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Aziz Choudry

Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, ietraceutk@gmail.com

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# **TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVIST COALITION POLITICS AND THE DE/COLONIZATION OF PEDAGOGIES OF MOBILIZATION: LEARNING FROM ANTI-NEOLIBERAL INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT ARTICULATIONS**

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**Aziz Choudry**

Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
(GATT Watchdog and Global Justice Ecology Project)  
([www.globaljusticeecology.org](http://www.globaljusticeecology.org))

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## **INTRODUCTION**

For many years I have been active in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Asia-Pacific, and global campaigns and mobilizations in support of self-determination struggles of Indigenous Peoples, and against various vehicles and processes that promote neoliberalism such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade/World Trade Organization (GATT/WTO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), bilateral free trade and investment agreements, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as domestic free market policies. I have worked extensively as an educator on anti-racism, colonialism and Indigenous Peoples' struggles and authored various articles, reports, and campaign resources contesting neoliberalism, transnational corporate power, and colonialism (see ZNet: <http://www.zmag.org/bios/homepage.cfm?authorID=138>).

This article will demonstrate that (a) neoliberal globalization is a process of re/colonization; (b) the prospects for decolonization face considerable challenges from national and global political and economic power elites, and also from within networks of non-government organizations (NGOs) and transnational movements/coalitions ostensibly committed to transformative social change who are engaged in pedagogies of demobilization/re-colonization in so far as they do not consider the "coloniality of power"; and (c) that the latter can be addressed by learning from pedagogies of mobilization (as decolonization) employed by Indigenous Peoples' movements confronting neoliberalism and their allies (usually smaller NGOs or activist organizations), explicitly committed to an anti-colonial analysis and politics of mobilization.

My activist engagement contributes to my sense of disjuncture between much scholarly literature on transnational activism and social movements, and the worlds of activist practice. Many academic analyses seek or construct theoretically pure forms of social movement or community struggle, without an appreciation for the complexities surrounding social action. Such appreciation is difficult to foster without critical engagement and concrete location in social struggles. It is important to ground analyses somewhere and to “recognize the complex, ambiguous and contradictory character of particular movements and struggles” (Foley, 1999, p. 143). Additionally, and before engaging this analysis, I should state that it would be a gross misrepresentation to homogenize all Indigenous Peoples’ positions as inherently anti-capitalist and anti-colonial. There are many internal debates and conflicts among Indigenous Peoples regarding values and models of “development.” Some, particularly those engaged in business enterprises, embrace free market/free trade policies as opportunities to create business and economic relationships locally and internationally, somewhat independently of the interference of the colonial nation-state. Indeed some equate this entrepreneurial approach with self-determination. However, this paper focuses on those movements, mobilizations, and networks that critique and oppose neoliberalism and frame this in the context of anti-colonial struggles for self-determination.

### **FRAMING NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION AS (RE)COLONIZATION**

A central concern of my activist practice is the framing of neoliberal globalization as a continuation of colonialism, which subsequently must be confronted and delegitimized. For me, struggles against neoliberalism and for Indigenous Peoples’ rights to self-determination go hand in hand. Raghavan (1990) coined the phrase “re-colonization” to refer to the GATT negotiations. Such a frame is common in critical Third World scholarly literature and activist networks (Ahmad, as cited in Barsamian, 2000; Shiva, 1997). Smith (1999) noted that decolonization, “once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, is now recognized as a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological divesting of colonial power” (p. 98). For Bargh (2001), writing about the Pacific Islands, “re-colonization is the embedding and re-embedding of Neo-liberalism utilizing multiple avenues including institutional, state, corporate and intellectual pressure” (p. 252). In the Aotearoa/New Zealand context, neoliberal globalization, whether mani-

fested in sweeping domestic free market reforms since 1984 or successive governments' zealous embrace of free trade and investment, presents a lens through which to understand the injustices wrought by contemporary capitalism, the colonial nature of the New Zealand state, and implications for both Maori and non-Maori, a point that I will elaborate upon later.

The neoliberalism-as-colonialism discourse has found relatively greater traction, resonance, and articulation in Aotearoa/New Zealand than in Canada, the USA, and Australia. Perhaps the extreme nature of its experience with neoliberalism and the higher proportion of Indigenous Peoples to the total population contributes to this. But it also stems from long-term conscious education and mobilization campaigns by Maori and some non-Maori allies opposed to neoliberalism (e.g., GATT Watchdog and the Aotearoa/New Zealand APEC Monitoring Group) to frame neoliberal globalization in this way.

Anti-colonial critiques of neoliberalism (and the actors promoting it) among Indigenous scholars and activists in the global North (Bargh, 2001; Smith, 1999; Venne, 2001) come in the wake of the failure of much Western scholarship to be aware of what Mignolo (2000) called the "coloniality of difference and the subalternization of knowledge built into it" (p. 4), including the limitations of dominant (i.e., Euro-American) strands of Marxist scholarship (Churchill, 1983; Mignolo, 2000; Smith, 1999) in dealing with colonization and acknowledging the validity of Indigenous knowledge/worldviews. Churchill (1983) posited an explicit link between support for Native American liberation struggles and fighting capitalism in North America. "If the liberation struggles of Native America are defeated while the left stands idly by debating 'correct lines' and 'social priorities', a crucial opportunity to draw a line on the capitalist process in America will have been lost, perhaps forever" (p. 203). It is my own sense that both colonial (and, indeed, class) analysis is often weak or lacking in contemporary "anti-globalization"<sup>1</sup> movements in the North and that this is a major analytical and strategic weakness.

Indigenous Peoples and some traditional, land-based communities and peasant movements in the "Third World" have articulated sharp critiques of contemporary capitalism explicitly located in relation to colonialism. For example, many Indian peasant farmers view transnational corporations as new colonial forces, newer versions of the British East India Company (Ahmad, as cited in Barsamian, 2000; Shiva, 1997). From land to water, to the corporate enclosure and control of nature through bio-prospecting and the imposition of intellectual property regimes, Indigenous and other colonized peoples are at the forefront of both analysis and mobilizations

against neoliberalism, emphasizing how neoliberal theory and practice commodifies everything, is fundamentally predicated on exploitation of people and nature, and embodies a colonial mindset. These analyses and mobilizations in turn draw from broader understandings, theories, histories, and values underpinning Indigenous Peoples' worldviews.

Holst (2002) used the term "pedagogy of mobilization" to describe "the learning inherent in the building and maintaining of a social movement and its organizations" (p. 87). Mobilization against neoliberal policies and practices provides a potential pedagogical tool to bring to the fore struggles and strategies around decolonization, and to build an analysis of contemporary social, environmental, economic, and political issues grounded in an understanding of colonialism, not as a historical occurrence, but as an ongoing process. Such a pedagogy of mobilization can potentially broaden understanding and debates among non-Indigenous communities by making explicit links and connections between older forms of colonialism and apparently newer forms of economic, environmental, social, and political injustices that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities face. For Starr (2000) a colonial analysis of neoliberal globalization is important because it "proposes a vision of how to address the problem (decolonization and sovereignty) with the understanding that decolonization must include education as well as political economy" (p. 153). Learning about links between injustices alone is insufficient to bring about change: people also need an organizing or collective context in which to act. In turn there are challenges to contend with from within NGO and movement coalitions and networks ostensibly committed to transformative social change.

### **NGO NETWORKS AND TRANSNATIONAL COALITIONS: PEDAGOGIES OF DEMOBILIZATION/(RE)COLONIZATION?**

"Progressive" organizations/movements and the left in general have not been inherently sympathetic or supportive of Indigenous Peoples' struggles for self-determination (Bedford & Irving, 2001; Churchill, 1983). In settler-colonial states like Canada and Aotearoa/New Zealand, and in the discourse of many international NGOs, the dominant frame for most "anti-globalization" campaigns typically identifies transnational corporations, powerful governments like the US, and domestic business and political elites as engines of neoliberalism, but essentially proposes a program of reforms and strengthening of social democratic governance as a solution. This frame advocates nostalgia for a Keynesian welfare state, retooling the national government, re-regulation of the economy, tight-

er controls on foreign investors, more social spending and more public consultation, participation, and transparency around policy-making. Underpinning this are assumptions about supposedly universal and shared “Canadian” or “Kiwi” values that must be reclaimed to (re)build a fairer society. I call this the “white progressive economic nationalist” position. In the Canadian context, critiques of neoliberalism advanced by NGOs like the Council of Canadians, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and major trade unions exemplify this position. There is little reflexivity on the part of such actors about the knowledge on which they base their concepts of social justice, and their own roles in reproducing colonial power relations. Largely missing from this dominant frame is any genuine acknowledgement of the colonial underpinnings of Canadian state and society, the ongoing denial of Indigenous Peoples’ rights to self-determination, and the highly racialized construction of Canadian citizenship and state. Likewise, struggles against “development” and neoliberalism by Indigenous Peoples in the North (e.g., Maori struggles against corporatization and privatization of state-owned assets in the 1980s) (see Kelsey, 1997) have tended to be overlooked and discounted by dominant narratives of anti-neoliberal mobilizations. Continued assertions of self-determination and demands for decolonization by many Indigenous Peoples are a rich but woefully untapped source of theory and critique of both capitalist economic systems and the state itself.

I saw the “white progressive economic nationalist” frame at work during the 1997 People’s Summit (NGO Forum) on APEC in Vancouver. There, speaker after speaker from Canadian NGOs and trade unions attacked corporations and the US administration, and identified them as the driving forces behind APEC, yet ignored struggles like that of the Lubicon Cree Nation (in neighboring Alberta)—against gas, oil, and timber transnationals invading their unceded territory with the complicity of the Canadian state and Alberta’s neoliberal provincial government. Self-determination for East Timor and Tibet were central issues on the agenda but no such space was given to focus on Indigenous Peoples’ struggles within territories claimed by Ottawa. When some of us raised these concerns, discussion was actively discouraged by session chairs and moderators. Militarism, human rights violations, and undemocratic governments could be challenged if they were Burma, China, or Indonesia. But the fact that a “liberal democratic” government of Canada, like the one which through hosting APEC hoped to influence Asian trading partners with “Canadian values” (a number of Canadian NGOs concurred with this stated goal), had mounted major armed operations against Indigenous Peoples in the 1990

standoff at Kanehsatake (near Montreal) and again in 1995 at Gustafsen Lake in interior British Columbia, did not warrant a mention from the podium. This is hardly surprising—the People’s Summit received funding and other support from provincial and federal sources, and many of the Canadian NGOs present enjoyed similar relationships with government. Such silences illustrate the problematic and selective way in which “social justice” continues to be framed by powerful NGO actors, while simultaneously pointing out pedagogical opportunities (assuming that there is a commitment to decolonization) that might be explicitly geared towards addressing these absences.

We educate and mobilize in an era of coalitional politics. Writing about the US context, Armstrong and Prashad (2005) saw coalition politics as a result of fragmentation and the “NGOization” of the left. According to them, “[E]ach of our groups carves out areas of expertise or special interest, gets intensely informed about the area, and then used this market specialization to attract members and funds. Organizations that ‘do too much’ bewilder the landscape” (p. 184). This critique could be just as accurately leveled at most of the groups at the People’s Summit and NGO networks on globalization in general. When they do acknowledge Indigenous Peoples’ struggles, many NGOs—primarily non-Indigenous groups working in coalitions around anti-corporate, human rights, environmental or global justice campaigns and networks—amplify, appropriate, distort, or reinterpret these struggles for their own purposes. Social movements can also reproduce dominant status quo positions and ideas. Struggles between Indigenous Peoples and state governments over attempts to deny, limit, and qualify their rights are mirrored in struggles with many NGOs in national and global “civil society” networks. As Petras and Veltmeyer (2001) observed, many NGOs behave as “intellectual policemen who define ‘acceptable’ research, distribute research funds and filter out topics and perspectives that project a class analysis and struggle perspective” (p. 137). To this I would add, anti-colonial analysis. While a small number of NGOs work respectfully with Indigenous Peoples to support and resource their struggles, more often than not and as in the case of the Vancouver Summit, NGOs that enjoy funding and/or political relationships with their governments are less likely to take critical stands in support of local/national Indigenous Peoples’ struggles, although the same NGOs may advocate for the rights of Indigenous Peoples overseas.

Many NGOs that have the resources and privilege to work at an international level act as gatekeepers and regulate access to funding sources and other networks, including opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to

meet each other to discuss their concerns without interference from the NGO patron. In Canada, Australia, and Aotearoa/New Zealand, for example, international aid and development NGOs that purportedly have a commitment to development education have tended overwhelmingly to construct their concerns about economic globalization as a "Third World" issue and largely overlook domestic impacts—including on Indigenous Peoples. For NGOs that do address local issues, Indigenous Peoples are usually reduced to a token sidebar. To put it bluntly, it seems more likely that North American "anti-globalization" actors will support Indigenous Peoples in Bolivia or Chiapas than Indigenous activists far closer to home (Indigenous Peoples' rights!—but Not In My BackYard!). When Indigenous Peoples' resistance and analyses are not acknowledged or respected by those in local or national organizations and movements with international networks, this can create obstacles for potentially supportive actors located outside of the country in terms of, for instance, jeopardizing judgment in making appropriate networking contacts in North America. Meanwhile, in international "anti-globalization" campaigns, large NGOs frequently define intellectual property rights as an "indigenous" issue and allow limited space for Indigenous Peoples to talk about them in the context of their campaigns and conferences but keep control over the parameters of what is discussed and the overall framework of the "big picture" analysis. Indigenous Peoples and their organizations are often absent or severely underrepresented in such international "anti-globalization" networks, campaigns, and events. Despite this, Indigenous Peoples have worked to build direct networks amongst themselves that are less dependent on the patronage and agendas of such NGOs.

Smith (1999) noted that Indigenous Peoples' knowledges and world-views continue to be erased and/or subordinated by dominant Western knowledges, especially in the educational academy. A similar process of subalternization of knowledge and colonial power is at work within movement networks purportedly committed to "global justice." Racism and various forms of elitist power politics manifest themselves in many organizations and coalitions supposedly committed to social and environmental justice. Indigenous communities have, for many years, been subjected to corporate greed, social and environmental destruction, and militarization that is being "predicted" for the rest of the world under neoliberalism. To overlook, or underestimate the value of their analyses and strategies of resistance is to seriously constrain analysis and action to meaningfully transform the dominant economic, political, and social order, locally and internationally. A decade after the Vancouver People's Summit, my overall sense is that such colo-



nial blind spots, tensions, and power dynamics remain largely unchanged in most Northern NGO networks opposing neoliberal globalization.

### **INDIGENOUS/ALLIED MOVEMENTS AGAINST NEOLIBERALISM: PEDAGOGIES OF MOBILIZATION/DECOLONIZATION**

The transnational activism of Indigenous Peoples can be seen as exercises in naming, shaming, framing, and claiming. Indigenous Peoples frequently focus on naming their oppression and oppressors—as systems of colonial or neocolonial domination, often embodied by state governments, particular government policies, domestic industry, or transnational corporations operating in (or intending to operate in) their territories. Once named, they often seek economic, moral, and political leverage through shaming their protagonists in international arenas such as the UN or as part of international NGO campaigns. In tandem, much Indigenous activism frames Indigenous Peoples' struggles in an understanding of rights to self-determination in the context of ongoing colonialism, rather than viewing colonialism as a historical event. This is particularly evident in Indigenous Peoples' struggles to contest neoliberalism, and to frame it as the latest wave of a much older colonization process.

For the most part, these transnational mobilizations still target the nation-state's domestic policies or behavior using what Keck and Sikkink (1998) described as "boomerang strategies" (p. 12) to try to bring external pressure on states to address Indigenous Peoples' rights in a just manner. But transnational mobilizations of Indigenous Peoples often tend to be part of multilayered, multifaceted campaigns and struggles, impacted by both local and international factors. Many simultaneously target transnational actors operating in a number of locations (e.g., transnational corporations, international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF, intergovernmental negotiations on free trade and investment agreements such as the GATT/WTO) even as they focus on bringing pressure on specific "local" operations or manifestations of these actors in the different locations in which network members or participants are located. As Gedicks (2001) noted, the growth, development, and globalization of oil, gas, and mining industries "has multiplied the points of connection between grassroots resistance movements and the larger international community" (p. 199). The spread of multilateral, regional, and bilateral trade and investment agreements are also multiplying potential points for collaboration and confrontation of neoliberalism.

Indigenous Peoples mobilizing for self-determination and against externally imposed models of development frequently form or join coalitions at national and international levels. Some of these are formal alliances and networks, others less so. In some cases international networks and coalitions resemble networks of national coalitions, while in others, particularly around specific campaigns and mobilizations, involvement may be tactically and strategically selected. Such coalitions often work to construct and frame issues so they resonate among diverse groups in different locations. A major challenge is to try to promote an understanding and common rallying points about how all of our lives are bound together—Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Blaser, Feit, and McRae (2004) suggested that with the emergence in the 1980s of a transnational environmental movement, “the idea that Indigenous peoples have the right to sustain their own life projects received new impetus” (p. 9). The environmental focus “provides a narrative anchor by which their concerns with survival can be articulated with non-Indigenous peoples’ concerns for survival....the potential exists for Indigenous peoples to gather support on the basis that the threat to their territories and survival constitutes a threat or a loss to people located elsewhere and a responsibility on the part of those whose lifestyles would benefit from the resources being extracted” (p. 10).

Indigenous Peoples located in the global North face specific challenges in both local and transnational mobilizations. I concur with Churchill’s (1992) view that “liberal democratic” nation-states such as Canada “depend heavily upon their ability to clamp a lid of secrecy over their internal applications of lethal force for political purposes, thereby maintaining their ability to posture as “humanitarian” entities within the geopolitical arena” (p. 251). International mobilization and recourse to “boomerang strategies” by Indigenous Peoples in countries like Canada, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Australia often rely more on moral leverage and the politics of shame than on leverage over natural resource flows. The “justificatory mythmaking” (Jackson, 2004, p. 98) apparatus of purportedly liberal democratic governments such as Canada and New Zealand is of a different, and more difficult order to confront than Third World countries whose governments are more readily seen as undemocratic and unjust in international arenas. Domestically such strategies can help to support local struggles, by validating local grassroots resistance from afar, and can be used, over time to focus broader public attention on the way that claims made by such governments about relations with Indigenous Peoples in international forums gloss over injustice.

It continues to be the case in the North that acknowledgement and a commitment to confront colonialism and advocate “globalization-as-colonization” frame are more likely to be articulated by Indigenous Peoples or communities of color directly confronting corporate and state power themselves and allies in smaller more militant activist groups and networks. As nation-states restructure under pressure from global capital and the spread of neoliberalism, or enact repressive legislation in the name of “national security” and the “war on terror,” so too their legitimacy is questioned by activists advocating self-determination and sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples as a bottom line for a different world order to that advanced through market capitalism. The “how could the government do this to us?” sense of betrayal and the loss of sovereignty experienced by many non-Indigenous people affected by neoliberal globalization and free market reforms provides a window of opportunity to build solidarity with Indigenous Peoples resisting ongoing colonization. But that work is hard, and requires long-term processes of grassroots education and organizing, at a time of “growing conservatism and declining sympathies of a public that itself feels less secure in its affluence under neo-liberal changes” (Blaser et al., 2004, p. 8). Such work may not have immediately visible dividends. As Foley (1999) noted, it may be contradictory and ambiguous, or even unsuccessful. Such efforts have to contend with sensationalized and often deeply racist corporate media and official accounts of Indigenous Peoples and contemporary society, as well as the unwillingness—and sometimes, hostility—of most larger, well-resourced NGOs to take up this education/mobilization work.

### **BUILDING AND ACTIVATING A PEDAGOGY OF DECOLONIZATION**

The Vancouver People’s Summit “progressive consensus” and marginalizing of Indigenous Peoples was addressed by a separate, much smaller, more militant initiative against APEC. On a shoestring budget, APEC Alert (comprised of student activists and Vancouver activists working on local struggles) made explicit links between decolonization struggles in Canada, and a clear position of rejection of APEC and free trade in their activities, in which I also participated. Their panel on Indigenous Peoples’ struggles in Canada and other speakers helped to situate these issues as being as worthy of support and relevant to anti-APEC actions as the Asia-Pacific human rights abuses profiled at the People’s Summit, and promoted an anti-colonial analysis of corporations, APEC/neoliberalism and the Cana-

dian state. Meanwhile, the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) issued a direct challenge to the APEC process, corporate elites, foreign business leaders and politicians and the Canadian state: "Treaty and non-treaty Indigenous Nations shall not surrender, cede our Aboriginal Title for an economic development agreement which deprives our future generations of benefits from their sacred homelands. We give notice to the APEC state leaders and their corporate elite that investment, especially in British Columbia, remains very uncertain" (UBCIC, 1997).

International conferences of financial institutions and shareholders' meetings of corporations have been put to good effect by Indigenous Peoples and their allies to directly oppose and put forward critiques of neoliberalism and colonialism that link local and global struggles. When Auckland hosted the annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank in 1995, Maori sovereigntists held an impromptu press conference that garnered international media attention and provoked a national furor. Maori lawyer and activist Annette Sykes warned visiting financiers and businesspeople: "it's about time you sat down and talked to us because the present illegal government has no warrant to deal with resources, neither for the past, nor for the present, and certainly not for the future.... If they do not acknowledge the status that we enjoy nationally and internationally within law, then they will be facing extreme acts of terrorism and activism amongst us, and it is about time they changed" (Transcript of press conference, 4 May, 1995). In a year marked by several high-profile Maori land occupations and two major international conferences aimed to showcase New Zealand's free-market experiment to the world (Auckland hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting later that year), Maori were able to tap into international media interest to good effect. This heightened the urgency and profile of assertions of sovereignty being made domestically while also clearly articulating opposition to neoliberalism, and challenging the New Zealand government's right to be involved in international trade and economic negotiations or discussions without a mandate from Maori. Such statements, mobilizations, direct actions, media work, community research, and the production, popularization, and dissemination of analyses incrementally generate an archive of mobilization resources, references, skills, and strategies tying self-determination politics with anti-neoliberal struggles. A core of committed Maori and non-Maori activists, and broader community support, operating in formal and informal networks, draw upon, and add to this body of knowledge, whether in explicitly anti-neoliberal struggles or in other community practice.

Maori were at the forefront of opposition and analysis of free trade and investment agreements throughout the 1990s. In 1994, National Maori Congress, a pan-iwi (tribal nation) body, declared its member iwi exempt from GATT/WTO, and challenged the New Zealand government's mandate to negotiate on behalf of Maori (National Maori Congress, 1994). Maori opposition to the failed OECD Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) was strong during 1997-1998. This also testified to the incremental effects of longer-term education and mobilization work among Maori in response to both local (e.g., privatizations) and international (e.g., GATT and APEC) manifestations of neoliberalism, as well as networking with other Indigenous Peoples and allies in various international arena such as the UN and Peoples' Global Action (PGA). (See Bargh, 2007, for detailed accounts of Maori responses to neoliberalism.)

Maori concerns about the GATT/WTO TRIPs (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement) regime and renewed threats to Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and biodiversity have been widely expressed. With increasing pressures to harmonize intellectual property laws and growing commercial interest in traditional knowledge, Maori knowledge and native flora and fauna have already been targeted by transnational corporations. One ongoing Treaty of Waitangi claim (WAI 262) against the New Zealand government over native flora, fauna, traditional knowledge, and intellectual property has enormous international significance. It is an assertion of Maori sovereignty. It also directly challenges the corporations which are increasingly commodifying and privatizing knowledge and biodiversity worldwide, assisted by governments that are overhauling their patent laws for their benefit, and TRIPs. Research, education, and mobilization work around this claim among Maori (and to a lesser extent, by non-Maori supporters) has kept these issues alive for many years, and repeatedly reasserted an opposition to neoliberal economic values and practices alongside a reaffirmation of Maori sovereignty in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This experience has also been applied internationally as Maori work to support other Indigenous Peoples' struggles over intellectual property rights and traditional knowledge. Smith (1999) highlighted the way in which international indigenous networks with a colonial analysis of "development" can offer and share alternatives to the dominant model. "The sharing of resources and information may assist groups and communities to collaborate with each other and to protect each other. The development of international protocols and strategic alliances can provide a more sustained critique of the practices of states and corporations" (p. 105). Maori expertise on intellectual property/traditional knowledge is a good example of this in action.

Several non-Maori environmental NGOs opposed this Maori Treaty claim, notably the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, viewing themselves and the New Zealand government to be the rightful guardians of Aotearoa/New Zealand's biodiversity. In campaign and media work against TRIPs and intellectual property provisions in other free trade and investment agreements, GATT Watchdog linked international struggles and concerns against these agreements with Maori struggles and openly confronted these environmental NGOs about their trust in a neoliberal state that had privatized, commodified, and commercialized as much of the country as it could, instead of Indigenous Peoples that continued to protect what remained of their territories' biodiversity. Such confrontations contest racism and colonialism in dominant NGO discourses but also provide support for the analysis of Maori claimants, connecting Maori sovereignty to the growing unease or outrage felt by a growing number of New Zealanders towards economic globalization and domestic market reforms. Moreover, Maori mobilization around traditional knowledge and resistance to the imposition of intellectual property regimes offers further pedagogical possibilities to popularize a decolonization position that is interwoven with rejection of neoliberalism. However, there are also obstacles to overcome when trying to build broader support for such a position. National government, private sector, and international institutional claims to legally recognize Indigenous Peoples' status, to consult and form "partnerships" with them, must be critically examined to ascertain whether these moves are meaningful moves to address colonial injustice, or merely new forms of assimilation and cooptation into neoliberal/colonial frameworks.

Tensions over meaning, frames, representation, and mandate often come to a head within coalitions and networks. Grassroots struggles of Indigenous Peoples, "nationalized" or "internationalized" in social or environmental justice coalitions, often find themselves caught in an industry of making and marketing advocacy campaigns where contexts and histories are contested, revised, or repackaged, and where coalition power dynamics and hierarchies of knowledge subordinate the positions and experience of Indigenous Peoples in a reproduction of the status quo. I concur with Long (1997) who warned that "failure to take the diversity of coalition and movement supporters into account can lead to a distorted, even mythical view of coalitions as seen by the movements belonging to them. Since even the smallest coalitions give expression to a diversity of beliefs, perspectives, and interests that are themselves open to challenge and change, counter-hegemonic coalitions and the larger social movements around them are inherently fragile phenomena" (p. 166). In the case of coalitions

supporting the Lubicon Cree, Long pointed out how the interests of different NGOs and activist groups in the issue of the forestry transnational corporation Daishowa's planned logging on Lubicon territory could lead to a future clash—between those who frame the struggle as fundamentally about the right of Lubicon to self-determination and land rights, and those adopting an environmentalist frame who seek to protect and preserve wildlife and the natural environment. Power dynamics in environmental coalitions often subordinate Indigenous Peoples' perspectives. Tensions between Indigenous Peoples and NGO human rights networks can arise when the latter do not see integrationist approaches to development as violations of rights. Other tensions stem from an emphasis by some NGOs to prioritize support for individual rather than collective rights.

The tendency of non-Indigenous activists and organizations to only support Indigenous Peoples' struggles during visible crises also poses a challenge to building broader anti-colonial critiques and long-term alliances and strategies, either locally or internationally. Thomas (2001) pointed out that "the most prominent efforts by non-native Canadians tend to be crisis-driven, an ad-hoc response to current events rather than a persistent, organized effort with an agenda and a strategy" (p. 216). At other times Indigenous Peoples seem invisible and avoidable to the average non-native Canadian. Many scholarly, NGO and activist accounts fail to recognize the significance of low-key, long-haul political education and community organizing work, which goes on "below the radar" of externally located observers, who base their theories and understandings on websites, media reports, the activities and statements of large, well-resourced NGOs, and apparent "explosions" such as the 1994 Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico, or the 1990 standoff between the Canadian state and the Mohawk community of Kanehsatake. Seemingly sudden manifestations of resistance often build on years of less visible forms of organizing.

## CONCLUSION

For Burgmann and Ure (2004) the contributions of Indigenous Peoples' struggles for self-determination are very useful for theorizing convincing alternatives to neoliberalism. They argued that "the practical critique of neoliberalism embodied in indigenous people's resistance to their incorporation into the global market is one informed by an often acute recognition of not only the global dimensions of such resistance but also an acknowledgement of anti-imperialist struggles stretching back over many hundreds of years" (p. 57). This has "enabled non-indigenous groups

and movements to root their critique in an anti-capitalist perspective that emanates from non-Western sources" (p. 57). They argued that the desire for self-determination in the face of neoliberalism "often finds its most intense expression in indigenous struggles and that, as such, the role of indigenous peoples in struggles against neo-liberalism has been crucially significant to its spread to other sectors of global society" (pp. 56-57). For Blaser et al. (2004), through exposing the contradiction between the way that nation-states claimed to be committed to human rights standards yet ignored these for Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous activism contributes to "the erosion among nation-state authorities, and the public more generally, of unselfconscious confidence in dominant Western values, including the ideas of development" (pp. 4-5). Making an anti-colonial platform a central plank of education and mobilization for change against neoliberalism requires reflexivity about knowledge as well as strong critiques of transnational actors and processes and the nature and role of the state.

Embedding and interweaving anti-colonial or decolonization analysis into education and mobilization confronting neoliberalism remains a major challenge for organizing and action in struggles against neoliberalism in countries like Aotearoa/New Zealand and Canada. While there are many opportunities to refocus dominant understandings of neoliberalism to situate them in a decolonization frame, Indigenous Peoples and their allies face challenges not only from national and global power elites but from within networks of NGOs and movements ostensibly committed to transformative social change. Education in social action tends to be incremental, sometimes contradictory, and often difficult to discern and document. If we are looking for neat, replicable formulae for effective pedagogy for instant decolonization, we may be disappointed!

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## **TEACHING TO RECLAIM**