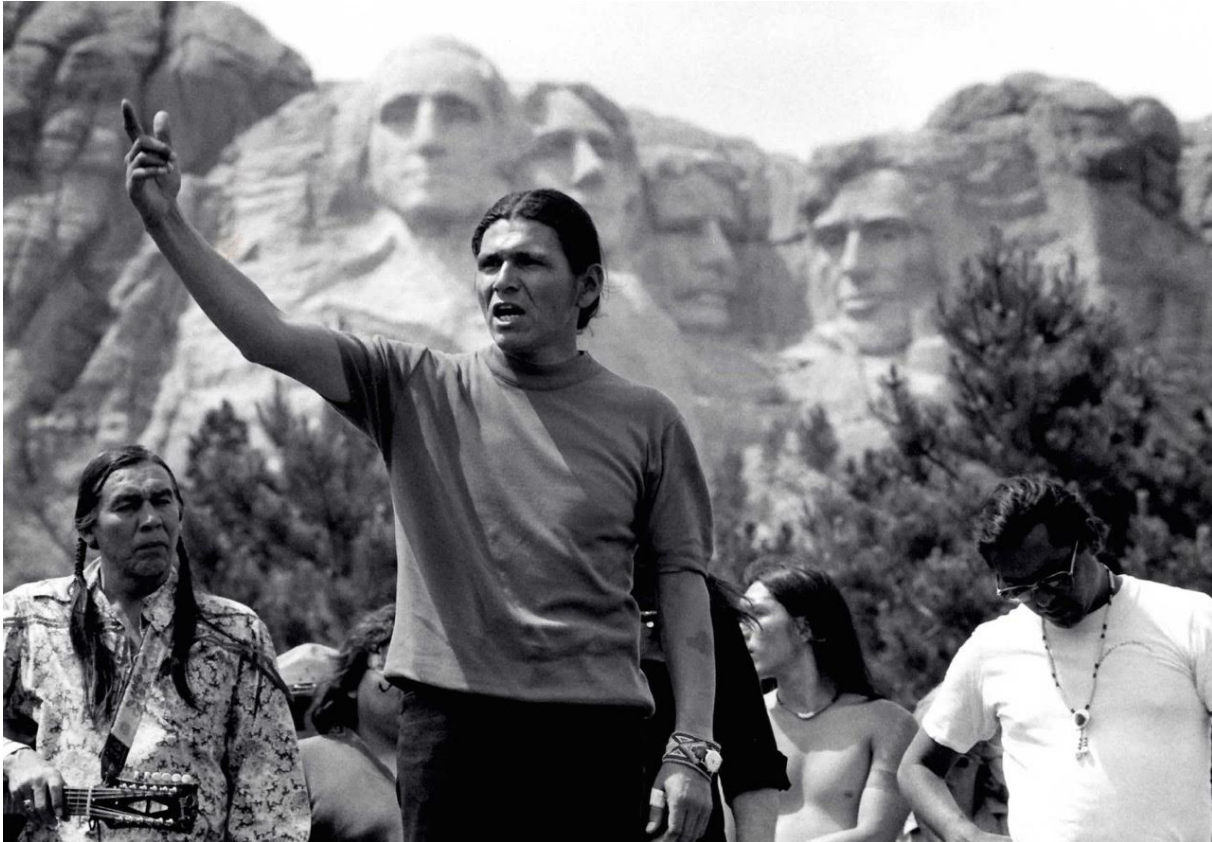


1970-1971: Native Occupation of Mount Rushmore



American Indian Movement (AIM) Founder Dennis Banks at Mount Rushmore

In 1970, the United Native Americans (UNA) organized a protest camp at the top of Mount Rushmore. During an interview with CBS News, the founder of the UNA, Lehman Brightman, discussed the motivation for the protest:

“Well, first I should say, the Federal Government said this land would belong to us as long as the grass grows and the water flows and the sun shines. Then six years later they sent General Custer to this area on an expedition, and they discovered gold here in the Black Hills. Then they turned around and took this land from us.

We’re sick and tired of sitting back and turning the other cheek and bending over to get those other two kicked. You’re going to see some wide-awake, educated Indians. We got some new Indians coming up, new warriors. And this is a breeding ground, right here. You are going to see a spark.”



November 1969-June 1971: Alcatraz Occupation

From November 1969 to June 1971, Native Americans took over and claimed Alcatraz Island off of the coast of San Francisco as Indian Land. To announce their motivations for the occupation, they authored the following proclamation:



American Indian Movement member
John Trudell at Alcatraz

PROCLAMATION: TO THE GREAT WHITE FATHER AND ALL HIS PEOPLE

We, the Native Americans, reclaim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery. . . We feel that this so-called Alcatraz Island is more than suitable for an Indian Reservation, as determined by the white man's own standard. By this we mean that this place resembles most Indian reservations in that:

1. It is isolated from modern facilities, and without adequate means of transportation.
2. It has no fresh running water.
3. It has inadequate sanitation facilities.
4. There are no oil or mineral rights.
5. There is no industry and so unemployment is very great.
6. There are no health care facilities.
7. The soil is rocky and unproductive; and the land does not support game.
8. There are no educational facilities.
9. The population has always exceeded the land base.
10. The population has always been held as prisoners and kept dependent upon others.

Further, it would be fitting and symbolic that ships from all over the world, entering the Golden Gate, would first see Indian land, and thus be reminded of the true history of the nation. This tiny island would be a symbol of the great lands once ruled by free and noble Indians.



1972: The Trail of Broken Treaties

In 1972, a large group of Native Americans marched into Washington DC and occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Once at DC, they delivered a 20-point position paper, which included:

1. RESTORATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL TREATY-MAKING AUTHORITY
2. ESTABLISHMENT OF TREATY COMMISSION TO MAKE NEW TREATIES
3. AN ADDRESS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE & JOINT SESSIONS OF CONGRESS
4. COMMISSION TO REVIEW TREATY COMMITMENTS & VIOLATIONS
5. RESUBMISSION OF UNRATIFIED TREATIES TO THE SENATE
6. ALL INDIANS TO BE GOVERNED BY TREATY RELATIONS
7. MANDATORY RELIEF AGAINST TREATY RIGHTS VIOLATIONS
8. JUDICIAL RECOGNITION OF INDIAN RIGHT TO INTERPRET TREATIES
9. CREATION OF CONGRESSIONAL JOINT COMMITTEE ON RECONSTRUCTION OF INDIAN RELATIONS
10. LAND REFORM AND RESTORATION OF A 110-MILLION ACRE NATIVE LAND BASE
11. REVISION OF 25 U.S.C. 163; RESTORATION OF RIGHTS TO INDIANS TERMINATED BY ENROLLMENT AND REVOCATION OF PROHIBITIONS AGAINST "DUAL BENEFITS"
12. REPEAL OF STATE LAWS ENACTED UNDER PUBLIC LAW 280 (1953)
13. RESUME FEDERAL PROTECTIVE JURISDICTION FOR OFFENSES AGAINST INDIANS
14. ABOLITION OF THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS BY 1976
15. CREATION OF AN "OFFICE OF FEDERAL INDIAN RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY RECONSTRUCTION
16. PRIORITIES AND PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED NEW OFFICE
17. INDIAN COMMERCE AND TAX IMMUNITIES
18. PROTECTION OF INDIANS' RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND CULTURAL INTEGRITY
19. NATIONAL REFERENDUMS, LOCAL OPTIONS, AND FORMS OF INDIAN ORGANIZATION
20. HEALTH, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND EDUCATION



Native Americans Occupy BIA Offices