



# **American Indian Activism**

**ALCATRAZ TO THE LONGEST WALK**

EDITED BY

**Troy Johnson, Joane Nagel,  
and Duane Champagne**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS  
URBANA AND CHICAGO

## CONTENTS

Introduction TROY JOHNSON AND JOANE NAGEL	1
1. American Indian Activism and Transformation: Lessons from Alcatraz TROY JOHNSON, DUANE CHAMPAGNE, AND JOANE NAGEL	9
2. Alcatraz, Activism, and Accommodation VINE DELORIA, JR.	45
3. Urban Indians and the Occupation of Alcatraz Island ADAM (NORDWALL) FORTUNATE EAGLE	52
4. Alcatraz Recollections TIM FINDLEY	74
5. Reflections of Alcatraz LANADA BOYER	88
6. Indian Students and Reminiscences of Alcatraz STEVE TALBOT	104
7. Personal Memories of Alcatraz, 1969 LUIS S. KEMNITZER	113
8. A Reminiscence of the Alcatraz Occupation EDWARD D. CASTILLO	119
9. The Native Struggle for Liberation: Alcatraz JACK D. FORBES	129
10. Alcatraz Is Not an Island LENNY FOSTER	136
11. From the Reservation to the Smithsonian via Alcatraz GEORGE P. HORSE CAPTURE	140

Introduction and Chapter 1 © 1997 by the Board of Trustees of the  
University of Illinois

Chapters 2–16 are reprinted with minor editorial changes from *American  
Indian Culture and Research Journal* 18:4 (1994) by permission of the American  
Indian Studies Center, University of California at Los Angeles. © 1994 by the  
Regents of the University of California

Manufactured in the United States of America  
1 2 3 4 5 C P 5 4 3 2 1

*This book is printed on acid-free paper.*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
American Indian activism : Alcatraz to the longest walk / edited by Troy  
Johnson, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne.  
p. cm.  
Includes bibliographical references and index.  
ISBN 0-252-02348-X (alk. paper). — ISBN 0-252-06653-7 (pbk. : alk. paper)  
1. Alcatraz Island (Calif.)—History—Indian occupation, 1969–1971.  
2. Indians of North America—Government relations—1934– .  
I. Johnson, Troy R. II. Nagel, Joane. III. Champagne, Duane.  
E78.C15A2 1997  
979.4'61—dc21 97-1877 CIP

---

## AMERICAN INDIAN ACTIVISM AND TRANSFORMATION: LESSONS FROM ALCATRAZ

Troy Johnson, Duane Champagne,  
and Joane Nagel

The occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969–71 initiated a unique nine-year period of Red Power protest that culminated in the transformation of national consciousness about American Indians and engendered a more open and confident sense of identity among people of Indian descent. Between 20 November 1969 and the Longest Walk in 1978, there were more than seventy property takeovers by Indian activists.<sup>1</sup> This series of collective actions is referred to as the Alcatraz–Red Power Movement (ARPM) because it started with—and was modeled after—the Alcatraz takeover. Certainly, many individual Indian people were politically active before and after this period, but what made the movement so powerful were the large numbers of *organized* demonstrations and the property seizures aimed at airing national and local Indian grievances.

The ARPM was predominantly a struggle to secure redress for overwhelming conditions of political, cultural, and economic disadvantage that mirrored the long history of Indian poverty, not only on reservations, but more recently in urban environments. Current theories of social movements focus on situations of group repression or disadvantage while emphasizing elements of individual and group choice, such as active leaders, effectively organized groups, formation of common group and individual interests, and the development of group ideology.<sup>2</sup> Both repressive and voluntarist elements must be analyzed to understand the rise, development, and decline of social movements. Voluntarist elements within the ARPM include charismatic leaders, the legacy of historical Indian resistance and social movements, the tactic of property seizure, a pan-Indian identity, formation of a national activist organization—in this case, the American Indian Movement

(AIM)—and a common national agenda of self-determination for Indian people and communities. Other structural and voluntarist elements are situational and have to be understood within the specific historical context. Some of these situational events are the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War protests, widespread student activism, the rise of radical ethnic groups, the reluctance of the federal government to overtly repress social movements during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the mass media attention heaped on many Indian takeovers, including Alcatraz Island.

Despite its influence, the occupation of Alcatraz Island has largely been overlooked by those who write or speak today of American Indian activism. Much has been written about the battles fought by Indian people for their rights to hunting and fishing areas reserved by treaties in the states of Washington, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, as well as about Six Nations efforts to secure guaranteed treaty rights in the northeastern United States and Indian actions protesting the demeaning use of Native American mascots by athletic teams. The 1972 takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) headquarters in Washington, D.C., and the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee are also well known, as is the killing of the young Coeur d'Alene Indian Joseph Stuntz and also the deaths of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1975, which resulted in the imprisonment of Leonard Peltier. Yet it was the occupation of Alcatraz Island that launched the greatest wave of modern-day American Indian activism. In the pages that follow, we will describe and analyze the rise, organization, fall, and legacy of the Alcatraz-Red Power Movement.

### **The Legacy of Native American Activism**

The ARPM protests were not unusual in that they were part of a long line of rebellions and social movements among Native Americans as means to resist colonial and U.S. control over their livelihood, culture, government, and resources. To better understand the ARPM, we will compare it with some of the major types of Indian movements occurring throughout history, pointing out similarities, differences, and important continuities.

Religious revitalization movements, numerous in Native American history, have provided spiritual solutions to the conditions of economic marginalization, political repression, and major losses of territory, as well as the ability to carry on traditional life. The more notable movements of this type include the Delaware Prophet (1760–63), the Shawnee Prophet (1805–11), the Winnebago Prophet (1830), the Ghost Dance of 1870, and the Ghost Dance of 1890, but there are also many local and lesser-known movements. In each of these, a prophet relied on ritual knowledge and power to gather

a pan-Indian following either to fight against European invaders or to pray for a cataclysmic event that would restore the Indian nations to the peace, plenty, and life they had known before American or European intrusions.<sup>3</sup> Most of these movements were either militarily repressed or the followers abandoned them when the predicted events did not come to pass. In some cases, small groups continued in the religion, but there were no pan-Indian churches or enduring community change. Similar to the ARPM, the religious revitalization movements formed a multitribal gathering of adherents, and both movements were reactions to severe conditions of economic, political, and cultural deprivation. But the ARPM was secular, relying on physical tactics rather than spiritual solutions; and while the ARPM depended on charismatic leaders, it did not focus on prophets or the formation of new religious beliefs.

Social revitalization movements, most of which led to reformed religions with present-day practicing adherents, also served to establish modified forms of community organization designed to better accommodate American-style agriculture, reservation land, and political restrictions. These movements include Handsome Lake Church (1799–present), the Delaware Big House Religion (1760–1910), the Kickapoo Prophet (1830–51), the Shaker Church (1881–present), and the Native American Church (1800s–present). Multiple tribal groups gathered for the Kickapoo Prophet, Shaker Church, and Native American Church, while the Delaware Big House Religion and Handsome Lake Church were exclusively tribal in nature.<sup>4</sup> Unlike these social revitalization movements, the ARPM was not concerned directly with reconstituting Indian communities as a solution to poverty or with political marginalization. Rather, ARPM protests were aimed at getting the attention of U.S. officials and agencies to gain access to material resources to alleviate poverty and redress cultural and political repression. Building Indian colleges, creating Indian studies programs, and preserving Indian cultures through federally funded cultural centers and museums were goals that could be achieved while working within U.S. institutions. The ARPM did not require major institutional change within Indian or reservation societies but rather sought fairer treatment, the honoring of treaty obligations, and financial assistance from the federal government.

While the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were studded with the rise of Indian religious movements, secular Indian movements have characterized much of the twentieth century. Early national Indian reform movements, led by organizations such as the Society of American Indians (SAI), were composed of well-educated Indian professionals who favored assimilation of Indian people into mainstream American society as the solution to the poverty and misery of reservation life. They formed national organizations and were involved in the Indian policy issues of the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>5</sup>

Like the ARPM, the SAI worked within the larger U.S. societal framework, but the SAI's assimilationist stance generated much internal debate. The ARPM sought not assimilation but the preservation of Indian identity and culture. The SAI, however, sowed the seed for a national Indian policy and a lobbying force in American politics, which came to fruition with the formation of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in 1944.

In the 1950s, the Six Nations peoples<sup>6</sup> used passive resistance and militant protests to block various New York State projects. For example, Tuscaroras and Mohawks demonstrated in opposition to the building of the Kinzua Dam in upstate New York, which required the displacement of Indians and the flooding of Indian land. Activism began to build in the 1950s, as more than twenty major demonstrations or nonviolent protests were orchestrated by Indian people. These demonstrations were aimed at ending further reductions of the Indian land base, stopping the termination of Indian tribes, and halting brutality and insensitivity toward Indian people. This rise in Indian activism was largely tribal in nature, however; very little, if any, pan-Indian or supratribal activity occurred. The militancy was primarily a phenomenon of traditional people typified by the participation of elders, medicine people, and entire communities, not the forging of alliances outside tribal boundaries, such as would later occur during the Alcatraz occupation and which characterized the Alcatraz–Red Power Movement.

A major example of tribally based activism was the dispute over state taxes in New York in the late 1950s. In 1957, Wallace “Mad Bear” Anderson, a Tuscarora Indian, helped the Mohawk fend off a New York State income tax on the grounds of Indian sovereignty on Indian reservations. Anderson led a protest group of several hundred Indians from the St. Regis Reservation to the Massena, New York, courthouse, where they tore up summonses for nonpayment of state taxes.<sup>7</sup> In April 1958, Anderson led a stand against the tide of land seizures, a move that ultimately brought armed troops onto Indian land. The New York Power Authority, directed by its chairman, Robert Moses, planned to expropriate 1,383 acres of Tuscarora land for the building of a reservoir and the back-flooding of Indian lands. Anderson and others practiced such harassment tactics as standing in the way of surveyors' transits and deflating vehicle tires. When Power Authority workers tapped the Indian leaders' telephones, Tuscaroras switched to speaking their tribal language. When the Tuscaroras refused to accept the state's offer to purchase the land, one hundred armed state troopers and police invaded Tuscarora lands. They were met by a nonviolent front of 150 men, women, and children, led by Anderson, who blocked the road by lying down or standing in front of government trucks. At the same time, Seneca and Mohawk Indian people set up camps on the disputed land, challenging the state to remove them. Anderson and other leaders were arrested, but the media at-

attention forced the Power Authority to back down. The Federal Power Commission ruled that the Indians did not have to sell the land, and the tribe did not sell. The *Buffalo Courier Express* reported that Mad Bear Anderson, more than anyone else, was responsible for the tribe's decision.<sup>8</sup>

Following the Six Nations' success in New York State, the Miccosukee Indian Nation of Florida summoned Anderson to help fight the federal government's attempt to take land from them as part of the Everglades Reclamation Project. In 1959, several hundred Indian people marched on BIA headquarters in Washington, D.C., to protest the government policy of termination of Indian tribes, and they attempted a citizen's arrest of the Indian commissioner. In California, Nevada, and Utah, the Pit River Indians, led by Chief Ray Johnson, refused \$29.1 million of claims case money awarded by the government and demanded return of their traditional lands. The Pit River Indian people carried on their battle until 1972, at which time they reached a negotiated settlement for partial restoration of land and a monetary payment.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Indian resistance to U.S. policies was galvanized by the common threat of termination of reservation and tribal status. Termination policy sought to detribalize and liquidate Indian land, directly abrogating federal treaties and agreements. The NCAI was joined by organizations such as the Indian Rights Association and the American Friends Services Committee in their fight against termination. Today, the NCAI, composed of tribal representatives—each with one vote—works within the political system as a national lobbying group for tribal-reservation (but not urban Indian) interests. It presents legislation to Congress, serves as a legislative guardian over Indian issues, and organizes Indian support or opposition to congressional actions. By contrast, the ARPM used social protest rather than established political procedures, and it represented the interests and concerns of urban Indians as well as disfranchised reservation Indians, who often were unfriendly to the established tribal governments and their leaders. These differences in approach created tensions between the more established NCAI and certain ARPM organizations, such as AIM, during the 1960s and 1970s.

The federal government's policy of termination led to interest among Indians in strengthening Indian policy, and numerous Indian rights and protest organizations emerged in the early 1960s, most notably the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC). The NIYC was organized by young college-educated Indians following the American Indian Charter Convention held in Chicago in 1961. They adopted some of the ideas of the civil rights movement and staged numerous fish-ins in the Pacific Northwest, where Washington State was attempting to use state laws to restrict Indian fishing rights guaranteed by federal treaties.<sup>9</sup> The NIYC encouraged greater tribal self-

sufficiency and autonomy and was therefore critical of federal and BIA policy. Although the group was active throughout the 1960s, it never got the media attention that the ARPM did in the 1970s, nor did it engage in the same protest tactics.

The rhetoric of Indian self-determination can be traced to the early 1960s, when Melvin Thom, a Paiute Indian from Walker River, Nevada, and the cofounder and president of the NIYC, recognized the need to alleviate the poverty, unemployment, and degrading lifestyles experienced by urban and reservation Indians. Thom realized that it was essential that Indian people, Indian tribes, and Indian sovereign rights not be compromised in the search for solutions to various problems. He said, "Our recognition as Indian people and Indian tribes is very dear to us. We cannot work to destroy our lives as Indian people."<sup>10</sup> He understood that family, tribalism, and sovereignty had sustained Indian people through the many government programs designed to destroy them as a people and to nationalize their traditional lands. The official government policy, dating back to 1953, was termination of the relationship between the federal government and Indian communities, meaning that Indian tribes would eventually lose any special relationships they had under federal law—for example, the tax-exempt status of their lands and federal responsibility for Indian economic and social well-being. In other words, Indian tribes themselves would be effectively destroyed. Thom described the termination policy as a "cold war" that was being fought against Indian people:

The opposition to Indians is a monstrosity which cannot be beaten by any single action, unless we as Indian people could literally rise up, in unison, and take what is ours by force. . . . We know the odds are against us, but we also realize that we are fighting for the lives of future Indian generations. . . . We are convinced, more than ever, that this is a real war. No people in this world ever has been exterminated without putting up a last resistance. The Indians are gathering.<sup>11</sup>

Indian people wanted self-determination rather than termination. This included the right to assume control of their own lives independent of federal control, the creation of conditions for a new era in which the Indian future would be determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions, and the assurance that Indian people would not be separated involuntarily from their tribal groups.

The 1960s witnessed a continuation of localized Indian protest actions such as the brief Indian occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1964. Preceding this event, however, were the fish-ins along the rivers of Washington State. The fish-in movement began when tribal members and their supporters fished in waters protected by federal treaty rights but were restricted by state and

local law enforcement. When Isaac Stevens was appointed governor of the new Washington Territory in 1853, he concluded the Medicine Creek (1854) and Point Elliott (1855) treaties, which guaranteed Indian rights to fish both on and off the reservation and to take fish at usual and accustomed grounds and stations. In the mid-1950s, state authorities tried to control Indian fishing in off-reservation areas on the Puyallup River. The Indians protested, arguing that these were "usual and accustomed grounds and stations" within the meaning of the 1854 and 1855 treaties. In 1963, the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the rights of Indian people to fish in accordance with these treaties. In 1964, in defiance of the Supreme Court decision in *United States v. Winons* (1905), the state courts in Washington closed the Nisqually River to Indian fishermen in areas off the Nisqually Reservation. In the same year, the Survival of American Indians Association (SAIA) was formed as a protest organization to assert and preserve off-reservation fishing rights. Fish-ins were organized by SAIA and held at Frank's Landing on the Nisqually River. A large number of state and local law enforcement officers raided Frank's Landing in 1965, smashing boats and fishing gear, slashing nets, and attacking Indian people, including women and children. Seven Indians were arrested. Dangerous though they might be, the fish-ins nonetheless provided the Indian youth of Washington with an opportunity to express their disillusionment and dissatisfaction with U.S. society and also to protest actively the social conditions endured by their people. Celebrities such as Marlon Brando lent their names to bring national media coverage of these protest actions. The Indian people who participated in the fish-ins would later provide assistance to the occupiers on Alcatraz Island.

In March 1966, President Lyndon Johnson attempted to quiet the fears of Indian people. In a speech before the Senate, he proposed a "new goal for our Indian programs; a goal that ends the old debate about termination of Indian programs and stresses self-determination; a goal that erases old attitudes of paternalism and promotes partnership and self-help."<sup>12</sup> In October 1966, Senator George McGovern from South Dakota introduced a resolution that highlighted the increased desire of Indian people to be allowed to participate in decisions concerning their development. The frustration resulting from years of BIA paternalism and the new Indian awareness of their powerlessness resulting from years of neglect, poverty, and discrimination had finally attracted the attention of the bureaucracy in Washington, D.C.

In the summer of 1968, United Native Americans (UNA) was founded in the San Francisco Bay Area. Many of the Indian occupiers of Alcatraz Island were, or had been, members of UNA; many more were strongly influenced by the organization. UNA had a pan-Indian focus. It sought to unify all persons of Indian blood throughout the Americas and to develop itself

as a democratic, grass-roots organization. Its goal was to promote self-determination through Indian control of Indian affairs at every level. Lehman Brightman, a Sioux Indian, was the first president of UNA.

The year 1968 closed with a confrontation between Canada, the United States, and members of the Iroquois League. Canada had been restricting the free movement of Mohawk Indians (members of the Iroquois League) between the United States and Canada, demanding that the Mohawk pay tolls to use the bridge and pay customs on goods brought back from the United States. Members of the Iroquois League felt that this was an infringement of their treaty rights granted by Great Britain, and members of the Mohawk tribe confronted Canadian officials as a means of forcing the issues of tolls and customs collections on the Cornwall International Bridge (the St. Lawrence Seaway International Bridge) between the two countries. The protest was specifically over Canadian failure to honor the Jay Treaty of 1794 between Canada and the United States.<sup>13</sup>

A number of Mohawk Indians were arrested for blockading the Cornwall Bridge on 18 December 1968, but when they pressed for presentation of their case in the court system, the Canadian government dismissed the charges. This protest action was not without precedent. In 1928, the Indian Defense League, founded in 1926, had argued that unrestricted rights for Indians to trade and travel across the U.S.-Canadian border existed based on the Jay Treaty of 1794 and the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. It was not until the 1969 concession, however, that the Canadian government formally recognized these rights, under article 3 of the treaty, and allowed Indians to exchange goods across the border, duty-free, and permitted unrestricted travel between the countries.<sup>14</sup>

The 1968–69 Cornwall Bridge confrontation also brought about the creation of *Akwesasne Notes*, an Indian newspaper, which began as an effort to bring news to Indian people regarding the crisis by reprinting articles from diverse newspapers. Edited by Jerry Gambill, a non-Indian employed by the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs, *Akwesasne Notes* developed into a national Indian newspaper with a circulation of nearly fifty thousand. As a result of coverage in *Akwesasne Notes*, Cornwall Bridge became a prominent discussion topic for Indians across the nation. Later, the Alcatraz occupation would find an Indian media voice in *Akwesasne Notes*.

In addition to his newspaper work, Jerry Gambill assisted Ernest Benedict, a Mohawk Indian, in establishing the North American Indian Traveling College and the White Roots of Peace. The White Roots of Peace harked back to an earlier Mohawk group, the Akwesasne Counselor Organization, founded by Ray Fadden, a Mohawk Indian, in the mid-1930s. The counselor organization had “traveled far and wide inculcating Indian pride among Mohawk youth . . . hoping to influence a group of young Mohawk

. . . to take up leadership roles in the Mohawk Longhouse.”<sup>15</sup> This was largely an attempt by Fadden and other Mohawk to preserve and revive Iroquois lifeways. Seeing the spiritual crisis caused by the death of key elders and noting that many young Indians were moving away from the faith, Benedict and Gambill founded the White Roots of Peace, which was committed to the preservation of tradition by bringing back the Great Binding Law through speaking engagements to Indian and non-Indian communities and school audiences.

As part of this increase in Indian activism in the 1960s, the Taos Pueblo Indians of New Mexico reasserted their claims to ancestral lands. In 1906, the U.S. government had appropriated the Taos Blue Lake area, a sacred site belonging to the Taos Pueblos, and incorporated it into part of the Carson National Forest.<sup>16</sup> In 1926, the tribe, in reply to a compensation offer made by the government, waived the award, seeking return of Blue Lake instead. As a result, they got neither the compensation nor Blue Lake. On 31 May 1933, the Senate Indian Affairs Committee recommended that the Taos Pueblo Indians be issued a permit to use Blue Lake for religious purposes. The permit was finally issued in 1940. On 13 August 1951, the tribe filed a suit before the Indian Claims Commission seeking judicial support for the validity of their title to the lake. On 8 September 1965, the Indian Claims Commission affirmed that the U.S. government had taken the area from its rightful owners. On 15 March 1966, legislation was introduced to return Blue Lake to the Taos Pueblo Indians; however, the bill died without action in the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Subcommittee. On 10 May 1968, House Bill 3306 was introduced to restore the sacred area to the tribe. Although it was passed unanimously in the House of Representatives, it once again died in the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Subcommittee.<sup>17</sup>

The return of Taos Blue Lake became the centerpiece of Indian policy for the administration of Richard Nixon, the incoming president. Two other significant events also had a strong effect on Nixon’s developing policy of Indian self-determination. First was the receipt of a study of the BIA by Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., entitled *The American Indian and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1969*.<sup>18</sup> In his report, completed on 24 February 1969, Josephy chastised the federal government for its ineptitude in the handling of Indian affairs. Specifically, he condemned the failure of various presidents to effect any change in the multilayered, bureaucratically inept BIA, the failure of the government’s Indian education policy, and the high rates of unemployment, disease, and death on Indian reservations as a result of neglect of Indian people by the federal government. Second was the publication in 1969 of Edgar S. Cahn’s *Our Brother’s Keeper: The Indian in White America*, a study of the ineptitude of the BIA and an indictment of the BIA for its failure to carry out its responsibilities to the American Indian people.<sup>19</sup> Cahn high-

lighted the numerous studies of Indian people, all except one conducted by non-Indians, and stated that “recommendations have come to have a special non-meaning for Indians. They are part of a tradition in which policy and programs are dictated by non-Indians, even when dialogue and consultation have been promised.”<sup>20</sup>

Other movements, such as the Alaska Native Claims Movement of 1960–71, raged on. This particular movement consisted of regional coalitions of over two hundred Alaska Native villages joined in a statewide land claims protest. A large land claims settlement was finally negotiated in 1971 whereby the Alaska Natives retained 44 million acres of land and received \$962.5 million and other benefits.<sup>21</sup> The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971 became a model for many struggling indigenous movements around the world.

Indian protests for assertion of treaty-based fishing rights continued throughout the 1960s and early 1970s and were often associated with arrests and violence. In a 1970 protest over treaty fishing rights at Frank’s Landing in Washington State, sixty Indians were arrested. SAIA members, led by Janet McCloud, a Tulalip Indian, gathered in Seattle and marched in protest at the federal courthouse. In January 1971, Hank Adams, a former member of NIYC and now a member of SAIA who had participated in a decade of fish-ins, was shot in the stomach by two white sport fishermen as he slept in his pick-up truck. Adams had been tending a set of fish nets for a friend on the Puyallup River. He survived the shooting, but the police, who sympathized with the non-Indian sport fishermen, disputed his account of the incident and did not search for his attackers. In February 1974, a federal judge, George Boldt, ruled in *United States v. Washington* to uphold the treaty rights of Indian people to fish at their usual and accustomed grounds and stations off reservation and “in common with” other citizens.<sup>22</sup>

Self-determination formed the logic for much tribally based litigation, lobbying, and protest action. The outlines of the Indian self-determination policy were formed during the late 1960s, when Zuni Pueblo took advantage of a little-known law to contract BIA services. The Zuni wanted to minimize BIA interference in their community, preferring to manage their own affairs. The success of the Zuni contracting of BIA programs came to the attention of Nixon administration officials, and the new self-determination policy announced in 1970 was based on contracting of federal and BIA services directly to tribal governments. However, the contracting mechanisms for enabling tribal governments to take advantage of the self-determination policy were not worked out until passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act of 1975. Nevertheless, the new policy of self-determination was designed to give Indian people greater control over their communities, tribal governments, and reservation institutions, all of

which had been managed by BIA officials since late in the nineteenth century. Although ultimately the effects of the self-determination policy were limited, most Indian communities strongly favored the new policy.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, Native Americans thus had a rich and long legacy of social movements. Most were tribally centered around treaty or land issues. Others were multitribal, led by groups such as the NCAI and composed of loose coalitions of tribal groups or members allied temporarily to struggle against a common external threat, such as termination. Most Indian social movements revolved around issues of injustice, deprivation, or suppression, something they shared with the Alcatraz–Red Power Movement. The fact that the ARPM relied on a history of past incidents to inform and organize its members and leadership also was not unusual. The ARPM drew selectively on many elements of Indian history, especially symbols of resistance. Geronimo, the Apache leader who fought against U.S. control over reservation communities in the 1880s, was one such symbol for the Alcatraz Island occupiers. Custer’s defeat in 1876 was used to symbolize Indian victory and defiance, and the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890 became a major symbol of Indian repression during the Wounded Knee seizure in 1973.

The ARPM was very different from earlier and contemporary Indian social movements. Its members sought change and inclusion in U.S. institutions while preferring to retain Indian cultural identity. This was a form of nonassimilative inclusion that was not well understood at the time but later helped form the contemporary vision of a multicultural society. The defining characteristics of the ARPM were its emphasis on a supratribal identity and the tactic of property seizure, which was used only sparingly by other Indian social movements. Since most Indian people were repressed and marginalized throughout the 1960s, there was much activism, but nothing of the scale or significance of the Alcatraz–Red Power Movement in terms of tactics, new identity formation, visibility in U.S. society, and bringing attention to Indian issues. So we must look to other issues beyond the legacy of Indian social movements for explaining the rise of the ARPM, its goals, pattern of organization, and tactics, as well as its legacy.

### Change and Protest in American Society

The occupation of Alcatraz Island occurred at the height of considerable urban unrest in the United States. To understand both the causes of the occupation and its consequences for American Indian activism, individual ethnic consciousness, and Native American community survival, it is important to recall the atmosphere of the 1960s and the changes underway in U.S. social and political life at the time.



The United States was deeply involved in an unpopular war in Vietnam. The new feminism was stirring, and the civil rights movement, Black Power, LaRaza, the Latino movement, the New Left, and Third World strikes were sweeping the nation, particularly its college campuses. While U.S. armed forces were involved in the clandestine invasion and bombing of Cambodia, the 1969 announcement of the massacre of innocent civilians in a hamlet in My Lai, Vietnam, burned across the front pages of American newspapers.<sup>23</sup> Ubiquitous campus demonstrations raised the level of consciousness of college students. People of all ages were becoming sensitized to the unrest among emerging minority and gender groups who were staging demonstrations and proclaiming their points of view, many of which were incorporated by student activists. Sit-ins, sleep-ins, teach-ins, lock-outs, and boycotts became everyday occurrences.

The occupation of Alcatraz Island was part of the much larger movement for social change, which had its roots in the 1950s and 1960s and was now being promoted by people of many colors, genders, and ages. The 1960s witnessed a marked upsurge in political awareness and activity sparked by events in the national arena such as the civil rights movement. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), founded in April 1960, was made up of black-led, nonviolent sit-in activists. It combined with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), founded in 1962, to form what came to be called the "New Left." Young black Americans were hearing an angrier and more militant voice, a voice coming from former members of SNCC and participants in the civil rights movement. Between 1964 and 1967, more than a hundred major riots and scores of minor disruptions occurred in cities across the country. By the end of 1968, racial upheavals had resulted in more than two hundred deaths and property destruction valued at approximately \$800 million. It was during this time that the Black Panther Party (BPP) was born.<sup>24</sup>

The activist movements of the 1960s were marked by a variety of racial, class, and gender groups: young college students were joined by Vietnam veterans, gay rights activists, women's liberation activists, urban American Indian people, Mexican American farm workers, and members of LaRaza, the newly emerging Chicano/Chicana empowerment movement. These disparate groups came together in an era marked by dynamic personal change, cultural awareness, and political confrontation. Meanwhile, many Indian activists observed the civil rights movements and contemplated how this activity could be brought to bear on Indian issues.<sup>25</sup>

The Vietnam War came to be defined in the minds of many Indian men and women as a war fought to defend a freedom that they themselves had never experienced. While Indian people may have been the forgotten Americans in the minds of many politicians and bureaucrats during peacetime,

this was not the case in time of war or national emergency. American Indians were required to serve and did so honorably: 1,000 in World War I; 44,500 in World War II; and 29,700 during the Korean conflict. The Vietnam War proved no exception, with a total of 61,100 Indians serving during that era.<sup>26</sup> Beginning with the commitment of troops to Vietnam in 1963, Indians either volunteered or were drafted into military service for this undeclared war against a people some Indian servicemen considered to be as much of an oppressed minority as American Indians themselves were. Mad Bear Anderson, the Tuscarora activist, visited Vietnam seven times and stated, "When I walk down the streets of Saigon those people look like my brothers and sisters."<sup>27</sup> Robert Thomas, a Cherokee anthropologist, commented that Indian people understood the war in Vietnam better than his university colleagues did: "The conflict in Vietnam was tribal in origin, and the Vietnamese were tired of the war machine flattening their crops."<sup>28</sup>

American Indians coming back from Vietnam faced difficult choices. Those who returned, or attempted to return, to life on the reservation found high unemployment rates, poor health facilities, and substandard housing conditions—as did Indian veterans coming back from World War II service. Those who elected to relocate or settle in urban areas encountered what can best be described as "double discrimination." First, they were faced with the continuing discrimination against Indian people that resulted in high unemployment, police brutality, and, very often, alcoholism and death. Second, they experienced the discrimination felt by other Vietnam veterans viewed as participants in an unpopular war; rather than being hailed as heroes or shown some measure of respect for their sacrifices, they were considered third-rate citizens and treated as outcasts. In an attempt to retreat for a period of time, to adjust to a changing society, or perhaps simply to acquire skills for future employment, many of the returning Indian veterans utilized their GI bill educational benefits and enrolled in colleges in the San Francisco Bay Area. Indian students from these colleges, many of them Vietnam veterans, filled the ranks of the rising Indian activism movement now emerging as "Red Power."

### Organization and Protest in the Urban Environment

In 1990, more than 50 percent of American Indians lived in cities. This trend toward urbanization began during World War II as a result of wartime industrial job opportunities, federal policies of relocation (in tandem with the termination of tribal rights and the forced assimilation of Indians into non-Indian society), and the urbanization of the U.S. population as a whole. Many Native Americans migrated to the Bay Area during this time to work in defense

industries; thousands of others were relocated there by the federal government. In the Bay Area, which was one of the largest of more than a dozen relocation sites, the newly urban Indians formed their own organizations to provide the support that the government had promised but had failed to deliver. While some groups were known by tribal names such as the Sioux Club and the Navajo Club, there were also a variety of intertribal organizations, including sports clubs, dance clubs, and the very early urban powwow clubs. Eventually, some thirty Bay Area social clubs were formed to meet the needs of the urban Indians and their children—children who would, in the 1960s, want the opportunity to go to college and better themselves.<sup>29</sup>

Many of these organizationally connected urban Indians were dissatisfied with conditions in the cities and on reservation homelands—specifically, with the lack of self-determination in both communities and with federal policies concerning Indian affairs. They represented a population that was poised on the brink of activism: disillusioned Indian youth from reservations, urban centers, and universities who called for Red Power in their crusade to reform the conditions of their people. Native American scholar Vine Deloria, Jr., in *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties*, states: “The power movements which had sprung up after 1966 now began to affect Indians, and the center of action was the urban areas on the West Coast, where there was a large Indian population.”<sup>30</sup>

These Red Power groups strongly advocated a policy of Indian self-determination, with the NIYC in particular emphasizing the psychological impact of powerlessness on Indian youth. This powerlessness and lack of self-determination was explained by Clyde Warrior, a Ponca Indian and cofounder of NIYC, when he told government officials in Washington, D.C., in 1967: “We are not allowed to make those basic human choices and decisions about our personal life and about the destiny of our communities which is the mark of free mature people. We sit on our front porch or in our yards, and the world and our lives in it pass us by without our desires or aspirations having any effect.”<sup>31</sup> An article in *Warpath*, the first militant, pan-Indian newspaper in the United States, established in 1968 by UNA, summed up the attitude of the Bay Area Indian community: “The ‘Stoic, Silent Redman’ of the past who turned the other cheek to white injustice is dead. (He died of frustration and heartbreak.) And in his place is an angry group of Indians who dare to speak up and voice their dissatisfaction at the world around them. Hate and despair have taken their toll and only action can quiet this smoldering anger that has fused this new Indian movement into being.”<sup>32</sup>

On 11 April 1969, the National Council on Indian Opportunity (NCIO), established by President Lyndon Johnson by Executive Order 11399, conducted a public forum in San Francisco before the Committee on Urban Indians. The purpose of the forum was to gain as much information as pos-

sible on the condition of Indian people living in the area so as to help find solutions to their problems and ease the tensions that were rising among young urban Indians. The hearings began with a scathing rebuke by the Reverend Tony Calaman, founder of Freedom for Adoptive Children. Reverend Calaman attacked the San Francisco Police Department, the California Department of Social Welfare, and the Indian child placement system, stating that the non-Indian system emasculated Indian people. When asked to explain, he said: “it is a dirty, rotten, stinkin’ term [emasculatation], and the social workers are doing it and the police officers are doing it when they club you on the head. It is a racist institution, just pure racism—and you all know what racism is, and you all know what racists are. Look in the mirror, and you will see a racist.”<sup>33</sup>

Earl Livermore, director of the San Francisco American Indian Center, appeared next and concentrated his testimony on problems Indian people face in adjusting to urban living, particularly Indian students faced with unfavorable conditions in the public school system. Those conditions ranged from lack of understanding by school officials to false or misleading statements in school textbooks. Livermore pointed out that many of the textbooks in use damaged the Indian child’s sense of identity and personal worth. His testimony also addressed urban Indian health problems, which often were the result of Indian people not being properly oriented to urban living and the frustration and depression that often followed. Lack of education, according to Livermore, resulted in unemployment, which in turn led to depression, which led Indian people deeper into the depths of despair. Alcoholism, poor nutrition, and inadequate housing were also highlighted as major problems.<sup>34</sup>

A total of thirty-seven Indian people took advantage of the opportunity to appear at the public forum to highlight the problems and frustrations felt by urban American Indians. Twenty-five of them would be among the occupiers of Alcatraz Island seven months later. Dennis Turner, a Luiseño Indian, testified before the committee about his personal frustrations resulting from the relocation program and about the inadequacy of the educational system to meet Indian needs. He also highlighted problems of inadequate housing and lack of counselors for Indian people newly relocated to the urban areas. More directly, Turner addressed the problem of governmental agencies such as the NCIO conducting hearings and making promises, and the frustration of seeing no change as a result of hearings such as the one before which he was presently testifying. Addressing LaDonna Harris, a Comanche Indian and chairperson of the Committee on Urban Indians, Turner stated: “After it’s [the hearing] over with, you’re going to wonder what is going to happen? Is something going to come off or not? The Indian is still hoping. If he keeps on hoping, he’s going to die of frustration.”<sup>35</sup>

In response to a press query, "Are you going to have some militant Indians?" Harris replied, "Heavens, I hope we will."<sup>36</sup> Her statement was, in fact, a look into the future, to plans not yet formalized but soon to capture the attention of Americans throughout the nation and to be played out as a nineteen-month drama on Alcatraz Island. But her premonition was not without precedent. In a 1969 meeting at the San Francisco Indian Center, Richard McKenzie, a Sioux Indian who was one of the members of a short-lived 1964 Alcatraz occupation party, recognized the uniqueness of the Indian situation as opposed to the civil rights movement. He said, "Kneel-Ins, Sit-Ins, Sleep-Ins, Eat-Ins, Pray-Ins like the Negroes do, wouldn't help us. We would have to occupy the government buildings before things would change."<sup>37</sup>

The rise of Indian activism was also prophesied by Walter Wetzell, the leader of the Blackfeet of Montana and former president of the National Congress of American Indians: "We Indians have been struggling unsuccessfully with the problems of maintaining home and family and Indian ownership of the land. We must strike."<sup>38</sup> Mad Bear Anderson, who had turned back the bulldozers when a dam was planned on Iroquois land, declared: "Our people were murdered in this country. And they are still being murdered. . . . There is an Indian nationalist movement in the country. I am one of the founders. We are not going to pull any punches from here on in."<sup>39</sup>

President Nixon's self-determination policy would be tested in California, particularly the Bay Area, which had become the hotbed for the newly developing Indian activism. Jack Forbes, a Powhatan/Lenape Indian and professor of Native American studies and anthropology at the University of California, Davis, became an advisor and mentor to many of the new Indian students. In the spring of 1969, Forbes drafted a proposal for a College of Native American Studies on one of the California campuses. American Indian or Native American studies programs were already being formed—for example, at UC Berkeley, UCLA, and San Francisco State College. These programs grew out of the Third World strikes in progress on the various campuses and included Indian students who would soon be intimately involved in the Alcatraz occupation: Richard Oakes, Ross Harden, Joe Bill, Dennis Turner, LaNada Boyer, and Horace Spencer.<sup>40</sup>

On 30 June 1969, the California legislature endorsed Forbes's proposal for the creation of a separate Indian-controlled university. Forbes wrote to John G. Veneman, assistant secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, and requested that Veneman look into the availability of a 650-acre site between Winter, California, and Davis.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, in 1969, the Native American Student Union (NASU) was formed in California, bringing together a new pan-Indian alliance between the emerging Native American studies programs on the various campuses. In San Francisco, members of

NASU prepared to test President Nixon's commitment to his stated policy of self-determination before a national audience by occupying Alcatraz Island. For Indian people of the Bay Area, the social movements of the 1960s not only had come to full maturity but would now include Indian people. In November 1969, American Indians moved onto the national scene of ethnic unrest as active participants in a war of their own. Alcatraz Island was the battlefield.<sup>41</sup>

### The Alcatraz Occupations

In actuality, there were three separate occupations of Alcatraz Island.<sup>42</sup> The first was a brief, four-hour occupation on 9 March 1964 by five Sioux Indians representing the urban Indians of the Bay Area. The event was planned by Belva Cottier, the wife of one of the occupiers. The federal penitentiary on the island had been closed in 1963, and the government was in the process of transferring the island to the city of San Francisco for development purposes. But Belva Cottier and her Sioux cousin had plans of their own. They recalled having heard of a provision in the 1868 Sioux treaty with the federal government that stated that ownership of all abandoned federal lands that once belonged to the Sioux reverted to the Sioux people.<sup>43</sup> Using this interpretation of the treaty, they encouraged five Sioux men to occupy Alcatraz Island and issued press releases claiming the island in accordance with the treaty and demanding better treatment for urban Indians. Richard McKenzie, the most outspoken of the group, pressed the claim for title to the island through the court system, only to have the courts rule against him. More important, however, the Indians of the Bay Area were becoming vocal and united in their efforts to improve their lives.

The 1964 occupation of Alcatraz Island foreshadowed the unrest that was fomenting, quietly but surely, among the urban Indian population. Prior to the occupation, Bay Area newspapers contained a large number of articles about the federal government's abandonment of the urban Indian and the refusal of state and local governments to meet Indian people's needs. The Indian social clubs that had been formed for support became meeting places at which to discuss discrimination in schools, housing, employment, and health care. Indian people also talked about the police, who, like law officers in other areas of the country, would wait outside Indian bars at closing time to harass, beat up, and arrest Indian patrons. Indian centers began to appear in all the urban relocation areas and became nesting grounds for new pan-Indian, and eventually activist, organizations.<sup>44</sup>

The second Alcatraz occupation had its beginning on Bay Area and other California college and university campuses when young, educated Indian

students joined with other minority groups during the 1969 Third World Liberation Front Strike and began demanding courses relevant to Indian students. Indian history written and taught by non-Indian instructors was no longer acceptable to these students, awakened as they were to the possibility of social protest to bring attention to the shameful treatment of Indian people. Anthropologist Luis S. Kemnitzer has described the establishment of the country's first Native American Studies Program at San Francisco State College in 1969—the spring before the occupation. The students involved in that program went on to plan the Alcatraz occupation:

... a non-Indian graduate student in social science at San Francisco State who was tutoring young Indian children in the Mission District came to know a group of young Indians who ... all had some contact with college and had come to San Francisco either on vocational training, relocation, or on their own. ... Conversation with the student tutor led them to become interested in the strike and in exploring the possibility of working toward a Native American studies department.

... the university and the Third World Liberation Front had started negotiations, and there was limited room for movement. ... [LaRaza] agreed to represent the Indians in negotiations, and there was close collaboration between representatives of LaRaza and the future Native American studies students. I was one of the faculty members on strike, and, although I was not involved in the negotiations with the university administration, I was informally recruited by other striking faculty to help plan and negotiate with LaRaza.<sup>45</sup>

Richard Oakes was one of the students in the program. He came from the St. Regis Reservation, had worked on high steel in New York, and had traveled across the United States, visiting various Indian reservations. He eventually wound up in California, where he married a Kashia Pomo woman, Anne Marufo, who had five children from a previous marriage. Oakes worked in an Indian bar in Oakland for a period of time and eventually was admitted to San Francisco State College. In September 1969, he and several other Indian students began discussing the possibility of occupying Alcatraz Island as a symbolic protest, a call for Indian self-determination. Preliminary plans were made for the summer of 1970, but other events led to an earlier takeover. During the fall term, Oakes and his fellow Indian students and friends caught the attention of a nation already engrossed in the escalating protest and conflict of the civil rights movement as they set out across the San Francisco Bay for Alcatraz Island.<sup>46</sup>

The catalyst for the occupation was the destruction of the San Francisco Indian Center by fire in late October 1969. The center had become the meeting place for the Bay Area Indian organizations and the newly formed United Bay Area Indian Council, which had brought the thirty private clubs together into one large council headed by Adam Nordwall (later to be known

as Adam Fortunate Eagle). The destruction of the center united the council and the American Indian student organizations as never before. The council needed a new meeting place and the students needed a forum for their new activist voice. The date for the second occupation of Alcatraz Island was thus moved up to 9 November 1969. Oakes and the other students, along with a group of people from the San Francisco Indian Center, chartered a boat and headed for Alcatraz Island. Since many different tribes were represented, the occupiers called themselves "Indians of All Tribes."<sup>47</sup>

The initial plan was to circle the island and symbolically claim it for all Indian people. During the circling maneuver, however, Oakes and four others jumped from the boat and swam to the island. They claimed Alcatraz in the name of Indians of All Tribes and then left the island at the request of the caretaker. Later that evening, Oakes and fourteen others returned to the island with sleeping bags and food sufficient for two or three days but left the next morning, again without incident, when asked to do so.<sup>48</sup>

In meetings following the 9 November occupation, Oakes and his fellow students realized that a prolonged occupation was possible. It was clear that the federal government had only a token force on the island and that so far no physical harm had come to anyone involved. A new plan began to emerge. Oakes traveled to UCLA, where he met with Ray Spang and Edward Castillo and asked for their assistance in recruiting Indian students for what would become the longest Indian occupation of any federal facility. Spang, Castillo, and Oakes met in UCLA's Campbell Hall, now the home of the American Indian Studies Center and the editorial offices of the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, in private homes, and in Indian bars in Los Angeles. When the third takeover of Alcatraz Island began, seventy of the eighty-nine Indian occupiers were students from UCLA.<sup>49</sup>

In the early morning hours of 20 November 1969, eighty-nine American Indians landed on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. These Indians of All Tribes claimed the island by "right of discovery" and by the terms of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie, which gave Indians the right to unused federal property that had previously been Indian land. Except for a small caretaker staff, the island had been abandoned by the federal government since 1963, when the federal penitentiary was closed. In a press statement, Indians of All Tribes set the tone of the occupation and the agenda for negotiations during the next nineteen months:

We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians. ... [W]e plan to develop on this island several Indian institutions: 1. A CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES ... 2. AN AMERICAN INDIAN SPIRITUAL CENTER ... 3. AN INDIAN CENTER OF ECOLOGY ... 4. A GREAT INDIAN TRAINING SCHOOL ... [and] an AMERICAN INDIAN MUSEUM.

... In the name of all Indians, therefore, we reclaim this island for our Indian nations. ... We feel this claim is just and proper, and that this land should rightfully be granted to us for as long as the rivers shall run and the sun shall shine. Signed, INDIANS OF ALL TRIBES.<sup>50</sup>

The occupiers quickly set about organizing themselves. An elected council was put into place, and everyone was assigned a job: security, sanitation, day-care, housing, cooking, laundry. All decisions were made by unanimous consent of the people. Sometimes meetings were held five, six, or seven times per day to discuss the rapidly developing events. It is important to remember that, while the urban Indian population supported the concept of an occupation and provided the logistical support, the Alcatraz occupation force itself was made up initially of young, urban Indian students from UCLA, UC Santa Cruz, San Francisco State College, and UC Berkeley.<sup>51</sup>

The most inspiring person, if not the recognized leader, was Richard Oakes, described as handsome, charismatic, a talented orator, and a natural leader. The casting of Oakes as the person in charge, a title he himself never claimed, quickly created a problem. Not all the students knew Oakes, and, in keeping with the concepts underlying the occupation, many wanted an egalitarian society on the island, with no one as their leader. Although this may have been a workable form of organization on the island, it was not comprehensible to the non-Indian media. Newspapers, magazines, and television and radio stations across the nation sent reporters to the island to interview the people in charge. They wanted to know who the leaders were. Oakes was the most knowledgeable about the landing and the most often sought out, and he was therefore identified as the leader, the "chief," the "mayor of Alcatraz." He was strongly influenced by the White Roots of Peace, which had been revitalized by Ray Fadden, and Mad Bear Anderson. Before the Alcatraz occupation, in the autumn of 1969, Jerry Gambill, a counselor for the White Roots of Peace, had visited the campus of San Francisco State and inspired many of the students, none more than Oakes.<sup>52</sup>

By the end of 1969, the Indian organization on the island began to change, and two Indian groups rose in opposition to Oakes. When many of the Native American students left the island to return to school, they were replaced by Indian people from urban areas and reservations who had not been involved in the initial planning. Where Oakes and the other students claimed title to the island by right of discovery, the new arrivals harked back to the rhetoric of the 1964 occupation and the Sioux treaty, a claim that had been pressed through the court system by Richard McKenzie and had been found invalid. Additionally, some non-Indians took up residence on the island, many of them from the San Francisco hippie and drug culture. Drugs and liquor had been banned from the island by the original occupiers, but they now became commonplace.<sup>53</sup>

The final blow to the nascent student occupation occurred on 5 January 1970 when Oakes's thirteen-year-old stepdaughter, Yvonne, who was apparently playing unsupervised with some other children, slipped and fell three floors to her death down an open stairwell. The Oakes family left the island, and the two groups began maneuvering for leadership roles. Despite these changes, the demands of the occupiers remained consistent: title to Alcatraz Island, the development of an Indian university, and the construction of a museum and cultural center that would display for and teach non-Indian society the valuable contributions of Indian people.<sup>54</sup>

In the months that followed, thousands of protesters and visitors spent time on Alcatraz Island. They came from a large number of Indian tribes, including the Sioux, Navajo, Cherokee, Mohawk, Puyallup, Yakima, Hoopa, and Omaha. The months of occupation were marked by proclamations, news conferences, powwows, celebrations, "assaults" with arrows on passing vessels, and negotiations with federal officials. In the beginning months, workers from the San Francisco Indian Center gathered food and supplies on the mainland and transported them to Alcatraz. However, as time went by, the occupying force, which fluctuated but generally numbered around one hundred, confronted increasing hardships as federal officials interfered with delivery boats and cut off the supply of water and electricity to the island. Tensions on the island grew.<sup>55</sup>

The federal government, for its part, insisted that the Indian people leave, and it placed an ineffective Coast Guard barricade around the island. Eventually, the government agreed to the Indian council's demands for formal negotiations. But, from the Indian people's side, the demands were nonnegotiable. They wanted the deed to the island; they wanted to establish an Indian university, a cultural center, and a museum; and they wanted the necessary federal funding to meet their goals. Negotiations collapsed for good when the government turned down these demands and insisted that the Indians of All Tribes leave the island. Alcatraz Island would never be developed in accordance with the goals of the Indian protesters.<sup>56</sup>

In time, the attention of the federal government shifted from negotiations with the island occupants to restoration of navigational aids that had been discontinued as the result of a fire that shut down the Alcatraz lighthouse. The government's inability to restore these navigational aids brought criticism from the Coast Guard, the Bay Area Pilot's Association, and local newspapers. The federal government became impatient, and on 11 June 1971, the message went out to end the occupation of Alcatraz Island. The dozen or so remaining protesters were removed by federal marshals, more than a year and a half after the island was first occupied.<sup>57</sup> Some members of Indians of All Tribes moved their protest to an abandoned Nike missile base in the Beverly Hills, overlooking San Francisco Bay. While that occu-

pation lasted only three days, it set in motion a pattern of similar occupations over the next several years.

The events that took place on Alcatraz Island represented a watershed moment in Native American protest and caught the attention of the entire country, providing a forum for airing long-standing Indian grievances and for expressing Indian pride. Vine Deloria noted the importance of Alcatraz, referring to the occupation as a “master stroke of Indian activism.” He also recognized the impact of Alcatraz and other occupations on Indian ethnic self-awareness and identity: “Indian[n]ess was judged on whether or not one was present at Alcatraz, Fort Lawson, Mt. Rushmore, Detroit, Sheep Mountain, Plymouth Rock, or Pitt River. . . . The activists controlled the language, the issues, and the attention.”<sup>58</sup> In 1993, Deloria reflected on the longer-term impact of the Red Power movement: “This era will probably always be dominated by the images and slogans of the AIM people. The real accomplishments in land restoration, however, were made by quiet determined tribal leaders. . . . In reviewing the period we should understand the frenzy of the time and link it to the definite accomplishments made by tribal governments.”<sup>59</sup>

The Alcatraz occupation and the activism that followed offer firm evidence to counter commonly held views of Indians as powerless in the face of history, as weakened remnants of disappearing cultures and communities. Countless events fueled American Indian ethnic pride and strengthened Indian people’s sense of personal empowerment and community membership. Wilma Mankiller, now principal chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, visited Alcatraz many times during the months of occupation. She described it as an awakening that “ultimately changed the course of my life.”<sup>60</sup> This was a recurrent theme in our interviews with Native Americans who participated in or observed the protests of that period:

**GEORGE HORSE CAPTURE:** In World War II, the marines were island-hopping; they’d do the groundwork, and then the army and the civilians would come in and build things. Without the first wave, nothing would happen. Alcatraz and the militants were like that. They put themselves at risk, could be arrested or killed. You have to give them their due. We were in the second wave. In the regular Indian world, we’re very complacent; it takes leadership to get things moving. But scratch a real Indian since then, and you’re going to find a militant. Alcatraz tapped into something. It was the lance that burst the boil.<sup>61</sup>

**JOHN ECHOHAWK:** Alcatraz just seemed to be kind of another event—what a lot of people had been thinking, wanting to do. We were studying Indian law for the first time. We had a lot of frustration and anger. People were fed up with the status quo. That’s just what we were thinking. Starting

in 1967 at the University of New Mexico Law School, we read treaties, Indian legal history. It was just astounding how unfair it was, how wrong it was. It [Alcatraz] was the kind of thing we needed.<sup>62</sup>

**LEONARD PELTIER:** I was in Seattle when Alcatraz happened. It was the first event that received such publicity. In Seattle, we were in solidarity with the demands of Alcatraz. We were inspired and encouraged by Alcatraz. I realized their goals were mine. The Indian organizations I was working with shared the same needs: an Indian college to keep students from dropping out, a cultural center to keep Indian traditions. We were all really encouraged, not only those who were active, but those who were not active as well.<sup>63</sup>

**FRANCES WISE:** The Alcatraz takeover had an enormous impact. I was living in Waco, Texas, at the time. I would see little blurbs on TV. I thought, These Indians are really doing something at Alcatraz. . . . And when they called for the land back, I realized that, finally, what Indian people have gone through is finally being recognized. . . . It affected how I think of myself. If someone asks me who I am, I say, well, I have a name, but Waco/Caddo—that’s who I am. I have a good feeling about who I am now. And you need this in the presence of all this negative stuff, for example, celebrating the Oklahoma Land Run.<sup>64</sup>

**ROSALIE McKAY-WANT:** In the final analysis, however, the occupation of this small territory could be considered a victory for the cause of Indian activism and one of the most noteworthy expressions of patriotism and self-determination by Indian people in the twentieth century.<sup>65</sup>

**GRACE THORPE:** Alcatraz was the catalyst and the most important event in the Indian movement to date. It made me put my furniture into storage and spend my life savings.<sup>66</sup>

These voices speak to the central importance of the Alcatraz occupation as the symbol of long-standing Indian grievances and increasing impatience with a political system slow to respond to native rights. They also express the feelings of empowerment that witnessing and participating in protest can foster. Loretta Flores, an Indian woman, did not become an activist herself until several years after the events on Alcatraz, but she has eloquently described the sense of self and community that activism can produce: “The night before the protest, I was talking to a younger person who had never been in a march before. I told her, ‘Tomorrow when we get through with this march, you’re going to have a feeling like you’ve never had before. It’s going to change your life.’ Those kids from Haskell (Indian Nations University) will never forget this. The spirits of our ancestors were looking down on us smiling.”<sup>67</sup>

### The Alcatraz–Red Power Movement: A Nine-Year Odyssey

The success or failure of the Indian occupation of Alcatraz Island should not be judged by whether the demands for title to the island and the establishment of educational and cultural institutions were realized. If one were to make such a judgment, the only possible conclusion would be that the occupation was a failure. Such is not the case, however. The underlying goals of the Indians on Alcatraz were to awaken the American public to the reality of their situation and to assert the need for Indian self-determination. In this they succeeded. Additionally, the occupation of Alcatraz Island was a springboard for Indian activism, inspiring the large number of takeovers and demonstrations that began shortly after the 20 November 1969 landing and continued into the late 1970s. These included the Trail of Broken Treaties, the BIA headquarters takeover in 1972, and Wounded Knee II in 1973.

Many of the approximately seventy-four occupations that followed Alcatraz were either planned by or included people who had been involved in the Alcatraz occupation or who certainly had gained their strength from the new “Indianness” that grew out of that movement. For example, on 3 November 1970, in Davis, California, “scores of Indians scaled a barbed wire fence and seized an old Army communications center . . . unimpeded by four soldiers whose job it was to guard the facility. Raising a big white tepee on the surplus Government property, 75 Indians occupied it for use in development of an Indian cultural center. Several veterans of the successful Indian invasion of Alcatraz Island a year ago took part in [the] assault.”<sup>68</sup> Most occupations were short-lived, lasting only a few days or weeks, such as those that occurred during 1970–71 at Fort Lawton and Fort Lewis in Washington, at Ellis Island in New York, at the Twin Cities Naval Air Station in Minneapolis, at former Nike missile sites on Lake Michigan near Chicago and at Argonne, Illinois, and at an abandoned Coast Guard lifeboat station in Milwaukee.

A number of protest camps were established during the early 1970s, including those at Mount Rushmore and the Badlands National Monument. During the same years, government buildings also became the sites of protests, including regional Bureau of Indian Affairs offices in Cleveland and Denver, as well as the main headquarters in Washington, D.C. Many of these occupations took on a festive air as celebrations of Indian culture and ethnic renewal, while others represented efforts to provide educational or social services to urban Indians. The September 1971 attempted “invasion” of BIA headquarters was described as follows:

A band of militant young Indians sought to make a citizens’ arrest of a Federal official today and wound up in a noisy clash with Government guards

at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. . . . [T]hey sought a conference with bureau officials on their contention that Indians were being denied basic rights. Some of the Indians . . . barricaded themselves in two rooms of the public information office on the first floor and others occupied Mr. Crow’s [Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs] office on the second floor. . . . The invasion of the bureau was directed by the American Indian Movement and the National Indian Youth Council.<sup>69</sup>

As Indian activism in the 1970s progressed, some events were characterized by a more serious, sometimes violent tone, revealing the depth of grievances and difficulty of solutions to the problems confronting Native Americans after nearly five centuries of Euro-American contact. An example was the November 1972 week-long occupation of BIA headquarters. This unplanned takeover occurred at the end of the Trail of Broken Treaties, a protest event involving caravans that traveled across the United States to convene in Washington, D.C., the purpose being to dramatize and present Indian concerns at a national level. The inability of an advance party to secure accommodations in private homes and churches for several hundred exhausted Indians led to the occupation of BIA offices. Angry participants, many of whom mistakenly thought the federal government had agreed to provide housing and then reneged, literally destroyed the inside of BIA headquarters. They barricaded the doors with furniture and office equipment, soaking each pile with gasoline so it could be quickly ignited in the event of forced removal. They smashed plumbing fixtures and windows, covered the walls with graffiti, and gathered up BIA files and Indian artifacts to take back to their reservations. The protest ended a week later after a series of negotiations with federal officials. Damage to the building was estimated at \$2.2 million.

During this period, the ARPM protest strategy began to shift from Alcatraz-style takeovers to different forms and terrains of contention linked to the organizational underpinning of supratribal collective action and its urban population base. Researchers and journalists generally reported that participants in activist events in 1970 and 1971 were Indians of varied tribal backgrounds who mainly lived in urban areas and were associated with the NIYC or some other supratribal organization—or else with AIM, the primary organization of the Red Power movement.<sup>70</sup> Before Alcatraz, AIM was essentially an Indian rights organization concerned with monitoring law enforcement treatment of native people in American cities. However, the occupation of Alcatraz captured the imagination of AIM as well as the rest of the country, and as a result, AIM embarked on a historic journey into Indian protest activism.<sup>71</sup>

The American Indian Movement, founded in Minneapolis in 1968, quickly established chapters in several U.S. cities. AIM’s membership was

drawn mostly from urban Indian communities, and its leadership and membership both tended to come from the ranks of younger, more progressive, and better educated urban Indians.<sup>72</sup> Although not involved in the initial takeover of Alcatraz Island, AIM played an important role in the spread of supratribal protest action during the 1970s and in shaping the Red Power agenda, tactics, and strategies for drawing attention to Indian people's grievances. Ward Churchill and James Vander Wall have noted that "the 19-month occupation [of Alcatraz] . . . demonstrated beyond all doubt that strong actions by Indians could result not only in broad public exposure of the issues and substantial national/international support for Indian rights, but could potentially force significant concessions from the federal government as well. . . . The lessons of this were not lost on the AIM leadership."<sup>73</sup>

The American Indian Movement was enormously influential, but its role in orchestrating Red Power protest events must not be overstated. While many collective event participants claimed AIM membership, the more common thread was education, urban ties, and Indian ethnic identification. AIM and its visible leadership provided a symbolic as well as an actual organizational point of entry for these potential participants in Red Power. Networks of urban Indian centers, Indian churches, and Indian charitable organizations helped plan and support collective actions by AIM.<sup>74</sup> Protest activities and strategies moved through Indian communities via Indian social and kin networks and by way of the "powwow circuit," which passed information along to Indian families who traveled between the cities and the reservations.<sup>75</sup> However, the most important factor contributing to AIM's influence on Red Power protest was probably its ability to use the news media—newspapers, radio, magazines, and television—to dramatize Indian problems and protests.

After visiting the Indians on Alcatraz Island and realizing the possibilities available through demonstration and seizure of federal facilities, AIM embarked on a national activist role. Its leaders recognized the opportunities when they met with the Indian people on the island during the summer of 1970 and were caught up in the momentum of the occupation. AIM leaders had seen firsthand that the bureaucracy inherent in the federal government had resulted in immobility: No punitive action had been taken thus far on the island. This provided an additional impetus for AIM's kind of national Indian activism and was congruent with the rising tide of national unrest, particularly among young college students.

AIM's first attempt at a national protest action came on Thanksgiving Day 1970 when its members seized the *Mayflower II* in Plymouth, Massachusetts, to challenge a celebration of colonial expansion into what had mistakenly been considered a "new world." During this action, AIM leaders acknowledged the occupation of Alcatraz Island as the symbol of a new-

ly awakened desire among Indians for unity and authority in a white world. In his 1995 autobiography, *Where White Men Fear to Tread*, former AIM leader Russell Means has stated:

[A]bout every admirable quality that remains in today's Indian people is the result of the American Indian Movement's flint striking the white man's steel. In the 1970s and 1980s, we lit a fire across Indian country. We fought for changes in school curricula to eliminate racist lies, and we are winning. We fought for community control of police, and on a few reservations it's now a reality. We fought to instill pride in our songs and in our language, in our cultural wisdom, inspiring a small renaissance in the teaching of our languages. . . . Thanks to AIM, for the first time in this century, Indian people stand at the threshold of freedom and responsibility.<sup>76</sup>

It was on Alcatraz, however, that the flint first met the steel; it was on Alcatraz that young Indian college students stood toe to toe with the federal government and did not step back.

After 1972, the involvement of urban Indian individuals and groups, such as AIM, in ARPM protests revealed tensions inside the Indian communities themselves—between urban and reservation Indians, between AIM and tribal governments, and between different age cohorts—often arising out of political divisions on the reservations. The tone of protest became less celebratory, less other-directed, and more harsh, more inward, and sometimes more violent. No single event of the Alcatraz–Red Power Movement more clearly illustrates the combination of Indian grievances and community tensions than the events on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in the spring of 1973, a ten-week siege that came to be known as "Wounded Knee II."<sup>77</sup>

The conflict at Wounded Knee, a small town on the reservation, involved a dispute within Pine Ridge's Oglala Lakota (Sioux) tribe over its controversial tribal chairman, Richard Wilson. Wilson was viewed as a corrupt puppet of the BIA by some segments of the tribe, including those associated with AIM. An effort to impeach him resulted in a division of the tribe into opposing camps. The two camps eventually armed themselves and began a two-and-a-half month siege that involved tribal police and government, AIM, reservation residents, federal law enforcement officials, the BIA, local citizens, nationally prominent entertainment figures, national philanthropic, religious, and legal organizations, and the national news media.<sup>78</sup>

The siege began with the arrival of a caravan of approximately 250 AIM supporters, led by Dennis Banks and Russell Means, on the evening of 27 February 1973. Although the armed conflict that followed AIM's arrival is generally characterized as a stand-off between AIM and its supporters and the Wilson government and its supporters, the siege at Wounded Knee was



really only one incident in what had been a long history of political instability and factional conflict on the Pine Ridge Reservation.<sup>79</sup> The next weeks were filled with shootouts, roadblocks, negotiations, visiting delegations, and the movement of refugees out of various fire zones. There were also moments of high drama. For example, on 11 March “the occupiers, together with a delegation of Sioux traditionalists who had entered Wounded Knee during a truce, proclaimed the new Independent Oglala Nation, . . . announced its intention to send a delegation to the United Nations . . . [and] on March 16, 349 people were sworn in as citizens.”<sup>80</sup>

When the siege ended on 9 May, after protracted negotiations between Leonard Garment, representing President Nixon, and AIM leaders Dennis Banks and Carter Camp, two Indians and one FBI agent were dead and an unknown number on both sides had been wounded. Wilson remained in office (though he was challenged at the next election), and many of the AIM members involved in the siege spent the next few years in litigation, in exile, and in prison.<sup>81</sup>

Although the action at Wounded Knee was inconclusive in terms of upsetting the balance of power in the Oglala Lakota tribal council,<sup>82</sup> the siege became an important component of the ARPM repertoire of contention. In the next few years, there ensued a number of both long- and short-term occupations. Many, but not all, of these occupations were similar to Wounded Knee in that they occurred on reservations and involved tribal factions associated with AIM or urban tribal members. These events included the six-month occupation of a former girls’ camp on state-owned land at Moss Lake, New York, in 1974; the five-week armed occupation of a vacant Alexian Brothers novitiate by the Menominee Warrior Society near the Menominee reservation in Wisconsin in 1975; the eight-day takeover of a tribally owned Fairchild electronics assembly plant on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico in 1975; a three-day, followed by a one-day (several weeks later), occupation of the Yankton Sioux Industries plant on the reservation near Wagner, South Dakota, in 1975; and the week-long occupation of a juvenile detention center by members of the Puyallup tribe in Washington State in 1976.<sup>83</sup>

Red Power protests in the mid- to late 1970s were increasingly enacted in an atmosphere of heightened confrontation. The following, which took place in 1976, illustrates the tension of later activism:

With little pomp, unobtrusive but heavy security and an impromptu Indian victory dance, the Federal Government today commemorated the 100th anniversary of the battle of Little Bighorn. . . . Today on a wind-buffed hill covered with buffalo grass, yellow clover and sage, in southeastern Montana where George Armstrong Custer made his last stand, about 150 Indians from various tribes danced joyously around the monument to the Seventh Caval-

ry dead. Meanwhile at an official National Park Service ceremony about 100 yards away, an Army band played. . . . Just as the ceremony got underway a caravan of Sioux, Cheyenne and other Indians led by Russell Means, the American Indian Movement leader, strode to the platform to the pounding of a drum.<sup>84</sup>

The last major event of the Alcatraz–Red Power Movement occurred in July 1978 when several hundred Native Americans marched into Washington, D.C., at the end of the Longest Walk, a protest march that had begun five months earlier in San Francisco. The Longest Walk was intended to symbolize the forced removal of American Indians from their homelands and to draw attention to the continuing problems of Indian people and their communities. The event was also intended to expose and challenge the backlash movement against Indian treaty rights that was gaining strength around the country and in Congress. This backlash could be seen in the growing number of bills before Congress to abrogate Indian treaties and restrict Indian rights.<sup>85</sup> Unlike many of the protest events of the mid-1970s, the Longest Walk was a peaceful event that included tribal spiritual leaders and elders among its participants. It ended without violence. Thus, Red Power protest had come full circle, from the festive Alcatraz days, through a cycle of confrontations between Indian activists and the federal government, to the traditional quest for spiritual unity that marked the end of the Longest Walk.

The decline of the Alcatraz–Red Power Movement is generally attributed to FBI suppression. That is probably only part of the story. AIM leaders were jailed, brought to trial, and many AIM members were found dead.<sup>86</sup> Internal debates in AIM underscored a long-standing split in the movement between those who preferred to work for the benefit of the urban Indian community using conventional methods of federal funding and community service and those who favored the activist national/supratribal agenda. The activist leadership began to withdraw from AIM: some moved on to other issues; some were kept busy fighting legal battles or serving jail time; and others were excommunicated from AIM by those who preferred more conventional tactics. Some leaders, disillusioned with the possibilities of attaining recognition of native rights within the United States, sought recognition of treaty, national, and humanitarian rights within international forums such as UNESCO. After 1978, AIM leaders pursued many of the same goals as ARPM leaders, but the tactic of property seizures—the defining characteristic of the ARPM—fell out of favor, signaling the end of a formative period of Red Power activism.<sup>87</sup>

In some sense, the ARPM was no longer needed. It had laid the foundation of Indian activism and achieved many of its goals, mostly by conventional means. More Indian students were attending college, by the early

1980s there were over a hundred Indian studies programs in the United States, many tribal museums had opened, the National Museum of the American Indian was being planned, and an international indigenous rights movement has been recognized by the United Nations. However, throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, AIM remained a force in American Indian activism and consciousness, organizing and participating in protests in the Black Hills (Camp Yellow Thunder);<sup>88</sup> continuing the battle over land and grazing rights in Navajo and Hopi territory; protesting athletic team Indian mascots, gestures, logos, and slogans; and working for the repatriation of Indian burial remains, funerary items, and sacred objects.

Social scientists have written extensively on the consequences of activism for the individuals and communities involved in protest movements, which can be life-transforming events.<sup>89</sup> Doug McAdam has found, for example, that the lives of participants in the 1964 Freedom Summer voter registration campaign in the South were altered such that these activists remained ever different from their uninvolved contemporaries, and, furthermore, the effects of these changes extended well into their adulthoods.<sup>90</sup> In his study of labor actions and strikes, Rick Fantasia has found that the participants in such activism redefine themselves and others in terms of their awareness of class distinctions and power relations. He has also pointed out that the community divisions arising out of sustained protest can be long lived and sometimes bitter.<sup>91</sup>

Sometimes, individual communities are strengthened by their members coming together in protest action. For example, Annette Kuhlmann, Richard White, and Carol Ward have all found that many Native American communities have benefited from the involvement of former activists, whether as museum curators, newspaper editors, community or legal service providers, or tribal leaders.<sup>92</sup> Joane Nagel has argued that the activist period of the 1970s contributed to the cultural renaissance currently underway in many Indian communities in the form of tribal museum development, tribal language instruction, cultural preservation and apprenticeship programs, tribal history projects, and the preservation and reinstitution of ceremonial and spiritual practices.<sup>93</sup>

Perhaps the most profound effect of the Alcatraz–Red Power Movement was to educate and change the consciousness of people in the United States and around the world. By the 1980s, more Americans were familiar with Indian issues as a result of the attention brought to bear by ARPM activism. While Americans have generally demanded assimilation from Indians, the ARPM made the point that Indians have cultures, traditions, history, and communities that they want to preserve—but that they also want equal justice, economic opportunity, access to education, and more accurate portrayal of Indians in the media and in history books. Along with other ethnic group

movements, the ARPM contributed to debate over multiculturalism within the U.S. national community. In the end, the Alcatraz–Red Power Movement may have strengthened and diversified U.S. society and made it a more tolerant place for all.

## NOTES

1. Stephen Cornell, *The Return of the Native* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 180.
2. See R. H. Turner, "Collective Behavior and Resource Mobilization as Approaches to Social Movements," *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change* 4 (1981): 1–24; Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley); Doug McAdam, *The Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
3. Michael Hittman, *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance* (Carson City, Nev.: Grace Danberg Foundation, 1990), 63–64, 182–94.
4. For a discussion of spiritual and social revitalization movements, see Duane Champagne, "Transsocietal Cultural Exchange within the World Economic and Political System," in *The Dynamics of Social Systems*, ed. Paul Colomy (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1992), 120–53.
5. H. W. Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 6.
6. Six Nations peoples consist of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora Indian tribes of the northeastern United States.
7. Guy B. Senese, *Self-Determination and the Social Education of Native Americans* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 146.
8. *Ibid.*, 147.
9. Fay G. Cohen, *Treaties on Trial: The Continuing Controversy over Northwest Indian Fishing Rights* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), 69.
10. Quoted in Senese, *Self-Determination*, 145.
11. *Ibid.*, 148.
12. *Ibid.*, 144.
13. Troy R. Johnson, "Part 3: Native North American History, 1960–94," in *Chronology of Native North American History*, ed. Duane Champagne (Detroit: Gale Research, 1994), 355.
14. *Ibid.*, 361–62.
15. Quoted in Senese, *Self-Determination*, 224.
16. Robert Hecht, "Taos Pueblo and the Struggle for Blue Lake," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 13:1 (1989): 55.
17. R. C. Gordon-McCutchan, *The Taos Indians and the Battle for Blue Lake* (Santa Fe, N.Mex.: Red Crane Books, 1991), xvi–xvii. This book recounts the story of the government taking of Blue Lake and the Taos Indians' successful campaign to recover it.
18. Alvin Josephy, "The American Indian and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1969: A Study with Recommendations," 24 February 1969. Report commissioned by President Richard M. Nixon.

19. Edgar S. Cahn, "Postscript," in *Our Brother's Keeper: The Indian in White America*, ed. Edgar S. Cahn (New York: New Community Press, 1969), 187–90.
20. Ibid.
21. R. D. Arnold, *Alaska Native Land Claims* (Anchorage: Alaska Native Foundation, 1978).
22. Cohen, *Treaties on Trial*, 82–83.
23. The Nixon presidential archives make no mention of the invasion of Cambodia, since it was largely a secret operation (though poorly kept) at the time. President Nixon and his staff make direct analogies among the Indian people on Alcatraz, the events at My Lai, and the shootings at Kent State. It was agreed that the American people would not stand by and see Indian people massacred and taken off Alcatraz in body bags.
24. Judith Clavir Albert and Stewart Edward Albert, *The Sixties Papers: Documents of a Rebellious Decade* (New York: Praeger, 1984), 18.
25. Wub-e-ke-niew, *We Have a Right to Exist* (New York: Black Thistle Press, 1995), xxxix.
26. Veterans Administration Statistical Brief, "Native American Veterans," SB 70-85-3 (October 1985), Washington, D.C.
27. Quoted in Stan Steiner, *The New Indians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 282.
28. Ibid.
29. Joan Ablon, "Relocated American Indians in the San Francisco Bay Area: Social Interaction and Indian Identity," *Human Organization* 23 (Winter 1964): 297.
30. Vine Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 34.
31. Quoted in Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *The American Indian Fight for Freedom* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978), 84. Clyde Warrior is often referred to as the founder of the Red Power movement.
32. Quoted in Jack D. Forbes, *Native Americans and Nixon: Presidential Politics and Minority Self-Determination, 1969–1972* (Los Angeles: American Indian Studies Center, University of California, 1981), 28. Brightman founded and began publication of *Warpath* in 1968, providing a voice for the rising urban Indian youth groups.
33. Quoted in National Council on Indian Opportunity, "Public Forum before the Committee of Urban Indians, San Francisco, Calif.," 11–12 April 1969, 3 (hereafter NCIO, "Public Forum"). In the possession of Adam Fortunate Eagle, Fallon Indian Reservation, Fallon, Nev.
34. Joan Ablon, "Relocated Indians in the San Francisco Bay Area: Social Interaction and Indian Identity," *Human Organization* 23 (1964): 296–304.
35. NCIO, "Public Forum," 39.
36. Ibid., 41.
37. Quoted in Steiner, *New Indians*, 45.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Johnson, "Part 3," 355–57.
41. During this period, the University of California, Davis, was attempting to acquire the same site for its own use. It was the occupation of the intended site by Indian youth, some of which had been involved in the Alcatraz occupation, that ultimately led to success for the Indian-controlled university. In April 1971, the

federal government formally turned this land over to the trustees of Deganawida-Quetzalcoatl (D-Q) University, a joint American Indian and Chicano university. One of the demands of the Alcatraz occupiers, in 1964 and again in 1969, was the establishment of an Indian university on Alcatraz Island. While this never occurred, the establishment of D-Q University was seen by many as the fulfillment of that demand.

42. Troy Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996). The occupations took place on 9 March 1964, the night of 9–10 November 1969, and 20 November 1969.
43. Belva Cottier interview with John Garvey, San Francisco, Calif., 13 May 1989. Copy in the possession of Troy Johnson.
44. NCIO, "Public Forum."
45. Luis S. Kemnitzer, "Personal Memories of Alcatraz, 1969" (chapter 7 of this volume), 114–15.
46. Johnson, *Occupation of Alcatraz Island*, 119.
47. Earl Livermore (Blackfoot) interview with John D. Sylvester, 8 April 1970, Doris Duke Oral History Project, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
48. Johnson, *Occupation of Alcatraz Island*, 48.
49. Ibid.
50. "Unsigned Proclamation" reproduced in *Alcatraz Is Not an Island*, ed. Peter Blue Cloud (Berkeley, Calif.: Wingbow Press, 1972), 40–42.
51. Johnson, *Occupation of Alcatraz Island*, 71–72.
52. Ibid., 40–41.
53. Ibid., 154–55.
54. Ibid., 206.
55. Ibid., 152, 169.
56. Ibid., 182–83.
57. Ibid., 226.
58. Vine Deloria, Jr., "The Rise of Indian Activism," in *The Social Reality of Ethnic America*, ed. R. Gomez, C. Collingham, R. Endo, and K. Jackson (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1974), 184–85.
59. Vine Deloria, Jr., correspondence with the authors, 1993.
60. Wilma Mankiller telephone interview with Joane Nagel, Tahlequah, Okla., 27 November 1991. Transcript in the authors' files.
61. George Horse Capture telephone interview with Joane Nagel, Fort Belknap, Mont., 24 May 1994. Transcript in the authors' files. See also George Horse Capture, "An American Indian Perspective," in *Seeds of Change: A Quincentennial Commemoration*, ed. Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).
62. John Echohawk telephone interview with Joane Nagel, Boulder, Colo., 9 July 1993. Transcript in the authors' files.
63. Leonard Peltier telephone interview with Joane Nagel, Leavenworth, Kans., 1 June 1993. Transcript in the authors' files.
64. Frances Wise telephone interview with Joane Nagel, Oklahoma City, Okla., 24 August 1993. Transcript in the authors' files.
65. Quoted in Judith Antell, "American Indian Women Activists" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1989), 58.

66. Grace Thorpe interview with John Trudell on "Radio Free Alcatraz," 12 December 1969. Transcript available from Pacifica Radio Archive, 3729 Cahvenga Boulevard, North Hollywood, CA 91604.
67. Loretta Flores telephone interview with Joane Nagel, Lawrence, Kans., 12 May 1993. Transcript in the authors' files.
68. "Indians Seize Army Center for Use as Cultural Base," *New York Times*, 4 November 1970, 6. This land later became the site of Deganawida-Quetzalcoatl (D-Q) University. See *Akwesasne Notes* (January–February 1971): 17.
69. William M. Blair, "24 Indians Seized in Capital Clash," *New York Times*, 23 September 1971, 49.
70. Ward Churchill and James Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret War against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1988), 121; Rex Weyler, *Blood of the Land* (New York: Everett House, 1984), 24, 42–43; Peter Matthiessen, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* (New York: Viking, 1991), 37–40, 49–52; Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *Now That the Buffalo's Gone* (New York: Knopf, 1982), 228–31.
71. Johnson, *Occupation of Alcatraz Island*, 219–20; Wub-e-ke-niew, *We Have the Right to Exist*, xl–xlvi.
72. Churchill and Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression*, 121.
73. Ibid. Ironically, several researchers also cite the role of common prison experiences in the formation of the American Indian Movement organization. See Matthiessen, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, 34; Weyler, *Blood of the Land*, 35; Rachel A. Bonney, "Forms of Supratribal Indian Interaction in the United States" (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1975), 154–55.
74. Fay G. Cohen, "The Indian Patrol in Minneapolis: Social Control and Social Change in an Urban Context" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1973), 52.
75. Ibid., 49–50; Jeanne Guillemin, *Urban Renegades: The Cultural Strategy of American Indians* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975); Roy Bongartz, "The New Indians," in *Native Americans Today*, ed. H. M. Bahr, B. A. Chadwick, and R. C. Day (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 495.
76. Russell Means with Marvin J. Wolf, *Where White Men Fear to Tread: The Autobiography of Russell Means* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 540.
77. Today, most commentators, participants, and observers refer to the 1973 siege at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, as "Wounded Knee." At the time, the press and commentators often called the siege "Wounded Knee II," to distinguish it from the U.S. 7th Cavalry's massacre of Lakotas which took place there in December 1890. See Robert Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963), 110.
78. See Edward Lazarus, *Black Hills, White Justice: The Sioux Nation versus the United States, 1775 to the Present* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), chap. 12; Matthiessen, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, chap. 3; Churchill and Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression*, chap. 5; Stanley D. Lyman, *Wounded Knee 1973: A Personal Account* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991); Rolland Dewing, *Wounded Knee: The Meaning and Significance of the Second Incident* (New York: Irvington, 1985).
79. For instance, Lazarus reports that, up to that point, the "Pine Ridge Sioux had never reelected a president to a second term" (*Black Hills, White Justice*, 309).
80. Ibid., 307.
81. The most celebrated of the cases involves Leonard Peltier, who was tried and convicted for the deaths of two FBI agents who were shot on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1975. See Matthiessen, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, 162.
82. For instance, Wilson remained in office and was reelected after a challenge by AIM leader Russell Means in 1974. Wilson died in 1990. See Churchill and Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression*, 189; Martin Waldron, "President of Oglala Sioux Is Re-elected," *New York Times*, 9 February 1974, 23; Matthiessen, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, 581.
83. While several of these post-Wounded Knee occupations were marked by intratribal conflict, the Puyallup occupation of the detention center appears to have been undertaken by a unified tribe.
84. Grace Lichtenstein, "Custer's Defeat Commemorated by Entreaties on Peace," *New York Times*, 25 June 1976, II-1.
85. For a general description of anti-Indian backlash groups and activities in the late 1970s, see the series of articles in "Nationwide Backlash against the Indian Tribes," the 18 July 1977 supplement of the *Yakima Nation Review*: Richard La Course, "Anti-Indian Backlash Growing; Tribes, Groups Form Defense Tactics"; Carole Wright, "What People Have Formed Backlash Groups?"; June Adams, "Three Major 'Backlash Bills' in Congress"; June Adams and Richard La Course, "Backlash Barrage Erupts across U.S." See also Fay G. Cohen, "Implementing Indian Treaty Fishing Rights: Conflict and Cooperation," in *Critical Issues in Native North America*, vol. 2, ed. W. Churchill (Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 1991), 155–73.
86. Ken Stern, *Loud Hawk: The U.S. versus the American Indian Movement* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 93–98. The deaths were never investigated, but Indian people suspect the FBI was involved.
87. See, for example, Wub-e-ke-niew, *We Have the Right to Exist*, xlv, 232–33; Josephy, *Now That the Buffalo's Gone*, 254–55.
88. Camp Yellow Thunder was established in the early 1980s to protest federal violations of Sioux treaties and the refusal of the federal government to return the Black Hills. See Lazarus, *Black Hills, White Justice*, 411–12; and Donald Worster, *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), chap. 8.
89. See, for example, Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Rick Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness, Action, and Contemporary American Workers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Verta Taylor and Nancy E. Whittier, "Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities: Lesbian Feminist Mobilization," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, ed. A. D. Morris and C. M. Mueller (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), 104–20; Joane Nagel, "American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Politics and the Resurgence of Identity," *American Sociological Review* 60 (1995): 947–65.
90. McAdam, *Freedom Summer*.
91. Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity*.
92. Annette Kuhlmann, "Collaborative Research on Biculturalism among the Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1989); Richard H. White, *Tribal Assets: The Rebirth of Native America* (New York: Henry Holt, 1990), 124; Carol Ward, "The Intersection of Ethnic and Gender Identities: The Role of

Northern Cheyenne Women in Cultural Recovery," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Raleigh, N.C., October 1993, p. 86.

93. Joane Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 195–200.

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY: ALCATRAZ AND THE ACTIVIST PERIOD

- Cornell, Stephen. *The Return of the Native: American Indian Political Resurgence*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Churchill, Ward, and James Vander Wall. *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*. Boston: South End Press, 1988.
- Crow Dog, Mary, and Richard Erdoes. *Lakota Woman*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990.
- Fortunate Eagle, Adam. *Alcatraz! Alcatraz! The Indian Occupation of 1969–71*. San Francisco: Heyday Books, 1992.
- Johnson, Troy. *The Indian Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996.
- Matthiessen, Peter. *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*. New York: Viking, 1991.
- Means, Russell, with Marvin J. Wolf. *Where White Men Fear to Tread: The Autobiography of Russell Means*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.
- Nagel, Joane. *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Smith, Paul Chaat, and Robert Allen Warrior. *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee*. New York: The Free Press, 1996.
- Stern, Kenneth S. *Loud Hawk: The U.S. versus the American Indian Movement*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994.

## 2

### ALCATRAZ, ACTIVISM, AND ACCOMMODATION

Vine Deloria, Jr.

Alcatraz and Wounded Knee 1973 have come to symbolize the revival of Indian fortunes in the late twentieth century, so we hesitate to discuss the realities of the time or to look critically at their actual place in modern Indian history. We conclude that it is better to wrap these events in romantic notions and broker that feeling in exchange for further concessions from the federal government; consequently, we fail to learn from them the hard lessons that will serve us well in leaner times.

Activism in the 1950s was sporadic but intense. In 1957, Lumbee people surrounded a Ku Klux Klan gathering in North Carolina and escorted the hooded representatives of white supremacy back to their homes sans weapons and costumes. In 1961, a strange mixture of Six Nations people and non-Indian supporters attempted a citizens' arrest of the secretary of the interior, and, sometime during this period, a band of "True Utes" briefly took over the agency offices at Fort Duchesne. The only context for these events was the long suffering of small groups of people bursting forth in an incident that illustrated oppression but suggested no answer to pressing problems. In 1964, the "fish-ins" in the Pacific Northwest produced the first activism with an avowed goal; continual agitation in that region eventually resulted in *U.S. v. Washington*, which affirmed once and for all the property rights of Northwest tribes for both subsistence and commercial fishing.

Indians benefited substantially from the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the ensuing doctrines concerning the poor, which surfaced in the Economic Opportunity Act and more particularly in its administration. The civil rights movement had roots in a hundred small gatherings of concerned attorneys brought together by Jack Greenberg and Thurgood Marshall to determine the legal and philosophical basis for overturning *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Concentrating on the concept of *equality*, a series of test cases involving access to professional education in the border states cut away the unexam-