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Review of *Ojibwa Warrior: Dennis Banks and the Rise of the American Indian Movement* By Dennis Banks with Richard Erdoes

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Ojibwa Warrior: Dennis Banks and the Rise of the American Indian Movement. By Dennis Banks with Richard Erdoes. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004. xii + 362 pp. Photographs. \$29.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper..

Richard Erdoes has established a veritable cottage industry by co-authoring the autobiographies of prominent Indians from the 1970s. Beginning with 1972's *Lame Deer* (with John Fire Lame Deer), he has since helped to produce works by Mary Crow Dog, Leonard Crow Dog, and even a sequel with Mary Crow Dog (a follow-up to their 1990 best seller, *Lakota Woman*). His most recent effort couples him with one of the American Indian Movement's founders, Dennis Banks. In some respects, this one is different. For starters, it comes from an academic publisher instead of a mass-marketing commercial press. In other respects, though, this book has numerous similarities to Erdoes's other autobiographies. Many of the

same topics and anecdotes are rehashed. In fact, readers familiar with these books will be able to discern Erdoes's literary voice from Banks's, even if they are not already familiar with Banks's voice.

As with most autobiographies, there is a fair dose of self-serving interpretation and perspective. There is also the brash rhetorical style and techniques that are emblematic of the speeches and writings of many AIM members. It was shocking and original in the 1970s, and still has the power to move, but three decades later it at times seems tired. Nonetheless, the book still has important value.

Banks's take on the familiar narrative of AIM's activities of the 1970s is complemented by his insights into less familiar subjects, including a vivid picture of his early life and much needed discussions of his activities of the 1980s. This book is also, on some level, a retort to Russell Means's 1995 autobiography *Where White Men Fear to Tread*, a book Means teamed with Marvin Wolfe to write. Banks and Means, AIM's two primary leaders during its most influential period, have not always agreed on matters, and those disagreements have sometimes been public. True to form, Means was sometimes openly critical of Banks and his supporters in *White Men*. Also true to form, Banks is more diplomatic in *Ojibwa Warrior*, even complimenting of Means. But the discerning reader can readily pick out the issues of contention. The general schism in approaches is perhaps best shown by their conclusions. Means ended his book by lauding the virtues of therapy and the Libertarian Party (he has since disavowed the Libertarians). Banks ends his by celebrating his life with his youngest son and other family members back on the reservation of his birth in Minnesota, where he subsistence hunts and fishes and runs a small business based on wild rice and maple syrup harvesting.

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