



Indigenous Rights



The year 2002 marks the 30th anniversary of the Trail of Broken Treaties 20-Point Indian Manifesto, with the 30th anniversary of the Declaration of Continued independence coming up in 2004. Both documents sadly enough are still current enough to be reprinted here in their original forms.

THE DECLARATION OF CONTINUED INDEPENDENCE

This document addresses issues that the American Indian Movement (AIM) and the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) still focus on today. It was drafted by the first international Indian Treaty Council in 1974. The preamble is reprinted here, for the full text go the IITC web page (www.treatycouncil.org).

The Preamble: The United States of America has continually violated the independent Native people of this continent by Executive Action, Legislative Fiat and Judicial Decision. By its actions, the United States has denied all Native people their international treaty rights, treaty lands and basic human rights of freedom and sovereignty. This same United States government which fought to throw off the yoke of oppression and gain its own independence, has now reversed its role and became the oppressor of sovereign Native people. Might does not make right. Sovereign people of varying cultures have the absolute right to live in harmony with Mother Earth, so long as they do not infringe upon this same right of other people. The denial of their right must be challenged by truth and action. World concern must focus on all colonial governments to the end that sovereign people everywhere shall live as they choose, in peace with dignity and freedom.



The International Indian Treaty Council hereby adopts this Declaration of Continuing Independence of the Sovereign Native American Indian Nations. In the course of these human events, we call upon the people of the world to support this struggle for our sovereign rights and our treaty rights. We pledge our assistance to all other sovereign people who seek their own independence.

THE TRAIL OF BROKEN TREATIES

Another highly important document of the American Indian Movement is the Trail of Broken Treaties 20-Point Indian Manifesto. Again we will reprint only the preamble (the full text is to be found on www.aimovement.org at the AIM archives) to give you an impression of how pressing the issues dealt with in this paper still are. Keep in mind, it was drafted in October 1972 to be brought before the Nixon administration to bring forth demands of restitution, reparation, restoration of lands and the reconstruction of an Indian future in the USA.



The Preamble: We need not give another recitation of past complaints nor engage in redundant dialogue of discontent. Our conditions and their cause for being should perhaps be best known by those who have written the record of America's action against Indian people. In 1832, Black Hawk correctly observed: "You know the cause of our making war. It is known to all white men. They ought to be ashamed of it."

The government of the United States knows the reasons for our going to its capital city. Unfortunately, they don't know how to greet us. We go because America has been only too ready to express shame, and suffer none from the expression - while remaining wholly unwilling to change to allow life for Indian people.

We seek a new American majority - a majority that is not content merely to confirm itself by superiority in numbers, but which by conscience is committed toward prevailing upon the public will in ceasing wrongs and in doing right. For our part, in words and deeds of coming days, we propose to produce a rational, reasoned manifesto for construction of an Indian future in America. If America has maintained faith with its original spirit, or may recognize it now, we should not be denied.



So we demand:

Respect indigenous treaty, land and cultural rights

For more information visit www.lasolidarity.org, write to LASC@afgj.org or call 202-544-9355.

