

SNAPSHOTS OF COLONIAL VIOLENCE

Colonialism – the establishment of a state's sovereignty over a territory including the imposition of social, cultural, economic, and political structures over the people living on that territory.

Capitalism – an economic system based on competitive production which aims to maximize profits and accumulate material wealth through the commodification of every aspect of life (cultural, political, environmental, and social).

Patriarchy – a social structure in which men hold power and domination over “others”, including women and non-human beings.

The dictates of patriarchy demand that beneath the Native male comes the Native female. The dictates of racism are that Native men are beneath white women and Native females are not fit to be referred to as women.

– Lee Maracle, from *I Am Woman* (1996: p.17-8)

White Supremacy – a Eurocentric belief and practice according to which white people are superior to non-whites.

Doctrine of Discovery – a decree by Roman Catholic Popes which sanctioned the European Christian nations the right to claim the title to any newly “discovered” land governed by non-Christian nations.

Terra Nullius – Latin for “land belonging to no one”. This central element to the Doctrine of Discovery justified the theft of lands that were not used for capitalist purposes.

The following data is meant to provide examples of the harmful effects of colonialism. It is not aimed at further entrenching Indigenous women into racist stereotypes. Although we have made a conscious effort to avoid “statisticizing” Indigenous women, we hope the following facts can help visualize the realities faced by Indigenous peoples.

In their lifetime, an estimated 87% of Indigenous women will experience physical violence, and 57% will experience sexual abuse, of which up to 75% will be less than 18 years of age.

Although Indigenous peoples generally make up less than two percent of a city's population, Indigenous women are over-represented in prostitution, ranging between 20 to 60% across various cities.

In 2010, the life expectancy was 77 years for Indigenous women and 71 years for Indigenous men, about 5 years less than non-Indigenous people. The life expectancy of Inuit people living in Inuit-inhabited areas is 12 years shorter than that of non-Inuit people.

As of July 31st, 2011, 126 out of 633 Indigenous communities with access to tap water were under a Drinking Water Advisory. At least 25% of those advisories have lasted over a year. Meanwhile, approximately 20,000 First Nations peoples living on reserves across Canada simply have no access to running water or sewage.

Suicide and self-injury are the leading causes of death for Indigenous youths. Suicide rates of registered Indian youths (aged 15 to 24) are five times higher than the national rate for males and eight times higher than the national rate for females.

In terms of education, Indigenous children only receive 60 to 80% of that which their non-Indigenous counterparts receive.

Over 27,000 Indigenous children are currently in the child welfare system. In Canada today, more First Nations children are in child welfare care than at the height of the residential schools.

In 2006, one in four Indigenous persons lived in dwellings that required major repairs.

The Office of the Correctional Investigator, in 2006, reported that the Correctional Service of Canada “classifies Aboriginal offenders at higher security levels than other inmates, identifies them as having lower reintegration potential and places them in minimum-security institutions at less than half the rate of non-Aboriginal offenders. Aboriginal inmates are placed in segregation more often than non-Aboriginal offenders, limiting their access to appropriate programming. These discriminatory outcomes are even more pronounced in the case of female Aboriginal offenders.”

In a 1996 report conducted by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, young Indigenous women are five times more likely than other women of the same age to die as the result of violence.

For sources on these facts, please visit:

www.ipsmo.wordpress.com/honouring-indigenous-women