

Book Review: Imagining Decolonisation,  
Bianca Elkington, Moana Jackson, Rebecca  
Kiddle, Ocean Ripeka Mercier, Mike Ross, Jennie  
Smeaton and Amanda Thomas, Bridget Williams  
Books, 2020

By David Haigh

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Abstract:

This is a valuable introduction to an important contemporary issue that will surely not go away or be swept under the carpet. The book starts by explaining the impacts of colonisation on Māori, stating that colonisation “transforms a land and a society in profound ways ... it takes a toll on colonised people” (p. 40). Colonisation “is a process of dispossession and control” (p. 134), which has certainly been true in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through the process of colonisation, Māori lost control of their land, te reo and institutions of governance. The new settlers did not come empty handed; they came with a strong desire to own property (often for the first time) coupled with a cash economic system to make it happen. The onward march of classical liberal economic policy in the 19th century and neoliberalism in the 20th and 21st centuries has seen the individual ownership of property and the privatisation of natural resources; processes detrimental to the wellbeing of Māori.

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