

THE NATION WITHIN: PROSPECTS FOR AN INDIGENOUS FUTURE

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I. INTRODUCTION

people in terms of land issues and economic development, as the pressure to rebuild a new Navajo economy has increased during the recent presidential election.¹ For example, at the June 28, 2022 Navajo Nation Presidential Forum hosted by Diné College, Native American students from local colleges and universities posed questions for the presidential candidates.² All sixteen presidential candidates were asked questions on rampant on the Navajo Nation.³ Many candidates responded by describing

our Navajo lands is an excellent contribution to the framework required to understand the complexity of our economic system and trust lands. The conversations around homesite leasing, grazing site leases, and business site leases are the most crucial aspects of the Navajo Nation land reform. Rosser

economic development, and offers some ideas on how to overcome these challenges.¹⁰ For instance, he suggests that a modified version of adverse possession that requires non-use, might work for homesite leasing.¹¹ **The** Navajo Nation could justify such a modification because the tribe holds

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re-purity, prior to European contact.¹⁸ This state of purity is depicted in our original stories, in which pre-colonial indigenous people were able to protect the land by living in a state of balance and harmony with their own values.¹⁹ *places* of outmost significance, and
.. ²⁰ In contrast, d in historical and
developmental terms, thereby placing *time* ²¹ In
our creation stories, our ancestors migrated through the four worlds to escape

human reality in the Navajo population.³⁸ As described by David Adams, Indigenous children were taught the meaning of private property, individualism, and wage ownership through the coupling of forced education and language learning.³⁹ It is also clear that the false government, constructed by the federal government in the 1920s, illustrated the period of

heal. We have given too much of our power to the federal government and outsiders. It is time to consider the new movements happening both internally and externally.

exploitation of these lands. This movement involves examining these moral questions, which might be included in the current Land Back movement talks. In the United States, the Land Back movement, which was articulated by current Native American activists, calls for the return of stolen Native American lands and territories.⁵³ Social movements like the No Dakota Access Pipeline (NoDAPL),⁵⁴ the movement to protect Bears Ears,⁵⁵ and the movement to prevent fracking at Chaco Canyon,⁵⁶ have increased the Land

destructive stewardship of lands that have a destabilizing impact on sacred lands and spaces.⁵⁷ The Land Back movement raises an old and unanswered moral question for the United States and for our tribal nations: how can the

forces our society to think about ways to fix the unjust colonial past. Future research must examine how the Land Back rhetoric

repair the wrongs of its colonial past, particularly in light of recent land acknowledgement statements made by the government, universities, and corporations that recognize where these institutions are built.⁵⁸ If Land Back becomes a reality, activists and leaders demand the return of the jurisdictional and sovereign oversight over lands.⁵⁹ This type of action will force the federal government to revisit approximately 368 treaties that the United States commissioners and tribal leaders have negotiated and signed between 1777 and 1868⁶⁰

