
HOUSE ORGAN

Native Liberation Struggles in North America: The Red Nation 10-point Program

We are a coalition of Native and non-Native activists, educators, students, and community organizers advocating Native liberation. We formed to address the marginalization and invisibility of Native struggles within mainstream social justice organizing, and to foreground the targeted destruction and violence toward Native life and land.

The Red Nation is dedicated to the liberation of Native peoples from capitalism and colonialism. We center Native political agendas and struggles through direct action, advocacy, mobilization, and education.

The Red Nation rises in the spirit of the countless Native ancestors in the last five centuries who gave their lives resisting the onslaught of invasion. We place our struggle within the longest, most well-established histories of resistance in the Western Hemisphere. From the ashes of the first pan-Indigenous coalition against US empire led by Tecumseh to the pan-Indigenous Red Power movements of the 1960s and 1970s, we recognize the importance of uniting Native peoples in struggle against a common enemy.

Ours is a historical struggle. Our people are those who fan the flames of hope in the past and who are convinced that not even our dead are safe from the enemy if he wins. This enemy exists unvanquished.

But the future is ours. As Native peoples, we are firmly rooted in the land where the bones of our ancestors are interred. But it is our stubborn persistence in the present, with our long historical memory as free peoples that gives light to our current movement. We have made our way into the world, into the metropolises, and atop lands no longer considered our own. We find ourselves inhabiting spaces that attempt to violently erase our presence. We rise to claim these spaces to make the unlivable present a livable future, not only for Native people but also for all human and nonhuman relatives who deserve dignified life.

The Native tradition is a tradition of resistance. The Red Nation formed in November 2014 out of a desire to contribute to the widespread resurgence of strong, vocal, organized, and radical Native struggle in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA, and beyond. We formed to address the marginalization and invisibility of Native struggles within mainstream social justice movements, and to speak out and fight against the ongoing destruction of Native life and land.

We continue the long and unfinished history of Native resistance to reclaim the spaces that no longer belong to us—racist border towns and cities. Urban Native organizing has been dormant for too long. It is time to stand up again and to take steps together as a coalition of Native and non-Native activists, concerned community members, workers, students, organizers, revolutionaries, intellectuals, educators, and longtime participants in the struggle who are dedicated to the building of a widespread movement to aid in the liberation of Native peoples from colonialism. Only through centering Native agendas, peoples, and struggles; working with non-Native peoples and coalitions; and collectively working to smash colonialism and violence against Native peoples is liberation possible.

The Red Nation organizes around Native liberation as expressed through our 10-point program, in which we demand an end to violence against Native peoples and our nonhuman relatives through:

1. The Reinstatement of Treaty Rights

From 1776 to 1871, the US Congress ratified more than 300 treaties with Native Nations. A provision in the 1871 Indian Appropriations Act withdrew federal recognition of Native Nations as separate political entities, previously contracted through treaties made with the USA. As a result, treaty making was abolished, and it was established that “no Indian nation or tribe within the territory of the United States shall be acknowledged or recognized as an independent nation, tribe, or power with whom the United States may contract by treaty.”

We demand the reinstatement of treaty making and the acknowledgment of Native independence. We demand Native Nations assume their rightful place as independent Nations guaranteed the fundamental right to self-determination for their people, communities, land bases, and political and economic systems.

2. The Full Rights and Equal Protection for Native People

Centuries of forced relocation and land dispossession have resulted in the mass displacement of Native Nations and peoples from their original and ancestral homelands. Today in the USA four out of five Native people do not live within reservation or federal trust land. Many were and are forced to leave reservation and

trust lands as economic and political refugees due to high unemployment, government policies, loss of land, lack of infrastructure, and social violence. Yet, off-reservation Native peoples encounter equally high rates of sexual and physical violence, homelessness, incarceration, poverty, discrimination, and economic exploitation in cities and rural border towns.

We demand that treaty rights and Indigenous rights be applied and upheld both on- and off-reservation and federal trust land. All of North America, the Western Hemisphere, and the Pacific are Indigenous land. Our rights do not begin or end at imposed imperial borders we did not create nor give our consent to. Rights shall be enforced pursuant to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the historical and political doctrines of specific Tribes.

3. The End to Disciplinary Violence against Native Peoples and All Oppressed Peoples

In the USA, more than three million people are incarcerated in the largest prison system in the world. Native peoples and oppressed peoples are disproportionately incarcerated and persecuted by law enforcement. Within this system, Native peoples are the group most likely to be murdered and harassed by law enforcement and to experience high rates of incarceration. This proves that the system is inherently racist and disciplines politically disenfranchised people to keep them oppressed and prevent them from challenging institutions of racism like prisons, police, and the law that maintain the status quo. Racist disciplinary institutions contribute to the continued dispossession and death of Native peoples and lifeways in North America.

We demand an end to the racist and violent policing of Native peoples on- and off-reservation and federal trust lands. We demand an end to the racist state institutions that unjustly target and imprison Native peoples and all oppressed peoples.

4. The End to Discrimination against the Native Silent Majority: Youth and the Poor

Native youth and Native poor and homeless experience oppression and violence at rates higher than other classes and groups of Native peoples. Native people experience homelessness and poverty at rates higher than other groups, and Native youth suicide and criminalization rates continue to soar. Native youth now comprise as much as 70 percent of the Native population in some places. Native youth in the USA experience rates of physical and sexual violence and posttraumatic stress disorder higher than other groups. Native poor and homeless experience rates of criminalization, alcoholism, and violence at higher rates than other groups. Because many Native youth and Native homeless and poor live off-reservation and trust lands, they are treated as inauthentic and without rights. Native youth and Native poor and

homeless continue to be marginalized and ignored within Native and dominant political systems, and within mainstream social justice approaches.

We demand an end to the silencing and blaming of Native youth and Native poor and homeless. We demand an end to the unjust violence and policing they experience. Native youth and Native poor and homeless are relatives who deserve support and representation. We demand they be at the center of Native struggles for liberation.

5. The End to the Discrimination, Persecution, Killing, Torture, and Rape of Native Women

Native women are the targets of legal, political, and extra-legal persecution, killing, rape, torture, discrimination, and disenfranchisement in North America. This is part of the ongoing process of eliminating women's political and customary roles as leaders in Native societies. In the USA, more than one in three Native women will be raped in their lifetime, often as children. Since 1980, about 1200 Native women have gone missing or been murdered in Canada; many were young girls. Native women are at higher risk of being targeted for human trafficking and sexual exploitation than other groups. Native women continue to experience sexism and marginalization within Native and dominant political systems, and within mainstream social justice approaches.

We demand an end to the legal, political, and extra-legal discrimination, persecution, killing, torture, and rape of Native women. Women are the backbone of our political and customary government systems. They give and represent life and vitality. We demand that Native women be at the center of Native struggles for liberation.

6. The End to the Discrimination, Persecution, Killing, Torture, and Rape of Native Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Two-spirit People (LGBTQ2)

Native LGBTQ2 people experience persecution, killing, torture, and rape within Native Nations and within dominant society. The processes of colonization and heteropatriarchy impose binary gender roles, nuclear family structures, and male-dominated hierarchies that are fundamentally at odds with Native customary laws and social organization, where LGBTQ2 people often held positions of privilege and esteem. The effect of this system for Native LGBTQ2 is violent. Native LGBTQ2 experience rates of murder, sexual exploitation, discrimination, hate crimes, homelessness, and substance abuse at high rates. Like Native youth, poor and homeless, and women, Native LGBTQ2 continue to be marginalized and ignored within

Native and dominant political systems, and within metropolitan-based social justice approaches that ignore the mostly rural-based issues of Native LGBTQ2.

We demand an end to the legal, political, and extra-legal discrimination, persecution, killing, torture, and rape of Native LGBTQ2 in Native societies and in dominant society. Native LGBTQ2 are relatives who deserve representation and dignity. We demand that they be at the center of Native struggles for liberation.

7. The End to the Dehumanization of Native Peoples

The appropriation of Native imagery and culture for entertainment, such as sports mascots and other racist portrayals, and the celebration of genocide for holidays and amusement, such as Columbus Day and Thanksgiving, dehumanize Native people and attempt to whitewash ongoing histories of genocide and dispossession. These appropriations contribute to the ongoing erasure of Native peoples and seek to minimize the harsh realities and histories of colonization. These appropriations are crimes against history.

We demand an end to the dehumanization of Native peoples through cultural appropriation, racist imagery, and the celebrations of genocide and colonization. Condemning symbolic and representational violence is an essential part of any material struggle for liberation.

8. Access to Appropriate Education, Health care, Social Services, Employment, and Housing

Access to quality education, health care, social services, and housing are fundamental human rights. However, in almost every quality of life standard, Native people have the worst access to adequate educational opportunities, health care, social services, and housing in North America. Native people also have the highest rates of unemployment both on- and off-reservation than any other group in the USA. Access to meaningful standards of living is historically guaranteed under many treaty rights, but have been consistently ignored and unevenly applied across geography and region.

We demand the universal enforcement and application of services to improve the standard of living for Native peoples pursuant to provisions in treaties and the UNDRIP, whether such peoples reside on- or off-reservation and trust lands. North America is our home and we demand more than mere survival. We demand conditions to thrive.

9. The Repatriation of Native Lands and Lives and the Protection of Nonhuman Relatives

The ethical treatment of the land and nonhuman relatives begins with how we act. We must first be afforded dignified lives as Native peoples who are free to perform our purpose as stewards of life if we are to protect and respect our nonhuman relatives—the land, the water, the plants, and the animals. We must have the freedom and health necessary to make just, ethical, and thoughtful decisions to uphold life. We experience the destruction and violation of our nonhuman relatives wrought by militarization, toxic dumping and contamination, and resource extraction as violent. Humans perpetrate this violence against our nonhuman relatives. We will be unable to live on our lands and continue on as beings recognized by the spirits if this violence is allowed to continue.

We demand an end to all corporate and US control of Native land and resources. We demand an end to Tribal collusion with such practices. We demand that Points 1–8 be enforced so as to allow Native peoples to live in accordance with their purpose as human beings who protect and respect life. Humans have created this crisis and continue to wage horrific violence against our nonhuman relatives. It is our responsibility to change this. We demand action now.

10. The End to Capitalism–Colonialism

Native people are under constant assault by a capitalist–colonial logic that seeks the erasure of noncapitalist ways of life. Colonial economies interrupt cooperation and association and force people instead into hierarchical relations with agents of colonial authority who function as a permanent occupying force on Native lands. These agents are in place to enforce and discipline Native peoples to ensure that we comply with capitalist–colonial logics. There are many methods and agents of enforcement and discipline. There are the police. There are corporations. There are also so-called “normal” social and cultural practices like male-dominance, heterosexuality, and individualism that encourage us to conform to the common sense of capitalism–colonialism. These are all violent forms of social control and invasion that extract life from Natives and other oppressed peoples in order to increase profit margins and consolidate power in the hands of wealthy nation-states like the USA. The whole system depends on violence to facilitate the accumulation of wealth and power and to suppress other, non-capitalist ways of life that might challenge dominant modes of power. Political possibilities for Native liberation therefore cannot emerge from forms of economic or institutional development, even if these are Tribally controlled under the guise of “self-determination” or “culture.” They can only emerge from directly challenging the capitalist–colonial system of power through collective struggle and resistance.

We demand an end to capitalism—colonialism on a global level. Native peoples, youth, poor and homeless, women, LGBTQ2, and nonhuman relatives experience extreme and regular forms of violence because the whole system relies on our death. Capitalism—colonialism means death for Native peoples. For Native peoples to live, capitalism and colonialism must die.

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