We’re half the world,  
but we carry the rest of it on our backs.

We both live in occupied territories,  
but what can I know about you  
Half a world away from me

You and me, we know violence:  
The pain of our mothers,  
The memories of this land.

We share a history of being moved,  
removed,  
moved again.  
Taken from our homes  
and wondering if we’ll ever go back.

………………………………………..

So this is for Amal:  
the 17 year old girl shot by an IDF soldier,  
while reading a book on her porch

………………………………………..

This is for Anna-Mae:  
A Mi’kmaq activist executed point blank on Pine Ridge,  
Her body left in the snow to freeze,  
the voice that had grown a little too strong.
Tell me again about your revolution.

You and me
We’re the nation
And this is for the mothers and daughters
leading movements from Gaza to the grasslands.

-Erica Violet Lee excerpt from “Our Revolution”

We open this special issue with lines of poetry written by one of our contributors, Erica Violet Lee, a Cree feminist who wrote “Our Revolution” for Palestinian women and all Indigenous women during the 2014 Israeli massacre on Gaza. Through her feminist decolonial poetic, “you and me” signifies the way Lee disrupts the vast distances across the seeming bounded logics of settler sovereignties, territorialities, capitalist accumulation and the gendered and racist violence through which these systems are enacted and reproduced on Indigenous women, peoples and lands. Lee brings Indigenous women’s realities into intimate conversation, and names the violence of settler colonialism, within an ongoing process of Indigenous feminist resistance that threads native memories in ways that sustain the specific ways that Indigenous women and people as a whole think out, enact and theorize decolonization. This poem encapsulates the themes and conversations that this special issue seeks to open up, as we situate and analyze the question of Palestine and decolonization in a global context.

This special issue brings Palestine into conversation with Settler Colonial Studies, Critical Indigenous Studies, Critical Ethnic Studies, other critical scholarship and political practices. In doing so, we write in opposition to the way in which Palestine is often taken up and framed in the mainstream media and academic scholarship. In 1948, the Zionist settler colonization of Palestine culminated in the mass eviction of the overwhelming majority of the indigenous Palestinian people (over 800,000 people) who were expelled from their homes and forcefully dispossessed from their lands. They were unable to return and became refugees as Zionist militias attacked and destroyed villages, towns and cities across Palestine. Palestinians have termed this the al-Nakba (catastrophe) which signifies the theft and loss of their land and the establishment of the Israeli settler colonial state. During the 1967 war, what was left of historic Palestine (Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza) became occupied by Israel. Palestine remains colonized as the Israeli state continues to militarily occupy and confiscate Palestinian land to build colonies for Jewish settlers, while exercising routine violence through massacres, bombings, mass incarceration, targeted assassinations, restricted movement, home demolitions,
sexual violence, and implementing racist apartheid policies that fragments the Palestinian population into Bantustans.

In writing about the ongoing settler colonization of Palestine, we start by recognizing our locations on the traditional territories of the Huron Wendat, Haudenosaunee, the Seneca and most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit River, and the waters that sustain life on these stolen lands. In contending with this positionality, we recognize that our locations are required by the Canadian settler state to maintain its settler project and as such it actively solicits our identification and participation in the ongoing colonization and erasure of Indigenous people. In this issue we also draw attention to some of the histories of forced movement and displacement that underlie our presence on these lands, and the ways our location in this settler state can be disrupted and transformed through alliances and relations of solidarity. Specifically, these traditional territories have been a central site in which Palestinians and their allies have advanced global solidarity with the indigenous Palestinian struggle, while simultaneously expressing solidarity and building ties with Indigenous peoples from Six Nations, Tyendinaga, and across Turtle Island (Krebs and Olwan, 2012, Juma’ 2007). Mike Krebs and Dana Olwan (2012) and others document this distinct local history of connecting the struggles against the settler colonial states of Canada and Israel, which we and some of the contributors in this special issue have been part of building for over a decade. This history is significant because Palestinians and their allies on these territories were building these relationships at a time when both of these Indigenous struggles were hardly recognized, well before the time of reconciliation (in Canada), and the popularization of the global solidarity movement with Palestine. This history of connection has produced its own conversations, political analysis, critiques, tensions, and praxis, which this issue is both informed by and seeks to consolidate and take forward.

These ongoing political relationships center and are rooted in a responsibility to decolonial struggles on these lands, what Steven Salaita in his contribution in this special issue calls an “ethical imperative” which he reissues to the Palestine solidarity movement. Political intimacies (Lowe, 2015) between the Palestinian liberation struggle, Indigenous movements and other struggles are not new. Salaita reminds us that “dialogue between Natives and Palestinians goes back at least half a century” and suggests “the first substantive interchange occurred during the heyday of the American Indian Movement [AIM], when Native activists, like their Black Panther peers, looked to global liberation struggles for inspiration and solidarity, proffering both to anti-colonial movements in return” (2017, para 25). What is significant here is the way that such past and present relationships have disrupted and work against settler categories and imaginaries that have configured the native as always ‘disappeared’ or ‘defeated’, which has at times precluded solidarity across these geographies. This is not to deny that solidarity is difficult and that at times there have been tensions when forging ties between struggles (which have been written about by Amadahy, 2013; Bhandar & Ziadah, 2016; Kelley, 2016; Krebs & Olwan, 2012; Tabar, 2016), but we want to stress that by coming together through ethical responsibilities these movements also rupture the ideological structures, racial hierarchies and discourses of settler colonial states. Moreover, these settler colonial ideologies rationalize and sustain settler projects
of land theft, ongoing genocide, and anti-black racism (rooted in the history of transatlantic slavery), and coercive labour regimes in a global geography, in which similar racial categories enable capitalist accumulation, exploitation, dispossession and white supremacy across different territories. Thus we and our contributors in this special issue emphasize and expand upon how creating ways of seeing across colonial ideologies and the racialized, sexualized logics that sanction dominance and state terror, is part of a necessary internationalist decolonial project to transform systems of power.

State violence across colonial territories

We write during a political moment when settler sovereignties and carceral state logics are reproduced through an intensification of violence and war on bodies that have been rendered surplus and disposable. Whether through the mass incarceration and murdering of Black life, such as in the cases of Sandra Bland, the disappearance and murder of Indigenous women such as Tina Fontaine, the detention and mass deportations of immigrants, and criminalization of Arabs, South Asians and Muslims as a consequence of xenophobic, orientalist and anti-Muslim state discourses and policies. This violence is equally experienced and lived in a daily manner by Palestinians. On the one hand, the Israeli settler colonialism is central to the state repression and violence that takes place in these and other geographies by circulating militarized and carceral technologies. For example, in discussing the politics of incarceration in Israel and the US in her contribution in this issue, Johanna Fernandez says “since the terror attacks of September 11, 2011, at least 300 sheriffs and police officers in police departments across the country, from New York and Maine and Oakland to Chicago, have traveled to Israel to receive militarized and counter-terrorism training in the methods of brutal repression mastered by the Israeli Defense Forces.” Israel has imported a dual logic of colonialism and racism [specifically anti-black racism] through its relationship with U.S. empire. On the other hand, however, the racial terror and state violence that is enacted by the Israeli settler state is often absent, erased or marginalized in the consciousness and knowledge production of North American academe, as well as some progressive circles, including feminist movements in the US. What accounts for this persistent and ongoing erasure? Nada Elia takes up this question “progressive except for Palestine” and interrogates the differential ways in which some white feminists and women of color feminists in the global north, have perceived Palestine through a Zionist settler colonial lens and thus perpetuate the marginalization of Palestinian women. Our contributors specifically Nada Elia, Johanna Fernandez and Leigh-Ann Naidoo work against this kind of erasure through a feminist and materialist analysis by deliberately bringing to the forefront the everyday realities of settler terror and daily assault on Palestinian life as a result of settler colonial ideology that renders them killable as a part of and a furthering of their removal from their land. South African scholar-activist Leigh-Ann Naidoo, in her reflections in this special issue, describes witnessing from a distance three separate incidents of Zionist settlers executing Palestinian youth and children, which reminded her of growing up under apartheid in South Africa. Reading across
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these colonial racial regimes, their ideologies, structures and logic, our contributors discuss the conditions that make this terror possible. Similarly, Erica Violet Lee’s poem consciously makes Palestinian women’s daily experiences of colonial violence visible and connects this to Indigenous women’s realities and their political struggles against settler colonialism in Canada. Writing across these spaces, these contributors connect and name how settler sovereignties and carceral logics operate similarly, and manifest differentially upon racialized bodies in South Africa, Canada, the US and occupied Puerto Rico. This raises the question: how do we see the connections between these materialities of power and technologies of violence? This is a question which we return to in the following section.

We are also writing during a time of increased repression and targeting of Palestinian scholarship, student activism and the global solidarity movement. University campuses have become a successful site of resistance in the form of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions resolutions, divestment campaigns, and academic boycott through academic associations such as the American Studies Association, Asian American Studies Association, Native American Studies Association and the National Women’s Studies Association. It is because this activism has been able to rupture the Zionist settler colonial hegemony in North America that campuses specifically in the US have become a renewed site of attack, giving rise to lawfare and what Salaita (2017) has called the “pro-Israel punishment industry.” Through various pro-Israel organizations and lobby groups, the Israeli state has been operating on campuses to surveil students and faculty, monitor curriculum, academic research, public lectures, and extending into faculty hiring and search committees as outlined by Nada Elia. What is happening on campuses reveals the mutual investments of these settler states in advancing their respective hegemonies and modes of repression.

In June 2017, the University administration at California State University (CSU)-Fresno cancelled an academic search for the Edward Said Professor of Middle East Studies, which had already been completed and approved by administrators. External interference and complaints about the finalists and their politics were made by Zionist interest groups. Zionist faculty were also reported to have harassed members of the search committee. Instead of acting to protect the academic freedom and integrity of the search committee, faculty and candidates, the University claimed that the search was cancelled due to “procedural issues”. This assault on academic freedom and faculty governance has also been taking place at San Francisco State University (SFSU) where faculty and students are undergoing intimidation, attacks and defamation by the Lawfare Project - a right wing Zionist organization. More specifically the Lawfare Project seeks to destroy the careers of Professor Rabab Abdulhadi and the general Union of Palestinian students, as well as the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Studies program and the College of Ethnic Studies at SFSU.

The university’s complicity and capitulation in enabling Zionist lobby groups and organizations to enact further colonial and racist objectives on US campuses enacts material and psychic violence on those that are targeted. As a result, Palestinians have not only been evicted from their lands but have also been subject to removal from academic spaces and forced into
exile once again. On colonized lands, US institutions are furthering the project of Zionist dispossession, eviction and erasure of Palestinian academics and knowledge production. The above examples were preceded by the high profile case of the institutional ‘dehiring’ of Steven Salaita, professor of Indigenous studies at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign (UIUC), following the concerted pressure that Zionist organizations exerted on the University administration, which Salaita discusses in his essay on the politics of educational decolonization and solidarity in this issue. Salaita outlines how Native American Studies at UIUC became the subject of surveillance and disciplining through the settler logics that operate between and across the US and Israel. Reflecting Israel’s role in extending its settler project and support of the ongoing colonization of native lands in the US, he states “Zionist pressure will become a regular feature of American Indian and Indigenous Studies (as it already is in numerous fields). This pressure will not merely seek to curtail criticism of Israel, but will actively bolster state and administrative power. After all, one of Israel’s main geopolitical duties is to act as a guarantor of US colonial interests.”

These events calls for a serious reflection on both the nature and limits of academia as a site for critical knowledge production and space to pursue anti-colonial work. In response to these issues we pose the following questions: Why isn’t there a collective strategy to challenge such attacks on academic freedom, and the encroachment of racist colonial practices onto university and college campuses? Why are these instances of repression, censorship and targeting of Palestinians and their allies often framed and understood as individual problems (issues of meritocracy) rather than understood as systemic in nature? What mechanisms of protection can be put in place to support Palestinians and their allies who are producing critical knowledge? What are the roles and responsibilities of progressive academics in creating spaces in which such knowledge production can be continued and sustained? These questions raise broader issues of what decolonizing the academy would consist of and look like. In the context of North America, those working towards decolonizing the academy will need to grapple with Zionism and the question of Palestine, particularly as academic institutions are heavily invested in protecting the interests of the Israeli settler state. We should also consider the theory, strategies, and tactics developed in the global south by other movements committed to decolonizing education, such as Fees Must Fall and Rhodes Must Fall in South Africa, and efforts that preceded these struggles such as the Kampala Declaration. Since 2015 there has been a resurgence of anti-colonial activism on campuses across South Africa against the neocolonial and neoliberal security regimes that have delinked education from “the founding idea that the African university would be part of [the struggle for] decolonization and liberation” (Mama, 2015). Anti-colonial (decolonizing) work across these spaces needs “transnational and transgenerational solidarity” (Mama, 2015) learning and sharing effective strategies that are committed to dismantling systems of power.
Political intimacies as a framework

In this special issue our contributors map how the complex interrelations of settler colonialism, state violence, racial capitalism, militarism and patriarchy manifest locally and also work across territories. They write and make connections across the geographies of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Palestine, forging new political intimacies and recovering global memories of internationalism.

In *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (2015), Lisa Lowe links the histories of Indigenous and enslaved peoples, and colonized labourers in the formation of modern liberalism during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, through the notion of “intimacies”. In her analytical work she shows how racial difference was defined and rationalized through the emergence of liberties, derived from liberal philosophies, and enshrined in notions such as freedom, citizenship, sovereignty and wage labour. This process produced what she calls “colonial divisions of humanity” (Lowe, 2015, p. 20) whereby Indigenous, enslaved peoples and colonized labourers were racially, yet differentially constituted within the liberal logics of white supremacy. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, as a conceptual, methodological and political framework allows us to understand how settler colonialism, racial capitalism, imperialism and heteropatriarchy, often thought of as separate, are inextricably linked to one another, though they operate differently based on geographic and political contexts. This lens enables us to understand how these systems are co-constitutive and co-foundational structures of modernity which are organized through liberalism, and we pay attention to their specific histories and local formations. It directs our attention to the need to understand the connections between the differentiated material histories of settler invasion of territories, the dispossession of Indigenous people, and capitalist modes of accumulation as organized through racial categories.

Thinking about Palestine within this framework allows us to map some of the ways in which colonial technologies, their modes of governance, law, private property regimes and racialized processes of land dispossession circulate, are exported and shared across these geographies. This is important because often in literature on settler colonialism and racial capitalism scholars overlook or deliberately reject how these systems are mutually imbricated and structure one another. For example, the scholarship on settler colonialism invariably tends to focus on the logic of elimination that settlers enact for the conquest of land, and place emphasis on colonization solely, with little attention given to racial capitalism. Such conversations between settler colonialism and racial capitalism do exist however and are emerging. In *Red Skin, White Masks*, Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2014) encourages Indigenous studies to engage with Marxism, in so doing he discusses the foundational ways colonization and capitalism are linked, arguing that Marx’s notion of “primitive accumulation” is not limited to the initial formation of bourgeois capitalism but that Indigenous peoples are dispossessed in an ongoing manner for the acquisition of land and wealth by the Canadian settler state, emphasizing the colonial relation. In Andy Clarno’s (2017) new book *Neoliberal Apartheid* which he discusses in an interview with us in this special issue, uses the analytic of racial capitalism to acknowledge that “racialization and capital accumulation are mutually constitutive process that
combine dynamic context-specific formations focusing on South Africa and Palestine. He argues, that the study of racial capitalism thus [must] draw attention to the colonial conquests, imperial rule, and coercive labour regimes that have always been integral to the accumulation of capital and the formation of racialized social structures” (Clarno, 2017, p. 9). Coulthard and Clarno’s work challenges us to think of the systems of settler colonialism and racial capitalism in relation to one another. Similarly, in her essay in this special issue, Black and Latino Studies Historian Johanna Fernandez maps the intimate connections between the systems of settler colonialism and racial capitalism and makes a significant contribution by outlining how land grabs (across these territories) were mutually imbricated through settler land dispossession and capitalist expansion. Through a comparative and historic analysis on settler colonialism in Israel and the US, Fernandez specifically underscores the way in which the US capitalist project was built on the labour of racialized groups and super exploitation, while acknowledging that this capitalist system was based on a settler project on the lands of Native Americans. The settler system is thus the foundation of the white supremacist system in place today under which as she states African American’s “life experiences are circumscribed by state violence and institutionalized racism.” Likewise, Chandni Desai (2016) expands on such theorizations in her research on Palestinian cultural resistance by linking the logics of settler colonialism, racial capitalism and the gendered dimensions of colonial violence across settler colonial territories to show how dispossession and expropriation was multi continental. She argues that anti-colonial struggles committed to decolonization must confront these global processes particularly imperialism as it anchors settler colonialism (specifically in considering the context of Palestine).

These interventions reflect an important emerging body of literature that investigates the ways in which the gendered and sexualized project of settler sovereignty on native land and racial capitalist modes of extraction are co-foundation and co-implicated systems. Such perspectives remind us, for instance, that the carceral state, which today incarcerates Black, Brown and Indigenous poor and working class individuals on a mass scale, cannot be understood in separation from the formation of the settler state, its material, ideological apparatuses and the modes of colonial violence that maintain ongoing settler sovereignty on Indigenous lands (Nichols, 2014).

Moreover, in highlighting this emerging area of scholarship, we concur with Brenna Bhandar and Rafeef Zaidah (2016) in that there is also a need for researchers to examine the circulation and transference of colonial, imperial strategies and techniques across territories, while we add, considering these histories of co-constitution. Indigenous feminist scholar Joanne Barker has made important contributions to this type of inquiry by analyzing how the mid-19th century US judicial rulings known as the “Marshall trilogy” was “taken up by England’s Colonial Office in directing relations with indigenous peoples in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia” (2005, p.6). Barker argues that the trilogy reveals, “much about the international exchange of ideas regarding the character and rights of [settler] sovereignty” as well as the “attempt to justify the denial of that status and rights for indigenous peoples” (2005, p.6). Marshall relied on both the doctrine of discovery and racialized views about private property to
claim that full sovereignty resided with the invading European settlers and that Indigenous nations only had ‘usufruct rights,’ furnishing the ideological legitimization for the negation of Indigenous status and rights that were borrowed and used elsewhere.

While Palestine has long been ignored as a site of empirical investigation within the circulation of settler colonial strategies and technologies of genocide and land dispossession, a new generation of scholars is challenging this. Omar Tesdall’s (2015) work charts the way that early 20th century “American interest in dry farming science emerged out of a practical need to propel and sustain colonization of the Great Plains, but later became a joint effort of researchers from several emerging settler enterprises, including Australia, Canada and the Zionist movement” (p.1). Similarly, in her research, Linda Tabar (forthcoming) looks at the way colonial law, rights and private property facilitated the imposition and expansion of Zionist settler sovereignty over Palestinian land in early 1900’s in ways that mirrored the racialized liberal discourses and capitalist logics that were used to further US settler colonial theft of Indigenous lands (Barker, 2005; Den Ouden, 2005). She analyzes the intersecting ways the law codified white supremacist notions of who counts as persons that negated indigenous Palestinians’ sovereign presence and rights. While imposing private property rights, which were organized around the racist view that Palestinians like Indigenous nations in North America were not capable of making good use of the land (Den Ouden, 2005, p.3), thus facilitating a racialized processes of land dispossession and solidifying white settler control over native land.

This framework, which is historical, comparative and considers both the transference of colonial, imperial strategies, and the relational ways colonial and capitalist systems operate globally, offers a useful analytic that allows us to historicize and theorize the connections that social movements have already been making, from Ferguson and Palestine to Standing Rock. This framework allows us to deepen the analysis of these connections, such as tracing the movement of technologies of violence across territories, by illuminating the structural, ideological and historical forces and conditions that enable and have given rise to these modalities of power and extract surplus from their circulation. On the one hand, this allows for new forms of comparative analysis. On the other hand, it enables thinking about decolonization across a larger geography. In relation to this comparative analytic one may ask: how might we begin to explore the ways peoples have been dispossessed in very different yet interconnected ways across the structural formations of settler sovereignty and its mass eviction and genocide of Indigenous peoples, the kidnapping and enslavement of Africans or indentured laborers, or currents formations of predatory capitalist modes of accumulation which are based on seizing assets of the poor and racialized peoples (and for many resulting in forced migration)?

**Decolonization and the question of Palestine**

In recent years, intellectual knowledge production on decolonization has primarily focused on the geographies of the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. This special issue attempts to put Palestine in conversation with other geographies (across the global south and north) with the
hopes that this opens up the possibility of thinking about decolonization transnationally, across colonial constructed borders, nations, racial categories and identities. We arrive at this special issue in thinking through the particular, past, present and ongoing ways, in which indigenous Palestinians have been theorizing and envisioning decolonization, which has largely been confined to Palestinian scholarship and ignored or kept out of other critical fields.

Historically, Palestinians took up the question of decolonization through the lens of anti-colonial liberation (as opposed to sovereignty). This framing raises productive questions, as it expands and contributes to the ongoing pathways, processes, and ways political movements including Indigenous struggles globally define, imagine and work towards decolonization and the dismantlement of settler colonialism. As a liberation movement, the Palestinian vision for decolonization was embodied in a political program, that sought to provide an alternative to the framework of settler sovereignty, its liberal governance and its capitalist base. Within the archive of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and for the different parties of the PLO, liberation rested on an unequivocal rejection of settler claim to sovereignty on Palestinian land, a refusal of the normative framework of the settler state, its racial supremacist system, and, for the left, this extended to a rejection of capitalism. They elaborated the project of liberation outside of colonial parameters, whereby decolonization was premised on the dismantlement of the apparatuses and institutions of the Zionist settler state, replaced by a secular democratic Palestinian state (DPFLP, 1969; Fateh, 1967). While the PLO articulated decolonization in theory in the political, economic and judicial realm (in the form of a program), it was the practices of mass organizing that gave this vision concrete form. Specifically during the first intifada, mass-based resistance was predicated on delinking from the settler state. As such Palestinians envisioned and enacted the basis for alternative decolonial structures and relations through the popular anti-capitalist economic alternatives and infrastructure they built, in the form of cooperatives, popular education programs, grassroots healthcare services and women’s committees. This leads us to question what ways such infrastructure and existing institutions can be reclaimed and reactivated by Palestinians for an anti-colonial liberated future.

Moreover, gender has been central to Palestinian liberation and their conceptions of decolonization across time and space. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Palestinian women have always linked their feminist struggles to the cause of national liberation. Their praxis challenged masculine imaginaries of national liberation and resistance - and often remained framed by hetero-patriarchy, even when women’s liberation was acknowledged as central to national liberation.[ER9] One of the ways Palestinian women have confronted patriarchal structures is by extending the notion of decolonization to the private sphere by problematizing, unsettling and theorizing the multiple ways in which gendered and racialized colonial power and sexualized violence and internal patriarchy are imposed and exercised in their most intimate private lives/spaces (Abdo, 2016; Abdo & Lentin, 2002; Elia, 2011; Meari, 2011; Naber 2016a; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2015).Their praxis has moved beyond their own national liberation by linking and connecting with other movements across various geographies
Decolonization is a global project and by building feminist solidarities within a broader anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-capitalist feminist framework (Abdo, 2016; Abdulhadi, 2017; Naber, 2016b).

The vibrant popular resistance of the first intifada, including women’s activism, was dismantled as a result of the Oslo Accords. Today, the Palestinian Authority has moved away from this liberatory model to a neoliberal capitalist governance structure and has become a security subcontractor for the Israeli settler colonial state which Claro’s book *Neoliberal Apartheid* – discussed in an interview with the author in this issue – contends with at length. Nevertheless, in his contribution Haidar Eid from Gaza reminds us that Oslo cannot negate “the revolutionary consciousness that has been formulated throughout the different phases of the Palestinian struggle.” Despite Oslo, and the Palestinian Authority’s capitulation, the project of liberation continues to be articulated today in various ways. In his essay, Eid reflects on what decolonization in Palestine might look like. He puts forward a decolonial framework that is predicated on an ethical process of de-Zionizing the colonial racist apparatus currently in place, which would liberate the colonized, colonizers and the racial hierarchies through which European Zionists differentially demarcated and subordinated Arab and African Jews. Similarly in an interview with Jamal Juma, coordinator of the Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, he suggests that anti-colonial decolonization in this historical moment requires dismantling the settler state apparatus, as well as the Palestinian Authority and its neoliberal regime and repatriation of land.

In addition, decolonization is about imagining modes of life and futures that are rooted in indigenous Palestinian epistemologies, memory and relations to land, place and the body, and not solely just about replacing the colonial state and racial economy. Our contributors emphasize the centrality of land and memory in this process. In his interview, Jamal Juma’, describes how Palestinians living relationship to the land underpins the way they put their bodies on the line on the line on the frontier spaces that the settler state attempt(ed)(s) to clear and eliminate Palestinians from. He describes how a Palestinian peasant, Abu Nidal, whose land was being confiscated by Israeli occupation forces, began to speak the land during a direct action, while simultaneously mocking the settlers inability to comprehend the living relationship Palestinians have to land. For many Palestinians, solidarity is not only limited to political relationships with other movements, but it is also expressed to the land. It is through protecting, knowing and taking care of the land that some Palestinians like Abu Nidal and Jamal Juma’ enact solidarity with the land, and teach future generations of that responsibility. It is these embodied ties and practices of resistance that enable Palestinians to enact a decolonial process on a daily basis, one that constructs a present and a future beyond settler sovereignty and the “imagined geography” (Said, 1978) that it imposes on the land.

The reproduction of the Zionist settler colonial enterprise depends on the ongoing erasure of Palestinian geographies, culture, history and life on the land, via replacement with the settler...

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1 Though Palestinian refugees have been denied access to their homeland they also express living relationships to the land and anti-colonial modes of life and futures rooted in Palestinian memory.
imaginary. It is for this reason that Palestinian embodied practices, living ties to place and presence on the land are such powerful forms of resistance. They invoke the anxieties of the settler colonizers and destabilizes their mythologies and claims to land. Palestinian memory also plays a significant role in rupturing the colonizer’s ideology and the material edifice of the settler colonial project. More importantly, in the midst of this continued dismemberment, memory mends, repairs and keeps alive relations to place and enables a continuity of history, culture and future. These living memories - in storytelling, resistance culture, daily transmissions and texts - are part of Palestinian worldviews that articulate decolonization through their intellectual and political traditions beyond the colonial system and its ideological apparatus.

**Global decolonial thought**

Palestinian aspirations for their own decolonization, as an Indigenous people struggling for their political sovereignty and liberation, is connected to a global vision of decolonization, which locates them within a transnational geography of anti-colonial, Third World liberation struggles. This specificity of being an Indigenous sovereignty struggle with a transnational vision connected to Third World liberation movements and anti-imperialist struggles, necessarily opens up new productive discussions both within and across movements, regions, geographic, temporal divisions, and desperate bodies of scholarship, as it unsettles these compartmentalizations. The Palestinian liberation struggle problematizes the strict binary division between settler colonialism in the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, and colonialism in the Middle East, Africa and Asia (Bhandar and Zaidah, 2016). Palestine also reveals the ways theories of liberation have travelled across these domains, pointing to both the ways theories and practices of decolonization are specific to place and territories, while underscoring the productive ways in which these traditions can be brought into dialogue. Important connections between the history of struggle of enslaved people and Indigenous movements in the Americas have been made (Delgado-P. and Childs, 2005) and, though important, these connections have often been bound to the geography of the global north, precluding reflections on global decolonial thought. In calling for a wider analytic that brings the histories of decolonial thought in the Americas and the Third World into conversation we are in no way collapsing the different systems of colonialism, their distinct histories and racial formations. Recognizing the particular histories of genocide and forced removal that the settler conquest of Indigenous lands depended on, we contend that colonized and racialized peoples resistance to these systems have produced insurgent modes of thought and decolonial theories that should be brought into comparative analysis.

For instance, in arguing for the need to decolonize the system of knowledge production through which imperial and colonial domination is maintained, in his essay in this special issue Magid Shihade directs our attention to the African and Asian roots of the present, which have been erased by the European colonial project. Shihade discusses how African students (at Makerere University) engage and take up the Arab sociologist Ibn Khaldun in ways that rejects European racial taxonomies which have created binaries and strict bounded racial categories of
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the Arab/Muslim/African. These categories are used by colonial and imperialist systems to differentiate and rationalize processes of slavery, captivity, land, dispossession, imperialism, genocide and war. Shihade’s intervention invites us to consider global decolonial modes of thought that critique, reclaim, enact, and expand conceptions of history, geography, time and knowledge production while contesting the racial categories and European colonial epistemologies that have informed capital accumulation and colonial expansion on a global scale. Robin DG Kelley (2000), in his reading of Cedric Robinson’s *Black Marxism*, explains why these global decolonial modes of thought are so important when he reminds us that European global dominance depended on the “fabrication of the Negro” on the one hand and the fabrication of Europe as “solely responsible for modernity” on the other. This was partly achieved through:

An entire generation of “Enlightened” European scholars [who] worked hard to wipe out the cultural and intellectual contributions of Egypt and Nubia from European history, to whiten the West in order to maintain the purity of the “European” race. They also stripped all of Africa of any semblance of “civilization,” using the printed page to eradicate their history and thus reduce a whole continent and its progeny to little more than beasts of burden or brutish heathens (2000, p. 22).

In a similar vein, Magid Shihade’s essay opens up new ways of thinking about how such modes of Third World decolonial thought can be brought into conversation with political and anti-colonial thought in Palestine and the Americas (as an integral part of decolonizing academic institutions). This is a practice that has deep historic roots in the Third World. For example, during the anti-colonial struggles of the fifties and sixties, Afro-Asian Writers from sixty countries came together to build solidarity based on their political, geographic, cultural and historical relationships (Desai, 2016; Nassar, 2016). During this period, Palestinian cultural producers residing in 1948 occupied Palestine (unable to physically join Afro-Asian writers due to restricted movement imposed by Israel), situated and connected themselves as part of a broader geography, and aligned in solidarity with decolonization movements in Asia and Africa through their writings and resistance poetry published in the Communist Party’s journals *Al-Jadid* and *Al-Ittihad* (Nassar, 2016). Similarly, Rabab Abdulhadi reminds us that, “the recent resurgence of solidarities that emerged in 2014” after the Israeli massacres in Gaza were predated and prefigured by the period of the 1960s when anti-imperialist, anti-racist solidarities were articulated across the Americas, Palestine and the rest of the Third World. For movements like the Young Lords, “the American Indian Movement, the Brown Beret, the I-Wor Kuen, the Red Guard, El Comite, and the Black Panther Party, support for the Palestinian struggle was consistent and uncompromising” (Abdulhadi, 2017). This formative historical period produced radical political thought, critical intellectual traditions and resistance cultures that were generative of shared analysis of colonial and imperialist systems. These shared analytics allowed for a comparative analysis of structures of oppression across various geographies, connections to
be made between movements and their visions for liberation. As well, enacted ways of transgressing, and re-making relations across “colonially imposed racial boundaries” (Ouden, 2005, p. 34) through political solidarity.

**Solidarity as political intimacy**

Drawing on Lowe’s notion of political intimacy throughout this special issue, we show how political solidarity disrupts and transforms systemic power while creating insurgent countervailing forms of power across geographies, as well as shared analytics, archives of knowledge, and modes of resistance important for political projects committed to decolonization. Gaztambide-Fernandez (2012) cautions that “while solidarity is often evoked in the context of political projects committed to decolonization, it provokes skepticism as a concept that can be mobilized to obscure the very dynamics of colonization that set the stage for – and are sometimes reproduced through – solidarity relations (see Tuck and Yang, 2012)”. While we take this skepticism of solidarity seriously, in the context of Palestine, the history of Third World internationalism between the PLO and other movements, and the 2015 Palestinian call for Boycotts, Divestments and Sanctions premised solidarity on particular principles and guidelines that bring to the surface the dynamics of colonization, apartheid, occupation and imperialism.

In reflecting on a prisoner and labour solidarity delegation to Palestine that Johanna Fernandez participated in, her essay in this issue discusses the similarities and differences in state formation in the US and Israel, and internationalist solidarities built across the Americas and Palestine with a specific focus on Black internationalism. Moreover, in our interview with Vijay Prashad, he discusses the long history of internationalism between Palestine and India and the shifts that have taken place from the 1930’s till the present. From 1936-1980 Indian nationalism viewed Palestinian aspirations for national liberation as identical to that of the Indian freedom movement, thus forging ties with the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Prashad excavates an important history of Third World internationalism that is not commonly known. He underscores that:

India was key to preventing the emergence of Israel as a player in the Third World bloc, from Bandung onwards. It played an important role in the United Nations to push for the establishment of the institutions for the Palestinians. During the 1948, 1956, 1973 and 1982 acts of Israeli aggression, the Indians led the defense of Palestine in the United Nations. Indian troops were at the – then – Egyptian border in Gaza as UN peacekeepers, led by the legendary Major-General Indar Jit Rikhye. India was a key player in the UN resolution that defined Zionism as a form a racism….and has also played a key role in opposing settlement activity.

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2 Also see Alex Lubin’s (2014) “Geographies of Liberation” also provides historical background on the formation of an “Afro-Arab imaginary” deepening our understanding on Black-Arab political solidarity forged during the period of the 1960s and 1970s.
Nevertheless, Prashad discusses the economic, political and ideological conditions that have hindered political solidarity. Since the 1980’s, bourgeois Indian nationalists have shifted their politics in alignment with Washington due to economic pressures and the Hindu right (since coming to power) ideologically aligned themselves with the Zionist state. For Prashad, such policies and ideological alignments are antithetical to the Indian Communist Party’s position on Palestine which has been anti-imperialist and continues to be so in the present. As he indicates within an anti-imperialist framework, solidarity was understood as a strategic alliance across geographies.

In addition to conceptualizing solidarity as strategic (political) alliances, our contributors also think about solidarity as a transformative relationship that is generative of new spaces and different modes of political thought, though it is a consistently fraught process. In her contribution, Leigh-Ann Naidoo underscores the importance of women’s roles in the struggles of the world and specifically in building political intimacies with Palestine. Naidoo’s piece reflects on a nine day solidarity sea mission that thirteen women took part in on a women’s boat to Gaza, in an attempt to break the illegal siege and blockade. Naidoo’s essay reflects on the experiences, lessons, risks and strategies for struggle, specifically in solidarity with Palestine. By coming together, the participants on the women’s boat knitted together a political geography spanning from the Indigenous territories of the Maori in New Zealand struggling against land dispossession; to grandmothers from Northern Ireland that resisted colonial violence; to Algeria that has no diplomatic relations with the Israeli state; as well as a Turkish woman who had returned yet again on another freedom flotilla after her husband was killed by Israeli forces and died in her arms on the Mavi Marmara in 2010. As he reflects on Ardoch Algonquin Chief Robert Lovelace’s journey on a similar freedom flotilla to Gaza in 2015, Steven Salaita in his essay suggests that this form of solidarity comes from a place of personal commitment and love, engendering possibilities for new communities, kinships and subjectivities or political thought. Before Naidoo embarked on her journey to Gaza, at the height of the Fees Must Fall struggle in South Africa that she is involved in, she reflected upon on the question posed by the late anti-apartheid activist Neville Alexander, who asked: “what is enough to live with? What might a theory of sufficiency be?” This process of reflection and action (praxis) suggests that solidarity creates spaces in which decolonial thought is borne out of the dialectical exchanges between the experiences and epistemologies of Palestinians and South Africans, provoking radical anti-colonial imaginaries of the world we wish to see. For many Palestinians, solidarity has also been based on a principle of reciprocity with other movements also trying to rupture hegemonic power structures. Some poignant examples include solidarity with Puerto Rico, South Africa, the Movement for Black Lives, and the Standing Rock Sioux in the US, and Idle No More in Canada, the landless peasants movement in Brazil.

While solidarity can be transformative, it is also embedded in contradictions and often has its limits. In her contribution in this special issue, Nada Elia expands on a wide body of literature that critiques white liberal feminism by incorporating Palestinian feminist experiences and challenging their erasure by white liberal feminists as well as women of colour.
Complicating solidarity, Elia shows that whiteness and the hegemony of the Zionist narrative in the west mediate relations between feminists across the Americas to Palestine which obstruct the formation of genuine feminist alliances. She interrogates the way white liberal feminists impose a micro-level analysis of the sexism and gender violence experienced by Palestinian women that disconnects these realities from the macro-level of settler colonialism, militarism and racism. She argues that these liberal feminists adopt a white savior complex to “save” their less fortunate sisters and perceive Palestinian women as trapped by ‘backward traditions’ and ‘Islamic fundamentalism.’ This is linked to the specificities of Palestine and the way that progressives in the west continue to identify with Israel and therefore shield the settler colonial state from criticism. Her contribution puts forward an analysis of solidarity that is not parallel but intersectional through which feminists can come “together at various nodes” where solidarity is reciprocal as “a long-term movement, not a moment”. She challenges global north feminists (including women of colour) to enact solidarity with Palestine that furthers a decolonial praxis, which is only possible if that solidarity is committed to ending Zionist settler colonialism.

We recognize that while solidarity can become a problematic site for the re-enactment of racist, colonial power relations that are invested in normative subjectivities and notions of superiority, it is still necessary to build a decolonial solidarity across difference, that centers the voices and demands of the oppressed and builds ethical relations of accountability to these communities and defers to the leadership of their respective movements. Also in a time when identity politics are deployed in ways that obscures a structural analysis of power, Kelley (2016) reminds us that “solidarity ought to be understood as a political project rather than some kind of natural alliance. Solidarity is a political stance, not a racial imperative” (Para 3). Our contributors theorize and enact modes of solidarity that are internationalist in their political practices and their understandings of the global formations of power. Because of the intrinsic interlocking ways that land dispossession, capitalist accumulation and systemic violence are linked globally, Jamal Juma’ suggests it is necessary to “unify our struggles” and go beyond solidarity by “working towards a joint global struggle for people’s rights of Palestinians, Africans, Latin Americans, Asians and Indigenous people worldwide.” This suggests that solidarity goes beyond tactical alliances and transactional exchanges between movements and should entail a deeper formidable process of global transformation in imagining and making a better world.

The unification of struggles that Juma’ is calling for in the present, has long been considered dangerous by those in power. As Delgado and Childs note, as “long as Native Americans and African Americans were in proximity they constituted a dreaded threat of anti-colonial alliance” (2005, p. 77). Our special issue mobilizes a global memory in which different forms of internationalism, specifically with Palestine (which have posed a threat to systems of power), have enabled us to interpret and connect the different ways state violence, settler sovereignty, racial capitalism work together, while at the same time, rupturing how these ideologies separate and divide oppressed peoples of the world. Moreover, this special issue utilizes this global memory of past and present connections, to theorize and think about decolonization in a global context.
In many ways, solidarity encapsulates the various themes this special issue puts forward. As Johanna Fernandez notes, “solidarity promises to enlarge our global vision, foster communal values and restore our humanity.” Solidarity is a space where ethical relationships and strategic political alliances can be built; colonial and capitalists structures and categories can be contested; and different modes of radical thought and relationships can be envisioned and enacted. Solidarity, therefore, is not only a terrain in which movements can stand together and take risks in opposing power, but also a transformative process that can prefigure a different world. As Neferti Tadiar suggests, “to be involved in the struggle of Palestinians is to resist and transform the conditions of their own dispossession and disposability...and also participate in the remaking of global life” (2012, para 4). This is precisely because colonial, capitalist and imperialist systems and apparatuses conjoin in producing and reinforcing dispossession and disposability of lives all over the world. It is these complexities and performative processes that our contributors theorize and discuss. By centering Palestine they broaden intellectual, political debates and activism from which Palestine has often been left out of, expanding ways of thinking about anti-colonial thought and processes from the Americas to Palestine and the rest of the Third World.

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References


Decolonization is a global project


