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Casting Activists as Terrorists: The Post-9/11 Police State and Native Communities in Canada

A review of the book: Andrew Crosby and Jeffrey Monaghan. *Policing Indigenous movements. Dissent and the security state*. Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2018, xii+218 p.

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This is a pivotal period in the modern struggle for Indigenous sovereignty in North America. In 2016, activists based on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota began to protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline. The oil pipeline's original route posed a threat to water sources and the environment surrounding non-Indigenous Indigenous communities, and so a permit was granted for a new plan that placed the pipeline under tribal water supplies instead. Indigenous activists and non-Native allies from across North America set up protest camps in an attempt to halt construction. They were initially attacked by private security guards using pepper spray and guard dogs in September, and over the course of the following months the activists were assaulted again – this time by members of numerous government law enforcement agencies, who committed human rights violations against both protestors and journalists during the raids on the camps. Leaked documents have since shown that activists were targeted by a private security firm, using "military-style counterterrorism measures", working in collaboration with administrative and law enforcement agencies (Brown, Parrish, & Speri, 2017). Such tactics have not been limited to the United States.

Andrew Crosby and Jeffrey Monaghan's book *Policing Indigenous Movements: Dissent and the Security State* seeks to demonstrate how the Canadian government has also used the rhetoric, surveillance tools, and increased militarisation of supposedly civilian policing bodies that arose from the so-called "War on Terror" following 9/11 to further corporate interests against those of its Indigenous populations. The authors are well suited to the task they set themselves. Crosby, currently a PhD candidate,

has published articles concerning settler colonialism and Indigenous legal issues (see Crosby, 2016, 2019). He has also worked as a coordinator for Carleton University's Ontario Public interest Research Group, which helps to organise student activism. Monaghan is an assistant professor at Carleton's Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice, and has examined both the policing of protest movements and the intersections of corporate interests and state surveillance practices (see Monaghan & Walby, 2012, 2017). Their detailed investigation of four specific conflicts relies upon interviews with First Nation activists as well as thousands of documents obtained via Access to Information and Freedom of Information requests. The case studies concern the Algonquins of Barrier Lake, Wet'suwet'en First Nation, the pan-Indigenous Idle No More Movement, which provided some of the impetus for the protests in North Dakota – among other places – and the Elsipogtog First Nation.

The conflicts surrounding treaties, land rights, and Canada's long-standing habit of meddling in Indigenous governments for the sake of profits are epitomised by the chapter on the Algonquins of Barrier Lake and their decades-long struggle against logging companies. Crosby and Monaghan's extensive contextualisation and analysis of this case more than amply "highlight how an expanded security state actively delegitimizes Indigenous groups while also explicitly privileging the corporations and economic interests that profit from extractive capitalism" (p. 18). The Barrier Lake community, for example, was subjected to a set of policies designed to extinguish aboriginal title to its lands. The initial ploys – creating internal division, attempting to impose an illegitimate tribal government, and the suspension of a 1991 treaty on land usage (pp. 33–34) – are all familiar to any scholar of twentieth-century Indian and settler colonial conflicts. However, the events of September 2001 gave the Canadian government a new set of strategies. Native protests at Barrier Lake were now discussed using the rhetoric of "Aboriginal extremism", and activists became subject to the security state infrastructure purportedly put in place to defend the country against terrorists.

This is far from an isolated case. As outlined by Crosby and Monaghan, the systematic criminalisation of Indigenous activists seeking to defend territorial sovereignty against corporate-government alliances is now standard practice. This was demonstrated in the conflict in British Columbia where the Wet'suwet'en First Nation fended off incursions by the energy giant Enbridge in the guise of its Northern Gateway Pipelines project. The multinational, headquartered in Calgary, had the complete support of the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs, despite unanimous First Nations' opposition (pp. 68–69). In another instance of private-public profit ventures at the expense of Indigenous populations, in 2013 the Royal Canadian Mounted Police launched an unsuccessful raid against Elsipogtog First Nation in New Brunswick, where protestors were trying to prevent another multinational – Southwestern Energy Company – from illegally invading Indigenous territory (pp. 136–140). Here too, activists were under surveillance by state agencies that characterised their efforts as threats to national security and economic interests.

However, this narrative has also been applied to an activist movement not associated with a specific land base or a single cause. Idle No More began in 2012, and via social media rapidly spread throughout the Americas and overseas. Teach-ins, flash mob round dances, pop-up protests, and marches galvanised Indigenous communities, uniting urban and reservation populations. Alongside demonstrations centred on environmental issues and land rights, cultural revitalization, and language preservation, a large segment of protestors sought to bring attention to the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada and the United States. In response to the growing movement, Canadian law enforcement agencies began to monitor social media traffic, and enacted surveillance of around a thousand specific events associated with it over the course of 2012–2013 (p. 104).

Yet as Crosby and Monaghan point out, settler governments developed bureaucracies to deal with well-defined and localised Indigenous populations. When confronted by "non-conventional Indigenous actors" operating outside the boundaries of colonial administrations and borders, settler authorities are left scrambling to respond. In a move highly reminiscent of the FBI's use of the Counter Intelligence Program ("COINTELPRO") to disrupt the decentralised American Indian Movement of the 1960s and 70s, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police looked for ways to exploit potential divisions among activists and delegitimise them. Repurposing the old tropes of "good Indians" and "bad Indi-

ans", cooperative Indigenous representatives were approached to discuss treaty reform based on the extinguishment of aboriginal title. Idle No More protestors, meanwhile, were cast as violent extremists who posed a threat to essential infrastructure – and as co-opters of their own movement (pp. 108–117).

The four case studies presented by Crosby and Monaghan span the range of contemporary settler-Indigenous conflicts from resistance to more traditional extractive capitalist endeavours such as logging, to transnational opposition to energy company juggernauts, to protests against widespread and endemic violence and poverty resulting from exploitative and racist colonial societal structures. In fact, the greatest strength of this volume lies in its evidentiary nature. It is hard to argue that "post-colonialism" exists in anything but a conceptual sense when so many decidedly colonial policies and land grabs continue to be enacted, and with so little secrecy. Moreover, the authors' introduction, in which they discuss the reproduction of colonial order (pp. 1–25), can easily serve as a stand-alone essay for students of settler-Indigenous relationships, past and present. I certainly intend to use it as such in future courses. Indeed, Crosby and Monaghan's volume is set to become a standard in the field of contemporary Native Studies, and will no doubt be cited alongside other recent eye-witness and scholarly accounts of Native resistance movements and government-corporate oppression such as Nick Estes's *Our History is the Future* (2019) and Dina Gilio-Whitaker's *As Long as the Grass Grows* (2019).

Crosby and Monaghan's work has also helped broaden our understanding of (post-)colonial policing in general by demonstrating how law enforcement agencies can function to serve economic interests in a wealthy, industrialised nation with a long-established regime, and the plethora of resources at their disposal. This is an important addition to a subject area that has tended to focus its contemporary lens on developing countries where policing often serves a more immediate political purpose (see Cole, 1999).[1] And yet, I think that the book's wider significance within the field of surveillance studies remains to be seen. The surge in research relating to the "War on Terror" and its impact on civil liberties may soon be overtaken by a wave of literature relating to new, coercive government measures ostensibly enacted to stem the tide of COVID-19, but which can also function as a convenient means by which to stifle dissent.[2] However, should that prove to be the case, Crosby and Monaghan's work will remain a cornerstone for research into an earlier era in human history.

One minor critique of the work concerns how the data is presented. The acronym list spans two pages, and at times obscures more than it clarifies. The RCMP ("Royal Canadian Mounted Police") will be known to many readers. However, as someone intimately familiar with the activist movements under discussion, even I tripped over the use of INM to refer to Idle No More. Moreover, the sheer number of agencies under discussion in the volume makes the text incredibly dense, and what is really required to navigate the analysis is a flow chart. That being said, the mass of acronyms employed does help to convey the complicated nature of the web of forces arrayed against Indigenous resistance movements in Canada. A more problematic issue with the volume relates to the source materials employed. While Kevin Walby and Mike Larsen (2011) have convincingly argued that Access to Information and Freedom of Information requests can prove a fruitful means by which to gather data, they also highlighted the problematic nature of this type of research. The documents concerned are not held in a public archive of the sort that historians such as myself are typically more familiar with. The right to request information from the Canadian government does not mean that scholars will actually receive all of the records available, or any at all for that matter. This can be a particular problem if a request or requester is identified as "politically contentious". Considering the subject matter at hand, this raises questions about what information may have been withheld from Crosby and Monaghan. Nevertheless,

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1 It is worth noting as well that Canada, and the United States, are handled in an entirely different chapter in the same volume in which Cole's chapter appears.

2 The United Nations, for example, has already warned the government of Zimbabwe against doing this. See UN News, (2020, July 24).

the authors must be commended for making their source materials available to the general public via an official website.[3]

I sincerely hope that the authors are correct in their contention that "the machinations of the security state illustrate the fragility of the settler society" when confronted by imaginative and inspirational Indigenous resistance (p. 194). However, Crosby and Monaghan's work is far from definitive and the struggle for sovereignty continues. As of the writing of this review in February of 2020, RCMP officers have begun arresting Wet'suwet'en protestors trying to physically block yet another pipeline. According to one witness, the Canadian government is supporting the energy companies behind the project in full force: "It's a whole damn army up there [...] They've got guns on, they've got tactical gear on. They look like they're ready for war" (Cecco, 2020).

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3 "Policing Indigenous movements: dissent and the security state." https://policingindigenousmovements.ca

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