

Facing Down White Supremacy At Ada'itsx (Fairy Creek)

Anonymous

August 18th, 2021

At the forest entrance to Ada'itsx/Fairy Creek, a pickup truck aggressively swings in, engine revving and music blaring. Obscenities are yelled at the people on the ground. When the truck is asked to please go, lewd comments are sneered back. And then, the truck just stays, the two men inside glaring and watching the bystanders. One of them gets out and shifts around a parked vehicle, continuing to watch. After what seems like an eternity, the man gets back into the idling pickup truck and they peel out in a cloud of dust and black exhaust fumes.

What makes this obnoxious event stick out from any other, is that this is the same pickup truck that rammed through a Wet'suwet'en solidarity blockade just outside of Cumberland on February 10, 2020: an identical paint job, matching licence plates and the same plume of toxic black exhaust. In that February 10 incident, the men in the pickup truck filmed themselves giggling as they smashed through signs and wooden pallets with a confederate flag unabashedly displayed on their dashboard, as seen in footage broadcast by Global News. According to witnesses, men sporting masks with the Canadian flag on them then emerged from the forest and accosted land defenders. Chek news reported "close to 30 drunk people."

Although these two incidents are 17 months apart, this pickup truck demonstrates a disturbing example of the presence and continuity of white supremacists actively engaged in disrupting both Indigenous and environmental organizing. To see the Confederate flag displayed alongside the Canadian Maple Leaf while assaulting Indigenous land defenders harks back to when a racist mob attacked Indigenous families at Whiskey Trench outside of Montreal in 1990. In that attack, hundreds of people assembled to pelt a convoy of Kahnawake residents with rocks while the police looked on, resulting in one death and dozens of injuries.

More ominous still is the consistency of this sort of behaviour with counterinsurgency tactics. British counterinsurgency doctrine, for example, emphasizes the use of vigilantes as an effective way to subdue anti-colonial movements and provide a means of evading responsibility. As vigilantes engage in their dirty work, the police are conveniently looking the other way or suddenly out of their jurisdiction. In a clever sleight of hand, the narrative is manipulated into one where the police become necessary to protect people's physical well being from vigilante violence – a twist on the well used metaphor, 'good cop, bad cop.'

It must be noted that the signs on the pickup truck – while harassing the people at the Ada'itsx/Fairy Creek entrance July 4th, 2021 – read, “Forestry feeds my family,” and, “I love Canadian Forestry.” These statements are misleading, considering last years’ workers’ eight-month strike against Western Forest Products, a Vancouver-based lumber company trying to chisel away workers’ safety, pensions and seniority benefits. With these pickup truck vigilantes openly displaying their allegiance to Confederate ideology and Canadian nationalism, their attempts to pass themselves off as forestry workers, or at least their allies, is nothing short of fraudulent. The essence and purpose of their actions are immediately laid bare when they are put against the core values of the labour movement: anti-racist, anti-colonial, and solidarity amongst exploited people. The interests, safety, and well being of forestry workers are directly opposed to the priorities of extractivist corporations to pry a profit. The history of labour struggle demonstrates the vast gulf between worker and company man.

In this chaos, the corporations and the Canadian state remain conspicuously silent. While playing the innocent, they continue to brutally subjugate Indigenous people for their own avarice; they continue to make fast money from ecological devastation; and they continue to squeeze profit from the ravaged bodies of workers and loggers.

While the Canadian state and its corporations engage in this exploitative rampage, they spin these issues as unrelated and non-existent. Nevertheless, they have their men on the ground, speeding around in pickup trucks adorned with Confederate and Canadian flags as well as in tactical gear with ‘Blue Lives Matter’ stripes adorning their police insignia.

The face-off at the Ada'itsx/Fairy Creek entrance is but one skirmish in the bigger picture. Do not let the issues be shifted away from their history and redirected into dead ends. Artificial barriers between struggles and people must be broken down, and solidarity re-energized. Indigenous and anti-colonial struggle, workers’ struggle, and ecological balance must not be played off against one another. With the status quo clinging onto power through violence and calculated skullduggery, their legitimacy is an empty myth. Through creativity, energy, and initiative, a more beautiful tomorrow is within reach. Every action creates a new reality!

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