

Gasoline on the Fire

The Strategic Opportunity of Settler on Settler Violence

Indigenous Action

January 10 2021

Occupied Piscataway Lands (Washington, DC) — As thousands of white nationalists stormed the Capitol building, we were amazed at the relative ease with which they accessed this pinnacle of U.S. order. Though, we were not at all surprised or shocked by the convulsions of western chauvinists and neo-fascists, or the tacit collusion of the police.

The tension behind this escalation has been mounting for years, with pseudo and outright fascists like Milo, Spencer, Bannon, Oath Keepers, Proud Boys, and others vying for the limelight on an archaic stage of xenophobia that Trump and his posse have re-manufactured and rebranded to “protect” cis-hetero “western civilization” and “white heritage.”

Trump has been playing with the fire of authoritarian nationalist politics with his pyrrhic rhetoric for years. In this way, we see the actions that occurred on January 6th as a self-inflicted wound, as one of many acts in the death pact that is the colonial project of what they call “America.” We see this not as an exceptional “attack” on democracy but the live-streamed slip ‘n slide of a social order established on violence against black and brown bodies, the land, and non-human beings. It’s not a downward spiral, in the context of colonialism it’s full circle.

What occurred at the Capitol was written on the walls as part of the “stop the steal” battle cry for their fantasy of an “American civil war.” We’re not concerned so much with the conspiracy theories or fixation on “stolen” elections or placing the sole responsibility on one demagogue. White supremacy is a conspiracy that designed this project of so-called democracy in the US that is predicated on the annihilation of Indigenous bodies and mass-scale theft of lands. So to really stop “the steal” on stolen lands, the stones of the Capitol building would have to be returned to the earth and the land welcomed back by the Piscataway.

Though we make some of the same observances as our relatives who see hypocrisy in the way state violence was wielded against Indigenous water protectors at Standing Rock or the Black led revolts against police violence, we find little use in these moral comparisons and political condemnations. When repression and violence is and always has defined the politics of “America.” Pointing out the contradictions, or moralizing some kind of false equivalency between good or bad forms of protest and dissent, ultimately serves to reinforce state violence as a whole and implies a liberal suggestion that the state can be reformed for equal enforcement of the law. When “The Law” itself is violence. That the state is casual about policing a white settler led riot and heavy handed when BIPOC resist and rise up, is an argument that exists to validate liberal feelings, it’s not at all a radical charge to state what has been obvious since 1492 in these lands. Policing in “America” started to maintain “white property.” Its original function was to catch stolen Black lives and defend stolen Indigenous lands. The state and its so-called “democracy” is a project of white supremacy and as such will always collude with its beneficiaries.

Liberal left and centrist pundits, including some voices from the right, have strongly condemned the siege on the capitol and urged towards a “healing” of democratic order. Throughout the world a chorus of neo-liberal politicians have called for a “peaceful transition of power.” Yet there has never been anything peaceful about the existence of the US for Indigenous Peoples who have desired to protect their lands, people, and ways of being. Further, US policies throughout the world have fomented political instability of those it opposes since its inception. From outright destruction and manipulation of Indigenous cultural societies to funding coups and insurrections to invasion and war throughout the entire world, from Big Mountain to Palestine and literally everywhere in between.

The notion of “peaceful means,” most especially by those in the legislative arms of the state, its literal agents and representatives isn’t simply hypocritical it is blatantly and intentionally

misleading. It flagrantly aims to deflect and obfuscate not simply the existence of the state whose maintenance is derived from violence, but that the very role in which the political apparatus and its politricks plays is that of an orchestrated institution of violence. Regulated through the facade of legitimacy, as “the law” or did we miss the many months of the states abject indifference to the plight of its own citizenry, throttled by an economy in freefall, gripped in an inescapable pandemic, while simultaneously the largest military budget in U.S. history is put forth, and every proviso around climate change, environmental, resource and personal protection is attacked and undermined? Was there a formula of violence we didn’t see running roughshod over the masses? Were the disproportionate impacts of firestorms, heatwaves, cold spells, hurricanes, and mass flooding not violence? Yet simultaneously preventable if only those who now claim governance is peaceful failed to act?

The amount of violence that has been handed down from the US Capitol institution as law to be enforced against Indigenous bodies and sacred lands is incalculable. Politicians denouncing political violence from the dais at the Capitol and the liberals nodding their heads in agreement are that much more culpable in that ongoing brutal legacy. Incredulously, cries for justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Womxn, Girls, Trans, and Two-Spirit relatives have been made to the same lawmakers that have written the very laws that precipitated the conditions for so many of our relatives to perish.

We reject any overtures to heal this colonial order, we seek its total abolition.

January 6th laid bare the vulnerability and fear of an empire consuming itself. We see this current volatility, this demise, no matter how momentary, as an offering of possibility, or the strategic opportunity of settler on settler violence.

By the end of the so-called “Indian Wars” the U.S. had perfected its strategy of conquer and divide using both overt and covert “scorched earth” tactics to perpetuate genocide and mass scale land theft. As unwilling students of this legacy of brutality, we see the same possibility of *division* and *destabilization*: seizing all opportunities to propagandize division utilizing whatever corrosive devices, whether narrative or practical, to creatively employ and destabilization of critical infrastructure through asymmetric above and below ground direct actions. This economic and political system has been scorched by this pandemic. The heat is rising with the industrially induced warming of earth. In this way, perhaps this compounding of crises can be an anti-colonial tactical opportunity to precipitate instability while simultaneously building, stabilizing, and proliferating scaled collective efforts towards healthy and just communities.

We anticipate the authoritarian response to the actions on January 6th to hit across the political spectrum. We have no illusions that the business of vilifying those organized against fascism and racism will cease. And so we must continue to brace ourselves and by increasing and adapting security culture practices and support for those targeted by the state in this escalating political environment.

Even though the state is seeking to prosecute those who stormed the Capitol, we also anticipate that those fascists will become emboldened in their direct strikes against those most vulnerable in our communities. We are more concerned about organizing collective defense and building out our own capabilities and infrastructure for conflict. This is a proposition of survival, liberation, and renewal so long as it is grounded in actions that restore Indigenous autonomy, Black reparations and centers queer, trans and two-spirit BIPOC forces. So long as it is decentralized, anti-authoritarian, and fiercely intersectional.

This is a strategy of ruins, which is the natural trajectory of empires. There is a tendency towards ash for those who play with fire and although the flames engulfing this empire were not set by our hands, we'll be pouring more gasoline and fanning these flames.

Some resources:

<https://crimethinc.com/2004/11/01/what-is-security-culture>

<https://itsgoingdown.org/confidence-courage-robust-security/>

<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2020/06/surveillance-self-defense-attending-protests-age-covid-19>

<http://www.indigenouspeoplesdayofrage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/warriorsecurity-imposed.pdf>

<https://antirepressionbayarea.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Repress-This-5.5x8.5.pdf>

<https://crimethinc.com/zines/how-to-form-an-affinity-group>

<https://www.sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/direct-action/blocs-black-and-otherwise>

<https://itsgoingdown.org/forming-an-antifa-group-a-manual/>

https://itsgoingdown.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/three_way_fight_print.pdf

<https://www.indigenousaction.org/zine-fascism-anti-fascism-a-decolonial-perspective/>

<https://www.indigenousmutualaid.org/mutual-aid-101-organizing-guide/>

<http://www.indigenouspeoplesdayofrage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/defend-the-territory-pdf-zine1.pdf>

http://www.indigenouspeoplesdayofrage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/direct_action_survival_guide.pdf

http://www.indigenouspeoplesdayofrage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/basic_blockading.pdf

<http://www.indigenouspeoplesdayofrage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/various-authors-ecodefense-a-field-guide-to-monkeywrenching.pdf>

<https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/protesters-rights/>

<https://right-to-protest.org/protect-your-protest/>

<https://www.sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/>

<http://www.indigenouspeoplesdayofrage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/incite-the-revolution-will-not-be-funded-beyond-the-nonprofit-industrial-complex-2.pdf>

<http://www.indigenouspeoplesdayofrage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/How-Nonviolence-Protects-The-State.pdf>

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