

György Ferenc Tóth. *From Wounded Knee to Checkpoint Charlie: The Alliance for Sovereignty between American Indians and Central Europeans in the Late Cold War.* Tribal Worlds: Critical Studies in American Indian Nation Building Series. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016. 313 pp. \$90.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-4384-6121-2.

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Several scholars have paid attention to the often complex, fluid, and connected transatlantic histories of Native Americans and Europeans, pasts that often emerge from complex local cultural contexts. In the German-speaking countries of Europe, for instance, the fictional writings of Karl May on the American West, especially his Apache hero Winnetou, have been influential in shaping the cultural sentiments, views, projections, and fantasies about Native Americans. May's novels were also widely translated, and the Winnetou movies of the 1960s were dubbed into various European languages, were watched by millions, and influenced European public perceptions of American Indians beyond German-speaking parts of Europe. It is also important to underscore that May's novels and the movies based on his writing were only the most popular and financially lucrative examples in what was a vibrant genre in many Central European countries.

Scholars on both sides of the Atlantic are also fascinated with European hobbyists "reenacting" Native American cultures, which emerge, shape, and reflect a similar milieu as May's work. In a different context, Philip J. Deloria's 1998 work *Playing Indian* describes such processes as "playing Indian," and his work raises many important

questions and concerns about the impact that such phenomena have on societies. There has been a growing literature that not only engages with these issues but also examines the connections that such cultural production might have had on the history of relations between Native Americans and Europeans. Christian F. Feest's 1999 edited collection *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*, the 2002 collection of essays *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections*, edited by Colin Calloway, Gerd Gemunden, and Susanne Zantop, and H. Glenn Penny's 2013 *Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians since 1800* are some of the more influential books that have shed light on this subject.

György Ferenc Tóth's recently published book, *From Wounded Knee to Checkpoint Charlie: The Alliance for Sovereignty between American Indians and Central Europeans in the Late Cold War*, contributes to this growing historiography and our theoretical understanding of the connections between Native Americans and Europeans. In particular, Tóth's study examines the transatlantic relations of what he calls the "American Indian radical sovereignty rights movement" and "Central European solidarity activists" on both sides of

the iron curtain during the last two decades of the Cold War (pp. 2, 5). His study focuses especially on German-speaking Europeans.

Theoretically and conceptually in terms of indigenous and Native American studies, *From Wounded Knee to Checkpoint Charlie* not only draws on Deloria's and Penny's work but is also influenced by Jace Weaver's 2014 *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927*, Ronald Niezen's 2003 *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity*, and Daniel Cobb's work, such as his 2008 *Native Activism in Cold War America: Struggle for Sovereignty* on Native activism in the Cold War United States. Tóth argues that "previous transatlantic cultural forms, representations and 'playing Indian' both enabled and constrained the transatlantic alliance. In turn, the radical sovereignty rights movement intervened in old (some transatlantic) forms of 'playing Indian' and manipulated them to make political claims. This book is a core study of how cultural representation can inform social movements in the United States and transnationally" (p. 3). Native Americans developed and used this alliance as a means to put pressure on the government of the United States. The book also provides a historiographical intervention and encourages readers to rethink transatlantic Cold War history and the study of international relations. Tóth follows a recent historiographical trend in international relations and global studies, which has moved the field beyond the study of nation-states to marginal communities and social movements. The book also attempts to challenge the assertion that the 1973 Wounded Knee protest was the high point of Native American radicalism and that the movement faced quick decline, argued most prominently by Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior in their 1997 *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee*. In contrast, Tóth maintains that while the Native American radical sovereignty movement post-Wounded Knee "was struggling to protect its ac-

tivists and to legitimately represent its constituencies, the sovereignty movement actually transformed into a transnational advocacy network" (p. 49).

From Wounded Knee to Checkpoint Charlie consists of seven chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. The introduction explores Tóth's theoretical framework, definition of topic, terminology, and argument. Chapter 1 provides a quick overview of how Native Americans were constructed "in the transatlantic cultural landscape" through art, European Wild West shows, literary production, and film. This section of the book also "specifically highlights how Central European forms of 'playing Indian' made for a potential for intercontinental alliances" (p. 4). The second chapter examines the Native American sovereignty movement's transnational efforts at challenging the US federal government, and focuses especially on the role that activists and journalists played in this struggle. Chapter 3 examines the emergence and development of the transatlantic sovereignty alliance. By focusing on Richard Erdoes, the Native American radical press, and activists, and their impact on European press coverage of the American Indian civil rights struggle and public perception, as well as the interactions between indigenous activists and the Green Party movement in 1980s Germany, this section uncovers the role that these players had in the late Cold War period. The role that "solidarity" played in the transatlantic politics of the sovereignty alliance is the subject of chapter 4. It investigates the role that Europeans played at Wounded Knee; the sexual and gender politics of the "radical Indian sovereignty movement"; and the transatlantic intimacies, solidarities, romance, camaraderie, and desires that were part of the activist network. Chapter 5 examines the transatlantic relations of Native American civil rights activists and Marxist nation-states and movements. The activism and coalition of the movement at the United Nations and its efforts at lobbying for indigenous rights is the focus of chapter 6. Chapter 7 investigates the

US government responses and interferences to the transnational sovereignty movement.

Tóth provides a solidly argued and researched archival study that should be of value to scholars with an interest in Native American transnational studies as well as those in the field of international relations interested in indigenous issues. While he acknowledges not using interviews, due to what he calls the challenges of institutional approval processes, I wonder if oral histories might have strengthened the study further. Tóth provides a detailed, nuanced, and well-articulated study of the transnational linkages, and demonstrates that they were influential. Yet some readers will wonder how much of an impact this transnational movement really had. I am also curious if there really was such a clear-cut development that saw the morphing of the radical sovereignty movement into a transnational movement post-Wounded Knee, as Tóth suggests. Was this maybe rather one part of a continued strategy that also involved activism (in a sense also “transnational” in nature) between mainstream governments and Native American nations, which involved activists of earlier civil rights struggles all over the United States? The questions raised here in no way diminish the value of *From Wounded Knee to Checkpoint Charlie*, but rather they underscore the book’s value and the possible avenues of further research in the future.

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