

to the flow of information & control of public space itself. Dissidents on reserves often suffer in terms of employment, housing, social services, etc., as it is the band councils who are often the major employer of band members, who allocate housing, who approve applications & funding, etc. This itself is a reflection of the neo-colonial role of the band council administrators. In situations of conflict, with the complicity of government, business, and police, there is always the potential for Indigenous paramilitary forces to be organized by corrupt & violent band councils.

Under the proposed First Nations Governance Act (in 2003), band councils were to be empowered to organize band enforcement officers. They were to enforce by-laws, with the power to enter residences & conduct searches, seize evidence (inc. computer files), etc., as a pseudo-police force on reserves.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article has been to expose the reader to a military view of colonization as a war for territory, resources &/or settlement. It is believed that this view is critical to understanding the true nature of our struggle and the intentions, strategies, & tactics of our enemy.

That state security forces will be used to enforce colonial rule & corporate access to resources is an already established fact. As economic & environmental conditions decline, as resources become more depleted, the potential for ever-greater social conflict increases. In preparation for this, the state is already well advanced in its system of social control (especially after 9-11).

For these reasons, fighting spirit must also be augmented by preparations for militant defense of land, resources, & communities, in the years to come. The primary threats are: military/police, settler groups/mobs, and Indigenous paramilitaries.

If any one word can be used to describe the future, it is uncertainty: Uncertainty involves chance turns of events that cannot reasonably be foreseen and over which we and our enemy have no control... Consequently, we must view chance not only as a threat but also as an opportunity, which we must be ever ready to exploit.

In the Spirit of Winalagalis
Zig-Zag, Spring 1999 (revised Spring 2004)
<http://www.nativeyouthmovement.com>

COLONIZATION

A War for Territory

(Originally pub. 1999 as Colonization is Always War, Revised 2004)

If anyone is trying to destroy you, STOP HIM!

Karoniaktajeh - Louis Hall, Warrior's Handbook

Defining War

Just slightly over 500 years ago, in 1492, three European ships under the command of Christopher Columbus arrived on the shores of what has come to be known as the Americas. With this began an invasion, occupation, and colonization that would forever change the world of Indigenous peoples.

1492 marked the beginning of a genocidal war aimed at destroying Indigenous nations, occupying our ancestral territories, and plundering the natural wealth of the earth. How many tens of millions of Indigenous people were killed in this war will never be known, although the methods of massacres, biological warfare, executions; torture; and the enslavement of entire nations, has been well documented by historians.

Similar invasions were being carried out in Africa and parts of Asia during this same period. This systematic campaign of genocide and colonization was a total war waged against Indigenous nations by European colonialist nations. No one can deny this historical fact.

War can be defined as, a state of hostilities that exists between or among nations, characterized by the use of military force... a violent clash between two hostile, independent, and irreconcilable wills, each trying to impose itself on the other. The means to that end is the organized application or threat of violence by military force.

Warfighting

Here in North America, military violence can be said to have characterized the imposition of colonialism and the establishment of settler-nations up to 1890. That year, 300 Indigenous men, women and children were massacred by US military forces at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. By the late 1880s, the use of gun-boats to destroy villages had ended along the Northwest Coast. In the southwest, Apache guerrillas had also been defeated. At this time, the military domination of Indigenous peoples was virtually complete. This was only slightly over 100 years ago.

Is There A War Against Indigenous Peoples Today?

Today, there are some who believe that military force and violence does NOT characterize our present-day reality here in N. America. But this is not entirely correct: The selective use of military/police violence can be clearly seen in recent examples from the last 30 year period.

Thousands of soldiers and police, using military equipment, weapons and tactics, have been deployed against our Indigenous movement. The most

During Oka 1990, white mobs in nearby Chateaugay rioted for several nights in a row, demanding the military be sent in to end the standoff and re-open the Mercier Bridge. Mobs gathered daily near Mohawk barricades & police lines, drinking & taunting the warriors. They threatened to dismantle Mohawk barricades & to invade the territory of Kahnawake. On some nights they burned effigies of Native warriors.

Throughout the siege, white mobs prevented ambulances from leaving Mohawk lines, or delayed their passage. They also prevented shipments of food & medical supplies being brought into Kanehsatake.

On August 28, white mobs lined a highway used by Mohawk civilians evacuating Kahnawake. The convoy was first delayed for two hours by police, while local radio stations broadcast news of the evacuation. Soon, hundreds of white racists had gathered. They attacked the convoy with rocks, smashing vehicle windows, resulting in the death of one elder from a heart attack (Joe Armstrong, 71-years old, died one week after this incident).

During the 1995 Gustafsen Lake siege, the conflict began with armed ranch-hands (cowboys) threatening and intimidating elders, women, and children at a Sundance camp. During the siege, local anti-Native groups organized pro-RCMP rallies at nearby 100 Mile House, and distributed posters calling for a posse to restore law and order.

In Burnt Church, New Brunswick, 2000-01, white vigilante fishermen attacked Mikmaq fishermen, opened fire on them, and destroyed their lobster traps. At Skewekwekwelt, at least two cabins built by Secwepemc have been destroyed by arson. At Sutikalh, a roadside information booth was also burned down.

3. Indigenous Paramilitaries

Indigenous paramilitaries are collaborators from among our own people, who sell themselves as mercenaries for the oppressor. The most well-known example of this in N. America is that of the GOONs, whose members carried out violent repression of traditional Lakota people & AIM members on the Pine Ridge reserve in S. Dakota, 1973-76.

GOON stood for Guardians of the Oglala Nation, and this is how they referred to themselves. They were thugs hired by a corrupt Tribal president, Dick Wilson. The GOONs were responsible for hundreds of assaults, fire-bombings, and some 70 deaths. Despite a large police and FBI presence in Pine Ridge during this period, very few GOONs were ever arrested, charged or convicted. In fact, there is documented evidence and testimonies from former GOONs that the FBI themselves armed and equipped them (see Agents of Repression, by Churchill/Vanderwall).

Similar patterns can be seen throughout all reserves, where band councils have both power and influence over communities, from economic to social,

One piquetero explained their strategy: We see that the way capitalism operates is through the circulation of goods. Obstructing the highways is the best way to hurt the capitalists the most.

Piqueteros were organized in many communities and by regions, beginning in the mid-90s. They have been comprised largely of youth, the unemployed, etc., with over half being women. Their coordinated actions caused extensive economic disruption throughout the country. For example, in August 2001 a national mobilization saw 300 highways shut down with over 100,000 people participating. Thousands were arrested and 5 killed by police & soldiers.

The movement, made up of unemployed & marginalized communities, also self-organized their own bakeries, gardens, clinics, water supply, etc.

In Ecuador & Bolivia, countries where the majority of people are Indigenous, movements have been successful in mobilizing tens of thousands to shut down highways, towns, and cities. In both cases, the entire country has been brought to a standstill. These popular rebellions have resulted in presidents fleeing for their lives and abandoning government posts. In Bolivia, a government plan to privatize and sell-off a city's water system was defeated through mass revolts in the streets.

Although these examples are of mostly unarmed rebellions, it can be seen that state security forces will still resort to deadly force. Ipperwash 1995 is also an example of this. After defeating an Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) riot squad, Indigenous defenders (unarmed) were later attacked by a heavily-armed tactical response unit who fired over 1,000 rounds, killing Dudley George and wounding one 15-year old youth.

In Palestine, over 2,000 have been killed since the first Intifadah began in 1987. In this case, the conflict has reached a point of both armed and unarmed conflict in which deadly force is routinely used against civilians (mostly Palestinian youth).

In Argentina, Bolivia, & Ecuador, hundreds have been killed by soldiers & police during confrontations & riots. Despite this, the people continue to fight and resist using any means at their disposal. Overall, against state security forces we must use good tactics & smart strategies to overcome their greater military power.

2. European-Settler Vigilante Groups/Mobs

In many regions of the country, and especially in rural areas, white supremacist beliefs and ways of life contribute to racial tension and a climate of violence. During conflicts, or times of crisis, this tension can escalate to violent attacks against Indigenous communities. This is a pattern commonly seen any time Indigenous peoples assert themselves in their traditional territories, whether it's a protest, a roadblock or "illegal" fishing.

notable examples being:

1. the 71-day siege at Wounded Knee, S. Dakota, in 1973. Hundreds of police, FBI and paramilitaries, with military assistance including armoured personnel carriers, weapons, ammunition, etc., engaged in fire-fights with warriors in bunkers and trenches. 3 warriors were killed.
2. the re-occupation of Ganienkah by Mohawks in New York state in 1974. Hundreds of state police laid siege, and gunfire was exchanged with white vigilantes. NY state eventually retreated & negotiated a parcel of land still occupied today.
3. the blockade at Cache Creek, BC, in 1974.
4. the re-occupation of Anicinabe Park near Kenora, Ontario, in 1974;
5. the 1975 shoot-out at Oglala, S. Dakota (two FBI agents and one warrior killed). Hundreds of FBI agents were deployed to Pine Ridge in a massive search for AIM members.
6. the 77-day standoff at Kanehsatake (Oka) and Kahnawake, near Montreal, Quebec, in 1990. Over 4,500 Canadian soldiers were deployed. One SQ police officer was killed in initial raid by heavily-armed tactical unit on Mohawk roadblock.
7. the month-long siege at Gustafsen Lake, BC (Peten), in 1995. Over 450 RCMP ERT members were used, with 9 Bison armoured personnel carriers from the Canadian military. During the siege, RCMP used an explosive charge to disable a vehicle, then rammed it twice with an APC. In a fire-fight which occurred, as many as 20,000 rounds were fired by police, yet only one defender was wounded (1 dog killed).
8. the re-occupation at Ipperwash (Aazhoodeena), Ontario, 1995. A police tactical unit opened fire on unarmed protesters, killing Dudley George and shooting a 15-year old youth in back (1 dog killed).
9. Burnt Church 2000-01. Hundreds of heavily armed DFO & RCMP officers (inc. ERT units) in boats, helicopters, & planes were used against lobster fishermen & security escorts (inc. Westcoast Warrior Society).
10. July, 2001: over sixty RCMP were used to dismantle a road block at the Sutikah re-occupation camp near Mt. Currie, BC. Along with a helicopter & dog teams, heavily-armed ERT members were used to arrest 7 (unarmed) people. The blockade had shut down all commercial traffic on Highway 99, a vital link between Vancouver & the southern interior.
11. Sun Peaks (Skwekwekwelt), where RCMP arrested approx. 70 elders & NYs from 2000-03. These arrests resulted from occupations, road-blocks, and protests against expansion of Sun Peaks ski resort.

12. September 21, 2002: RCMP from the Integrated Security Enforcement Team (INSET) an anti-terrorist unit created after 9-11 along with ERT, raided homes of Westcoast Warrior Society members on Vancouver Island (BC).

13. April 8, 2003 : RCMP with ERT & helicopter raided NYM homes in Bella Coola & Neskonlith (BC). They seized computers, discs, address books, & printed materials.

14. October, 2003: a convoy of approx. 100 RCMP in over 30 large vehicles & vans, with ERT units, riot cops, and dog teams, rolled through Cheam as a show of force (Cheam had blockaded a CN railway cutting through their reserve in protest against logging in Elk Creek).

During these incidents and the time periods in which they occurred, hundreds of people were assaulted, arrested, and jailed. At least six Indigenous people died during these incidents; in S. Dakota, between 1973-1976, nearly 70 members/associates of the American Indian Movement (AIM) were killed by paramilitary groups & BIA police, acting under the direction of a corrupt tribal president, with the complicity of local, state, and US federal law enforcement agencies. FBI agents supplied training and equipment to these paramilitary forces.

At roadblocks or re-occupation camps, heavily armed police are also frequently used for surveillance and over-watch for regular police making arrests. When the Lilwat road block at Mt. Currie was dismantled in the Fall of 1990, the large RCMP force which arrested over 60 people was covered by ERT snipers.

During the Spring 1995 road block near Merritt, BC, (Douglas Lake Ranch), an RCMP ERT unit was discovered conducting surveillance.

In May 2001, near La Loche, Saskatchewan, an RCMP ERT unit was discovered conducting surveillance on a blockade camp. The camp was alerted to the presence of camouflaged police by a dog. After being confronted, they ran back to an old cabin, where other ERT members were brewing coffee. In their retreat, they left behind several items, including a tear gas canister and a 9 mm pistol.

Following September 11, 2001 , and new anti-terrorist measures, the RCMP have become even more aggressive in their repression of Indigenous resistance. As noted, in September 2002, RCMP INSET & ERT units raided the homes of Westcoast Warriors. In April 2003, RCMP & ERT raided the homes of NYM members in Bella Coola & Neskonlith , BC .

Considering all this, it must be acknowledged that the use of military/police force, or the threat of violence by military/police force, has in fact continued, directed against and mostly limited to, those Indigenous people

Against a superior enemy force, the tactics & methods of guerrilla warfare must be used. This includes secrecy, surprise, mobility, attacks on enemy vulnerabilities, and avoiding enemy strengths. It is also possible to adapt less-lethal conflict involving riot tactics & techniques. The Palestinian Intifadah is a primary example of this, where militants & youth use rocks, slingshots, burning tires, & Molotovs to delay or harass Israeli occupation forces.

During the summer of 1999, members of the Native Youth Movement (Vancouver) assisted as security for Cheam fishermen, who were constantly harassed over the years by Department of Fisheries & Oceans (DFO) officers. Fish were confiscated, along with nets & even boats. Fishermen, youth, and elders were harassed, intimidated, and arrested by DFO officers.

The NYM security force wore camouflage clothing, masks, and carried batons. They accompanied Cheam fishermen in their boats and helped secure nets, often in a race with DFO patrol boats. Throughout the entire summer, DFO managed to seize only one net, and that was by using night-vision devices and stealth. Although the NYM members carried batons, there were no violent incidents until the end of the season (when one warrior was kicked in the head in a struggle with DFO officers).

Although DFO officers are armed with batons, pepper spray, and 9 mm pistols, only once did they draw their pistols against security members, and even then they retreated. Overall, the use of batons served to deter violent conflict. For DFO officers to have used deadly force in a fisheries dispute, against Native youth with the support of the community, could have sparked a dangerous crisis. In this case, repression was limited by the level of community solidarity, support, & underlying public sympathy.

In January, 2004, over sixty Aboriginal police officers were barricaded inside the Kanehsatake (Quebec) police station after they were brought in to reinforce local band police. People from the community laid siege to the station for several days, and large groups of masked militants with batons stood guard. During this time, the house of a corrupt chief was also burned to the ground after he had fled to nearby Montreal.

Another example of community resistance is the piqueteros in Argentina, so named because of their practise of blocking roads. During a major economic crisis in 2001, a popular rebellion erupted. Along with riots, huge protests, etc., roadblocks of burning tires were used to shut down major highways & streets. Groups of youths (inc. entire families) would arrive at pre-selected locations with tires & gasoline, along with batons for self-defense. If the roadblock was near a location with a large chain-link fence, this was removed and used to barricade a street. Anything & everything was used to build barricades. When large numbers of police arrived ready to attack, they would disperse & re-group.

Many become apathetic to these conditions, while some attempt to assimilate themselves even further into this system and its way of life, a form of self-destruction in itself.

Unable to see colonization as the fundamental condition which oppresses them, many not only lack a will to resist, they can even lack a will to live (i.e., suicidal tendencies).

Fighting Spirit

A primary aim of Indigenous resistance must be to strengthen the fighting spirit of our people and their will to resist.

Fighting spirit can be strengthened and affirmed in many ways, i.e. through the use of certain language and concepts, graphics, clothing, crest animals, songs, etc. A fuller understanding and practice of our own Indigenous cultures would also contribute to raising fighting spirit, and in and of itself is a form of de-colonization. Our people's history of resistance, and especially the last thirty year period, should be maintained and communicated.

Defensive Operations

Military action is important to the health of the nation- it is the ground of death and life, the path of survival and destruction, so it is imperative to examine it.

Sun Tzu, The Art of War, p. 1

What discourages opponents from coming is the prospect of harm.

Sun Tzu, The Art of War, p. 40

As the young men and women of our nations, it is our duty to defend our people and territories from aggression. In today's modern world, we use many different methods to fight, and understand that our primary weapon is knowledge. In a sense, we are presently in a guerrilla-information war for the hearts and minds of our people.

Based on recent history, and patterns of conflict in other anti-colonial struggles, we can identify three sources of potential conflict:

1. State security forces (military and/or police);
2. European-settler vigilante groups/mobs;
3. Indigenous paramilitaries.

1. State Security Forces

Both police & military are a primary concern to anti-colonial resistance movements because it is through them that the state is able to impose its will. Therefore, overcoming or otherwise neutralizing these forces is a primary concern.

who become involved in protest or resistance activities. Because of the focused use of state violence against Indigenous resistance, some people believe these confrontations are the result of extremists and that this use of military force is used only to resolve criminal matters.

This view reveals the success with which the state has isolated resistance, in the minds of some, as being the work of Indigenous criminal-terrorists, etc. In fact, after the 1990 Oka Crisis, an analysis of the siege concluded that the use of the military gave the Mohawk warriors a "moral victory" in the eyes of the public. This was seen to contribute to widespread sympathy for the warriors across the country.

One report recommended the use of heavily-armed police to reinforce the view of Indigenous rebels as criminals. This tactic was successfully used at Gustafsen Lake & Ipperwash in 1995 (along with strict control of the media).

Leonard Peltier, an Anicinabe-Lakota involved with AIM in the 1970s and imprisoned for over 28 years, has observed that, if white society attempts to colonize people meets with resistance, it is called war. However, if the colonized Indians of N. America unite to rise up and resist, then we are called criminals.

Portraying resistance as criminal is a primary method by which our enemy seeks to undermine our movement. Other common smears include terrorist, thugs, etc. These terms carry negative & anti-social meanings. When attached to a group, terms such as these influence public perception & loyalties. Corporate media play a big role in disinformation campaigns & counter-insurgency operations.

War by other Means

Some may agree that the selective use of military force is used, but argue that this is the result of the imperfect society we live in. They might add that in other parts of the world, Indigenous people live with deadly violence on a daily basis. In N. America, we may be oppressed, but it is not a war, because military force is not used against our people as a whole.

This perspective, however, is based on a narrow definition of war, characterizing it as purely military. A broader definition of war states: War involves the use of all the elements of national power, including diplomacy, military force, economics, ideology, technology, and culture.

Wars can be of either high- or low-intensity, depending on the overall objectives and the means available to wage that war. By its very nature, because it is a struggle between two opposing wills, war is both uncertain and constantly changing. Because of these factors, different means of waging war will tend to dominate in certain conditions.

Here in N. America, as our military ability to resist was overcome, other means besides a military one came to dominate colonialist strategies and methods. The suspension of military campaigns did not, however, mean the end of colonization.

Colonization is an ongoing and continual process that does not end so long as the territory and people are occupied by the colonialist nation.

Just as war cannot be said to be purely a question of military force, neither can colonization.

The imposition of special laws contained in the Indian Act, including the reserve and band council system; the residential school system and religious indoctrination; distorted and incomplete depiction of our people and history in the public education system, etc.; these are some examples of colonialism using legal, political, ideological, and cultural means.

Colonization is War

Colonization, the occupation of a territory and the domination of the Indigenous people, can be characterized as a clash between two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature, with one force attempting to impose its will onto the other. It is a life & death struggle. This characterization fits our definition of war as previously stated.

It is therefore factual and correct to say that colonization is a condition of war, and is it itself a form of war to gain territory for resources &/or settlement.

Because colonialism continues to this day, it follows then that a war is being waged against our people at this time. This war of colonization is conducted by the state of Canada using all the elements of national power at its disposal, including diplomacy, military/police force, economics, ideology, technology, and culture.

Identifying The Effects Of This War And Combating Them

There is another type of warfare waged on the native. It is waged against the mind of the natives. This type of warfare is every bit as dirty and deadly as the ones with guns. The casualties are the drunks, dope addicts & suicides. The casualty rate is high. There are Indians walking around dazed and confused suffering from identity conflict. This is one of the wars the modern warriors have to fight. To fight any kind of war, one needs courage, gumption knowledge of the enemy and strategic planning. The biggest single requirement is FIGHTING SPIRIT.

The more that a war of colonization comes to rely on political, economic or ideological means, and the less it uses military force, the more difficult it is for the Indigenous people to comprehend and understand that a war is in fact being waged against them.

In this way, the inferior condition of the Indigenous person in all aspects of life, and little progress towards remedying this oppressed condition, cannot be accounted for, except as an unfortunate result of history. Yet, despite continual inquiries and special commissions & constitutional debates & new government programs -- all aimed at uplifting the Indigenous people, we are told -- the fundamental conditions which keep Indigenous people oppressed do not change.

This lack of change is not due to history, it is because our enemy actively prevents any movement towards fundamental changes to its system. It in fact seeks to prevent even the thought that fundamental changes are necessary.

Ideology and psychological warfare, transmitted through the public education system, corporate media and entertainment industries, and political institutions, serves to obscure and make incomprehensible the full nature and extent of a war of colonization.

Know Your Enemy

Unable to comprehend this war, the Indigenous person is then incapable of defining the enemy and the means by which this war is conducted. This ability can only come through education.

The identification of the colonial system as an enemy of Indigenous people should be clearly communicated. Another important part of de-colonization is the history of Indigenous resistance to colonialism. As well, people need to be exposed to the realities of the global capitalist system, its use of military force to impose imperialism, the role of white supremacy & patriarchy in this process, etc. Casualties of War

The effects colonization has had on our people should be acknowledged. Indigenous peoples have the highest rates of suicide in the country; the highest infant mortality rates; the lowest life expectancies; disproportionately high rates of AIDs, cancers, and imprisonment; the lowest income level; the highest unemployment rates, etc.

Many have suffered physical, mental and sexual abuse in the residential school system; the effects of this have resulted in inter-generational patterns of abuse in our communities.

How many tens of thousands of Indigenous children have been taken from their families, and their people, and fostered out in non-Indigenous family units may never be known, and still continues.

The overall physical and psychological effects of these oppressed conditions can never be fully known, for the casualties and deaths of such a war do not appear as bodies on a battlefield, but instead as suicide statistics, alcoholics, drug addicts, prostitutes, and slaves.