

Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine. By Steven Salaita. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016. 232 pages. \$80.50 cloth; \$22.95 paper; \$13.49 electronic.

In March 2017, I spoke at a national convention for Jewish Voice for Peace, a leading Palestine solidarity organization in the United States. Among several conversations during the convention with comrades who had recently traveled to the West Bank, my interest was sparked when one friend recounted over dinner her most recent interrogation by Israeli border personnel. At the heavily militarized Israeli border with Jordan, one of the common points of entry to the West Bank, travelers regularly undergo interrogations. Although she received many of the same questions asked during previous interrogations, this time my comrade noted a new line of questioning. She singled out one question in particular, directed at her with great concern by an Israeli soldier: “So, tell me about this notion of intersectionality. What is it?” Our table of friends chuckled at the seeming absurdity of such a question being asked during a border interrogation: why would Israeli border security possibly care about the black feminist concept of intersectionality?

In *Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine*, Steven Salaita answers this question by pointing out that cooperative frameworks like intersectionality that articulate a politics of solidarity and collaboration pose a serious threat to the supremacy of nation-states like Israel and the United States. Such cooperative frameworks, which Salaita usefully calls “inter/nationalism,” supersede and reject the universalizing impulses of the nation-state, embracing instead a capacious, heterogeneous practice of relationality as the basis for political imagination and action. At the outset of the book, Salaita proposes inter/nationalism as “an amalgamation of what is sometimes called solidarity, transnationalism, intersectionality, kinship, or intercommunalism” (ix). Although he does not collapse these terms into the overarching concept of inter/nationalism, he casts them as operating within a commitment to “mutual liberation” (ix). Mutual liberation is not, however, the only feature of inter/nationalism. What sets inter/nationalism apart from other cooperative frameworks is its commitment to decolonization and its commitment to nationalism—indigenous nationalism in particular.

Salaita understands decolonization as a constellation of international struggles that work together to reclaim national liberation and self-determination for colonized peoples. However, the type of national liberation and self-determination he advocates is entirely different from the nationalisms of Western imperial and colonial political orders (what he calls “nation states”). The introduction notes that indigenous nationalism is not an “isolated organism. It is a radical entity that survives in relation to the destinies of other nations” (xvii). Here, “in relation to” describes the “inter” part of the “inter/national” equation. But inter/nationalism is born of a particular set of relationships that arise from settler-colonial contexts, and in particular from the interplay between nation-states and indigenous nations. Settler nation-states like the United States and Israel use their monopoly on violence and power (seen in cases of extravagant use of militarized

policing to repress dissent) to destroy, dispossess, and repress indigenous nations whose very presence undermines presumptions of permanence and justified dominion.

While US settler-colonialism is certainly sited in specific territorial configurations, Salaita points out that “American colonization is an international phenomenon” (61). A prime example of this phenomenon is contemporary Israeli nationalism, which he argues is a “modern incarnation and proud conserver of American manifest destiny” (15–6). The internationalism of American-Israeli colonization conditions the inter/nationalism of indigenous (Native and Palestinian) national liberation efforts, which must also cross borders and geopolitical specificities to challenge, reject, and defeat the expansionist nationalisms of the US and Israeli states. Indigenous nationalism therefore exists in opposition to the authoritarian, militaristic, and imperial violence that settler nation-states require to maintain their ideological and physical coherency. Inter/nationalism is the decolonial rejoinder to the violent imperial project of internationalism that settler nation-states like the United States and Israel reproduce. It asks advocates to “subvert colonization wherever their feet touch the ground” (69).

Inter/nationalism demonstrates that indigenous nationalism is both cooperative and antagonistic. This is a nuanced approach and a major contribution to theories of indigenous nationalism, a topic that continues to hold key importance in American Indian studies and indigenous liberation struggles more broadly. However, sceptics of nationalism may balk at inter/nationalism. A growing trend within the field critiques and dismantles indigenous nations because of their perceived exclusionism, a tenet that purportedly obstructs cooperation among and across liberation struggles. As one of our field’s most important interlocutors on decolonization reminds us, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, decolonization requires envisioning a future that transcends material configurations overdetermined by colonialism and imperialism.

With its insistence on envisioning a form of indigenous nationalism that espouses relationality, cooperation, intersectionality, and reciprocity, inter/nationalism offers us a nationalism of different kind: a decolonial nationalism. It also asks us to question normative attachments to concepts of the “nation” that are often derived, even unintentionally, from political orders that reinforce colonial relations embedded within state power. I encourage critics of indigenous nationalisms to (quite literally) take a page out of Salaita’s book and recast their conception of indigenous nationalisms in a manner more consistent with the theories and practices of decolonization that the colonized themselves have been producing for decades. After all, Salaita reminds us that “We listen to the colonized. We hear the colonized. We heed the colonized. This is the first necessity of decolonization” (49).

As part of his commitment to decolonization, Salaita points out that his interest is not in comparing settler nation-states. He argues in the introduction that a methodological shift to decolonization prioritizes “matters of liberation rather than merely assessing the mechanics of colonization” (xi). Salaita’s shift to a decolonial framework of comparison is a refreshing intervention into scholarship and political organizing on Palestine in our field, which has often focused on comparing settler colonialisms. However, decolonization for Salaita is not an analytical or scholarly tool alone. As he notes, American Indian studies has a longstanding commitment to decolonization

as both a research agenda *and* as a political project. What is perhaps different about inter/nationalism is that it is “more explicitly trained on the discourses and practices of political organizing” (151). This makes sense given that the resurgent presence of Palestine in American Indian studies was born out of political organizing to implement boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) resolutions within American academic institutions, another major topic of the book.

Recent BDS efforts build on long traditions of cooperation between Native and Palestinian liberation movements. In his chapter on Native poetry, Salaita points out that “Native poets do not mention Palestine as an abstract space detached from their own ancestral grounds. They instead treat it as a component of their own political identities” (104). He goes on to argue that “There is often a sense of reinvigoration of Native decolonial struggle through reference to or engagement with Palestine” (104). Salaita highlights the crucial fact that Palestinian liberation means more to American Indian studies than just research; Palestinian liberation is an essential component of indigenous nationalism and, thus, decolonization. To again draw from Tuhiwai Smith, decolonization is a dynamic material struggle that colonized peoples engage in together to abolish empire and achieve liberation. Omar Barghouti, whom Salaita quotes in length, makes a similar observation about decolonization: “in contexts of colonial oppression, intellectuals . . . cannot be just—or mere—intellectuals in the abstract sense; they cannot but . . . organically engage in effective, collective emancipatory processes” (62). Like the Black feminist framework of intersectionality, Salaita (and BDS) remind us that decolonization is a commitment and a relationship that must be fostered beyond the confines of research and critique, in the realm of material cooperation and political organizing for liberation.

Even though Salaita does not earmark it as a specific contribution of the book, his focus on political organizing offers a nuanced contribution to social movement theory and, perhaps more importantly, movement building. His discussions of BDS and US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel offer a compelling model for the kind of decolonial political organizing that inter/nationalism advances. If American Indian studies is to carry out its commitment to decolonization as a research agenda *and* as a material political project, inter/nationalism must become a more prevalent feature of our field’s efforts.

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The Land Is Our History: Indigeneity, Law, and the Settler State. By Miranda Johnson. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 248 pages. \$105.00 cloth; \$26.95 paper; \$25.60 electronic.

Miranda Johnson’s ambitious study compares late-twentieth century indigenous activism in the settler states of Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. Her text demonstrates the ways in which indigenous activists—within the spaces of settler-colonial courtrooms—renegotiated constructions of indigeneity within the settler state through assertions of