

HOW TO TOPPLE A COLONIAL STATUE



-How to Topple a Colonial Statue-

NOTE: For your own safety, don't leave a copy of this zine easily accessible to police, housemates, or downloaded to devices associated with you!

This guide is by no means directly transferable to your *chosen statue*. The following is just a series of tips & things to consider for a clandestine attack of this sort. Apply based on what best suits your context & target.

Please do not consider doing this action before understanding security (such as how to remain anonymous) & the associated legal risks (such as likely charges faced if caught). Do this with people you fully trust (e.g. if it goes badly) & have worked with before, do not do this with less than a *few* people.

Planning considerations:

If you are not Mob, ask yourself (and Mob!) what the people most affected by colonisation on these occupied lands want. Build meaningful relationships with those communities you are in solidarity with. For settlers undertaking these kinds of decolonial actions this is *anonymous (and often autonomous) solidarity work*, not a chance to be a hero, or do something Community doesn't want! Solidarity means acknowledging and respecting the sovereignty of Indigenous communities, it means enabling genuine self-determination for Mob. Toppling a colonial statue is only *one* way to begin doing this.

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Statues can typically be A) cut at the legs/ankles, B) pulled down with a winch, or even just C) cut in different places (e.g. beheaded).

On a scout

- Consider the material of the statue & what kind of surface you are cutting? (e.g. folds or bumps in metal can make the grinder cut differently)

- *Statue types:*

- If its bronze or aluminum a grinder won't spark as you cut it -

but remember metal chips will still fly into your eyes without PPE.

- Metal statues are usually hollow, but this can be checked before embarking by tapping on the statue.

- Winching could be better for solid statues, but try to work out how the statue is secured.

- What part will be easiest to cut through? E.g. does it have small ankles, or a narrow part of the neck?

- Can you get a grinder in close to make the cut, i.e. can the depth of your blade cut through all the material of your cut point or can you maneuver the whole way around that part of the statue?

- What is the height of the statue, will you you need to climb? How long a rope/chain will you need to reach the winch & keep you out of the fall zone? Find the minimum length of chain/rope you'll need (c); $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$. Take slightly more than you think you will need. Note the fall zone will be slightly more than the statue's height / where it is cut from, as it flies off of its base when pulled.

- Are there strong anchor points on the body you can pull it down from? E.g. tying around the neck, waist or a large arm.

- If winching; are there nearby trees or other anchors to base the winch to?

- Keep in mind that the newness of the statue might impact the winching-method's success. Although this might be counteracted by the height of the statue relative to how well it is attached to its base.

- CCTV on the site. High profile statues often have cameras directly facing them.

- Secure entry & exit routes, distance and direction to the nearest police station etc.

(See more security tips at the end of this zine)

Materials you may need

Not all of these are needed, go for a scout to choose which method & materials would be appropriate

- A winch rated to 1 tonne (*stronger the better!*) with strong chain or tow straps.

- A cordless angle grinder or *multiple* (with a few spare batteries, cutting disks, & disk changing tool).

- Ropes to guide the direction of the statue's fall, e.g. at least 10mm poly or strong static rope. Avoid unrated or worn rope.

- A ladder to climb up statues on a plinth. Ratchet straps can be useful for securing the ladder directly to the plinth & will make for much easier work.
- PPE (safety goggles, ear muffs, helmet).
- Unidentifiable dark clothing, including gloves & face coverings to avoid traces.
- Headtorch (particularly important for those cutting at night).

Possible to do:

Winching

- Attach the winch to a nearby sturdy anchor such as a tree or structure, attaching with a tow strap or a sling using a basket hitch (which will be strongest) rather than girth hitch.
- Climb up the statue & tie a secure loop or self tightening knot (such as a barrel knot, bowline knot etc.) to the highest strong point you can. Practice knots & pre-tie them if possible.
- Step back & start cranking the winch.

- If you need to extend your winch length use straps/ chain & linking shackles of greater breaking strength than the winch itself (any added ropes need to consider this strength).

- Winching could mean it is easier to resurrect so consider once it is on the ground permanently defacing it in another way to prevent this.

Grinder

- Typically, there are two key roles: cutting the statue, & pulling the statue to make sure it falls in a safe direction.

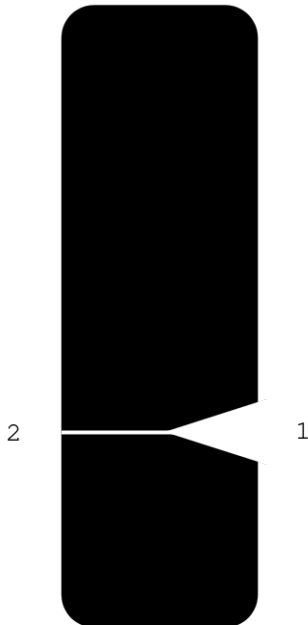
- Prepare your rope so it is easy to roll out once you reach the site. Coiling the rope in a bag (using the butterfly method) is a good way to do this. Preset a 3:1 mechanical advantage on your tug rope before you arrive at the action site & butterfly it into a bag with the statue-bound end in last.

- Climb up the statue to attach the tug rope. Tend the other end. A truckers hitch around a ground anchor point can give you good mechanical advantage. Make sure pullers are standing far enough from the fall zone so as not to get hit.

- You can grind a straight cut through each ankle. But if you want a slightly more controlled fall, you can cut a V out of the ankles on the side you want the statue to

fall. You can cut the V first, then finish the cut around the circumference of the legs (see diagram). Once the V is cut, the pullers can start applying some tension. *Don't pull too hard while the statue is being cut*. In instances where you are not cutting the V, *still cut the falling side first*. This is important because the blade can pinch from the weight of the statue which can result in your cutting disk getting stuck or in the grinder kicking back. (Securely watching some videos on chainsawing trees will give you sense of how gravity can effect your cutting).

(fall direction →)



Hot tips

- Visualise the direction the statue will fall, how the weight of your statue will effect your cutting, & when / how you will make each cut.
- You might be cutting right at eye level, wear goggles that seal to your face. A full face covering can also be good to avoid sparks or flying debris. Seeing clearly is important so also wear a head torch & avoid goggles that are dark.
- Practice using an angle grinder at waist level, then when comfortable practice again at eye level.
- Practice grinding on similar materials if you can, e.g. aluminum cuts quite similarly to bronze. Toppling a stone statue would require a little more research beyond this zine. It is unknown if a stone statue has been felled in this colony before, but it could possibly be done with diamond cutting disks.
- Multiple people cutting different parts / performing different (sub)roles at the same time might be the difference between getting away and getting caught.
- You can ratchet strap your ladder to the plinth, to secure your ladder & keep it steady.

Best practice general security tips:

- Make everything untraceable, e.g.
 - Wear clothes & head coverings that leave you unidentifiable.
 - Don't bring anything to the action site that can be linked back to you, such as vehicles, phones, items that may be left behind or regular clothing.
 - Be wary of DNA / fingerprints. At the very least, wear gloves.
 - Dispose of your clothes & any other incriminating materials soon as possible afterwards. (Note: if you're cutting bronze, particles of dust could be found on your clothes/tools if they are seized anytime in the future.)
 - Always avoid keeping any materials used in actions in your home, or at all. Whether circumstantially or through forensic analysis they will be linked back to the action if you / your home is searched.
- Plan your entry & exit routes. Break continuity for investigators watching, & consider leaving things like ladders behind, if necessary.
- Think about contingencies
- Keep the whole action on a need to know basis!
- Scout cautiously.

- Consider how far away a police station is & how long first responders might be.

- Consider timing & whether there might be civilians or security around during the action. There is a general increase in surveillance on weekends & public holidays, and around high-profile statues *especially the night before 'significant' colonial days*, e.g. Invasion Day.

- Don't take this zine with you to your chosen statue! (If you haven't memorised everything you need to know beforehand you probably aren't ready to do the action yet, apologies)

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For more info on general relevant security practices these zines might be insightful:

- 'No Trace'
- 'How to Have a Fun Night to Forget'
- 'How to Submit a Communique Anonymously and Get Away With It'

All of these are on <https://NoTrace.How> (DO NOT ACCESS THESE WITHOUT TOR).

Consider securely accessing YouTube to learn practical skills like using an angle grinder, rigging skills etc. Even better: learn from a trusted friend!

Made on stolen and occupied Aboriginal land.
Sovereignty never ceded. Death to the colony.

Land back liberation end colonial occupation