

Indigenous Resistance in an Era of Climate Change Crisis

Kalamaoka'aina Niheu

Climate change. Global extraction. Military violence. At times problems seem to lie so thick on the ground that it feels impossible to move. In my bleakest moments, the times when I feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of this great task, I know that you, dear reader, might feel the fatigue that fills my soul. Do you feel it in your heart as well? Can you feel me fight the soporific embrace of darkness calling me to a well-earned and much-needed rest? And yet, each morning I rise with hope and determination. What is it that has provided me always with the strength to continue and rise after each new attack? The answer is a deep hope and faith in the wisdom of our *kupuna* (elders who have come before), who for centuries created profound sustainability and resilience. It is a power that I believe can bring hope to you, too. It is an abiding warmth to which I always return. I invite you to walk with me briefly and hope, in this moment, to wrap you in the *mana* (power) of our *mo'omeheu* (ancestral pathways).

Where shall we begin this journey? Let us start with introductions. *Aloha 'aina*. *Kalamaoka'aina Kil Soon Niheu keia*. My name is Kalamaoka'aina Niheu. Kanaka Maoli, the first peoples of Hawai'i, understand that names are things of *mana*. They have meaning, and agency. We name our children after significant events in history so that when we recite our genealogy we say aloud the history of our people. It is a powerful thing indeed, for as long as you know your ancestors, you will always be rooted in history.

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In the tradition of our people I was named Kalamaoka'aina, Light of the Land. Others interpret it as the Fire That Feeds Us. I was named to inscribe in the history of our people one of our great struggles: the fight for Kalama Valley. Kalama was one of many *ahupua'a*, or traditional land divisions, that was earmarked for destruction and development during the 1970s. Termed "evictions," they were, in a historic sense, the destruction of villages with ancient connections, modern indigenous land clearances disguised as progress. It was on a rooftop in Kalama Valley where my mother and father met and fell in love as they stood guard over a besieged land.

Despite blockades and mass mobilizations, Kalama Valley was tragically lost. The farms were ground down and churned into a California-esque suburb filled with houses that Kanaka Maoli could not afford. Despite this defeat, the lessons that were learned there were strong—lessons that later earned the Kalama Valley struggle its recognition as the birthplace of the Hawaiian Renaissance, the rebirth of Kanaka Maoli culture and people. The struggle inspired a generation to illuminate the dark spaces where our people were left to die after the overthrow of our kingdom, when in 1893 the United States waged an act of war against the peaceful, neutral, and internationally recognized Kingdom of Hawai'i at the behest of a small number of white businessmen. One hundred years later, on November 23, 1993, Congress recognized that the overthrow was an illegal act and apologized to the Native Hawaiian community on behalf of the United States.¹ This history was systematically buried by generations of martial law, illegal annexation by the United States, the illegalization of our language and culture, and an occupation that continues to this day. Like many indigenous peoples, in the 1970s we had no conception of the depth of that suppression. We only knew that something was incredibly wrong. But my parents and their generation knew they were fighting for the right to exist. Only after that mental and spiritual battle had been won could we begin to delve into the vast history that had been denied to us. Our people cannot fight to know our history until we believe that we have the right to know it.

The Kalama Valley struggle paved the way for numerous other struggles against US occupation in Hawai'i, including Wai'ahole, Waikane, Kahana Valley, and Kaho'olawe. All were *ahupua'a* earmarked for destruction and clearance but instead were preserved through people's struggle, occupation, and community education. The Wai'ahole/Waikane struggle of the 1970s, spanning several years, started off much like that of Kalama Valley, but the outcome was markedly different. It was also a traditional *ahupua'a* inhabited by Kanaka Maoli mixed with the descendants of Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, and Puerto Rican plantation laborers. Together, we are collectively referred to as "locals." That identity played a critical role in elevating the class consciousness of the struggle.

When the community was notified that people who inhabited the lands at Wai'ahole/Waikane were to be removed and the land sold off for yet another

multimillion-dollar housing development, it became clear that the destruction of Kalama Valley was not going to be an isolated incident. The plantations were no longer making sufficient money, and the focus of profit had shifted to clearing, developing, and selling real estate. Everyone was to be discarded, both native and immigrant descendant alike. The community at Wai’ahole/Waikane vowed that it would not happen to them and made an alliance with the veteran defenders of Kalama Valley. Among those veteran defenders who joined the fight were my mother and father and my newborn sister.

All of the lessons from the struggle at Kalama Valley—of distributing leaflets and press releases, knocking from door to door, refusing to obey evictions, occupying the land, and coordinated, strategic nonviolent direct action—were incorporated into the resistance. This time the resistance mobilized an increasingly educated “local” community. Understanding the intersectionality of those who identified as local—the vast majority of the Hawai’i population—is critical to understanding the power of the rising tide. The local identity had been forged by the stark contrast of the wealthy *haole* (foreign white) landowners, descendants of the sugar cane and pineapple barons who had conspired to overthrow the Hawaiian Kingdom and subsequently built their empires on the backs of immigrant labor. Although plantation owners originally intended to import different ethnicities to their plantations to facilitate a strategy of divide and conquer, they ultimately discounted the power of the host culture. The Hawaiian Kingdom had the first constitution that enshrined nondiscrimination as a human right; Kanaka Maoli culture did not have xenophobia at its core. Indeed, intermarriage was extremely common. By the 1970s the class consciousness and alliance between Kanaka Maoli and descendants of Asian immigrant plantation workers had been firmly established. Although some Asians had allied themselves with the ruling classes, others rejected that privilege and instead allied themselves with the indigenous population and Hawai’i’s working class.

That class consciousness extended far beyond Wai’ahole/Waikane and Kalama Valley and became instrumental in the nonviolent direct action that eventually led to triumph. On the day of the planned eviction in 1977, the strategy was set. Wai’ahole/Waikane residents and their supporters blockaded the only road in and out of that remote, rural area of the island. For the police to come in and forcibly remove community members from their homes, they needed access to the *ahupua’a* via a narrow two-lane road. The blockade brought traffic to a complete standstill. Seizing the moment, community activists went to every car immobilized by the traffic jam and handed out leaflets to the motorists informing them of what they were fighting for.

They were fighting for their families.

They were fighting for their homes.

Years of community education and struggle, then, had an incredible impact on the locals who lived on the coast, locals who knew that their *ahupua’a*—their

homes—likely would be next. My mother always has tears in her voice when she remembers the cheerful way people responded. “No worries,” she heard over and over again. “We understand and totally support you.”

Forcibly removing civilians caught in the blockade would have been a terrible public relations move, signifying an attack not only on the valley but on all of the communities in the surrounding area. It would have ignited a fire in the local community that the state of Hawaii had no intention of lighting. Unable to move their squad cars and paddy wagons into the valley to arrest the residents, the state police were forced to stand down, and a long-term agreement was reached that kept the community on the land and the *ahupua'a* intact. It was an incredible win.

As our people rose up against capitalist development represented by increased land commodification, forced relocation, and militarization, we realized that the myth of our peoples as weak, powerless, and ignorant was false. It was a myth that buttressed the US colonial project for over a century. We began to remove the shackles of our enforced and deliberately created ignorance to our own history. The lack of historical awareness among our people was created at the time following the overthrow when they removed our people from all positions of governmental power and educational institutions.

It is only after we fought for and won our right to be Kanaka that we could delve deeper into the incredible brilliance and technology of the systems of sustainability that our ancestors cultivated over millennia.² The struggles over land that gave birth to the Hawaiian Renaissance are inextricably intertwined with the struggle against the erasure of Hawaiian culture and forms of knowledge. Indeed, it is not hyperbole to claim that our knowledge is vital to the future of the planet.

The Rise of the Indigenous Scientist

All over the world, it's the Indigenous communities . . . those who we call “primitive” [who] are trying to save those of us who we call “enlightened” from total disaster.

—Noam Chomsky, interview on TeleSurTV, 2016

For the first time in history, the scientific community is in overwhelming agreement that climate change is an imminent threat to the entire planet.³ Yet, the United States, our occupier, has actively denied the existence of climate change and in fact has taken aggressive steps toward increasing fossil fuel dependence.⁴ Here, in my home of US-occupied Hawai'i, I have struggled to find words to convey how imperative are the voices of the indigenous peoples of the world to this era of climate change crisis. How can we communicate to the world how systems of exploitation and extraction have been wreaking havoc not just in our homes but in the homelands of our occupiers as well? How can I, as a Kanaka Maoli, help shift the simplistic narrative of our fight to survive a mighty foe to a more revelatory discussion of how the racism inherent to dismissing our systems of sustainability endangers us all?

These questions now have haunted me for many years. I have come to realize that the events our ancestors warned against are far more imminent than we believed.⁵ That is, instead of framing climate change as a fight for our children's future, we need to understand that the future we are fighting for is our own. Catastrophic climate change is not in some distant future but is the reality of our present. As an indigenous scientist, at first I was overwhelmed by this realization. How can we, as frail and small creatures, combat the great tides of greed and avarice created over centuries? How are we to overcome the institutions of oppression we consistently and conscientiously have resisted for generations? It is at times more than anyone can bear. As survivors of genocide, we often feel this struggle as though we are locked in a repeating loop, beating our heads and grinding our souls against an oppressive and extractive way of life that has for hundreds of years punished anyone who dared to dream a better world, a better life.

I see a time of critical intervention. We have been putting our bodies on the line in defense of the planet for a very long time. Even among progressives and academics, the rationale behind the revitalization of indigenous science has sometimes been relegated to a quasi-mystical condescension—an idea that we can “feel the earth” rather than possess technologies capable of detecting disturbances in ecosystems and understanding their potential consequences. While our spirituality is very important and real, we need to challenge the conception that it is not based on keen observation equally valid as Western science. After all, if the much-vaunted Western scientific community truly had a deep understanding of the current global crisis, would they not sacrifice their lives and their bodies on the front lines of this war against climate change? Instead, it is the communities that are long considered the most vulnerable, the most “primitive,” that are taking action. It is indigenous peoples who are staving off the greatest degradations, and often paying the highest costs. Recognized Western scientists are largely missing the crucial ingredient: how to actually protect the planet. To implement those critical interventions, I can only think that we must see the rise of the indigenous scientist.

Where Has the Village Gone?

A child who is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth.

—African proverb

From my island, I can smell the ocean and rain on the wind as I watch the flickering light of my television screen report on the events of yet another US school shooting. I bear witness to the children of wealth who sit in the very seat of privilege that so many of the world aspire to. Slowly, collectively, they kill themselves. I see death in an overindulgent, sedentary lifestyle that results in cancer, heart attack, stroke—the diseases of excess. Rising deaths from an opioid crisis borne of a pharmaceutical industry that has no accountability to the communities they afflict. Death by domestic terrorism, denied but increasingly present in mass shooting and bombs. As I saw

the horror of schoolchildren being killed by their classmates I cried for the children of a nation that occupies my own and that of so many others. I can't help but ask myself, do Americans ever wonder what portion of their humanity they have surrendered, that we weep for their children while they have no tears for ours?

In the weeks that followed the Parkland school shooting, powerfully ricocheting in the social mediasphere was lament for a lost child, orphaned, isolated, and seemingly abandoned by his "village." It was that sense of profound loneliness that resonated deeply with me.

As climate change urgency requires me to spend ever-increasing days away from my own people (whether it be to build alliances, share education, write, or simply manage the grinding needs of my own survival), this feeling of loneliness wraps around me as well. The isolating effects of modern lifestyles have come under greater scrutiny in recent years as the likely causes of violence in our occupying nation. Where, lamented America, has the comfort and support of the village gone?⁶

While the debate on gun control and gun violence raged in the wake of the Parkland school shooting, here in Hawai'i the US Marine Corps was putting guns literally in the hands of children. The US Marine Corps Community Services held an event on March 23, 2018, called "Operation Ooh-Rah Kids," described as a "fun, interactive, mock deployment exercise for children ages 7–13."⁷ At the event, the Marines taught schoolchildren how to load and fire assault rifles. The gun orientation took less than ten minutes, which, as anyone proficient in gun safety knows, is insufficient to teach anyone, let alone excited children, about the key factors of safety and danger. Barely able to contain themselves during the brief talk, they gleefully pounced on the weapons, fighting over who got to play first with these weapons capable of inflicting such damage. Such a casual game of children taking lives in the name of US empire. Many of those who participated in Operation Ooh-Rah Kids were children of enlisted soldiers, and many were Kanaka Maoli youth from severely poor communities. Lower socioeconomic status is the single largest predictor of enlisting in the military.⁸ The ranks of military aggression are filled with youth who, due to poverty, have no other option but to join the military in return for some means of upward mobility. The military allows for their personal advancement by participating in the oppression of other peoples with whom they have more in common than with the ruling classes. Operation Ooh-Rah Kids was designed to teach youth that it is fun to invade another people's country. In all the talk about Parkland children dying from gun violence, few seem to remember the children of Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan, and elsewhere who are dying at the hands of our American youth in the military or those who brandish our weapons.

As I contemplate the image of children raising firearms in play, I cannot help but think it is time to discuss how American children and those in their occupied territories are learning about violence. Violence is embedded into the very fabric

of society. The poorer and darker peoples of the world have become accustomed to fighting in militias that protect the finances of the world's top 1 percent, those who hold more wealth than the entire bottom half of the economic pie. Peoples like Kanaka Maoli, from nations that have been invaded, destabilized, and inserted into situations where, as the price of survival, we participate as foot soldiers of destabilization, theft, and murder of poor and brown people in other countries.

When the United States places violence at the center of its social, political, cultural, and economic system, American children will bring the violence back home.

Kanaka Maoli are intimately familiar with the intensity of militarization and the normalization of US imperial violence. The US Pacific Command, located on O'ahu, is responsible for coordinating US troops over more than 50 percent of the earth's surface. The area stretches from the US West Coast to the western border of India and from Antarctica to the North Pole, encompassing thirty-six countries as well as twenty territories and possessions. According to the US Department of Defense, in 2009 the combined services in Hawai'i had 113 military installations for a total of 231,560 acres.⁹ In my home of O'ahu, the military controls 22 percent of the island. Tanks and military convoys line our highways; lands filled with unexploded ordnance from military exercises impede our traditional gathering rights; water is diverted from its natural course to feed military bases; the booming of war games disturb our fishing on a regular basis; lands are stolen. We are an occupied nation living in one of the most heavily militarized places on the planet.¹⁰

US military might goes hand in hand with protecting US economic interests abroad, and Hawai'i is often the host for gatherings that marry the two, most notably the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC). RIMPAC is the world's largest international maritime warfare exercise, where military might is displayed, trained, and traded. One of the most horrific exercises under RIMPAC is the training of the Indonesian military that is currently engaged in the active genocide of the peoples of West Papua.¹¹

Systems of Sustainability

He naha ipu auane'i o pa'a i ka hupau humu.

It isn't a break in the gourd container that can be easily mended by sewing the parts.

—Mary Kawena Pukui, *Olelo No'eau*, 1983

Kanaka Maoli systems of sustainability are based on *ohana*, or extended families. Traditionally *ipu*, or gourds, were the literal and metaphorical repository of our physical and spiritual nourishment. Our water and food were carried in *ipu*. All would eat and drink from a communal bowl. If one went hungry, all would suffer

equally. If you ate from the same bowl you were family. Hence, the breaking of a gourd is not simply the destruction of an implement but a powerful metaphor for the loss of common wealth.

Each *ohana* was responsible for the stewardship of *ahupua'a*, or traditional pie-shaped land divisions from the highest mountain peaks extending down to the ocean depths. Every *ahupua'a* was self-sustaining in its own right, composed of everything that was needed to clothe, feed, house, and nurture a community.¹² We traded primarily for luxury or specialized goods and coordinated everything we needed for survival through a complex set of laws and cultural norms called *Kanewai*. While portrayed by settlers as primitive, at the time of contact this system nurtured approximately 700,000 people with no need for imports.¹³ This stands in sharp contrast to present-day Hawai'i, where 90 percent of foods are imported.¹⁴ Each system was complex, geographically specific, and unique. The scope of its *mana*, or special power, is fully knowable only by understanding the parts of its whole.

Too often the co-optation of indigenous structures occurs by slicing and dicing the elements that seem more suited to Western branding, packaging, and capitalist exploitation. Grab a dream catcher here, insert a little *kavakava*, serve a little naked yoga, and presto! Instant shaman!

In the pursuit of an antithesis to the modern ailment—as signaled by opioid overuse and gun violence—this extraction merely replicates the process that led to the illness in the first place. According to this philosophy, what is desired must be dissected, the organism (the people, culture, and biological ecosystem) from which it is born and evolved eviscerated. The specific context that lends its essential value is dismissed. A song beautifully sung weaves a tapestry of incredible richness when it describes the rhythm to which we pound *wauke* (a traditional bark-based textile) into the softest cloth. The chant that calls out the navigational winds of our journey is most precious when it teaches us our path home.

The concept of systems of sustainability is critical. The embrace of systems reflects the unique biodiversity and geological particularity of the indigenous space. It also reveals the powerful way we have learned to live using minimally destructive practices on lands and oceans that we know are not disposable. To create such complex systems, indigenous peoples have to reclaim our science. We must participate in intergenerational observation, data collection, and analysis. These are not LEGO pieces to snap onto generic platforms, interchangeable and replaceable. When the gourd is broken to analyze its parts, piecing it together again isn't so easy.

To conceive potential pathways forward for all peoples, we have to grapple with the structural racism that drove manifest destiny and valued only those civilizations that left permanent scars on the face of the earth, resulting in its progressive scarring and disfigurement.

To heal the broken gourd of our mutual wealth, could we revitalize intricate and complex geographically specific systems? Our systems of sustainability were

destroyed precisely because they were incompatible with systems of exploitation and extraction. In what way is it possible for us, as mere mortals, to resist the greatest military and economic system on the planet—a system that continues to criminalize and persecute our very attempts to reassert sustainability?

In Hawai'i, one of our approaches has been to grow deep roots that revitalize traditional technologies within our communities and decrease our dependence on systems of exploitation. My journey during the past twenty-two years has focused on revitalizing our food sovereignty by supporting traditional, *kalo* (taro) farming. I belong to an alliance of *kalo* farmers who have maintained the secrets of this science in spite of great persecution and hardship.¹⁵ In the early 1900s, land and water stolen from us starved us of our traditional systems of sustainability. What once was a flourishing food base was severely curtailed and replaced with plantation sugar and pineapple for export. *Kalo*, revered by our people as Haloa, the elder sibling to Kanaka Maoli, dried up in most places, as water was diverted away from the fields.

A tremendous part of our food sovereignty movement has required the repatriation of lands stolen during the 1893 overthrow of our sovereign kingdom. That repatriation has occurred often via nonviolent direct action. Wai'ahole, where farmers fought and won their land in the 1970s, remains one of our greatest successes. In the 1990s we were also the first to fight for and win back water rights that, for nearly a century, had been diverted from the east side of O'ahu to the agricultural plantations on the central plain. During the struggle, we leveraged traditional *kalo* farmer water rights that remain from the times of our kingdom. The farmers, also known as the Warriors of Haloa, sent out a call for help, and from all over Hawai'i farmers came out of their nooks and helped reclaim traditional *lo'i* (taro paddies). Farming utilizes ancient technology, is mostly done by hand, and does not involve any pesticides, herbicides, or chemical fertilizers. A farming technique newly referred to as “organic” must be considered ancient. As we worked together, we realized that backbreaking work in isolation is not what we traditionally would have done.

In ancient times, the entire *ohana* would work for only a few hours a day and then return to other pursuits. This is in marked contrast to the farming of these modern times, where *kalo* farmers toil as one or two subsistence farmers, working in isolation. Onipa'a Na Hui Kalo brought back the tradition where dozens if not hundreds of people would gather together for a few hours. The laughter and sheer scale of the work we could accomplish boggled our minds. The farmer Ikaika Bishop said, “The work of a year we could accomplish together in one day.” We realized that not only did we love working together, but we needed it. So began a journey in which we started to revitalize ancient *lo'i* in almost every major island. We shared technology on battling pests and increasing yield, as well as waterway management and soil enrichment. As we became more successful we inevitably clashed with developers and the military, whose goals are at odds with ours.

It is here we see most starkly why the process of colonization dismantled our systems of sustainability. Our people, empowered by the knowledge of the interconnectedness of our lands, peoples, and resources, would always find conflict with a system that seeks land and resources for profit and without regard for the future. It was here that it became clear to me that destabilizing our own systems was a necessity. Once staying on and nurturing our lands becomes a question of survival, the options are to stay, suffer, and perhaps die, or to participate in the great movement of migration that we see shaking the world. This is a system that requires we transplant ourselves to foreign shores and participate in the only system that we know—that of our oppressors—as a means of our survival. We become settlers who destabilize other indigenous peoples often unknown and unseen by us because they are rendered invisible by the same oppressors who in our homelands have made us invisible.

When I imagine this great, hungry tide sweeping the planet, uprooted, destabilized, and blind to sacred systems of sustainability that they now occupy, I can only call out to our allies and peoples of conscience. Find your roots! Dig them deep. While your struggle may seem easier in greener pastures, understand that if you yield the protection of your traditional place you will become part of that great and hungry tide devouring the planet. Stay and fight for your people where you are. Fight for your people. Fight for your land.

Building Global Alliances

Simultaneously, if we are too fixated on our own plight, we easily become xenophobic, inadvertently divided from our brothers and sisters fighting in their lands. I find it a great tragedy that my home has become a jumping off point for US oppression and extraction throughout the world by its role as US Pacific Command. For me, it is not simply that I wish to be free from oppression; I also wish to be free from participating in the oppression of others. It hurts my heart to know that when the Iraq War started, the military built a “Muslim village,” complete with a small mosque and other “native” signifiers, and trained American soldiers how to invade civilian territory. Now, with tensions rising with North Korea, a similar village, this time Korean in design, has been erected to do the same.¹⁶

Historically, our people have been a part of the globe-spanning struggle for humanity and to oppose US military aggression abroad by taking on the military right here at home. A relatively small population on these tiny islands in the Pacific, we have taken on the world’s most powerful military time and time again. And sometimes we win. One of our greatest wins was to stop the bombing of Kaho’olawe. More recently, two powerful elders fought to block a lease for yet another live bombing test site on our island Pohakuloa and won!¹⁷

In our home, military aggression is a never-ending adversary that fuels the dangerous impacts of climate change. We see the impact of climate change in the

way the hungry tides are slowly eating at the edges of our islands. If the trend continues, we know that our fate will be like that of our cousins in Kiribati and Tokelau. These Pacific islands are much lower-lying atolls that are disappearing under the sea, the first victims of sea level rise.¹⁸

It was for this reason that when the call went out to stand with Standing Rock in August 2016, many of us in Hawai'i and elsewhere dropped what we were doing to answer it. Standing Rock was an indigenous-led struggle that connected the importance of protecting sacred waters and standing against an oppressive and destructive fossil fuel industry. As a physician, I knew I had highly specialized skills to offer. Well experienced on the front lines of indigenous nonviolent direct action, I hoped to offer aide in any way I could. When I arrived, many healers from all disciplines were already there. People had set up tents and first aid signs. Medics packed kits and joined the protectors as they stood against pepper spray, concussion grenades, and water cannons in subzero temperatures. Despite people putting themselves on the front lines, many of us felt that the action/struggle lacked a common mission and a unified coalition. It was there that I met Linda Black Elk, Sara Jumping Eagle, Jesse Lopez, Vanessa Bolin, David Kingfisher, and about thirty other healers from all walks of life, who had come to answer that same call. We met in September 2016 in a near-empty tent on what we called Facebook Hill (it was the only place where we could get data reception) and formed what became the Standing Rock Medic Healer's Council. By the end of the encampments, we had formed a multidisciplinary, integrated, indigenous matriarch-led, frontline action-focused council consisting of thousands of volunteers from around the world. We were all in service to the great fight to stop the destruction from fossil fuels and to protect the drinking water for millions of people. It was an honor to serve that great cause. But when the encampments closed, and my obligation was done, I was more than glad to return home to my quiet *ahupua'a*, to be with my own people once again.

The lesson that I hope to share from the story of our people and our alliances is to honor your fight wherever you are. To dig deeply. To find that which you love. To find others of like mind. To organize, educate, and fight.

As I contemplate solutions from and for my own people and the universal lessons they might provide the world, I can't help but reflect on the African proverb quoted earlier. Despite research attempts by myself and others, the source remains frustratingly obscure. In the search for meaning and connection I find it ironic that the very generic, rootless attribution to such a powerful sentiment speaks as much about the colonizer as it does the African village. Africa is an enormous continent, fertile and full of nations, each distinct and vibrant in its own right. The continent's true history may be lost forever beneath the waves of the brutal transatlantic slave trade, another victim of the very foundation of the current capitalistic system that has so briefly but so overwhelmingly defined the fate of the globe for the last few centuries.¹⁹

“Where has the village gone?” was the fundamental question of the abandoned child. The answer is that the village has been invaded, bombed, and besieged. It has been rendered dangerous, dry, and uninhabitable. It has been abandoned due to destabilization and survival. Yet it lives in lands and in the hearts of indigenous people who continue to fight for it. To all those who have lost or yielded their village, I ask simply, was what you got for it worth what you have given up? For those of us who continue to defend our traditional ways and communities, stay the course. If you can see the wealth of the pieces of this gourd that was once abused and forsaken, I challenge you to join us. Have the courage and the love to become one of us, one of those who fight with their last breath to gather the precious shards and become a part of this great legacy, to mend what once was broken.

Kalamaoka’aina Niheu, MD, is a Kanaka Maoli physician. Born on the front lines of the Hawaii independence movement, she continues community advocacy as cofounder of the Standing Rock Medic Healer’s Council, convener of Aha Aloha Aina (a Kanaka initiative for traditional governance), board member of Ahahui o Na Kauka (Native Hawaiian Doctor’s Association), medical officer for Hokule’a, a traditional vessel that reinvigorated the ancient technology of navigation via the stars, and *kauka* (physician) for Onipa’a Na Hui Kalo (Traditional Kalo Farmers for Food Sovereignty).

Notes

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3. NASA, “Global Climate Change.”
4. Marcin, “Donald Trump’s Administration.”
5. Biello, “Dangerous Global Warming.”
6. Monbiot, “Neoliberalism Is Creating Loneliness.”
7. Lamantia, “Operation Ooh-Rah Kids!”
8. Lutz, “Who Joins the Military?”
9. US Department of Defense, *Base Structure Report*.
10. US Department of Defense, *Report to Congress*.
11. Sands, “West Papua.”
12. Kamehameha Schools. “Ahupua’a.”
13. Goo, “After 200 Years.”
14. Woody, “Food Independence.”
15. Miller, “(Poi) Power of Hawaiian Food Sovereignty.”
16. Confidential interview with a Marine, by the author, March 3, 2018.
17. Big Island Video News, “Pohakuloa Court Ruling.”
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19. Gerdeman, “Clear Connection between Slavery and American Capitalism.”

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