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“IT’S NOT A TREATY, IT’S A LEGAL BINDING AGREEMENT”: FORT LAWTON, RED POWER, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR INDIGENOUS LAND RECLAMATION

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“IT’S NOT A TREATY, IT’S A LEGAL BINDING AGREEMENT”: FORT LAWTON, RED POWER, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR INDIGENOUS LAND RECLAMATION

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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Abstract

In 1970, over one hundred Native American activists occupied the Fort Lawton military base in Seattle, Washington. The protestors, disgruntled over the federal government's termination of tribal lands and lack of support for urban Indians, demanded that the base be given to Seattle's Native community. Combining confrontation with negotiation, the demonstrators scored an unexpected victory when government officials returned twenty of the base's acres. Despite this success, Fort Lawton receives only limited attention in scholarship concerning the Red Power Movement and its assertion of Native sovereignty. Most often, it is overshadowed by the two protests that bookended it: the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz Island and the 1972 occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters. These protests also sought the return of Indigenous land and used direct action to secure a platform from which to negotiate. However, the Alcatraz and BIA protestors failed to procure any concessions when they remained committed to demonstration. This thesis compares Fort Lawton with these better-known events, illustrating that confrontation and compromise could work in tandem to advance Native land rights.

Introduction:

In winter 1855, Chief Seeathl of the Suquamish and Duwamish Tribes was aging fast. Seeathl, who had spent his entire life in and around present-day Puget Sound, felt his health waning at the same time that U.S. government officials were pressuring him to abandon his peoples' lands. The hills and riversides that officials urged Seeathl to surrender meant as much to him in his old age as they did during his youth. Yet, the place that he called home was undergoing rapid transformations as white settlers flooded Puget Sound and the larger Pacific Northwest. Finding himself and his people surrounded, Seeathl reached an agreement with Isaac Stevens, the then governor of Washington Territory, to protect his tribes from further encroachment. Known as the Point Elliot Treaty, this agreement appeared on a piece of parchment that Seeathl signed with an "X."[1] This mark effectively ceded the Suquamish and Duwamish's "right, title, and interest" to lands that they had known for generations.[2] As prelude to this signing, Seeathl supposedly delivered a speech that historian Coll Thrush described as "a key text of both indigenous rights and environmental thinking" and a "'fifth gospel'" to some adherents.[3] His message purportedly went as follows:

> "Every part of this country is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been hallowed by some fond memory or some sad experience of my tribe. Even the rocks, which seem to lie dumb as they swelter in the sun along the silent seashore in solemn grandeur, thrill with memories of past events connected with the lives of my people. And when the last red man shall have perished from the earth and his memory among the white men shall have become a myth, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe; and when your children's children shall think of themselves alone in the fields, the

[1] "Treaty between the United States and the Duwamish, Suquamish, and other allied and subordinate tribes of Indians in Washington territory," opened for signature January 22, 1855, Washington D.C. (1859). Available via the Newberry Library's Edward E. Ayer Collection.
[2] Ibid. While stipulating the Suquamish and Duwamish's removal, the treaty also guaranteed the Tribes the right to camp, hunt, fish, and harvest berries at the "usual and accustomed stations and grounds." For more detail, see Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2007), 51.
[3] Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 6.

> store, the shop, upon the highway, or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone. In all the earth there is no place dedicated to solitude."[4]

While it is impossible to determine whether Seeathl uttered these remarks in their entirety, if at all, the events that transpired after the treaty's ratification are undisputed: the Chief and his people relocated to reservations established outside of present-day Seattle.[5] Seeathl moved to Bainbridge Island where missionaries laid his remains in a grave identifiable only by his assigned Christian name: "Noah."[6] Meanwhile, a city sprouted on the lands that the Suquamish and Duwamish had been forced to abandon and took the Chief's birthname as its own. Nearly one hundred years after Seeathl's passing, a group of Native American activists walked the same hills, valleys, and plains that the Suquamish and Duwamish leader had spoken of a century prior. Layers of steel and concrete had rendered this landscape unrecognizable, but the activists never forgot the history behind Seattle's origin. When a wave of Native protest swept the United States in the latter twentieth century, this cohort of Indians resolved to do the unthinkable: take the land back.

In November 1971, an organization known as United Indians of All tribes (UIAT) successfully reclaimed twenty acres from the Fort Lawton military base, an army installation on Seattle, Washington's outskirts. This accomplishment led to the opening of Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center, the first large-scale institution within Seattle devoted to Native cultural preservation and socioeconomic advancement. UIAT's feat is unparalleled in the history of twentieth-century Indian activism, as it is the only instance in which protestors permanently

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[4] H.A. Smith, "Scraps From a Diary–Chief Seattle–A Gentleman by Instinct–His Native Eloquence," *The Seattle Sunday Star*, October 29, 1887, https://www.washington.edu/uwired/outreach/cspn/Website/index.html.
[5] Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 86. These reservations include Port Madison (later known as Suquamish), Muckleshoot, and Tulalip.
[6] Ibid., 6.

regained Native land.[7] However, Fort Lawton has received limited scholarly attention, thus betraying its status as a remarkable victory for urban Indians and a testament to the interconnectedness between Native Americans and their land. "Land," legal scholar Charles Wilkinson once wrote, "will always permeate what it means to be Native."[8] Whether a tribe calls the American Southwest, Northeast, or uppermost reaches of Alaska its home, land is essential to identifying as a distinct sovereign people. It enables Indians to speak their own language, to form tribal governments, to practice food sovereignty, and, perhaps most importantly, to conduct religious ceremonies that tie together the natural and spiritual worlds.[9] Land, in effect, is the vessel through which Native peoples fully realize their Indigeneity, something that Chief Seeathl understood quite painfully when he signed the Point Elliot Treaty. UIAT also understood this dynamic, which served as its motivation for occupying Fort Lawton. The group took the base with the conviction that land back would provide Seattle Indians the means and the confidence to express their Indigeneity without hesitation. Yet, achieving this objective required confronting some of Washington State's most powerful political actors, and doing so in a way that would ensure concessions.

When UIAT first occupied Fort Lawton in March 1970, it appeared as just another grassroots Indigenous protest apart of the emerging Red Power Movement. Broadly defined, Red

[7] Shelby Scates, "Whitebear Leads Indians to Victory in Ft. Lawton: Many Skirmishes, But No Bloodshed," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, December 5, 1971, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[8] Charles F. Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 240.
[9] Although Native American land reclamation extends to the 1960s/70s, recent land back movements have articulated these themes particularly clearly. For more detail, see, Cheyenne Bearfoot, "Land Back: The Indigenous Fight to Reclaim Stolen Lands," KQED, accessed March 21, 2023, https://www.kqed.org/education/535779/land-back-the-indigenous-fight-to-reclaim-stolen-lands; "NDN Collective LANDBACK Campaign Launching on Indigenous' Peoples Day 2020," NDN Collective, accessed March 21, 2023, https://ndncollective.org/; David Treuer, "Return the National Parks to the Tribes: The Jewels of America's Landscape should belong to America's original peoples," *The Atlantic*, accessed March 21, 2023, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/05/return-the-national-parks-to-the-tribes/618395/.

Power is an ideology that advocates direct action as the most effective means of restoring Native lands, lifeways, and human rights.[10] The movement's roots date to the early 1950s when Indian students began organizing on college campuses.[11] However, it took another decade for Red Power to assume a national scope, a feat accomplished in late-1969 and early-1970 specifically. UIAT and its leader Bernie Whitebear, a member of the Sin-Aikst Tribe and a former U.S. Army Green Beret, were among the most ardent supporters of the movement.[12] They used the term Red Power to describe themselves and participated in other major Indian demonstrations throughout the 1970s.[13] UIAT members were, in fact, so committed to direct action that they occupied Fort Lawton not once but three separate times: March 8, March 12, and April 2, 1970.[14] Afterward, UIAT did something unexpected; it transitioned into a political lobbying group. Recognizing that their occupations had secured them a seat at the figurative, but also literal, bargaining table, UIAT members solicited public support to solidify their claim to Fort Lawton.[15] This transition paid dividends in December 1971 when Seattle's city government agreed to return part of the base. A mixture of confrontation and negotiation, in other words, afforded UIAT land back, something that other Red Power protests sought but failed to achieve.

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[10] Kent Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom: Richard Oakes, Alcatraz, and the Red Power Movement* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), 4.
[11] Paul R. McKenzie-Jones, *Clyde Warrior: Tradition, Community, and Red Power* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015); Bradley G. Shreve, *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Native Activism* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011).
[12] Vera Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism in the Pacific Northwest: The Power of Indigenous Protest and the Birth of Daybreak Star Cultural Center* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018), 49; Jerry Bergsman and Paul Henderson, "Indians 'Invade' Army Posts," *Seattle Times*, March 9, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[13] For UIAT members' participation in the 1969 Alcatraz occupation and 1972 BIA occupation, see, Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 187, 249-250.
[14] Lossom Allen, "By Right of Discovery: United Indians of All Tribes Retakes Fort Lawton, 1970," The Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project, Fall/Spring 2006, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_takeover.htm; Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 59-61.
[15] Bernie Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton: Meeting the Needs of Seattle's Urban Community Through Conversion," *Race, Poverty, & the Environmen*t 4/5, no. 4/1 (Spring-Summer 1994): 6; Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 73.

Despite this accomplishment, the Fort Lawton protestors retain a marginal place in the historical record, finding themselves overshadowed by two larger-profile Indian demonstrations also aimed at land reclamation. The first was the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz Island, during which an organization called Indians of All Tribes (IAT) led upwards of five hundred protestors in holding the former prison for nineteen months.[16] In the second, the 1972 occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) headquarters, five hundred members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) barricaded the office for six days.[17] Like the Fort Lawton occupiers, the Alcatraz and BIA protestors were predominantly urban in make-up. Many came to cities as a result of two policies that they roundly condemned: termination and urban relocation. Termination came about in 1953 when Congress passed House Concurrent Resolution 108 (HCR-108), a law which allowed for the dissolution, or "termination," of Indian reservations.[18] Urban relocation, formally known as Congress's Voluntary Relocation Program (VRP), followed shortly thereafter to encourage Indians to move to urban areas.[19] Although politicians hailed these measures as affording Indians better economic opportunities, the protestors denounced them as government-sanctioned land theft.[20] As evidence, they pointed to the millions of acres of

[16] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 6.
[17] Peter Osnos and Paul Ramirez, "500 Indians Here Seize U.S. Building," *Washington Post*, November 3, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.wapo.19721103.xml; William M. Blair, "Indians Take Documents as They Leave U.S. Building," *New York Times*, November 9, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.nyt.19721109.xml.
[18] Golden Gate National Recreation Area, "We Hold the Rock," YouTube Video, 25:40, October 7, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEmae2PsWJI; American Indian Movement, "Trail of Broken Treaties 20-Point Position Paper," October 1972, https://www.aimovement.org/ggc/trailofbrokentreaties.html; United Indians of All Tribes, "Proclamation," 1970, box 16, folder 1, Parks Construction and Maintenance Records, Record Series 5804-05, Seattle Municipal Archives, Seattle, Washington, https://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/online-exhibits/daybreak-star-indian-cultural-center; Lawney L. Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear: An Urban Indian's Quest for Justice* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006), 87.
[19] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 80-82.
[20] For officials' support of the Voluntary Relocation Program, see, Douglas K. Miller, *Indians on the Move: Native American Mobility and Urbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 6-7; for Red Power activists' criticism of this program, see Golden Gate National Recreation Area, "We Hold the Rock"; American Indian Movement, "Trail of Broken Treaties 20-Point Position Paper"; United Indians of All Tribes, "Proclamation"; Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 87.

land that passed out of Indians' possession and into state and private ownership.[21] These critiques stemmed from the same mindset exemplified by the Fort Lawton occupiers: land is crucial to Indigeneity and its revocation strikes at the heart of Native peoples' right to remain Indian. Uniting around this understanding, the Fort Lawton, Alcatraz, and BIA protestors set out to reverse land loss and to provide Indians, particularly urban ones, the means to reclaim their heritage. UIAT did so by demanding Fort Lawton's entire acreage while the Alcatraz occupiers sought title to the island and the BIA occupiers insisted that 110 million acres across the country receive restoration as a Native land base.[22] In the end though, UIAT led the only demonstration that secured any land.

The importance that Red Power protestors placed on land reclamation and their shared perception of what land back meant encourages a closer examination and, in some cases, reevaluation of the policies of termination and relocation. Termination, for one, has long drawn condemnation as an attempt to eradicate Native culture through the dispossession and reallocation of Indian lands.[23] The policy's destructiveness toward tribal sovereignty and language of "liberating" Native peoples are well established.[24] Yet, that the Alcatraz, BIA, and Fort Lawton occupations all revolved around land reclamation emphasizes something that is

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[21] Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes, "Proclamation," *Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes* 1, no. 1 (January 1970): 2-3; American Indian Movement, "Trail of Broken Treaties 20-Point Position Paper"; United Indians of All Tribes, "Proclamation." In a 1960 address, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) estimated that approximately 1,800,000 acres of Native land was lost due to termination. For more detail, see, National Congress of American Indians, "The New Frontier in Indian Affairs: Policy and Program for the Sixties," December 1, 1960, box 1, folders 1-10, Indian Claims Commission Case Documents Research Reports, Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.

[22] Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes, "Proclamation," 2-3; American Indian Movement, "Trail of Broken Treaties 20-Point Position Paper"; United Indians of All Tribes, "Proclamation."

[23] Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986); Donald L. Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 184; Paul C. Rosier, "'They Are Ancestral Homelands': Race, Place, and Politics in Cold War Native America, 1945-1961," *Journal of American History* 92, no. 4 (March 2006): 1301-1302; Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 50-51.

[24] Ibid. The notion of "liberating" Native peoples through termination is attributed to Senator Arthur Watkins. For more detail, see Chapter 1.

either absent or understated in the literature concerning termination. That is, termination did more than revoke Indians' land base and threaten the continuation of tribal government. It instead lobbied a decisive blow at Native peoples' identity by rupturing their spiritual and cultural relationships with the land and calling into question whether they could ever be truly "Indian" again. Native peoples wrestled with this dilemma and came to grips with termination's repercussions while participating in Congress's Voluntary Relocation Program (VRP). The historical narrative surrounding the VRP is also relatively well-known. The program, like HCR-108, promoted the abandonment of Indian lifeways in favor of white middle-class American norms. It showcased major issues, painting an idyllic picture of urban life while only sporadically providing Indians promised social support. In recent years, historians such as Douglas Miller have expanded the discourse surrounding relocation by revealing Native peoples moving to cities on their own terms and for their own ends. As Miller explained, Native Americans needed to "rebuild their own" homes in urban areas before dismantling the "house" of the settler colonial state.[25] That rebuilding, which took the form of Indian bars, community centers, and health clinics, exercised a crucial role in maintaining Indigeneity. However, it was ultimately not enough, as land remained the centerpiece to urban Indians asserting themselves as distinct sovereign peoples. The process through which Native Americans came to this realization and the inner-city institutions that empowered them to take land back serve as the focus of Chapter 1.

While the Red Power protestors in question understood land back in markedly similar ways, their methods of reclaiming it differed significantly. UIAT, for one, alternated confrontation with negotiation to obtain land, an approach that historians such as Vera Parham

[25] Miller, *Indians on the Move*, 5.

and Kent Blansett have previously explored.[26] The effectiveness of this approach, however, becomes clearer when compared with the Alcatraz and BIA occupiers' strategies. When these protests are contrasted with one another, it becomes apparent that the Alcatraz and BIA occupiers failed to balance confrontation with compromise to the extent that any of their demands, land-related or otherwise, were obtained. Through direct action, both demonstrations secured a platform from which to negotiate only to vacate this position when they remained firm in their original demands. The Fort Lawton protestors, on the other hand, used confrontation strategically, ceasing it once they had a position from which to advance their claims. From here, UIAT skillfully maneuvered through bureaucratic corridors, engaging with federal agencies in a manner that set them against one another. Ultimately, this strategy procured a smaller amount of land than initially demanded, leading some to wonder whether UIAT scored only a symbolic victory. However, to much of Seattle's Native community, this concession strengthened their pride and constituted a step toward improving their socioeconomic standing. Land back, even in a limited form, enabled Seattle Indians to reconnect with their Native heritage in ways no longer considered possible. UIAT's route to success as well as the Alcatraz and BIA protests make up Chapter 2.

Finally, Fort Lawton prompts a rethinking of the legacies of the Red Power Movement. Since the formal introduction of the term "Red Power" in 1966, both scholars and activists have debated the movement's effectiveness in procuring reform.[27] For some academics, such as anthropologist George Pierre Castile, the accomplishments of Red Power protestors are

[26] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*; Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 200. Blansett argued that this approach, and UIAT's legacy more broadly, "has yet to be fully measured."
[27] Although the precise origins of the term are debatable, "Red Power" became public after Ponca activist Clyde Warrior displayed the phrase on a banner during a 1966 National Congress of American Indians parade. For more detail, see, McKenzie-Jones, *Clyde Warrior*, 72-73.

negligible at best. Although employing tough rhetoric and dramatic demonstrations, Red Power proponents achieved few, if any, tangible gains in Castile's estimation.[28] He instead attributed most of the progress on twentieth-century Native policy to Indians who worked strictly within government and lobbied for reforms such as the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.[29] On the other hand, Paul Chaat Smith, a curator for the National Museum of the American Indian, and Robert Warrior, an English professor, have challenged perceptions of Red Power's ineptitude, comparing the movement to a "hurricane" that struck "anywhere, anytime, to stand up for Indian people."[30] While conceding that Red Power endured a short reign and bordered on extremism, these scholars regarded Indian protestors as raising unprecedented awareness of Native affairs.[31] Fort Lawton, for its part, suggests that Red Power could exist as something other than the ineffective militancy depicted by Castile or the symbolically potent radicalism portrayed by Smith and Warrior. UIAT was indeed confrontational, but it was not beyond working within "the system" nor was it without any material accomplishments. Its members quite literally took Fort Lawton back and, in the process, recovered a part of themselves. As Puyallup occupier Ramona Bennett explained, Indian peoples never really assimilate because "their roots run deep" and they are constantly called to "find their way

[28] George Pierre Castile, *To Show Heart: Native American Self-Determination and Federal Indian Policy, 1960-1975* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 145; Castile claimed that, if Red Power activists "had any policy impact at all," it was to "slow down" rather than accelerate legislative reform.
[29] Ibid., 43-72, 161-174. Castile considered the 1975 Self-Determination Act a "milestone" in federal Indian policy since it promised tribes "maximum…participation in the Government and education of the Indian people; to provide for the full participation of the Indian tribes in programs and service conducted by the federal Government for Indians and to encourage the development of human resources for the Indian people; to establish a program of assistance to upgrade Indian education; to support the right of Indian citizens to control their own educational activities; and for other purposes."
[30] Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Warrior, *Like A Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 200.
[31] Ibid., viii.

home."[32] At Fort Lawton, Seattle Indians heard and answered that call, retaking a parcel of land that has allowed them to maintain their Indigenous identity.

[32] Ramona Bennett, "Viewpoint of People Living on Puyallup River," *Indian Center News* 9, no. 1 (September 1970): 11.

Chapter 1: Land Lost

Almost two decades before the events at Fort Lawton, Bernie Whitebear stepped off a bus in Seattle. The young Sin-Aikst, then eighteen years old, opted to leave his childhood home on the Colville Indian Reservation in search of a better life in the city. The decision was life-changing for a teenager who had grown up among small Salishan tribes in northeastern Washington. It also seemed regrettable at first. Whitebear enrolled at the University of Washington but found his studies unfulfilling and decided to leave school. Afterward, he bounced between odd jobs only to discover that many Seattle businesses were resistant to hiring Indians.[33] Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, "No Indians Allowed" signs hung in street windows, encouraging some Native workers to try and pass themselves off as Italian.[34] Yet, alienating as these experiences were, Whitebear and other urban Indians gradually found one another on street corners and in bars and apartment hallways.[35] Many came to cities as a result of termination and urban relocation, two government policies aimed at stamping out Native culture. Specifically, these measures meant to separate Indians from their reservations and encourage assimilation into mainstream society. For a time, they splintered Native peoples' deepest connections to their heritage and cast their identity as Indians into serious doubt. Native peoples, nonetheless, found ways to complicate government plans, and used their consolidation in urban areas to retain their Indigeneity. This proved true in San Francisco but also Seattle, where Whitebear and members of diverse Native organizations worked to keep Indian pride alive. Yet, keeping pride alive and ensuring it for perpetuity constituted two entirely different goals. Whitebear and other Red Power activists understood this difference and recognized land back as the key to fully

[33] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 60-62.
[34] Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 168. Thrush attributed this observation to UIAT member Ramona Bennett.
[35] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 62, 79-81; Troy Johnson, *The American Indian Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Red Power and Self Determination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 13.

reclaiming their Indigenous identity. Although they began with inner-city community building, Indian relocatees turned their focus to retaking land once thought to be permanently lost.

The threat that termination and relocation posed to Native culture can be traced to an era of Cold War conformity that questioned the very viability of Indian lands. As the first of these policies, termination exemplifies what historian Paul Rosier described as the post-World War II equation of "difference" with "un-American."[36] Contrariness with white Western norms, in other words, invited scrutiny and backlash, as seen by strong political reactions against Black Civil Rights activists, labor organizers, and feminists.[37] Historian Donald Fixico echoed Rosier's claim and wrote that this "patriotic sweep" against difference grew to include Indians.[38] Residing mostly on rural reservations, Native peoples lived apart from the wider public and endured some of the nation's worst living conditions. These conditions tended to escape the average American, but government bodies such as the South Dakota Relief Agency (SDRA) took notice. In 1935, the SDRA conducted a survey of South Dakota's ten reservations and produced a series of bleak findings.[39] These included reservation homes consisting of one-room tar paper houses, reservation schools offering little more than a fifth-grade education, and a "dire" prevalence of disease among Indians of all ages.[40] The survey also found drunkenness to be "a common sight" among reservation adults and claimed that residents of the Sisseston Reservation considered the local prison better shelter than their own homes.[41] Alarming as these discoveries were, the

[36] Rosier, "'They Are Ancestral Homelands'," 1301-1302.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America*, 9.
[39] South Dakota Emergency Relief Administration, *1935 Survey of Indian Reservations* (Arlington: University Publications of America, 1979). The 1928 Merriam Report was another government investigation into Native poverty. More extensive than the SDRA survey, this report blamed the federal policy of allotment for facilitating Indians' poor living conditions. Its findings also helped inspire the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. For more detail, see Paul C. Rosier, "Surviving in the Twentieth Century, 1890-1960," in *The Oxford Handbook of American Indian History*, ed. Frederick E. Hoxie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 118.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

survey's most disconcerting observation appeared in its conclusion, which stated: "Living conditions on these reservations are characteristic of those on most Indian reservations."[42] At a glance, this claim might seem attributable to the Great Depression, which was then affecting Americans across racial and class lines. However, an absence of growth in reservation agriculture and industry over the next few decades reveals Indian poverty as distinct from hardship elsewhere in the United States. In theory, these sectors should have boomed given the nation's postwar economic growth but remained stagnant and encouraged officials already skeptical of Indian life to gaze more distrustfully toward reservations.[43] As some in Congress came to argue, Native peoples and their relationship to their land required drastic policy change.

No politician did more to advocate a radical reorientation of tribes to their reservations, and subsequently their identity as Indians, than Senator Arthur Watkins. A Republican and devout Mormon, Watkins grew up in Utah where he lived near a community of Northern Utes but interacted almost entirely with people belonging to his church.[44] At sixty years old, Watkins sought and successfully secured Utah's Junior Senate seat, revealing himself to be a staunch proponent of American exceptionalism and critic of anything remotely resembling communism.[45] This wariness toward left-of-center practices extended to reservations where Native peoples held land in common rather than individually. In Watkins's view, this form of

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Rosier, "Surviving in the Twentieth Century, 1890-1960," 117; Joseph G. Jorgensen, "Indians and the Metropolis," in *The American Indian in Urban Society*, ed. Jack O. Waddell (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), 83. While not exhaustive, national surveys conducted in 1968 reveal the stagnancy of reservation agriculture and industry. In this year, Americans grossed $170 million from agricultural products and charged up to $0.75 per board of lumber. Reservation agriculture accounted for only $16 million of the $170 million grossed, while reservation lumber sold at a paltry $0.18 per board.

[44] R. Warren Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy: The Discarded Indians of Utah* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 22-23; Metcalf wrote that Watkins "stands alone" among politicians in terms of both formulating termination policy and translating it into federal law.

[45] For Watkins's views on American exceptionalism, see Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy*, 30-31; For Watkins's skepticism toward communism, see Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, 67; Wilkinson noted that while Watkins displayed conservative ideals, he almost "always followed his convictions." A notable example of this took place in 1954 when Watkins broke with his Republican colleagues to censor Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy.

land ownership rendered reservations outright "socialistic" environments, similar in ways to Soviet communes.[46] Moreover, Watkins believed that the federal government bore responsibility for enabling these environments by providing Indians health, education, and welfare services.[47] This support, although meant to assuage Native poverty, supposedly rendered Indians reliant on the federal dole and prevented them from assuming their "full responsibilities" as American citizens.[48] "[Indians]," the Senator remarked, "want all the benefits of the things we have…but they don't want to pay their share of it."[49] Therefore, Watkins spoke quite literally when he told his colleagues that reservations' dissolution and Indians' integration into the free market would "liberate" Native peoples from impoverishment.[50] This evocative language culminated in 1953 when, in a Senate address, Watkins proclaimed: "I see the following words embellished in letters of fire above the heads of Indians – THESE PEOPLE SHALL BE SET FREE."[51] The Senator, in effect, laid out a vision for fundamentally altering Native policy, although he needed assistance bringing it to fruition.

Fortunately for Watkins, political winds had shifted in his favor by the time of his impassioned Senate remarks. Almost immediately after World War II, a bloc of western congressmen and high-ranking members of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) began backing

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[46] Rosier, ''They Are Ancestral Homelands'," 1301.
[47] Fixico, *Termination and Relocation*, 93.
[48] Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, 68-69; Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy*, 43; The phrase "full responsibilities" is attributed to Forrest R. Stone, superintendent of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation who met with Watkins in 1948.
[49] Ibid.
[50] For quote, see, Rosier, "'They Are Ancestral Homelands'," 1301; Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy*, 45. As Metcalf explained, Watkins believed that reservations were "outmoded relics of the nineteenth century." The Senator also considered Indians a "fallen race" bound to become "white and delightsome" once converted to the gospel. This religious devotion prevented him from imagining an Indian policy that would "simultaneously protect Native culture *and* Indian rights."
[51] Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, 69; Rosier, "'They Are Ancestral Homelands'," 1301; Arthur Watkins, "Termination of Federal Supervision: The Removal of Restrictions over Indian Property and Person," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science and Social Science* 313, no. 1 (May 1957).

reservations' elimination.[52] Many of these officials, or "terminationists," shared Watkins's belief that Indians would benefit both socially and financially from embracing capitalism.[53] However, Rosier claimed that terminationists balanced these "well-meaning" motives with more "criminal" ones; namely, a desire to strip Indians of their land while forcing the abandonment of Native identity.[54] Detecting these darker aims could prove difficult given that congressional rhetoric often revolved around cost-cutting and reducing wasteful government expenditures. BIA Commissioner Dillon Myer brought this rhetoric to a climax in 1951 when he declared that the government needed to "get out of the Indian business as quickly as possible."[55] In Myer's view, Congress had invested too much in Indian welfare for too long, excessively bloating the BIA's budget in the process.[56] A majority of congressmen agreed with the commissioner, and declared reservations economically unsalvageable so long as they remained in Indians' hands.[57] These officials also argued that, if transferred to state or private ownership, reservations and their resources could prove profitable. This optimism stemmed from observing a western economy then booming in farming, stock raising, lumber, mining, and manufacturing.[58] Therefore, a fervent, almost religious, belief in acclimating Indians to the free market and a latent interest in

[52] Rosier, "'They Are Ancestral Homelands'," 1301; Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience*, 9; Larry W. Burt, "United States Expansion and Federal Policy Toward Native Americans, 1953-60," PhD diss., (University of Toledo, 1979), 8; Roberta Ulrich, *American Indian Nations from Termination to Restoration, 1953-2006* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 12.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Rosier, "'They Are Ancestral Homelands'," 1301.
[55] James E. Officer, "Termination as Federal Policy: An Overview," in *Indian Self-Rule: First-Hand Accounts of Indian-White Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan*, ed. Kenneth R. Philp (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1986), 119; Prior to his position at the BIA, Myer served as head of the Wartime Relocation Authority and oversaw the internment of thousands of Japanese Americans during World War II. For more detail, see, Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience*, 9; Burt, "United States Expansion and Federal Policy," 12; Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy*, 78-79.
[56] Officer, "Termination as Federal Policy," 119-120.
[57] Ibid; Officer also noted that, by 1946, a majority of congressmen considered the BIA bloated "with personnel whose salaries and travel expenses drain…the vast sums that Congress appropriates for…Indian tribes."
[58] Ulrich, *American Indian Nations*, 11-12; Larry W. Burt, "Roots of the Native American Urban Experience: Relocation Policy in the 1950s," *American Indian Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 87.

appropriating Native lands raised the specter for an assault on tribal sovereignty. Whatever relationships Native peoples had with their lands or the sense of identity that they drew from them would be irrelevant in the discussions that followed.

Meanwhile, events unfolding outside the capital building also accelerated the drive toward termination. The first of these developments involved the Indian Claims Commission (ICC), which Congress established in 1946 to settle tribes' outstanding legal suits against the United States.[59] The commission proved willing to award Indians settlements but insisted that any of its rulings marked the end of a tribe's relationship with the federal government.[60] It attached, in other words, a sense of finality to its dealings as if to suggest that Indians should stop identifying as collectives once they received a settlement.[61] The ICC's work garnered national recognition and overlapped with a series of crises on the Navajo Reservation. Since the early twentieth century, drought and erosion had ravaged the reservation, inspiring a livestock reduction program aimed at preserving the landscape.[62] When this program failed, Congress launched an investigation and discovered that the reservation housed 20,000 more people than its projected carrying capacity.[63] Terminationists seized on this finding and began advocating a so-

[59] Fixico, *Termination and Relocation*, 26-29; Daniel Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 12.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid. Ernest Wilkinson, a lawyer that Metcalf described as arguably the most "dynamic, energetic, yet enigmatic" attorney to practice Indian law in the 1940s and 1950s, deserves particular credit for the conclusiveness of ICC rulings. In 1945, Wilkinson appeared before Congress to lobby for the ICC's creation. He offered several suggestions which included the commission's right "to hear cases filed on the basis of 'unconscionable consideration,' to prohibit government offsets against amounts awarded to tribes, and to deny the government the defense of *res judicata*." He also insisted that the commission last five years, or, at the very most, ten. For more detail, see Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy*, 54-56.
[62] Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy*, 41-42; For a detailed account of the Navajo livestock reduction program and its failures, see Marsha Lee Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).
[63] Burt, "United States Expansion and Federal Policy," 12. Burt also mentioned that a string of blizzards struck the reservation in winter 1947. These prompted a massive government airlift meant to prevent widespread starvation and death.

called "surplus population" theory.[64] Presuming the Navajo reservation indicative of other Indian homelands, this theory posited that reservations could support only a fraction of their populations.[65] "Surplus" Indians, therefore, needed to move off their lands and into urban areas where they could find employment.[66] As a model for what relocation might look like, terminationists pointed to the 1950 Navajo-Hopi rehabilitation program. This initiative, which developed in response to the Navajo reservation's plight, provided Indians contract work with Arizona and New Mexico Employment Services and the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board.[67] The program received high praise, and, although it remained a regional effort for another few years, assured officials that Indians could simply be moved elsewhere if reservations were disbanded.[68]

After close to a decade of anticipation, termination became law in 1953 and ushered in an era of Native land loss that UIAT and other Red Power groups worked to reverse. In August of this year, Congress passed House Concurrent Resolution 108 (HCR-108), an act that historian Warren Metcalf described as passing "with remarkably little debate for such far-reaching legislation."[69] Commonly known as the "termination bill," this measure revoked services and protections that had been in place since the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act (IRA).[70] For close to twenty years, the IRA preserved tribal governments by affording Indian lands federal trust status.[71] Such status exempted tribes from state taxes and granted Indians jurisdiction over every

[64] Ibid. Burt noted that this theory was based on outdated BIA resource surveys. Still, it helped "absolve the government of responsibility for the recent catastrophe and also served as the rationalization for many of the policies promoted by conservative terminationists."
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Douglas Miller, *Indians on the Move: Native American Mobility and Urbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 72.
[68] Ibid. Congress authorized the program to last ten years and became so impressed with its results that it devoted an additional $3.5 million to the initiative in July 1951.
[69] Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy*, 101.
[70] Officer, "Termination as Federal Policy," 123; Michael C. Walch, "Terminating the Indian Termination Policy," *Stanford Law Review* 35, no. 6 (July 1983): 1183-1189.
[71] Ibid.

day civil and criminal matters.[72] Most importantly, the IRA halted allotment, or the division of reservations into individual parcels.[73] Allotment served as the federal government's Indian policy under the 1887 Dawes Act and sought to assimilate Native peoples by encouraging a sedentary lifestyle.[74] HCR-108, then, represented a shift back toward the Dawes era by allowing for the partition and liquidation of Indian lands. Congress believed that research conducted by William Zimmerman, Dillon Myer's predecessor, would allow it to manage this shift. As BIA Commissioner, Zimmerman appeared before the Senate Civil Service Committee in February 1947 and identified Indian groups as belonging to one of three categories.[75] The first included tribes with enough resources and acculturation that trust status could be terminated immediately. The second and third categories featured tribes that required supervision for upwards of ten years or more. This categorization made termination seem straightforward, and thus became the framework for HCR-108. However, putting these criteria into practice proved more contentious than expected.

From its outset, termination served as a disorienting experience for Native peoples and one that Red Power activists frequently referenced in their push for land reclamation. That the policy became associated with dysfunction, deception, and an assault on Native identity through land dispossession is ironic given how its proponents envisioned it. As historian Laurie Arnold explained, "the men who drafted [HCR-108] believed the process would be a simple and relatively speedy one. Experts would go to reservations to assess the value of land, mineral, and

[72] Ibid. HCR-108 did not revoke tribes' jurisdiction over their lands. Instead, Public Law 280, which Congress passed as a complimentary measure to HCR-108, permitted states to assume criminal and civil jurisdiction over Indian reservations. For more detail, see Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, 18-21.
[73] Ibid.
[74] S. Lyman Tyler, *A History of Indian Policy* (Honolulu: University of the Pacific, 1973), 95; Wilkinson and Biggs, "The Evolution of the Termination Policy," 144. According to Wilkinson and Biggs, the Dawes Act resulted in the loss of approximately 86,000,000 acres of Native land.
[75] Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy*, 40-41; Fixico, Termination and Relocation,

human resources, and Congress would tally those figures to create a lump sum value that would be paid to tribal members of that group on a per capita basis."[76] Tribes were allowed to vote on whether to accept these payouts, but those that did were often misinformed or not informed at all about termination's ramifications. Two prominent examples include the Klamath and Menominee Tribes whose names appear in the original HCR-108 bill.[77] In the Klamath's case, neither the BIA nor tribal officials explained that termination would involve a full rescission of government services.[78] Consequently, tribal members voted in favor of the policy and received payouts of $43,000, a sum that many considered low given the tribe's extensive Oregonian timber reserves.[79] A similar situation unfolded in northern Wisconsin, where members of the Menominee Tribe believed that a refusal to accept termination would result in the withholding of an $8.5 million settlement won in 1951.[80] Tribal members thus voted for termination out of a concern for losing this money, but expressed regret once the government closed the tribe's rolls and transferred its lands to a private corporation known as Menominee Enterprises, Inc.[81] The Menominee, now devoid of their land and the cultural grounding that it provided, seemed rudderless in Wisconsin's upper reaches. Disconcerting as these instances were, termination did not stop with the Klamath and Menominee. Over the next seventeen years, 109 tribes were singled out for termination, and over 2 million acres of land passed out of Native hands.[82] Red

[76] Laurie Arnold, *Bartering with the Bones of Their Dead: The Colville Confederated Tribes and Termination* (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2012), ix.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., 129.
[79] Ibid., 129-131. Feeling angered and misled, a group of Klamaths launched a decades-long campaign to restore the tribe's federal trust status. They ultimately succeeded in 1986 when Congress passed the Klamath Restoration Act.
[80] Ibid., 131. Congress awarded the Menominee the settlement due to BIA mismanagement.
[81] Arnold, *Bartering with the Bones of Their Dead*, 131-133; Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, 183; Menominee Termination Law, June 17, 1954, "Travel Itineraries, 1957," Box 1, Folder 8, BIA Relocation, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL; Like the Klamaths, a contingent of the Menominee Tribe also led a campaign to reverse termination. Known as the Determination of Rights and Unity for Menominee Shareholders, or DRUMS, this group succeeded in 1973 when Congress passed the Menominee Restoration Act.
[82] Burt, "Roots of the American Indian Urban Experience," 88; Walch, "Terminating the Indian Termination Policy," 1186; National Congress of American Indians, letter to NCAI constituents, December 1, 1960.

Power protestors undertook some of the most notable efforts to halt these processes, although another group of Indian activists preceded them.

While UIAT can claim the distinction of having regained Native land, the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA) and National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) can claim recognition for stalling the loss of Indian territory. These organizations served as counterpoints to Red Power groups, with the AAIA's membership consisting mostly of non-Native academics, patricians, and retired government bureaucrats.[83] Their main contention with Red Power protestors, however, involved an insistence on promoting Native sovereignty through political lobbying rather than direct action, an attitude reflected by attire. Whereas Red Power activists sported headbands and braided their hair in accordance with traditional Native customs, AAIA and NCAI members wore suits and presented themselves as professionally as possible. Younger and more militant activists scoffed at this formal garb, but the AAIA and NCAI countered any mockery by pointing to a key accomplishment. Just a few years after HCR-108's passage, these groups nearly repealed termination when they lobbied for Senate Concurrent Resolution 3 (SCR 3). This bill sought to restore tribes' trust relationship with the federal government while guaranteeing Indians technical and financial assistance.[84] The AAIA and NCAI introduced the measure carefully, using, as historian Daniel Cobb described, the "politics of 'cold war civil rights'" to frame SCR 3 as assisting the United States in its ideological struggle against the Soviet Union.[85] As these groups argued, investment in the U.S.'s Native population would signal to Indigenous peoples in other parts of the world that America truly valued the welfare of its citizens.[86] This portrayal resonated with several congressmen but failed to secure SCR 3's

[83] Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America*, 14.
[84] Ibid., 17.
[85] Ibid., 4, 18-19.
[86] Ibid.

passage.[87] Nonetheless, it left a strong impression on the Eisenhower Administration, which encouraged Congress to lessen its drive to terminate tribes and instead focus on Native communal and economic development.[88]

Despite the AAIA and NCAI's best efforts, termination remained federal policy until 1970, and left a lasting influence on those who led the struggle to reclaim Native land.[89] Richard Oakes, the figure most associated with the Alcatraz occupation, vividly remembered rumblings of termination sweeping across the Akwesasne Reservation. Although a teenager at the time, Oakes understood that termination equated to land loss and the replacement of tribal courts with racially biased state ones.[90] More than that, Oakes and others feared that Akwesasne culture, so intimately tied to the tribe's land base, would disappear with the reservation. These thoughts weighed heavily on the future activist, who, as Blansett wrote, ended up devoting "most of his political life" to overturning termination legislation.[91] A different although equally moving experience affected Adam Fortunate Eagle, an Ojibwa and architect of the Alcatraz occupation. As Smith and Warrior explained, Fortunate Eagle once appeared "the kind of Indian the federal bureaucracy hoped to create."[92] Born "Adam Nordwall" on Minnesota's Red Lake Reservation, Fortunate Eagle moved to San Francisco in 1951 where he established an extermination business, donned suits, and drove a Cadillac.[93] Once out west, however, Fortunate Eagle met Indians

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[87] Ibid., 21. Cobb stated that Senator George S. McGovern was especially impressed by the AAIA and NCAI's work. McGovern became "a critically important ally" for tribes in the decades to come.
[88] Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America*, 14; Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, 178. Wilkinson claimed that the Democratic Party's winning control of the Senate in 1955 constituted another key factor in termination's demise. The Democrats' victory cost Senator Watkins his subcommittee chairmanship and ability to "ramrod" termination legislation through Congress.
[89] In July 1970, President Richard Nixon successfully petitioned Congress for the repeal of HCR-108. For more detail, see Richard Nixon, "Special Message on Indian Affairs," July 8, 1970, Washington D.C., https://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/timeline/522.html; Tyler, *A History of Indian Policy*, 221-222.
[90] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 51.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 9.
[93] Adam Fortunate Eagle, "Urban Indians and the Occupation of Alcatraz Island," in *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 18, no. 4 (1994): 34-36; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 9.

whose lands had been torn asunder by termination. Without a land base to which to orient themselves, these Indians drifted amid San Francisco parks, alleys, and side streets. These encounters troubled Fortunate Eagle to the extent that he declared the policy the "most insidious federal project of the twentieth century."[94] Albeit uncertain, it is possible that he may have crossed paths with Russell Means. A Lakota who grew up in cities rather than on reservations, Means never experienced the disorientation and loss of identity that came with having his homeland ripped out from underneath him. In fact, Means did not learn of HCR-108 until he began spending time in San Francisco bars.[95] Yet, after hearing stories similar to those that influenced Fortunate Eagle, he cynically condemned termination, summarizing the policy as: "Here's a little money for everything we've done to you, for everything we're doing to you now, for everything we're going to take away from you–and to hell with your heritage, to hell with your children, and to hell with your future."[96] Moved by these experiences, Means helped make termination a central focus of the 1972 BIA occupation during which he and other Red Power protestors demanded back land that had been painfully lost.

As deeply as termination shaped some of Red Power's most recognizable leaders, it is difficult to express how profoundly the policy influenced a young Bernie Whitebear. Much of Whitebear's sensitivity toward termination stemmed from his upbringing on the Colville Reservation where his mother taught respect for the natural world and where government initiatives seemed to throw nature out of balance. According to Whitebear's brother, Lawney Reyes, his mother instructed her children "that the water had power" and provided "life for the

[94] Golden Gate National Recreation Area, "We Hold the Rock."
[95] Russell Means and Marvin J. Wolf, *Where White Men Fear to Tread*: *The Autobiography of Russell Means* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 96; Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 89. Means specifically learned of termination in Warren's Slaughterhouse, which Lumbee activist Dean Chavers described as "the grungiest bar in the world."
[96] Means and Wolf, *Where White Men Fear to Tread*, 96.

People, all beings of the forest, and the great salmon that came up the river."[97] Water and river, in this case, referred to the Columbia, which in 1933, underwent one of the most extensive damming projects in American history.[98] The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) spearheaded this undertaking and completed construction of the Grand Coulee Dam after detonating tons of dynamite and pouring thousands of pounds of concrete.[99] The CCC hailed this dam as a remarkable feat of engineering, but the Sin-Aikst remembered it as something entirely different. For generations, the Columbia's salmon runs served as the Sin-Aikst's main source of sustenance.[100] The dam, however, permanently ended these runs, and, in Reyes's words, marked the Sin-Aikst's descent into "unimaginable poverty."[101] Moreover, the project's completion traumatized Indian youth, who, standing on the Columbia's banks, watched masses of salmon hurl themselves against "the solid concrete mass that stood between them and their spawning grounds upriver."[102] Whitebear was one of these children and never forgot the disruption that government interference brought to his home. Therefore, when talk of termination reached his reservation, he quickly grasped the seriousness of the situation. The loss of Colville land had the potential to disrupt tribal identity just as much, if not more, than the construction of the Grand Coulee.

The Colville Reservation's battle over termination constituted one of the most formative experiences in Whitebear's life and provided an antithesis to what UIAT strove to achieve. As Arnold explained, the Colville Tribes' experience with termination was unusual in many

[97] Lawney L. Reyes, *White Grizzly Bear's Legacy: Learning to be Indian* (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2002), 13.
[98] Ibid., 49.
[99] Ibid., 73.
[100] Ibid., 50-51, 71.
[101] Ibid., 50.
[102] Ibid., 49.

respects, so much that it adds a "new dimension" to histories of the policy.[103] Specifically, the Colville Tribes distinguished themselves from other Native peoples by actively *pursuing* termination.[104] This decision extended to 1872 when the federal government opened 1.5 million acres of the Colville Reservation's northern half to settlement.[105] Although promising to compensate the Colville Tribes at one dollar per acre, the government failed to deliver any payment.[106] To many tribal members, losing half of their land base felt like losing half of themselves, an experience which shook them to their core. Yet, the Colville Tribes refused to let the government's actions go unanswered and began a century-long struggle to reclaim their reservation's lost portion. Termination, it seemed, provided an opportunity to bargain with federal officials. In October 1953, the Colville Business Council, the Tribes' governing body, traveled to Yakima, Washington to present the following proposition to BIA Commissioner Glen Emmons: the Tribes would accept termination in exchange for whatever lands remained of their reservation's northern half.[107] When Emmons expressed openness to the idea, the council returned to hold meetings and introduce termination bills.[108] Whitebear attended these events and grew alarmed at the infighting that debate over termination caused.[109] As Lawney Reyes detailed, "Bernie could see the danger of termination, especially to those Indians who still lived on the reservation" and "became angry every time he thought of how our tribe…was dispossessed of their land, their culture, and finally their well-being."[110] Whitebear, therefore,

[103] Arnold, *Bartering with the Bones of Their Dead*, xi.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid., 8.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid., 13.
[108] Ibid., 13-15.
[109] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 87.
[110] Ibid., 84, 87.

expressed relief when members of the Tribes voted against termination.[111] Colville land had been preserved for the time being, but elsewhere in Indian country, Native peoples were boarding buses and watching what remained of their homes fade into the rearview mirror.

As debate over termination raged on the Colville Reservation, another federal policy brought a generation of Native Americans to cities and laid the groundwork for land reclamation. On January 1, 1952, Congress launched its Voluntary Relocation Program, an initiative based on the 1950 Navajo-Hopi rehabilitation act.[112] This program resettled Native peoples as termination diminished their homelands, establishing relocation centers in Chicago, Salt Lake City, Denver, San Francisco, and San Jose.[113] In doing so, it promised relocatees a one-way bus ticket, temporary housing, and job counseling for a year after arrival.[114] Terminationists, familiar with reservation poverty and eager to encourage Indian assimilation, assumed that Native peoples would jump at this opportunity. Instead, they found the program struggling to take off as tribal governments expressed more recalcitrance toward the initiative than anticipated. This resistance was, in fact, a sign of things to come, as Miller noted that Indians proved to be "players" rather "victims" in the relocation process.[115] For instance, BIA officials traveled to the Menominee, Oneida, and Stockbridge-Munsee reservations less than a month into the VRP's operation to determine why so few people had enlisted in the program.[116] These agents discovered that the reservations' residents felt confident finding jobs in nearby Green Bay and Manitowoc.[117]

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[111] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 87; Arnold, *Bartering with the Bones of Their Dead*, 15-16, 28. Arnold explained that the Colville termination bills included majority-of-voters clauses. This meant that the bills needed a simple majority to pass, but also that abstention equated to a "nay" vote. These clauses thus awarded an advantage to tribal members who opposed termination.
[112] Miller, *Indians on the Move*, 84.
[113] Ibid., 93.
[114] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 112; Johnson, *The American Indian Occupation*, 7-8.
[115] Miller, *Indians on the Move*, 69.
[116] Ibid., 84.
[117] Ibid.

Similarly, BIA personnel learned that members of Minnesota's Prairie Island Dakota community preferred working in rural towns rather than in cities such as Minneapolis.[118] The Minnesota Chippewa Tribal Executive Committee, the Dakota's neighbors, explained that it could not endorse relocation out of concern that children born away from the reservation would lose tribal privileges.[119] Indians, it seemed, were not nearly as willing to part with their lands as government officials had expected. While relocation was to become a watershed experience for Native peoples, it needed revamping first.

After a lackluster inaugural year, the VRP received a major boon from BIA Commissioner Dillon Meyer. Meyer, then nearing the end of his BIA tenure, embarked on a campaign to bolster the VRP just as Arthur Watkins sold his fellow congressmen on termination. In December 1952, Meyer delivered a rousing speech before an audience of western governors in Phoenix, Arizona. Harkening to terminationists' surplus population theory, Meyer described reservations as housing too many Indians and displaying "broken homes, juvenile delinquency, bad health conditions, and general hopelessness."[120] Moreover, he claimed that he needed governors' assistance in convincing Indians to leave their homelands, ominously warning that "if we miss this opportunity to relocate and raise the standard of living of the surplus Indian population, it will mean a continued subsidy either by the Federal Government or the States."[121]

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[118] Ibid, 81-82

[119] Ibid., 86. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council also refrained from supporting the VRP. The Council explained to BIA officials that tribal members were awaiting a land settlement that could award $5,000 to each person residing within reservation limits.

[120] Ibid., 88.

[121] Ibid., 89. Although speaking of subsidies and standards of living, Myer's tenure as head of the War Relocation Authority lurked behind these statements. The WRA oversaw the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II, dispersing them across the country and dissolving many of the West Coast urban enclaves that they called home. Myer seems to have believed that similar methods could be used to eliminate Indian reservations. As historian Richard Drinnon explained, the BIA Commissioner argued that Indians "should be made as *un*comfortable on, and as comfortable off, their reservations as it was the power of government to make them. Harassed without intermission *on* their reservations, these 'pensioners upon the national bounty' could be driven off to vanish in welfare rolls and the slums where Myer had scattered so many of the Japanese Americans." For more detail, see

The governors heeded Meyer's call and lent their support to strengthening the VRP over the next four years. Between 1953 and 1957, governors' endorsements and increased congressional funding grew reservation relocation offices from 14 to 41 and the BIA's Branch of Relocation Services' personnel from 90 to 240.[122] The number of relocation centers also expanded from six to twelve, with offices cropping up in Oakland, Dallas, Cincinnati, and Cleveland and two experimental offices opening in Joliet and Waukegan, Illinois.[123] In 1956, the BIA highlighted an enrollment of 6,964, its highest ever for a single year.[124] Sixteen years later, it claimed credit for resettling over 100,000 Indians, or 13% of the nation's Native population.[125] A carefully crafted marketing campaign was responsible for much of this success, producing images that Red Power activists never forgot.

Years before they stared down law enforcement officers, Red Power leaders gazed curiously at pamphlets released by BIA relocation offices. St. Louis's relocation office released one of these pamphlets in the late-1950s, presenting an enticing picture of the Gateway City and the BIA personnel that worked there. Pictures of the office's employees adorned the pamphlet's cover, greeting onlookers with images of smiling and well-dressed officials. A statement inside the cover read: "You are about to make an important decision which is an important step in your life…that of choosing the city in which you are to make your new home…We sincerely hope that you will be deciding to come to St. Louis and that we will be seeing you very soon. This is a special invitation from all of us in this office."[126] The pamphlet then extolled the benefits of city

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Richard Drinnon, *Keeper of Concentration Camps: Dillon S. Myer and American Racism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1987), 166, 192.

[122] Ibid., 93

[123] Ibid. The BIA chose Joliet and Waukegan as experimental offices because they were suburbs rather than major metropolitan areas.

[124] Ibid., 90.

[125] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 112. Cities claimed almost 50 percent of the nation's Native population by 1977.

[126] St. Louis Field Office—Employment, Staff, Photographs, Newsclippings, Box 3, Folder 34, Urban Relocation Office 1955-1975, BIA Relocation Collection, Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.

living, describing a world in which Native relocatees could obtain steady work, better homes, and middle-class lifestyles. Materials like these proliferated throughout the VRP's duration, encouraging Native peoples to take a government-sponsored bus ticket and try their hand at urban life. Between 1955 and 1975, Chicago's relocation office released numerous brochures depicting Indians thriving in the city. One such brochure showed Mr. Henry Spencer, a Navajo relocatee, smiling as he stacked lumber at the R.R. Donnelly Corporation.[127] Spencer, the brochure explained, made $1.67 an hour, a rate similar to another Navajo relocatee, Mr. Charlie Skeets.[128] Skeets's picture appeared alongside Spencer's, and depicted the young man dressed handsomely while embracing his wife and infant daughter on the sidewalk of a Chicago neighborhood.[129] The family could not have seemed further removed, physically or culturally, from the reservation that had once been their home and source of their Navajo identity. Moreover, these BIA materials made a new and financially rewarding life seem just a decision away.

Mr. Spencer and Mr. Skeets were hardly the only Native Americans that the BIA highlighted to encourage relocation. The Bureau also held up the Hardy and Gonzales Families as motivation for Indians to abandon their reservations and assimilate into mainstream society. The Hardy Family, described as "Chippewas from Minnesota," relocated to Chicago in 1957 and settled in the suburb of Waukegan.[130] BIA pamphlets showed Mr. Samuel Hardy, his wife, and their two young children shopping in department stores and strolling along Waukegan's snow-

[127] Chicago Field Office—Employment, Families, Photographs, Miscellaneous, 1956, Box 2, folder 24, Urban Relocation Offices 1955-1975, BIA Relocation Collection, Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Chicago Field Office—Employment, Families, Photographs, Miscellaneous, 1956, Box 2, folder 28, Urban Relocation Offices 1955-1975, Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL. BIA pamphlets described Waukegan as "an industrial town of 45,000 on the shores of Lake Michigan in beautiful wooded country."

covered streets. They also displayed the Hardy's hosting guests in their well-furnished living room, where they laughed and enjoyed one another's company. Meanwhile, the Gonzales Family, who lived near the Hardys, also showcased the supposed benefits of urban life. Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzo Gonzales and their four children relocated from the Arapaho Reservation to 542 Washington St., which contained modern kitchen appliances and spacious living quarters. BIA materials depicted Mrs. Gonzales and her children relaxing on their living room carpet and solving a jigsaw puzzle. Another picture showed the Gonzales family seated on the couch and in one another's arms watching television. As the image's caption explained, the Gonzales were "far from" from their roots in New Mexico and had embarked a "new, independent life" with the BIA's assistance.[131] In these respects, the Gonzales and the Hardys seemed just like any other middle-class American family. Now removed from the lands that had been central to their identities as "Chippewa" and "Arapaho," these relocatees could, once and for all, disappear into larger society. As other relocation materials revealed, the adoption of mainstream values and lessening of one's Indian identity was exactly what the BIA intended.

BIA brochures both oversimplified city life and patronized Native peoples' ability to adjust to urban environments. Reflecting on these materials, Miller wrote that "it is difficult to overstate the…paternalistic tone" of a BIA informational booklet.[132] An example of this condescension appeared in a brochure sent to the Menominee Reservation. Displaying a pie chart labeled "Relocation Is Many Things," the brochure explained that relocatees accustomed to "seasonal work cycles" needed to learn "sincerity," "sound planning," "a desire to do better," and "community adjustment."[133] If accomplished, relocatees could expect "housing," "jobs,"

[131] Ibid.
[132] Miller, *Indians on the Move*, 95.
[133] "Travel Itineraries, 1957," Box 1, Folder 8, Fort Peck Agency, BIA Relocation Collection, Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.

"job benefits," and "financial aid."[134] This same logic appeared in another pamphlet that showed Native adults sitting smiling and attuned in rows of classroom desks. The picture's caption described the students taking night courses at an unnamed city college and emphasized punctuality and proper dress as essential to academic and career success. Meanwhile, other BIA materials offered gendered guidance, with one manual encouraging Native women to avoid working outside the home in order to facilitate good relations with their neighbors. The manual also considered it women's responsibility to protect their families from cities' "more unsavory characters," explaining "DO watch for pick pocketers" and "DO carry proper identification."[135] The BIA's seemingly endless images of Native peoples in modern homes presented rewards for following this advice. These pictures suggested what awaited Indians if they relinquished their Indigeneity and slipped into the American mainstream. The problem, as Red Power activists later made known, was that these rewards were a façade and that Native peoples had little interest in surrendering their Indian identity and the land from which it stemmed.

Despite all of its promotional materials, the BIA's carefully cultivated image of city life unraveled as Native Americans and future Red Power activists migrated to cities. Millie Ketcheshawno, a Muskogee and participant in the Alcatraz occupation, remembered BIA materials "luring" her to Oakland, California in the early-1960s.[136] Like many other relocatees, Ketcheshawno expected improved living conditions compared to those that she had known in Eufala, Oklahoma. Instead, a bus dropped her off in a "poverty-type area" where she exclaimed: "Oh my gosh this is just what I came from!"[137] LaNada Means, a member of the Shoshone

[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Carla Hinton, "Indian voices cry out," *The Oklahoman*, August 21, 2000, accessed September 20, 2022, https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/2000/08/21/indian-voices-cry-out/62185090007/.
[137] Golden Gate National Recreation Area, "We Hold the Rock."

Bannock Nation and Ketcheshawno's colleague in the Alcatraz takeover, had a similar experience after exiting a bus in San Francisco. Raised on Idaho's Fort Hall reservation, Means endured poverty as well as physical beatings in a BIA boarding school.[138] Bureau officers promised her better times in the Bay Area only to relocate her to an impoverished neighborhood where she and other Native women pooled together to make ends meet.[139] Decades later, Means frustratingly summarized her experience as: "We were not aware that the federal government's plan to 'drop us off' in the cities was another insidious method of depriving us of our reservation lands and membership in our tribes."[140] Richard Oakes drove himself from Brooklyn to San Francisco in the summer of 1968, but encountered the same poverty as Means and Ketcheshawno. Also settling in the city's Mission District, or "Red Ghetto," Oakes noticed relocatees' rat and roach-infested apartments and expressed concern that the BIA seemed uninterested in mitigating the situation.[141] As he later explained, Indians had known hardship on reservations, but found cities' sheer size profoundly "disruptive."[142] Indeed, the improved lives that the BIA promised Native peoples rarely began as advertised.

Poor housing proved just the beginning of relocation's shortcomings. Besides touting comfortable images of urban life, BIA materials guaranteed "retention-based services" such as monthly stipends and training in navigating urban environments.[143] The Bureau's Washington D.C. headquarters sent memos to each of its field offices instructing employees to administer these services immediately after relocation. Relocation officers were supposed to walk Indians

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[138] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 71.
[139] California Historical Society, "Exploring Red Power in the 1960s," YouTube Video, 1:36:05, December 4, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMGvGCIhKes.
[140] LaNada War Jack, "Reflections of Alcatraz," in *Gathering Native Scholars: UCLA's Forty Years of American Indian Culture and Research*, ed. Kenneth Lincoln (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009): 327.
[141] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 83.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Relocation Records: Series 1, 1936-1963, Box 1, BIA Relocation Collection, Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL; Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 84.

through using household equipment such as "gas or electric cooking ranges, electric refrigerators, [and] water and toilet facilities."[144] They were also expected to lead tours of relocatees' neighborhoods, showing Indians "how to use…supermarkets, drug stores, barber shops, beauty shops, do-it-yourself laundries, public parks, playgrounds, and other recreation facilities."[145] Afterward, a series of check-ups were to follow. The St. Louis relocation office required employees to carry out "a maximum of three follow-up visits to every Bureau-assisted relocate within the first six months the individual or family is in the city."[146] Once a relocatee "achieved stability and a sense of self-assurance," employees could cease visits and whatever support they were providing.[147] And cease support they did. Securing an unskilled or semi-skilled job was often enough to convince officials that "stability" had been achieved and that contact could be cut off.[148] These jobs, however, experienced high turnover rates, meaning that relocatees frequently lost their source of income without notice.[149] Red Power activists had already experienced these disruptions first-hand, pushing them further toward protest.

For many Native peoples, the shock and disillusionment that came with relocation persisted after arrival. Wilma Mankiller, a participant in the Alcatraz occupation and future Chief of the Cherokee Nation, watched her family struggle repeatedly after relocating from Tahlequah, Oklahoma to San Francisco. BIA officials provided Mankiller's family limited support while enrolling her and her nine siblings in local schools. As a junior high student, Mankiller felt deeply disconnected from her roots in Oklahoma and witnessed her classmates ride bicycles, use

[144] Urban Relocation Offices, St. Louis Field Office—Information for Relocatees, 1956, Box 3, Folder 37, BIA Relocation Collection, Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Johnson, *The American Indian Occupation*, 10; Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 84. Blansett states that one of the major criticisms of the termination and relocation era was that the federal government meant to exploit a large unskilled labor force.
[149] Johnson, *The American Indian Occupation*, 10.

telephones, and do all kinds of things that she had "never done before."[150] These experiences fostered a sense of isolation and the feeling of being "surrounded by children from another planet."[151] Consequently, the future activist had difficulty putting her feelings into words, something that Adam Fortunate Eagle had little trouble doing. On Sundays, Fortunate Eagle and his family visited San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, where they spoke with relocatees struggling to make ends meet amid a lack of social services. These Indians also expressed concern over whether to even identify as Indigenous anymore. Recognizing that they were now removed from their homelands and part of a sprawling cityscape, claiming Indigeneity seemed questionable and acutely uncomfortable. Frustrated by what he heard, Fortunate Eagle condemned the relocation program and sarcastically described BIA officials telling Indians: "Come out and sign up for relocation, we're going to get you an apartment to live in, we're going to ship you free of charge, you and your family, grandma and grandpa!"[152] Halfway across the country, future AIM leader Dennis Banks had a more cordial experience with BIA officials when they helped him secure a job at Minneapolis's Honeywell Corporation.[153] Initially, the position paid dividends, granting Banks a modest but steady income. However, as the twenty-nine-year-old Ojibwa commuted to work every day, he noticed Indians shuffling along Minneapolis's Fourth Avenue without any employment.[154] Years later, Banks helped lead an exodus out of

[150] UW Video, "A Modern Pioneer in the Cherokee Nation (Wilma Mankiller)," YouTube Video, 28:24, March 6, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqqkKrz5U5Y.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Golden Gate National Recreation Area, "We Hold the Rock."
[153] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 130. Smith and Warrior explained that the Honeywell Corporation actively hired Native employees and assigned Banks to a recruiter position. Banks recruited over four hundred Indians during his tenure with Honeywell but felt conflicted over the corporation's production of antipersonnel weapons for the Vietnam War.
[154] Dennis Banks with Richard Erdoes, *Ojibwa Warrior: Dennis Banks and the Rise of the American Indian Movement* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 59. Banks described Minneapolis's Fourth Avenue as "the center of Indian life in Minneapolis." While Indians had difficulty finding work in the Twin Cities, their high incarceration rates made them into an unpaid labor force for various municipal projects.

Minneapolis to the nation's capital, where scores of Indians who had once wandered city streets without any sense of home demanded land back.

Before that exodus or any other protest took place, two conflicting images of the VRP emerged. The BIA propagated the first of these images, which painted the program as proceeding as advertised. A 1957 article in the *Waukegan News-Sun* encapsulated this stance by drawing comparisons between white settlers' westward expansion and Indians' relocation to cities. The article nostalgically waxed that the VRP represented the "reversal of a historic movement [sic] of several generations ago, when sturdy Americans from the eastern seaboard moved into the Indian territories…in Conestoga wagons to homestead the prairie lands and establish settlements."[155] The article added that Indians were now moving to cities bearing the same "purpose and fundamental motivation" as white pioneers.[156] The VRP, therefore, could be seen as Native peoples following in the footsteps of more enlightened Anglo-Americans, although the article noted that Indians' relocation bore "none of the colorful aspects of the westward struggle of the early pioneers."[157] Meanwhile, a competing image of the VRP appeared in underground Native newspapers such as *The Indian*. In 1969, this publication featured an article that contradicted the sense of American pride presented by the *Waukegan News-Sun*. This piece detailed a Lakota Sioux family's relocation to San Francisco where they "huddled together in apartments…unable to look beyond themselves to the terrifying white world…because they don't have the skills, cultural or technical, to cope with it."[158] This family had indeed moved west as the *Waukegan News-Sun* reported, but doing so had come at a great cost to their health and confidence in their

[155] *Waukegan News-Sun*, February 4, 1975, Box 2, Folder 28, BIA Relocation Collection, Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] "The Indian," *The Indian*, May 15, 1969, American Indian Histories and Cultures Database, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.

identity. Without the feeling of home that land provided, the Lakota family lived in "an almost inhuman situation," and expressed their frustration primarily through drinking.[159] Relocation as envisioned by the BIA seemed to be running amok.

As the VRP's shortcomings came into focus, Indians carved out their own communities within urban environments that served as the foundation for land reclamation. As Miller explained, the literature concerning relocation tends to overlook these communities in favor of images of Indians "fumbl[ing] with modern gadgets and struggl[ing] to cope with the future."[160] Such depictions perpetuate what historian Ned Blackhawk described as "the pathological urban Indian trope" and what Thrush declared the "primitive rube" in the city trope.[161] The result is that Indians' transformation of urban areas such as San Francisco's Mission District into hubs of empowerment and intertribal activity goes unnoticed. The Mission District was, as Millie Ketcheshawno described, "a poverty-type area" characterized by low-income housing, high unemployment, and crime.[162] Initially, Native families' movement into the neighborhood fostered conflict with Samoan immigrants and other ethnic groups over jobs and municipal services.[163] Despite this fighting and the BIA's erratic social support, Indians established spaces where they conversed with one another and gained confidence expressing their Indigeneity. Some of the first of these spaces included bars.[164] The Klamath-owned Warren's Slaughterhouse

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[159] Ibid.
[160] Miller, *Indians on the Move*, 8.
[161] Miller, *Indians on the Move*, 8; Ned Blackhawk, "I Can Carry On from Here: The Relocation of American Indians to Los Angeles," *Wicazo Sa Review* 11, no. 2 (1995): 16-30; Coll Thrush, "Iceberg and the Cathedral: Encounter, Entanglement, and Isuma in Inuit London," *Journal of British Studies* 53, no. 1 (January 2014): 59-79.
[162] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 85, 94. Native residents often referred to the Mission District as "the Little Rez."
[163] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 85, 90, 94; Joan Ablon, "Retention of Cultural Values and Differential Urban Adaptation: Samoans and American Indians in a West Coast City," *Social Forces* 49, no. 3 (1971): 385-393. Conflict between Native and Samoan residents ultimately escalated into a turf war. In 1965, San Francisco mayor Joseph Alioto's office explicitly encouraged Samoan street gangs to target the Mission District's Native community. Native peoples had expressed their opposition to Alioto's BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) line, which was designed to run through the San Francisco Indian Center and Warren's Slaughterhouse, the city's most popular Indian bar.
[164] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 88-89.

developed a reputation as San Francisco's most famous "Indian Bar," while several other taverns served as entry points into the city.[165] Here, Indians learned about opportunities for housing and tribal politics, while enjoying an atmosphere of relaxation. Russell Means, for one, described bars as the only places where Indians felt some measure of control over white people. As he explained, "Most Indians sense white power the first time they see whites on Indian reservation," but, when inside a tavern, Indians "could win a…brawl with anyone."[166] Indeed, Mission District taverns could, and often did, foster alcoholism and hostile social settings. In one particularly alarming incident, Richard Oakes had a pool cue smashed over his head and needed hospitalization.[167] Still, drinking establishments exercised critical roles in building inter-city Native communities and imparting survival skills onto migrants.[168]

The survival skills that Indians learned in taverns trickled out into other spaces, the most notable of which involved community centers. In the early 1950s, the St. Vincent De Paul Society, a Catholic organization, established what would later become San Francisco's Indian Center.[169] Located on sixteenth street at the edge of the Mission District, the center resided upstairs in an old frame building and sported a hardwood dance floor, meeting rooms, and small restaurant. These spaces allowed for numerous gatherings, particularly ones concerning job counseling and health outreach programs. The center, as a result, was able to provide some of the social services that the BIA failed to deliver. It also, like Indian bars, became a place where Native peoples could convey their difficulties and take pride in their Indigeneity. Wilma

[165] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 88-89; Means and Wolf, *Where White Men Fear to Tread*, 96.
[166] Means and Wolf, *Where White Men Fear to Tread*, 72-73.
[167] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 88-89, 216-218. Oakes was bartending at Warren's at the time of his assault. The attack occurred in the summer of 1970 after he had removed himself from the Alcatraz occupation. His injuries left him hospitalized for over two months and temporarily paralyzed the left side of his body.
[168] Ibid., 89.
[169] Ibid., 90-91. In the 1960s, the St. Vincent DePaul Society turned ownership of the building over to the American Indian Council of the Bay Area, an intertribal political group that offered aid to relocatees.

Mankiller believed that visiting the center counterbalanced the difficulties that she encountered in school. "The center," she explained, "became a sanctuary for me…an oasis where I could share my feelings and frustrations with kids from similar backgrounds." Other Indians felt the same, leading the center to host more than forty local organizations.[170] These organizations ranged from tribally-specific groups that supported initiatives such as language revitalization to intertribal groups, such as churches, that cut across tribal affiliations.[171] Powwows, however, constituted the center's most popular initiative.[172] These dances served as overt demonstrations of Native endurance while encouraging cooperation among Indians from different backgrounds. Although many powwow participants lost their homes to termination, dancing at the center and in San Francisco parks kept their Indian pride alive.

As the 1960s progressed, the atmosphere within the Mission District shifted from disillusionment to a mixture of cautious optimism and agitation. Heavy drinking and poor housing remained rampant, but the city's Native community could point to some real progress. The San Francisco Indian Center created numerous opportunities for intertribal cooperation, while providing some of the social support promised by the federal government. In addition, relocatees such as Elba Tuttle, a Lakota, began working with other minority groups to form Community Action Programs such as the Mission Coalition Organization (MCO). This organization supported tenant rights and battled gentrification in and around the Mission District.[173] Lastly, younger Indians such as LaNada Means, Richard Oakes, and Al Miller, all of whom would play roles in the Alcatraz occupation, gained admission to Bay Area colleges and

[170] Ibid., 91.
[171] Ibid., 93. Tribally-specific organizations included the Navajo, Eskimo, and Tlingit-Haida clubs. Six Indian churches were in the Bay Area. These ranged from the American Indian Baptist Church to the Native American Church.
[172] Ibid., 93.
[173] Ibid., 87.

universities. Despite these accomplishments, San Francisco Indians remained restless. To many, especially those of a younger generation, living conditions were improving slowly, if at all. Something integral seemed missing in the push to re-establish and permanently retain Indigeneity within San Francisco. The city's Native community had bars, community centers, and several other organizations, but the urban landscape still rubbed uncomfortably against relocatees' sense of themselves as Indians. Few moments captured this sentiment better than when the San Francisco Indian Center fired LaNada Means and Lehman Brightman, a Cheyenne River Sioux and another Alcatraz occupier, as editors of its newspaper. Both Means and Brightman had published articles criticizing federal Indian policy, leading the center's elders to remark that "Indians don't protest."[174] Brightman, however, harbored no regrets and retorted, "I knew what the Bureau of Indian Affairs was doing to our people…screwing them around…and I saw all the problems that Indian peoples had in urban areas…so I resolved to do something: raise a little hell."[175] Indian protest, in other words, was on the horizon just as it was eight hundred miles north in Seattle. Tucked away in the Pacific Northwest, Seattle Indians felt termination and relocation's effects in similar ways compared to Native peoples in San Francisco. They too challenged these policies by establishing their own institutions and turning to land back as the ultimate solution to urban Indians' problems.

While Native peoples remade pockets of the Bay Area, Seattle underwent its own Indigenous transformation. Just a couple of decades prior to the VRP's establishment, Seattle emerged as a bona fide metropolis when its population reached over 350,000.[176] This growth resulted from booming industry that suffered a major setback from the Great Depression. Waves

[174] California Historical Society, "Exploring Red Power in the 1960s."
[175] Quanah Brightman, "UNA International President #LehmanBrightman on the Real History of the Alcatraz Take Over 1969-1971, YouTube Video, 1:23, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyntBGEMyho.
[176] Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 152.

of layoffs swept through the city's factories as well as the canneries and lumber mills that rimmed Seattle's edge.[177] However, Seattle businesses roared back to life during World War II. The city's hangars and shipyards bustled as workers welded, drilled, and fueled the battleships and warplanes that supported the Allied war effort.[178] A town that had grown quiet for a decade saw its manufacturing base double and its industry assume a critical role in the fight overseas.[179] As laborers filed back into the workplace, they noticed, to their surprise, that Native peoples stood alongside them.[180] To be sure, Indians had lived in and near Seattle since the time of Chief Seeathl. Most resided on reservations just beyond the city, while others established homes in Seattle's working-class, or bungalow, neighborhoods.[181] An even greater number lived in the city's poorest areas, specifically Chinatown and Pioneer Square which consisted of flophouses and aging apartment buildings.[182] Few vestiges of the city's Indigenous landscape remained, but totem poles and Native street names testified to Indians' enduring presence.[183] World War II helped uncover this presence, while other factors brought it into greater focus.

As the 1940s transitioned into the 1950s, Native peoples moved to Seattle at increasing rates. The VRP contributed to this migration, although operating more subtly than it did in other parts of Indian country. The BIA never selected Seattle as one of its target cities for relocation, a

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[177] Ibid., 152, 164. Prior to World War II, lumber mills and canneries constituted the main industry in and around Seattle.
[178] Ibid., 164. One of these warplanes bore the name "Chief Seattle."
[179] Ibid. The number of Seattle residents employed in manufacturing went from 35,000 in 1940 to 115,000 in 1943. "Seattle," Thrush wrote, "was now Boeing's town."
[180] Ibid., 164-165; Seattle's economy underwent a brief downturn after the war. Industrial production rebounded in the 1950s, but the benefits of the boom "rarely trickled down to Indians, who experienced discrimination in virtually every aspect of life."
[181] Ibid., 153-155; Many of the Indian families in Seattle's working-class neighborhoods were of mixed-race.
[182] Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 155; Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom,* 323. These neighborhoods also consisted of single-resident occupancy (SRO) hotels. According to Blansett, residence in these hotels has led to Indians' exclusion in census counts.
[183] Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 152. Thrush mentioned the straightening of the Duwamish River, Lake Washington's flow through the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks, and the construction of new apartments making Seattle unrecognizable from the late nineteenth century.

decision which continues to draw speculation.[184] It did, however, open a relocation office in Olympia and proffer many of the same materials to Pacific Northwest tribes that it did to Native peoples elsewhere.[185] BIA officials especially promoted relocation as debates over termination rippled across the Colville Reservation and dam projects such as the Grand Coulee and Elwah disrupted Native peoples' traditional fishing economies.[186] These developments as well as an awareness of Seattle's growing industry encouraged many Indians to self-relocate. Side-stepping the BIA's services, these Indians either sought jobs in Seattle's defense industries or continued a decades-long practice of obtaining seasonal work in the canning and logging industries.[187] Such decisions exemplify Miller's claim that relocation often "fit within larger patterns of Indian social, economic, and spatial mobility."[188] The influx of Native peoples to Seattle also appears deceptively low, with census records indicating that the city's Indian population grew from 1,729 in the 1960s to around 12,000 in the 1970s.[189] Blansett, however, explained that U.S. census officials failed to acknowledge that Seattle's Indian community was "highly mobile, made up of thousands of Canadian First Nations peoples, and situated in close proximity to Tribes in western Washington."[190] In other words, movement between urban and reservation space was common

[184] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 174-175, 323. Blansett offered a few potential reasons for the BIA's decision: federal and Indian trust land surrounded Seattle; Washington State was already grappling with debates over Native fishing rights; seasonal and migratory work had long been common for Washington State Indians, meaning that permanent relocation lacked appeal. All these observations reflect concerns that Native peoples would be less likely to "melt" into the mainstream if relocated to Seattle.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid., 179-180, 323.
[187] Ibid., 174-175, 177. Blansett claimed that approximately one-third of the country's entire Native population relocated without government assistance.
[188] Miller, *Indians on the Move*, 8.
[189] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 171.
[190] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 173-174, 323; Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience*, 117. Blansett explained that Indian centers have always struggled to provide census officials with accurate measures concerning relocation. The consequence of such inaccurate reporting is that it prevents Native job agencies, nonprofits, and organizations from securing competitive federal funding. Fixico estimated that 55 percent of Seattle Indians were transient during the 1960s, meaning that they moved back and forth from the city to reservations. He also claimed that only 5 percent of the patients who visited the Seattle Indian Health Board had health insurance. 60 percent of patients are also believed to have had low incomes.

and skewed census taking at a time when Seattle's Native community was rapidly growing. As Lawney Reyes explained, anyone living in Seattle "could see an Indian" during the 1950s and 1960s. All they had to do was "jump in the car and go down to Skid Row."[191]

Skid Row, more commonly referred to as "Skid Road," encompassed Seattle's Pioneer Square as well as much of the city's first avenue. Those who followed Reyes's advice and drove through the neighborhood would have seen fading building facades and rusting industrial architecture. In his renowned 1951 history of Seattle, Murray Morgan wrote that visitors to Skid Road saw "men sitting on curbs and sleeping in doorways…condemned buildings…missions and taverns and wine shops and stores where you can buy a suit for $3.75."[192] Murray portrayed the neighborhood as "a place of dead dreams" where "the discards of the maelstrom of industrial activity" accumulated.[193] Thrush, writing decades later, pointedly described Skid Road as home to "hundreds of Indians."[194] Indeed, Seattle's 1960 census identified 30 percent of Pioneer Square's inhabitants as either "Indian or Oriental," meaning that the neighborhood housed the city's largest concentration of Native people.[195] For these Indians, living conditions were just as fraught as they were in places such as San Francisco. Landlords frequently exploited neighborhood tenants, hiking up rents for substandard and dilapidated housing.[196] Meanwhile, race and gender regulated access to capital in Seattle, leaving Native peoples at a disadvantage in securing home loans. The city's defense industry, although profitable since the war, failed to

[191] Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 165.
[192] Murray Morgan, *Skid Road: An Informal Portrait of Seattle* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), 9; Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 165.
[193] Ibid
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid. Ironically, Skid Road was one of the Japanese American enclaves that Dillon Myer and the War Relocation Authority attempted to dissolve. Japanese Americans' removal from the neighborhood occupies a central theme in Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter*, an autobiographical account of pre-war Seattle. For more detail, see Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (1953; reis., Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2014), 145-164.
[196] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 184.

guarantee all workers steady employment let alone a job. Consequently, alcoholism and crime ran high among Indians, facts that trickled back to reservations and led to whispers that Skid Road was a place where Native peoples disappeared.[197] As Thrush detailed, World War II opened some windows of opportunity, but life for Seattle Indians appeared "as bleak as ever…if not worse" during the 1950s and 1960s.[198]

While forlorn in many respects, Native peoples persevered amid Skid Road's poverty and established a base for their claim to Fort Lawton. The American Indian Women's Service League emerged as the neighborhood's most crucial nexus of support. Founded in 1958, this organization grew out of the efforts of seven Native women who relocated to Seattle and expressed dismay at Skid Road's conditions.[199] Pearl Warren, a Makah whose husband worked for the defense industry, rallied six of her friends together after her daughter, Mary Jo Butterfield, brought home a destitute Indian couple.[200] Moved by the couple's condition, Warren and her colleagues began visiting apartment buildings, Greyhound bus stations, and just about anywhere where Native peoples seemed in need of help.[201] These women's devotion to assisting other Indians seemed unusual at first. Thrush described the League's founders as "paragons of assimilation," as each was Christian, married with mixed race children, and enjoyed "the relative security of working- and middle-class life."[202] However, appearances proved misleading as these women demonstrated unwavering commitment to providing the resources that no state or government organization seemed intent on offering. As Warren explained, "We need to help

[197] Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 165. Thrush stated that unexpected deaths were, in fact, common in Skid Road. Reasons for fatalities could range from "cirrhosis" to "a fall under a passing train" to "a knife in the ribs."
[198] Ibid.
[199] Pearl Warren, "President's Message," *Indian Center News* 1, no. 1 (February 19, 1960): 1.
[200] Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 166. The couple had been roaming the streets after being discharged from a Seattle hospital.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid., 165-166.

each other—we have depended on others for too long…This is something that belongs to us as Indians. As Indians, let's do ALL THAT WE CAN!"[203] Over the next decade, the Service League did exactly that, transforming Skid Road, much like the Mission District, into a space where Native peoples could experience some sense of belonging. Although it did not provide the same feeling of home that the land lost through termination did, Skid Road became an important starting point for preserving Indigeneity.

Despite its humble origins, the Service League rapidly grew in importance among Seattle Indians. The group established a permanent residence at the intersections of First and Vine Streets where it announced the creation of the Seattle Indian Center and dove headfirst into assuaging the difficulties of city living.[204] Some of the center's earliest efforts included hosting potlatch dinners, running food and clothing drives, and offering sewing and craft classes.[205] Although a limited budget prevented them from serving meals, the organization's leaders described themselves as ready to "refer persons to whatever agency [that] can provide food, clothing, shelter, transportation, etc."[206] The center's success in these endeavors encouraged it to branch into other initiatives such as speaking engagements. These talks drew crowds of more one hundred people and addressed issues such as maintaining one's Indian identity in a society where being Native seemed unacceptable.[207] Speakers such as Wayne Williams (Tulalip) and Mary Hillare (Lummi) discussed the "sense of pressure" and "awareness of being different" that Indian children encountered in schools and made suggestions for helping Native youth feel more

[203] Warren, "President's Message," 1.
[204] Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 167. The group operated out of a rented storefront at this location.
[205] The American Indian Women's Service League, Inc., "Indian Center Open House," *Indian Center News* 1, no. 8 (September 10, 1960): 1.
[206] Ibid.
[207] The American Indian Women's Service League, Inc., *Indian Center News* 2, no. 11 (February 21, 1962): 2.

confident.[208] In addition, the center, like its counterpart in San Francisco, organized annual powwows.[209] One of the Center's first powwows happened to be one of its most impressive. Held at Seattle's Masonic Temple, this event showcased Yakima drummers, singers, and fancy dancers as well as an attendance of over one thousand people.[210] The event served as a major fundraiser for the nascent center and concluded with an "enthusiastic" applause.[211] What began as the workings of a few Indian women quickly made a name for itself.

By the mid-1960s, the Seattle Indian Center had drawn the attention of the city's non-Native residents while inspiring the formation of other Indigenous organizations. Just two years after its founding, the center received an award from Seattle's Civic Unity Committee for "outstanding contribution toward human relations in Seattle."[212] The committee hailed Pearl Warren and the Service League's other founders for visiting Indians in hospitals, helping relocatees adjust to city life, and "giving moral support and encouragement" to Indian students.[213] The committee also described the center as developing into a "full-fledged incorporated League for service…known among scores of Indian tribes across the state of Washington."[214] In 1966, Seattle mayor J. D. Braman acknowledged the center's influence when he proclaimed June 3, 4, and 5 "Seattle Indian Days" and encouraged city residents to attend the

[208] Ibid. Native education seems to have been of particular interest to the Service League. The group used its newsletters to communicate concern over Native students' high absenteeism and dropout rates and recommend solutions. For more, see: Wilbur Betts, "Aims of the American Indian Professional Associates," *Indian Center News* 2 (October 13, 1961): 1; The American Indian Women's Service League, Inc., "Educational Conference," *Indian Center News* 4, no. 25 (February 19, 1965): 3.
[209] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 180. The American Indian Women's Service League, Inc., "Calendar of Events," *Indian Center News* 5 (May 1967): 1.
[210] The American Indian Women's Service League, Inc., "North American Indian Benefit Ball," *Indian Center News* 2, no. 4 (April 7, 1961): 1. The powwow's impressive turnout resulted from radio and television announcements organized by Don McQuade.
[211] Ibid.
[212] The American Indian Women's Service League, Inc., "American Indian Women's Service League Given Award Citation," *Indian Center News* 1, no. 10 (November 4, 1960): 1.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid.

Service League's Native arts exhibition.[215] This praise corresponded with the rise of other Native organizations throughout Seattle. Taking its cue from the Service League, the Northwest Intertribal Club began sponsoring powwows once a month.[216] Meanwhile, the American Indian Professionals Association provided Native doctors and lawyers opportunities to socialize and develop work relationships.[217] As these relationships took hold, Indian businesses cropped up along Pike Street in downtown Seattle, most notably the Haida-owned Walt's Barber Shop.[218] Despite the poverty and other challenges that came with relocation, Seattle Indians managed to transform the urban environment in ways that benefitted them. Yet, extraordinary as their strides were, members of the city's Native community recognized that a land base remained crucial for the full restoration of Indian pride.

Pearl Warren and the Service League's success strengthened their resolve to speak out on behalf of Native peoples, and in 1967, they made land reclamation *the* objective for Seattle Indians. Warren, now possessing an impressive track record of assisting relocatees, felt that the center deserved a larger space than its location at First and Vine Streets. As she explained, "We feel the city should give us back…some land and we won't settle for any old haphazard deal. We want an Indian-style longhouse—a place with a meeting room, craft workshop and display center."[219] Warren's remarks largely went unnoticed by the press but caught the attention of Bernie Whitebear. At this point, Whitebear was no longer the eighteen-year-old who had once drifted around Seattle. Now thirty years old, he was a frequent presence at Seattle's Indian

[215] The American Indian Women's Service League, Inc., "Proclamation," *Indian Center News* 5, no. 6 (September 1966): 1.
[216] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 181. Blansett explained that powwows provided income for many Seattle Indians. Traders sold Indian crafts at these events while Indian businesses advertised themselves.
[217] Ibid., 182. The American Indian Professionals Association had a counterpart in San Francisco known as the United Indian Development Association.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid., 180.

Center and had either witnessed or personally experienced many of the hardships that the Service League sought to address. His brief college career had given way to a tour of duty in the U.S. Army, an experience which, by his own admission, provided his first steady source of employment and kept him out of Skid Road's alleys.[220] Whitebear enjoyed the Army's intensive training regimen and excelled as a paratrooper, but the sense of disillusionment that he experienced as a teenager returned when his service ended.[221] Like other Seattle Indians, he saw work in the city's defense industry as his next best option and secured a job as a jet parts fabricator.[222] The position afforded Whitebear a livable wage, but, as Lawney Reyes wrote, his heart remained "with the plight of Seattle Indians.[223] In 1968, Whitebear quit his job to devote his full attention to serving the city's Native community. Warren's remarks about land reclamation weighed heavily on him as he watched Seattle Indians struggle against overwhelming odds. As he soon realized, a land base within the city was indeed key to addressing urban Indians' socioeconomic issues and disconnect with their Native heritage.

Before Whitebear could carry land reclamation to fruition, he needed experience working with other Seattle Indians and gaining their trust. Whereas Warren and the Service League operated within Seattle's Indian Center, Whitebear's efforts at community building occurred within two other settings: the Seattle Indian Health Board and Skid Road bars. The first of these institutions developed in response to the absence of health services available to Seattle Indians. As Whitebear himself recalled, Seattle Indians had "little experience in preventative health care," seeking assistance "only in life threatening circumstances."[224] He explained that when Indians

[220] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 71. Before enlisting in the army, Whitebear made most of his income from seasonal fishing.
[221] Ibid., 71-72. Whitebear served in the 101st Airborne Division and completed a tour of duty in Europe.
[222] Ibid., 72-73.
[223] Ibid., 73.
[224] Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton," 3.

did pursue health services, they found themselves "ping-ponged from one hospital to the next."[225] Eventually, Bob Lupson, an Alaskan Native and member of the Kinatchitapi Club, another group that lobbied for the welfare of Pacific Northwest Indians, declared the situation untenable and opened a free medical clinic at the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital.[226] Lupson persuaded Lyle Griffith, an Oglala Sioux and doctor in residency, to join the clinic and enlist the services of over thirty other doctors.[227] A lack of funding continually plagued the clinic, inspiring Griffith to seek out a spokesperson who could secure donations. Whitebear, then well-known and well-liked at Seattle's Indian Center, appeared the logical choice, and agreed to apply for the Board's executive director position. Although admittedly knowing little about healthcare, Whitebear proved a skilled fundraiser, and raised enough money to hire an assistant director and full-time secretary for the organization.[228] His tenure with the Board lasted only a year but helped expand the clinic to the extent that it would later assist thousands of Indians.[229]

In addition to the Health Board, Whitebear became a frequent presence in Skid Road bars where he grew more familiar with urban Indians' problems. These bars, like those in San Francisco's Mission District, exercised a vital role in sustaining the city's community.[230] Seattle taverns afforded Indians camaraderie, news about work opportunities, and places to escape the trials and tribulations of city life. Whitebear knew the city's bar scene just as well, if not better, than anyone else, and became a regular patron after his Army service. Oftentimes, he drank with

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[225] Ibid.
[226] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 93. The Kinatchitapi Club lent its support to the Fort Lawton occupation, assisting Whitebear with efforts to obtain the base through bureaucratic channels. For more detail, see Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 48.
[227] Ibid., 94. Dr. Willard Johnson, director of Seattle's U.S. Public Health Service Hospital, also played an important role in the Health Board's founding. Reyes explained that Johnson was "sympathetic to the needs of Indians" and made clinic space available at the hospital.
[228] Ibid., 96-97.
[229] Ibid., 96.
[230] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 182.

three friends: George Meachem (Swinomish and Warm Springs), Robert Taylor (Yakima), and Gary Kalapis.[231] This group, which affectionately called itself the "Skins," revealed the kind of solace and companionship that Seattle Indians could find in taverns.[232] Lawney Reyes explained that the group "spent a lot of time together partying and drinking" and "always supported one another in times of need."[233] They formed a "fraternal order to bolster their spirits" and enjoyed comparing themselves to the Elks, the Moose, and the Shrines, all "fraternal organizations of the white man."[234] They especially enjoyed joking that they had their own lodges, or bars that they visited the most. Those who knew the Skins also understood that they did not take kindly to insults. Reyes wrote that "when the Skins gathered, others gave them a wide berth" knowing that an offense against one member would draw the response of the whole group.[235] Friendships such as these illustrate Seattle Indians' ability to find commonality and networks of support within unfamiliar settings.

However, Whitebear's experiences in Skid Road taverns also revealed the darker side of urban Indians' living conditions and solidified the need for land reclamation. As Reyes pointed out, Whitebear visited Seattle bars at a time when Indians were moving to the city "not only from reservations in Washington but also from states as far east as the Great Plains."[236] Much like the experiences that Russell Means and Adam Fortunate Eagle heard in San Francisco, these migrants expressed confusion and despair after relocating to "unknown environments of concrete, bricks, and steel."[237] Whitebear particularly witnessed this disillusionment among his friends. He understood, for instance, that the Skins' humor kept morale high but that it also

[231] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 78.
[232] Ibid., 79.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid., 82.

served as "a shallow exercise in passing time."[238] His friends' frustration over their lives and futures often spilled out during heavy nights of drinking. On one occasion, George Meachem asked whether anyone had as much difficulty finding employment as him and then despondently remarked: "The only place I can get a job is in the berry fields at Puyallup [,Washington]. Imagine a great warrior like me picking raspberries."[239] A similar sadness and questioning of his identity followed Robert Taylor whose work hauling hundred-pound sacks of grain earned him the nickname "Chief." Reyes described Taylor as a fierce fighter who loved "telling his favorite jokes to anyone who would listen."[240] However, his growing dependency on alcohol made many believe that he was becoming "a joke himself."[241] Whitebear, for his part, listened to his friends' struggles and sympathized with them. As critical as bars were in establishing solidarity among urban Indians, they were simply not enough to address the social, financial, and cultural hardships that afflicted relocatees. The same could be said for Seattle's other Native institutions, which, although necessary for stemming the erosion of Indian culture, did not allow Indigenous peoples to connect with their heritage to the extent that land did. One night, therefore, Whitebear vowed to address Seattle Indians' plight and ensure that state and federal governments would take Native peoples' needs seriously.[242] That pledge would lead him to occupy Fort Lawton, retake the land needed to be fully Indian, and forever change the dynamic of Seattle's Native community.

By the late-1960s, conditions had aligned for a major push back against the federal government's termination of Indian lands and attempted assimilation of Native peoples through

[238] Ibid., 81.
[239] Ibid., 72.
[240] Ibid., 78.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 84; Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 182; Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 175.

relocation. Termination proceeded vigorously only for a few years, but in that time, wrested tribes of millions of acres of land. The experience of losing one's home struck at Indians' most intimate understandings of themselves as distinct tribal peoples. Without their land, Native Americans began to wonder whether they were even Indian anymore. This thought proved so disorienting that historian Alvin M. Josephy Jr. has described it as "termination psychosis," or an "an all-pervading suspicion of government motives in Indian affairs."[243] Indeed, Indians' wariness toward federal authority increased as they participated in the VRP. BIA materials portrayed relocation as bettering Indians' lives, but city living often left Native peoples feeling isolated. A sporadic administration of social services coupled with government officials' belief that Indians would simply "disappear" or "melt" into the American mainstream forced relocatees to fend for themselves.[244] As Standing Rock Sioux scholar Vine Deloria Jr. explained, the VRP operated on the singular and misguided assumption that "you could take an Indian family into the city, give them employment training, help them find a house, and [that] they would succeed, which is a definition of a human being only in economic terms."[245] Yet, despite these setbacks, Native peoples transformed urban spaces to suit their own needs. In cities such as San Francisco and Seattle, Indian centers, bars, and a host of other institutions maintained a grip on Indigenous culture at a time when it seemed on the verge of slipping away. Land, all the while, remained the key to retaining that culture for the foreseeable future. A cadre of Red Power activists recognized this situation as they worked within urban areas, articulating a simple yet profound vision: retake the land that had been lost and improvements in Native affairs would follow.

[243] Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy – A National Challenge*, 90th Cong., Senate Resolution 165 (Washington, DC, 1969).
[244] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 174.
[245] Golden Gate National Recreation Area, "We Hold the Rock."

Chapter 2: Land Back

On March 8, 1970, residents of the Seattle metropolitan area awoke to an unusual sight. Two caravans of cars, each half a mile long, were working their way down the normally quiet suburban streets to the Fort Lawton military base. Displaying Native American banners, the cars contained more than one hundred Indian men, women, and children intent on occupying the presumably abandoned army installation. Upon arrival, these protestors promptly exited their vehicles, scaled the fort's fences, and joined in song around makeshift teepees. Meanwhile, Bob Satiacum, a Puyallup and one of the takeover's architects, readied himself to recite a proclamation explaining the protestors' plans to not merely occupy the base's 1,100 acres but to reclaim them. Satiacum, however, never received his chance, as forty military police officers unexpectedly descended on the scene. Dressed in riot gear, these officers exercised little restraint when they began tackling, handcuffing, and forcibly dragging the protestors off the premises.[246] Trying to make sense of the disarray, occupier Randy Lewis concluded, "all hell broke loose."[247] With the protestors bloodied and locked in the base's stockade, it seemed as though their efforts had reached a rather unremarkable end. That was until three years later, when Seattle Mayor Wes Ulhman stood on Fort Lawton's grounds and declared the dedication of twenty acres to UIAT.[248]

In the time between Fort Lawton's March 8 takeover and Mayor Ulhman's concession, UIAT engineered a strategy that differentiated it from other Red Power protests and allowed it to

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[246] Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton," 5; Allen, "By Right of Discovery"; Bergsman and Henderson, "Indians 'Invade' Army Posts"; Richard Simmons, "Indians Invade Ft. Lawton," *Seattle Times,* March 10, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm; "Army Repels Indians at Forts Lawton and Lewis," *Bremerton Sun*, March 9, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm; "Army Disrupts Indian Claim on Fort Lawton," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 9, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm; Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 189-190. According to Blansett, Leonard Peltier was one protestor helping others over the fences. Peltier is best known for his alleged killing of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1975.

[247] Lynda V. Mapes, "Native Americans mark 40 years since Fort Lawton protest." *Seattle Times*, March 8, 2010, https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/native-americans-mark-40-years-since-fort-lawton-protest/.

[248] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 88.

achieve the seemingly unattainable goal of land back. This approach, which was equal parts protest and negotiation, placed government officials in compromising positions that the Alcatraz and BIA occupiers sought but failed to accomplish. Whereas these protestors remained committed to confrontation until the very end, UIAT shifted its strategy at the opportune moment. Sensing growing support for its cause, the group embarked on a lobbying campaign that solidified its claim to Fort Lawton. These differences in strategy are not only critical for understanding Fort Lawton's success, but challenge the interpretations of scholars such as George Castile who have characterized the Red Power era as one "street theater" Indians raising "noise" about Native affairs without actually improving them.[249] UIAT demonstrated that the right mixture of protest and political maneuvering could lead to real improvements for Native peoples rather than just symbolic gestures of Indian pride. Yet, the ingenuity of UIAT's approach should not diminish land's centrality to each of the Red Power protests in question. Whether at Alcatraz, the BIA, or Fort Lawton, Red Power demonstrators recognized that a land base had the potential to radically transform urban Indians' socioeconomic situation and connection to their heritage. To the protestors, it did not matter whether the land reclaimed belonged to their particular tribe. Instead, they regarded land back as beneficial to *all* Native peoples, an outlook forged through the collective experience of living in urban areas. That said, the scope of these protests and their methods are what set them apart.

Although ground-breaking, UIAT's success remains obscured by arguably the most recognizable Indian protest of the twentieth century. In November 1969, Richard Oakes and a cohort of Native college students led approximately eighty Indian men, women, and children

[249] Castile, *To Show Heart*, 111, 145-146.

onto the abandoned Alcatraz Island.[250] The protestors' arrival inaugurated what Castile has called "the only noteworthy activist incident in the first Nixon term," although local media initially interpreted the event as a "gimmick."[251] Just five years prior, a separate and smaller group of Native activists had also traveled to Alcatraz and demanded its return.[252] This first wave of demonstrators had observed the federal government's decision to declare Alcatraz surplus land and pointed to a clause in the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty stipulating Native Americans' right to excess federal property.[253] They regarded their occupation as a publicity stunt, staying on the island for less than a day, and likely knew that the treaty claim was tenuous. However, they were serious about the relevancy of treaty rights, a stance that persisted and fascinated a twenty-nine-year-old Oakes.[254] As Smith and Warrior explained, he and other Bay Area Indians had been drinking "deeply from the well of protest" on college campuses.[255] The spirit of social upheaval that permeated the 1960s engrossed these young activists who, according to Wilma Mankiller, genuinely believed "that everything was possible."[256] This optimism seemed legitimate after Oakes and LaNada Means successfully lobbied for the establishment of Ethnic Studies Departments at San Francisco State University and the University of California–Berkeley. Contacts through San Francisco's Indian Center put the two leaders in touch and, before long, had them "obsessed with the idea of taking Alcatraz."[257] Their conversations reached a fever

[250] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 154; "Alcatraz Taken Back," *Akwesasne Notes*, November 1969, The Newberry Library's American Histories and Cultures Database.
[251] Castile, *To Show Heart*, 112; "Alcatraz Taken Back."
[252] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 10-11.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid., 19.
[256] UW Video, "A Modern Pioneer in the Cherokee Nation (Wilma Mankiller)."
[257] Johnson, *The American Indian Occupation*, 140; Oakes and Means also had contacts through their participation in the 1969 Third World Liberation protests. These protests developed in response to San Francisco State University firing a black faculty member for having alleged sympathies toward the Black Power Movement. For more detail, see Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 97, 100.

pitch after Lamar Hunt, a Texas oilman, proposed opening a casino on the island.[258] Emboldened by their earlier activism, Oakes and Means resolved to take the island permanently, remarking to one another: "Enough talk. Let's just do it."[259]

After stepping ashore, the '69 Alcatraz demonstrators wasted little time making their intention of reclaiming the island known. Oakes, having already tipped off reporters about the occupation, read the statement: "The Proclamation to the Great White Father and His People."[260] Herein, the protestors declared Alcatraz "Indian property," sardonically describing how the prison, like reservations, possessed no running water, productive land base, and mineral and oil rights.[261] As such, the occupiers explained their intention to hold Alcatraz in perpetuity, taking what they considered to be a "monument to a sick society" and transforming it into "something good" through the establishment of a new and improved San Francisco Indian cultural center.[262] Just a few weeks prior, the center that served San Francisco's Native community for close to a decade burned down under suspicious circumstances.[263] While the source of the fire remains unknown, the center's destruction added a sense of urgency and legitimacy to the occupiers' cause. Oakes and his colleagues understood that their claim to the island seemed dubious, even implausible, on its face. Yet, the center's loss was, according to Smith and Warrior, "devastating" and "mourned like a death in the family."[264] It goaded the protestors even more into action, and convinced them that the reclamation of a small island could permanently solve the social and cultural issues brought about by termination and the VRP.[265] Therefore, they saw

[258] "Alcatraz Taken Back."
[259] California Historical Society, "Exploring Red Power in the 1960s."
[260] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 132-133; Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes, "Proclamation," 2-3.
[261] Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes, "Proclamation," 2-3.
[262] Unnamed occupier, interview by KPIX News, November 10, 1969, video, San Francisco State University's Bay Area Television Archive, San Francisco, CA.
[263] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 91; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 12-13.
[264] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 12.
[265] Ibid.

little reason as to limit their demands, stating that outright title to Alcatraz was but "little to ask from a government which has systematically stolen our lands, destroyed a once-beautiful natural landscape, polluted air and water, and ripped open the very bowels of our earth in senseless greed."[266] As one occupier summarized succinctly, "We have no intentions of moving, not for this government or any other government."[267] Confrontation, in other words, was to serve as the protestors' modus operandi, a decision which proved only partially effective.

The protestors' confrontational stance secured, at least for a time, an audience to which to broadcast their agenda. Caught off guard by the occupation, the Nixon Administration scrambled to formulate a response just as hundreds of Native Americans traveled to San Francisco to join the demonstration.[268] With images of the takeover flooding the nation's television screens, presidential advisor Leonard Garment convinced the president that it was in his best interest to dialogue with the protestors.[269] As Garment himself later explained, "The last thing I wanted was a federal shootout with a garrison of Indians."[270] When Nixon agreed, Garment dispatched Robert Robertson, head of the National Council of Indian Opportunity (NCIO), to hear the occupiers' concerns and diffuse what was quickly developing into a tense situation.[271] Now a few weeks into the occupation, the General Services Administration (GSA) had severed the island's electricity while the U.S. Coast Guard began ramming boats ferrying the protestors

[266] Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes, "We Hold the Rock," *Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes* 1, no. 1 (January 1970): 1.
[267] "Alcatraz Taken Back," *Akwesasne Notes*.
[268] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 142.
[269] Castile, *To Show Heart*, 113.
[270] Ibid. Garment's statement warrants clarification. There is no evidence that the Alcatraz occupiers possessed any weapons at the occupation's outset. However, weapons are rumored to have appeared on the island as the occupation progressed. For more detail, see Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 83.
[271] Castile, *To Show Heart*, 113; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 72-73. According to Smith and Warrior, Robertson had an almost "disarming way of admitting he was no expert on Indians." A lifelong member of the Republican Party, Robertson reached out to the Nixon Administration after the 1968 presidential election and requested work. Appointed head of the NCIO, Robertson's career seemed on the upswing until he found himself negotiating on Alcatraz, "where there were few, if any, Republicans."

provisions.[272] When Robertson arrived in January 1970, he attempted to convey a sense of calm, reclining and smoking a pipe as the occupiers listed their demands.[273] This visit, however, proved a fruitless exercise when the protestors disavowed any arrangement not conceding ownership of the island.[274] After Robertson exited, LaNada Means reaffirmed the occupiers' uncompromising stance: "We're going to hold out as long as it takes...We said we weren't going to leave the island from the beginning."[275] Yet, this insistence on holding out effectively left the takeover running on borrowed time.

As soon became apparent, the issue of title to Alcatraz proved a sticking point between the protestors and federal negotiators. The occupiers' intractability in the matter hampered the effectiveness of their posturing, which, for a few months, seemed poised to deliver their desired Indian center.[276] The protestors did little to hide their disgruntlement with the absence of social services for San Francisco's Native community. They spoke often of urban Indians needing a space to care for themselves and their tribal lifeways, with one occupier passionately explaining during Robertson's visit: "Once relocated...you are not Indian anymore. They think you don't have health problems that they have on the reservation. No one wants to deal with you. You just keep getting referred back to the BIA.[277] Land, the protestors made clear, could reverse this trend if placed under the full authority of Indigenous peoples. An unquestionably Indian space in an

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[272] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 136-140; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 67.
[273] Robert Robertson, interview by KPIX News, December 10, 1969, video, San Francisco State University's Bay Area Television Archive, San Francisco, CA. The Bay Area Television Archive's listed date for Robertson's visit is incorrect.
[274] "U.S. Takes Plan to Island: 'Indianized' Alcatraz Park," *Akwesasne Notes*, April 1, 1970, http://www.aidhp.com/items/show/4#?c=&m=&s=&cv=; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 74. Robertson particularly wanted to discuss health and safety issues pertaining to the occupation. As Smith and Warrior explained, the NCIO representative became almost taken aback when he "felt as though the Indians expected him to start writing checks right there."
[275] LaNada War Jack, interview by KPIX News, June 26, 1970, video, San Francisco State University's Bay Area Television Archive, San Francisco, CA.
[276] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 77-78.
[277] Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes, "Proclamation," 2-3.

otherwise overwhelming urban area would afford Native peoples a sense of belonging that they had not experienced since leaving their homelands. Perhaps to the occupiers' surprise, Robertson, Garment, and Brad Patterson, who served as Garment's assistant, acknowledged the seriousness of the demonstration and tendered plans for the center.[278] However, federal negotiators rendered it unquestionably clear that title to the island was not open to debate.[279] This resoluteness stood in opposition to the occupiers' repeated assertions that they had legitimate claim to Alcatraz via the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.[280] Yet, as happened with the 1964 Alcatraz takeover, federal negotiators denied any legal basis for the occupiers' claims. The treaty did contain a phrase allowing the Lakota Sioux to homestead federal land "which is not mineral land, nor reserved by the United States for special purposes other than Indian occupation," but this stipulation was applicable only to the Lakota Nation.[281] Its exclusivity made little difference to the Alcatraz demonstrators, who, having experienced the struggles of urban life, saw themselves as a collective and believed that excess land should be available to all Indians. As such, the situation reached an impasse, with federal officials trying to meet the protestors halfway but the demonstrators holding out for total victory.

Once negotiations reached a standstill, conditions on Alcatraz deteriorated and the objective of land back faded from view. The GSA, for one, refused to turn the island's electricity back on, a decision which made for brutally cold living quarters during the winter months.[282] Likewise, food and clothing donations dried up as the takeover persisted. The American public, initially enraptured by the protest, lost interest in lending its support as the demonstration lasted

[278] "U.S. Takes Plan to Island: 'Indianized' Alcatraz Park"; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 78.
[279] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 74.
[280] Castile, *To Show Heart*, 113.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 61.

from weeks to months.[283] An absence of leadership exacerbated both of these issues, as Oakes faced accusations of "selling out" his fellow protestors by attending fundraising dinners on the mainland.[284] Shortly thereafter, he permanently excused himself from the occupation to mourn the death of his twelve-year-old stepdaughter.[285] A council of leaders emerged to take Oakes's place and impose some semblance of order, but its efforts were largely unsuccessful.[286] The island, in Smith and Warrior's words, had descended into "a strange combination of a constant powwow and street fight."[287] While some protestors used the occupation to learn and reconnect with their Indigenous lifeways, others treated it as an opportunity to indulge in drugs and alcohol smuggled in from the city's Haight-Asbury District.[288] In June 1970, the takeover entered its most precarious phase after a fire destroyed the warden's building, the prison's old medical clinic, and the island's lighthouse.[289] Spokesperson John Trudell, sensing the protest's demise and the demonstrators' impending removal, remarked: "The government has been stopping Indians on technicalities for hundreds of years now. Why should they change?"[290]

In June 1971, the Alcatraz occupiers' refusal to compromise led to their exit from the island in the custody of federal marshals rather than in possession of any of their demands.[291] The protestors' alleged sale of $680 worth of copper wire served as pretense for their removal, although their confrontational stance had placed the government in a position where it felt

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[283] David Milner, "'By Right of Discovery': The Media and the Native American Occupation of Alcatraz, 1969-71," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 33, no. 1 (July 2014): 80-81.
[284] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 63.
[285] Ibid., 65. Oakes's stepdaughter, Yvonne, died from falling down a flight of stairs on the island.
[286] Ibid., 70-71. The council consisted of seven members who were supposed to serve ninety-day terms.
[287] Ibid., 34.
[288] Ibid., 61, 66, 76.
[289] John Trudell, interview by Irene Silentman and Anna Boyd, February 5, 1970, transcript, The University of New Mexico's American Indian Historical Research Project, Albuquerque, NM.
[290] John Trudell, interview by KQED News, June 8, 1970, video, San Francisco State University's Bay Area Television Archive, San Francisco, CA.
[291] "Indians Removed from Alcatraz, Part I," June 11, 1971, KPIX News, video, San Francisco State University's Bay Area Television Archive, San Francisco, CA; Milner, "'By Right of Discovery'," 80. At this point, the occupation had dwindled to only fifteen protestors.

compelled to offer several concessions. These included not only the proposed Indian center but the construction of monuments to honor Indian figures and an Alcatraz board of directors consisting of elected tribal officials.[292] Yet, impressive as these entreaties were, the occupiers understood their demonstration as assuming too powerful an imagery to be sacrificed for anything less than Alcatraz's complete ownership. As Smith and Warrior explained, the Indians who remained on the island in spring 1970 wanted to continue the occupation on the idealistic terms that had become its hallmark.[293] The former prison had developed into a symbol of Indian pride and the protestors simply could not bring themselves to "trade away the symbol."[294] Alcatraz, in effect, had come to mean something to all Native peoples, specifically the promise that a land base would allow Indians to reconnect with their culture irrespective of tribal differences. Demonstrator Joe Bill provided an example of this thinking in December 1969 when he stated that "if we turn Alcatraz over...it would be going halfway and we didn't want to go halfway, we wanted to go all the way."[295] A few months later, Bill's stance assumed a more poetic rendering when he reflected on Alcatraz's potential to "unite our people and show the world that the Indian spirit would live forever."[296] To an extent, this proved accurate, as Castile noted that numerous "copycat demonstrations" followed in Alcatraz's wake.[297] Castile, however, failed to reference the Fort Lawton protestors and their distancing themselves from the Alcatraz occupiers' zero-sum game. While UIAT walked a careful line between confrontation and dialogue, the Alcatraz occupiers proudly issued such statements as: "THERE WILL BE NO

[292] "U.S. Takes Plan to Island: 'Indianized' Alcatraz Park"; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 78.
[293] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 79.
[294] Ibid.
[295] Joe Bill, interview by John Trudell, December 23, 1969, transcript, American Indian Histories and Cultures Database, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.
[296] Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes, "Alcatraz Is Not An Island."
[297] Castile, *To Show Heart*, 115.

MORE COMPROMISES!"[298] Given such rhetoric, it is perhaps not surprising that John Trudell grinned when a reporter asked whether the occupiers' eviction and failure to reclaim the island meant defeat. In a sign of things to come, Trudell responded: "Nah man there is no such thing as defeat! We're going to bandage up the bruises and stand up again. They didn't beat us."[299]

Trudell's remarks proved prescient when just a year after the Alcatraz occupation another group of Indians turned to direct action to reclaim Indigenous land. This time the American Indian Movement took the lead, organizing a caravan that quite literally brought the struggle for land reclamation to the government's doorstep. Founded in 1968, AIM resembled the Alcatraz and Fort Lawton occupiers in that its members were intimately familiar with the VRP's pitfalls. Relocating primarily to Minneapolis, AIM supporters came of age amid the poverty and alcoholism prevalent along the city's own "skid row" neighborhood.[300] However, their movement from reservations to urban areas included a key stopover: prisons.[301] Unlike their counterparts in San Francisco and Seattle, AIM leaders found their voices inside penitentiary walls as much as they did within Indian centers and other urban organizations. Few moments illustrate this better than when AIM co-founder Clyde Bellecourt, a twenty-five-year-old Ojibwa, went on a hunger strike inside Minnesota's Stillwater Prison and heard Eddie Benton-Banai, another Ojibwa, whistling "You Are My Sunshine" outside his cell.[302] When Benton-Banai pleaded with Bellecourt to cease the hunger strike and help put together an Indian cultural program, "everything started to change" for the young inmate.[303] Bellecourt, who once had no

[298] Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes, "United Indians Invade Fort Lawton," *Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes* 1, no. 3 (1970): 1.
[299] John Trudell, interview by KPIX News, June 11, 1971, video, San Francisco State University's Bay Area Television Archive, San Francisco, CA.
[300] Banks, *Ojibwa Warrior*, 59; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 128-129.
[301] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 128-132.
[302] Clyde Bellecourt as told to Jon Lurie, *The Thunder Before the Storm: The Autobiography of Clyde Bellecourt* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2016), 33.
[303] Ibid., 36.

way of expressing his "feelings…hopes…and fears," took up Benton-Banai's offer and found a group of Indians that he felt he could "depend on."[304] In the years after, Native peoples across the country followed Bellecourt's lead and put their faith in a new organization for land reclamation.

By the early 1970s, AIM seemed more than up to the task of demanding land back. The group's urban make-up, like that of the Alcatraz occupiers, fostered a familiarity with the cultural disconnect that plagued city Indians and encouraged a perception of land reclamation as something that would restore Native pride across tribal lines. AIM's notoriety skyrocketed following Bellecourt and Benton-Banai's release from prison, which saw AIM members develop reputations for criticizing officials as often as confronting them. In fact, AIM's emergence on the national stage proved so momentous that scholars such as Wilkinson have overlooked Fort Lawton and transitioned directly from the events at Alcatraz to those at the BIA.[305] Initially, the group recruited Indians to perform sweat lodge and sacred pipe ceremonies, but later turned to patrolling cop cars and preventing police brutality against Native peoples.[306] In the process, AIM established chapters in multiple cities and picked up two skilled leaders in Russell Means and Dennis Banks.[307] Both men had served prison sentences for petty crimes and seemed unusual fits for a group committed to reviving Indigenous culture. Means, for one, had spent little time on Indian reservations, instead residing in cities where he drank heavily and engaged in numerous street fights.[308] Banks, meanwhile, had worked for the defense industry, and, on one occasion,

[304] Ibid., 37.
[305] Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*.
[306] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 128. During patrols, AIM members sported red jackets and equipped their cars with cameras and two-way radios. These tactics resembled those of the Black Panthers who monitored police in Oakland, California.
[307] Ibid., 128.
[308] Means, *Where White Men Fear to Tread*, 70-73.

had actually denounced Minneapolis Indians for public protest.[309] Yet, as Smith and Warrior explained, Means and Banks proved "tough, seasoned…[and] resourceful," forging "key alliances" with lawyers, journalists, and civil rights activists after joining AIM.[310] Inspired by the Alcatraz occupation, they and other AIM leaders staged a brief takeover of Mount Rushmore in August 1970 and demanded its return.[311] However, they saved their main push for land reclamation for 1972.

When AIM committed itself to regaining Native land, it did so wholeheartedly and without reservation. The group's inspiration for its Washington D.C. caravan included the Alcatraz and Mount Rushmore occupations as well as Richard Oakes's untimely death. In September 1970, Oakes confronted a YMCA camp counselor in Mendocino County, California for allegedly mistreating a Native youth. Details of the confrontation are disputed, but what remains clear is that the counselor fatally shot Oakes.[312] AIM, which then had a national following, passionately denounced the killing and organized a march on Washington that it called the "Trail of Broken Treaties."[313] The group organized three waves of cars to carry upwards of 5,000 protestors from Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle to the nation's capital.[314] The demonstrators also intended to present President Nixon with a twenty-point list of grievances. Broadly speaking, this list sought to reestablish Indians' treaty-making ability, while calling for the consolidation of Native peoples' natural resources and the establishment of a

[309] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 129. Minneapolis's Indian Employment Center staged the demonstration in question. The center insisted that the BIA provide equal services to urban and reservation Indians. When Banks learned of the protest, he went to the center's office dressed in a suit and tie and began "wagging his finger" at the employees.
[310] Ibid., 135.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 246-247.
[313] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 250; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 142.
[314] Raul Ramirez, "Indians Converging on D.C. for Rallies," *Washington Post*, October 31, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.wapo.19721031.xml.

permanent Indian land base.[315] The document, in other words, spoke on behalf of all Indians, treating land reclamation as a collective endeavor that would uplift Native peoples equally. The document, in other words, proved a powerful one, opening with such unapologetic statements as: "We need not give another recitation of past complaints nor engage in redundant dialogue of discontent...*You know the cause of our making war. It is known to all white men. They ought to be ashamed of it*."[316] In case anyone did miss the cause, Clyde Bellecourt bellowed to audiences: "We're the landlords of this country, the rent is due, and we're here to collect!"[317] Therefore, when AIM set out for Washington D.C., confrontation weighed on the group's mind.

Like the Alcatraz occupiers, AIM's use of direct action secured the audience it desired. At first, the president's staff reacted skeptically to news of the caravan, denouncing it as little more than a publicity stunt.[318] However, as this procession of Indian cars snaked its way across the country, increasing in size and capturing headlines wherever it stopped, federal officials began to anxiously anticipate its arrival.[319] When the protestors finally appeared in Washington on a cold and rainy November 1, they quickly made their presence known. As part of a schedule to discuss Indian land and water rights, the group stopped to hold a religious ceremony at Arlington Cemetery.[320] To the demonstrators' chagrin, the U.S. Army forbade their entrance, leading spokesperson Robert Burnette (Rosebud Sioux) to remark: "We're not going to take this lying down at all. This is our country. We were here first and we expect to be able to use it. If we

[315] American Indian Movement, "Trail of Broken Treaties 20-Point Position Paper."
[316] Ibid.
[317] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 136.
[318] Ibid., 146.
[319] Ibid., 143-144. One of the most notable of these headlines involved a stop at the Custer Battlefield National Monument in Montana. AIM left a plague that read: "In honor of our heroic warriors who fought for our lives and land against the aggressive U.S. government. Donated by the Trail of Broken Treaties, Oct 12, 1972."
[320] Raul Ramirez, "Indians Refused Permission to Use Arlington Cemetery for Services," *Washington Post*, November 2, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.wapo.19721102.xml. This ceremony intended to honor Indian war veterans, specifically Ira Hayes who helped raise the American flag on Iwo Jima.

are mistreated like this, we will realign our thinking too."[321] Twenty-four hours later, the protestors did exactly as Burnette predicted and drove to the Bureau of Indian Affairs building where they peered around hallways and chatted with employees.[322] Unable to ignore the hundreds of Indians now present in a federal office space, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Harrison Loesch met with the demonstrators and agreed to arrange a meeting with the White House.[323] Although the situation would soon assume an entirely different course, the protestors had won their chance to negotiate.

Awarded the opportunity to press land reclamation with the president's staff, AIM seemed to have a potential path to success.[324] However, any hopes of receiving territorial concessions dissipated during a press conference held by Dennis Banks. Just as Banks announced the government's consent to dialogue, police barged into the BIA lobby and demanded the protestors leave.[325] The incident ignited a scuffle that, although brief, inspired the demonstrators to begin barricading furniture against the building's entryways.[326] Loesch, startled by the turn in events, rushed to contain the situation, calling to the protestors from the BIA lawn that the Nixon Administration intended to take their grievances seriously.[327] AIM members, less interested in conversing, leaned out the windows and retorted: "Harrison, you don't know

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[321] Ibid.
[322] Osnos and Ramirez, "500 Indians Here Seize U.S. Building."
[323] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 154. Loesch's promise to secure the protestors a meeting with the White House is ironic. Just weeks earlier, he had sent a memo to BIA officials instructing them *not* to cooperate with the caravan.
[324] David Treuer, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2009), 305.
[325] Osnos and Ramirez, "500 Indians Here Seize U.S. Building." The police's entrance seems to have resulted from miscommunication given Loesch's earlier assurances and Brad Patterson's preparation to meet with the protestors. For more detail, see, Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 154-155.
[326] Osnos and Ramirez, "500 Indians Here Seize U.S. Building."
[327] Raul Ramirez, "500 Indians Seize U.S. Building After Scuffle With Capital Police," *New York Times*, November 3, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.nyt.19721103.php.

anything about Indian affairs."[328] At this moment, talk of AIM's twenty-point program faded as the protest's leaders and federal authorities met to prevent circumstances from escalating any further.[329] The protestors' conviction that land back would restore Indian identity, something powerfully laid out in the twenty-point program, became increasingly irrelevant. After several hours of heated discussion, Brad Patterson and BIA Commissioner Louis Bruce offered the occupiers a chance to resume dialogue as well as housing in the Department of Labor's auditorium.[330] Yet, when the protestors headed down Constitution Avenue to the auditorium, they found it locked, leading them to reoccupy the BIA.[331] From here, concerns over land reclamation fully gave way to a standoff between the occupiers and federal officials.

While AIM arrived in Washington D.C. touting promises of reform, the group's confrontational stance left it struggling to leave town under its own volition. Holed up in the BIA and frustrated over the Department of Labor mix-up, AIM protestors began breaking furniture and ripping copying machines out of the walls. Some demonstrators used makeup as war paint and posted themselves on the roof with makeshift bow and arrows.[332] Incredulous, government officials estimated the damage at $250,000, a sum which Russell Means dismissed with an air of assurance: "we won't be prosecuted; we are a sovereign people."[333] Means's confidence aside, AIM still needed to negotiate its way out of the building without enduring a barrage of lawsuits or, at the very least, bloodshed. This seemed an almost impossible task during the first few days

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[328] Ibid.
[329] Ibid. As AIM leaders met with federal officials, the occupiers began answering the BIA's phones. To callers' surprise, the protestors who answered exclaimed: "the Pigs are all around us."
[330] Raul Ramirez, "Indians Continue Occupation of BIA," *Washington Post*, November 4, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.wapo.19721104a.xml.
[331] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 157. Describing the incident at Department of Labor, Smith and Warrior sardonically remarked that "perhaps only the BIA could have managed successive failures of this magnitude."
[332] William L. Claiborne, "Order Delayed, Indians Stay in Offices," *Washington Post*, November 7, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.wapo.19721107a.xml.
[333] "300 Indians Seize Capital Building and Close Bureau," *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.lat.19721103.xml.

of the occupation, which saw the protestors and federal personnel exchange escalatory remarks and actions. Government officials, for their part, stationed more and more police outside the building, while AIM leaders such as Dennis Banks called to onlookers: "I invite you all to stay and witness the atrocities that are about to happen."[334] Some protestors such as Joe Moving Around even expressed a willingness to give their lives for their cause, explaining: "We are ready to fight and die for what we believe in."[335] With the eve of the 1972 presidential election nearing and government officials' irritation with the occupation mounting, the standoff between the two sides grew untenable.[336]

The efforts of a few exhausted lawyers may have been the only reason that the occupation did not devolve into violence. For six days, AIM's legal team worked around the clock to stave off a police raid on the Bureau. The group appeared repeatedly before U.S. District Judge John Pratt, with whom they pleaded to postpone the occupiers' eviction. At first, Pratt obliged and refused to sign a citation that would have called for the protestors' immediate dismissal.[337] However, his patience soon waned, and on November 6 he issued an order requiring the demonstrators to vacate in two days or face removal by force.[338] AIM attorney Jim Heller, fearing the ruling's ramifications, told reporters that he saw a "dreadful possibility of bloodshed."[339] Heller's concern was not unfounded as AIM leaders continued to insist that the government fulfill the twenty-point platform in its entirety. Land reclamation, once articulated so

[334] Claiborne, "Order Delayed, Indians Stay in Offices."
[335] Peter Osnos, "'Indians First, Always,' Demonstrator Declares," *Washington Post*, November 4, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.wapo.19721104.xml.
[336] Treuer, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee*, 305. When informed of the situation, Nixon supposedly grumbled to his staff that he was "through doing things to help Indians."
[337] "Judge Stalls Eviction of Indians; U.S., Protestors Hold Site Talks," *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.ct.19721105.xml.
[338] "Arrest Order for Indians Stayed—They Threaten to Level Building."
[339] "Judge Orders Indians Evicted: 'When we Go, Building Goes Leader Says,'" *Los Angeles Times*, November 6, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.lat.19721106.xml.

clearly at the start of the Trail of Broken Treaties, had become lost in the standoff over the BIA headquarters. The protestors' belief that land back would reinvigorate Native pride now seemed moot amid fears that the building might be raided. Pratt's decision further changed the protest's trajectory by stripping AIM of its bargaining power and forcing it to consider the government's next best offer: travel funds, an agreement not to press charges, and a formal response to the twenty-points within 45 to 60 days.[340] Recognizing the vulnerability of their position, the demonstrators agreed, but not before committing themselves to one final act of defiance: raiding the BIA's file cabinets. Upon leaving the building, AIM members scattered and pocketed hundreds of documents that Secretary of the Interior C.B. Rogers Morton complained would "take to months to reassemble, if at all."[341] When the sacking ceased, the protestors returned to their cars and drove home without having secured any of their desired land base.

As AIM exited Washington D.C., UIAT was still celebrating its recent and unexpected success in reclaiming federal land. Just a year before the BIA occupation, the group wrapped up its nine-month struggle over the use of Fort Lawton. Its name served as a nod to the Alcatraz occupiers, whose actions impressed Bernie Whitebear.[342] Whitebear was personally present at the Alcatraz takeover, drawing inspiration from a protest that seemed at odds with his low-profile character. Whereas Wilkinson once described Richard Oakes as "movie star handsome" and Russell Means as cutting a "captivating," even "fearsome presence," Whitebear's contemporaries knew him for his small stature and soft-spokenness.[343] Yet, those familiar with his work through the Seattle Indian Center and Indian Health Board knew better than to

[340] Osnos and Ramirez, "500 Indians Here Seize Building."
[341] Eugene L. Meyer, "Indians Seize Files as Some Go Home," *Washington Post*, November 8, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.wapo.19721108.xml.
[342] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 170.
[343] Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, 138-139.

underestimate his five-foot, four-inch frame. Seattle journalist Melissa Lin recounted that although Whitebear was, in fact, a "little bear," he had quite a "big bite."[344] Likewise, Bob Santos, executive director of Seattle's International District Improvement Association, cautioned against mistaking Whitebear's reserved demeanor for passiveness, stating: "Bernie was soft spoken but outspoken."[345] Indeed, Whitebear was fully committed to establishing an Indian land base by the time of Alcatraz's occupation. Land's necessity for restoring Indian identity had dawned on him while working at the Seattle Indian Health Board, a position he resigned specifically to focus on land back.[346] Some within Seattle's Native community questioned the viability of land reclamation when Whitebear began advocating the idea in late 1969.[347] However, the city, much like San Francisco, was ripe for such an action.

In the time since Whitebear and other Indians' relocation, Seattle had become a metaphorical powder keg. Numerous social movements rocked the Emerald City and the West Coast throughout the 1960s, a period that historian Sherry L. Smith described as one of "intense turmoil, experimentation, and barrier-shattering change."[348] In 1966, one of this era's most forceful movements spread outward from Greenwood, Mississippi, where a young Black activist named Stokely Carmichael grabbed the microphone at a Civil Rights rally and exclaimed: "We [have] have been saying 'freedom' for six years and we ain't got nothin'!"[349] Carmichael's

[344] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 161.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Ibid., 97.
[347] Ibid., 97-98. Bob Satiacum and Joe DeLaCruz, two future UIAT members, both expressed reservations about the feasibility of obtaining land back. While he supported land reclamation, Satiacum admitted to having no idea about how to accomplish it. Likewise, DeLaCruz stated that such an effort would require the "support of every tribe in the state."
[348] Sherry L. Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6.
[349] Tina L. Ligon, "'Turn this Town Out': Stokely Carmichael, Black Power, and the March against Fear," *Rediscovering Black History*, June 7, 2016, https://rediscovering-black-history.blogs.archives.gov/2016/06/07/turn-this-town-out-stokely-carmichael-black-power-and-the-march-against-fear/.

rhetoric gave rise to a younger cohort of African Americans who identified as the "Black Panthers" and espoused self-defense as the only means of protecting minority rights.[350] Before long, the Panthers began appearing on Seattle's streets as well as across America, marching and confronting authorities alongside the United Farm Workers, Vietnam War demonstrators, and Students for a Democratic Society.[351] Whitebear and other Indians took notice and received an early lesson in political protest when they joined a series of fishing demonstrations in northern Washington.[352] Here, state authorities had barred the Nisqually and Puyallup Tribes from accessing their fishing grounds, while admitting non-Indians in their place.[353] When the Tribes continued casting their nets, the situation grew tense, with private fishermen firing rifles at the Indians.[354] Literally caught in the crossfire, Whitebear and others drew inspiration from the Tribes' tenacity and the national attention it garnered.[355] They also reflected more deeply on the state of Seattle's Indian community, which, according to Parham, had reached a "crossroads" by 1970.[356] Although the fish-ins helped bring greater attention to Indian affairs, "little headway" had actually been made in addressing Native peoples' concerns in the Pacific Northwest as well as across the country.[357] The restoration of Indigenous pride and improvements in urban Indians' socioeconomic standing were still far from accomplished. Seattle Indians and Native peoples in other urban areas lacked the land base needed to raise their standard of living while allowing

[350] Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967), 50-51; "Introduction," in *The Black Panthers Speak*, ed. Philip S. Foner (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1970), xv.
[351] Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton," 5.
[352] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 186-187; Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 73-76.
[353] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 185.
[354] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 68.
[355] Ibid., 74-76. Much of the national attention resulted from Marlon Brando's participation in the demonstrations.
[356] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 36.
[357] Ibid.

them to practice their traditions. UIAT's leaders, then, decided that protest was still their best course of action but waited for the right moment to take their stand.

When news of the Alcatraz occupation broke, Whitebear and other UIAT members received the model they needed to construct their own movement. For one, the Alcatraz occupiers' citation of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty impressed the soon-to-be protestors, who recognized that a similar strategy might apply in Washington State. In 1969, the U.S. military announced that Fort Lawton, like Alcatraz, would be declared surplus federal property, thus creating an opportunity for UIAT to cite the 1855 Point Elliot Treaty.[358] This treaty also contained a provision stipulating Indians' rights to surplus land, something that UIAT invoked as justification for storming Fort Lawton.[359] However, a key difference existed between UIAT's citation of Point Elliot and the Alcatraz occupiers' citation of Fort Laramie. The Duwamish Indians, one of the parties to Point Elliot, had remained near Fort Lawton since Chief Seeathl reluctantly signed their lands away.[360] UIAT, then, made sure to issue its claim on the Duwamish's behalf, thus affording its title more merit than Richard Oakes's claim on behalf of the Lakota Sioux.[361] This decision, to be sure, did not diminish UIAT's conviction that all urban Indians needed a land base to reconnect with their heritage. Rather, it was a strategic device meant to legitimize the protestors' cause, something that UIAT bolstered by adopting the

[358] Sue Hutchinson, "Cultures, Dreams Clash on Fort Lawton: An Impasse on Future of Land," *Seattle-Post Intelligencer*, November 23, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[359] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 90.
[360] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, xix. The Duwamish were supposed to relocate to reservations after Point Elliot's ratification. Yet, many remained on the lands around Fort Lawton to gather foodstuffs. As the decades progressed, racism and the pressures of immigration increased on these Indians. Still, they remained.
[361] Ibid. UIAT's claim on the Duwamish's behalf wrought controversy as few members of the Tribe participated in Fort Lawton's occupation. Parham stated that the reasons for this lack of support are "numerous" and "complex." One of the main sources of conflict involved the Duwamish's 1946 appearance before the Indian Claims Commission. The ICC awarded the Tribe a $60,000 settlement that was never delivered. When UIAT introduced plans to retake Fort Lawton, many Duwamish felt that their right to the land had been replaced with a general "Pan-Indian" claim. For more detail, see Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 51.

Alcatraz occupiers' theatricality and "Proclamation to the Great White Father." Had Bob Satiacum been able to read UIAT's proclamation on March 8, 1970, listeners would have heard a statement almost identical to Oakes's. Like the Alcatraz occupiers, UIAT prepared to lambast government authorities for failing to provide Indians with the resources needed to survive on reservations while simultaneously working to eliminate said Indian homelands. "We," the protestors began, "feel this land of Fort Lawton is more suitable to pursue an Indian way of life...By this we mean 'this place does not resemble most Indian reservations.' It has potential for modern facilities, adequate sanitation facilities, health care facilities, fresh running water, educational facilities, fisheries research facilities, and transportation."[362] However, as time revealed, Whitebear and others understood that winning this land required a more finely tuned approach.

At first, the Fort Lawton protestors seemed on a similar course as the Alcatraz and BIA occupiers. Even before the dramatic events of March 8, UIAT assumed a confrontational stance when it insisted on a face-to-face meeting with Washington Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson.[363] Jackson, then an influential politician and hopeful 1972 presidential candidate, had recently presented Congress with the "Jackson, Magnuson Bill," an initiative that would allow Seattle's city government to purchase Fort Lawton at 0 percent of the base's actual value and then construct a park on its grounds.[364] He had also led the effort to dissolve the Colville Reservation, earning a reputation as one of Congress's most ardent terminationists.[365] UIAT, meanwhile, recognized the repercussions of Jackson's proposal and pressed the Senator for a meeting, to

[362] United Indians of All Tribes, "Proclamation."
[363] "Fort Lawton Braces for New Type Indian Attack," *Akwesasne Notes*, April 1, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[364] "Jackson Checks Fort Lawton Scene," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 1, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[365] Arnold, *Bartering with the Bones of Their Dead*, 20; Fixico, *Termination and Relocation*, 26, 28, 93. Fixico noted that Jackson also introduced the legislation that led to the creation of the Indian Claims Commission.

which he eventually agreed. When the two sides met, Jackson listened impatiently as Whitebear outlined UIAT's claim to the fort, explaining that his organization, like the Alcatraz occupiers, sought the construction of an Indian center. Speaking firmly about Seattle Indians needing to transition to city life without losing their Indigenous heritage, Whitebear stated: "We believe that the time has now arrived for the Indian to use his own initiative to take charge of his own destiny and at the same time...make a contribution to greater society."[366] A land base, in other words, had the potential to transform Whitebear's statement into a reality. It could deliver the social services needed to improve urban Indians' quality of life while also providing the space needed to perform traditional ceremonies and lifeways. Yet, impassioned as Whitebear's remarks were, Jackson remained unmoved, informing his audience that if they were serious about reclaiming the fort, they needed to file a petition through the Department of the Interior.[367] Later reflecting on Jackson's advice, Whitebear explained that the need to protest was obvious, stating that if UIAT attempted to obtain Fort Lawton strictly through formal channels, it would not "have a chance in hell."[368]

While Whitebear saw a clear need for direct action, not everyone in Seattle's Native community agreed with how to proceed. Ironically, the staunchest opposition to occupying Fort Lawton came from Pearl Warren, the first person to suggest land reclamation within Seattle. Warren, alongside a few other leaders of the Indian Women's Service League, feared that demonstration would jeopardize the modest funding that the League had secured from the city government.[369] Nearly all Seattle Indians agreed on the need for a land base, but if reclaiming

[366] Hank Adams, "Fort Lawton March-May 1970 – Valerie Bridges / Richard Oakes /Bernie WhiteBear /Franks Landing," YouTube Video, 12:05, August 25, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QicN-NaVV7g&t=191s.
[367] "Fort Lawton Braces for New Type Indian Attack."
[368] Bergsman and Henderson, "Indians 'Invade' Army Posts."
[369] Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton," 3.

that land meant forfeiting the few other resources that they had, then protest seemed shortsighted and even reckless. Consequently, UIAT's call for an Alcatraz-like takeover turned meetings contentious at Seattle's Indian Center. When Warren refused to consider an occupation or any similar measure, those in attendance split their support between her and Whitebear. However, according to Lawney Reyes, Whitebear's "following was too great" and placed Warren on the defensive.[370] Warren was then nearing the end of her term as Service League president and saw her position wane and then collapse when UIAT backed Joyce Reyes as her successor. As Lawney Reyes explained, UIAT's endorsement did not reflect "any ill will" toward Warren.[371] Instead, the group regarded her as "a fine person" who had dedicated much of her life to helping Indians.[372] UIAT simply sought a "united front" in its upcoming battle against the city and believed that any sort of division would derail their push for land reclamation.[373] Years later, UIAT member Randy Lewis expressed remorse over the infighting that Fort Lawton caused, explaining: "The old guard in the Service League…felt they were being ignored, resented, and event displaced. If I could do one thing different, I would honor those women for what they had done previously, and apologize for the ill will that was brought on them."[374] Nonetheless, Lewis and others remained committed to taking Fort Lawton, and stood in unison when it came time for the March 8 occupation.

The days before Fort Lawton's takeover served as a bellwether for the measured approach that UIAT would take. First, Whitebear turned to relationships that he had developed over years of grassroots organizing. This included enlisting the support of Sid Mills (Yakima),

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[370] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 103; Initially, Bob Satiacum wanted to lead the Fort Lawton takeover and vied for Seattle Indians' support alongside Whitebear and Warren. However, he too realized that Whitebear's following outmatched his own and bowed out of the competition.
[371] Ibid., 104.
[372] Ibid.
[373] Ibid.
[374] Allen, "By Right of Discovery."

Allison Bridges (Puyallup), Janet McCloud (Tulalip), and Joe De La Cruz (Quinault), all of whom he had worked with during the Washington State fish-ins.[375] Afterward, he called on contacts that he had made through the Alcatraz occupation, convincing Indians and celebrities alike to lend UIAT their support. One of these celebrities was singer Buffy St. Marie, who, along with other Canadian artists, drove to Seattle to hold a fund-raising concert.[376] Another well-known personality was Jane Fonda, who, in early 1970, embarked on a tour to meet with Native military members and "gain…sensitivity to problems faced by Indians."[377] Finally, Whitebear reached out to Gary Bass and Paul Blair, two Seattle attorneys, to incorporate UIAT as a legal body.[378] This decision would pay dividends during UIAT's negotiation phase as it bolstered the group's bargaining position.[379] When the night before the March 8 occupation arrived, Whitebear gathered UIAT members together at Seattle's Filipino Community Hall.[380] Although he had already gone over the takeover's plans, many of the protestors felt on edge.[381] Sensing this tension, Whitebear told the group, "It may get rough. I want all of you to hold your temper, in spite of any difficulty and pain that you might face. If any of you need drugs or alcohol to get you through this, forget it."[382] Then, to clarify that this occupation would be different from previous ones, he added, "I don't want to make the same mistakes that were made at Alcatraz. I want to win this one."[383] The land that UIAT had in its sights simply held too much potential to Seattle's Native community to be squandered over inappropriate conduct. Imbued with this

[375] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 50.
[376] Ibid., 52.
[377] Stephen H. Dunphy, "Jane Fonda Uses 'Leverage' To Aid Cause of Indian Rights," *Seattle Times*, March 8, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[378] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 52.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Ibid., 53. As precursor to the occupation, UIAT held a large powwow at the Community Hall.
[381] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 53; Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 99-100.
[382] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 100.
[383] Ibid.

mindset, the group followed Whitebear's instructions the following day as well as throughout the rest of its efforts.

UIAT's initial storming of Fort Lawton proved just the beginning of a carefully conceived plan, as the group committed itself to a second takeover almost immediately after the first one.[384] This began with an around-the-clock picketing of Seattle's federal courthouse, where demonstrators insisted that Fort Lawton's MPs be charged with police brutality.[385] Colonel Stuart Palos, head of the unit that removed the protestors, grew incensed at the allegations, remarking: "[There is] not one thread of evidence that the allegations can be substantiated. Not one military policeman is known even to have removed his nightstick from his shoulder at Fort Lawton."[386] While Palos pleaded his case, Whitebear led a separate contingent in picketing Fort Lawton's gates and donning shirts that read "Custer wore arrows" and "Custer had it coming."[387] Unsure of UIAT's next move, MPs skeptically eyed the base's perimeter until, on March 12, the protestors again scaled the fort's fences and the cliffs along its western edge.[388] Operating in the early hours of the morning, the demonstrators avoided notice for forty-five minutes, even managing to construct a Native lodge.[389] When MPs spotted the group, all ninety demonstrators, in particularly dramatic fashion, laid limp and forced the guards to carry them to the base's

[384] Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton," 5.
[385] "Indians Move on Fort Today," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 10, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[386] "Army Repels Indians At Fort Lawton, Lewis."
[387] Don Hannula and Jerry Bergsman. "Indians Drum Up Support for Fort Claim," *Seattle Times*, March 10, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm; Don Hannula and Jerry Bergsman, "Indian Picket Line Remains at Fort Lawton," *Seattle Times*, March 11, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm; "Indians Put Pickets Outside Fort Lawton in Effort for Site," *Bremerton Sun*, March 11, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[388] Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 195. Richard Oakes joined UIAT for this occupation. After the protestors were locked in the base's stockade, Oakes gave a speech encouraging the group to remain strong.
[389] Ibid.

stockade.[390] These actions awarded UIAT further publicity, ensuring that the protestors needed just one more effort to secure their desired bargaining position.

With two occupations accomplished, Whitebear and others had brought unmistakable media attention to their cause, creating a situation in which one final protest would solidify their claims and allow a transition into negotiation. In the weeks following March 8 and 12, the media reacted with a mixture of intrigue and positivity toward UIAT's efforts, bringing to light a people who otherwise felt ignored.[391] To the occupiers' surprise, the protests made not only regional but national headlines, with the *Seattle Times* stating that UIAT had "fired the imagination of the world press."[392] These claims held substance, as in one instance an Italian news agency called the *Times* to remark: "You have no idea how fascinating this kind of story is in Europe. Indians attacking a Fort in the West of the United States! Tell me, do you have an Indian problem out there?"[393] On another occasion, Frances Svennson, a reporter for the University of Washington's student newspaper, remarked that UIAT certainly had a "moral claim" to Fort Lawton since "Indians have all too often been 'invisible' for purposes of health, welfare, employment, and educational services in Seattle."[394] For Randy Lewis, this kind of coverage seemed unprecedented, since before the occupations it felt as though "Indians could never get an

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[390] Ibid.
[391] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 61-62. For a more critical account of the takeover, see, "The Indian Siege of Fort Lawton," *Bremerton Sun*, March 17, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm. This article describes the protestors engaging in actions "bordering on the ludicrous if not the bizarre." It also refers to the demonstrators as "publicity-seeking Indians" replicating "something out of an old 'B' movie."
[392] "Indian 'Attack' on Fort Fascinates World," *Seattle Times*, March 9, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm. Actress Jane Fonda's participation in the first takeover significantly raised UIAT's profile. For more detail, see Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton," 5; John Hinterberger, "Jane Fonda 'Gripes About Detention at Fort Lewis," Seattle Times, March 8, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm; "Latest Development in Ft. Lawton Situation," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 10, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[393] Ibid.
[394] Frances Svennson, "Fort Lawton: A Community of Indians?" *UW Daily*, March 12, 1971, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.

audience, even the papers didn't want to print what the Indians had to say."[395] With their interests now fixed in the spotlight, UIAT orchestrated one last protest on April 2, 1970. This time approximately eighty Indians stormed Fort Lawton's gates, forcing the MPs to chase and tackle them.[396] Tiring as this was for the occupiers, Fort Lawton's guards felt equally, if not more, exhausted, with one officer stating: "it's impossible to stop them. Now I know how Custer felt!"[397] At this point, Whitebear, believing that any further protest might jeopardize UIAT's goals, shifted into the group's "second phase": outmaneuvering Seattle's city government at the negotiating table.[398]

Whereas the Alcatraz and BIA protestors remained fixed on confrontation, UIAT proved more than willing to try its hand at political bargaining. Generally, this shift in strategy has received limited scholarly attention, with Smith and Warrior remarking only briefly that the protestors managed to transition from "dramatic direct action to the vagaries of bureaucracy and red tape."[399] Sherry Smith similarly noted that "Whitebear and others wanted to use a lighter touch" after their occupations, believing that "such tactics were more likely to encourage support."[400] These deductions, however, overlook the major hurdles that remained between UIAT and its desired Indian center. Despite the protestors' positive press, Seattle's city government and Senator Jackson pressed ahead with plans to transform Fort Lawton into a park. UIAT, therefore, needed to significantly tailor its strategy, and began letter-writing campaigns,

[395] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 62.
[396] Don Hannula, "Indians Again Try to Occupy Fort Lawton; 80 detained," *Seattle Times*, April 2, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm; "Fort Lawton Military Defeats Indian Attack," *Bremerton Sun*, April 3, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm. The protestors' charge was well-coordinated except for Ramona Bennett. Bennett arrived just as UIAT began storming the gates and had a cannister of tear gas thrown into her car. For more detail, see Blansett, *A Journey to Freedom*, 197-198.
[397] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 63.
[398] Whitebear, "Taking Fort Lawton," 6; Hannula, "Indians Again Try to Occupy Fort Lawton."
[399] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 90.
[400] Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power*, 161.

organizing events, and dinners with government officials.[401] In one of their first acts, UIAT leaders wrote to and received endorsement from over forty non-Indian organizations in Washington State.[402] With the backing of such influential groups as the Seattle Human Rights Commission and Washington State Board Against Discrimination, UIAT representatives appeared before Congress, testifying, ironically, before the House Interior subcommittee on which Jackson served.[403] Here, Whitebear passionately made a case against the Senator's still pending "Jackson, Magnuson Bill," stating that "when the Indian becomes self-sufficient, he will regain his pride, his dignity, and self-confidence. These are the things that money cannot buy."[404] Again, land appeared the centerpiece to urban Indians' socioeconomic advancement and full restoration of their pride. Working from an inner-city land base, Indians could accumulate the social and career skills needed to obtain steady work while still feeling secure in their identity. Jackson, perhaps recognizing Whitebear's act as difficult to follow, could only urge the committee to "act rapidly."[405] A few months later, the Senator faced accusations of meddling with the subcommittee's review, something that he flatly denied.[406] Whether Jackson acted inappropriately is questionable, but the impressiveness of UIAT's performance remains undeniable.

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[401] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 76-77.
[402] Ibid., 77.
[403] "Seattle Human Rights Commission Says Claim of Indians Must Not Be Ignored," *Medium*, November 12, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm; William Prochnau, "Indians Ask Congress for Fort Lawton at Hearing," *Seattle Times*, April 14, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm; Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton," 6. UIAT members Randy Lewis, Grace Thorpe, Douglas Remington, and Gary and Beverly Beaver joined Whitebear at the capital.
[404] William Prochnau, "Indians Ask Congress."
[405] Ibid.
[406] Don Hannula and Jerry Bergsman, "Sen. Jackson denies 'pressure' on bureau," *Seattle Times*, January 22, 1971, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm. Specifically, Jackson was accused of intimidating BIA Commissioner Louis Bruce. The Senator supposedly threatened to have Bruce fired if he did not support Jackson's plan for Fort Lawton.

As its endorsements grew, UIAT resisted entreaties from organizations that would have steered its efforts back toward confrontation. The first of these appeals came from Seattle's chapter of the Black Panther Party, which offered UIAT both its "physical support" and "psychological clout."[407] Whitebear, however, politely turned the group down, stating that UIAT appreciated the gesture but would benefit more from a monetary donation.[408] A similar situation unfolded when the Seattle Liberation Front, an anti-Vietnam War group, extended the demonstrators their support. The Front held a reputation as prone to violence, storming Seattle's federal courthouse in February 1970 to protest the trial of the Chicago Seven.[409] Given the group's history, Whitebear passed on an alliance, describing UIAT's cause as a "moral issue" that could be achieved without the sole use of protest.[410] As he explained, Fort Lawton's reclamation constituted one of the "last chances" for Seattle's "12,000 Indians and Alaskan Natives" to "pull themselves up by the bootstraps."[411] Without land, Seattle's Native community, or urban Indians elsewhere for that matter, would never be able to improve their financial standing while also remaining true to their Indigeneity. Natives and non-Natives alike could be brought to see this situation through less confrontational means such as walkouts. The most impressive of these walkouts took place in November 1970 at Seattle's Ames Theater. Here, hundreds of residents gathered at the behest of the Citizens Advisory Council to discuss Fort Lawton's usage. When, however, the Council refused to let UIAT speak, Whitebear and

[407] "Indians Picketed Fort Lawton After Invading the Post," *Seattle-Post Intelligencer*, March 22, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[408] Ibid.
[409] Don Hannula, "Indian Picket Line Remains at Fort Lawton," *Seattle Times*, March 11, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm. The Chicago Seven were a group of anti-Vietnam War protestors arrested for conspiracy and crossing state lines during the 1968 Democratic National Convention.
[410] Ibid.
[411] Ibid.

hundreds of others silently exited the building to the audience's shock.[412] Impressed, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* declared the walkout "the largest peaceful showing of Indian unity…on a single issue ever shown in the area."[413] No longer engaging in occupations but exploring other means of political leverage, UIAT inched closer and closer to its goal.

Besides Senator Jackson and Seattle's city government, a coalition of women's groups known as the Citizens for Fort Lawton Park (CFLP) presented another challenge to UIAT's claim. Made up predominantly of white middle-class women, the CFLP lobbied ardently for Fort Lawton's donation to the city and transformation into a park that would include a bird habitat and possibly a golf course and rhododendron gardens.[414] The group, in effect, wanted the base to become an "open space" for Seattle residents, a stance which historian Jeffrey C. Sanders deemed reflective of "the nascent postwar environmental movement."[415] Like other environmental groups then taking shape, the CFLP believed that open space within cities could alleviate social ills and "bring order" to otherwise disordered urban settings.[416] UIAT's plans for Fort Lawton, therefore, represented something entirely opposed to the CFLP's vision. Rather than a park available to all residents, UIAT desired an exclusively "Indian space" in which Native peoples could receive relief from the difficulties of city living.[417] Moreover, Whitebear argued that Fort Lawton's conversion into an Indian center would save the government "millions of dollars from welfare and other poverty programs."[418] With this in mind, UIAT laid out an

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[412] Sue Hutchinson, "Indians Present Fort Lawton Proposal Then Leave Meeting," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, November 11, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[413] Hutchinson, "Cultures, Dreams Clash on Fort Lawton."
[414] Jeffrey C. Sanders, "The Battle for Fort Lawton: Competing Environmental Claims in Postwar Seattle," *Pacific Historical Review* 77, no. 2 (May 2008): 215-216.
[415] Ibid., 205-206.
[416] Ibid., 206.
[417] Ibid.
[418] "Indians want first crack at surplus federal land," *Akwesasne Notes*, May 1, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.

ambitious plan for Fort Lawton's development, producing blueprints of an American Indian university, medical facility, and various recreational facilities.[419] The base, Whitebear explained, would become a full-fledged "halfway station" for Indian relocatees.[420] An array of services would ease Native peoples' transition into urban life, while ensuring that they and current members of Seattle's Native community had the space they needed to practice their Indigenous lifeways. The CFLP countered with an elaborate proposal of its own and threw its support behind Senator Jackson.[421] However, UIAT outmatched these efforts and positioned itself to score a resounding victory in November 1971.

After months of advertising its cause and navigating bureaucratic corridors, UIAT maneuvered Seattle's city government into a compromising position. Still engaged in a public relations campaign, Whitebear flew to Anchorage, Alaska in November 1970 to meet with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the nation's then leading Native organization.[422] At the NCAI's urging, Whitebear filed an application through the BIA that effectively froze Fort Lawton's passage into the city's possession.[423] As expected, Senator Jackson and the city government tried to circumvent the roadblock but fell short when Whitebear replicated a move devised by former NCAI director Vine Deloria Jr. In what Cobb has called an "inside-outside political strategy," Deloria weakened the NCAI's long-standing relationship with the BIA while simultaneously strengthening its ties with the Office of Economic Opportunity

[419] Svein Gilje, "Design proposed for Fort Lawton center," *Seattle Times*, December 2, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[420] "Indians Find Protests Bring Results," *Akwesasne Notes*, June 1, 1970, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[421] Sanders, "The Battle for Fort Lawton," 227. The CFLP's plan was entitled "A Fort Lawton Park Nature Center, A Preliminary Proposal." Seattle's chapter of the Audobon Society, an ally of CFLP, authored the proposal.
[422] Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton," 6.
[423] "Fort Lawton Agreement," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, December 13, 1971, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.

(OEO).[424] These actions, Deloria later explained, meant to place the BIA in an unfavorable position, pitting it against the OEO and compelling it to honor its commitments to Indian peoples.[425] In a loose rendition of Deloria's strategy, Whitebear appealed to the Department of Housing, Education, and Welfare (HEW) and its Regional Director Bernard "Buck" Kelly to sponsor UIAT's claim to Fort Lawton. Moved by Whitebear's pitch, Kelly agreed, and ran HEW directly against the Department of Outdoor Recreation which was then handling the city's claim to the base.[426] With these two agencies squared against one another, both the city and UIAT recognized that they could either reach an agreement or face a protracted legal battle.[427] Finally, in what seemed impossible just months prior, the city government brokered a truce and offered twenty of Fort Lawton's acres to Seattle's Native community.

When word broke of the city's concession, UIAT respectfully accepted, recognizing twenty acres of land as preferable to no land at all.[428] As for itself, the city received the fort's remaining acreage, thus allowing Senator Jackson and others to deliver their promised park. Pleased with the arrangement, city officials called a press conference during which they acknowledged UIAT's tenacity at the bargaining table. Mayor Ulhman complimented Whitebear as a "tough negotiator" after which Senator Jackson, who had once acted so dismissively toward UIAT, credited the protestors for moving beyond confrontation to dialogue.[429] The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, then covering the meeting, also hailed UIAT's transition from ardent protest group

[424] Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America,* 120.
[425] Ibid., 132.
[426] "Fort Lawton Agreement."
[427] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 81-82; "Fort Lawton Agreement"; Hilda Bryant, "City, Indians in Accord on Fort Lawton Center," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, November 15, 1971, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_newscoverage.htm.
[428] Scates, "Whitebear Leads Indians to Victory in Ft. Lawton"; Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton," 6.
[429] Bryant, "City, Indians in Accord on Fort Lawton Center." Perhaps the most flattering remark came from Deputy Mayor John Chambers who described the compromise as "one of the most gratifying experiences I've ever had as a public official. At the end, it was like being caught in a stampede. Everybody wanted a fair settlement." For this statement, see Scates, "Whitebear Leads Indians to Victory in Ft. Lawton."

to skilled negotiating organization. "In the beginning," the *Post* reported, "[Fort Lawton] looked like another radical demonstration, an instant replay of the much-publicized sit-in on Alcatraz Island."[430] Now, the *Post* explained, UIAT could claim the distinction of being the first "indigenous grassroots, Indian movement" to restore itself land.[431] Despite all these complements, Whitebear remained humble and summarized the reason for his organization's success as: "We did our homework. We put together a plan."[432] Then, in a moment which encapsulated UIAT's ability to compromise while still reaching its goals, a reporter asked whether the protestors had settled for a sort of modern-day "treaty." Whitebear, ensuring that no one would mistake the arrangement, asserted: "It's not a treaty. The white man doesn't keep treaties. It's a legal binding agreement."[433] Indeed, the compromise had awarded UIAT virtually full authority over the fort's twenty acres, a measure of control that encouraged Seattle Indians to exercise their Indigeneity as if they were still on their ancestral homelands. The designation of this portion of Fort Lawton as an Indian space sent the unmistakable message that Seattle's Native community, once caught between holding onto its traditions and fading into the urban landscape, was here to stay.

On September 27, 1975, a little over five years after the first Fort Lawton takeover, ground broke on the Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center. UIAT oversaw the building's construction and sought to make the center as inclusive of Native peoples as possible. For one, it hired the architectural firm Arai/Jackson/Reyes to design the building according to tribal artwork from the Pacific Northwest as well as across the country.[434] In addition, the group publicized the

[430] Scates, "Whitebear Leads Indians to Victory in Ft. Lawton."
[431] Ibid.
[432] Ibid.
[433] Ibid.
[434] Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 88.

services that Daybreak would offer well in advance of the center's opening.[435] The American Indian Women's Service League received the right to administer these services, several of which pertained to educating Indian youth on Native American history and treaty rights.[436] Others involved counseling, housing assistance, and family therapy, including an array of programs related to healthcare and cultural awareness.[437] These kinds of support reflect the center's mission statement which appears in the building's 1974 master plan. Here, UIAT declared Daybreak Star a place where a Native American "can increase his pride in his Indian self by making available to him the real accomplishments of his people, and by doing this, strike at the root of social problems caused by separation from his Indian identity."[438] This purpose harkens back to UIAT's meeting with Senator Jackson in 1970 where Whitebear claimed that an Indian center would enable Native peoples to "take charge of their own destiny." Since its inception, Daybreak Star has striven to do just that, empowering Indians to manage facets of city life that once seemed insurmountable during the termination and relocation periods. The center's employees have proven integral to this success, with Lawney Reyes describing them as a "top notch staff" responsible for bringing "forth…programs that have really helped…Indians over a long period of time."[439] Yet, Seattle Indians' ownership of Daybreak's land base has been just as important to the center's success, as it empowers visitors to express their Indigeneity to the extent that they would on their reservations. That Daybreak Star sits on the Bluffs of Magnolia, the same cliffs that UIAT scaled during its Fort Lawton occupations, is added reminder of the center's purpose and the conditions that make it possible.[440]

[435] Ibid., 89.
[436] Ibid., 89.
[437] Ibid., 92.
[438] Ibid.
[439] Ibid., 116.
[440] Ibid., 92.

As Daybreak Star came into being, the Red Power Movement climaxed and quickly declined with the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation. Wounded Knee, the site of an 1890 massacre of Oglala Sioux, serves as both a trading post and part of South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation.[441] In the early 1970s, Pine Ridge became a flash point when tribal chairman Dick Wilson faced accusations of favoring mixed-blood Oglalas over full-blooded or "traditional" ones.[442] Wilson also raised tensions by establishing his own auxiliary police force known as the Guardians of the Oglala Nation (Goons). The Goons acted as a kind of political hit squad, intimidating Wilson's opponents while drawing numerous allegations of physical assault and rape.[443] Eventually, the reservation's full-blooded residents grew desperate and called AIM to intervene. AIM responded in February 1973 by sending a caravan of over 200 members to Pine Ridge.[444] At the urging of Oglala elders, AIM members took their stand at Wounded Knee, where federal marshals, FBI personnel, BIA police, and Wilson's Goons promptly surrounded them.[445] Those following the situation anticipated law enforcement's presence given that AIM now held a spot on the Justice Department's list of subversive domestic organizations.[446] However, the display of force that federal officials rolled out shocked many Americans, who turned on their televisions to see Indians sporting hunting rifles against armored carriers and

[441] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 118-119.
[442] Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power*, 185; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 191.
[443] Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power*, 185; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 196-197. According to Smith and Warrior, Wilson mounted a .50 caliber machine gun on the roof of the Pine Ridge tribal office.
[444] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 197-202.
[445] Ibid.
[446] Ibid., 181. The FBI monitored and infiltrated AIM throughout the 1970s. Its tactics were, in many ways, a continuation of the Bureau's counterintelligence, or COINTELPRO, program. Between 1956 and 1971, the program's agents carried out a range of activities meant to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize" any domestic organization deemed a threat to national security. For more detail, see David Cunningham, *There's Something Happening Here: The New Left, the Klan, and FBI Counterintelligence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 6.

phantom jets.[447] The standoff lasted 71 days before AIM ultimately stood down in exchange for a presidential delegation to discuss Indian treaties.[448] Shortly thereafter, federal officials unleashed a barrage of lawsuits against AIM leadership that effectively hamstrung the organization.[449] While Indian protestors mustered one more large-scale demonstration in the form of the 1978 "Longest Walk" on Washington D.C., Red Power activism declined slowly but surely after Wounded Knee.[450]

All this considered, it is impossible to understand UIAT's victory without considering the larger movement in which it occurred. As Smith and Warrior wrote, there was "a brief and exhilarating time" in the early 1970s when Indians "staged a campaign of resistance and introspection unmatched in this century."[451] This campaign, or Red Power Movement, had many aims, but none were more apparent than the reclamation of Native land. Land, the key to tribal sovereignty and Indians' expression of their heritage, came under assault during the termination and relocation periods. Native peoples' understandings of themselves as Indian became these policies' collateral damage, a situation that various urban Indigenous organizations worked to mitigate. That all changed in November 1969 when a group of Indians switched from trying to halt the dissolution of Native culture to reclaiming it. They did so by occupying Alcatraz Island and demanding its unconditional return, identifying land as integral to Indigeneity. Bold and

[447] Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power*, 187-188; Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 205. Sherry Smith noted that law enforcement also showcased "M-16 rifles with 50,000 rounds of ammunition, 11,760 rounds of M-16 tracer ammunition, 8,200 rounds of M-1 ball ammunition, 20 sniper rifles, 2,500 star parachute flares, M-79 tear-gas launchers, and infrared lights."
[448] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, 261-267.
[449] Ibid., 270-271. The federal government arrested 562 people on charges directly related to the Wounded Knee occupation. Smith and Warrior wrote that "the unique feature of the government's prosecution lay in its decision to bring to trial every possible case it could, without undue concern for winning convictions." This strategy constituted a "brilliant move" in that it both immobilized and bankrupted AIM.
[450] Robert Warrior, "The Indian Renaissance, 1960-2000," in *The Oxford Handbook of American Indian History*, ed. Frederick E. Hoxie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 141.
[451] Smith and Warrior, *Like A Hurricane*, viii.

inspiring, the Alcatraz protestors secured a platform from which to assert their claims before a refusal to compromise cost them their bargaining position. The demonstrators, therefore, walked away without any land, although they remained confident that they had started a revolution. Just a couple of years later, that sentiment proved accurate when AIM and its caravan of five hundred protestors carried the struggle for land reclamation to Washington D.C. Insisting on a twenty-point program that included the restoration of 110 million acres, AIM may have been able to receive some of its demands had destruction not ensued within the BIA building. For a time, the protest even verged on catastrophe when Russell Means, then surrounded by police squadrons, proclaimed: "They can have the building after it is gutted. When we go, the building goes."[452] The Alcatraz and BIA protestors, in other words, fell short in securing territory, although the size and symbolism of their demonstrations has since elevated their place in the historical literature. That said, only UIAT, a group often marginalized in Red Power histories, can claim the distinction of having regained Native land.

In the end, UIAT distinguished itself within the Red Power Movement by alternating protest and negotiation. Believing direct action beneficial only to an extent, UIAT tapped into public opinion, explored various political channels, and set federal agencies at odds with one another. Ultimately, this resulted in a compromise that more radical protestors may have viewed as a sellout, but one that Whitebear and others saw in an entirely different light. Just two decades prior, the federal government had begun terminating Indian reservations, wresting Native peoples from their homelands and driving large numbers into cities like Seattle. As UIAT members observed, these relocatees suffered from social and financial malaise when they struggled to maintain work as well as their culture. To make matters worse, Indians often felt

[452] "Judge Orders Indians Evicted," *Los Angeles Times*, November 6, 1972, http://www.framingredpower.org/archive/newspapers/frp.lat.19721106.xml.

helpless when, looking outward from cities, they witnessed industries tear apart their homelands for water, minerals and other natural resources. Land back, therefore, emerged as the solution to urban Indians' crisis of identity by providing the space and the autonomy to continue traditional lifeways. To the Fort Lawton occupiers as well as other Red Power protestors, land reclamation was not so much about returning territory to particular tribes as it was providing a base for all Indians to express their heritage. The presence of Indian land in major metropolitan areas meant to assert that Indigenous peoples had survived the culturally destructive policies of termination and relocation and would continue to do so in the years ahead. Therefore, when construction began on Daybreak Star, Whitebear and others experienced a collective sense of pride and relief. In arguably the most striking instance in Washington's history as well as the larger United States, Native peoples had not lost land, but taken it back.[453] From here on, Seattle Indians had their own space in which to practice their religion, learn employment skills, and discuss the importance of ecological preservation. Years later, these accomplishments prompted Vine Deloria Jr., then a celebrated Native scholar, to conclude that "no one helped more Indians in need in the last century" than Whitebear and UIAT.[454] Depending on how one looks at the situation, Deloria's statement might seem true.

[453] Scates, "Whitebear Leads Indians to Victory in Ft. Lawton."
[454] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 164.

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