Movement Makers Convene to Interrupt Indigenous Invisibility for Collective Liberation

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In mid-October, our current cohort of Movement Makers gathered at Airlie conference center in Virginia for their fifth convening. Airlie was founded as a meeting place for activists to come together and dialogue, and every MEV cohort has met here. We take inspiration from knowing that the “Poor People’s Campaign” led by Martin Luther King, Jr., SCLC, and others was organized at Airlie, while also recognizing Virginia’s complicated and devastating history, including the displacement and slaughter of thousands of Native peoples and serving as a center of the slave trade.

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Our purpose for the week was to envision what liberation for all of our communities can look like so that no one is left behind, and what kind of world we need to build that centers love and care. In a time where the rhetoric we are hearing is increasingly violent towards women, people of color, immigrants, Muslims, and more, this work to build a new world is all the more urgent.
The center of our week was a historic story circle on Interrupting Indigenous Invisibility, led by the Indigenous members of our cohort and faculty. At MEV, and in similar spaces, we often say we support collective liberation but then don't dive into what that really means. Are we knowledgeable about the history of genocide that this country is founded on? Do we understand how violence against the earth, land, and water connect to violence against women? Do we hold the griefs, fears, hopes, and survival of Indigenous communities as our own? This opportunity to make visible what has been deliberately hidden and to embrace that visibility was an unprecedented opening for all of us who participated.

It was a natural lead-in to how do we make sure that no person or community is left behind or considered disposable in this new world we are starting to build. This sparked renewed energy for movement-building conversations we have been having throughout the life of MEV:

- How do we articulate the connection between interpersonal violence, historic violence, and state violence from a stance of thriving (not just surviving)?
- How do we expand our understanding of intersectionality to center spirituality and healing?
- How do we link Black Liberation and Indigenous Sovereignty?
- How do we deconstruct the gender binary while acknowledging the context of men’s violence against women?

These conversations are just beginning, and we're excited to take them further in our respective communities and at the final convening for our current cycle happening this February, an opportunity for all of our Movement Makers to come together.
In this spirit of growing the conversation, several Movement Makers left Virginia and headed straight to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence annual conference to present on issues enriched by our time together: building an intersectional movement, the responsibility of white people to dismantle white supremacy, economic globalization and gender violence, and the opening plenary on the trajectory of the movement.