



‘Why haven’t you known?’

Transoceanic solidarity and the politics of knowledge in feminist anti-nuclear activism

Catherine Eschle 

Received: 2 June 2022 / Revised: 13 December 2022 / Accepted: 6 January 2023
© The Author(s) 2023

Abstract This article critically examines the character and extent of transoceanic solidarity in feminist anti-nuclear activism. Drawing on archival research into a British-based solidarity network, Women Working for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (WWNFIP), the article centralises the rhetorical question ‘Why Haven’t You Known?’ demanded by Māori activist Titewhai Harawira of her British audience in 1986, and extends it to contemporary scholars of feminist anti-nuclear activism. The article makes three main empirical claims. First, the WWNFIP archive pushes Indigenous women from across the Pacific into the limelight as experts and teachers, with British-based counterparts playing a supportive role. Second, the archive foregrounds Indigenous knowledge claims about nuclear colonialism and correspondingly represents decolonisation as essential to nuclear abolition. Thirdly, solidarity is shaped in ambivalent ways by these knowledge claims, which simultaneously evoke sisterly closeness and the discomfort of potential white allies. Overall, WWNFIP’s relatively successful construction of transoceanic solidarity, notwithstanding some ambiguities and limitations, points to the crucial relationship between knowledge and solidarity. The case study not only offers some valuable lessons for contemporary efforts to forge anti-nuclear solidarities but also disrupts dominant accounts of feminist anti-nuclear activism, past and present.

Keywords Disarmament · The global nuclear order · The Pacific · Indigenous · Epistemology

✉ Catherine Eschle
School of Government and Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 16 Richmond
Street, Glasgow, G1 1XQ, Scotland, UK
E-Mail: catherine.eschle@strath.ac.uk

Warum haben Sie das nicht gewusst?

Transozeanische Solidarität und die Politik des Wissens im feministischen Antiatomkraftaktivismus

Zusammenfassung In diesem Beitrag werden der Charakter und das Ausmaß der transozeanischen Solidarität im feministischen Antiatomkraftaktivismus kritisch untersucht. Basierend auf Archivrecherchen über ein in Großbritannien ansässiges Solidaritätsnetzwerk von Frauen, die sich für einen atomwaffenfreien und unabhängigen Pazifik einsetzen („women working for a nuclear free and independent pacific“ [WWNFIP]), stellt der Beitrag die rhetorische Frage „Warum haben Sie das nicht gewusst?“, die die Maori-Aktivistin Titewhai Harawira 1986 an ihr britisches Publikum richtete, in den Mittelpunkt und überträgt sie auf zeitgenössische Wissenschaftlerinnen des feministischen Antiatomkraftaktivismus. Der Beitrag enthält 3 empirische Hauptaussagen: 1. Im WWNFIP-Archiv werden jenseits des Pazifiks lebende, einheimische Frauen als Expertinnen und Lehrerinnen ins Rampenlicht gerückt, wobei die in Großbritannien ansässigen Kolleginnen eine unterstützende Rolle spielen. 2. Im Archiv wird das indigene Wissen über den nuklearen Kolonialismus in den Vordergrund gestellt und dementsprechend die Dekolonialisierung als wesentliche Voraussetzung für die Abschaffung der Atomkraft angesehen. 3. Die Solidarität wird auf ambivalente Weise durch diese Wissensansprüche geprägt, die gleichzeitig schvesterliche Nähe und Unbehagen bei potenziellen weißen Verbündeten hervorrufen. Insgesamt verdeutlicht die – trotz einiger Unklarheiten und Limitationen – relativ erfolgreiche Konstruktion transozeanischer Solidarität des WWNFIP die entscheidende Beziehung zwischen Wissen und Solidarität. Die Fallstudie bietet nicht nur einige wertvolle Lektionen für zeitgenössische Bemühungen, Antiatom-solidaritäten zu schmieden, sondern stellt auch vorherrschende Darstellungen des feministischen Antiatomaktivismus in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart in Frage.

Schlüsselwörter Entwaffnung · Die globale Nuklearordnung · Der Pazifik · Einheimische · Epistemologie

1 Introduction

Anti-nuclear advocate and writer Ray Acheson (2021) recently published a riveting insider story of the successful struggle for the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). As Acheson makes clear, western feminist analyses of the gendered dimensions of nuclear weapons and nuclear discourses were highly influential in the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear weapons (ICAN), and various Indigenous groups, including from the Pacific Islands, also played a key role (2021, p. 107–8; 153). In addition, Acheson emphasises the impact on diplomatic allies of searing first-hand testimonies from survivors of nuclear bombs and tests, including Pacific Islanders, Australian Aboriginals and Indigenous communities from Kazakhstan (2021, p. 134–35). The main focus of Acheson’s book is how ICAN and its diplomatic partners worked successfully within ‘the weeds’ of the UN to push for the TPNW. However, from my perspective—as someone

interested in the tangled undergrowth of feminist and anti-nuclear activism—their account raises other questions. How was ICAN able to stitch and hold together such a diverse mosaic of perspectives? More precisely, in what ways and to what extent was transoceanic solidarity created and sustained between western feminists and Indigenous activists—and to what effect?

While others are more qualified to answer that question with regard to ICAN, this article offers an archival case study that casts some light on the issues at stake. After all, the effort to build anti-nuclear solidarity between feminist, Indigenous and other constituencies under the ICAN umbrella is not without historical precedent. There is considerable research into the dynamics and impact of Cold War western feminist anti-nuclear activism, on the one hand (e.g., Bartlett 2013; Eschle 2013; Managhan 2007; Feigenbaum 2015), and Indigenous experiences of and resistances to the global nuclear order, on the other (e.g., Johnston 2007; Rozsa 2020; Endres 2009; Maurer and Hogue 2020). Yet previous instances of activists from these two very differently situated and motivated groups striving to work together have not been well documented.¹ Indeed, Cold War western feminist anti-nuclear activism has been characterised by critics as ‘white feminism’, in the sense not only of being numerically dominated by white women but also of exclusively reflecting their relatively privileged perspectives and interests (Brown 1984; Amos and Parmar 1984, p. 15–17). This critique positions feminist disarmament (or at least some strands of it) as unconcerned with the structures of racism and legacies of colonialism that distort the lives of women of colour and Indigenous women, and thus as unlikely to be relevant to them. However, there were some instances when Cold War western feminist anti-nuclear activists took this critique on board and sought to confront racism and colonialism, and to build alliances across its fissures. One such instance is the British-based network, Women Working for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (WWNFIP).²

WWNFIP emerged from Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp in 1984.³ One of the founder members, Zohl de Ishtar, describes how the network was ‘born in a bender’:

“It was March 1st, Nuclear free and Independent Pacific Day, 1984, and we had a party at Green Gate to celebrate the strength of our Indigenous Pacific sisters. This wasn’t the first ... We’d linked with Aboriginal and other Australian women on November 11th 1983, when women gathered to protest the US base at Pine

¹ For a recent exception, see Bartlett (2023). I note also the important new research into anti-nuclear solidarities *between* Indigenous groups, e.g., Rozsa (2020) and Hogue and Maurer (2022).

² In 1991, the network changed its name on its bulletin to Women for a Nuclear Free Pacific, thus dropping the second W in the acronym, but for consistency I stick to WWNFIP throughout. I describe the network as British-based because it emerged in the UK and had active members (listed in the bulletin) throughout England and in Glasgow, Scotland, and regular national ‘conferences’, while also reaching beyond borders to forge connections with women in the Pacific region. I will go on to describe participants in the UK as British-based, rather than according them a nationality that they may not have shared—certainly, some key members hailed originally from Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand.

³ For background on the Greenham camp, see Roseneil (1995; 2000).

Gap ... but this party was to be the birth of a network of women working for the Pacific.

It was a great party.”

(WWNFIP bulletin 1991, no. 24, p. 18).⁴

The network was one of several solidarity groups in Europe seeking to support the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) movement, which had emerged from a conference in Suva, Fiji in 1975 (Smith 1997, pp. 31–2). WWNFIP focused particularly (although not exclusively) on building links with Indigenous women and on coordinating UK-based women’s actions in their support.

Crucially, WWNFIP organised several visits and speaking tours of women from Pacific Island states and also from Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, beginning, in March 1985, with Titewhai Harawira from Aotearoa and Chailang Palacios from the Northern Marianas on a month-long speaking tour around the UK. In September 1985, Maria Pangelinan and Jacoba Seman from the Northern Marianas attended the London Dumping Convention, while in March 1986, another speaking tour, this time in collaboration with the Nuclear Free Zone Movement, included Lorenza Pedro from Bela [Palau] and Lijon Eknilang from Rongelap in the Marshall Islands, with Violette Tarahu from Fa’a’ā, Tahiti, visiting later the same year (WWNFIP bulletin 1986, no. 4, pp. 1, 4–6; 1986, no. 6, p. 2). In 1988, guests included Joan Wingfield from the Kothaka people in Australia and Bernie Keldermans from Belau (WWNFIP bulletin 1989, no. 15, p. 19); Nicole Tangopi of Kanaky arrived during the summer of 1989 (WWNFIP bulletin 1991, no. 24, p. 13), while Isabella Sumang from Belau visited in 1990 for a conference on nuclear-free zones, subsequently touring the country (WWNFIP bulletin 1991, no. 22, p. 3), and again in 1996. On the latter trip she appears to have been joined by Cita Morei from Belau and Nancy Jouwe, from the West Papuan refugee community in the Netherlands, all of them attending the Violence, Abuse and Women’s Citizenship Conference in Brighton (WWNFIP bulletin 1997, no. 38 [issue 1]). Over the years, several of these women also visited the Greenham camp (WWNFIP bulletin 1991, no. 24, pp. 13–16). Speeches and papers from the early tours were published in a booklet *Pacific Women Speak—Why Haven’t You Known?* (WWNFIP). In addition, the network sent Zohl de Ishtar and Bridget Roberts from the UK on a tour of the Pacific in 1986–1987 to research the situation first-hand and build connections in the region (WWNFIP bulletins 1986, no. 5, pp. 8–14; 1986, no. 6, pp. 13–16; 1987, no. 8, pp. 21–30; 1987, no. 9, pp. 22–24) and it supported the participation of de Ishtar and Sian Evans in the 1987 NFIP convention in Manila (WWNFIP bulletin 1987, no. 11, pp. 15–21).

Beyond this, the network coordinated myriad activities in the UK and beyond, from petition-signing to letter writing, to protests and direct action, in order to draw

⁴ This is a quote from the archive of WWNFIP bulletins and other papers held at the Glasgow Women’s Library. The archive is not catalogued, so for each quote from the bulletin, I provide (in the text only, and not in the reference list for this article) the year of production, issue number and page number. In July 1992, the network stopped numbering issues, instead listing them by month; from early 1996 it started numbering issues from 1–4 per year, and a few of the later issues don’t have page numbers. In response, I supplement the reference system above with other issue numbers/dating systems where relevant and insert page numbers where none are supplied.

attention to events and issues in the Pacific region. Last but by no means least, it published and distributed a regular bulletin documenting these events and issues as well as the tours by the Indigenous and British-based women, and solidarity activities in the UK. There were many editions of the bulletin—the earliest one I have seen is no. 3, published at the start of 1986, which indicates the first two were the preceding year, and the last one is no. 45, published June 1999.⁵

In what follows, I analyse the character and extent of transoceanic solidarity in WWNFIP as constructed in the bulletin and the *Pacific Women Speak* pamphlet. Paying particular attention to textual and visual representations of the British-based feminists, the Indigenous women activists and of relations between them, I show that WWNFIP documents centre the knowledge claims of Indigenous peoples from across the Pacific and portray Indigenous women specifically as experts and teachers. I argue that such representations are crucial to the effective construction of transoceanic solidarity in WWNFIP documents, notwithstanding some elisions and ambiguities in the depictions of Indigenous and western women’s identities, and of the connections between them. This case study offers some lessons for contemporary efforts to forge anti-nuclear solidarities by foregrounding the relationship with epistemology. Beyond that, it disrupts dominant accounts of feminist anti-nuclear activism, past and present.

In order to make this argument, I first explore recent feminist literature on solidarity, in order to help situate and conceptualise the activities of WWNFIP as a feminist organisation. I then briefly discuss some methodological considerations in relation to the conduct of archival research into WWNFIP sources before turning in the third part to the empirical analysis.

2 Feminist reversionings of solidarity

The concept of solidarity has been much discussed in feminist literature. According to Jo Littler and Catherine Rottenberg (2021, p. 2), ‘[s]olidarity invoked in a feminist context is often thought to cut across different identity categories—such as race, class, sexuality or nation—without assuming sameness among women or falling back into gender essentialism. To express solidarity with others is ostensibly to recognize and respect differences without colonizing those differences’. Political solidarity, specifically, goes beyond mere expression by entailing a positive commitment to support these differently placed others in their struggle against a particular injustice, by actively resisting with them (hooks 1986; Scholz 2008); it thus involves forging a political alliance in some form, to serve the mutual goal of social change.

A common narrative emerges across the feminist literature on solidarity to the effect that western second-wave feminist efforts to build solidarity across difference were reliant on tropes of ‘global sisterhood’ and thus fatally flawed because they assumed a familial sameness of female identity and experience around the world. This was critiqued either on the grounds that it flattened racial and imperial hierarchies

⁵ I have been unable to confirm at the time of writing if this is the final issue ever published. More detail of the form of the bulletin are given in the methodology section below.

that privilege some women over others (e.g., Mohanty 2003, chap 4) or because it relied on essentialist categories of identity that did not provide the fixed ground for politics that its advocates assumed (e.g., Dean 1998). As the story goes, these critiques of the sisterhood model, and indeed of feminist identity more generally, came to prominence as western feminist activism took a dip in the late 1980s and 1990s, between the peaks of the second and third wave. In this context, feminist theorists began to develop alternative grounds for building solidarity, particularly across borders. While some responded by advocating for a retreat to specific identities, others sought to articulate a ‘post-identity’ basis for solidarity connections across specific social and geopolitical locations (e.g., Dean 1998). In parallel, the notion of ‘transnational feminism’ emerged, focused on border-crossing solidarity practices in the context of globalising dynamics while rejecting universalising global visions (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Mohanty 2003). These post-identity and transnational formulations became highly influential on feminist efforts to articulate solidarity later in the 1990s and into the 2000s.

I want to make three points about this narrative in the literature and its applicability to WWNFIP. The first has to do with chronology. WWNFIP was active from 1984 into the 1990s, at precisely the period when feminist solidarities around shared identity across difference are alleged to have been in crisis. One possible explanation can be gleaned from Becky Thompson’s (2002) revisionist history of second and third wave feminism in the US, focusing on what she calls ‘multiracial feminism’ that organised across racial divisions. Thompson shows that the height of such organising was actually in the 1980s and early 1990s. As Thompson makes clear, dominant tellings of feminist solidarity as I have rehearsed them above equate it not only with the US context but also with liberal and radical traditions, narrowly defined: if we instead centre feminism’s multiracial forms, then our understanding of feminist trajectories and their timings will shift. In addition, Thompson’s account implies our substantive understanding of feminist solidarity will shift too. For her, the rethinking of solidarity that arose in the context of multiracial organising was more practical than theoretical, centering on the ‘work that white women needed to do in order for cross-racial sisterhood to really be powerful’ (Thompson 2002, p. 347). WWNFIP replicated this move, as I will show below.

The second point I want to make relates to the cross-border dimension of solidarity. Janet Conway (2017) has convincingly argued that, with some exceptions, ‘transnational feminism’ as an analytic has become somewhat unmoored from empirical study of cross-border movement practices. Clearly, it remains important to study how feminist solidarities have been articulated and practised across borders, especially those constituted at least partly by racism and imperialism (Moghadam 2000; McLaren 2017; Anderl 2022). Moreover, Conway insists we should pay close attention to the *situated* character of transnational feminism, ‘to specific linguistic and cultural flows [and] ...their connection to place’ (2017, p. 222). In that spirit, I note Sylvia Frain’s use of ‘transoceanic’ rather than ‘transnational’ when considering solidarity in the context of the Pacific islands (2017, p. 100). Frain’s point serves as an important reminder of the significance of the Pacific Ocean itself, as a sea of islands and a space of connection, in configuring solidarity relations within

and beyond the region. Following Frain’s reasoning, I use the term transoceanic rather than transnational to describe the reach of connections in the WWNFIP case.⁶

Connectedly, the third and final aspect of the feminist solidarity literature I want to underline is that theoretical debates about feminist solidarity post ‘global sisterhood’ tend to be concerned primarily with what we might loosely call ontological concerns, about the feminist subject and how it might be constructed given the splintering or destabilisation of the category of ‘woman’, particularly on a global scale. As Jodi Dean puts it, the key question becomes how to ‘conceive of connecting with each other through and across our differences’, how to move beyond seeing disagreement as ‘fundamental disavowals of *who we are*’ (1998, p. 5, emphasis in original). Perhaps less visible is that there is also an epistemological element to these debates, specifically a concern with knowledge of or from the Other, from a different social or geopolitical location. Thus Dean’s formulation of ‘reflexive solidarity’ focuses on the ‘communicative underpinnings necessary for constructing common ground’ which involves attentiveness to the ‘interdependence of partial perspectives’ (1998, p. 24) through assuming a situated, hypothetical third-person audience—someone not yet included in the solidarity relationship. In parallel, Nira Yuval Davis’s influential formulation of ‘transversal’ coalitions, enabled by ‘rooting’ politics in one’s located perspective while ‘shifting’ to build bridges with others, explicitly draws on a modified ‘standpoint epistemology, which recognises that from each positioning the world is seen differently, and thus that any knowledge based on just one positioning is “unfinished”’ (1999, p. 94–95). In this approach, solidarity is effectively reframed as a project to build ‘epistemological community’ as the basis of a shared political project (Alison Assiter quoted in Yuval-Davis 1999, p. 96). I will show below how WWNFIP can be understood in these terms. In this context, the demand ‘why haven’t you known’ takes on added significance.

At this point, I want to acknowledge a parallel field of literature of relevance to this article, on how Indigenous people and members of settler communities (whether feminist or otherwise) can and should interact in contemporary political contexts. Much of this literature warns of how difficult it is to create meaningful solidarity. In this vein, Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2021 [2000]) has exposed the racialised subject position of white women that has enabled them to shape the feminist movement in Australia in their own image and incorporate Aboriginal women only on unequal terms. She has also excavated the extent of the logic of the ‘White possessive’ (2015), which displaces Indigenous sovereignty claims even within civil rights struggles, and which illuminates how settler allies can take over Indigenous spaces. Claire Land (2015) has explored how these dynamics can distort solidarity projects by well-meaning settler groups, such that these projects are likely to be transient or ultimately serve the psychological needs not of Indigenous partners but of settlers wanting to ‘help’ without interrogating their privilege or complicity. In response, Land elaborates practical lessons in relation to solidarity that echo those elaborated

⁶ Frain (following Teresia K. Teaiwa) also argues that the term fluidarity should replace solidarity (2017, p. 100). However, in this article I have made a tactical decision to stick to the notion of solidarity as one that connects more easily to most existing feminist literature on coalition-building as well as to the conceptual language mobilised within WWNFIP.

by Thompson above. Moreover, Land's analysis underscores that there is an epistemological dimension here too, 'It is important for non-Indigenous people to develop their understanding of Indigenous struggles before they rush in ... Indigenous people, scholars and activists are clearly working to shift would-be allies' understandings of what the "problem" is and of the broader context of social change' (2015, p. 201). For Land, taking Indigenous knowledge claims seriously should ultimately involve non-Indigenous people shifting their understanding of their own interests. For this reason, I pay close attention in my case study of WWNFIP to the self-representation of British-based activists, as well as of their partners from the Pacific region. Before that, in the next section, I turn to more methodological concerns and elaborate on my textual and archival approach to the case study.

3 Archival research into feminist anti-nuclear solidarity

My research into WWNFIP focuses exclusively on the textual ephemera left by the network, in the form of the bulletin and the *Pacific Women Speak* pamphlet. I acknowledge that other research strategies, most notably interviewing, would help to excavate the interpersonal relations and economic factors that shaped the production and circulation of these texts, on the one hand, and their reception and wider impact, on the other. They would also help us to see the extent to which the solidarity relationships described below extended into women's lives in meaningful ways, and their material effects. I hope in the future to conduct such research, confining myself here to a study of the organisation's texts. In my view, this remains useful for several reasons. To begin with, the production of these texts was itself one of the major political activities of the network. In addition, the pamphlet in particular serves as a record of another major activity, the tours of Indigenous activists around the UK so their verbal testimony could reach British audiences. The texts are thus particularly valuable because they present words and images of *both* British-based and Indigenous activists. Several of these activists are now deceased (at least some of those from the Pacific Islands from cancers suspected to be related to radiation exposure).⁷ Finally, studying the textual traces of this network may not allow me to see how the bulletins and pamphlets were produced or what impact they had on their readership, but it does illuminate how the words and images are put together, what meanings are thus conveyed and with what resonance.

This article is thus also an archival study. To be clear, the textual ephemera of WWNFIP has not been constituted as a formal archive, ordered and catalogued within an institutional context. Instead we might understand it as constructed by contemporary feminists, including myself, in an attempt to redress past silences and reinterpret the present (Eichhorn 2014). I came across the bulletin at the Glasgow Women's Library (GWL), where it is held as part of a women's peace activism

⁷ The book *Pacific Women Speak Out* (de Ishtar 1998), a follow up to the *Pacific Women Speak* pamphlet of 1987, is dedicated to 'Darlene Keju-Johnson of the Marshall Islands, who died of breast cancer in 1996, aged 45. Her courage and vision inspired many.' Keju-Johnson's testimony in the original pamphlet highlights the 'tremendous increase' in cancers among her people, particularly women and children.

collection. It was donated before GWL established formal curation methods; there is no record of when it was donated or by whom, and it has not been catalogued. A copy of the *Pacific Women Speak* pamphlet was kindly passed on to me by another researcher, Rebecca H. Hogue and I have purchased other related publications by members of the network (de Ishtar 1998; 1994). By drawing attention to and supplementing the bulletin with related publications, I am in effect constituting this collection of texts as an emerging archive and conferring on it a certain legitimacy. In line with current feminist practice, I approach this archive as a site in which to uncover not a single truth about the past activism but rather its contradictions and contestations, and to imagine a different contemporary politics (Eichhorn 2014; Bartlett 2023; Moore 2023).

The texts in this archive change in form over the years. The self-described ‘bulletin’ was initially a hefty, hand-decorated publication which, following Anna Feigenbaum, might be described as a ‘proto-zine’ of the kind typically produced at Greenham.⁸ These earlier bulletins are an exciting mishmash of typed-up and handwritten commentary and calls to action from a variety of contributors; cut-and-pasted newspaper articles from the Pacific region, often printed at striking angles; emotive poetry by both British-based and Pacific-based campaigners; all interspersed with photographed and hand-drawn images and decorative motifs of plants, wildlife and abstract patterns referencing the Pacific region. The pamphlet *Pacific Women Speak*, published in 1987, has a more uniform typed appearance, and photographed imagery, but it echoes some of the earlier qualities in its decorative motifs. In 1992, however, the bulletin transmutes into a more professionalised ‘newsletter’, produced exclusively by the London branch and with an increasingly slimline and standardised appearance. Enabled by developments in home computing and desktop publishing during the 1990s, this shift also reflects a drop in ‘the number of people [in the UK] actively involved’ on the issue, and a consequent lack of money, as well as a dwindling of direct contact with activists in the Pacific (WWNFIP bulletin 1992, no. 25, pp. 12–13). Correspondingly the newsletters change in substance from this time: they gradually become factual collations of news items produced by media outlets in the Pacific region with less space for text written by British-based women in the network, or for the words and poetry of Pacific Islander, Māori and Aboriginal women. In my analysis, I will focus primarily on the documents produced prior to this shift.⁹

⁸ WWNFIP newsletters and pamphlets are not quite comparable to those ‘written in the mud’ at Greenham, as Feigenbaum puts it. Their regularity, the fact they seem to have been assembled and produced in people’s homes rather than at the camp, and a certain standardisation of layout, means they also have some of the more conventional traits of the organisational newsletters and reports of the time. Yet they clearly have zine-like qualities that are reflective of ‘Greenham’s DIY ethos, non-hierarchical organizational structure and scarcity of office equipment—along with women’s interest [in] creating alternative cultures’ (Feigenbaum 2013, p. 6).

⁹ I note that the books produced in this later period by WWNFIP founding member de Ishtar—*Daughters of the Pacific* (1994) and booklet *Pacific Women Speak Out* (1998)—while not published under the WWNFIP rubric and more professionalised in format, still emphatically centre the words of Indigenous women from the region, some of which were gathered by de Ishtar while on the WWNFIP-funded research tour of the Pacific mentioned in the introduction. As de Ishtar says in her preface to *Daughters*, ‘This is a book of stories ... told by Indigenous women and men who have guided their peoples through long years

As Alison Bartlett highlights (2023, p. 221), ‘only some social actors have a place’ in feminist archives, ‘those who write or are written about’, and Indigenous women are all too often conspicuous in their absence on both counts. The WWNFIP texts are different in this regard because the bulletins in the early years sometimes feature the words of Indigenous women themselves, alongside representations of them by their British-based allies. The pamphlet *Pacific Women Speak* is mostly the words of Indigenous activists, interspersed with explanatory text. In this sense, the archive offers a rare opportunity to study *self*-representations of women from both the Pacific region and the UK, along with characterisations from both of relations between them. Nonetheless, the archive should not be treated as a co-creation. The words of the Indigenous women are selected, transcribed and edited by the British-based activists: they come to the reader through this filter. The question of precisely how Indigenous women interacted with the newsletter and how the British-based counterparts selected and mediated their words and images is beyond the scope of the current article, focused as it is on the site of composition rather than of production or circulation. Within those constraints, the next section explores representations of solidarity in the WWNFIP archive.

4 Knowers, knowledge claims and solidarity in the WWNFIP archive

“‘WHY HAVEN’T YOU KNOWN?’ With these words Titewhai Harawira challenged the people of Britain. She came to speak for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific in March 1985. ‘Why haven’t you known’ about nuclear testing by the United States, Britain and France; about jellyfish babies born to women who were exposed to the tests? ‘Why haven’t you known’ about the effects of alien colonial, political and military domination of the indigenous people? ‘Why haven’t you known’ about uranium mining on Aboriginal land and nuclear waste dumping?”
(WWNFIP 1987, p. 4)

Present in this opening paragraph of the *Pacific Women Speak* booklet are all the protagonists of the WWNFIP solidarity relationship: the Indigenous women activists as represented by Harawira; the British-based members of WWNFIP who are the invisible producers of the text; and the wider British audience interpellated by Harawira’s call. By opening the booklet with these words, WWNFIP as well as Harawira are throwing down the gauntlet to a sympathetic, anti-nuclear British readership to become better informed about the experiences of women in the Pacific region and how this has been instigated in part by their own governments. Recovering knowledge of the Pacific region, by listening to Indigenous women from there, is thus positioned as key to building solidarity between the Pacific and the UK, and more broadly to effective opposition to the global nuclear order.

of colonisation and exploitation by foreign nations In the re-telling, I have tried to present these stories as they were told to me ... Europeans need to hear the stories of Indigenous women’ (1994, pp. xvii–xviii). It appears this ethos remained important among network participants even though the space for such stories in the bulletin was sharply reduced.

The presentation of Harawira's talk, given while on a tour of the UK in 1985, is worthy of close reading as a microcosm of the broader themes of the archive (WWNFIP 1987, pp. 34–7). Beginning by expressing her thanks to the British-based women of WWNFIP for their 'woman power' in organising the tour, Harawira soon gets both specific and uncompromising: 'I would like to say that what happens in the Pacific is usually told from the oppressor's point of view ... we're not recognised as a people that should be talking about what really happens to us' (1987, p. 34). She then asserts commonality with other Indigenous peoples in struggle, because 'their lands have been colonised'. She names nuclear testing in the Pacific as an undeclared 'nuclear war that we've been forced to live in for forty years' (1987, p. 34). And after discussing her people's claim to Aotearoa and their connection to it, she describes in detail the horrors of her people's specific encounter with British colonialism, identifying 'the British' as the perpetrators of sexual violence and massacres, and of cultural annihilation, in ways clearly intended to provoke discomfort in her British audience (1987, pp. 35–6). She calls for 'a nuclear free and independent Pacific. Because we know that it's the only way we're going to get rid of white oppression, of colonialism, and the whole nuclear madness' (1987, p. 36). And her request for solidarity in the struggle to that end is not a meek plea or polite invitation, but a demand to listen, and to 'earn our trust. We're going to have to see results ... if it's been a shock for you, well I feel good about it' (1987, p. 37). The text of her talk is accompanied by a strong image of Harawira, her face and torso deeply shadowed, as she stands very upright during a protest on Waitangi Day 1984, chin raised, eyes focused on the middle distance.

In general terms, Harawira's talk invokes the protagonists involved in this solidarity relationship, outlines the shared parameters of that relationship in terms of what it is against and what is for, and gestures at the character of that solidarity—all in connection to the political importance of speaking and being heard. I will now examine these three elements in more detail, with reference to the wider archive.

4.1 Constructing activist identity

I begin by considering the protagonists represented in the archive, the foremost of which are the Indigenous women from Oceania. To be clear, it is not only the women who feature; there are also frequent mentions of entire communities and peoples—and close attention to the differences in conditions, culture and priorities between these communities, as in, say, the Rongelap refugees living in overcrowded slum conditions on Ebeye (e.g., WWNFIP bulletin 1985, no. 5, pp. 11–12, 15) and the Belauan elders organising to defend their anti-nuclear constitution from multiple US-instigated referenda on a new Compact (e.g., WWNFIP bulletin 1987, no. 9, pp. 6–10; no. 10, pp. 4–6). This attentiveness is achieved by organising much of the bulletin geographically, by region, country and specific island. Moreover, male leaders feature prominently: their words often printed verbatim alongside their photographs, and in some cases support is expressed for them personally, whether in the form of requests for letter-writing on behalf of imprisoned independence leader Charlie Ching in Tahiti (WWNFIP bulletin 1986, no. 6, p. 9); an open letter from Kanaky independence leader Jean Marie Tjibaou (WWNFIP bulletin 1987,

no. 8, pp. 18–19); or a poetic lamentation for the murder of Belau elder Bins Bedor (WWNFIP bulletin 1987, no. 10, p. 3). The space given to male leaders undoubtedly reflects the dominance of men in the leadership of the NFIP (Hogue and Maurer 2022, p. 1268). Nonetheless, the British-based activists also articulate a curiosity about gender differences and inequalities amongst the Pacific communities they document, and try to represent women’s leadership, women’s groups and women’s voices.

There are several things to note about how Indigenous women activists are represented. To begin with, the feminist label is never applied to them. Indeed, feminism is barely mentioned by name at all in the archive. This should not be taken to mean that it is mistaken to call WWNFIP a feminist network or that none of the Indigenous women subscribed to feminism, however defined; rather it means that there is a determined avoidance of the feminist subject, that is, with the identity label ‘feminist’ as a marker of belonging to a collective. Instead, feminism pervades the archive as a political project rather than an identity. It is implied in references by Indigenous and British-based women to gender inequality in both the Pacific and in the UK; in the foregrounding of women’s lives, voices and images; and in references to feminist-imbued symbols and markers such as Greenham, ‘women power’ and sisterhood. By sidestepping the question of what feminism is or who counts as feminist, the network was undoubtedly able to be more inclusive and to focus instead on the issues of most import to the women in the Pacific. Perhaps more problematically, it dodged rather than resolving the problems posed for Pacific women by the intertwining of western feminism with coloniality and its consequent association with privileged, white, settler women’s interests. For instance, during the same time period that WWNFIP was active, prominent Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) writer Haunani-Kay Trask reflected: ‘as I decolonized my mind and my commitments, the political and cultural environment at home splintered my acquired feminism from my Hawaiian existence. I recognized that a practicing feminism hampered organizing among my people in rural communities. Given our nationalist context, feminism appeared as just another haole intrusion into a besieged Hawaiian world’ (1996, p. 909). And more recently, Sylvia Frain has written of how CHamoru women scholars in the Northern Marianas seek to articulate feminism(s) ‘grounded in their maternal indigenous heritage’, in opposition to feminism from the ‘imperial center’ (2017, p. 106). Such contestations and navigations of feminism are not visible in the WWNFIP archive, which means the feminist project implicit in it escapes contextualisation and critique.

The identities that do ‘stick’ to the diverse Pacific Islander, Māori and Aboriginal activists represented in the pages are twofold. The first is ‘Indigenous’, with constant reference from both the women themselves as well as in commentary from their British-based counterparts to a common, cross-cutting Indigenous worldview, particularly in relation to a view of the environment, community and cosmos. As Chailang Palacios, a CHamoru¹⁰ woman from the Northern Marianas states, ‘We are the people of the land and the ocean and we are struggling for survival. The ocean

¹⁰ I have updated some of these place names and identifiers from the original texts in line with my understanding of what is now preferred spelling.

is our spirit’ (WWNFIP 1987, p. 15). Similarly Barbara Flick, a Gamilaraay woman described as being ‘from the north-west of New South Wales, Australia’, declares ‘We have a spiritual relationship not only with the land itself but with all forms of plant and animal life on land’ (WWNFIP 1987, p. 29).

The other identity label is ‘women’. While some equivalence is drawn with white settler women, as in Harawira’s declaration that ‘women are strong’, the Indigenous woman in these texts tends to be defined more specifically—by both Indigenous and British-based activists—in terms of her intertwined roles as mother and keeper of a collective culture. There are countless photographed and hand-drawn images in the archive of Indigenous women with children, which reinforce this identity construction. While such ‘maternalist’ constructions have been subject to fierce criticism in western feminist circles for their conservative implications, not least when deployed in anti-nuclear mobilisations,¹¹ they are a common source of mobilisation in Indigenous contexts where both culture and family have been under sustained attack. As Tracey Voyles argues about First Nation women’s resistances to uranium mining, this is a politics that posits ‘Native motherhood not as the culmination of a woman’s socially constructed role as a caretaker but rather as part of the struggle for sovereignty’ (cited in Runyan 2022, p. 1157). It could also be considered in line with the ‘matrilineal social order’ of Indigenous communities in the Pacific region (Frain 2017, p. 114). Certainly, motherhood repeatedly features in the archive as a key site of the impact of nuclear testing. For example, Darlene Keju-Johnson’s testimony in *Pacific Women Speak* conveys in visceral and heart-breaking detail the increase in cancers suffered by women and children, radiation-induced ‘deformities’ in foetuses and children, and multiple miscarriages and stillbirths (1987, p. 8). However, the overall impression is not of victimhood, but of agency. As Lijon Eknilang of Rongelap declares, after detailing her own seven miscarriages and stillbirths, ‘It’s about time that someone who has experience of this terrible thing stands up’ (WWNFIP bulletin 1986, no. 4, p. 6).

It is from the intersection of these identities as Indigenous and as women that the Pacific Islander, Māori and Aboriginal activists emerge from the archive not only as agents of resistance but more specifically as transmitters of knowledge. This knowledge is often represented as grounded in lived experience—as in Eknilang’s assertion ‘I have come to share my experience with you because I want you to see your future—what it is going to be—through me’ (WWNFIP 1987, p. 19). Alternatively, it is represented as deriving from oral tradition, as in Flick’s insistence that ‘the places in which uranium have been found in Australia have been places of very strict taboo. We were told by our elders not to disturb the place’ (WWNFIP 1987, p. 30). Either way, Indigenous knowledge is asserted as a self-consciously political act against the privileging of western science: as Maria Pangelinan from the Northern Marianas states, ‘It’s so easy to see, it’s all facing us right now. Why do we have to listen and wait for reports from the scientists?’ (WWNFIP 1987, p. 27). Or as Joan Wingfield from the Kokatha people in Australia puts it more strongly, having scientists verify what is already known ‘is an insult to my people’ (WWNFIP 1987, p. 33). Wingfield’s critique gains traction because scientific knowledge in and

¹¹ See, e.g., discussions in Bartlett (2011) and Kerrow et al. (2023).

about the region is shown to be partial and partisan, in the service of the nuclear coloniser. For instance, Keju-Johnson testifies that the medical team sent to the Marshall Islands to study radiation went to only a couple of affected islands and failed to check the children born since the 1954 tests (WWNFIP 1987, p. 9).¹²

The cumulative impact of assertions of knowledge in the face of colonial silences and erasures is to position Indigenous women as a distinctive sort of expert on the region, and as teachers. Quite literally in Harawira's account, whereby 'we are teaching our history to our children ... we are teaching all our pre-school children to speak Maori' (WWNFIP 1987, p. 36). But in more general terms, the Indigenous women are positioned in the archive as teachers of their allies in the global North: 'They came so that more of us would know, would pass on the information, and would act upon it ... we are publishing some of their edited speeches in order that the Pacific story may be heard by a wider audience' (WWNFIP 1987, p. 4). This role of expert and teacher actively undermines the global racialised colonial hierarchy of knowledge in which the 'native' is positioned as 'primitive' and ignorant, and in which the transmission of expertise runs from North to South (Johnston 2007). It also affirms Indigenous knowledge as fundamental both to Indigenous resistance to the nuclear order, and to transoceanic solidarity in support.

What about representations of the British-based women in the network? Most obviously, they too are interpellated as women (or womyn or wimmin or other radical feminist adaptations that seek to excise the 'men' at the root of the term); indeed, the symbol for women is built into the WWNFIP logo. But more specifically, the British based women are constructed as white women. If some of the British-based participants were in fact women of colour, it is not evident from the pages in the archive and certainly, the one photograph of them that I have found in the archive is of white women. Beyond the fact of skin colour, there is some acknowledgement in the texts of the political effects of whiteness as a social category. Sometimes whiteness is implied indirectly, as in appeals to face up to racism in the UK as well as in the Pacific. At other points, its role in structuring solidarity relations in the network is explicitly acknowledged, as in the poem 'Feel their anger': 'When they turn to face us/with their tears, their hurt, affection/Accepting our whiteness, and our weakness/ Can we acknowledge still our strength' (WWNFIP bulletin 1986, no. 4, back cover). In this poem, the readers of the bulletin are challenged to face up to the structural privilege that whiteness brings and the barriers it creates with women of colour. Or as de Ishtar reports back from an NFIP conference:

"There was a lot of guilt-tripping being inflicted by some Indigenous ... in some cases, non-Indigenous were told not to speak. Working with non-Indigenous is often a hard job for Indigenous people, they have to face racism daily and that takes a lot of patience. Sometimes there's just a desire to hit out some of the anger that's been stored up for centuries. And if you're non-Indigenous and

¹² Textual evidence from official archives supports this insistence on the selectiveness of scientific surveys of the impact of radiation; even worse, the records show deliberate exposure of Indigenous people to fallout and the complicity of medical teams in not warning them of radiation levels and/or in further exposing them via injected doses—see Johnston (2007), also <https://moruroa-files.org/>.

want to work with Indigenous there’s a certain amount of that you’ve got to be able to take.”

(WWNFIP bulletin 1988, no. 11, p. 21).

If white British-based readers have to accept a ‘certain amount’ of ‘guilt tripping’, they also have to avoid being immobilised by it. This is evident in the frequent ‘action alerts’ that pepper the bulletin, and the detailed descriptions of activities, such as a women’s cycle caravan across the UK to the French embassy in London to deliver petitions against nuclear testing (WWNFIP bulletin 1986, no. 4, p. 14), or protests at the shareholder meetings of BP (British Petroleum) over its uranium mining interests on Aboriginal land (WWNFIP bulletin 1987, no. 8, p. 20). In such ways, British-based participants are represented, like their Pacific Islander, Māori and Aboriginal counterparts, as agents of change, but importantly they are seen to be following the lead and interests of women from Oceania. In another echo of the constructions of Indigenous activists, at least some of the British-based women are also positioned as experts. There are listings in every bulletin of those women prepared to talk to local groups about particular countries or campaigns, and de Ishtar and Roberts post extensive reports in the bulletin in 1986 and 1987 from their year-long research tour across the Pacific. However, again it would appear that this expertise is secondary, reliant on information passed on from news sources in the region or on the testimonies of Indigenous women. In this way, the status of British-based activists as knowers remains dependent on actively fostering links with women across the Pacific region.

4.2 Constructing shared knowledge and a shared political project

This takes me to the second line of analysis: the content of the knowledge claims being made in the texts and how these set the political parameters of the solidarity relationships in WWNFIP. Briefly, the diverse testimonies of the Indigenous women, and the detailed reporting on conditions in countries and territories across the region, highlight myriad problems plaguing Indigenous peoples in the Pacific, from US attempts to undermine the anti-nuclear constitution in Belau (e.g., WWNFIP bulletin 1984, no. 4, p. 11; 1986, no. 6, pp. 6–7), to the destruction of sacred land by missile testing in Kaho’olawe, Hawai’i (WWNFIP bulletin 1986, no. 4, p. 2), and food shortages amongst nuclear refugees from contaminated Rongelap atoll evacuated with Greenpeace’s help to the island of Mejato (Kwajalein atoll) (e.g., WWNFIP bulletin 1986, no. 4, p. 10; no. 5, pp. 16–19). These different problems are woven through with a common thread: colonialism. The historical experience of colonialism and its persistence in the form of French occupation of Kanaky and Maohi Nui, US interference in nominally independent territories in Micronesia and continued settler dominance in Australia and Aotearoa, are repeatedly referenced as key to enabling not only nuclear testing in the region but also economic extractivism and dependence, military expansionism, cultural annihilation, racial inequality and division, and ecological destruction. Colonialism is conceptualised in the bulletin in various ways: it is pathologised as ‘a disease’ (Sue Cullings, WWNFIP bulletin 1988, no. 13, p. 3); linked to Christian ideas of moral superiority (‘You came with

your bible and cross’, Roman Bedor, WWNFIP bulletin 1987, no. 9, back page); and seen as justified by legal niceties like the doctrine of ‘terra nullius’, while being violently instituted in ‘a sorry tale of psychopathic sadism’ (Rhys Jones cited in WWNFIP bulletin 1987, no. 10, p. 12).

Alongside this generalised critique of colonialism, the more specific concept of ‘nuclear colonialism’ is front and centre in the archive. This concept is not unique to WWNFIP: widely used among Indigenous critics (Ward and LaDuke 1992), it has been defined as ‘a system of domination through which governments and corporations disproportionately target and devastate indigenous peoples and their lands to maintain the nuclear production process’ (Endres 2009, p. 39). As a concept, it illuminates how such domination is pursued internally, within nuclear states, as well as externally; and how it relies on the control of territory. It is vividly represented by a hand-drawn map by Melanie Earle, which reappears in several issues of the bulletin and on the centre pages of the *Pacific Women Speak* pamphlet.¹³ The concept also features in the written text. For instance, Myria Baldonado, National Co-ordinator of the Peoples’ Task Force for Bases Clean-up in the Philippines, argues that, ‘[t]hrough the classic example of nuclear colonialism is Tahiti with the country remaining a colony of France, there are many subtle manifestations—the only difference is that the countries are seemingly sovereign’ (WWNFIP bulletin 1998, no. 42 [issue 1], p. 3). Baldonado and others show how issues of nuclear testing, extra territorial rights over land for nuclear bases, uranium mining, waste dumping and accidental spillages in the Pacific are all a product of colonial power relations.

Connectedly, the overarching solution that emerges from the archive is decolonisation. In this, of course, WWNFIP reflects the position of the movement for a Nuclear Free *and Independent* Pacific that it formed to support. As it says on one particularly striking cover of the bulletin, in clipped print overlain on Aboriginal art:

Hear us, White Australia,
We are the spirit of our land.
Our name is humanity.

Our aims are self-determination and justice.
We will not be defeated.

We are our history,
we are our culture,
we are our land.
(WWNFIP bulletin 1987, no. 10, front cover).

In addition, although not all advocates of anti-colonial solidarity have historically subscribed to nuclear abolitionism (Liu 2019), WWNFIP clearly does so. In this, it is informed as much by the Indigenous worldview elaborated earlier, which sees the land, sea and nature as sacred and humans as having a responsibility to care for it, as by British peace movement traditions. In sum, the WWNFIP archive showcases an

¹³ The colour image can be seen (and purchased) here: <https://yorkshirecnd.org.uk/shop/postcards/nuclear-colonialism-melanie-earle/>.

Indigenous-led analysis of the root causes of the nuclear problem, and an Indigenous-led articulation of the way forward to a safer and more just world for all.

4.3 Constructing solidarity

My third and final line of analysis follows the character and dynamics of the solidarity relationship/s represented in the archive. One striking feature is the recurrence of the trope of sisterhood. This is perhaps unsurprising given the roots of WWNFIP in the radical feminism of Greenham, and the insistence on shared womanhood as the basis of action. As outlined in part 2, the sisterhood model has been heavily criticised for assuming a commonality of experience among women that flattens power differentials between them. Yet as has been made clear above, WWNFIP texts do not assume the sameness of Indigenous and British-based women but rather construct them as distinct and unequal subjects in a matrix of racialised and colonial power relations. Moreover, the sisterhood trope is invoked not only by some of the British-based activists, but also by some of the Indigenous ones.

What is going on here? Perhaps sisterhood is referenced by the British-based women tactically, in an effort to appeal to Indigenous women by extending the familial imagery so central to their identity constructions in the archive? In other words, sisterhood may be a political move rather than an ontological claim. Or perhaps the concept of sisterhood has been reframed by both parties, so that is based less on familial resemblance and shared experience, and more on a duty to care for our siblings even if they look nothing like us and their lives do not bear any resemblance to ours? On this account the call to sisterhood is based on *knowing* the Other, not because we share the same harmful experience but because they have told us about it; and on *responsibility* for the Other, because we are complicit in and benefit from the harm done to them. Either way, the mobilisation of sisterhood in this archive indicates it may have a more positive relationship to feminist solidarity than is usually assumed. That is not to say it does not also contain ambivalences and contradictions. On this point, the poem 'To All My Sisters' by de Ishtar is instructive, as shown in the following excerpt:

I can feel the women, you
reaching through me.
Myself a channel
I see their hands, your hands
...

Extending, extending
outward
to touch each other
Extending into that which is
my now, my presence
(de Ishtar in WWNFIP bulletin 1987, no. 8, back cover).

The main point of the poem is to convey how British-based women in WWNFIP act as allies for Indigenous women, with the former 'a tool' or a 'messenger' for

the latter who are ‘reaching through’ them. However, the very boundaries between the physical bodies of Indigenous women and their British-based counterparts are dissolved in the poem, in a beatific conjuring of fused purpose and emotional connection that seems to me in tension with the careful delineation of the two subjectivities elsewhere in the archive.

Moving beyond the two-way solidarity relationship between Indigenous and British-based women, I turn finally to the implied connection with an additional protagonist, Dean’s ‘hypothetical third’ (the outside observer implicitly invoked in solidarity claims), as discussed in Part 2. In this context, the heuristic ‘why haven’t you known’ in the *Pacific Women Speak* pamphlet can be thought of as a demand made jointly by the Indigenous and British-based women who work together in WWNFIP to ‘*the people of Britain*’ (WWNFIP 1987, p. 4, emphasis added)—and more specifically to the peace activists or sympathisers reading WWNFIP materials or attending WWNFIP talks. And in this regard, ‘why haven’t you known’ has an accusatory quality, calling out white, western listeners/readers for their obliviousness to the damage wreaked by their states.¹⁴ In this, I suggest, it could be seen as challenging ‘white ignorance’, that is, ‘systemic group-based miscognition’ (Mills 2017) through which white people fail to see racialised hierarchies and how they benefit from them, along with the associated phenomenon of ‘colonial unknowing’ (Vimalassery 2016). Connectedly, it seems to me there are moments when the pamphlet challenges ‘white fragility’ (DiAngelo 2018), that is, the tendency of white people to become defensive and/or to centre their own emotional reactions when confronted with the realities of racialised and colonial inequalities. Recall how Harawira declared ‘if it’s been a shock for you, well I feel good about it’; to this she adds, ‘what are the white men doing about it?’. Similarly, Eknilang tells her audience ‘I didn’t come all the way here for you to cry for me... I don’t want to see the tears in your eyes. I want you to be strong’ (WWNFIP 1987, p. 19). In effect, both women are confronting white discomfort in the hope of decentring the emotional response of the audience to new knowledge and instead provoking their action. In sum, the WWNFIP archive hints that solidarity may be sustained by metaphors that conjure intimacy and closeness, but is likely to require discomfort to get off the ground. As Land puts it (2015), ‘the process of being uncomfortable is essential for non-Indigenous people to move from enemy to adversary to ally’.

5 Conclusion

The analysis above has parsed out the ways in which solidarity is constructed in the WWNFIP archive around the question ‘why haven’t you known?’. I have made three main claims. First, WWNFIP bulletins and pamphlets elevate Indigenous women from across the Pacific region as expert knowers and teachers, a status they gain from their experiences as Indigenous women rather than through feminist identifi-

¹⁴ Thanks to Rebecca H. Hogue for this interpretation of Eknilang’s question, during a presentation on the *Pacific Women Speak* booklet at an online workshop of the FemNukes international network, 1 March 2021.

cations, and with British-based counterparts playing a supportive role. Second, the archive showcases an analysis of the problem that foregrounds Indigenous knowledge claims about nuclear colonialism and correspondingly insists on decolonisation as essential to nuclear abolition. In this, Indigenous women set the terms of the political project for which solidarity is necessary. Thirdly, solidarity relationships are represented as emerging from knowledge claims, with Indigenous women’s testimonies leading to sisterly closeness but also to the discomfort of white, western audiences more broadly in ways intended to provoke action. Overall, my analysis presents the WWNFIP archive as a relatively successful instance of transoceanic solidarity construction during the 1980s and 1990s, notwithstanding some ambiguities and limitations, and points to the crucial relationship between knowledge and solidarity in the struggle against the global nuclear order.

This case study raises questions for contemporary anti-nuclear solidarities, as evident in the campaign for the TPNW with which I began. Could it be that ICAN and the wider TPNW coalition may have been sustained less by shared identity than by an attentiveness to the different social and geopolitical positioning of coalition partners, and a mutual effort to hear and learn from each other in the development of a shared analysis of the problem and of the way forward? Is it the case that the testimony of those with lived experience of the nuclear order was crucial to unsettling and mobilising wider constituencies?

I want to close, however, by considering the implications of the case study for understanding feminist anti-nuclear activism, past and present. And here I return to the ‘why haven’t you known’ heuristic and suggest that this question takes on a different hue when the intended audience shifts—to readers of this Special Issue on feminism and disarmament. I imagine you, my readers, (perhaps wrongly) as broadly feminist and anti-nuclear in your sympathies and interests, but as not having heard before of the WWNFIP network or the Pacific women’s stories it documents. I too was ignorant of the former, if not entirely of the latter, before stumbling across the bulletin collection. Harawira’s question urges us to consider why that might be the case. Why is this example of transnational solidarity-work in feminist anti-nuclear activism, and its attempt to centre Indigenous knowledge claims, so little known today?

Perhaps we can find some indicators in the substantial critical reflection in western feminist academic circles on how we tell stories about our collective past, present and future. As Niamh Moore (2023, p. 240) puts it, ‘feminists are also implicated in and non-innocent in the (failure of) transmission of feminism. Feminists produce some memories and not others, some archives and not others’. Moore draws here on Claire Hemmings’ influential book *Why Stories Matter* (2011). Hemmings identifies dominant narratives of progress, loss and return in feminism that, despite their differences, assume a clear periodization of feminist forebears in distinct ‘waves’ and confine some aspects of second-wave feminism, notably essentialist or universalising claims about women, to the 1970s. Moore suggests that Greenham is obscured by the wave periodization which places it in a period of movement decline, and that the progress narrative further positions Greenham as a site of essentialist

claims-making¹⁵ and thus of feminist discomfort and even shame. For these reasons, Greenham and its offshoots—of which WWNFIP is one—are ‘intentionally forgotten by some’ (Moore 2023, p. 240). I would add in relation to anti-racist work that the progress narrative characterises feminism as ‘*increasingly* attentive to difference—particularly racial difference—as well as coding the past as notably inattentive to the same’ (Hemmings 2011, p. 44, emphasis in original). Contrastingly, both loss and recovery narratives position the multiracial feminism of the late 1980s and 1990s as part of a politics of identity rather than solidarity, precursor to political fragmentation and a retreat from material politics. Either way, the dominant stories about feminism obscure the anti-racist, anti-colonial solidarity politics of WWNFIP, and thereby distort understanding of feminist anti-nuclear activism more generally.

This article has sought to bring WWNFIP back into view as an important element in feminist anti-nuclear organising of the 1980s and 1990s, and as an instructive resource for contemporary scholars and advocates of feminist disarmament. By the end of the 1990s, both the NFIP movement in the Pacific and WWNFIP back in London had disintegrated as organised political forces. But as Rebecca H. Hogue and Anaïs Maurer remind us in their important account of Pacific women’s anti-nuclear activism (2022), this does not mean that the struggle against nuclear colonialism in the region ended, or that Indigenous women in the region ceased resisting. As illustrated by the impression on policy makers and in academic circles made by the recent multi-method, multi-agency Moruroa files project,¹⁶ western audiences can still be shocked to learn of the impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific. Yet women and their communities in the region have long articulated these same impacts, rooting their claims to knowledge in experience and oral traditions.¹⁷ Moreover, they continue to do so, within and beyond the current global campaign for global nuclear abolition with which this article opened.¹⁸ In that light, Harawira’s question, and solidarity-building of the kind undertaken by WWNFIP, remain urgent. So why haven’t you known?

Acknowledgements Heartfelt thanks to Nicola Maksymuk for facilitating my access to the WWNFIP archive at Glasgow Women’s Library, and to Rebecca H. Hogue for our stimulating conversations about the archive and her close read of the initial draft of this article. My gratitude also to organisers, fellow panellists, and audiences at the DEP—*Deportate, Esuli, Profughi* conference ‘Disarming Women’, 23–24 November 2018, the International Studies Association annual convention, 7–10 April 2021, and the European International Studies Association Pan-European conference, 1–4 September 2022, where I presented work-in-progress on the archive.

Conflict of interest I have no financial or non-financial interests directly or indirectly related to the work submitted for publication. I received no grant money for the archival research or the writing-up of the research.

¹⁵ It bears restating that the assumption that Cold War women’s peace activism was always uniformly essentialist, with conservative political implications, is an empirical oversimplification (see Eschle 2013).

¹⁶ <https://moruroa-files.org/en/investigation/moruroa-files>; see also Philippe and Statius (2021).

¹⁷ I owe this point to Vanessa Griffen, who articulated it in a FemNukes online workshop with Sébastien Philippe of the Moruroa files project, 8 November 2021.

¹⁸ Griffen, for example, has been heavily involved in ICAN as regional representative for the Pacific region. See also the anti-nuclear poetry of Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, <https://www.kathyjetnikijiner.com/videos-featuring-kathy/> or the activities of the International Women’s Network against Militarism, <http://iwnam.org/>.

Funding Open access funding provided by University of Strathclyde.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Acheson, Ray. 2021. *Banning the bomb, smashing the patriarchy*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Amos, Valerie, and Pratibha Parmar. 1984. Challenging imperial feminism. *Feminist Review* 17(1):3–19.
- Anderl, Felix. 2022. Global or local solidarity? That's the wrong question: relationality, aspiration and the in-between of feminist activism in southeast Asia. *Globalizations* 19(1):1–16.
- Bartlett, Alison. 2011. Feminist protest and maternity at Pine Gap women's peace camp, Australia 1983. *Women's Studies International Forum* 34(1):31–38.
- Bartlett, Alison. 2013. Feminist protest in the desert: researching the 1983 Pine Gap women's peace camp. *Gender Place and Culture* 20(7):914–926.
- Bartlett, Alison. 2023. Feminism on Aboriginal land: the 1983 Pine Gap women's peace camp, central Australia. In *Feminism and protest camps: entanglements, critiques and re-imaginings*, ed. Catherine Eschle, Alison Bartlett, 217–234. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Brown, Wilmette. 1984. *Black women and the peace movement*. London: Falling Wall Press.
- Conway, Janet M. 2017. Troubling transnational feminism(s): theorising activist praxis. *Feminist Theory* 18(2):205–227.
- de Ishtar, Zohl. 1994. *Daughters of the Pacific*. North Melbourne: Spinifex.
- de Ishtar, Zohl. 1998. *Pacific women speak out: For independence and denuclearisation*. Christchurch: The Raven Press.
- Dean, Jodi. 1998. Feminist solidarity, reflective solidarity: theorizing connections after identity politics. *Women & Politics* 18(4):1–26.
- DiAngelo, Robin. 2018. *White fragility: why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Eichhorn, Kate. 2014. *The archival turn in feminism: outrage in order*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Endres, Danielle. 2009. The rhetoric of nuclear colonialism: rhetorical exclusion of American Indian arguments in the Yucca mountain nuclear waste siting decision. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6(1):39–60.
- Eschle, Catherine. 2013. Gender and the subject of (anti)nuclear politics: revisiting women's campaigning against the bomb. *International Studies Quarterly* 57(4):713–724.
- Feigenbaum, Anna. 2013. Written in the mud. *Feminist Media Studies* 13(1):1–13.
- Feigenbaum, Anna. 2015. From cyborg feminism to drone feminism: remembering women's anti-nuclear activism. *Feminist Theory* 16(3):265–288.
- Frain, Sylvia C. 2017. Women's resistance in the Marianas archipelago: a U.S. colonial homefront and militarized frontline. *Feminist Formations* 29(1):97–135.
- Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan. 1994. *Scattered hegemonies: postmodernity and transnational feminist practices*. Minnesota: Minnesota University Press.
- Hemmings, Claire. 2011. *Why stories matter: the political grammar of feminist theory*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hogue, Rebecca, and Anaïs Maurer. 2022. Pacific women's anti-nuclear poetry: centring Indigenous knowledges. *International Affairs* 98(4):1267–1288.
- Hooks, Bell. 1986. Sisterhood: political solidarity between women. *Feminist Review* 23(1):125–138.
- Johnston, Barbara Rose. 2007. "More like us than mice": radiation experiments with Indigenous peoples. In *Half lives and half truths: confronting the radioactive legacies of the cold war*, ed. Barbara Rose Johnston, 25–54. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.

- Kerrow, Kate, Vanessa Mordan, Vanessa Pini, Jill Raymond, Alison Bartlett, and Catherine Eschle. 2023. Greenham women everywhere: a feminist experiment in recreating experience and shaping collective memory. In *Feminism and protest camps: entanglements, critiques and re-imaginings*, ed. Catherine Eschle, Alison Bartlett, 273–293. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Land, Claire. 2015. *Decolonizing solidarity: dilemmas and directions for supporters of Indigenous struggles*. London: Zed Books.
- Littler, Jo, and Catherine Rottenberg. 2021. Feminist solidarities: theoretical and practical complexities. *Gender, Work & Organization* 28(3):864–877.
- Liu, Zifeng. 2019. Decolonization is not a dinner party: Claudia Jones, China's nuclear weapons, and anti-imperialist solidarity. *The Journal of Intersectionality* 3(1):21–45.
- Managhan, Tina. 2007. Shifting the gaze from hysterical mothers to “deadly dads”: spectacle and the anti-nuclear movement. *Review of International Studies* 33(4):637–654.
- Maurer, Anaís, and Rebecca Hogue. 2020. Special forum introduction: transnational nuclear imperialisms. *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 11(2):25–41.
- McLaren, Margaret A. 2017. *Decolonizing feminism: transnational feminism and globalization*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Mills, Charles W. 2017. White ignorance. In *Black rights/white wrongs: the critique of racial liberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. 2000. Transnational feminist networks: collective action in an era of globalization. *International Sociology* 15(1):57–85.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 2003. *Feminism without borders: decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Moore, Niamh. 2023. Remembering an ecofeminist peace camp. In *Feminism and protest camps: entanglements, critiques and re-imaginings*, ed. Catherine Eschle, Alison Bartlett, 235–255. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. 2015. *The white possessive: property, power, and Indigenous sovereignty*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.
- Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. 2021. *Talkin' up to the white woman: Indigenous women and feminism*, 20th edn., Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.
- Philippe, Sebastian, and Tomas Statius. 2021. *Toxique: enquête sur les essais nucléaires Français en Polynésie*. PUF/Disclose
- Roseneil, Sasha. 1995. *Disarming patriarchy: feminism and political action at Greenham*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Roseneil, Sasha. 2000. *Common women, uncommon practices: the queer feminisms of Greenham*. London: Cassell.
- Rozsa, George. 2020. The Nevada movement: a model of trans-Indigenous antinuclear solidarity. *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 11(2):99–123.
- Runyan, Anne Sisson. 2022. Indigenous women's resistances at the start and end of the nuclear fuel chain. *International Affairs* 98(4):1149–1167
- Scholz, Sally. 2008. *Political solidarity*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Smith, Roy. 1997. *The nuclear free and independent Pacific movement: after Mururoa*. London: IB Tauris.
- Thompson, Becky. 2002. Multiracial feminism: recasting the chronology of second wave feminism. *Feminist Studies* 28(2):337–360.
- Trask, Haunani-Kay. 1996. Feminism and indigenous Hawaiian nationalism. *Signs* 21(4):906–916.
- Vimalassery, Manu, Juliana Hu Pegues, and Alyosha Goldstein. 2016. Introduction: on colonial unknowing. *Theory & Event*, 19, no. 4. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/introduction-on-colonial-unknowing/docview/1866315123/se-2>. Accessed 9 Dec 2022.
- Ward, Churchill, and Winona LaDuke. 1992. Native North America: the political economy of radioactive colonization. In *The state of native America: genocide, colonization and resistance*, ed. Annette Jaimes, 241–266. Boston: South End Press.
- WWNFIP. 1987. *Pacific women speak: why haven't you known?* Oxford: Green Line.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 1999. What Is Transversal Politics? *Soundings* 12:94–98.