimilation somewhat futile. Over the course of four months, each speaker brought a slightly different perspective on Ojibwa culture and the questions of assimilation, urbanization, and development. Indeed, by the end of Steinbring’s lecture there were already differing perspectives on gender within Ojibwa culture. E.S. Rogers characterized the nuclear family as the prime economic unit in Ojibwa culture. Men and women, he argued, shared the duties of manufacturing and consumption. J. Steinbring, however, told listeners that “Ojibwa culture is male oriented” and that “primary economic roles are filled by men.”

For three weeks, starting with Steinbring, and ending with Dr. AD Asimi, assimilation into the “modern” world grounded the discussions. Just as the speakers before her had, University of Wisconsin anthropologist Nancy Oestreich-Lurie rejected

86 Steinbring, “Ojibwa Culture” 70.
the term “Indian problem.” “When you define people as a problem,” she argued, “you do not really want to get rid of the problem; you really want to get rid of the people so you do not have to notice them.” To help demonstrate this, Oestreich-Lurie’s offered a new way to approach the topic of urbanization which focused on two popular arguments suggesting that Indians were not prepared for modern society in the 1960s: the organization of time and space. She first directed her attention to the conceptualization of Indians as migrants to the city. The language of migration, she argued, created an inaccurate understanding of a process that was, for her, more akin to a commute. Why commuters and not migrants? Aboriginals were in places such as Kenora to “begin with.” Thus, “[f]or Indian people the ‘New World’ is the same as their old world.” What Oestreich-Lurie meant is that Indigenous peoples had adapted to urban industrial development without simply abandoning traditional ways of organizing time and space. In an era seemingly obsessed with bringing colonial subjects into a modern world, this night the audience was challenged with the idea that there was more than one way to live in “modern society.”

The organization of time, the other pillar of modern society was also up for reimagination if Indigenous peoples were left “to experiment and develop things in their own fashion.” For Oestreich-Lurie, “Indian time,” a term often used to malign those who did not seem interested in following strict compartmentalization of time, was a way of getting away from a nine-to-five workday. “We have always thought of ‘Indian Time’ as a bad thing,” she explained, “but forward looking industrial planners are beginning to

---

89 Oestreich Lurie, “The Indian Moves to an Urban Setting” 74.
90 Oestreich Lurie, “The Indian Moves to an Urban Setting” 83.
wonder about excessive rigidity of schedules.” This was not simply meant as a critique of modern society, rather she insisted that Indigenous time and space could be the pillars of a new globalized world.

The irony here is that at the same moment that people in a Kenora high school gymnasium were being told that “Indian” time and space offered a system that seemingly perfected global capitalism, others, mainly in the burgeoning North American hippie movements imagined a wholly different function for Indigenous culture. As Historian Philip Deloria illustrates, countercultural movements borrowed the symbols of Indianness (such as the tipi) and practices, including “Indian time,” as a way to escape what they believed was a modern society that robbed them of their individuality through micromanagement. Thus in the late 1960s Indigenous cultures helped imagine many diverse ways of organizing the world. As Deloria remarks, “whenever white Americans,” (and we should add white Canadians), “have confronted crises of identity, some of them have inevitably turned to Indians.”

The seminar series also featured speakers who did not view Ojibwa culture as a tool for progressive change. AD Asimi, a former community organizer in Karachi, Pakistan, argued that the way to “the good life” for Indians required an acceptance of capitalism. “The pursuit of progress” would facilitate a move from reserves into the city. For Asimi, “taking progress to the reserves” was useless because “the reserve will never be for the Indian anything but a reminder of his primitiveness…His confinement to the reserve represents the confinement of his people from their liberty, independence and

---

ancestral heritage.” For Asimi, progress was “not the one defined by [Indian] culture but that of the non-Indian.” 92

The four month long series ended much like it began, with a famous academic attempting to offer a broad perspective on the “problem” in Kenora. Anthropologist Ruth Landes gave the final lecture of the series. Landes was not a stranger to the Kenora area or to Indigenous peoples of the region. In the 1930s she did her PhD fieldwork in Manitou Falls, a community along the Rainy River in between the towns of Fort Frances and Kenora. This research, primarily based on stories provided by a couple of informants, provided the foundation for several studies on Ojibwa culture. To this day her studies of Ojibwa women remain controversial, both for her methodological tool of paying informants for stories and for her argument that Ojibwa society was highly individualistic. 93

Landes moved the cross-cultural seminar series into a topic on the minds of many in the late 1960s: protest. According to Landes’ biographer, Sally Cole, after taking a position at McMaster University in Hamilton, Landes began “to appreciate the intense and growing political issues of aboriginal self-determination and land claims in

93 For The Ojibwa Woman, Landes relied heavily on stories by Maggie Wilson, a self-identified Cree who lived in Manitou Falls and who Landes paid. Landes’ biographer, Sally Cole, met the family of Maggie Wilson in August 1995 in an attempt to learn more about Ojibwa responses to Landes’ book. Wilson’s granddaughter told Cole that the stories were “gossip” and “should not have been written down.” Wilson’s great-granddaughter, who was a teacher in 1995, had similar feelings, even telling Cole that she took it off the shelves when it arrived in Manitou Falls. For her part, Cole tried to convince the two women otherwise, claiming that Landes’ research was a feminist act and that the difficulties of women in the 1930s were spoken through her work. It does not appear as though either of the two women were moved by the argument. Sally Cole, Ruth Landes: A Life in Anthropology (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 66-69. One source of controversy and subsequent anger over Landes’ book was the anthropologist’s failure to maintain confidentiality of those negatively portrayed in Wilson’s stories, see Joan A. Lovisek, Tim E. Holzkamm, and Leo G. Waisburg, “Fatal Errors: Ruth Landes and the creation of the ‘Atomistic Ojibwa’,” Anthropologica, 39:1/2, (1997).
Canada."94 This proved productive as well as profitable. While Landes had already published a controversial book on condomblé in Brazil called City of Woman, the rise in Indigenous protest across Canada sparked interest in the research she had conducted almost thirty years earlier.95

As she began speaking in Kenora, Landes attempted to shift the discussion of Kenora away from the local towards the global. This was not a new approach during the Kenora lecture series. In an earlier lecture, anthropologist J Howard connected Ojibwa culture to Indigenous cultures across the Americas. Landes, however, added a new dimension to the global understanding of the Kenora area by including local Indians within the category of “the conquered” peoples of the world. Alongside blacks in Rhodesia and South Africa and the “American negro,” Indians, Landes told listeners, were only a “problem” because the “conquerors” created this identity. In “frontier” towns, such as Kenora, being “conquered” took shape through racial hierarchies that were built upon biological notions of Indians as inferior to whites. This hierarchy, Landes maintained, circumscribed the daily lives of local Indians.96

Landes distinguished herself even further from the other speakers who promoted a “community” response by arguing that it was the responsibility of Indians to overturn their identity as conquered subjects. Resistance had only been dealt with once previously during the speaker’s series when J. Steinbring discussed the idea of national liberation. “What very few people in the dominant external culture realized,” he argued, “is that

95 The Ojibwa Woman, Landes most controversial Ojibwa focused research, was reprinted in 1971. Ojibwa Religion and the Midéwiwin, was written in the 1930s but published in 1968, while Ojibwa Sociology was already in publication when Landes spoke in Kenora in 1967, Cole, 67.
resistance (and the organization of defenses) is an absolute sign of health and life. We should welcome resistance because it immediately shows us that the Ojibwa people think they have something worth defending."\(^{97}\) Where Steinbring spoke abstractly, Landes offered specific examples. Black Power groups, most notably Black Muslims, she noted, were beginning to refuse their identity as “conquered.”

Where as D’Arcy McNickle’s opening lecture suggested that colonialism was primarily an economic project, by the end of the series a different message emerged. By using race and culture as the primary categories of colonial domination, and by describing them through the binary of conqueror and conquered, Landes (perhaps unknowingly) had moved the audience in Kenora closer to a Fanonian interpretation of Third World decolonization. If Landes had ended her talk on that point, this would have made for a surprisingly radical end to the series of talks given in Kenora’s local high school gymnasium. However, what appeared to be a radical interpretation of colonialism as a global system by the end turned into a set of deeply conservative conclusions that ignored the importance (or existence) of the Indigenous protest that had originally ignited the speakers’ series. Landes concluded by criticizing Indians in Kenora for their “self-pity.” Ironically, turning away from her initial argument, she reemphasized the legitimacy of the term “Indian problem” and in doing so returned to a controversial idea for which she has become well-known: that Ojibwa culture is marked by its highly individualistic nature. The “Indian problem” she concluded, “in part then, can be accepted as the failure of Indians in this particular area to contribute effectively to an examination and programming of significant changes. There are reasons for these other than conquest. One reason is the Ojibwa tradition which is highly individualistic. But civilizations and groups

\(^{97}\) Steinbring, “Ojibwa Culture” 62.
of men do not survive without adaptations. Nobody ever gives freedom, opportunity, riches as a gift.”⁹⁸

**Conclusion**

The public discussions about aid, apartheid and white rule demonstrate that in the imagination of Canadians, knowledge about the Third World were often connected to opinions about Indigenous life in Canada. Journalists such as Peter Gzowski went further than most commentators by explicitly situating Indigenous protest in Canada within, what he called, the struggle between non-white and white peoples of the world.⁹⁹ The logic that informed this rhetoric takes at face value the logic that informed decolonization in the Third World: the agents of colonialism imposed a foreign way of life onto those that they conquered.

Coming away from the speaker series in May 1967 it was common to argue that the situation of Indigenous peoples in Kenora was not only similar to other Indigenous peoples in Canada but also to other formerly colonized peoples globally. Throughout the four months, beginning with McNickle’s reference to American Indians and ending with Landes invocation of Black Muslims, the global was commonly used as a way to problematize the “Indian problem” locally. Yet alongside these narratives locating the condition of Indigenous cultures within the “underdeveloped” world were Indigenous peoples themselves. For a growing contingent of militant organizers, the Third World appeared not as a space of pity and rescue, but instead as place with a

---

history that helped explain how Indigenous peoples in Canada could escape their own history of colonial oppression. It is to that moment that we now turn.
Chapter Three: “There is no Che in Canada, there is just an alleged Indian in Havana”—Third World decolonization and the rise of Red Power politics.

On October 17, 1967, Robert Thompson, a Social Credit Member of Parliament from Red Deer, Alberta, arose from his seat and asked Solicitor General Larry Pennell if he was aware that Cuba was attempting to incite rebellion in Canada. According to letters Thompson received from short-wave radio operators in British Columbia, Northern Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan, Radio Havana in Cuba was broadcasting a daily half-hour program giving instructions in “subversive activity and guerilla warfare” to the “Indians and Métis” in Western Canada.1 The radio operators claimed that a “former Indian resident” from Western Canada was on Radio Havana “interspersing his English talks with phrases in the Cree language.” Reportedly, he did so while reading excerpts from Ché Guevara’s On Guerilla Warfare.2

Rumours of Cuban interest in Indigenous rebellion continued for several weeks as the government promised to investigate the charges. In the midst of another parliamentary discussion on the topic, Thompson added to his theory by suggesting that weapons recently missing from an armories building in Winnipeg, Manitoba were stolen by Cuban inspired Western Canadian Indian militants.3 Thompson was prone to seeing

---

Russian, Chinese and Soviet communists around every corner of discontent. Yet for those without televisions, in the early 1960s radio remained an important source of information. As historian Cynthia Wright explains, for many working-class people in Canada, Cuban radio “formed their sense of revolution.” In autumn 1967, Canadian journalist Wayne Edmonstone lent some credibility to Thompson’s claim. Covering Stokely Carmichael’s visit to Havana (where he called for global black rebellion), Edmonstone reported that Cubans were continually asking him about the situation of Indians and Quebecois. He believed that if Cubans “read the story a few days ago of the little Indian girl who dies of malnutrition on a reservation in one of the richest countries in the world…they’ll feel themselves justified” in trying to provoke revolt in Canada.

By the time of these reports, Cuban revolutionaries and Indigenous groups in North America had already made symbolic overtures to each other. In 1959, only months after Fidel Castro took power, American Indians from several Indigenous nations found themselves in Havana for “26 July Movement” celebrations. Wallace “Mad Bear” Anderson was a member of Tuscarora Reservation close to Niagara falls and a longtime activist involved in fights for Indian sovereignty both in New York state and in Brantford, Ontario in the late 1950s. He remembered that Castro “rolled out the red carpet for us, including police escort in Cadillacs, bands, and machete-waving campesinos.” Another delegation, consisting of eleven Miccosukee Indians led by tribal

---

6 Wallace “Mad Bear” Anderson quoted in Stan Steiner, The New Indians (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1968), 281; and in Hall, 260. Steiner and Hall each mark the date of this meeting as July 1958, which is incorrect given the revolution’s chronology. When mentioning Anderson’s visit, many authors have repeated this mistake. However, the date is correctly given as July 1959 in Bruce Elliott Johansen and Barbara Alice Mann (eds), Encyclopedia of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) (Westport, CT:
spokesperson Buffalo Tiger, were also guests at the same celebration. The delegation found its way to Havana after earlier initiating dialogue with Cuban officials about sovereignty claims being made by the Miccosukee Indians in the state of Florida. After receiving a letter sent by the Miccosukees congratulating Castro on the revolution’s triumph, a Cuban official replied that it would “formally recognize” the Miccosukee as a sovereign nation, and invited the delegation to Cuba for the July celebrations. This exchange did not go unnoticed by the American government. In the words of historian Harry Kersey, they were “not pleased at the prospect of an American ethnic minority having to turn to a Communist nation for support in achieving its political rights.”

Meanwhile, in Canada, Thompson was still trying to get a serious response to his charges. “It is well known,” he claimed, “that Cuba follows a policy of subversion in Latin America and South America and there is no reason why this same policy would not be directed against Canada.” The Canadian government assured citizens it would investigate Thompson’s charges and “react strongly.” Yet, confirmation of Cuban interference in “French, Indian and Métis” radical politics, this time at least, never materialized. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) International Service

---


8 quoted in Kersey, “The Havana Connection,” 499; Buffalo Tiger and Kersey Jr., *Buffalo Tiger* 143.

9 Kersey, “The Havana Connection,” 502

Middle Eastern Division, capable of picking up global shortwave broadcasts, denied that Radio Havana programs could reach Canada.\(^{11}\) Cuban first secretary Robert Galvez, while acknowledging that Radio Havana could broadcast programs into Canada, claimed it was only English and French language news programming.\(^{12}\) Also denying Thompson’s more inflammatory charge of subversion was Cuban ambassador America Cruz.\(^{13}\) Although External Affairs Secretary Paul Martin did not make public his report on the matter, he gave the impression that Ambassador Cruz’s denial satisfied the government’s concern.\(^{14}\)

While journalists such as Edmonstone gave evidence of potential Cuban interest in Indian politics, most journalists took the same position as the Canadian state, but did so in language that dismissed the charges as an example of Thompson’s well-known wild imagination. The Toronto Star called the claim “Bizarre,”\(^{15}\) while the Montreal Star poked fun at Thompson with a cartoon depicting Castro at a podium, cigar in mouth, fist in the air, inciting the crowd with chants of “Vive Red Deer, Alberta, libre!”\(^{16}\) Other commentators just refused to believe in the possibility of rebellion from the Indians and Métis of Western Canada. In a fit of uncontrollable sarcasm, Gary Lautens claimed he had intercepted messages from Cuba. “It was pure luck,” Lautens wrote, “[y]esterday,

\(^{15}\) Hazlitt, “Is Cuban radio inciting separatists” 4.
while looking out my window, I noticed white puffs in the sky…of course—smoke signals!” Mockingly he listed the ways that the “Indians” were told to attack the “White man’s city” only to end by saying: “[t]ake it from me…the White Man doesn’t have anything to worry about.” An editorial in the Winnipeg Free Press shared in the sarcasm, claiming the climate would prevent a Cuban led insurrection in Canada:

There is no Che in Canada: there is just an alleged Indian in Havana. The Indian is probably grateful for a season out of the coming cold, and may feel fairly secure about another Che. If Cuban based insurrection comes it will play for only a summer season: the Cubans will prefer the heat and the sultry eyes of the Latin quarter to the cold reality of our northern winter.

---


---

Of course, Guevara did not lead a rebellion in Western Canada (in fact Guevara’s death in Bolivia was made public during this episode). Weeks after the affair disappeared from the public eye, Howard Adams (by then a familiar Red Power theorist and Métis activist from Saskatchewan) explained that while Indians and Métis were indeed talking of rebellion, they were not sitting around listening to Radio Havana. So, was this just another case of Indigenous peoples in Canada being symbolically invoked to sensationalize one person’s paranoid Cold War fantasies? Perhaps. Yet, I suggest that it is in the late 1960s and early 1970s when global anti-colonialism (including Third World decolonization and American Black Power) shaped the direction of Indigenous anti-colonial activism, or what is more commonly known as Red Power. Several historians have offered important studies on the rise Indigenous national identity in this period. They discuss how betrayals brought on by the Liberal Government’s 1969 White Paper helped mobilized a nationwide response. As Myra Rutherdale and Jim Miller explain, Indigenous peoples also used important moments in Canadian national history, such as Expo 1967, to exercise public grievances on an international stage. I do not contest the importance of these moments in the development of Indigenous protest politics and Red Power. Yet what I argue is that we also need a better understanding of the involvement of Indigenous activists, intellectuals, and filmmakers in the transnational world of anti-colonialism. As Ravi de Costa argues, the end of colonial empires “offered indigenous peoples a new way to see the world, one that combined grievance and resistance with

solidarity.”21 According to Bruce Baum and Howard Winant, these challenges to empire ruptured and reconfigured white global racial dominance.22 In such a context, Canada, now free of its identity as a colony, could be imagined as a state imposing a colonial order at the same moment old empires crumbled. Andrea Smith, for example, contends that in this moment, “Native peoples began to see a contradiction between asserting the sovereignty of indigenous nations on the one hand, and then seeking redress from their colonizer’s government on the other.”23

In this chapter I demonstrate that the association between local grievances and global anti-colonialism took shape in three distinct forms. This included grassroots organizing and the circulation of ideas through conferences and community newspapers. As well, the proximity of Canada to the United States facilitated constant interaction with members of the Black Panther Party, many of who spoke the language of national liberation. This coincided with a movement amongst some Indigenous activists and local black power advocates to articulate the similarities of their status as colonized subjects. In addition, I demonstrate the significance of travel by Indigenous intellectuals and activists outside of Canada. Here I discuss trips to China, Tanzania and California. Finally, because decolonization was both a political and cultural process, I suggest that the Indigenous articulation of their own histories in the late 1960s and 1970s in which Canada is described as a colonizing force helped articulate a set of new identities that highlighted past Indigenous resistance. This, however, was a contested narrative. The

state competed with filmmakers, for example, over the memory of Louis Riel and the Northwest Rebellion. I believe this is evidence that cultural battles over history were, perhaps, as important as political battles over policies in the development of Red Power.

**Black Power/Red Power:**

Almost four years after having to stand in front and below a stage when he spoke during the march in Kenora, by May 1969 Fred Kelly was sharing a stage with arguably some of the most recognizable figures of the global Black Power movement, including Kathleen Cleaver of the Black Panther Party and Jan Carew, a Guyanese radical intellectual. However, Kelly, Carew, and other members of the Toronto based Black Liberation Front and the Afro-American Progressive Association first made headlines four months earlier. On February 21st, 1969, the fourth anniversary of Malcolm X’s assassination, they declared a need for a partnership between Indigenous activists and Black Power. Given the date, the announcement drew significant publicity. Kelly used the opportunity to explain that the meeting took place because black peoples and Indians were “prey to the policy of divide and rule” and that “both suffer the atrocities of a colonial situation.”

Kelly illuminated the former claim by admitting that until recently he “was almost brainwashed” into believing that blacks were inferior.

For Jan Carew, a Guyanese intellectual who called Canada home for a brief period between 1966 and 1969, the announcement fit with the political and cultural work that then occupied most of his time. Born in Guyana, Carew, in the words of A.

---


Sivandanan, was instrumental in shaping “the cultural revolution against colonialism.”

In 1962, he served as Guyana’s Director of Culture and was later named a special cultural consultant for Kwame Nkrumah’s government in Ghana. After arriving in Toronto to work with the CBC, Carew became best known for dedication to global black liberation politics. In March 1968, Carew, along with Ted Watkins, a former player in the Canadian Football League, and Jose Garcia, an electrician from the Dominican Republic, formed the Afro-American Progressive Association (AAPA). The AAPA’s main objectives were to become involved in “the worldwide Black Liberation struggle,” “inform Black people living in Canada of conditions which exist in Canada and worldwide” and to use direct action to enact structural change. Education was an important aspect of AAPA organizing, as it was for many liberation movements of the Sixties. The AAPA recommended reading Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*, Nkrumah’s *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* and listening to a recording of “The Ballot or the Bullet” by Malcolm X. In addition, regular columns such as “Liberation News Fronts” and “Why the Struggle is World Wide” appeared to systematically link, for example, liberation wars in Rhodesia and South Africa with U.S. intelligence espionage in Chilé.

Carew’s opinions about race, Canada and global anti-colonialism proved controversial. Responding to an article published by the *Toronto Star*, one reader accused

---


27 Sivanandan writes that while in Ghana, Carew made important connections with other individuals involved in black power struggles, including Malcolm X, a person he often talked with “long into the night.” Carew would later relate his thoughts about Malcolm X in *Ghosts in Our Blood: With Malcolm X in Africa, England, and the Caribbean* (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1994).

28 Carew’s move to Canada was prompted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s offer to work as an arts reporter. Although hesitant at first, Carew came after much urging from fellow author Austin Clarke.

29 AAPA News Letter, Box 44, OHRC RG 76-3-0-787, OA, Toronto, Ontario.
Carew of blaming “‘whitey’ for all of his problems.” The reader argued that Carew needed to realize “that he is in a country where 99.6 per cent of the population is white. We can not suddenly drop everything just to accommodate his violent ideas.”

Yet if “99.6 percent” of Canadians were not interested in Carew’s ideas, Fred Kelly offers evidence that the ideas of the AAPA had currency amongst some politicized Aboriginals. And the interest appears mutual. Though he has difficulty remembering exact details, Carew explained to me that he tried to make “very close ties with the militant Indian groups” in the late Sixties. This effort was a product both of a personal history and a political theory. He has Amerindian heritage on both his father’s and mother’s side.

Moreover, his mother helped establish Amerindian schools in the mountains of Guyana, after she had retired from her primary job. Politically, bringing Aboriginal militancy and Black Power together made sense to someone deeply committed to anti-imperial politics of the late 1960s. As Carew explains in numerous articles (and reiterated to me in our interview), “wherever the insurgencies against slavery were most dangerous to imperialists were where Africans and Indians joined forces. That’s why there were ferocious attempts to divide them.”

In the aftermath of the meeting on the anniversary of Malcolm X’s assassination, a new type of dialogue about transnational “anti-colonial” and “anti-imperial” resistance began to emerge in Canada. The pages of West Indian community newspapers such as Contrast in Toronto, African liberation papers such as Uhuru in Montreal, and the pan-Indigenous periodical Akwesasne Notes give us a sense of this emerging dialogue.

---

31 Jan Carew, Personal interview, Nov. 2007.
Fig. 4., Canadian Student and Political Associations, Box 1, Afro-American Progressive Association, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.
Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Akwesasne Notes regularly published articles supporting claims that blacks and Indigenous peoples shared a common history of exploitation in North America. This included reprinting a large article first published in the Black Panther Party newspaper simply called Indian Rebirth and reprinting articles from the Pan-African Press on the historical alliances between blacks and Aboriginals. Yet Akwesasne Notes did not limit their vision to black and Indian. The paper became a must read because it consistently linked Aboriginal politics, culture and history in North America to a global narrative of colonialism and imperialism. In the mid 1970s they began writing their own investigative reports, producing extensive knowledge, for example, on the emerging atrocities in Guatemala. As one activist remembers, “[a]t the offices of Akwesasne Notes, where we went to help mail the newspaper, one could at any time meet Aborigines from Australia, Lakotas from Pine Ridge, Mapuchis from Chile, or Mayans from the hills of Guatemala, the grandparents of all Turtle Island indigenous people.” The letters to the editor were a dynamic aspect of Notes. Here Indigenous peoples from across North America, non-Indigenous allies, and sometimes non-North American supporters, provided significant debate over the politics and culture of Red Power and Indian identity.

Two of Eastern Canada’s most important black community papers, Uhuru and Contrast, while not as extensive as Notes, provide further evidence of the emerging debates about common political goals and shared history. After Henry Jacks, a

32 Beginning in the mid-1970s Akwesasne Notes extensively covered the deteriorating situation in Guatemala.
33 Douglas M. George-Kanentiio, Iroquois on Fire: A Voice From the Mohawk Nation, (University of Nebraska Press, 2008) 73.
representative of the West Coast based Native Alliance for Red Power spoke at a rally in Montreal, Uhuru commented that Indians and Métis in Canada “endure very much the same type of humiliations and dehumanization that the black man has had to endure in this country.” Red Power, like Black Power, “is determined that the white man who has raped, plundered and exploited them over the centuries must not be allowed to brainwash and dehumanize their people anymore.” The time had come, therefore, for blacks and Indigenous people, “to co-operate with each other in areas which can rebound to the mutual benefit of both peoples who constitute the ‘wretched of the earth’.35 Other contributors, such as Ainsley A. Mark, argued that for “many years Canada has been able to shroud its inhumane treatment of its non-white peoples, the Indians and the Blacks, by projecting a liberal and benevolent image on the international scene.”

The pages of Contrast also applauded the association between militant movements, but were more skeptical about the possibility for social change. “The recent developments of vigorous Black Power and Red Power groups is a step in the right direction,” TE Berry argued, “but these groups must recognize a fact of life that 60,000 blacks and 450,000 Indians aren’t going to generate much political power in a country of 21 million.” This meant that Indians and blacks needed to find common cause with other minorities and with white workers if they were going to create lasting change.37 Most of Contrast’s commentary focused on describing the social conditions of Indigenous peoples or the particularities of the Indian Act.38 They did reprint a poem by a young girl that had circulated widely in Indigenous newspapers. “I Am an Indian,” was the work of a grade

35 “Red Power in Canada” 3.
eleven student in Fort Frances—a town 170 kilometres southeast of Kenora. It described
the difficulties of being an Indian girl in the late 1960s. However, it ends by extending a
hand out to others as she explains that, “my trivial hardships here in Fort Frances aren’t
nearly as bad as the hardships many Negroes must face…” “Indians and Negroes,” she
continues, “are brought into the world by the same process as are all human beings and
are made in the same image of their Divine Creator. They should not know hate and
defeatism—*but they do.*” 39

As it had in the earlier debates over black civil rights and Indigenous protest, the
topic of differing goals appeared as a potentially divisive issue. In an article for *Contrast,*
one writer explained that Indians do desire equal treatment “but rather seeks to secure the
right to live on terms expressed by himself to live as an Indian.” 40 These debates also
took shape on television. During her trip to Toronto in the spring of 1969, Kathleen
Cleaver, an important Black Power advocate, stopped into CBC television studios to
record an episode of “Take 30,” a women’s magazine show hosted by Adrienne
Clarkson. 41 A distinguished panel of intellectuals and activists joined Cleaver. This
included sociologist Margaret Norquay, student radical Jennifer Penny, writer and urban
studies theorist Jane Jacobs, and film-maker Alanis Obomsawin. Born in Abenaki
territory in New Hampshire, Obomsawin spent the majority of her childhood in Quebec,
living on Odanak, her parent’s home reserve. 42 By the mid 1960s she was a well-known
documentary filmmaker and was serving as a consultant to the NFB on Indigenous film
projects. For Take 30’s discussion on “violence, oppression and action” the five panelists

were arranged with Cleaver sitting in between Obomsawin and Jacobs, and Norquay (who said very little) and Penny positioned somewhat off to the side of Obomsawin. Interestingly, though there were six women (including Clarkson) in studio, the panel approached the topic exclusively in terms of racial identity; not once was gender directly addressed. Cleaver and Jacobs were in sync throughout the thirty-minute discussion, sharing opinions on several topics: that working within the system was now futile, that while the system oppressed everyone race added a layer of oppression unknown to whites, that the history of state violence is too often ignored by mainstream media and violent direct action on the part of “oppressed” minorities is necessary if people have exhausted every other option. (By the tone of her question, Adrienne Clarkson assumed, incorrectly, that Jacob’s would counter Cleaver’s brash tone). Apart from suggesting that the situation of Indians and blacks could not be collapsed into one, Obomsawin also agreed with the social analysis of Cleaver and Jacobs. Yet, Obomsawin was also the only panelist to argue against the necessity of “violence;” at one point reiterating her opposition while staring directly at Cleaver. As Obomsawin was finishing this point, however, Jennifer Penny, a white student activist, cut her off. She proceeded to tell Obomsawin that the filmmaker’s attitudes about societal change were wrong. Penny told Obomsawin that the system had taken away all of the Indian’s dignity. This was too much for the generally mild-mannered Obomsawin. She raised her voice above its regular soft tone, looked Penny in the eyes, pointed her finger, and replied: “how do you know? Even if you live next door, you could never tell because you have different eyes than us, you hear different things, you see pain someplace, I see pain perhaps in another place, this is where you could never understand us.” Though taken aback, Penny did not
relen, again arguing that Indigenous people were “destroyed.” “They are only destroyed in one area,” Obomsawin responded, “there are things [the government] will never destroy, they will never be destroyed… I know where we are destroyed, but I am telling you there are areas where we will never be destroyed.” Penny again interrupted, saying the system will “chop up” Indians. This time, though they disagreed earlier, Cleaver responded: “But that,” she told Penny, “doesn’t destroy the spirit of the people.”

The Take 30 exchange demonstrates that there were disagreements, especially around tactics, but in some way a new language of common cause was emerging. When Cleaver made a second appearance, this time at a rally with Fred Kelly, it appeared Red Power was on the same page with Black Power. Along with Emory Douglas, the BPP’s “Minister of Culture,” and Jan Carew, the session’s chair, Cleaver spoke to an audience gathered at the Ontario College of Education. She stressed the differences between the social conditions in Canada and the United States, suggesting that, for example, if a black person in Canada is stopped in their car “it is highly unlikely that he will be shot dead.” Cleaver and Douglas spent most of the night explaining the Panthers position on violence, arguing that it was a just response to the violence American institutions imposed on blacks. Cleaver, however, was not the lone speaker. In front of an audience of six hundred, Fred Kelly declared that for Indians to achieve political power they needed to act in coalition with other persecuted communities. Cleaver seemingly in agreement echoed Kelly’s statements as she explained that there was a historical

---

43 “Violence, Oppression, and Action,” Take 30
44 This was a particularly trying time for the BPP as they were, in the words of Peniel Joseph, the “major radical organization targeted by a maze of authority.” It was also a moment of intense conflict within the organization. Eldridge Cleaver was in exile—a fugitive who went from California to Montreal to Cuba and then finally Algeria—and Stokely Carmichael had moved to Guinea and come July would leave the BPP. And there existed the always present conflict between those who were loyal to Marxism and those who were black nationalists, Joseph 240-42.
precedent for coalitions since American Indians had given help to fleeing American
slaves.46

Since the march in 1965, Kelly’s frustration was growing with the pace of change
and reluctance of the government to realize the increasing desperation of Indigenous
protest. In September 1969 he gave a clear sense of the new direction Indigenous protest:
“This is Red Power. There are other terms considered more appropriate, such as, Indian
Power, Native Power, Indian Assertiveness, and the like. This is mere semantic
quibbling—a self-imposed division.” Red Power, Kelly claimed was driven by the “quest
for self determination.” It did not advocate violence, nor, however, “did it fear it,”
because it already exists against Aboriginal peoples. Moreover it was also “characterized
by an indignant disregard for the establishment, the System, and to the colonialism which
keeps native people subjugated. It has a heated impatience for negotiation. Its ideology
and terminology is derived from the third-world movement.”47

Traveling to New Worlds

The emergence of high-speed travel and telecommunications created, in the words
of Marshall McLuhan, a global village. While satellite technology allowed people the
opportunity to see protests not as a static image, but as dynamic action, by the Sixties the
ability to move bodies across the world in shorter amounts of time greatly facilitated the
spread of a transnational politics and culture of decolonization. In her study of travelers
to Vietnam during the war, Franny Nudelman demonstrates how travel became of means

of developing an anti-war consciousness. Those who went to Vietnam, not as soldiers, but as witnesses, “hoped that travel might produce new forms of knowledge that would foster solidarity between Vietnamese anticolonialists and the American left.”

As Bonita Lawrence explained to me in a recent interview, travel is a fact of life for many Indigenous people in Canada. They are always on the move, often between home reserves, the place where identity is culturally rooted, and the city, where people live to make money. In the Sixties, it was the travel of Indigenous peoples from reserves to the cities as well as their interest in exploring other parts of the world that I see as important to the development of Red Power as a transnational idea. None of Fred Kelly, Kathleen Cleaver, Alanis Obomsawin, and Jan Carew were from Toronto, yet because all four, even if only for a brief moment, traveled there they were able to initiate discussion about the ways Red and Black Power were part of the same global system.

However, there were not only bodies traveling at this moment, but also ideas. When activists traveled they came home with new ideas that they shared. But ideas and bodies did not necessarily have to travel together. As Edward Said explains, “The point of theory…is to travel, always to move beyond its confinements, to emigrate, to remain in a sense in exile.” When traveling it changed, sometimes being modified to fit the particular context in which people were applying it. In the Sixties, while Third World theories collected many miles, perhaps no ideas traveled as much as those of Frantz Fanon. Critical to anti-colonial movements worldwide, and certainly to Black Power

movements in North America, Fanon gained significant traction amongst Red Power activists.

On Canada’s West Coast, long time activist Lee Maracle, a central organizer of the Vancouver based Native Alliance for Red Power, is a good example of how a language of anti-colonialism developed because bodies and ideas travel. In her memoirs, Maracle notes that she, and others in NARP, read both Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* as well as *Black Skins, White Masks*. When we spoke in the spring of 2008, I asked her about the importance of Third World theory in her development as a Red Power intellectual and activist. She told me that:

> Just after that was the publication of the Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of The Earth*, which we got a hold of. Like every other Third World person in the world we studied it and I remember we formed a study group to study it because we just couldn’t understand it.  

When we spoke about the significance of Fanon for her understanding of her own colonial subjectivity, Maracle explained that:

> It sort of came about later in my life, but it started in the Sixties this whole business of supporting other struggles in the hope that we’d be able to collaborate some day. Well the hope shouldn’t be what determines whether we support other struggles. It should be our sense of humanity. I think Fanon taught me that, you know, that little Wretched of the Earth, that the struggle is one for humanity first and foremost, everything else is secondary. I think that’s true for me personally. And it wasn’t true for all of us. But it is true for those people who started the little Red Power group way back in the Sixties. It is true for us, in our own way, doing what we can based on our sense of humanity.

In her memoir of the period, Maracle also explains the importance of international travel. Members of the BPP used to travel regularly from Oakland to

---


Vancouver. This contact significantly influenced the Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP). It sold copies of the BPP newspaper on university campuses to raise funds and, as Maracle explains, NARP modeled their program after the BPP line—with Maracle even at one point saying they just changed “Black Power into Red Power.”

The frequency with which American Black Power radicals were crossing the border from the US to Canada caught the eye of RCMP and members of Canadian government who argued that Stokely Carmichael should not be allowed into Canada.

When they came to Canada many American radicals, and an increasing number of Third World intellectuals and activists, found an element of the population receptive to their messages. Yet travel was not a one-way direct flight. Many Indigenous intellectuals used their own international travel experiences both to bring home new ideas and also to spread their own message. Maracle, for example, was involved in both ways. In 1975, as part of a Native People’s Friendship Delegation, she and eleven other people traveled to China. According to Clem Chartier the trip’s purpose was to “learn from China” and to “express solidarity and friendship to the Chinese people.” In going to China the group believed it was traveling to a once semi-colonized country that had, through revolution and socialism, achieved independence. Ray Bobb, another delegation member, explained that for the group China was important both because of revolution and because it provided an opportunity to talk with Mongolian “national minorities.” Bobb seemed impressed with the way China treated Mongolians. But he was equally impressed with the way China had used “revolutionary theory” to “liberate their country from foreign

and domestic oppression.”56 Upon returning to Canada, people were interested in hearing about the experiences of the delegation, thus another type of travel became important. A group of Indigenous Marxists in California brought Maracle to San Francisco to talk about the trip as a way to help the group with their goal of applying “Marxian analysis and national liberation theory to the history of colonization of Native American in North America.”57

At a time when Indigenous peoples served as symbols for political opinion on foreign affairs, perhaps it is not unexpected that the international travels of Aboriginal peoples could be controversial. George Manuel, who at the time was the President of the National Indian Brotherhood, traveled extensively in the late 1960s and early 1970s. On a trip to New Zealand, with government officials including Jean Chrétien, Manuel connected with Maori Council and other Maori members of Parliament. While the Canadian government attempted to pass-off the Maori as an example of successful integration, Manuel felt otherwise. He saw Maoris as being confronted with a value system not of their own making, an exact parallel to his situation in Canada. Because of its incessant focus on material accumulation, he told Indian News, “The present school curriculum is destructive to a very great degree, and it will destroy mankind, unless native people, Indians and Maori get together to do something about it.”58

It was Manuel’s trip to Tanzania, for its 10th anniversary celebration, that drew the strongest response from Canadian officials. As he had been a last-minute invitee, Canadian diplomats only became aware of Manuel’s presence after headlines in a Dar es

Salaam newspaper quoted him saying that he came to help Indians in Canada “seek solidarity with other members of the Third Humanity.”⁵⁹ As his biographer Peter McFarlane explains, Manuel “was quoted as describing the Europeans in North America as colonialists and said that the objectives of the Indian movement were akin to those of socialist Tanzania.”⁶⁰ Yet Manuel was not finished. A meeting he arranged with workers form the Canadian International Development Agency reportedly turned “heated” when workers disagreed with Manuel’s characterization of white Canadians as colonizers. Of greater concern, at least for Canadian diplomats, were rumours that Manuel reacted positively to the suggestion that armed struggle might be a useful strategy for Indigenous peoples in Canada. The Tanzanian press picked up on the tension filled meeting, responding with articles that focused on the discrimination in Canada at the hands of whites, including statistics on mortality rates, education and employment. By the time Manuel’s trip ended, McFarlane notes that Canadian diplomats were deeply concerned that he had single handedly ruined Canada’s good reputation in Tanzania.⁶¹

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Dr. Howard Adams was not in the business of destroying Canada’s reputation abroad, but he was interested in dismantling colonialism at home. In a 1970 interview, Adams noted his experiences at Berkeley in the early 1960s as key to his political growth. Having seen blacks being taken away by police in the 1964 free speech protests and having been exposed to Malcolm X, Adams believed he had “no choice” but to become involved. Deborah Simmons suggests that Adams’ encounter with

---

⁶⁰ McFarlane 162.
⁶¹ McFarlane 163-65.
Malcolm X led him to “reappropriate his Métis identity.” Adams saw in radical nationalist politics a way to counter the psychological oppression of being a colonized person. Just as for black Americans, nationalism helped Adams reject his feelings of personal shame. After his experiences at Berkeley, he also recognized that the parallels between Red Power in Canada and Black Power in the United States were found in their common colonial experience. “When you come right down to it,” he explained to the Montreal Star, “it’s fairly plain to see: we’re both conquered colonial people. We’re both exactly the same.” This commonality led to what Adams believed was an unspoken sense of solidarity: “I felt very strongly about [black] oppression and consequently a colonized native we understood one another immediately—there was no need to explain causes to each other.” Later Adams would argue that the similarities meant that blacks and Indigenous peoples understood each other “immediately.”

Writing Histories of Canadian Colonialism into Decolonization

Howard Adams was among the growing number of intellectuals and activists who also turned to Third World theory to help explain Indigenous liberation in Canada. Though there are many examples, the works of Martiniquean theorist Frantz Fanon proved intensely important. Prison of Grass can be read as a Marxist critique as Adams explained that “[r]acism…arose from economic functions inherent in capitalism.” Yet Adams also wrote extensively on the roles of education and culture in the process of

---

64 Howard Adams, Prison of Grass: Canada From a Native Point of View (Saskatoon: Fifth House, [1974] 1989) 152; see also the recent autobiography, Howard Adams, Howard Adams: Otapawy! The Life of a Métis leader in His Own Words and Those of His Contemporaries (Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2005).
65 Adams, Prison of Grass 11.
colonization. Much like Fanon, according to Adams the colonized were psychologically oppressed through the constant shame they felt as demonstrated by Adams memory that as a young adult he constantly tried to shake-off “the ugliness of Indianness.”\textsuperscript{66} He remembered that “even in solitary silence” he “felt the word ‘savage’ deep in his soul.”\textsuperscript{67} Adams explained how the colonizer purposefully educated the colonized to feel inferior and that successful internalization of this through education allowed colonization to become dialectical process. Making reference to Paulo Freire, Adams observed that “[s]everely oppressed people who do not understand oppression prefer domination. They refuse to listen to a call for freedom.”\textsuperscript{68} Much like his belief that liberation could only occur through the establishment of a socialist economy, Adams believed that indigenous control of education would help liberate the minds and psychological disposition of Indians and Métis in Canada.

The final fifty-pages of \textit{Prison of Grass} provides a program for the liberation of indigenous and Métis in Canada. Red Power, Adams argued, is best understood as radical indigenous nationalism. Thus he suggested that nationalism “is neither objective nor tangible: on the contrary, it is subjective, spiritual, ideological, and surrounds people continuously. Nationalism gives spirit and content to a community of people by bringing them together under a common history and state of mind.”\textsuperscript{69}

Validating Edward Said’s insights into the way theory travels and is rethought according to the context in which it is imagined, Adams, while inspired by revolutionary Third World nationalism, did not believe Indians and Métis in Canada were numerous

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{66} Adams, \textit{Prison of Grass} 123.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Adams, \textit{Prison of Grass} 16.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Adams, \textit{Prison of Grass} 139.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Adams, \textit{Prison of Grass} 167.
\end{itemize}
enough to take back all of their land, nor were they powerful enough to form a separate state. 70 Radical Indigenous nationalism did not simply mean reform and integration of the colonized into the colonizers mode of living. 71 According to Adams, this new form of nationalism was about control over their economic, social, political and cultural affairs, beginning with “complete local control of Indian reserves, Métis communities, and native urban ghettos.” 72

Articulating a new sense of a colonial past, however, was not only an endeavor of academics and activists. Filmmakers, artists, and musicians, offer significant insight into how articulating a colonial past helped shaped a politics and culture of anti-colonialism during the Sixties. They looked to a local past, recounting the ways specific local traditions and life forces had been disrupted while at the same time reframing the historical past as one of contestation between Indigenous nations and the British empire, thus presenting Indigenous history as a profoundly transnational narrative. 73 Perhaps the most powerful representation of the present as a product of the colonial past came by way of series of films that emerged out of Canada. Initiated by the National Film Board in 1967, “Challenge for Change” wanted the filmmaking process to reflect values of participatory democracy. 74 Moreover, as Maria de Rosa recalls, the series believed that film is a “catalyst for social change and political empowerment,” 75 a way for some of “the most disadvantaged” populations to speak directly back at Canadians. Significant debate continues to exist on the effectiveness of these films. Janine Marchessault, for

---

70 Adams, Prison of Grass 167.
71 Adams, Prison of Grass 166.
72 Adams, Prison of Grass 167.
74 Stewart, 60.
example, argues that by allowing a state-funded institution to direct the terms of
ingagement by people from ‘below’ “Challenge for Change” limited the possibility for
change.76 There is a certain truth to this, but as Stewart explains, the work produced by a
group called the Indian Film Crew, is an example of how film has unanticipated
ideological effects and also how we cannot confine the meaning of Indigenous cultural
production to geo-political borders.

A potent example of the way Indian Film Crew productions shaped knowledge of
a colonial past in order to inform anti-colonial language in the Sixties was Willie Dunn’s
powerful short documentary, *The Ballad of Crowfoot*. Released in 1968 by the National
Film Board, Dunn’s film tells of a history of colonization through the figure of Crowfoot,
the legendary chief of the Blackfoot confederacy of the Western prairies. Set to music
and lyrics written and performed by Dunn, Crowfoot is shown leading a resistance
against settlers who have come to live in the West. At the same time he is also in conflict
with other indigenous peoples who have taken part in the lucrative whiskey trade. There
is further resistance, but then he signs agreements at the same time as the Riel rebellion.
Dunn’s message is that disease, starvation, and death, made the choice to sign treaties not
much of a choice at all. The promises of food and protection under treaties, however, are
almost immediately broken, and Crowfoot is left to regret his decision to turn his back on
Riel in favor of the Canadian government. In the final minutes of the film, as the situation
is more dire, both the images and music become more rapid. The scene builds to a
dizzying momentum as the pictures from nineteenth century colonial encounters morph
into newspaper clippings about Aboriginal/white politics in 1960s. At the moment

76 Janine Marchessault, “Reflections of the Dispossessed: Video and the ‘Challenge for Change’
Dunn’s guitar seems on the verge of explosion the film goes silent, and all that is left is a still image of Crowfoot’ portrait as the screen fades to black.77

Dunn’s Ballad of Crowfoot is an example of how the language of colonialism informed the sense of lived Indigenous history in the late 1960s. It tells a particular narrative about the colonial encounter: begins with a peaceful society juxtaposed against the disruptive settlers who bring disease and death. As importantly it leads to divisions within Indigenous society, represented through the whisky trade and Crowfoot turning his back on Riel. The end with its chaotic tempo brings viewers right up until 1968—the year when revolution in the First World was on the minds of many. Ballad of Crowfoot was a “staple of 1960s basement coffee houses.”78 It also received significant global attention and was screened at film festivals in Buenos Aires, New York and Chicago.

The late 1960s also marked a renaissance for Louis Riel. In the span of a decade historians such as Douglas Owram could argue that “the rebel of 1885 has become [a] mythical figure.”79 In Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the site of the much of this nineteenth century Indigenous insurrection, the hundredth anniversary sparked campaigns resurrecting Riel’s importance to Western Canadian regional identity. In Manitoba, a campaign developed to have him named the “father of the province” and in Saskatchewan a statue of Riel guarded the legislative grounds.80 Television documentaries, new biographies, an opera, and even a stamp, all commemorated Riel, but not all carried the same message. Radicals of various political causes adopted him as a

symbol of their own resistance. In 1970, for example, the FLQ named a cell of their organization the Louis Riel Wing in recognition of the symbolic stature of Riel as a French victim of English Canadian injustice. As historian J.R. Miller explains, “Riel and his ‘adjutant’ Gabriel Dumont became Canadian versions of anti-imperialist guerilla fighters in the febrile orations of student radicals of the later 1960s and 1970s” or, as Owram concluded, “Riel had become a sort of northern Che Guevara.” Others believed Riel was an earlier example of global anti-colonialism. In the foreword to his early seventies play The Crime of Louis Riel, playwright John Coulter wrote that Riel and the rebellions were “precursors of later and present uprisings all over the world, particularly the so-called Third World.”

Government officials were not ignorant to the fact that Indigenous intellectuals, filmmakers, and grassroots activists were looking to their past in order to contextualize how Indigenous protest in the Sixties fit into global decolonization. Because of this,

---

83 Owram, “The Myth of Louis Riel,” 328; JR Miller makes almost the same observation arguing “in the 1960s Riel was adopted and partonized by white, middle-class student radicals who found him an acceptable substitute for the Cuban Revolution’s Che Guevara,” see JR Miller, Skyscrapers hide the heavens 251; Decades latter the relationship to the Cuban revolutionary remains strong, continuing to shape the historical memory of Riel. A recent entry in a Manitoba guidebook introduces Riel to the province’s new visitors as a man of many identities, most recently as a “Métis Ché Guevara.” Not to be out done, the encyclopedia of Saskatchewan has as the introduction for an entery on Gabriel Dumont: “the name conjures up a host of images,” including “the 19th-century Ché Guevara passionately concerned with his people’s self governance.” There are those who see the association negatively. Commentators who define Guevara as a murderer and a tyrant mobilize the image as a way to shape the memory of Riel as a traitor who twice took up arms against Canada. The association concerns commentator Cherie Dimaline. While not diminishing Riel’s important contributions to Indigenous rights, she questions the meaning of his recent trendiness, a branding not unlike Ché — though without the global reach, a Ché light perhaps. The branding represents simplicity, a failure to understand the complexities of Riel’s life. For Dimaline, the Metis need “to stay true to Riel’s memory, to pass down his stories and beliefs to their children and grandchildren around fires and in ceremonies. And we don’t need a t-shirt to do that,” see Cherie Dimaline, “Che Riel” Métis Voyageur (November/December 2004) 19.
Indigenous history became a profound site of contestation in this period. One example comes from Liberal Senator James Prowse who feared that Indian youth were admiring Ché Guevara and black power icons such as Eldridge Cleaver. He pointed, for example, to recent media reports that the Native Alliance for Red Power had posters of Cleaver on their walls and used “black militant” jargon as way to get attention.  

Prime Minister Lester Pearson appointed James Prowse to senate in 1967, the same year MP Robert Thompson made his accusations about Radio Havana inciting Aboriginal revolution in Canada. For his part, Prowse wanted to direct the attention of youth away from the likes of Ché in favour of another dead martyr, but one closer to home: Louis Riel. Prowse used the media to push the government to grant pardons for Louis Riel and other figures of the Riel Rebellion, such as Poundmaker, Big Bear, Crowfoot and Gabriel Dumont. More than just a pardon, he hoped that Indian kids would look to them both as significant Indian figures and as Canadian patriots. Prowse’s idea fell apart when the Justice Department told him that the government did not grant, at that time, posthumous pardons. However, the Senator was not defeated. He took off across the country attempting to sanitize and redeem the image of Riel. He showed up, for example, in Brandon, Manitoba where he explained to the local Women’s Canadian Club that Riel was a person who the “underprivileged members of society” could pin their “hopes and pride.” Instead of an “anarchist and a murder,” as one person in opposition to the pardon called him, Prowse described Riel as a figure committed to non-violence. He had prevented guerilla warfare and bloodshed by bringing a cross, not a gun, into

battle. With this particular historical account, Riel stood as the opposite of Third World radicals.

It might prove easy to read the Louis Riel renaissance, the struggle over his symbolic significance, and his ultimate position as a figure linking past Métis resistance to late Sixties Indigenous protests as a profoundly national narrative. Much like Ché, Riel competing forces in Canada have claimed him to serve specific purposes. These contestations over rebellious Indian figures of the past include, however, a significant transnational dimension. Riel and Dumont were popularly mobilized as figures of armed resistance in an era when armed struggle globally accrued romantic capital amongst the New Left. By 1968, citing Mao, Ché Guevara, Regis Debray and examples such as Algeria and more prominently Cuba, New Leftists—mostly young men—came to believe that small well-armed insurgencies within the United States could both end the war in Vietnam and create a revolution within the United States. Riel’s masculinity helps explain his popularity amongst radicals in the late 1960s. A figure that could be brought back to life in the image of the most romanticized man of his time, Ché Guevara, meant that Riel’s own memory was circumscribed by the desires of many young men to have

---

89 As Slavoj Zizek explains in regards to Guevara, he “has become ‘the quintessential postmodern icon’ signifying both everything and nothing—in other words, whatever one wants him to signify: youth rebellion, saintliness, up to and including the liberal-communist entrepreneurial spirit of working for the good of all. A couple of years ago, even a high Vatican representative proclaimed that the celebration of Ché is to be understood as expressing admiration for a man who risked and gave his life for the good of others. As usually, harmless beatification is mixed with its opposite, obscene commodification…There is nonetheless something desperate in this insistence that Ché has become a neutral commodity logo—witness the series of recent publications warning us that he was also a cold-blooded murderer who orchestrated the purges in Cuba in 1959, and so forth. Significantly, these warnings popped up precisely as new anti-capitalist rebellions began to take place all around the world, making his icon potentially dangerous again.” See, Slavoj Zizek, First As Tragedy, Then as Farce (New York: Verso, 2009), 57.
their own version at home. And, like Ché, Riel was not alive to complicate or contradict the image

But gender alone does not explain Riel’s popularity. For Indigenous peoples he served as a historical link to past Indigenous resistance, a point we will see again in the Ojibway Warriors Society takeover of Anicinabe Park in Kenora. We might also see Riel fitting into a long line of men brought back to life in the 1960s and 1970s to serve as symbols for a wide-range of purposes, from communalism to anti-imperialism. Figures such as Sitting Bull, Geronimo and Red Cloud often appeared as symbols to situate New Left oppositional politics. “The story of nineteenth century native resistance,” Philip Deloria remarks, “provided a home-grown model for opposition to the American military imperialism that protestors saw in Vietnam.”

Moreover, as Deloria’s explains, radicals could imagine parallels between “red” Indians and the “ideologically ‘red’ Vietcong.”

More than most radicals, it was Stokely Carmichael who situated black resistance, in the United States especially, with specific narratives about the Indian past. As a firm believer that “Black people in the United States have a colonial relationship to the larger society,” he saw in American Indian history important parallels. On February 2nd, 1968 more than five thousand people attended an Oakland rally to hear Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, and Eldridge Cleaver. That night both Rap Brown and Carmichael invoked American Indians. Rap Brown told the audience that the anti-colonial movement in the United States was a “revolution of dispossessed people in this country: that's the Mexican American, the Puerto Rican American, the American Indian, and black people.”

---

91 Deloria, “Counterculture Indians,” 164.
92 Deloria, “Counterculture Indians,” 164, 166.
this Stokely Carmichael took the stage. For nearly an hour he spoke about the survival of black populations throughout the world, the meaning of solidarity with Third World liberation movements, and the failure of rights based protest and integration in the United States. At the onset of his discussion on the “survival of black people” from genocide, Carmichael warned the audience not to take lightly the capability of white America to commit such heinous acts. He told the Oakland crowd that “the honky had to completely exterminate the red man, and he did it…[a]nd he did it where he does not even feel sorry, but he romanticizes it by putting it on television with cowboy and Indians.”

He made similar comments at the Congress of Black Writers in Montreal in 1968. There, as one of plenary speakers, he told audience, “I don’t think that white Canadians would say they stole Canada from the Indians (laughter). They said they took it—and they did (applause and laughter). Well then, it’s clear that we can’t work for these lands, we can’t be for ‘em, so we must take them. Then it’s clear we must take them through revolutionary violence.”

**Conclusion:**

We should not be surprised that figures from Indian and Métis history were symbolically adopted in the Sixties to explain both Indigenous anti-colonialism and to calibrate the imaginations of non-Indigenous radicals. This moment still lives with us.

Poster of Geronimo pinned to walls (in fact, I had one in my first year office) and images of gun-wielding nameless Indigenous men on t-shirts adorned with slogans such as “homeland security,” demonstrate how past Aboriginal resistance is filled with meaning

---

derived from the desires of the present. Today, perhaps no figure is as popularly invoked for scorn as Christopher Columbus, and the five hundred year period he represents.

As time moves further from October 12, 1492—the day Columbus landed in what is now the Bahamas—a process becomes a single moment. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot writes, “while Columbus’s landfall made possible world history as we know it, post-Columbian history continues to define the very terms under which to describe the landfall.”97 Or as an editor of a collection on imperialism between 1492 and 1992 puts it, “aboriginal peoples and their supporters…reaffirm that both the discovery and encounter myths are Eurocentrist ideology, and that the dominant legacy is one of conquest, oppression and exploitation.”98

In her forward to Eduardo Galeano’s The Open Veins of Latin America, Chilean novelist Isabel Allende describes why Galeano’s political and economic study of Latin America since 1492 was so important to her when she first read it in 1973. “That book with the yellow covers,” Allende explains, “proved that there were no safe islands in our region, we all shared 500 years of exploitation and colonization, we were all linked by a common fate, we all belonged to the same race of the oppressed.”99 As he reflected on Red Power movements, Howard Adams shared similar thoughts: “Leaders spoke of our struggle in the context of imperialism in the Third World. It helped to feel that we were part of a global revolution against oppression.”100

---

97 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History (Boston: Beacon Street Press, 1995) 139.
As conditions continued to decline for Indigenous peoples in many regions of Canada, the symbolic associations with a rebellious past and a global Third World became more than just an idea. As we will see in the next three chapters, beside the language of decolonization stood people who hoped radical direct action would force the change that negotiation and passive resistance had failed to deliver. Though neither Ché nor Fidel rode into Canada to lead Indigenous rebellion, we can forgive people for believing that by the mid 1970s a Red Power revolution was near. As Indian News announced in 1970, “Indian is ‘In’.”

---

101 “Indian is In,” The Indian News (January 1970): 5-6.
Chapter Four: Rumblings of Red Power in Kenora

In the summer of 1900, Kenora (at the time still Rat Portage) experienced its first, of what would become many, rumoured Indigenous “uprisings” during the twentieth century. In June, one hundred “panic-stricken women and children” arrived in Rat Portage after fleeing the towns of Koochiching, Minnesota and Rainy River, Ontario, one hundred miles to the south. Though there were fierce forest fires that summer, the one-hundred people, many of them recent migrants from eastern Ontario and Europe, came to Rat Portage because of reports that “3,000 Indians” from Canada and the United States were “on the warpath” with guns and ammunition in hand.¹

Spurred on by these rumours, citizens in Koochiching petitioned Minnesota Governor John Lind, a recent veteran of the Spanish-American war, for their own shipment of weapons and ammunition. Lind ultimately denied the request, but compensated by sending an Army battalion to Koochiching from Duluth, Minnesota. They were to put down any sign of “uprising,” but in case things got out of hand there were forty to fifty extra weapons to arm the settlers. Across the border, in Rat Portage, some called on the Canadian government to send in troops from the 90th Rifles battalion in Winnipeg. According to media reports, however, most citizens in Rainy River and Rat Portage were not about to hand over to the state the job of confronting the Indians. “The Indian scare,” reported the Manitoba Free Press, “created such a demand for firearms and

ammunition that local dealers have been cleared out and several orders from Rainy River still remain unfilled.”

With American and Canadians settlers preparing for armed conflict, the mayor of Rat Portage, William McCarthy, along with a party of other officials met with the reported leaders of the uprising. Much to their surprise, four hundred and fifty men, women and children from local Ojibwa communities greeted them not with guns but with open arms. “None of the chiefs had any grievances,” The Manitoba Free Press reported. They also claimed that a “jollier crowd was never encountered even amongst white people.” As word filtered back to Rat Portage that their well being was not under direct threat, the hundred who had fled returned home. In turn local media and town officials doubted the scare was any thing more than white-settlers misinterpreting the intent of the large numbers of Indigenous people who traveled through the area each summer.

Though Ojibwa gatherings were being mistaken for armed rebellion, were they as jovial and free of complaint as town officials claimed? Not likely. With the mass of new settlers came significant ecological impacts, including the preventable forest fires in the summer of 1900. Other projects, such as damming, had the dual effect of opening up travel routes while simultaneously flooding Indigenous farmland. As important was the issue of land. By 1900, the federal government was giving land allocated for Indigenous peoples by Treaty #3 to migrating settlers, whose presence had grown dramatically since the expansion of railroad.

---

137

5 Waisberg and Holzkamm, “A Tendency to Discourage Them from Cultivating” 184.
For those reading the story of the “Indian scare of 1900” in the Kenora’s Daily Miner and News Summer 1973 Tourist Guide, the situation may not have seemed much different from that of the turn of the century. Seventy-three years after the 1900 incident, rumours were rapidly spreading that Indigenous peoples were again ready to revolt. In this chapter, I will explore the tension between whites and Indigenous peoples in the Kenora area during the spring, summer and fall of 1973. Though a new language of global anti-colonialism animated the imagination of radical Indigenous protest in the late 1960s and 1970s, protests were also grounded in locality. Much like the march of 1965, the Red Power protests that shook Kenora in 1974 were a mixture of globally circulating ideas and locally based forms of discrimination and dehumanization. To fully grasp the Anicinabe Park occupation in 1974, which we will discuss in chapter five, it is necessary to understand the rising tensions on local reserves, the racial dynamic within the town of Kenora and the responses to the American Indian Movement’s (AIM) takeover of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, the era’s most iconic Indigenous protest.

If the way we die tells us anything about the way we lived, then statistics from Indian reserves illustrate just how unequal life was in Northwestern Ontario. In the early 1970s, reports from the Grassy Narrows reserve, for example, show that natural causes accounted for only 23% of deaths.6 By 1977 the rate of attempted suicides on reserves had skyrocketed to almost ten times the rate for Kenora.7 In 1973, the increasing rate of “violent deaths” led a group of Kenora citizens and members of Treaty #3 (the Concerned Citizens’ Committee) to compile a report for the Social Planning Council. In their attempt to learn as much as possible as to how Indigenous men and women were dying

---

6 Shkilnyk, 11.
7 Shkilnyk, 19.
differently than whites, the committee asked the province to conduct an inquest. The request was denied, but because of changes to the Coroners Act, the committee was able to obtain coroners reports. The group discovered one hundred eighty nine violent deaths over a three-year period between January 1970 and June 1973. This included death because of gunshot wounds, stabbings, drowning, suicide and exposure to the elements at rates much higher than that of others in the Kenora area. Based on this evidence, the committee released a report making twenty-three recommendations for action, including a greater role for status Indians in reserve policing and on the streets of Kenora and increased social services. From their perspective a “general housing plan” was of the utmost importance.

Upon returning from a meeting to discuss the preliminary findings and recommendations of the violent death study, Gary Coffin, a policy development officer with the Ontario Government, remained skeptical. In a letter to Deputy Solicitor General R.M. Warren, Coffin wrote that he was not sure the findings of the report at all supported the committee’s recommendations. What was evident though, according to Coffin, was “a strong feeling within the Committee and the native population at Kenora that there has been a much stronger inclination to conduct coroners investigations and inquests into the deaths of white people than into the deaths of the native population.”

Expectedly some in government did not react well to such implications. Frank Wilson, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Public Safety, claimed that the committee could not produce one

---

8 John Yaremko, Solicitor General, to Rory McMillan, Chairman, Concerned Citizens’ Committee, 29 June 1973, RG 33; 13.5; b223573, AO, Toronto.
example of racism on the part of coroners.\textsuperscript{10} What colleagues told Wilson, however, was that the truth was inconsequential. The government needed to “consider some extraordinary activities to assuage the concerns of the native people.”\textsuperscript{11}

Whether or not white people were treated better in death, colonial based race and gender discrimination was still a significant part of daily life in the Kenora area in the early 1970s. Anthropologist Lynn Kauffman who arrived in Kenora in February 1973 provides significant insight into this world. Kauffman was an American anthropologist in Kenora on a Doris Duke American Indian Oral History grant. Launched in 1966 at several universities across the United States, the goal of the Duke project, according to Dianna Repp, was to “collect testimony from Indian people.”\textsuperscript{12} Remembered primarily for her fortune and for eccentricities, Duke initiated the oral history project at the behest of her friends Michael Chinigo, a prominent resident of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, and actor Marlon Brando.\textsuperscript{13} Each of the seven universities received an initial sum of $200,000.\textsuperscript{14} While the program fits the long history of Duke family philanthropy, the donations also provided Doris Duke an additional benefit: a tax-shelter.\textsuperscript{15} It is unclear

\textsuperscript{10} Ministry of the Solicitor General, FL Wilson to RM Warren, “Violent Deaths Committee-Kenora,” 18, October 1973, RG 33; 13.5; b223573 AO, Toronto.
\textsuperscript{11} Ministry of the Solicitor General, RM Warren to FL Wilson, “Violent Deaths Committee-Kenora,” 9 October, 1973, RG 33; 13.5; b223573 AO, Toronto.
\textsuperscript{13} Rapp 19.
\textsuperscript{14} Rapp 19; Kathryn L. Jasper, “The Doris Duke Program in Scope and Sequence,” Journal of the Southwest 47.1 (2005), 153.
\textsuperscript{15} According to Rapp, Doris Duke had first tried to find a tax shelter far away from American Indian projects. “Ms. Duke,” Rapp writes, was looking for tax shelters, that the president of the United Arab Republic, Gamal Abdel Nasser, announced the forthcoming construction of the Aswan Dam on the Nile River. The resulting reservoir would submerge some of Egypt’s monumental antiquities. Ms. Duke contacted Mr. Nasser through an emissary, offering to buy fifty of the monuments. She planned to have them dismantled, removed from Egypt, shipped to the United States, and then re-erected, one in each state capital. Mr. Nasser agreed, but stipulated that “an astronomical sum for the transaction be placed in one of his numbered Swiss bank accounts” (Fontana e-mail communication May 26, 2001). Duke was outraged and withdrew her offer, but she still needed to find a tax shelter before December 31, 1966;” see Rapp, 18.
how Kenora became a location for Kauffman, though she did arrive as funding for the
oral history project was being terminated. Rapp believes Duke quit funding the project
partially because she was “wary of associating herself with rebellious causes.”16

Kauffman, however, was not in Kenora to document “rebellious causes,” though
this would happen by accident. Instead she was there to record Ojibway language and
customs. Yet she also spent much time reflecting on her daily conversations with whites
and Indigenous peoples. Whether it was conversations with her host family, with workers
at the Kenora museum, or in experiences in a multitude of public places and private
residences, her recollections offer private reactions of whites and Indigenous peoples to
the crushing effects of racism and sexism in Kenora in 1973 and also to the emergence of
radical Indigenous protest. At her host family’s dinner table on her first evening, we get a
sense of some of what was at stake if Indigenous people rebelled. A discussion on the
topic of “Indians and problems,” prompted a fierce response. As Kaufmann notes, a man
from her host family “was particularly upset with the current situation of B.C. Indians
who are attempting to take back lands; [he] is worried that Ojibway and other groups will
follow suit and stated he would take up his gun and tomahawk and do some scalping all
over again to protect his property.” 17

Kaufmann’s diary entries after trips to diners, bingo halls, the streets, bars, private
residences, reserves, parties, and the Indian Friendship centre reveal a town full of hatred,
friendship, confusion, frustration, hope and resistance. Much like Ontario Human Rights
Commission workers noted in 1965, public space was a site of explicit discrimination but

Program, 1908-1995, Field Worker Reports: Lynn Kauffman, 1967-1973, Series No: 15/2/32 Box 29,
University of Illinois-Champaign Archives: Liberal Arts & Sciences, Champaign, Illinois.
also of subtle, unspoken forms of prejudice. At lunch one day in late February 1973, in a hotel investigated by the OHRC in 1965, Kaufmann noted that “the waitress, a young white women…generally paid more deference to whites.” The public perception most evident in Kaufmann’s notes, however, is the contempt whites felt for the “drunken Indian.” While some of her friends thought the new detox centre was a success, most whites she spoke with were convinced that the majority of Indians in Kenora were drunks. In her notes, Kaufmann wonders if this was a problem of perception. Perhaps she wondered, because they did not have homes in Kenora, Aboriginals were forced to consume in public while whites consumed in private—thus easily avoiding both the judgment of the public and the handcuffs of police. “Drunken Indians” were like a public good for white people to trade stories, some of which were shared with Kauffman. People were eager to tell stories about any “drunk Indians,” but they saved their greatest contempt for those about Indigenous women. At home one night, the husband of the host family told two stories about “drunken squaws” he had encountered that day. Two days later, after spending a day at court watching a judge deliberate on cases only involving men, the only stories Kauffman remembered hearing outside the courthouse were about drunken women. At the Kenora museum, Kauffman listened to a man tell her that in public Indigenous women would brazenly offer to “fuck” in exchange for a bottle or money for booze. The companion to the sex-for-booze stories, in Kauffman’s recollections, was the common opinion that good Indians were those who could be mistaken for being white. Whiteness had a humanity and dignity that being Indian did

not. And regardless of skin colour one could partially move back-and-forth across boundaries depending on signifiers of dress, attitude, ambition, and morality.\textsuperscript{21}

Kenora is a hard drinkin’ town. Many of us either have been addicted to alcohol, or know somebody who is (even if they cannot admit it). We start early, stealing beer at the age of twelve or thirteen was a right of passage; not an aberration. We all know somebody who died in alcohol related accidents—cars careening into rock cuts, snowmobiles plunging into icy waters, boats into reefs, etc. Many of us also know people who when alcohol stopped working, took their own lives. Some of this is a gendered practice, boys sitting around bragging about how much they were able to drink. It is also about working-class culture. But it is not race specific. White, brown and all shades in between, we would get drunk and we did it often. It’s a common cross-cultural experience. The difference came in the symbolic powers of our drunkenness. I’m lucky that mine was never used as a commentary on the nature of my inhumanity.

Kauffman’s field notes demonstrate how the language of racism was a language of judgment and dehumanization. It reflected assumptions about whiteness as much as it did Indigienity. Kauffman regularly encountered people who told her that white benevolence was the root of Indian laziness. Some believed that this had not always been the case, as at lunch one day when a man remarked to Kauffman that in the 1920s, Indians made things but now they were just “lazy and shiftless.”\textsuperscript{22} This, however, was not simply an opinion reserved for private moments. In Sudbury in 1971, while presiding over an assault case, judge George Collins remarked that the International Nickel Company was having to bring in workers from Portugal because “area Indians” were too

\textsuperscript{21} Lynn’s Fieldnotes (Copy)-Daily Acct-1973, “March 2, 1973.”
\textsuperscript{22} Lynn’s Fieldnotes (Copy)-Daily Acct-1973, “March 2, 1973.”
lazy to complete the company mandated physicals. Judge Collins was so prone to racist remarks such as this that Indigenous groups eventually called for his dismissal.

**Wounded Knee**

Kauffman had only been in Kenora for a few weeks when news broke that a group called the American Indian Movement was involved in an armed standoff on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. On February 27, 1973, two hundred AIM activists took hold of a small hamlet at Wounded Knee. The occupiers demanded investigations into corruption amongst tribal government, questions of Indian sovereignty within the United States and the state’s role in reservation life. During the seventy-one day occupation there were numerous shootouts between AIM and National Guardsmen. It ended with many AIM members surrendering, but some high-profile activists such as Dennis Banks fled. According to Bruce D’Arcus, “The Wounded Knee occupation was noted for its spectacular symbolic politics” in which claims were articulated “on a global media stage.”

In a CBC interview on the evening of March 14, 1973, Kenora was one of several towns mentioned as a potential place for a Canadian Wounded Knee. As we have seen from chapter one, this was not a unique position for Indigenous people in the Kenora area. The Wounded Knee rumours began at the same time that seventy-five Indigenous men and women from Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario congregated at

---

the Winnipeg Native Club to decide how to support AIM at Wounded Knee.\textsuperscript{26} As John Price notes, though “most Indian periodicals disagreed with their methods, a wave of Native support came from all across the U.S. and Canada.”\textsuperscript{27} According to several sources, after appealing to Winnipegers for donations, a group of between twenty-five and fifty people left the next day in a caravan carrying food and supplies to South Dakota.\textsuperscript{28} Only days later, Canadian journalists at Wounded Knee related the following conversation they had with AIM militants to readers of the \textit{Winnipeg Free Press}:

“We’re journalism students from Canada.”
“We’re from Canada too,” he said, “Fort Qu’Apelle.”
“You think there’ll be a Wounded Knee in Canada?”
“It’s possible,” he said.\textsuperscript{29}

The perception that direct action was coming to Northwestern Ontario became reality for a brief moment in early March. According to Ontario Provincial Police records, on March 3\textsuperscript{rd}, a group of fifty members of the American Indian Movement and the Union of Ontario Indians briefly blocked a border bridge linking Ontario and Minnesota. They were protesting an incident from two weeks previous when five individuals were denied entry to Canada from the United States and told that Canada did not recognize the Jay Treaty in matters of immigration. At the short-lived, non-violent blockade, a police officer asked one of the protestors (reportedly a member of AIM from London, Ontario) what they were trying to prove. According to the officer, a protestor

responded that “the government of both countries are trying to enforce citizenship on them. They claim they are citizens of North America.”

All of this created much consternation amongst white residents and authorities in Kenora. By the middle of March, Kaufmann was noting almost everyday how people were discussing the possibility of revolutionary violence in the Kenora area. At breakfast the day after the aforementioned CBC report, Kaufmann’s friend immediately asked if she had “heard about the Indian uprising?” Though Fred Kelly, who was then the Grand council chief for Treaty #3, publicly stated that he doubted Kenora would see another Wounded Knee, all around town there were discussions of organizing a white vigilante group in response. The CBC report also did not escape the eyes and ears of provincial law enforcement. AH Bird, the Deputy Commissioner (Operations) for the Ontario Provincial Police wrote to the Deputy Solicitor General that “The native person made comments regarding the Wounded Knee incident…[w]hen pressed by the interviewer he singled out the Kenora area as the most likely location for such a disturbance.” Bird was concerned enough to alert local authorities. On March 15, 1973, the Assistant Commissioner Field Division of the Ontario Provincial Police received a memorandum concerning possible “civil unrest” in Kenora. In a meeting set up with Chief of Police C.W. Engstrom, Deputy Commissioner A.H. Bird, District Judge L.A. McLennan and H.E. Sparling agreed that a Wounded Knee type scenario was not imminent in Kenora, but preparations should be made. “It occurs to us, and was also mentioned by Judge

---

32 “Memorandum To: Mr. R. M. Warren, Deputy Solicitor General, Re: Possible Civil Unrest Involving Indians—Kenora, March 20, 1973, File 304 Indian Policing, RG 33; 59.2; b223702, AO, Toronto. This was one of Bird’s first acts as deputy commissioner as he had only been promoted to the position on the day the CBC broadcasted the controversial interview, see “OPP postings announced by Yaremko,” The Globe and Mail 15 Mar. 1973: 5.
McLennan,” Sparling notes in his memorandum, “that the most likely point of attack would be the Court House in Kenora, and we have plans for the defense of that building.”

If Wounded Knee became the focus of concern for many locals and government officials, conflicts on local reserves were also drawing attention. In 1973, fires on the White Dog reserve were epidemic. Residents of Kenora had many opinions as to the causes and significance of the fires. For some, the fact that these burning houses were newly built and funded with federal dollars, a fact that received significant attention from the media, gave further evidence to their claim that Indians were unappreciative and undeserving of what they received from “the white man.” While staying away from the discourse of undeserving Indians, government officials were not able to explain the rash of fires. One fire marshal just thought these were senseless pranks, probably fueled by alcoholic binges.

Yet, there has also been a long historical relationship between fire and racial violence in North America, with the symbol of the Ku-Klux Klan’s burning cross perhaps being the most recognizable. On the flip side, arson has also been a “weapon of the weak.” Historian Afua Cooper, for example, tells the story of Mary-Joseph Angelique, a slave who, in April 1734, started a fire in her owners home to create a diversion to facilitate her escape to prevent being sold to a West Indian slave colony. The fire eventually burnt down a significant portion of Old Montreal. Across the Atlantic

---

33 “Memorandum To: Attn: Assistant Commissioner Field Division, Re: Possible Civil Unrest Involving Indians—Kenora, March 15, 1973.” File 304 Indian Policing, RG 33; 59.2; b223702, AO, Toronto.
34 Memo, Frank Wilson to RM Warren, September 12, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
Ocean, throughout the late eighteenth century and first decades of the nineteenth century English peasants protested the encroaching effects with arson. In Northern Africa, between 1860 and 1900, Arab and Berber forest dwellers regularly torched forests when it became apparent that French colonial policies of land appropriation were curtailing their ability to live. Here lighting up trees was akin to setting fire to piles of money because French companies generated much of their wealth from cork production.

Robert Kuhlken argues that in the early twentieth century people living under British colonial rule in Kenya and in the Indian state of Uttar regular used incendiary fire as a form of protest and resistance. In recent memory, fires in North America cities turned burning buildings into iconic symbols of black American frustration in the 1960s.

It is in this context that we can consider the motivations behind burning houses on White Dog reserve in 1973. Of course protest and resistance is not necessarily a planned action. Sometimes it is spontaneous. On September 29, 1973, two more buildings burned to the ground. One was a recreational hall and the other a private dwelling. Frank Wilson wrote to deputy solicitor general Warren that “Charges have been laid with regard to both fires but the fires do not have anything to do with the unrest of the inhabitants of the reserve.” Yet at least one of the fires was not just an act of senseless destruction. Arrested for setting a fire, a girl in custody told officers her act was in response to an abusive family member. Police records from the evening note “she stated that her brother

---

38 Kuhlken, 349.
39 Kuhlken, 352-53.
40 Frank Wilson to RM Warren, October 4, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
[name blacked out] beat up his father and brother and smashed her around. She became very angry and set his house on fire, which was subsequently completely destroyed.\textsuperscript{41}

In response to the fires at White Dog, Chief Roy McDonald and the Islington Band requested that the Federal Government provide two RCMP constables who would live on the reserve for at least a year and help train two Aboriginal constables “appointed by the Band.”\textsuperscript{42} “We have planned and tried other programs, “ McDonald wrote MP John Reid, but, “[t]his one is the need for this community.”\textsuperscript{43} A little less than a month later, Leo Bernier, the local MPP and provincial minister for the Ministry of Natural Resources, wrote to Jean Chrétien, then the minister for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), expressing his opinion that “favourable consideration of Chief McDonald’s proposal might help correct the situation.”\textsuperscript{44}

Soon after filing the original request, McDonald petitioned for a second. He asked that special constables from Community Guardians Limited, a private company based in Toronto, be appointed to the reserve.\textsuperscript{45} One federal official with DIAND had positive opinions about CGL, referencing their work with Ontario Housing Corporation in Toronto and the security services they provided for Rochdale College.\textsuperscript{46} Nonetheless, another DIAND employee was not sure if CGL was a social service or a policing service. The question of purpose became inconsequential when a note to Deputy Solicitor General

\begin{footnotes}
\item[41] Det. Sgt. M. Kulmatycki for Insp. W. Parfitt to Assist. Commissioner Field Division, Re: Suspected Arson—Islington Indian Reserve, White Dog, Ontario, District of Kenora, 29 Sept. 73, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto; memo, Frank L. Wilson to RM Warren, re: Incendiary Fires at the Whitedog Indian Reserve, District of Kenora, October 12, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
\item[42] Band Council Resolution, June 4, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
\item[43] Letter, Roy McDonald to John Reid, June 13, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
\item[44] Leo Bernier to Jean Chretien, July 9\textsuperscript{th}, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
\item[45] Islington Band Council, letter, Roy McDonald and Larry Boyd to Solicitor General John Yaremko, August 16, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
\item[46] Dahn D. Higley to R.M. Warren, August 22, 1973, Minister of the Solicitor General, memorandum RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
\end{footnotes}
RM Warren, from Elmer Bell, the Chairman of the Ontario Police Commission, cited the “considerable danger” in having private security on the reserve (though he refused to elaborate on the specifics of this “danger”). Warren heard much the same from H.H. Graham, then the Ontario Provincial Police commissioner. In Graham’s opinion the fires were not a policing problem but a social problem, and either way CGL workers were not trained either to police or to do social work. And, as Graham emphasized to Warren, policing of reserves “will be met and resolved by us.”

McDonald received the news that his request for CGLs presence would not be approved the day after hearing that the federal government had denied the request for two RCMP constables on the grounds that policing of reserves fell under provincial jurisdictions. It quickly became clear what action officials were willing to take when Warren recommended that McDonald make closer ties to local OPP. Aside from the jurisdictional issues which precluded the RCMP’s involvement, Leo Bernier thought that OPP officers were better than the CGL because the former, in his opinion, commanded the respect of Indians. In his letter to deputy solicitor general Warren, Bernier strikes a confident tone as he added a hand written line to the type letter: “This appears to be well in hand! L.” Days later two more buildings burned to the ground. The focus on policing, jurisdictional questions and finding homes for the new officers may have blinded officials to a glaring fact mentioned only once in passing. A week prior to Bernier’s recommendation of additional OPP constables, a memo listing all of the fires at White

---

47 Elmer Bell to RM Warren, August 29, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
49 Jean Chretien to Leo Bernier, September 5, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
50 RM Warren to Roy McDonald, September 6, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
Dog since that past February made note that “there is no fire fighting equipment on the reserve.”

While fires were providing evidence of the increasingly desperate situation of young Indigenous men and women, a second development was just beginning to make national headlines. Though mercury poisoning later become a major political issue brought to attention by the Anicinabe Park occupation in 1974 and by subsequent visits to Grassy Narrows by teams of international researchers, the Canadian public, most people in the Kenora area were scarcely aware that starting in 1962 a mill in Dryden, Ontario had been dumping mercury into a river system that people in Grassy Narrows and White Dog fished extensively. For Grassy Narrows, this was the second incident in a ten-year span that had catastrophic effects. The first occurred in 1960 when Grassy Narrows went through a forced relocation. Jennifer Nelson argues that the relocation was “justified through the promise of progress (better schools, services, and housing),” but “the move proved devastating to their way of life.”

By 1970, when the Ontario government ordered Dryden Chemicals Limited to stop its dumping, the pulp and paper mill had already left 20,000 pounds of mercury in Wabigoon river system. Ten-years spent consuming a lethal substance was beginning to have noticeable health effects on the residents of Grassy Narrows and White Dog. Moreover, as Anastasia Shkilnyk argues this was a “devastating blow” to the people of Grassy Narrows. “Having just been wrenched from their moorings on the old reserve,” Shkilnyk writes, “the people were ill prepared to cope with yet another misfortune.”

---

51 RM Warren to AH Bird, September 11, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto.
52 Nelson, Razing Africville 49. For an extensive investigation into both the relocation and the effects of mercury poisoning and the campaign to expose these crimes see Shkilnyk.
53 Shkilnyk, 179.
Misfortune, however, is not quite the way I would explain the politics behind a catastrophe that continues, forty-years after the dumping stopped, to affect the lives of hundreds of people in two impoverished communities. When he first received data connecting mercury to negative health effects, Leo Bernier, then the Minister of Natural Resources for Ontario, opted not to ban commercial or tourist fishing on the river system. Instead he told reporters “that this problem of mercury contamination of certain waters is the result of new knowledge that is still imprecise.” Whether Bernier was being callous, devious, and underhanded or if he was just plain ignorant, I do not know. What the historical record does demonstrate though is that young people who lived on those reserves had a much deeper appreciation for the environmental and social costs of pollution than did the province’s own Minister of Natural Resource. Days before two more buildings burned to the ground at White Dog, Frank Wilson told RM Warren that there was “dissatisfaction among young people in the Band, due to the fact that there has been contamination of fishing sites in recent years due to mercury, and they wish to move from this location and establish a Band at another site.”

**Conclusion**

This chapter has offered critical insight into the state of social and political conflict in Kenora in 1973. During Kaufmann’s research trips Indigenous groups were taking new approaches in opposing the status quo. For Treaty #3, education became a priority. A report by Treaty #3 researchers in 1972 found that Indigenous children in the Kenora area did not have the opportunity to learn their own languages and customs (this while

---

54 Leo Bernier quoted in Robert Reguly, “Mercury or no mercury the tourists are eating the fish,” Toronto Star 8 Jun. 1973: 9.
55 Frank Wilson to RM Warren, September 25, 1973, RG 33, 5G.21; b223702, AO, Toronto
anthropologists were funded to learn Ojibwa). Treaty #3 reported that of thirty educators interviewed in February and March 1972, none had “a knowledge of the history of the Indians of the Lake of the Woods-Rainy River area, or of treaties and Indian rights…[a]nd no teachers had any training in teach English as a second language to Indian people.” Not that educators did not want to learn, for as the report also noted, educators supported the idea that “Treaty #3 and the bands to take over the educational field.”56

The social inequalities evident in 1973, along with growing hostility from politicians, townspeople and the police, created a tense situation in Kenora. By the summer of 1973, Kaufmann’s notes are full of quotes, mainly from young Indigenous men, about their distrust of white people. The evident discontent locally combined with a vocal Red Power movement across North America made Kenora appear ripe for its own moment. During the first weekend of August, at the same time as a large powwow was taking place, Kaufmann notes that “One of the nurses at the hospital said she saw an Indian man measuring the bridge in order to set dynamite and blow it up.” No such thing ever took place, but like 1965, rumours were running wild.

Kaufmann’s fieldwork ended only a few months before the first manifestation of Red Power in Kenora, the Ojibway Warriors Society’s short-lived office occupation at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in November 1973. Formed in 1972 by a group of Ojibway men and women from Northwestern Ontario, the group first drew significant attention in November 1973 with a thirty-six-hour occupation of a federal Department of Indian Affairs office in Kenora. Once inside the offices they

told those who would listen that the “pow-wow at Indian Affairs” was to bring attention to a number of grievances,\textsuperscript{57} including greater economic autonomy for First Nations, compensation for the mercury contamination of a river near the Grassy Narrows reserve, and an end to the overt racist actions and physical brutality perpetrated in Kenora.\textsuperscript{58} Officials agreed to consider the grievances, and did not charge the OWS for the occupation. Though this moment of rebellion passed somewhat unnoticed outside of Kenora, the ground had been broken for a new type of resistance to take shape the following year.

The 1973 Tourist Guide’s story on the “The Indian Rising of 1900,” appeared much as it did in newspapers in 1900, with one exception. Unlike reports in 1900, the readers in 1973 were told that although “the true cause of the unrest” is not apparent, “it had its beginning among the Indians of Northern Minnesota.” In 1974, amidst Canada’s first Indigenous armed occupation in decades, Canadians would spend much time blaming foreigners for the problems that had emerged in their own backyard.


Years ago when I was an undergraduate student at the University of Winnipeg, I often showed up early for an introductory French lecture. Needing a way to pass the time before class started, I would duck out of the classroom and cross the hall to look at a wall of famous photographs published in the Winnipeg newspapers. I cannot really remember any of them now, except for one. While most of images captured moments from Winnipeg’s past, there was one from Kenora, Anicinabe Park to be exact. Two people are
present in the photo; one is an Ontario Provincial Police officer who is standing beside his cruiser and the other is Louis Cameron, a leader of the Ojibway Warrior Society. They are facing each other. As we know, there are several iconic photos of Indigenous activists face-to-face with representatives of the Canadian state, perhaps the most famous coming from the Oka standoff in 1990. Yet, the photo from Anicinabe Park captures a different scene. With his knee propped up on a wooden barricade, Cameron, with his dog beside him is in conversation. The officer, whose back faces the photographer, strikes a similar pose. They could be talking about anything; we could mistake them for old pals, people comfortable in each other’s presence. They weren’t. That is because this photo was taken two weeks into an armed standoff in Anicinabe Park in the summer of 1974.

Led by the Ojibway Warriors Society (OWS), the Anicinabe Park occupation took place seven months after their occupation of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development office in Kenora. The OWS, armed with an assortment of assault rifles and homemade bombs, demanded action on many issues, mostly those discussed in chapter four: water poisoning, policing, land claims, etc. In addition to local grievances, this occupation also took place during an intense era of Indigenous political protest nationally and internationally. As sociologist Howard Ramos explains, during the period between 1973 and 1976 twice as many Indigenous protest actions and legal challenges took place in Canada per year as compared to any year between 1960 and 1969. According to historian Ken Coates these were protests intertwined with a sense of global imagination, resulting in the emergence of “a dramatic new rhetoric…immersed in the

---

language of decolonization and antiracism." Yet, because Red Power in Canada reached its zenith some time after 1968, the Indigenous protests are sometimes overlooked in the global histories of the Sixties. I argue that the forty-day armed occupation of Anicinabe Park in Kenora, Ontario during the summer of 1974 is one such moment demonstrating intersections between the global and the local. In this event we can observe several crucial links between Indigenous decolonization in Canada and the global forces of anti-colonial liberation that were so dominant in the post World War II period. The six-week occupation illuminates the intersections of identity politics, the culture of anti-colonialism in the 1970s and how commentators on all sides of the conflict explained the drama in a language that extended beyond Canadian borders.

1974: Anicinabe Park

In July 1974, the Ojibway Warriors Society organized a rally hoping it would be an opportunity to “unify our Indian people” for “drastic changes.” Plans were made to accommodate upwards of 5,000 people at Anicinabe Park, a fourteen-acre parcel of land on the southeast edge of Kenora most often used by summer tourists because of its lakefront location. Rumours that the rally would attract members of the American Indian Movement, including its leadership, and the memory of the Warriors’ occupation of Kenora’s Department of Indian Affairs office less than a year earlier, caused concern for town councilors and local law enforcement. Crown attorney Ted Burton remembers

---


being concerned that the conference was just a “cloak for subversive activities.” In addition, speculation grew that white vigilantes were planning attacks on conference attendees, leading the town to question if they had the resources to handle this situation. In response to the concerns of Mayor Jim Davidson, Grand Council Treaty # 3 President Peter Kelly wrote that the OWS would conduct their own security patrol; he recommended, however, that the town would be wise to “police their own people, particularly their own police” some of whom were known for their “hostile and prejudicial attitudes.” In preparation for the first day of the conference, posters put up by the OWS warned participants to “be at your best behavior” and that liquor and drugs were prohibited, a rule that “Indian security” would enforce. They even asked the Kenora Hotel Association to cooperate with this policy and close their bars for the weekend. In doing so, the Warrior Society reiterated their security responsibilities, but claimed they would not “be responsible for the perpetuation of alcohol, which could lead to definite and serious circumstances.” The Hotel Association turned down the request.

While attendance at the rally was lower than expected, the estimated five hundred who came spent much of the weekend drumming and dancing. They also discussed a wide-range of issues, many relating to government policies, Indigenous spiritualism and, ways to “find new direction, and new thinking and practice of our people.” The agenda

---

5 Peter Kelly “correspondence to Jim Davidson”, July 16, 1974, Don Colborne Private Papers, Thunder Bay, Ontario.
emphasized that while pan-Indigenous in spirit, the event was “first…an Ojibwa Nation Conference.” The conference ended with what by then must have felt like a celebrity appearance. Dennis Banks, the National Director of the American Indian Movement (AIM), and then on trial with Russell Means for their roles in the Wounded Knee standoff, had been given special permission to cross the American-Canadian border to speak in Kenora. The memoirs of Kenora crown attorney Burton provide the most detailed explanation that I have been able to find on Banks’ ability to cross the American-Canadian border in July and August 1974 while on trial. Burton claims “that the district attorney and the judge [in St. Paul, Minnesota] both held Banks in high esteem” and agreed to let him travel to Kenora. It was Canadian officials, not American officials, who were leery about Banks’ presence.

That evening, Banks gave a wide-ranging talk. He explained how the colonial system inflicted shame on Indigenous peoples across North America. Yet he did not limit his insights into simply providing relevant examples, because, in his opinion, the colonized did not need much evidence of their colonization. Instead, Banks argued that Indigenous people should be working together for their own protection. “[W]hen society initiates and creates laws detrimental to our members,” he explained “then we must disobey those laws. We must disobey the laws of the crooks. We must disobey the laws of people who have forgotten about mother earth and human rights.” The time to resist, according to Banks, was now, “[f]or no matter where they have been born, Indian people are standing up in lonely towns and on lonely reservations to be heard. We have been

---

10 See Burton 215-17.
silent about these injustices for too long, and we have been silent as a group.” Once he finished, people who remained saw a Tae Kwan do exhibition, martial arts for self-defense. According to Fred Ho, martial arts became popular in North America “in direct relation” to the global upsurges of Third World national liberation movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

Fig., 6 “Ojibway Nation Conference,” Don Colborne Private Papers.

By mid-day on Monday, July 23, a day after the conference ended, news spread that one hundred fifty members of the Ojibway Warriors Society were armed and would not leave the park until it was “liberated Indian territory.”\(^{14}\) The sight of guns immediately set the imaginations of newspaper copywriters into overdrive. “Kill or be Killed” read the Winnipeg Free Press’s front page.\(^{15}\) Yet the protest tactic of a land occupation, rather than a march, such as in 1965, fit the idea that this was an anti-colonial insurrection. As John Price suggests occupations of state owned lands are common occurrences “whether in Latin America, Africa or North America.”\(^{16}\) Numerous Red Power groups in Canada regularly emphasized the centrality of land to their emerging identity as post-colonial nations. The Vancouver based Native Study Group, for example, argued, “only national independence and the meeting of land requirements of statehood will end the dependence our people suffer from.”\(^{17}\) Only fourteen acres large, Anicinabe Park could not provide a material basis for a nation-state. However, it was contested land and the occupation should not have been a huge surprise. As OWS spokesperson Louis Cameron explained to Mayor Jim Davidson prior to the conference: “We have chosen this site as it used to be reserved for Indian people. Many of our lands have been illegally sold, surrendered or leased for minimal amounts; the Ojibway Warrior Society is now looking into how white people gained control of Anicinabe Park.”\(^{18}\)

State officials quickly tried to downplay the development. Jean Chrétien, then the Minister of Indian Affairs, called it a local event that the federal government did not

\(^{14}\) David Lee, “Kill or Be Killed,’ is Threat By 100 Armed Indians Seize Kenora Park, List Demands” Winnipeg Free Press 23 Jul. 1974: 1

\(^{15}\) Lee, “Kill or Be Killed,”

\(^{16}\) Price, Native Studies 235.

\(^{17}\) Native Study Group, “Land is the Basis of A Nation” Akwesasne Notes (Late Summer, 1975): 46.

intend on becoming involved in. Besides this, and though there were reports of weapons in the park, Mayor Jim Davidson told the public that this was “nothing more than a sit-in.”

“Let them have the park,” exclaimed Davidson—himself a former participant in the Indian-White Committee. “After a week or so they will drift away and there will be no problem.” However, the occupation quickly gained national attention after AIM activist Harvey Major proclaimed that if police entered the park, or if they were cited for breaching fire regulations, the OWS would circle back towards town and “start blowing things up.”

While the talk of exploding buildings alarmed citizens, historian Sean Atkins argues that because of that summer’s intense forest fires, breaches to fire codes fueled animosity against the OWS. One reader of the Kenora Daily Miner and News wrote in, asking “Why don’t you pass the word up to Kenora, to see if those government officials are willing to pay those Indians a good buck for doing a rain dance and put the forest fires out.”

Though officials initially downplayed the severity of the protest, days into the occupation the OWS were clear that this was more than just a sit-in. Unlike their 1973 building occupation, the OWS learned that you do not leave until you gain guaranteed

---

22 The summer of 1974 in Northwestern Ontario was particularly dry. At the time of the occupation forest fires were threatening a number of small communities, including Vermillion Bay and Red Lake, see Sean Atkins, “The River, the City, and the Yellow Line: Reimagining Associative Landscapes in Post-War Northwestern Ontario” Native Studies Review 17.2 (2008): 115-17.
concessions. Louis Cameron, the OWS’s 24-year-old spokesperson from White Dog who became the focus of much media attention, responded to the prediction of a short-lived sit in with a unique prognosis: “We’ll live here…[w]e may even get married here.” However, he was also clear that this was not a declaration of war against white residents. In fact, for Cameron, what Indigenous peoples and white people in the region shared was their neo-imperial relationship to the rest of Canada. “[A]ll their economy is controlled from the outside” Cameron explained, “they are controlled either from Toronto or the United States.”

The end of the first week did not see shooting break out, but it did see the beginning of negotiations. As the Ontario government refused to negotiate with a non-elected Indigenous group, members of Grand Council Treaty #3(including Fred Kelly and his brother, Treaty # 3 Grand Chief, Peter Kelly) initially represented the Warriors. Sitting across the table were Mayor Jim Davidson, Peter Hare from the Federal Department of Indian Affairs and representatives for Kenora MPP, Leo Bernier. If officials were unsure about the OWS’s mindset, Fred Kelly told the group that “the Warriors are prepared to die to protect themselves after bringing out the issues—not to attack the town of Kenora.” Town Council remained unconvinced that weapons were for purely defensive purposes. One councilor claimed that the town was “under state of siege”; for his part, Mayor Davidson simply did not want a mistake to be made that would be “disastrous for future relations.” Moreover he wanted to prove that Kenora was

---

“not a racist town.” In response, a member of the negotiating team offered some historical perspective on the issue of violence. Doug Skead reminded the group that while negotiating with governments Indian people have always had the threat of violence hanging over their heads. Chiefs signed Treaty #3 with government troops only five miles away.29

When the OWS made their demands public, they provided twenty-five points of contention that were divided into local, provincial and national concerns. At the top of the list was a demand that propelled the early days of negotiations: a claim to Anicinabe Park, a parcel of land with disputed legal entitlement. At issue was the legality of the town’s purchase of the land from the federal government in 1959, who had held it as “Indian land” since the signing of Treaty #3. The state claimed that the purchase was legal; the OWS, with the support of Grand Council Treaty #3, argued that not only was it illegal for the federal government to sell the land in 1959, moreover, they claimed the land should not have been the federal government’s to sell in the first place.30 Yet there were twenty-four additional points, most of which received only scant media attention. These built upon grievances first laid out during the 1973 Indian Affairs office sit-in and again in press releases prior to the Ojibway Nation Conference. The OWS asked for an “investigation into the violent deaths of Indian people in the Kenora area,” better job opportunities, co-operation from town police on legal matters and “better and fairer coverage of Indian issues in the local press.” Most of the provincial and national issues demanded reforms to the justice system so it would reflect Indigenous values, “speedy

and just settlement of land claims,”31 and compensation for the people devastated by mercury pollution, an act that the OWS called “an outright crime against two communities.”32

Support for the occupation varied. We probably should not be surprised that most of the letters published in local papers expressed disdain for the occupation.33 Some government funded Indigenous organizations, and imminent figures such as Harold Cardinal, said they supported the reasoning but not the tactics of the OWS.34 Such divisions became a media focal point. Only days after the occupation began, the Kenora Daily Miner and News reported in a survey that “as a whole…members of the Ojibwa people in the Kenora area do not approve of the actions taken by the Warrior Society.”35 Individuals, such as Harry Boulby from Sudbury, however, wrote in to Akwesasne Notes to relay support for the occupation saying it gave a chance for people to be heard. He offered a unique, but perhaps misguided, suggestion that “Indian families” in better off

32 Louis Cameron, Ojibway Warriors Society in Occupied Anicinabe Park, Kenora, Ontario, August, 1974 (Toronto: Better Read Graphics, 1974), 9. By 1969, the federal and provincial government both had knowledge of the mercury poisoning. The extent of their action was to appoint an executive from the Thompson Company, the group that owned the mill, to do an environmental impact assessment. In 1971, the World Health Organization released a report warning people in Whitedog and Grassy Narrows reserves that the mercury level of the Wabigoon River was above the level deemed safe for human consumption. The mercury, which had been dumped into the river system for over twenty-years, was traced back to a pulp and paper mill in Dryden, Ontario, a town 100 miles east of Kenora, see, “The Slow Death of Mercury Poisoning,” Akwesasne Notes, 7.3 (1975) 16; Shkilnyk, A Poison Stronger Than Love.
35 “Natives Don’t Approve of Occupation” Kenora Daily Miner and News 26 Jul. 1974: 11. Two days earlier the newspaper claimed that the silence from Aboriginal organizations was evidence that “the majority of Indian people in the Kenora area do not condone the actions of the Ojibwa Warriors Society,” see “Status of Park could Change” Kenora Daily Miner and News 24 Jul. 1974: 1
reserves should “adopt…a few of these Kenora so called hopeless families.”[^36] The loudest show of support in the early stages of the occupation came from AIM. At Queen’s Park in Toronto, Vernon Bellecourt, then AIM “International Field Director”, spoke to an audience of between fifty and one hundred people. Bellecourt’s talk covered much the same ground as the OWS’s demands: unemployment, alcoholism, mercury poisoning, “white backlash,” and perceived double-standards when it came to the justice system. These conditions, he concluded, forced Indigenous peoples to take drastic actions such as the occupation.[^37]

By the end of the second week serious negotiations appeared to have led to a tentative deal.[^38] Such reports, however, were premature.[^39] In fact, the OWS believed that negotiations were bypassing or not taking seriously most of their demands. In part this frustration resulted from the Department of Indian Affairs sending an official who, admittedly, had little power to make decisions for the Federal government.[^40] “We came honestly to talk,” Cameron exclaimed, “but we have to return to the park and tell our people there is no hope in these talks.”[^41] The OWS were also growing skeptical of their own negotiating committee (made up of representatives from Grand Council Treaty #3), and eventually began their own negotiations (Dennis Banks would also join them) with government and municipal officials. Officials from Treaty #3 denied that this was

[^41]: Louis Cameron quoted in “Little progress seen at joint meeting,” 1; and “Only Limited Success in Kenora Discussion,” 17.
evidence that the militants had lost support in the Kenora area. A press release stated that they “wish to reiterate their solidarity with the desire for immediate changes as expressed by the Ojibway Warrior Society now occupying Anicinabe Park. The fact that some Indian people are turning away from peaceful approaches to change is a direct result of years of exploitation and persecution of Indian people by those with power.”\textsuperscript{42} Internal disagreements clearly existed between the militants and the official power structure, but the message to the public remained clear: the divide and conquer tactics of colonialism were not going to work this time.\textsuperscript{43}

With the OWS representing themselves at the bargaining table, talks continued to focus mainly on the land question and getting the park occupiers to relinquish their weapons. Outside of the negotiating room, it may have appeared as though nothing was being done to end the occupation. Thus the embers of white militancy began to burn. Early into the occupation police arrested several white men who approached the park with loaded weapons.\textsuperscript{44} But what had been individual actions now turned into a more organized effort. A group of white citizens began to advocate a new, more aggressive, strategy to end the stand-off, and bring “law and order” back to Kenora.\textsuperscript{45} One “concerned citizen” wrote into the local newspaper, rhetorically asking, “[i]n this country, in this province, in this town, is there no one with authority who has guts enough to say, ‘The Law is the Law, it will be upheld?’”\textsuperscript{46}

---

\textsuperscript{44} “Armed White ‘Vigilantes’ Provoke Standoff At Kenora” \textit{The Chronicle-Journal} (Thunder Bay) 25 Jul. 1974: 1.
Concerned Citizens, organized by alderman (and future Mayor) Bill Tomashowski reportedly drew seven hundred residents and resulted in the formation of a twelve-person committee.\(^{47}\) Particularly vocal was Eleanor Jacobson, a nurse who worked in White Dog. She questioned the will of the town to enforce law and order and also claimed “there is no racism in Kenora.”\(^{48}\) At the same time that the group denied it advocated violence, one of their strategies for ending the occupation was to storm the park to “evict” the OWS.\(^{49}\) During Indigenous protests in the 1970s, such a response from white people was not uncommon. In response to a Menominee Warriors Society takeover of a building in Wisconsin and the belief that government officials were unwilling to end the standoff, some local residents formed the “Concerned Citizens of Shawano.”\(^{50}\) As historian Libby Tronnes explains, the longer the occupation continued, “the rumors of a large ‘citizen army’ preparing” to move in “grew more frequent.”\(^{51}\) In Kenora, one person in attendance, concerned that outsiders would perceive the CCC as a white vigilante group, told reporters that “[t]hey don’t want to act like a bunch of red necks or the Ku Klux Klan, but it will be necessary if something doesn’t happen soon.”\(^{52}\) Indeed, this was the OWS’s perception. A reporter for the Toronto Star commented that during an interview

\(^{51}\) Tronnes, 536.
with Cameron he was continually doodling the letters C.C.C., which “he then changed to K.K.K. (Kenora Klux Klan).\(^53\)

Amid rumours that some police were anxious to storm the park, and in the face of growing militancy from white townspeople, negotiations took on a more desperate tone. The citizens meeting seemingly spurred action from the town as they began to block vehicles from bringing food and living supplies sent by several Winnipeg based organizations into the park.\(^54\) This was especially true after the Town of Kenora cut electricity to the park and also revoked a temporary amnesty and arrested four OWS activists on charges of conspiracy and unlawful assembly around noon-hour on August 13\(^{th}\).\(^55\) Yet the anxiety over a potential showdown also produced expressions of support that came from various non-Indigenous groups. The Revolutionary Marxist Group, for example, sent letters expressing their support of the Ojibway Warriors Society. To be in solidarity with “those who are struggling,” explained the RMG, meant “material aid” as well as verbal support.\(^56\) Celebrity activists also lent their moral support. At a talk in Winnipeg, Angela Davis reportedly expressed solidarity with the park occupiers and told the audience that “by standing up for native rights and combating racism, you’re helping yourselves.”\(^57\) Others used their bodies as a support. The Canadian Friends Service Committee, who had organized an ad hoc group “of concern for Ojibway Indians,” sent volunteers to act as a buffer between police, rogue citizens and those in the park. They

---


\(^{56}\) “Solidarity with the Ojibwa Struggle,” Vancouver 1974-76, Box 1, File 16, Revolutionary Marxist Group, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

set-up tents on a strip of land that the OWS gave them, then proceeded to try, in their words, to “reach the less-sympathetic white population, including the self-styled vigilantes.” Here, admittedly, they failed.58

Various attempts at having human rights committees and government arbitrators oversee the talks could not break the impasse. Finally an unlikely arbitrator arrived on the scene. After much consternation from elected officials, all sides agreed to let Dennis Banks take on the role of mediator.59 Shortly thereafter, the OWS agreed to lay down their weapons on August 19 as an act of “good faith”—not, however, as an act of surrender. “The Ojibwa Warriors Society has spoken,” Cameron announced, “…we will now see if the government listened.”60 Ten days later, on August 29, 1974, the OWS, in conjunction with Dennis Banks and representatives from Grand Council Treaty #3, agreed to a tentative deal with the town, the provincial government, and the federal government, with further promises to study and implement several of the OWS recommendations. Grand Council Treaty #3 would file a land claim on behalf of the OWS for Anicinabe Park, which, in the mean time, would reopen and remain a free camping and recreation space for all visitors. Town council noted that if the land claim had not been settled by May 1, 1975 “the matter of charges for use of Park facilities will

59 “Local crown attorney wants Banks on scene,” Kenora Daily Miner and News, August 15, 1974, 1. In his memoirs, Burton recalls, in extensive and sometimes sensationalistic detail, the series of events which that resulted in Banks leaving the Wounded Knee trial and being allowed into Canada to act as a mediator in Kenora. See Burton, 215-223. Banks was accompanied by his personal pilot Douglas Durham. In 1975, after being confronted by AIM, Durham admitted to being an agent provocateur. For more on Durham and his involvement in First Nations protest in Canada, see Johanna Brand, The Life and Death of Anna Mae Aquash (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1978), 100-01, 105.
be reviewed.” As well, it was agreed that, for the most part, the park occupiers would be granted amnesty, save for a variety of minor theft and vandalism related charges. Moreover, no trials would “take place until the land claim concerning Anicinabe Park” was resolved.

**Canada’s Wounded Knee? Media commentary on the occupation and the occupiers.**

In their insightful commentary on the local media’s reporting of the park occupation, Mark Anderson and Carmen Robertson note that the OWS’s list of demands took “a distant back seat” to sensationalistic images and stereotypical portrayals of the Indian-white conflict in Kenora. During the occupation the press seemed to stretch the binary of warrior versus elder to mean male militant versus male elected official. Though, as noted earlier, Grand Council Treaty #3 publicly attempted to create distance from this divisive discourse, I suggest that much of negative characterization of the OWS was a way to control who was allowed to speak, and in what form they were able to do so. Across the country, this pattern held true. Day-after-day newspaper readers saw a curious mix of feathers, guns, and Indians, often without any context. The first mention of the occupation in the *Montreal Gazette*, for example, was a photograph of an unidentified male Warrior brandishing a rifle, below him sat the caption “armed Pow-wow.” This is an example of the way Indigenous protestors appeared to their audience: the OWS were always pictured holding a gun often while being pictured in a relaxed position. One of

---

61 James N. Davidson, Mayor’s Office, August 28, 1974.
the most widely circulated photos depicted two Warriors holding their guns while laying on the hood of a car. Thus not only were these Indians violent but they were lazy. And, as we see in the cartoon below they could easily be depicted, not as people with a complex history, but as relics from the past who hid behind bushes, and attacked whites with arrows and tomahawks.65

The cartoonish depictions became crude stereotypes as reporters began relating first hand accounts of their time in the park. Some related to readers stories about the “haunting sounds of tom-toms” and the spookiness of seeing Indians armed with rifles amongst the trees, almost as though they were part of the natural scenery in Kenora.66 Recalling his night in the park, reporter Derik Hodgson characterized the militants as “thugs,” “madmen” and “crazies” who “talked tough” and laughed when pointing guns at peoples faces. He described a park inhabited by giggling revolutionaries who spent the night “serenading policemen” with beating drums and talking revolution, language the militants learned from Algerians and Angolans. Hodgson painted a picture of a mystical and frightening space, yet he afforded virtually no space to grievances, even the land claim.67 Historians Mark Anderson and Carmen Robertson note that in Kenora’s newspaper Indigenous people were regularly described as having, as a race, a predilection to violence and a lack of self-control.68 The OWS, a Thunder Bay editorial claimed, were simply publicity seekers; martyrs; “young Indians” naïve for believing that they could change the world “with a wave of the magic wand.”69 Such characterizations were a way

68 Anderson and Robertson, 428.
to discredit the voice of Ojibway militants. Unlike the rest of Canadian civil society, Indigenous people were expected to have only one voice, and it required the approval of the Canadian state to be legitimate.

As was the case during the march in 1965, some commentators tried to disassociate the actions of Indigenous peoples in Kenora from commentaries on Canada. One widely circulating cartoon did this well, depicting a white couple at a travel agency with posters for Kenora, Turkey, Cyprus and Greece. The man is caught saying to the travel agent, “Isn’t there anywhere the natives are NOT restless?” Yet the American Indian Movement was the most convenient target for commentators wanting to characterize the six-week occupation as the work of foreign agents. AIM’s presence at Anicinabe Park cannot be denied. The geographical proximity of Northwestern Ontario to Minnesota allowed for easy travel. Moreover, Dennis Banks and the oft-quoted veteran AIM member Harvey Major were major presences during the occupation. AIM’s influence may even have been the reason for cheers coming from the park the day Richard Nixon resigned his post as President of the United States. Yet, I believe blaming outsiders was an important way to delegitimize the voice and claims made by the OWS. As historians such as Ward Churchill and Daniel Francis demonstrate, the discourse of “bad Indians” storming into towns to destroy the harmonious relations between docile “good Indians” and their white neighbours is not unique to Canada, or the 1970s. However, in the 1970s, the “good/bad” dichotomy traveled through references to AIM and their reported outside interference. We can understand this as a commentary on the symbolic status of race, nation and colonialism in Canada. AIM was not only provoking

---

Fig. 7 Kenora Daily Miner and News, 2 Aug. 1974: 4

Fig. 8 Winnipeg Free Press, 24 Jul. 1974: 21.
otherwise “good Indians” but also, in the words of one journalist, they were doing so with American methods of armed rebellion rather than Canadian tactics of peaceful negotiation. The OWS were ridiculed not only for fitting the stereotype of the “bad Indian,” but also for betraying the history of peaceful existence that supposedly characterized Indigenous-white relations in Canada. Indeed, this alleged racial harmony was a marker of Canadianess itself. What complicates this further is that the OWS acknowledged their intellectual and political debts to AIM as well as other decolonization struggles, as indicated by Cameron’s references to Algeria and Angola. At the same time as the Anicinabe Park occupation, immigration reforms in Canada were putting increased attention onto the politics of Third World immigrants. For those who opposed non-white immigration, Third World immigrants became an easy target for their potential political influence in Canada. Some concerned readers demanded the government stop “importing” black and brown immigrants who “refused” to assimilate and who brought with them “Third World propaganda” of racial equality. “Colored immigration to Canada on such a massive scale spells only one thing,” Basil Flood wrote in the *Toronto Star*, “Trouble.”

The meanings of transnational associations, however, were not one dimensional. Indigenous militants used their global language as a way to foster a sense power and history that located struggle outside local boundaries. Furthermore, in the mid-seventies journalists sometimes imagined intersections between Indigenous protest in Canada and global consciousness to produce sympathetic accounts of the occupation. Journalist Les Whittington, for example, explained that the stance of the OWS “echoes the posture of

---

their ancestors who fought the white man.” Moreover, returning to armed resistance was “nothing less than the renewal of the wars of the last century.” Scattered references both to AIM and Dee Brown’s *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* suggest the war Whittington refers to took place in the United States, not in nineteenth century Canada. Was this simply a slip of the mind? Or, was he attempting to link Indigenous struggles across national boundaries, creating a sense of a transnational struggle uncontrolled by colonial and imperial boundaries? Difficult questions to answer indeed; moreover, is one able to so neatly separate the two possibilities? A smattering of radical leftist groups in Canada, however, were not shy in using media to voice support for the occupation and its political goals. In a multi-article feature that appeared in the fall of 1974, *Canadian Dimension* explained that the occupation grew out of problems “inherited” from nineteenth century colonial polices. Moreover, the OWS were “good leaders” who “seized the initiative in Kenora, took risks they felt necessary and demonstrated themselves to be skilled tacticians during the negotiations.” For other journalists, however, the magnitude of Kenora, was that it served as an example of “the ones who will get fed up enough to trade in their copies of Robert’s Rules of Order for a volume of Frantz Fanon.” In other words, they had turned their heads away from North American parliamentary procedure for the likes of Third World inspired armed resistance.

The threats of “guerilla warfare” attributed to OWS leadership throughout the occupation reinforced the possibility of violent confrontation. Certainly the initial reports

76 Wayne Edmonstone, “A Cure for which there is no disease,” *Canadian Dimension*, 10.5 (1974): 33. Edmonstone originally wrote his comments for the *Toronto Sun* after which they were reprinted in *Canadian Dimension*’s feature on Anicinabe Park.
focusing on the potential for violence had elements of truth to them. Louis Cameron admitted after the occupation ended that the group was well armed and they intentionally used the sensationalistic nature of the media attention in order to gain the advantage of having the weapons become a main part of the subsequent bargaining process. Moreover, the Ojibway Warriors Society used this imagery of armed resistance in almost all of their literature. Though, it should be acknowledged that they produced very little of their own literature. Most times their platform was brought to the public through protests or explained in interviews.

**Understanding the Ojibway Warriors Society and Red Power in the 1970s**

The six-week occupation brought Indigenous protest, armed struggle and the town of Kenora back into the national and international spotlight. One might call it a moment of Manichean struggle: colonized versus colonizer. In the broadest sense this is true. The Anicinabe Park occupation pitted colonized Indigenous nations against white settlers who had actively oppressed them for centuries. While these binaries make the occupation understandable, unquestioned adherence to them is problematic. Media coverage, public protests, and the state response show that in an increasingly globalized world, Indigenous militancy could elicit a wide-spectrum of meaning.

The OWS spoke of locating Red Power within a global moment, but one that was contextualized by an Indigenous historical framework. Cameron emphasized the place of spiritual and medicinal traditions—specifically Midewiwin—in the long history of anti-colonial struggle. Midewiwin, prohibited by the federal government for much of the 20th century, provided what some scholars have called the institutional setting for the teaching
of an Ojibwa worldview; Cameron said it reflected “a full and material understanding of the ways of the Anicinabe people.” A ceremony in which healing, drumming and knowledge of the natural world occupied central roles, Midewiwin’s central concept—according to scholars—is that not only are human beings, animals and plants alive, “but so were some natural and created objects such as specific stones, locations, dolls, etc. All such being or creatures, not just humans, were considered to have what in English is termed a soul, and thus to be alive, and have power.”

According to scholar Michael Angel, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Ojibwa communities used Midewiwin as a way to slow down the impact of Christian missionaries across central Canada. Some choose to incorporate aspects of Christianity into the practice, while others used it as a tool to protect themselves from it. In 1974, with the conference and subsequent occupation, Midewiwin once again became part of opposition to colonialism, “The Indian movement, spiritually and in every way,” Cameron believed, “is part of human revolution.” Midewiwin was “not something you pray for, you just do it. It’s a search for justice; and practice, not talk about God, is the key.” It meant “going through the deep ceremonies, learning about your families and the traditions or history, for the purpose of going forward—not going backward but forward.”

---

78 Angel, 20.
79 Angel, 122-23.
80 Louis Cameron quoted in Tom Harpur, “Kenora Indian leader says rebellion is religious,” *Toronto Star*, 7 Sept. 1974: C04
Organizing under the title “Ojibway Warriors Society” also used the past to move forward. OWS literature, along with articles published by the Toronto Warrior Society, informed readers that the Warriors Society was a response “to the specific conditions and needs of the people,” that sought “justice and the return of the rights of our people.” The Toronto Warriors Society implicitly created a sense of global consciousness by including a wide variety of international stories in their newspaper Native Peoples Struggle. This included a story that documented a trip to China made by a group of Indigenous men and women, “a message from an Amazon Indian to his North American relatives,” and a comparative study of the health of Indigenous children in Canada with those in Vietnam. The newspaper also published the stirring “Apolitical Intellectuals,” a poem by Guatemalan poet Otto Rene Castillo, and noted that “Castillo was one of the leading poets of Guatemala. In the year 1967, in a show of guerilla strength, he died fighting for his people.” In pamphlets and interviews the OWS portrayed itself as not simply an incarnation of the 1960s and 1970s, but as a contemporary materialization of a long-standing Ojibwa tradition. As a result, besides being in solidarity with contemporary global struggles, the “Warriors” who fought in Kenora were the heirs of “Warriors” who “fought the invaders, the British troops, the French troops and the Spanish troops throughout North America.” Such a narrative located the Anicinabe Park occupation within a pan-Indigenous anti-colonial struggle. Moreover it explicitly depicted the summer of 1974 as one moment in a centuries long resistance. For Louis Cameron, the park occupation was just one of many such protests by peoples throughout the world. At

82 Native Peoples Struggle: An Organ of the Toronto Warrior Society 1:1 (July1975), Box 19, File 23, Canadian Liberation Movement fonds, McMaster University Archives, Hamilton, Ontario.
83 “Caravan 1974: Correspondence re Caravan from West to Ottawa, 1974.” Box 2, File 16, CASNP, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario.
a Montreal talk he explained that Ojibwa people were part of a human revolution, one that saw Indigenous peoples, Chicanos and blacks involved in bringing down “this imperialist monster.” He reiterated this point in a conversation with a Winnipeg reporter, telling him that “Indian and non-Indian people everywhere are fighting back. Across Canada, in the United States, in Angola, South America and Africa, people are getting it on.”

Though unique to Canada, armed struggle was a popular tactical choice for “getting it on” in the post-World War II era. Revolutionary violence was more than just a tool for political change; it also came with a set of important symbolic gestures. Most obvious is that weapons (or even rumours of weapons) helped enhance the dramatic effects of political action. By 1974, the OWS was able to situate their armed struggle in a linear historical narrative of other armed Indigenous rebellions in North America, drawing a line from the Riel Rebellion, through two Wounded Knees to the park occupation. As Cameron explained, armed struggle did not begin with Anicinabe Park, but instead with “the Anishinabe people…right from the word go, they’ve been fighting with the gun.” Yet they also imagined armed rebellion as part of a worldwide anti-colonial rebellion, as evidenced by references to Angolan decolonization, for example. This was a moment in time when, as postcolonial theorist Robert J.C. Young explains, “guerilla warfare embodied a seductive and powerful image of a successful mode of political struggle, waged against heroic odds by subaltern peoples of the Third World

---

84 Louis Cameron, quoted in David Fuller, “Indians ready to fight society,” The Ubyssey 4 October, 1974: 16.
87 Louis Cameron, quoted in David Fuller, “Indians ready to fight society” 16.
against the forces of imperialism. Moreover, as Vijay Prashad argues, these actions made the “identity of the Third World comprehensible and visible.”

Yet if armed struggle enhanced the attention paid to political demands, guns also helped create the perception that anti-colonialism was the business of heterosexual men. In 1970, after kidnapping British diplomat James Cross, the FLQ demanded their manifesto denouncing capitalism and colonialism be read over the air. When it was, historian Sean Mills argues that listeners heard a manifesto “written in a heavily masculine language,” which “also denounced Pierre Trudeau for alleged homosexuality.” As reprehensible as this was, the media also searched out and popularized such images. As scholar Daniel Francis explains, when he closed his eyes to think about the park occupation “the first image that occurred” to him was “a photograph of a young Ojibway man…sitting on the hood of a car cradling a rifle.” The rhetoric of revolutionary violence and its corresponding imagery, brought to life in North America in moments such as Anicinabe Park and Wounded Knee in 1973 generally “catered to the press’s stereotypical image of the Plains Indian Warrior.”

As several scholars point out, similar to the way mainstream stereotypes meant Indigenous men were either “warriors” or “elders,” women were forced to live with their own set of constrained identities: usually as “squaws” or “princesses.” (I suspect in private conversation, babies at an occupation became convenient ammunition for people who believed Indigenous women were bad mothers). By the mid 1970s, while the dominant discourses about Indigenous women remained steady (as Lynn Kaufmann’s

---

88 Young, White Mythologies: Writing History and the West 24.
90 Mills, 178.
records show) a new identity emerged. The militant woman of colour (often pictured with a baby cradled in one arm and an assault rifle in the other) suggested that women too were revolutionary fighters. Though this image became especially popular in leftist publications, several scholars argue that the reality of this situation often betrayed its romantic image. Norma Stoltz Chinchilla argues that while women in Central American liberation movements were celebrated for being militants, they were often part of movements that paid little attention to child-care.92 (This blind spot tended to be transnational, as British women’s liberation activist, Sheila Rowbotham, remembers men talking about Marxist utopias but refusing to share the burden of child care).93 Moreover, women’s militancy did not mean that gender equality would guide the construction of a post-colonial society. Militant women were believed to have only temporarily moved into masculine roles, ones they would retreat from when liberation wars were won. “Visions of social change and gender equality,” Aaronette M. White argues, “compete with popular patriarchal yearnings to return to normal…Women combatants have been asked to put down their weapons, return to the domestic sphere and bear children for the independent nation.”94

In the early days of the occupation, reports circulated that the OWS had a training school to young women were receiving instructions on how to use high-powered weapons.95 As well, when the OWS agreed to end the standoff, the weapons were handed-over in a ceremony conducted by female activists. What I find confusing is that

93 Sheila Rowbotham, Promise of a Dream: Remembering the sixties (London: Verso, 2001).
95
while images of militant Indigenous women did appear, such as in the leftist publication Canadian Dimension, they did not circulate widely like the images of militant Vietnamese women or even militant black women in the United States. In fact, for the most part, men defined the public images and voices of the occupation. Why they picked up guns helps us understand the ways in which they imagined enacting decolonization. Of course, armed struggle represented a direct challenge to state policies. Yet it was also, in the words of David Lynes, a way “to undermine the ways of thinking which perpetuate colonial social structuring within colonized societies.” But more than just thinking, the colonial structure also put restrictions how bodies moved. Louis Cameron understood this; so to did Frantz Fanon. For Fanon, colonized bodies were bound with muscular

---

tension. Thus decolonization was both a release from the structures of colonialism and from the bodily tension it enforced.\(^97\) As Kristin Ross argues, the historical movement of Third World decolonization, for Fanon, was “indistinguishable…from the physical, muscular movement of men in action.”\(^98\) There is no proof that Cameron read Fanon. Yet Cameron believed the colonial system needed to be destroyed because it did not allow Indigenous peoples to express “human freedom.” “They have to laugh, they have to yell and they have to be free to move around,” Cameron argued. “But when you push people into a group like that a lot of that expression turns inside. It’s what you call internal aggression.” This accounted for the high level of suicides, alcoholism, physical violence and, he believed, the rash of fires that plagued reserves. “The only way,” to get out, the OWS believed, was “to bring that internal aggression outwards. It must go out, we must break out through the same way we got in. We got in by violence, we must go out by confrontation.”\(^99\)

The collapse of colonialism would also allow the recovery of manhood. Here Kristin Ross is again instructive. She argues that Fanon’s analysis “of the colonial situation depends heavily on a Freudian model of castration whereby the (male) castrated colonized subject attains full manhood or ‘wholeness through revolutionary solidarity and the violent overcoming and expulsion of the colonizer.’”\(^100\) Revolutionary violence could be central to this because men picked up the gun not only to initiate violence, but “also to

\(^97\) Much of Fanon’s discussion on revolutionary anti-colonial violence is outlined in Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* 35-106.
\(^99\) Cameron, 5.
\(^100\) Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* 158-59.
create an embodied sense of empowerment.”101 The recovery of manhood through armed protection became a reoccurring theme for several participants in the occupation. Though AIM activists were not expelling the colonizer in totality, the group’s male leadership sometimes mobilized the language of recovering manhood. At the Wounded Knee trials in 1974, just prior to the Anicinabe Park occupation, Russell Means, told jurors that there were only five ways for Indian men to express manhood. These were to be an athlete, a soldier, to get drunk and beat women, to become a white, or to be an activist. AIM, Means explained, provided Indian men a rebirth through radical politics.102 Similar themes emerged in the Anicinabe Park occupation. Louis Cameron did not replicate the gendered language of AIM in totality as he spoke often about the OWS being a “human movement,” where “Indian people” could put “their dreams, their hopes, [and] their frustrations together.”103 Ojibway men, however, were the protectors of their community’s women and children, Cameron believed. “When we went into the park to liberate our land we took guns,” he explained, “not to attack the community but to protect our women and children from outside belligerence.”104 Apparently, men did not hold exclusive rights to this language. In a post-occupation interview, OWS activist Lyle Ironstand suggested his wife spurred him into action by challenging him to act like the men who took over Wounded Knee.105 In his work on early civil rights organizing in the

103 Cameron, 11
104 Cameron, in the Indian Voice, (September 1974).
105 Lyle Ironstand in Burke, Paper Tomahawks 365-66.
United States, Historian Timothy Tyson suggests women “deployed stereotypes in assertive ways—demanding of black men, in effect ‘why aren’t you protecting us?’”

The recovery of manhood through the undoing of colonialism and the productive use of gender stereotypes, however, did not create sexist and heterosexist free environments. In fact, according to Lee Maracle, the opposite is true. She says these traits were “inherent in the character of the American Indian Movement.”

(This was not only true of Indigenous movements, but almost all social movements during the sixties, including Women’s Liberation movements). “Culturally,” Maracle explains, “the worst most dominant white male traits were emphasized. Machismo and the boss mentality were the basis for choosing leaders.”

This meant having to struggle against colonialism and patriarchy at the same time. A female board member of the Kenora Friendship Centre felt this first hand while attending an AIM led meeting in Sault Ste. Marie in the spring of 1973, noting that “this almighty guy” just threw questions at her. “I’ve been dominated by someone else for too long,” she told a group of other women in Kenora. Even with this initial experience, she told her group that if AIM came to Kenora she would still attend their meetings, even just to know what was going on.

While militant women made good press, inside movements dishes, cooking and cleaning were women’s duties. In the park occupation Indigenous women cooked and cleaned as they did in other Red Power protests in Canada. During the Native Peoples

---

106 Tyson, Radio Free Dixie, 141
107 Lee Maracle, I Am Woman: A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism (Vancouver: Press Gang, 1996) 107
109 Maracle, I Am Woman 99.
Caravan in September 1974, Vern Harper was candid about this sexual division of labour. “Some of the younger brothers,” he writes, “didn’t want to do kitchen detail, and they tried to use tradition—so called tradition—to get out of it. When they were asked to pick up the mop they would say ‘oh no, warriors don’t do that.’”\(^{113}\) In an account of her years spent as a Red Power activist, Lee Maracle relates the difficulty faced by women who wanted to be involved in radical anti-colonial activism while at the same time having to attend to the needs of young children.\(^ {114}\) This is not to argue that men did not value this work, nor is to argue that women did not value this type of labour. As Devon Abbott Mihesuah explains, in AIM “not all of the women expressed sentiments that their roles were less important than the men’s. They justified their ‘invisible’ work by stating that men and women have specific tasks to perform and all duties are essential to tribal survival.”\(^ {115}\) Moreover, in a “gender complimentary society” (to borrow Maracle’s term) division of labour based on gender is not a form of oppression; it is a way of organizing society. The problem with division of labour is the power society accords to each job. Hands that held guns, not those that held dishes, were those of social movement leaders. In turn they were in the press everyday, were those who determined the direction not only of social movements, but often how the state would respond. Full decolonization would require the destruction of patriarchy.

For Indigenous women the patriarchy and sexism they encountered in everyday life—and for some in radical political movements--was deeply connected to their tenuous racial and national status, as defined by the Indian Act. Challenges to the most significant

---

\(^{114}\) For the most extensive memoir on Red Power activism in Canada see Maracle, *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel*.
clauses, those that at their essence stripped Indigenous women—but not men—of their “Indian” identity if they chose to marry non-Indigenous Canadians, were the most public anti-colonial (and feminist) struggles led by Indigenous women in the 1970s.\footnote{In 1971, Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, a Native woman who lost her status through marriage, challenged sections of the Indian Act that disempowered Native women. “Status” is the term used to refer to those who are recognized by the federal (national) government as “Indian” for the purposes of the Indian Act. Prior to 1985, the Act’s membership provisions stripped status from any Indian woman who married anyone other than a status Indian man. Their children were not recognized as Indian, and non-status Indians could not reside on reserves or participate in the political life of reserve communities. Status Indian men, however, retained their status upon marriage and conferred it upon their wives; thus, non-Indian women acquired status upon marriage to status Indian men, and the children of these marriages were recognized as Indian.” see from Joyce Green, “Balancing Strategies: Aboriginal Women and Constitutional Rights in Canada,” in Joyce Green, (ed) Making Space for Indigenous Feminism (Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 155.}

Ironically, though the challenge to the Indian Act can be theorized today as an act of anti-colonial persuasion, in the mid-seventies, at the time of the Anicinabe Park occupation, prominent Indigenous nationalists vehemently rallied against such measures. Bonita Lawrence suggests that since 1968, when the federal government attempted to replace the entire Indian Act in favor of assimilation, many official Indigenous leaders and representatives viewed changing any part of the Indian Act as way for the federal government to erode Indigenous nationhood through step-by-step assimilation.\footnote{See Colleen Glenn with Joyce Green, “Colleen Glenn: A Métis Feminist in Indian Rights For Indian Women, 1973-1979, in Joyce Green, (ed) Making Space for Indigenous Feminism (Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 235; for the most comprehensive examination of Indian Act regulations on gender and its centrality to colonialism in Canada see Bonita Lawrence, “Real” Indians and Others: Mixed Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood (Vancouver, British Columbia: UBC Press, 2004).}

**Conclusion**

The desire for sovereignty, or the resistance to assimilation, helped drive the protests in Kenora during the summer of 1974. Though the park occupation ended in early September, its effects saturated the air for a long time afterwards. Twenty-seven charges were filed against OWS activists but were not pursued until the question of the park was settled the following year. At a meeting of the Concerned Citizens Committee
in early September, Mayor Jim Davidson defended his perceived inaction, saying that by not being drawn into armed confrontation Kenora had “won the war.” However, only weeks later Kenora residents punished Davidson by electing Bill Tomaschowski, a leader of the committee, mayor because of promises to bring back “law and order.”

Aside from land issues, some movement occurred on issues of mercury poisoning and policing. However, OWS leaders would quickly prove that Red Power would not be abandoned just because the occupation ended. As we will see, Louis Cameron, using his new found status as a respected militant activist, along with other park veterans, would go onto organize the Native Peoples Caravan. In this moment the scene would shift to Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

---

118 “Mayor Defends Kenora’s Role” The Chronicle-Journal (Thunder Bay) 6 September, 1974: 6
Chapter Six: Spy Games --The Native People’s Caravan, Douglas Durham and Warren Hart.

“It feels like I’m working on a spy novel.” This has often been my response when people have asked about this chapter. How else can one make sense of the attempted destruction of social movements in Canada through the state’s use of *agent provocateurs*? Of course this was the era of James Bond and the romance of spies defending Western democracy from all of its “enemies,” an image that still captures the way we imagine covert operations by the state. Yet the histories of people such as Douglas Durham and Warren Hart in the early 1970s, while sensational, are neither the things of romance nor fiction (though, as *agent provocateurs*, they were profoundly fictional). Both were men, both were born in the United States, both were former American military personal, and between 1974 and 1976, both shaped the direction of political protests and social movements in Canada.

This chapter argues that North American states actively intervened in attempts made by social movements in Canada during the mid 1970s to make common cause. The chapter begins with the controversies surrounding the Native Peoples Caravan that went from Vancouver to Ottawa and ended with a riot on Parliament Hill. I then take one commonly known figure, Douglas Durham, a man who spied on the American Indian Movement, and offer new evidence as to why he is important to our understanding of state surveillance of Indigenous movements in Canada, including the controversy around the caravan. I use files from the Revolutionary Marxist Group and black power activist
Rosie Douglas to demonstrate that in the mid 1970s white Marxists, black power activists in Canada, and radical Indigenous activists tried to find common cause. The chapter ends with an examination of Warren Hart, a controversial yet revealing figure in the history of transnational espionage. Hart, I believe, gives us some of the most compelling evidence of the state’s concern that social movements were crossing ideological and identity boundaries in search of common political goals.

**The Native People’s Caravan**

On September 10th, 1974, at the Native Friendship Centre in Edmonton, Louis Cameron and Ken Basil (a leader of the Cache Creek Warriors Society) announced a cross-country caravan that would attempt to unite Indigenous people.\(^1\) The group consisted of people from Canadian chapters of the American Indian Movement, various Warriors Societies and allies such as those from the Canadian Association in Support of Native Peoples, Quakers, and members of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) (CPCML). According to Vern Harper, who ran as a CPCML candidate in the 1974 federal election and helped organize the caravan, the CPCML agreed to give financial support to the caravan—a detail that became the source of great controversy in the following weeks.\(^2\) The group, according to Harper, brought many different interests to the caravan. One consistent theme was “Native spiritualism” and developing a sense of being a “Red Nation.” Politically some were interested in Marxism and socialism because, according to Harper, of what “it had done for other oppressed nations of the

---

1 Harper 9.
2 Harper 10.
Third World.” Others were not motivated by political ideology as much as by a return to Indigenous traditions through the revival of languages and ceremony.³

The caravan left Vancouver on September 15, the day after a rally had brought out two hundred supporters. Fifteen days later they arrived in Ottawa, set to protest at the opening of Parliament on September 30, 1974.⁴ As National Indian Brotherhood President George Manuel remarked in his letter of support, the caravan’s “choice of the capital city of Ottawa as their destination will not go unnoticed by the peoples of the Third World.”⁵ The two-week journey from Vancouver to Ottawa was not without stress and controversy. According to Harper, some of the AIM members were convinced that communists were too prevalent and thus decided to split off when the caravan reached Kenora.⁶ The communist controversy followed the caravan around the country to the point where caravan leaders reportedly noted whether people were “caravanists” or “leninists” when they joined.⁷

Fears of “Leninists” were joined by persistent rumours that the caravan would bring terrorism to Parliament Hill. In Hamilton, Ontario, where the caravan received the support of the district labour council and several unions,⁸ journalists reported that Cameron was threatening to blow up Parliament. Harper suggests that the mainstream press was responsible for much of this sensationalism. An internal memo from members of CASNP who were communicating with Cameron throughout the caravan makes

---
³ Harper 40.
⁴ Harper 13.
⁵ George Manuel, “Re: Indian Caravan,” September 24, 1974, Box 2, CASNP, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario.
⁶ Harper 27.
⁷ “Re: Caravan Advance People,” Box 2, CASNP, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario.
⁸ Telegram to Diane Mackay from Bill B. Stetson, Secretary Hamilton and District Labour Council, September 24, 1974 and Telegram to Diane McKay from Ed Hunt, Recording Secretary UER and NWA local 504, Box 2, CASNP, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario.
similar claims. They note that Cameron was not able to give reports without the “permission” of the other leaders (a detail also noted by Harper) and call the media reports of bombing “a hatchet job.”

When the caravan arrived on Parliament Hill, hundreds of other protestors joined the protest. The day was loaded with symbolic importance. For example, while the RCMP band serenaded Chief Justice Bora Laskin with God Save the Queen as he stood on the top steps of parliament, below Indigenous protestors played drums and sang the AIM anthem. Yet caravaners were also there to make various demands. They called for greater accountability by Indian Affairs, that moneys allocated for Indian Affairs be paid directly to Indigenous communities, that treaty rights be recognized for all Indigenous peoples (status and non-status), better health care provisions (noting that if the “underdeveloped countries” such as Cuba and China could do so, so too could an industrialized first world nation), and end to cutbacks for Indigenous education. What came to overshadow all of these demands, however, was what has come to be known as ‘the riot on Parliament Hill’: a bloody confrontation between RCMP police and riot squads wielding billy clubs and mostly unarmed Indigenous men, women and children.

Just a month after the end of the Anicinabe Park occupation, the Parliament Hill riot reignited national attention towards Indigenous protest and violence. But violence on whose part? Unlike the park occupation where armed confrontation never went beyond rhetoric, on September 30th the scene on Parliament Hill ended in a physical confrontation. When asked by journalist James Burke to describe the events, Louis Cameron attributed the bloodshed to an overzealous police force eager to beat up Indians.

---

9 Telegram September 27, 1974, Box 2, CASNP, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario.
11 Manifesto of the Native Caravan is reprinted in Harper, 50-53 and is partially reprinted in Hall, 274-75.
Yes, protestors pushed through several barricades, Cameron admitted, but only to find an “open area” where the group could congregate and continue singing songs and playing drum. It was when the “national guard,” armed with bayonets attached to their guns, marched towards the group that violence broke out. Asked why police attacked them, Cameron said it was retaliation “on the native people for their armed insurrection at Anicinabe Park.”

Vern Harper’s account differs somewhat from that of Cameron. In Following the Red Path, Harper’s chronicle of the Caravan, he writes that the initial push past the first barricades was an action only taken by a few protestors. For him this was confusing because, as he writes, “we had agreed that there would be no violence.” Harper’s reference to violence here is ambiguous. Does it mean that the push through the barricades was a violent act? Or does he mean that the push through the barricades resulted in a violent response from the police? Either way, for Harper the confrontation escalated after an RCMP officer grabbed and flipped his sixteen-year-old son Vince. The group, however, restored calm and once again began singing and drumming. But then came the riot squad. Harper believed that the actions of police and state that day were planned: “I feel that the riot squad was used on us to accomplish a number of things. One was to show Native people across the country that if they supported us or got involved in the Native liberation movement, this is what they would get.”

The English Canadian left voiced similar opinions about the government and its police forces. In one of the most comprehensive reports on the caravan and the subsequent riot, Dave Ticoll and Stan Persky, writing for Canadian Dimension, claimed

12 Cameron quoted in Burke, Paper Tomahawks 391-93.
13 Harper, 57.
14 Harper, 65.
that thirty riot police with clubs, plastic shields, and tear gas charged the crowd after a shoving match between protestors and RCMP broke out late in the afternoon.\(^\text{15}\) Articles in the communist paper *The Young Worker* claimed “the federal government’s total unwillingness to even meet with the leaders of the caravan” led to the violence. Here, once again, the source of violence is ambiguous. Is the reporter saying that violent actions on both sides could have been avoided? Or was it referring to the specific actions of either the police or the protestors? Regardless, they judged the riot to be “just one more episode in the continuing, 400 year old campaign to keep the Native peoples from regaining their rights and from establishing control over their own future.”\(^\text{16}\)

Yet the most intensely scrutinized aspect of the events on Parliament Hill were not the actions of the RCMP, or the grievances and demands of the Native manifesto, but instead the rumoured role of Maoist agitators. By 1974, Marxist-Leninism had developed into a major ideological influence on North American radicals. Born of the Chinese revolution and various Third World Marxist movements, Marxist-Leninism in North America put, at least theoretically, the intersection of racism, class and imperialism at the centre of its worldview.\(^\text{17}\) Historian Max Elbaum estimates that by the mid 1970s there were 10,000 Maoists in North America,\(^\text{18}\) with Canada being a hotbed for Marxist-Leninist organizing. According to one study no less than five Maoist parties emerged at various points throughout the decade, with the largest party being The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist).\(^\text{19}\) It was in Montreal, historian Sean Mills reveals, that

\(^\text{16}\) Shane Parkhill, “Native people’s demands met with violence!” *Young Worker* (October, 1974): 3.
\(^\text{17}\) Elbaum, 3.
\(^\text{18}\) Elbaum, 4.
\(^\text{19}\) For an overview of various Maoist organizations that existed in Canada see Robert J. Alexander, *Maoism in the Developed World* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2001) 41-49. Alexander, while informative on the
Maoist organizations in Canada “flourished, often attracting hundreds of members, publishing weekly newspapers, and playing an influential if controversial role in union and community organizing…”20 En Lutte!, one of the three major Maoist organizations in Montreal, reportedly regularly distributed 10,000 copies of its paper.21

Mainstream press played up the Maoist link, often giving the sense that a vast communist conspiracy underwrote the anti-colonial and anti-imperial demands. Yet they were not alone in casting such a shadow. Leftist and Indigenous newspapers also weighed in on the Maoist presence. The Young Worker claimed that the few dozen CPC (ML)ers on Parliament Hill tried to give the impression that they were leading the protest. The author believed CPCML actions caused natives to be “strongly anti-Communist” and also gave the government a powerful propaganda tool to claim that whites were behind the recent rise in Indigenous protest.22 The Ticoll and Persky report published by Canadian Dimension went into extensive detail about the role of CPC (ML)ers at the protest as well as during the caravan. Though writing for Canadian Dimension, Ticoll and Persky also wrote for the Vancouver based Trotskyist paper Western Voice in 1974 (The CPCML dismissed Western Voice as being “anarcho-syndicalist”). The article suggested that the Maoists involvement began in Vancouver, the caravan’s point of origin. They claimed that only “[a]bout half of the demonstrators were native people” who were joined by “a large and vocal division of CPC (ML) supporters. Many of them were members of

---

20 Mills, 210, 271fn20.
21 Mills, 210. There may have been a wide-distribution of Maoist influenced literature, but Phillip Resnick argues that the “Marxist-Leninist language” of En Lutte! “proved quite alien to ordinary Quebec workers, welfare recipients, or immigrants, while their dogmatic tendencies hastened their own demise.” Phillip Resnick and Daniel Latouche, Letters to a Québécois Friend (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990) 31.
22 Parkhill, “Native people’s demands met with violence!” 3.
Vancouver’s East Indian community, which “itself is increasingly victim to racist attacks and police indifference, if not complicity.”²³ Throughout the article, the authors invoke the CPC (ML) as a source of conflict between caravaners, especially those who were American Indian Movement activists, and amongst supporters, especially in what was characterized as the “the complex, sectarian, Toronto scene.”²⁴ Yet Ticoll and Persky also tried to provide some balance to the report, by noting that Maoists provided important financial and logistical support and, moreover, the mainstream media and government officials were making Maoists scapegoats for the police induced violence on Parliament Hill.

Many of the mainstream Indigenous papers were keen to disassociate themselves from any connection to communism. Indian Record, the organ of the National Indian Brotherhood, reprinted in full the sensational piece on Maoist involvement which appeared in the Toronto Sun.²⁵ Both Indian Record and The Native Voice republished an article from the Edmonton Sun blaming the CPCML for inciting the riot and asserting that the American Indian Movement would withdraw support from further protests if “leftists continued to get involved.”²⁶ The Native People, published by the Alberta Native Communications Society, ran numerous stories on the caravan, both during its tour across Canada and after the protest on Parliament Hill. On September 27th, four days before the caravan reached Ottawa, the paper printed a front-page story reporting that AIM had left

---

²³ Ticoll and Persky, “Welcome to Ottawa” 19. Media from all sides often portrayed the CPC-ML as ‘white agitators’ or ‘white marxists.’ Ticoll and Persky’s reference to East Indian involvement does a little to disrupt this assumption. Moreover, generally unnoted is that Hardial Bains, a CPC-ML leader, migrated to Canada from India.
the caravan and “well-informed sources say it has been infiltrated and is now directed by radical leftists.” The same source reportedly told The Native People that Maoists were to “blame” for “the complete disintegration of what was…a Canadian Indian Movement.”

The paper’s post-riot coverage continued along the same lines. A first hand observer reported that native people did not come out in large numbers to the caravan due to the “obvious infiltration of outside forces.” Though unlike other reports, this one claimed that alongside CPC(ML)ers other supporters included “the local Steel Worker’s Union and the Local Truck Drivers Union.”

**Douglas Durham, AIM, and the Canadian Connection:**

While most of the protestors returned to their home communities after the violence on Parliament Hill, a small group stayed in Ottawa and occupied a vacant warehouse on Victoria Island, calling it the Native People’s Embassy. Though it only lasted five-months, Akwesasne Notes explained that the Embassy “reflected in miniature the entirety of the three centuries Europeans have related to native peoples.”

Enthusiasm shaped the early days of the occupation, but deteriorating conditions, including a lack of basic amenities, and intergroup conflict began to lower people’s spirits. In an effort to boost morale at the Native People’s embassy, AIM sent Douglas Durham from the United States. As of November 1974, Durham had only been involved with AIM for just over a year but he had quickly ascended to an important position: director of security. In the minds of many AIM activists Durham had also become Dennis

---

Bank’s closest confidant. In Ottawa, Durham spent a few days at the Native People’s embassy giving press conferences and talking to those who were still left in the building. According to Vern Harper, Durham “fit in quite well...people liked him; he made a good impression.”

Five months later, in April 1975, the world learned that Douglas Durham had another identity: he worked for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Communists and bombs threats plagued the caravan, but so too did the RCMP, as they continually harassed caravaners from the moment they left Vancouver. As one carvaner from CASNP noted in correspondence to other CASNPers, “this telex is bugged as are our phones.”

The story of Douglas Durham suggests this was more than paranoia.

Durham first came to AIM’s attention when Ron Petite, a prominent AIM activist from Des Moines, Iowa, introduced him to the organizations leadership in autumn of 1973. Earlier in the year, at Wounded Knee, Durham had been able to enter (with secret help from the FBI) as a photographer with press credentials from Pax Today—a leftist newspaper located in Des Moines. Immediately upon being introduced, Durham shared information that made some in the room uncomfortable: he told them he was a former police officer. Though several AIM members did not respond well to this admission, according to historian Ward Churchill, Ron Petite was close enough to Banks to convince him that Durham, who was a skilled pilot and a photographer, would be an asset to the

---

30 Harper, 74-75.
31 Footnote about A.M.'s discovery of Durham’s true identity.
32 CASNP, Trent, Box 2, Telegram, “Re: Caravan Advance People.”
group.\footnote{Churchill and Vander Wall, \textit{Agents of Repression}; Banks, \textit{Ojibwa Warrior} 267.} In a later interview, Aaron Two Elk, also a Des Moines AIM member, recalled that they thought Durham’s alleged background might give them “a special insight about the way the police worked.”\footnote{Aaron Two Elk quoted in Churchill and Vander Wall., 213.} Just under two years elapsed between this initial meeting and the moment when Dennis Banks, Russel Means and other AIM leaders confronted him in early March, 1975 with evidence that he was an FBI agent, an accusation Durham often made against others members of AIM (a tactic known as ‘bad jacketing’). Though influential AIM members such as Vern Bellecourt and Anna-Mae Aquash, who noticed Durham dyeing his hair black, were suspicious,\footnote{Matthiessen, 111.} Banks had become close enough to Durham that he often dismissed these concerns. So close was Durham that by the time his true identity became known to AIM he was in charge of finances and was the group’s head of security.\footnote{Banks, \textit{Ojibwa Warrior} 267, 269, 271-72, 276; Baringer, 22.}

For scholars who write about AIM, Douglas Durham is a focal point. It is easy to see why. From claims that he attended a secret CIA camp in Guatemala in the late 1950s to rumours that he participated in the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, his life reads like an Ian Fleming novel. What is real and what is fiction is still not clear, for as journalist Steve Hendricks remarks, “The CIA will say nothing of Durham’s claims and is shielded by law from having to.”\footnote{Hendricks, I believe, provides the most complete treatment of the FBI’s legacy within AIM. He is the first person, that I know of, to use the recently opened Wounded Knee Legal Defense Organizing Committee files in his work. Along with extensive interviews, the files allow him to be critical of the FBI’s role in the deaths of several AIM activists without glossing over the way intense paranoia circulating at the time within AIM led many activists to commit acts of violence against each other. Hendricks also has the most complete recollection of Douglas Durham’s post AIM life. For the reference to Durham’s rumoured CIA training, see Steve Hendricks, \textit{The Unquiet Grave: The FBI and the Struggle for the Soul of Indian Country} (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2006) 177-78; for more on Durham’s controversial past as part of the Des Moines Police Department see “The Many Faces of Doug Durham,” \textit{Akwesasne Notes} (Early Winter, 1975): 12-13.} Adding to the intrigue around Durham is that he is
evidence that while the United States officially suspended COINTELPRO in 1971 the
government directly intervened and sought to disrupt social movements—just in a less
official capacity.\textsuperscript{40} And this they did. Many still suspect that Durham either had a direct
role or facilitated in a significant fashion the death of Ana Mae Aquash in 1976, of
Juanita Eagle Deer in 1975, of Harvey Major in 1974 and was crucial to the extradition of
Leonard Peltier in 1976. When “Durham’s undercover status was exposed,” Sandra
Baringer explains, “reactions among AIM leadership ranged from shock to denial and
redirection of suspicion against each other. He had penetrated to the heart of the troops
and when the dust settled, some of the things that remained visible were the bodies of
dead women.”\textsuperscript{41}

Compared to all this, Durham’s time in Canada may seem relatively unimportant.
At least it has to almost everyone who until now has written about Durham. Even in the
most thorough study of the FBI’s infiltration—Steve Hendricks’s \textit{The Unquiet Grave}\textsuperscript{42}
Durham’s actions are mainly confined to the United States. That is, save for one moment.
After being indicted for his role in Wounded Knee, Dennis Banks fled to Canada—to the
Northwest Territories, via Edmonton, to be exact. It is common knowledge in AIM
historiography that Durham flew Banks to and from Canada after Banks turned himself to
stand trial in St. Paul, Minnesota. It has been argued that Durham’s facilitation of the
escape and return from Canada subsequently led Banks to appoint Durham his confidant
and bodyguard. It also led the FBI to hire Durham as a full-time operative within AIM.\textsuperscript{42}

When activists are confronted with evidence that one of their own was in fact
playing for the other team it seems natural to want to create distance. In Indigenous

\textsuperscript{40} COINTELPRO is an acronym for Counter Intelligence Program.
\textsuperscript{41} Baringer, 41.
\textsuperscript{42} Hendricks, 189.
protest circles and other social movements in the 1960s and 1970s, one did not want others to think that in fact one was also an agent of the state. Activists such as Anna Mae-Aquash paid with their lives for these persistent (and ultimately untrue) rumours about FBI ties. As well, one did not want to look stupid by admitting that the state had duped you. When Durham’s identity was revealed, Vern Harper at once tried to downplay Durham’s impact on the caravanners but betrayed this when admitting that though he did not tell Durham “anything I didn’t tell anybody else… he had fooled everybody completely so I imagine he gave the FBI and the RCMP a lot of information.”

When confronted with evidence of Durham’s true identity, Louis Cameron told reporters that Durham, during his brief stay in Anicinabe Park, was the person who tried to get the OWS to initiate violence: “Durham tried to get our people to make explosives and bombs…to break up into small terrorist groups like the FLQ.” Cameron claimed that Harvey Major, the Des Moines, Iowa based AIM activist who was a central figure in the press during Anicinabe Park, “didn’t feel right about what Durham was doing. He told me to be careful, and watch him.” The OWS reportedly did just that and unanimously voted down Durham’s ideas.

As expected there are conflicting opinions regarding Durham’s role in the Anicinabe Park occupation. One solid fact was that he was only there during Dennis Bank’s two appearances: in late June at the Ojibway Nation conference that preceded the occupation and in August 1974 to help mediate a settlement. According the crown attorney Ted Burton, he and Durham became close during the latter’s time in Kenora: “I had many phone conversations with Durham in succeeding months, as he continued to

---

43 Harper, 74.
give me good advice on how to wind down the volatile situation in Kenora. He must have dropped my name in Wisconsin and The Dakotas…In particular, the Governor of Wisconsin called to discuss a reasonable way to deal with the seizure by local Indians of a monastery of Gresham.”

This last remark is in reference to an armed standoff between the Menominee Warriors Society and local law enforcement over a piece of disputed property owned by the Roman Catholic Alexian Brothers. Scholars have not mentioned Burton’s role, but according to historian Libby Tronnes, “Durham took part in the negotiations as an AIM representative.”

While Red Power activists tried to distant themselves from Durham in the immediate aftermath of his exposure, others, such as Ted Burton drew himself closer. Besides claiming that he and Durham partnered to help end the Menominee standoff, the “country lawyer,” as he has called himself, facilitated Durham’s involvement in the caravan. If Burton did this, apparently he did so without the knowledge of Canada’s Solicitor General, Warren Allmand. In April 1975, Allmand told reporters that all FBI agents and CIA agents were required to clear their operations in Canada with the RCMP. Though the RCMP had given Durham permission on other occasions to enter Canada, he told CBC “As it Happens” host Barbara Frum that the RCMP had no idea who Durham was during the Native Peoples Caravan. After being questioned in the House of Commons by Progressive Conservative MP Perrin Beatty, Allmand confirmed they had not sanctioned Durham’s presence in September 1974.

45 Burton 226.
46 Trones, 539.
48 “Advisers to Indians a spy, RCMP learn,” Toronto Star, April 18, 1975, A3; “Ottawa did not know FBI man in Canada,” Toronto Star, April 22, 1975, B7
Durham’s Canadian connections received their most comprehensive treatment from the protagonist himself, during testimony in 1976 to the Eastland Committee on Revolutionary Activities of the American Indian Movement. Here Durham argued that generally all radical Aboriginal protest in Canada was part of a global communist conspiracy. In his words, he facilitated communication between the RCMP, Ottawa Police and the occupants in order to “prevent any reoccurrence of violence.” But he was also on the lookout for communists, whom, the Eastland Committee heard, were present at the Anicinabe Park occupation and were the main inspiration for the Native People’s Caravan.

When it came to the Anicinabe Park occupation Durham’s testimony grew even more provocative. Again he highlighted the role of the CPC(ML) in funding Indigenous protest. From there he made further allegations, including that he and Banks had tricked the public into believing the weapons at Anicinabe Park were destroyed after the first agreement had been reached in early August 1974. His testimony is worth quoting at length:

Mr. Durham: The agreement was reached that the arms would be turned over to responsible government authorities and that a negotiation period would come for the transfer of title. Actually, in Dennis Banks’ own handwriting, he handed me that note saying that the arms will be hidden and kept inside the park. They were buried, along with the Molotov cocktails. Approximately four old, rusty rifles and shotguns, were turned over in front of the press, and I received the honor of destroying approximately three or four of the at least 30 Molotov cocktails that had been assembles in the park.

49 The objectivity of the Committee is suspect but it is still useful for uncovering the fact that FBI agent provocateurs were active within Aboriginal movements in Canada, as Durham uncovers in his various testimonies about his actions in Canada. U.S. Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Internal Security (Eastland Subcommittee) Revolutionary Activities Within the United States: The American Indian Movement (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976).

Two days previously the press had pictured Indians assembling a large number of Molotov cocktails, and yet were willing to accept the fact that there were only three of them when I destroyed them for the press. The weapons, rusty and inoperable, were placed in a blanket and surrendered ceremoniously, while the others were buried in the park. Negotiations began, until the press left; then the principals in the occupation decided to depart for western Canada, began building a caravan to travel to Ottawa, the seat of the capital of Canada, to demonstrate violently. They did in fact do that, and in a press release to the Toronto Globe and Mail, Reporter Rudy Platiel portrayed the caravan as being Communist inspired, I will submit that article to the subcommittee.

Mr. Schultz: I notice Mr. Banks gave you that. Was that in the presence of others, so he couldn’t just tell you that? He wanted you to know what would happened with the weapons?

Mr. Durham: It was during the negotiations in Kenora with the government officials. I nudged him and said, “Dennis, what are you going to do about the guns, you are not going to hand them over?” He wrote the note out to me, indicating that this is what would be done. In fact, that was done.

Mr. Schutz: Would you initial the note and put today’s date on it, and submit it for the record? We will mark it as exhibit No 28.—Dennis Banks food stamp book

Mr. Durham: Also, again, during this occupation. George Roberts of Los Angeles became involved and sent a telegram to the Canadian government, threatening a precipitation of an international incident of unknown proportions if the Government of Canada attempted to dispossess the Indians of Kenora land.”

Making sense of Durham’s Eastland Committee testimony is difficult. It often appears to be a large dose of paranoia inflected by bits of truth. In her analysis of Durham, Sandra Baringer calls him a chameleon—a person who could tell you what you wanted to hear, a person who had also changed his post-exposure discourse to suit his new audience. She argues that immediately following his exposure as an FBI agent, Durham spoke sympathetically about the situation of Indigenous peoples, arguing that his role as a spy was to try and turn AIM not away from social change, but from violence. Yet this discourse underwent significant change after being commissioned by the right-wing John Birch Society to go on a speaking tour. “The lecture tour,” Baringer argues,

51 Durham, “Eastland Committee” 66.
“gave [Durham] some needed incomes, but in playing to an entirely different audience, his narrative about AIM underwent significant revision.”\textsuperscript{52} Indigenous peoples also regularly showed up at these talks looking to challenge Durham’s depictions of AIM. Sometimes Durham split the scene, other times the protestors were refused entry, and sometimes police beat them for refusing to stop demonstrating at Durham’s lectures.\textsuperscript{53}

Whether or not Durham’s testimony is accurate does not change the insight into the drastic measures the United States was willing to take in order to uncover what they believed was a vast communist driven movement hidden behind brown faces. Yet, Durham was speaking to an American audience. Were Canadian officials as concerned with communist influences as their American counterparts? Several historians argue that by this time the RCMP security service had moved from an exclusive focus on communism to a new enemy: terrorism. As Reg Whitaker explains, two theories dominated the thinking of Canada’s security apparatus. One was that “there was a terror network operating throughout the world under the careful direction of Moscow.” Other theories, he argues, “recognized that there were indigenous non-Communist bases for terrorism.”\textsuperscript{54} In early 1970s this often meant looking at Palestine and Northern Ireland. The FLQ crisis in 1970 gave these new theories a distinctly local grounding.

These intertwined theories meant that Indigenous political protests could be imagined as being influenced by a wide array of global forces. From time-to-time, rumours popped up claiming ties, for example, between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the American Indian Movement. In Canada, the press sometimes found

\textsuperscript{52} Baringer, 27.
\textsuperscript{53} “Durham In the John Birch Society,” Akwesasne Notes (Early Winter, 1975): 13.
it suitable to compare acts such as the park occupation to bombings in Northern Ireland.

Yet, in the late 1960s, as the RCMP began closely surveilling Indigenous political activities they worried more about the influence of American Black Power than anything else. By the 1970s another concern had emerged: white/Indigenous associations. A security report delivered from the Saskatoon office of the RCMP, in addition to commenting on ridding schools of politicized Métis teachers, noted that one of their greatest concerns was: “the gravitation of caucasian persons who are militant/dissidents in their own right, to the various native organizations.” Of additional interest, the security operative noted that many of these white radicals had recently been fired from positions within the provincial government because of their political orientation.

Though they were two separate moments in two different countries, Wounded Knee in 1973 and the Anicinabe Park occupation in 1974 ushered in an intense era of surveillance of Indigenous activists, and in turn Indigenous communities. In a commonly referenced statement from 1975, a confidential internal document from the RCMP called the Red Power movement the single most important threat to Canadian national security.

The increased surveillance of Indigenous peoples under the umbrella of “Native extremism” took place, as historian Steve Hewitt outlines, at a moment of profound change within the RCMP security apparatus. Not only was the RCMP now looking for evidence of terrorism in addition to communism, but they also moved their

---

56 Saskatoon Sub Division, December 16, 1974, RG 146, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.
57 This is referenced in many studies, though there are conflicting dates on when the report became public. David Long suggests 1974 as does Steve Hewitt. Johanna Brand, however, lists 1975, Brand, *The Life and Death of Anna Mae Aquash* 158; “The “Red Power” Scare Hits Canada and No One Knows What to Think” Akwesasne Notes (Early Autumn, 1975): 41.
attention away from campuses and into communities.\footnote{Hewitt 173.} This change in focus coincided with a change in tactics. As Hewitt explains, the RCMP “launched its most determined effort to destroy its opponents.”\footnote{Hewitt 190.} The two targets they set out to “destroy” were organizations that were believed to be a “violent revolutionary threat,” and those which wanted to take down the system from the inside, by infiltrating government.\footnote{Hewitt 191.}

Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario, home to one of the first Native Studies programs in Canada, was extensively watched. This demonstrates how a clear line between university and community cannot always be drawn. As historian Terry Pender explains, this surveillance often extended from the university and into communities because the RCMP saw the program, and Sudbury in general, as a “breeding ground for AIM Radicals.”\footnote{RCMP report quoted by Terry Pender, “The Gaze on Clubs, Native Studies, and Teachers at Laurentian University, 1960s-1970s” in Gary Kinsman, Dieter K. Buse, and Mercedes Steedman (eds), \textit{Whose National Security: Canadian State Surveillance and the Creation of Enemies} (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2000), 112.} The most banal of actions, such as enrolling in a Native Studies Program, was seen as demonstrating support for AIM. While the RCMP believed the Anicinabe Park occupation marked the start of a new form of “Native extremism” in Canada, they were also concerned that Indigenous activists were making connections with other so-called subversives. “Barbara,” a student at Trent University who was both in Native Studies and a member of the Trent Homophile Association, which, she recalls, “the RCMP didn’t like very much.”\footnote{“Barbara” quoted in Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, \textit{The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation} (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010) 252.} The RCMP was not mistaken in sensing that social movements were making gestures towards each other. In the early 1970s, activists who primarily identified with other concerns—Marxist movements, black liberation, gay
liberation, women’s liberation, immigrant rights, Quebec liberation—were also beginning to identify with Indigenous anti-colonial protest. As “Barbara” suggests individuals from gay rights groups were also interested Indigenous activism. In return the presence of gays and lesbians in Red Power allied groups made Indigenous men, such as Vern Harper, reevaluate their perspective on homosexuality. “We had a couple of gay sisters on the Caravan,” Harper recalled, “and they weren’t put down; they were treated with respect. I think a lot of us were opening our eyes for the first time.”63 A person could also become conscious of new forms of personal political identity through their participation in Aboriginal politics. Many women who later became involved in women’s liberation were first involved in organizing for Indian and Métis rights.64 At Laurentian it was the existence of a small Marxist Study Group and the National Black Coalition of Canada that caused the greatest concern. As Pender explains, the “RCMP justified its surveillance of the Native Studies Program, in part, by saying it was vulnerable to infiltration by the Marxist Study Group, a handful of students who met once a month, for a few months.”65 In the mid-1970s as multiple social movements in Canada emerged, the RCMP were looking for cross-pollination. “Social movements, at least those influenced by the left,” write Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, “were viewed as potential risks to national security. The RCMP also continued to associate these pressure groups with Marxism, even if in an unaligned way.”66

When the RCMP noted their concern over whites becoming tied to Aboriginal protests, the security bulletin did explicitly define just to whom they were referring. Yet

63 Harper, 27.
64 Adamson, et. al, Feminist Organizing For Change 39.
66 Kinsman and Gentile, 248.
given the year, 1975, it is quite possible that these white activists were connected to leftist organizations such as the Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG). As an active member of the RMG in the early 1970s, historian Gary Kinsman suggests the group was interested in supporting a wide array of social struggles and building coalitions. At the end of the Anicinabe Park occupation’s third week, the local Winnipeg chapter of the RMG drafted a letter “in solidarity with the Ojibwa struggle.” In it they called capitalism the root cause of racism, the land struggles of Indigenous people just (unless they led to “red capitalism”) and offered that such resistance went as far back as “the European invasion of America in the sixteenth century.” What may have really caught the eye of RCMP security in Saskatchewan was a January 1975 RMG “red forum” called “the future of the native movement” that took place in Regina. Again they affirmed that racism was a product of capitalism and that the collapse of the class system would help ensure success for Indigenous nations. Yet the RMG—in what might appear a contradiction of logic—also declared that it was “abundantly clear to us that all socialists must give complete and unconditional support to the right of native people to determine their future as a nation or as several nations.”

The arrest of Ojibwa activist Lyle Ironstand for his participation in the Anicinabe Park occupation illuminated the possibilities that Indigenous protest, black liberation and anti-racist work by Marxists could find a way to combine separate political interests into one. In June 1975, the RMG suggested that the “structural context” of “Natives,” was not

---

67 Formed in 1973 by student radicals, people in the Waffle’s “red circle,” and ex members of the League for Socialist Action/Young Socialists, see Kinsman and Gentile, 280.
68 Kinsman and Gentile, 280-86.
69 Revolutionary Marxist Group, “Solidarity with the Ojibway Struggle.”
the same as with immigrants. And, even though Indigenous peoples organized important
demonstrations, they remained “politically far less developed” than immigrant groups.\textsuperscript{71} By December 1975, the RMG admitted that Indigenous issues remained “the weakest area” of their practice and theory, a particularly “glaring” problem given how involved their Western Canadian chapters were in Aboriginal “support work.”\textsuperscript{72}

Yet it was probably the western chapters of the RMG that were the cause of RCMP concern. By the end of 1975, the RMG were claiming that through “long and patient work” they had made excellent connections with the Ojibway Warriors Society, that in Regina “important links” had been made with the Métis Society and other Indigenous militant protestors, and that in Vancouver they had “established a good relationship both with the left of AIM and with some militants from Mount Curry.”\textsuperscript{73} The RMG believed these successful ties were forged primarily because the group understood “how to do support work”—meaning they tried not to impede Indigenous independence with their own political convictions. Yet they also admitted constraints in organizing, such as feeling as though if they pointed out links between Aboriginal struggles and working class struggles they were interfering with the former’s autonomy.\textsuperscript{74}

Added to their attempts to connect to Indigenous politics, the RMG were trying to make ties with local Caribbean radicals and black Canadian activists, especially around the question of immigration policies. They also were trying to emphasize to the “white-


left” the “links between Canadian imperialism and the Caribbean revolution.”

For the RMG the time seemed ripe for such alliances because they believed black radicals had moved away from black nationalism in favor of “left-marxist current.” Yet there were difficulties in doing alliance-based work across racial identities. This included the typical problems of sectarianism, which the RMG blamed on the CPC (ML) and the Black Workers Alliance.

Race, however, proved the most difficult from their perspective. The RMG argued that this was a ‘nationalistic’ phase of political awakening that will take work from “politicized black and native militants and on our own part…to overcome.” They argued that “with respect to the politicization of vanguard elements who are white, the question of racism is critical, for a number of reasons.” This included the large number of Third World immigrants who were now making up a significant part of the working class, the “genocide of the Native people,” and the link between Canadian imperialism and the Caribbean will help aspects of international solidarity.

The difficulties social movements endured were not only because of their own “contradictions” or differing approaches to politics. Without downplaying these issues (from the perspective of the RMG at least), the infiltration of these groups by agent provocateurs also made alliances a task of monumental difficulty. Though it would only become public knowledge several years later, examples such as a cross-Canada tour organized for black Caribbean activist Rosie Douglas in the spring of 1975 demonstrates

---


that the Canadian state was both keeping surveillance on social movements and also attempting to destroy them through the use of agent provocateurs.

**Notes from the Rosie Douglas Tour**

From 1965 and until his deportation in 1976, Roosevelt “Rosie” Douglas was at the centre of Black Power activism in Canada, especially in the eastern cities of Montreal and Toronto. From Dominica, a country to which he would eventually return, becoming its Prime Minister in 2000, Douglas helped organize a series of important conferences in Montreal that historian David Austin writes “ignited the Montreal black community” and helped mobilize “African-descended peoples…throughout Canada against racial oppression.”

Douglas is most famous for being part of what is now commonly known as ‘The Sir George Williams Affair.’ In late 1968, students charged that professor Perry Anderson was deliberately failing black students. When university administrators failed to adequately respond to the allegations, a group of two hundred students occupied the university’s computer centre in late January 1969. The occupation ended under auspicious circumstances, with students thinking an agreement had been reached but the having police storm the computer centre. Douglas was arrested, charged and sent to jail for his part.

Jail did not dampen Douglas’ desire for radical social change, but it did make it more difficult. After serving sixteen months of his sentence for his role in Sir George, Douglas was paroled in November 1974. But the state wanted Douglas deported, and finally had their way on May 1st, 1976, after declaring him a “national security risk.”

---

78 Austin, “All Roads Led to Montreal” 518, 520.
For much of the end of 1974 and all of 1975, Rosie Douglas traveled across Canada numerous times in an effort to raise awareness about his own pending deportation but also to discuss the connection between racism, immigration, colonialism and the Canadian state. “The Rosie Douglas Tour,” as it was labeled, included stops in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the Grassy Narrows reserve north of Kenora, Winnipeg, Regina, a reserve in Alberta and Vancouver. Unbeknown to Douglas, or most of those helping organize the tour, the loquacious spokesperson for Black Power and racial justice was being watched closely by an equally larger than life figure: his driver and bodyguard, Warren Hart.

On March 6, 1975, Douglas gave speeches both at the University of Manitoba in the afternoon and then at the University of Winnipeg that evening. The talks reportedly attracted around five hundred people, leading the RMG, one of the tour’s financiers, to conclude that the Winnipeg talks were some of the best attended of all of those during Douglas’ tour. Seventy-five people were in attendance during his talk at a Unitarian church in Vancouver two weeks later.

The University of Manitoba student newspaper reprinted text from one of Douglas’ speeches, and it demonstrates how social movement activists were imagining a system of injustice that connected colonization of Indigenous peoples to racism and restrictive immigration policies. Canada, Douglas told the audience, “was founded upon the premise of racism.” He also explained the differences between settler colonies and conquered colonies, giving Canada the status of settled colony. Most of his time was spent discussing immigration and to how the state historically used immigration policies

---

as a way to keep “black people out of Canada.” On the topic of his own deportation on a national security certificate, Douglas was unrelenting, dismissing any rumour that in return for having his certificate ripped up he would go work for Solicitor General Warren Allmand. The soon to be exiled Caribbean radical explained that he would have none of that: “If you’re committed to something you’re going to fight to the end. That’s the only kind of fight I understand…There is no signing of any peace treaty in between. The last time people signed peace treaties in this country you can see what happened to the native people.”

Douglas ended his talks by suggesting that local activists form committees to fight the deportation of close to fifteen hundred Haitians, who, if sent back to Haiti, might face torture and execution at the hands of the Jean-Claude Duvalier regime. The case of Haitian deportations was one of the most galvanizing for a wide range of social justice groups in 1974 and 1975. The fifteen hundred Haitians, most of whom were unskilled labourers, were caught up in changes to Canada’s immigration system that made it illegal for foreigners to claim landed immigrant status while in Canada. After appeals failed, and the Canadian government refused to grant them special exemptions, they were deported—but not before significant resistance from many Canadians, including unions, church groups, human rights organizations and grassroots community organizers.

Though Montreal and Quebec City were the centres of anti-deportation organizing, promotional campaigns made this a nationwide concern. Some people acted as individuals. In December 1974, an organization raising awareness of the Haitian situation received a cheque from a person living on Attawapiskat reserve. The attached

---

letter read: “From a remote Indian reservations in Ontario, I wanted to tell you how I found the Haitian affair shattering.” Evidently the Rosie Douglas Tour sparked action in Winnipeg. On March 8th, 1975, at the University of Winnipeg, eight city groups formed a committee, electing September Williams, a member of the Black Action Movement, as the committee co-coordinator, and Leslie Currie, “of the Ojibway people,” as the committee’s secretary. Douglas’ suggestion about the Haitians was a central focus of the group, but they also went beyond it. As some of the group’s literature explained, they were working “against the deportation of 1500 Haitian workers, 37 Columbian workers, and Rosie Douglas. In addition, the committee will work in the court defense of Lyal (sic) Iron Stand, a victimized Ojibway, who participated in the occupation of Anicinabe Park, in Kenora, last summer.”86 The group planned a teach-in and demonstration for May 24th. Much like Douglas did during his speeches, the Committee used Canada’s international image as a racism free nation as a form of rhetorical shame. Moreover they personally implicated those who did not act. “There is little time,” one of the committees handouts noted, “If we know these things and do not act, then we become the torturers, executioners, and prison bars.”87

Warren Hart: Canada’s Good Spy Gone Bad

Douglas continued his cross-Canada speaking engagements throughout most of 1975. In Regina in June, he spoke alongside Rod Bishop, a key member of the Métis

Fig., 10 Revolutionary Marxist Group, 1947-1980, McMaster University Archives, Hamilton, Ontario.
Society of Saskatchewan. As in Winnipeg, the speakers were concerned with a systematic approach to injustice in which Indigenous issues and immigrant concerns were linked together. According to an RCMP surveillance report, Bishop gave what was “a long dissertation on the native children who were sent from Northern Saskatchewan to the United States.” For his part, Douglas gave a speech with “the usual rhetoric concerning racism and imperialistic repression.” He also reportedly “denounced” the CPC (ML), in what the informant believed was an attempt to resurrect Vern Harper’s credibility (Harper had just left CPC (ML)).

It is possible the surveillance report came from Warren Hart. In 1975 Hart was just a radical who drove a fancy car and served as Douglas’ bodyguard; by 1979, however, Canadians knew him as a double-agent. Hart’s story reveals to what lengths the

---

RCMP went in their efforts to infiltrate and disrupt social movements, especially those that were forming a common front around deportation politics and Indigenous protest. Revelations of excessive RCMP surveillance were not unique in the 1970s. In Quebec, the province organized the Keable Commission in the early seventies to expose the tactics used against Quebec based social movements. In 1977 these investigations took on a national view with the McDonald Commission. Best known for its recommendation for the separation of policing and intelligence, the Commission led to the creation of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) in 1984. Although the McDonald Commission started in 1977, it was not until the final week in February 1978 that Canadians really became aware of just how far the RCMP went in efforts to destroy movements for Indigenous justice.89

On February 22nd, 1978, longtime Progressive Conservative MP Elmer McKay released an affidavit in which Hart claimed that while he was working undercover, the RCMP (while on loan from the FBI) had him secretly record conversations between Rosie Douglas and NDP MP John Rodriquez and between Douglas and Solicitor General Warren Allmand.90 This revelation initiated a two-week period of wild rumours about Warren Hart. What allegations might be true, and what the consequences this might pose for the RCMP were still unknown. Interviews with Hart quickly established that the RCMP hired him in 1971 to infiltrate Black Power groups in Canada because of his reputation as a successful FBI agent who infiltrated the Baltimore chapter of the Black Panther Party. Reporters quickly painted a picture of Hart as larger than life playboy,

noting that he liked to drive around in a “flashy” Grand Marquis and later a Lincoln Continental, both of which were electronically bugged to record conversations.\(^{91}\)

Yet, he was as dangerous as he was glamorous. By the time Rosie Douglas was deported in late 1975 because of “national security” concerns, Hart had been Douglas’s bodyguard and driver for four years while. When confronted with Hart’s true identity Douglas responded in much the same way that AIM and Louis Cameron did to the revelations about Durham. Douglas told reporters that he never trusted Hart, knew for a long time that he was a double agent, but found him useful because he paid for many of Douglas’ cross-Canada trips. Moreover, according to Douglas, Hart’s true identity was easy to detect because he always had “guns in the car and [the police] never bothered him.”\(^{92}\) Others, such as Al Hamilton, the editor of Contrast and British Columbia NDP opposition leader, Dave Barrett, made similar claims.\(^{93}\) On hearing that Douglas had downplayed Hart’s importance, the latter retorted: “I knew everything he was involved in—even the color of his underwear.”\(^{94}\) The RCMP also used extraordinary measures to keep secret Hart’s undercover status intact. At one point, after Douglas was arrested and eventually sent to jail in 1973, the RCMP deported Hart back to the United States to create the illusion that Hart too had been arrested. Upon returning to Canada after Douglas’ release from jail, Hart fabricated a story about sneaking across the border.\(^{95}\)

It is really beyond the purview of my research to describe all of Hart’s escapades in the 1960s and 1970s. It would be nearly impossible anyhow. A simple list will have to


\(^{94}\) Warren Hart quoted in “Hart Ready to Testify,” Toronto Sun, check date and page, Feb 24, 1978.

suffice. Hart has been implicated in facilitating the murder of a member of the Baltimore Black Panthers who the Panthers (wrongfully) suspected of being FBI. This was one reason why the FBI sent Hart to Canada. Another, as David Austin explains, is that Hart was “implicated in the assassination of Chicago Black Panther Fred Hampton.” Internationally, Hart failed in an assassination attempt on journalist Tim Hector who had revealed “an international plot by the Canadian-American multinational Space Research Corporation, which Hart worked for at the time, to illegally ship” weapons from New Brunswick, through Antigua, to South Africa.

Hart had a lot to hide, but ultimately came clean out of spite. After Douglas’ deportation, Hart believed the RCMP would allow him to stay in Canada with his new family. Yet by the time Douglas’s plane touched down in Dominica, Hart too was on his way back to the United States (ironically, the state denied his citizenship application because of his previous deportation, the one created by the RCMP to maintain Hart’s cover). For Hart, this was betrayal. Canada turned its back on him; testifying at the McDonald Commission was one way to gain retribution. But how did Hart’s desire to punish his former employer affect his memory? Similar to Durham’s Eastland, it is difficult to know just what is truth and what has been created to suit a specific audience. From all reports, Durham and Hart both shared a love for the limelight, and in both cases

---

96 Another explanation that is offered is that a member of the Baltimore Black Panthers, Marshall Eddie Conway, discovered Hart’s true identity. According to Dylan Rodriguez, when Conway “helped expose and expel” Hart, he was “specifically targeted by COINTELPRO for neutralization. In 1970, Conway was arrested and charged with the murder of one police officer and the attempted murder of two others,” although there was no evidence linking him to the crime, see Dylan Rodriguez, Forced Passages: Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals and the U.S. Prison Regime (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006) 263. Much the same description is given by Joy James, Warfare in the American Homeland: Policing and Prison in a Penal Democracy (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007) 97-98.
their testimony made them the centres of national attention. Speaking to the television news program “Primetime,” Hart seemed to take pride in the fact that he was, in his own words, the “first one in the history of the country loaned to another country.”

During Hart’s McDonald Commission testimony he provided significant details into the license the RCMP gave Hart as an agent provocateur. Originally used to spy on Black Power movements in Canada, the RCMP expanded his role and included intelligence gathering on “black, Canadian Indian, immigrant and labour groups in Montreal, Toronto, Kenora, Lethbridge, and Vancouver.” According to Hart, the infiltration of Indigenous groups was one of his most important tasks. Much like Durham, Hart used the media and the Commission to create a narrative about himself, one in which he saved Canadians from the violent designs of Indigenous activists. He explained to reporters that on several occasions Indigenous groups asked for his help in blowing up buildings, because it was common knowledge that Hart was a demolitions expert. This included requests by the Ojibway Warriors Society to help blow up a bridge and by a group in Alberta to blow up a pipeline.

In his McDonald Commission testimony, it is apparent that Hart had plenty of opportunity to infiltrate Indigenous groups through accompanying Rosie Douglas across Canada. This included a reported trip to Anicinabe Park during the occupation. (This is a claim I cannot verify. He may have confused this with a conference in Grassy Narrows that Douglas attended in 1975). He also described meetings in 1975 with Ojibway

---

98 Transcript, PRIMETIME CTV 26 Feb. 1978.
Warriors Society lawyer Donald Colborne in Thunder Bay, with groups in Winnipeg and finally a visit to the Mount Currie reservation in British Columbia.

In many ways Hart’s testimony is reminiscent of Durham’s to the Eastland Committee. Both were keen to describe Indigenous protests as communist plots. Both tried to portray themselves as patriotic citizens intent on protecting the country from revolutionary violence. Unlike the Eastland Committee, however, there is a counternarrative to Hart as he was only one of many people to testify at the McDonald Commission. Witnesses challenged the portrait of Hart as a well-intentioned informant with claims that he was agent provocateur who encouraged Indigenous protestors to adopt increasingly violent tactics. According to lawyer Clayton Ruby, Rosie Douglas was never asked to testify in front of the commission.\(^\text{102}\) But others were. In a summary and contextualization of Hart’s testimony, Don Colborne’s deposition is quoted extensively (though his entire deposition has never been made public). Colborne testified that upon meeting Hart in Thunder Bay in June 1975, Hart “several times stated that he intended to steal weapons from persons in Thunder Bay” and to find ways to attain military grade weapons.\(^\text{103}\) Though Hart denied these allegations, other activists offered similar testimony. In British Colombia, activist Gary Cristall claimed Hart offered unlimited supplies of weapons to AIM during his trip to the Mount Currie Reservation and volunteered to train them “in the use of dynamite and other types of explosives.”\(^\text{104}\) Hart denied ever meeting Cristall at the reserve.

---


\(^{103}\) Don Colborne quoted in Third Report, Macdonald Commission, April 1981, 488.

Because of these allegations, Noel Starblanket, then the president of the National Indian Brotherhood demanded a criminal investigation into Hart. Moreover, Starblanket believed he should have had the opportunity to examine Hart because of his admission that he was asked by officials to train militants in guerilla warfare (during Douglas’ 1975 tour) only then to have the RCMP swoop in and raid the camps. The intent was to create the perception that the RCMP was successful in rooting out internal threats to national security.

This pattern continued to repeated itself: witnesses accused Hart of being a provocateur and Hart would deny them. The evidence continued to pile up. Ultimately it led to the conclusion that Hart was not a rogue agent or a bad apple. Depositions taken by the National Indian Brotherhood demonstrate that other RCMP agents often used dirty tricks in attempts to gather intelligence. An Indigenous woman serving time in a Kenora jail in 1976, testified that two members of the RCMP from Winnipeg offered her money in exchange for information on the Winnipeg AIM chapter. She took the money as well as further payments for information on activists involved in Leonard Peltier campaign and people working with Treaty #9 who had “leftist” affiliations.

Conclusions:

Almost a decade after Hart testified a federally commissioned report concluded that in deporting Hart the RCMP had acted “disgracefully” out of “fear of public

---

disclosure” of Hart’s true identity. Consequently, Solicitor General James Kelleher awarded Hart $56,000 in compensation. After their moments in the spotlight both Warren Hart and Douglas Durham escaped into lives of general obscurity. Both are now dead. In this they share the fate of some of the people who came into contact with them while they worked as agent provocateurs for the FBI and RCMP in the 1960s and 1970s. The histories of Hart and Durham read like action adventure spy films. But their activities had grave consequences. While they presented themselves as heroes, their activities were costly, both to the movements they infiltrated and to later public perceptions of Indigenous political protests. Without a doubt, social movements in North America, including Red Power groups, sometimes promoted armed insurrection as a tactic of political change. Yet within most of these groups there was a range of opinion as to what was appropriate action. Agent provocateurs, such as Hart, amplified the possibility of revolutionary violence. In doing so they also gave states the license to repress movements for social change that, in the 1970s, were advocating multiracial and transnational oppositional politics.

More than three decades after the Warren Hart, Douglas Durham, the FBI and the RCMP collapsed complex movements for social justice into categories such as “communist” and “terrorist,” Indigenous activists are continually imagined as threats to national security. In early 2007, a leaked draft of a Canadian army counter-insurgency manual listed Hezbollah, the Tamil Tigers, and specific Indigenous groups in Canada as insurgents whom tactics such as “ambushes, deception and killing” would be legitimate tools for suppression. As the Grand Chief of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs

---

explained, this was evidence of the “deliberate criminalization of the efforts of Indigenous peoples to march, demonstrate and rally to draw public attention to the crushing poverty that is the reality within our communities.” One of many ways that the Sixties live on.


Conclusion

Dear Louis Cameron:

For a long time now I’ve habitually checked Kenora’s online obituaries page in case I need to send condolences to friends. I was not prepared to see you there. I’ve long imagined that the concluding words of this dissertation were going to be yours. This chapter was supposed to be an interview, reprinted verbatim, where we would speak about all of the things not found in the documents, over the airwaves or on televisions in the Sixties; those moments captured only by memory. However, by the time I came up with what I thought were the right questions and the courage to respond humbly to potential rejection, it was too late.

Your death should not be my tragedy; I know that one day we all must leave. Yet I’ve spent the better part of five years reading your interviews and pamphlets, writing about you and trying to find a way for us to speak. This is now a one-way conversation in which I can only imagine your response. But the person who wrote the obituary must have known you well since they told us many important things about your life. You continued to live based on the principles of Midewiwin, which you spoke about during the occupation, and you were active in drum circles. Were politics and spirituality one in the same for you? Certainly many have argued that Red Power was a spiritual movement as much as it was a political act. But given the history of state policies regulating Indigenous traditions in Canada, separating the two may not be possible. I wonder if I ever saw you drum in Kenora?
Over the past five years not a day has passed in which I have not thought about the march, the occupation, the caravan, the language of colonialism, and the way even empathetic dialogue still seems an impossible task for so many. But I still know so little about you. You appeared in 1973 as a voice for Red Power. Two dramatic years later you were gone, at least from the public eye. Some people from the Sixties became pseudo-celebrities, or professors, because of their acts of radical defiance. This was not your experience, was it? I’ve heard many stories about what happened afterwards, from people who told me they knew you. They are certainly not mine to repeat. Do you think life would have been better if you had not occupied Anicinabe Park and then set out across Canada in a caravan? I suspect that in 1974 for you there was no such thing as the future. Too many Indigenous people in the Kenora area were dying. In 1974, you explained that this was the result of both the material and psychological effects of colonialism. Yourself and others did something to try and change that, not all at the same time, but in many different ways in a range of volumes. Since the OWS’s was the loudest it invoked scorn from all sides, from your own community, from white residents in Kenora, and from a Canadian state that sent in agent provocateurs instead of tanks.

When the past continually relives itself in the present why write history? From what I’ve read, you seemed to be a student of history. What you would say about the world today. So many of the things that the people of your era opposed still live with us today, though time and time again activists have illustrated their harm. Canada has a complicated relationship to empire. It maintains a formal attachment to past empires through the figure of the Governor General, similarly its proximity to the United States means that the country is deeply entangled in the project of American imperialism. Yet at
the same time Canada is not simply a victim of American imperialism, nor simply a puppet of the monarchy. Canada’s economic and political role in the Caribbean and its decade long role in the war in Afghanistan recasts this country as an imperial aggressor. 

Canadian attempts to downplay complicity in imperial aggression are often only matched by attempts to disguise the continued importance of historical and contemporary colonialisms within its borders. Recently Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper took this revisionism a step further. Speaking to reporters at a G-20 meeting in September 2009, Prime Minister Harper remarked: “Canada has no history of colonialism.” Harper’s statement, though ignored by many mainstream media outlets in Canada, drew immediate response from Shawn Atleo, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. Atleo rejected the excuse that Harper’s words were taken out of context. The legacies of colonialism are a daily reality for Indigenous peoples in Canada—a fact not lost on the international community. “Internationally,” Atleo wrote, “Canada has been scrutinized and harshly criticized for its treatment of Indigenous peoples and failure to respect Aboriginal and Treaty rights.”

In a particularly insightful essay, Russel Lawrence Barsh argues that the legend of peaceful coexistence between the Canadian state and Indigenous peoples is no small piece of moral propaganda. This legend, he suggests, is that “Canada settled its territory peacefully…while the United States fought many bloody Indian wars for greed and gold.” “Canada” it is often repeated, “has been ‘gentle tolerant, just and impartial’ in its treatment of First Nations.”

Louis, two books about you are amongst many stacked on my desk right now. They were published shortly after the end of the park occupation and the Native People’s Caravan. I think they reiterate the contestation over the historical representation of Indigenous protest during the period. One of these books is now somewhat infamous, and, as I found out, is stored behind the librarian’s desk at Kenora’s Public Library away from the general stacks. You were amongst a group who fought to have Eleanor Jacobson’s *Bended Elbow* categorized hate literature. When it came out in 1975, it portrayed the Indigenous activists from the area as simple communist pawns, disregarding the historical truths many of you spoke to through your actions. Her book claimed to be Kenora speaking back, but it seemed more like a personal vendetta. In volume two, she printed letters from chiefs who she said supported her intervention. Including the infamous Dick Wilson, the tribal chairman of Pine Ridge Reservation where Wounded Knee had taken place. Of course, both volumes became clearinghouses for stories and pictures depicting Indians in Kenora as lazy and drunk, as something less than human.

Yet, Louis, she was not the only author claiming to speak for “Kenora.” 1975 also saw the publication of “Red Power,” a comic book written and illustrated by Clermont Duval. Published in English and French, the comic is split into two parts. Part one begins with a message for Chiefs from the three largest “Indian reservations in Canada” to rendezvous at an unnamed lake to meet a person unknown to any of the three chiefs:

---

Mawouk, Mirko, and Fasca. Upon arrival, they are guided, through the forest, to a secret hidden opening. Through the secret passage, there is an underground building. It has shiny floors, a monorail train and a giant hall filled with young Indians, giant totem polls and eagle statues. The three chiefs have arrived at the Indian underground and meet its leader: Chief Kenora.

The new visitors to the underground learn that an elder named Carava (one letter short of Caravan) is also part of Chief Kenora’s underground in which exist rows and rows of incubators with 40,000 young men and women trapped inside. As they hatch, Chief Kenora tells the three visitors, they are coming out as complete individuals, “endowed with a superior intelligence, free from jealousy and egoism.” In Duval’s comic, out of this massive racial rebirth comes one new character to join Carava and Chief Kenora, “the future chief of us all”: Red Power.

From that point onwards Kenora, Red Power, and Carava emerge from the underground and in a series dramatic battles with the Canadian military, liberate Indians across Canada. Louis, I understand why Duval thought you were a superhero. In the face of such hostility provoked by the likes of Bended Elbow, maybe this comic was a necessary opposite. Yet, each of these portraits misses the point. You were not the villain that Eleanor Jacobson tried to manufacture in Bended Elbow; nor were you the superhero of Duval’s comic. Though you and the other Red Power activists spoke different languages than those people who marched in Kenora in 1965, I think you were all simply doing what people do when they do not want to be ignored any longer. But how did you see yourself in this moment?
SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER ONE: THREE INDIAN CHIEFS FROM CANADA ARE INVITED TO SHARE THE SECRETS OF A RACE THAT HAS REMAINED HIDDEN UNDERGROUND FOR 200 YEARS. THEY WILL WITNESS THE MOST STUPENDOUS HAPPENING EVER ACHIEVED: 60,000 INDIANS HATCHING OUT FROM THEIR AGE-LONG UNDERGROUND INCUBATION! BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE THE THREE CHIEFS ARE TOLD THAT ALL THE INDIANS AT THE BASE WILL EMERGE, WITHIN A WEEK, TO BEGIN THE FORMATION OF A COUNTRY THAT THEY MAY CALL TRULY "THEIRS.

"A DETERMINED RACE"

AT THE BASE, A WEEK HAS QUICKLY PASSED. THE HONEYMOON OF THE YOUNG BRAVES ENDED THIS VERY MORNING AND THEY ARE ALL AT THEIR POSTS, READY TO COME OUT, AWAITING ONLY THE WORD FROM THEIR CHIEFS RED POWER AND KENORA!

FORWARD!
As much as anything else, the flaws illustrate your humanity, a word you invoked often when speaking about liberation. And for historians interested in the politics and culture of social justice movements, we would be doing a better job if we saw flaws not as a default of character but as something we have in common. Historians can be awfully judgmental; it’s a hazard of our job. We have hindsight on our side and theory to help make sure all of our present desires can be read into the past. Louis, did you also do this with history? Was it helpful to see the OWS not only as a product of the contemporary moment, but also as a product of history? I hope I’ve treated you and the politics of Indigenous protest fairly. It’s difficult to know because like most other Red Power activists after the cameras disappeared you were not in a position to tell your own stories (and maybe you did not want to). The last public appearance you made gives us a bit of insight into how you came to understand the past. Thirty-two years after making Anicinabe Park symbolic beyond its borders, in late June 2007 it returned to its contested past. You were there as a part of celebrations marking the first annual Aboriginal Day of Action, a moment in which thousands of Indigenous peoples and their non-Indigenous allies across Canada made symbolic gestures against continued injustice. All I have is a copy of the following day’s newspaper that says you encouraged peaceful demonstration. What does peaceful mean? You spoke often about violence being a dialectical process of colonialism. Were these really your words or those imagined by a newspaper reporter?

The obituary also told us about your involvement in the Ojibway Warriors Society, a history that will not be written out of your life after its death. Yet, what really
caught my eye was that the writer called you a philosopher. You were certainly a wide-ranging and generous thinker. Similar to many of the people I wrote about in this dissertation, you framed protest as simultaneously local and global. Moreover, the way you spoke about human liberation betrays the notion that post-1968 protest politics in North America were just fractured identity battles. At a moment when many in Kenora seemingly wanted you thrown in jail, you said you understood how this working-class town faced its own set of difficult circumstances. I imagined that during our interview we would spend much of it in Anicinabe Park, but I also hoped we might walk to the big gravel graveyard where the pulp and paper mill used to stand. Years before the occupation, the Kenora march used the mill as an example of the immense discrimination faced by Indigenous men trying to find well paying jobs in Kenora. Years it was discovered that the Dryden mill had been using the English Wabigoon River system as a toilet to dump mercury pollutants, aided in part by a provincial government which hid knowledge of the disaster from people at Grassy and that used the water system for food and employment. You and other concerned people helped draw international attention to all this. The first visit by the Japanese researchers, who brought much attention to the issues in the 1970s, was just commemorated by a return trip to Grassy Narrows. What it demonstrated though is that people in these communities still live with the daily effects of poisoned water. Young activists from Grassy Narrows have also staged a five-year long blockade to protect the Whiskey Jack forest. In doing so they prevented Abitibi, the last corporation to run the Kenora mill, from clear-cutting the area. What did you think of some of the most recent protests? Are they different than those of the 1960s and 1970s?

---

5 see “Japanese and Native Victims Unite To Fight Mercury Pollution,” Toronto Native Times 6.10 (October 1975): 1, 10.
Though your thoughts are only collected in a few small pamphlets and in a couple of interviews from the early seventies they profoundly shaped the direction of this dissertation. You led me to post-colonial studies and Indigenous history, not the other way around. The way you spoke about decolonization transnationally made me want to learn more about how others Indigenous peoples made sense of their actions in the global sphere. The occupation and the caravan spoke a complicated language that seemed national, transnational and local all at the same time. Each of the chapters I wrote attempted to illustrate broader historical processes, such as Third World decolonization, social movements, racism, life in a working class rural town, the legacies of settler-colonialism, and state manufactured fear campaigns because Indigenous men and women organized and acted out against systems they believed were unjust. This is why 1965 and 1974 are the two pillars supporting this dissertation. Moreover, an idea I openly borrow from U.S. Historian Laura Briggs is that our research reflects the theoretical insights made by the same people we write about. The theoretical underpinnings of Marxism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism are written all over this dissertation. But, so too are people who show up as historical actors in this Sixties drama. Howard Adams, the radical Métis scholar, Lee Maracle’s first person narrative of her time at the centre of Red Power activism; the debates around culture and development from a Kenora gymnasium, the brief interaction between Fred Kelly and Guyanese intellectual Jan Carew, all of these have shaped the contents of this dissertation and the way I understand contemporary life. In essence, Louis, you and others help me make sense of the world in 2010 as much that in the Sixties.

Returning to Kenora with this bag of tools is a humbling experience. Knowing that there were people, with all of their faults, who, in the face of strong backlash, exhibited such a profound imagination for possibilities locally and globally illuminates so brightly my own narrow understanding of the world. These stories were about thinking and acting expansively. Unfortunately they ended not with triumph but as unattained goals. These are not fairytales about how resistance immediately creates better worlds. Many of the structures and systems of disempowerment from the Sixties era still exist for complicated and often contradictory reasons. The dreams of decolonization and the hopes of the Sixties era may not have come to fruition…yet. That something beautiful will emerge often appears impossible, but it doesn’t hurt to hope.\footnote{Louis Cameron passed away on 17, April 2010.}
Bibliography

Archives

Archives of Ontario
RG 33 Deputy Solicitor General Files: 13.5; b22357358; 17-b223701; 59.2; b223702,
5G.21; b223702

RG-76-3 Ontario Human Rights Commission,

Library and Archives of Canada
RG 146, Native Peoples Friendship Delegation, Vol 1.

McMaster University Archives
Canadian Liberation Movement fonds., 1951-1977

Private Papers
Donald Colborne, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Trent University Archives

University of Illinois-Champaign Archives
Doris Duke Indian Oral History Program, 1908-1995, Field Worker Reports: Lynn

Newspapers and Periodicals
Akwasasne Notes
Brandon Sun
Canadian Dimension
Contrast
Counterpunch
Edmonton Journal
Kenora Daily Miner and News
Forbes
Globe and Mail (Toronto)
Human Relations
Indian Record
Maclean’s
The Manitoban (University of Manitoba)
Manitoba Free Press
Marxist Quarterly
Montreal Gazette
Montreal Star
Native Times
New Breed
New York Times
Ottawa Citizen
Ottawa Journal
Saturday Night
The Chronicle-Journal (Thunder Bay)
The Indian News
The Native People
Times of London
Toronto Star
Toronto Sun
Toronto Telegram
Ubyseey (University of British Columbia)
Uhuru
United Church Observer
Vancouver Sun
Weekend Magazine
Winnipeg Free Press
Young Worker

**Television**


**Radio and Sound Recordings**
Our Native Land, CBC, Toronto, February 1974, online at http://archives.cbc.ca/society/native_issues/clips/15991/

“Stokely Carmichael, Free Huey Rally,” sound recording, KPFA Berkeley, 2 February 1968


**Film**


We Have Such Things At Home, Tamarack Productions, 1997.

**Government Reports**


**Theses and Unpublished Papers**


**Interviews**  

**Articles, Books, and Pamphlets**


**Ojibway Warriors Society in occupied Anicinabe Park: Kenora, Ontario, August 1974**


Walker, Barrington.  “‘This is the White Man’s Day’: The Irish, White Racial Identity, and the 1866 Memphis Riots”  *Left History* 5.2 (1997): 31-55.


