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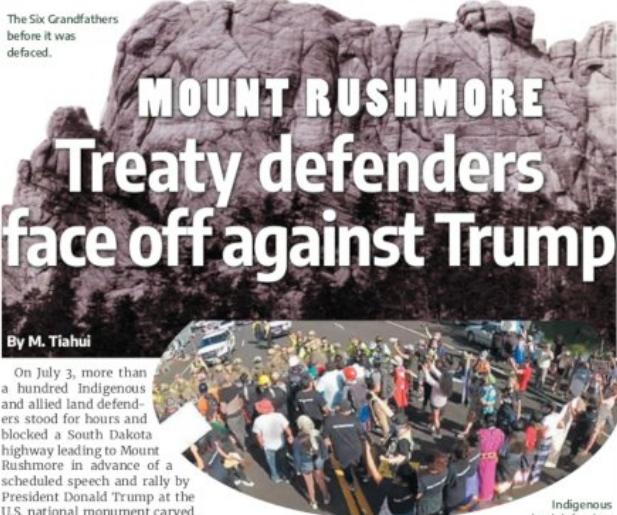
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MOUNT RUSHMORE Treaty defenders face off against Trump

By M. Tiahui

On July 3, more than a hundred Indigenous and allied land defenders stood for hours and blocked a South Dakota highway leading to Mount Rushmore in advance of a scheduled speech and rally by President Donald Trump at the U.S. national monument carved into stolen land. Led largely by Lakota and other Native youth, the heroic defenders faced off against police in riot gear in front of them.

The treaty defenders parked white vans across the road to ensure the road would stay blocked for some time even after they were arrested. They later removed the wheels, climbed on top of the vans, and shouted, "Land back!" Several were arrested. Through it all, they also were confronted by rabid Trump supporters who were angry that they were not able to get through to attend the rally.

Nick Tilsen of the NDN Collective said the group had "reclaimed the road," which is on stolen treaty land. "We don't need them to give us permission to do this on our land."

Krystal Two Bulls said, "We need to be bringing out the roots of what we're talking about.

This country was founded on white supremacy," including the genocide of Native people and slave labor of Black people.

Trump's rally in the Black Hills was a direct attack on Lakota and other Indigenous people who hold the area sacred and hold clear treaty rights to the area, just as his visit to Tulsa, Okla., near the Juneteenth holiday was a clear attack on Black people.

Mount Rushmore — known as the Six Grandfathers — is part of the sacred Black Hills. The U.S. has refused to honor treaties for the area since gold was discovered there in 1874 by an Army expedition led by Gen. George Custer. Uranium was later discovered and mined by corporations.

In the 20th century, the Six Grandfathers were defaced when the Mount Rushmore

monument to white supremacy was created by a Klu Klux Klan member. Two of the presidents carved into the mountain were slave owners (Jefferson and Washington), another (Lincoln) approved the hanging of 40 Native men in the largest mass execution in U.S. history, and the last (Theodore Roosevelt) was an imperialist and staunch believer in white racial superiority. All four presidents held anti-Native and other racist views.

The treaty defenders demanded that Mount Rushmore be removed and the Black Hills returned to the Lakota. In advance of Trump's rally, Ogala Lakota tribal chair Bear Runner publicly said that the people did not give permission for Trump to enter into the Black Hills.

Like many other Native people, Bear Runner believes that Mount Rushmore needs to come down. "I don't believe it should be blown up, because it would cause more damage to the land. But there are other methods to take down the monument that would have less environmental impact."

Black Hills defense.

PHOTOS: INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY



ATLANTA COMMUNITY: 'Return the Rayshard Brooks memorial'

By Lizz Toledo

On June 12, 2020, Rayshard Brooks was murdered by officers of the Atlanta Police Department at the Wendy's drive-through on University Avenue. Many community members witnessed the murder and were traumatized by the sight of Brooks, a Black man and father, being shot in the back, kicked while he was down and his body stood on by a police officer as he lay dying.

This happened in a poor, working-class, Black community that has witnessed and experienced the brutality of the APD for years. This time, the community decided to take control of this sacred space a liberated zone for justice, grieving and community control.

On July 6, Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms and the Atlanta police violently stole this liberated space from the community and destroyed Rayshard Brooks' memorial. Bottoms' excuse was the tragic nearby shooting death of 8-year-old Seociea Turner, a tragedy that the mayor and cops falsely blamed on armed community defenders guarding the memorial site.

Bottoms' cruelty has no bounds. After a powerful march on July 11 initiated by Community Movement Builders demanded that the city return control of the site to the community, the mayor ordered the complete tearing down of the Wendy's where Rayshard Brooks was murdered.

On July 14, members of the community watched as bulldozers and other equipment leveled the site to the ground. People were crying and begging them to stop.

We are still demanding that the city give us back this space so we can turn it into a community center, in Rayshard Brooks' honor. This site was already well on the way to becoming a place of community solidarity and support. Each time I visited I saw food and water distribution, games and activities for young children, education activities for older youth, masks, snacks and a community space that felt safer to us and our children than any other space in Atlanta.

We want it back. Community control now!

A petition issued by the Atlanta Peoples Power Assembly demands:

1. Return the community property, including posters, flowers and other donations, that were stolen from the Rayshard Brooks memorial.
2. Return to the community the Wendy's site and

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