

CALL FOR CONTENT Rock! Paper! Scissors! Tools for anarchist + Christian thought and action

Decolonization, Incarnation and Liberation

Guest editor: Seth Patrick Martin



Image by Nan Young Lee

"Long before I ever heard of Christ, or saw a white man, I had learned from an untutored woman the essence of morality. With the help of dear Nature herself, she taught me things simple but of mighty import. I knew God. I perceived what goodness is. I saw and loved what is really beautiful. Civilization has not taught me anything better!"

*-Ohíye S'a (Charles Eastman), *The Soul of the Indian* (1911)*

"We want to be sure to clarify that decolonization is not a metaphor. When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future. Decolonize (a verb) and decolonization (a noun) cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks. The easy absorption, adoption, and transposing of decolonization is yet another form of settler

appropriation. When we write about decolonization, we are not offering it as a metaphor; it is not an approximation of other experiences of oppression. Decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn't have a synonym."

-Eve Tuck and Y. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a metaphor" (2012)

(<https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/aec/pdfs/Decolonization-is-not-a-metaphor.pdf>)

Let us admit it, the settler knows perfectly well that no phraseology can be a substitute for reality. -Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963)

To seriously advocate for decolonization in any way, shape or form, is to take a fiercely moral stance. It is to declare allegiance in a very real war at this moment. But allegiance to what? And to whom? It is to acknowledge and protest not only the continuance but the thriving of past forms of colonization through the nations, institutions, religions, power imbalances, behaviors and dominant narratives that now take on different names. These colonizing forces remain protected by silence as they--through human beings that do not resist them--continue to make war on all living peoples, lands, cultures and ways of thinking that conflict with their universalizing missions.

Decolonization demands we take a side. It is to choose solidarity amidst chaos, with suffering people and land, against comfort and death. For any coming from the dominant culture, it is to choose to die in order to live. "Unless a grain of wheat should first fall to the ground and die..." Yes, but it is also to know and act upon the knowledge that no real "self" can be found while living and pursuing a dream that necessitates false history and the silence or death of all who do not fit in the dominant narrative. It is a refusal to continue "imagining autonomy on stolen land" (Adam Lewis, 2016. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/2201473X.2016.1241211?journalCode=rset20>).

Furthermore, as radical persons of faith, we also see and acknowledge that, when held up and viewed through a lens of decolonization, much of what we continue to embody and even fight for as Christians reeks of--and perpetuates--the evil of the colonizing mindsets, structures, and violent legacies we openly claim to abhor and resist.

We lament the colonization of our minds and actions, and seek to decolonize. This is not only for our liberation but in solidarity with all who the Church's past actions and inactions have continued to oppress. We seek liberation and incarnation together, and understand that to do so by calling for decolonization demands at the very start something akin to repentance. It begins with acknowledging that colonization remains in and around us, and that uprooting and destroying it will certainly mean uprooting and destroying things in ourselves we have learned to cling to and protect as essential to our identities--as people of a colonizers' faith tradition and as willing and unwilling participants in the legacy of spiritual, mental and physical colonization.

We firmly believe that decolonization of land, mind, and body are necessary for true liberation and justice to grow in and through all of us. But how do we get there? And how is the call for decolonization a *distinct* form of liberation from other forms of transformation? We come to this issue in a posture of shame, rage, sorrow, and repentance, to learn and follow, not to teach and lead.

With all this in mind, we are asking for submissions from any and all folks who wish to share about the realities of colonization in our lives today, and who have insights and stories to share about what decolonial struggle looks like, and what it demands. We are looking for examples of decolonial critiques and struggles in every aspect of life, on the personal level as well as the collective and national levels.

- How does colonialism continue in today's "post-colonial" world, in this era of "globalization"?
- What does it mean to decolonize one's mind?
- What does decolonization demand of our Religion (especially those of us who still identify in any way as Christian), our Education, our families, our incomes and relationships to whatever land or objects we claim to love and/or own?
- What about language, clothing, food, and music?
- What about standards of beauty, intelligence, health, and success?
- What does it have to say about sexuality and gender?
- What does it have to say about racism and anti-racist struggle?
- What challenges does decolonization bring to our understandings of anarchism, radical spirituality, green politics, and animal liberation?
- What challenges does it bring to our most common working definitions of human and other-than-human rights?
- To violence and non-violence?
- What does, or can, solidarity in decolonization struggle look like across, for and between Indigenous peoples, those whose Indigenous beings were shortcircuited by enslavement, and the descendants of settlers?

[NOTE/UPDATE:

This R!P!S!'s theme was decided after months of discernment, beginning with conversations and prayer last year. While forming, and since completing, the original call for submissions, we have witnessed many high-profile struggles that are challenging and changing power relations, including the uprising following George Floyd's murder at the hands of Minnesota police. We welcome reflections on this and other related movements for liberation.]

We are especially happy to receive submissions in the form of written or artistic reflections such as academic papers, interviews, music, art, poetry, reviews of literature or other media, critiques of figures and movements past and present, and personal essays, and other materials we can include well in this online multimedia journal medium.

Submission guidelines: Word length is flexible, but brevity is prized. Maximum length is approximately 2,000 words. Conversational or academic writing styles are both acceptable, but keep in mind a popular audience. We seek intersectional, liberative, and self-reflective pieces. Please fact-check and proofread your work. Writers retain full copyright control of their work. Content is due by **July 6th, 2020** to submissions [dot] jesusradicals [at] gmail [dot] com. Please include a short biography, photo, and possible accompanying image. Visit our website for full guidelines and to view previous issues.

[NOTE: given the nature of this issue's theme, we understand and respect any need for anonymity from contributors. If anyone wishes to contribute something but for reasons of safety needs to do so under a pseudonym and/or without a picture, we will work to ensure that happens, on a case-by-case basis.]