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AIM and Native American political activism in the 20th century

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Native Americans have had to struggle with surviving on their reservation since the 1800s. Some individuals have stepped up to fight the struggles and created a movement known as the American Indian Movement (AIM). These leaders became prominent figures who fought for better housing, better health care, native language and culture education, and treaty rights.

Dennis Banks, Clyde Bellecourt, Russell Means, and Anna Mae Aquash led the cause. Banks and Bellecourt were the first leaders who established AIM. The two focus on the Minneapolis area, where many of the Indians moved from the reservation. Eventually, natives from across the nation asked for AIM's help and traveled to the places and took a stand in defending issues that were not supportive of a better life for Native Americans.

The occupation of Alcatraz, Mount Rushmore, the Mayflower, Plymouth Rock, Wounded Knee, the Trail of Broken Treaties, and the BIA headquarters take over were some areas AIM occupied with demonstrating their tribal issues to the public, government, and news media.

AIM was on the FBI watch list as a group that interfered with government regulations. After the loss of a prominent AIM leader, the movement slowly decimated into its chapters.

(Developed for Social Studies and Navajo [Diné] Language, grade 5; recommended for Social Studies, grade 5)

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