**Unit 10: Democracy Challenged (1968-1980)**

[Topic 4: American Indian Movement: Native Americans Fight Back](https://www.thinkport.org/tps/ushist/inquiry-kits.html?unit=10&topic=04)

Source 2, “Memorandum Regarding the Occupation of Wounded Knee”

This note tells about what happened when the American Indian Movement occupied Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

March 2, 1973

From: Forrest Gerard, a Senate staffer and member of the Blackfeet Tribe.

“The so-called occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota is apparently being led by a small handful of AIM leaders. In following this issue through the press, radio, and television, it appears that AIM’s intention is to seek a National forum in which to seek redress for past wrongs committed against American Indian people.

You are aware that AIM’s actions at Wounded Knee resulted in Senators McGovern and Abourezk traveling to the site in an effort to negotiate a release of the 11 hostages. In addition, staff aids from Senators Fulbright and Kennedy’s office accompanied the two South Dakota senators.

Yesterday, I received a call at home from Mr. William Youpee, Executive Director of the National Tribal Chairman’s Association. Bill expressed concerns that, once again, a small handful of self-appointed militant Indians had gained concession from the Federal Government; in this case, the Congress. Bill stated that the Tribal Chairman’s Association has worked through the normal governmental channels and procedures to secure progress but they are becoming fearful that their efforts are being over-shadowed by the bizarre actions of the militants.”

**Emerging ESOL / Reader**

**Unit 10: Democracy Challenged (1968-1980)**

[Topic 4: American Indian Movement: Native Americans Fight Back](https://www.thinkport.org/tps/ushist/inquiry-kits.html?unit=10&topic=04)

Source 2, “Memorandum Regarding the Occupation of Wounded Knee”

This note tells about what happened when the American Indian Movement occupied Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

**Vocabulary**

* **occupying** – won’t leave a place

March 2, 1973

From: Forrest Gerard, government worker and member of the Blackfeet Tribe

A small group of American Indian Movement leaders is occupying Wounded Knee, South Dakota. The news says that the AIM wants attention from the United States. They want people to know that the country was bad to American Indian people. They want the country to pay them back.

1. Where are the AIM leaders?

The AIM leaders are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. What does the American Indian Movement want? Why?

The American Indian Movement wants \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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3. Are the AIM leaders right to occupy Wounded Knee? Tell why or why not.

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**Intermediate ESOL / Reader**

**Unit 10: Democracy Challenged (1968-1980)**

[Topic 4: American Indian Movement: Native Americans Fight Back](https://www.thinkport.org/tps/ushist/inquiry-kits.html?unit=10&topic=04)

Source 2, “Memorandum Regarding the Occupation of Wounded Knee”

This note tells about what happened when the American Indian Movement occupied Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

**Vocabulary**

* **hostage** – a person who cannot leave because someone is making them stay
* **senator** - a person who stands for people from a state

March 2, 1973

From: Forrest Gerard, Senate worker and member of the Blackfeet Tribe

It looks like there is a small group of American Indian Movement leaders occupying Wounded Knee, South Dakota. The news says that they want the country to pay attention to them. They want the country to pay them back for the bad things it did to Native American people.

You know that two US senators went to Wounded Knee to talk to the AIM leaders. Senators McGovern and Abourezk are from South Dakota. They went to try to free the eleven hostages. Other senators sent helpers with them.

1. What people were part of the Wounded Knee problem?

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1. Did the leaders get the attention they wanted? How do you know?

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1. Do you think that taking hostages would help or hurt what the AIM leaders wanted? Explain.

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**Advanced ESOL / Reader**

**Unit 10: Democracy Challenged (1968-1980)**

[Topic 4: American Indian Movement: Native Americans Fight Back](https://www.thinkport.org/tps/ushist/inquiry-kits.html?unit=10&topic=04)

Source 2, “Memorandum Regarding the Occupation of Wounded Knee”

This note tells about what happened when the American Indian Movement occupied Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

**Vocabulary**

* **press** – newspapers
* **intention** - plan
* **aids** - paid helpers
* **militant** - someone who fights like they are at war
* **over-shadowed** - made to look less important

March 2, 1973

From: Forrest Gerard, Senate staffer and member of the Blackfeet Tribe

It seems that the occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota is led by a small group of AIM leaders. The press, radio, and television say that AIM’s intention is to have a way to speak to the country, to seek repayment for past wrongs done to American Indian people.

You know that AIM’s actions at Wounded Knee made Senators McGovern and Abourezk travel there to try to discuss release of the 11 hostages. Staff aids from Senators Fulbright and Kennedy’s offices also went with the two South Dakota senators.

Yesterday, Mr. William Youpee, Executive Director of the National Tribal Chairman’s Association called me at home. Bill is worried that, once again, a small bunch of self-appointed militant Indians got what they wanted from the federal government; in this case, the Congress. Bill said that the Tribal Chairman’s Association has worked through the government’s normal procedures to make progress but they are afraid that their efforts are being over-shadowed by the weird actions of the militants.

1. How do you know that the AIM leaders at Wounded Knee are getting the attention they want?
2. Who would say each of the following?

Those crazy guys are ruining our good progress! \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Let’s meet with them and see if they’ll release the hostages. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please let me go home to my family! \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Our cameras cannot see inside the occupied building. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Now maybe you’ll listen to us! \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. How would attention from the press help and hurt the AIM leaders?

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| **BONUS** – Write or draw an interview between the media and any other person or group that is part of the occupation. |