



TISHMAN CENTER · OCTOBER 26, 2021

Letter from Affiliated Faculty Dr. Leonardo Figueroa Helland on Indigenous People's Day



Tlaneci, morning ,

I hope you and your relations are
healthy, safe and well.

Today, we want to emphatically
recognize, enthusiastically welcome,
and joyfully join the many
celebrations of Indigenous Peoples'
Day. Yet we also want to underline
that for Indigenous Peoples and
those who stand side-by-side with

Indigenous struggles, every day is a day of resistance, survivance and resurgence. Every day is a day to protect and defend Indigenous communities, territories, lands and Mother Earth. Every day is a celebration of the community of life in all its relations -- a daily ceremony dedicated to regenerating the cycles of life in all their rich diversity and vitality.

Yet every day is also a day to oppose, challenge, subvert and (re)constitute lifeways outside and beyond the acts and systems of power, domination, and exploitation that undermine Indigenous Peoples, territories and Mother Earth. Every day is a day to resist and reconstitute lifeways outside and beyond colonialism, in all its forms, including but not limited to settler colonialism and neocolonialism. Every day is a day to resist and reconstitute lifeways outside and beyond state, capitalist, extractivist, racist, heteropatriarchal and anthropocentric violences and exploitations that have brought both Indigenous communities and Mother Earth to the perils of a catastrophic crisis from which they will nonetheless surge. It is everyday that Indigenous peoples face the highest and most disproportionate rates of murderous and other

violences in their defense of their communities, lands, territories, environments and rights. Yet it is also everyday that Indigenous peoples stand up, at the forefront of social, environmental and climate struggles, to defend communities, lifeways, and Mother Earth in ways that constitute real alternatives and real solutions to a world in crisis. And so it is not just today, but every day that we must nurture, nourish and defend lifeways rooted in Indigenous and like-minded principles -- lifeways outside and beyond dominant and domineering systems, so as to make life possible beyond the current catastrophes of environmental, climate, social, health and other crises.

Finally, it is important to note that one day is far from enough. The dominant, still pervasively colonial society highlights one or two dates of its calendar in which attention shifts to peoples subject to its power. Yet this incorporation of subaltern identities into a slot of the dominant calendar can also contribute to bracketing attention away from everyday struggles and aspirations, as if they were worthy of attention only a few times a year. Yet for Indigenous peoples, it is not enough to have a place in the dominant culture's calendar, or in its spaces

and institutions, nor even to be recognized and acknowledged by them. Recognition means little without decolonization and systemic transformation. And so the struggle continues to be, as it has always been, an everyday struggle for self-determination, sovereignty and self determination, for total decolonization, entailing the return and reconstitution of Indigenous communities and territories, including the repatriation of stolen lands, and the reemergence of a world of regenerative cycles, complementary diversity and reciprocal relations, so we can live -- justly and sustainably --- as Indigenous ancestors always taught, through the original instructions: to nurture and protect Mother Earth, land, community and relations, so they will also nurture all life in return.

On this day, I want to point you to the following timely materials and happenings:

- [Indigenous Peoples' Day and the Climate Week of Action](#)
- [Indigenous Resistance against Carbon, report](#)
- [EXPECT US – On Indigenous Peoples' Day Biden Wakes Up To A Clear Message As Thousands Arrive to Demand Climate Action](#)

- [#MMIWG2S – Missing and Murdered Indigenous Womxn, Girls, and Two Spirit:](#)
- [Hoodwinked in the Hothouse; Resist False Climate Solutions \(PDF Report and Webinar\)](#)
- ["Scientists' Warning to Humanity on Threats to Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems"](#)
- [Last Line of Defense \(Indigenous Land and Environmental Defenders\) Report.](#)

Tlazocamati, thank you,

Leonardo



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