



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Introduction: shaping a global horizon, new histories of the Global South and the UN

O'Malley, A.M.; Thakur, V.

Citation

O'Malley, A. M., & Thakur, V. (2022). Introduction: shaping a global horizon, new histories of the Global South and the UN. *Humanity: An International Journal Of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, And Development*, 13(1), 55-65. doi:10.1353/hum.2022.0003

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licensed under Article 25fa Copyright Act/Law \(Amendment Taverne\)](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3479905>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



PROJECT MUSE®

Introduction: Shaping a Global Horizon, New Histories of the Global South and the UN

Alanna O'Malley, Vineet Thakur

Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development, Volume 13, Number 1, Spring 2022, pp. 55-65 (Article)

Published by University of Pennsylvania Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/hum.2022.0003>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/855864>

Introduction: Shaping a Global Horizon, New Histories of the Global South and the UN

In 2020, the United Nations entered its seventy-fifth year. Both laudatory and critical histories of the organization have tended to take the year of its creation, 1945, as one of the key founding moments in the formalization and concretization of the liberal world order.¹ However, the actors, sources—and, thereby, the perspectives and approaches of these histories—remain primarily Western. Global South actors, who in fact make up the majority of UN members since 1960, continue to remain marginalized in the genealogies of the UN. Furthermore, the liberal world order was experienced as inherently illiberal by large swathes of the global population. The language of freedom and rights in the West is very often translated into imperial practices in the Global South; in fact, interventionism is endemic to liberalism—and from this perspective, the liberal order appears as a contested sphere of ideas and practices.²

We use the adjectival Global South, rather than actors from the Global South or countries in the Global South, in order to point to the different types of actors that encompassed the group and to deliberately disconnect their identity from being part of one geographical space, or one homogenous group, which inherently comes with associated geopolitical assumptions about power dynamics. There is certainly no singular script of how the Global South actors responded to the liberal order. Indeed, their responses varied across a spectrum, from outright rejection to cautious adoption. However, there is so little literature on the responses, especially with regard to the histories of the United Nations, that this dossier comprises a first attempt to trace the variety of Global South responses. Such a project renders a series of clear and pressing questions: How do we recover and rehabilitate the critical genealogies of the UN's past? How have Global South actors shaped the UN "system?" In particular, how have the Global South actors, coalitions, and groups advanced, critiqued, interrogated, nuanced, and resisted the principles and practices of the liberal world order? We use the term "Global South actors" here to emphasize the political identity of a disparate group of state and nonstate actors who sought to recalibrate world order in order to underscore their growing cohesion around projects of emancipation.

This dossier sets out to address these questions by opening a space in which to generate inclusive global histories of the organization. The articles here emphasize the ways in which actors have experienced the liberal world order, and how these experiences have been translated into challenges and criticisms of the international system which have in turn shaped the liberal world order. Founded in a moment of worldwide optimism about international organizations, the UN, in particular its Charter, was imbued with the hopes and dreams of millions of people around the world, most of whom had suffered

under colonialism. The UN system was to serve, to use Inis Claude's formulation, as both the stage and the actor for the establishment of a new liberal world order.³ Over the next few decades, this new world order was given concrete shape through the institutionalization of democracy, human rights, and economic development. Often forgotten, however, is that several key initiatives around these ideas were introduced, discussed, debated, contested, and pushed through by Global South countries. While contesting the Western-led liberal order, Global South actors advanced nuanced critiques designed to articulate different visions of world order.

However, the agency of Global South actors, as is often the case, operated within the bounds of existing structures. The structures and strictures of the UN, and more broadly the operation of the international order, allowed only a limited space for maneuvering. This reality calls for a moment of reflection on how we theorize and think about agency. To make a somewhat crude, but by and large helpful generalization, Western actors—states as well as individuals—are backed by structural power, while Global South actors often are operating against it. Invariably, our narratives privilege agency that rides on structural power, rather than one that swims against it. At the very least, this dynamic goes very much against what agency is supposed to mean. Our histories center and celebrate “success” stories, often achieved in collusion with structural power, while failures are dismissed with cynical resignation or portrayed as naïve optimism.⁴

This dossier raises questions about how we understand failures as well as what we understand to be the task of a historian. We take a balanced approach to this problem, mindful that the narrative dominance of the Western version of UN history has omitted both. We maintain that any reality is constituted by both successes and failures. An existing order is framed not only by what succeeded but also by what did not. Further, any existing order is dialectically informed by the failures of the past as well as the continuing struggles of the present. Consequently, in the case of UN histories, historical narratives written from the perspectives of Western actors often only give us a very partial view of the constitution of the liberal order.

The contributions here reveal the dynamic interactions between agency and structures, the associated asymmetries and inequalities, and sometimes failures, that have shaped the liberal order. They narrate the navigation of this restricted agency by Global South actors, arguing that in some cases European interlocutors and interest groups helped to facilitate the agency of Global South actors where the structures of power at the UN proved impenetrable. This dossier examines how Global South actors, motivated by decolonization and its meaning for democracy, human rights, and economic development, helped reconstitute the liberal world order by contesting and resisting (and, at times, failing) to change its policies, practices, and systems.

The Global South in Focus

In order to historically identify, reveal, and record the contributions of Global South actors to the international system, it is necessary to engage with three main issues. Firstly, what do we mean by the Global South, and is it actually “global” in scale and representation? Secondly, how can we utilize existing theories and methodologies to re-inscribe the Global South into Global/World History? Thirdly, how can the UN be understood from the perspective of the Global South, and to what extent does this approach help to “decolonize” the institution?

To take the first issue, it is essential to define what we mean by the term “Global South.” Popularized in recent years, the term has replaced such titles such as the “Third World” and the “Developing World,” both of which had problematic teleological connotations. From the late nineteenth century onwards, anticolonial actors sought to organize their activities and share their experiences of deprivation, migration, slavery, and resistance in transregional and transnational networks. Gradually, these alliances and communities, which inherently tended to be global in scale since activists such as, for example, the African American civil rights advocate W. E. B. Du Bois and the Chinese communist leader Zhou Enlai were geographically separate from each other and yet shared ideals, became formalized into regional and international organizations. Most well-known among these creations is the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which arose from the famous “Bandung Moment” of 1955, but it includes a range of other, regional alliances, such as the Organization of American States (1948), the Organization of African Unity (1964), and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (1967). Bandung itself, however, was a continuation, rather than birth, of pre-existing panregional movements and initiatives in Africa and Asia.

A host of other groups quickly emerged in connection with these formal organizations, many of which were to prove instrumental at the UN. This included, but was not limited to, the Afro-Asian or Asian-African bloc, regional groupings, the Group of 77, and a broad collection of associated alliances that waxed and waned over time. What is clear then is that the Global South is neither a formal, nor a strictly defined group itself, but is rather amoebic in structure and nature.

In keeping with its origins in the “Third World,” Vijay Prashad has described it “a political project, not a place.”⁵ In other words, it is foremost a project of resistance. The term “Third World” itself was first employed in case of the Asian Relations Conference of 1947, which, as a British official suspected, “had a part to play in restoring to equilibrium a balance of power at present too exclusively dependent on the opposed worlds of America and Russia.”⁶ But the “Third World” was unified neither in its articulation nor in its responses, which at one level could seem like a reason for its undoing as a “project”—and indeed that is what Prashad argues. However, this has precisely also been the reason for its mutative quality. In other words, to further depart from Prashad, the Third World was neither a project nor a place but a process—of becoming, of adaptive alliances and retaining spaces of maneuver, of replicating in the arteries of the system rather than controlling its heart, of building on piecemeal reforms rather than dreaming of upending the system through outright resistance, of working through the constraints of power rather than negating it. The Third World, or Global South, is neither the sword nor the shield; it is the swarm. Therefore, rather than attempting an empty definition of what the Global South is, here we adopt a reflexive approach, which tends to analyze the group as an assemblage of its multifarious actors, motives, methods, and means.

We follow Siba Grovogui’s definition of the term Global South as a “symbolic designation with political implications.” While the term was not employed by the actors themselves until 1969, he argues that it points to the multifaceted nature of the movement, which contested the legacies of colonialism.⁷ We use it here to argue that the process of challenging the liberal international order, and in particular the challenges actors faced in doing so, contributed to the rhetorical shift from the term Third World to

Global South. As the struggle to recalibrate world order diversified from campaigns demanding territorial sovereignty to other issues such as economic sovereignty and human rights, the nature of the Third World movement changed from state-actors to transnational and nonstate actors and groups. Further, the resistance that these actors encountered was fundamental to their increasing cohesion as a “Global” rather than “Third World” group, particularly given the role of Latin American states. We employ the term deliberately in order to escape the north-south and Cold War frames of analysis that have dominated scholarship. We also seek to connect the efforts of diverse African, Asian, and Latin American actors to address the myriad challenges of socioeconomic development, postcolonial state-building, and the legacies of colonialism and imperialism by accentuating the “global” scope of their efforts to redress the political and economic imbalance between the north and south.⁸

Secondly, in examining this shape-shifting group, it is important to question why existing histories have omitted these actors, given their considerable presence within, especially, the UN archives. This omission would suggest that methodological and theoretical approaches have either failed to highlight the historical agency of Global South actors in a clear way or have obscured their role indirectly. The archives of the UN (and its associated agencies and institutions) have received resurgent interest since Matthew Connolly called scholars to “take off the Cold War lens,” which led many scholars to re-examine institutional archives as an addition, if not an alternative to state-based sources. In more recent years, historians such as Sunil Amrith, Cemil Aydin, Patricia Clavin, Madeleine Herren-Oesch, Susan Pedersen, Davide Rodogno, and Glenda Sluga, among others, have paved the way for a re-engagement with a host of other methodologies and sources as a way to approach international history.

Beyond just the question of pluralizing our archives, we also need to think more concretely about the status of archive itself as the authoritative repository of truth and engaging with them as critical genealogists do. Even as historians agree that archives often reproduce the hierarchies of the world, making certain “facts” more accessible, retrievable, triangulable, and interpretable than others, studies on the UN and its agencies have yet to methodologically find ways of speaking through the silences and evasions of the archive. To be fair, there are now excellent UN histories of making the “small voice of history” count.⁹ The scholarship on the Global South within this frame has begun to grow, yet, this has to be integrated within World/Global histories.¹⁰

In tackling this problem, it is essential to innovate existing methodologies in order to transcend the caesura created by the frameworks of “system,” “empire,” and “nation-state,” on the one hand, and the everyday life of these institutions, on the other. Here, we have sought to interrogate these concepts, investigating how they have been used in exclusory capacities, which have impacted which actors become part of the story, and how we understand their role at various moments. Our approach has been to examine the relationship between Global South actors and the UN at formative moments, which of course does not offer a full picture of their entire relationship but rather a snapshot of their interaction. In doing so, the articles in this dossier have utilized as wide an array of sources as possible. What is revealing is that there is a real value and yet a simultaneous dearth of local, provincial, and regional sources required to capture the wider dynamics of this process. We hope that these articles provoke further scholarship that engages these sources to add another dimension to the history of the UN and the Global South.

Thirdly is the challenge of the extent to which we can “decolonize” international history, and more specifically, that of the UN. Broader efforts to decolonize the humanities have highlighted the problems of identifying the agency of the Global South. Here, we have taken a two-fold approach. In the first instance, it is necessary to employ a balanced approach toward the UN itself. In many cases, the organization has directly and indirectly functioned to uphold or even facilitate policies based on the postwar vision of a liberal world order, even when the effects of these policies and practices were shown to be detrimental to the very people and states they sought to help. This has highlighted the importance of a critical approach not just toward the institutions but toward the actors themselves. In the second instance, therefore, it is also essential to take an objective approach toward Global South actors by remaining vigilant to the reduction of decolonization to a romantic, sanitized history of the Global South. At times, these actors employed emancipatory language for self-serving ends, which merely paid lip service to the ideals they espoused. At other times, they sought to shape order within the Global South, embracing some issues and excluding others. Therefore, we have focused on narrating the agency of the Global South with attention to the pathways and crevices that may remain deliberately obscured. Furthermore, as will become clear in the essays, “actors” could vary from individuals to NGOs to agencies to states who often speak to, against, over, and past each other—or speak not at all—in non-linear ways, creating sets of interactions that feed into the reconstitution of the liberal order.

Tackling these three main problems together, the Global South emerges here as an active, dynamic set of actors with varied objectives, which requires further integration with our conceptions and theories of the liberal world order. To that end, we propose two main hypotheses. The first is that the liberal world order was largely predicated on an exclusionary system of politics and economics but that within it, Global South actors constantly sought to reconstitute this order to make it more equitable. Secondly, as they did so, the emancipatory framing of the Global South falls away as insufficient to explain their myriad motives for agency, which itself shifted in importance over time. Our effort here is also to liberate our understanding of the shaping of the UN through the stifling binaries of success and failures and instead focus on some of the key moments, processes, and actors in which these emancipatory claims are made.

Contribution to the Field

The dossier will be organized around one central question: how do we understand the role of the Global South in the constitution of the postwar liberal world? In order to answer this question, the articles below provide varied histories, engaging in a variety of perspectives, and utilizing a range of archives in and of the Global South. We make a series of interventions in the overlapping fields to which the dossier is addressed. Firstly, we have integrated the Global South literature with both conventional and critical histories of the postwar era. The latter has copiously documented the Western lives of the postwar liberal order. Conventional histories have emphasized how the West has been the flagbearer of these values.¹¹ Critical and Marxist histories have instead labored to expose a more sinister imperialist agenda, which is at the heart of this (neo)liberal order.¹² Either way, it is the West that is portrayed as the driving force of postwar liberal order. In the former case, the “Third World” is usually the problem; while in the latter, the Global South remains

the acted-upon space of history. In sum, the actors of the Global South are either uninterested bystanders or the innocent victims of the liberal world order.

Scholarship on and from Global South has challenged these assertions and made two crucial interventions into the debate. First, several scholars have engaged with the meanings of liberalism and liberal order and traced their multiple genealogies. As a result, liberalism is recast from being a Western project to a historic co-constitution of the West and the non-West. It is important to acknowledge that co-constitution does not disregard power dynamics, but frames interactions, which are fundamentally unequal, as hybrid reality.¹³ We contend that as the Global South proactively engaged with the liberal world, it gave rise to a series of opportune moments, but also problematic turning points where the challenges toward liberalism revealed the shortcomings of policies and practices based on fundamental liberal ideas about socioeconomic development and human rights. In this way, this dossier moves beyond recent work of scholars such as Quinn Slobodian and Or Rosenboim who, while pointing to the global origins of the postwar order, are still heavily focused on nonstate actors from the West. This literature still tends to cast the liberal international order as a benign framework dominated by the West.¹⁴ Rather, the liberal world order emerges here as a contested network of power, which was made as much by the Global South as the West.

From this perspective, this dossier builds on the contributions of others, most specifically Philippa Hetherington and Glenda Sluga, who have highlighted an important critique of the liberal world order as being inherently illiberal in many of its practices and policies.¹⁵ In the case studies in this dossier, it is clear that several Global South actors mounted a critique from within, that is, they embraced the language of liberalism, couched their demands in liberal frameworks, while at the same time contesting the liberal project. These critiques revealed that liberalism was far from an emancipatory philosophy, rather, within the UN its imperialist underpinnings were fortified. In assuming the cloak of liberalism, Global South actors sought to remake the structures and power dynamics of the liberal world order, using their critical experiences of liberal policies to expose the contradictions that lay at the heart of the liberal project; that far from liberating, the liberal international order often sustained the calcified networks of imperialism.

The “Third World” was not a project of emancipation from liberalism. Quite on the contrary, most postcolonial states in the immediate aftermath of their independence mimicked, rather than revolted against, liberal modernity.¹⁶ Global South actors sought a reconstitution, not a renunciation, of the liberal order which leads us to build on the work of Manu Bhagavan and Adom Getachew, among others, who maintain that Global South activists and thinkers including Vijayalakshmi Pandit, W. E. B Du Bois, George Padmore, and Julius Nyerere were as much engaged in a project of global order, as they were in constructing anticolonial nations.¹⁷ However, we seek to go beyond the emphasis on the intellectual contribution of these actors, that this scholarship and others investigate,¹⁸ by highlighting the agency of Global South actors in creating, resisting, and indeed failing to radically transform the liberal world order envisioned by the West. By enacting the UN as a space that granted power to their ideas and reinterpreting the principles of the organization in response to the liberal internationalist policies on decolonization questions in particular, Global South actors gained coherence, structure, and agency. This happened even at moments when they were unable to assert their claims or change the

agenda. Our argument is that the agency of Global South actors was nuanced and limited but that even when they did not ultimately “succeed” in delivering their aims, the very act of creating solidarity networks, communities of interest, and informal structures of cooperation had effects. Arguably, as can be seen in the scholarship in this dossier, it was in fact when their agenda was deliberately thwarted by Western actors that the sense of coherence between Global South actors was strongest. The same goes for the opposite effect: when their agency was productive, it sometimes had the effect of splintering the group. Ultimately, these moments demonstrate that the enactment of the liberal order was contested and that the process of contestation reveals the formal and informal barriers toward change that emerged within the UN context.

We nuance the role of the Global South in shaping the world order by looking at how they shaped and were shaped by the UN through an examination of the ways in which the agency of the Global South operated. It becomes clear that it is not a story of one-dimensional power dynamics in which these actors only sought to challenge their Western counterparts. In fact, in some instances below, Global South actors sought collaboration with European colleagues in order to drive their agenda forward. Even in those instances, it becomes evident that the UN functioned to constrain their already limited agency, revealing that the evolution of these actors in this environment was not chronological and that the dynamics and structures of UN environment often upended progress on specific issues. In this way, while we argue that the UN provided a space for the enactment of Global South agency, we take a critical view of the processes and functions of the organization and their effect on that agency.

In this dossier, Emma Kluge narrates how West Papuan activists advocated their struggle for decolonization at the United Nations. She explores how independence leaders turned to African leaders to seek support for their campaign for self-determination and an independent state at the General Assembly. A key part of their argument was to advocate for the inclusion of the Pacific region within the Global South group by emphasizing racial solidarity with their African counterparts. Crucially, this had a splintering effect on the coherence of the Global South group because it antagonized one of the leaders, Indonesia, as the latter denied their claims to self-determination. Kluge’s focus on these marginalized actors exposes the inner dynamics of Global South activity at the UN on tricky questions of self-determination that challenged the predominance of some larger Global South leaders. Furthermore, her article offers insights into how the West Papuan activists seized upon the language and agenda of the UN to further their cause, demonstrating how different ideas of rights, race, and self-determination were mediated in this setting.

Similarly, but from the opposite side of the globe, Stella Krepp examines how Latin American states played a decisive role in the formation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) between 1947 and 1964. Focusing on the “decolonization divide,” which has resulted in Latin American contributions to development debates being pushed to the margins of history, Krepp utilizes a broad range of sources to reconstruct Latin American attempts to reform the international economic order through the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁹ Diplomats from across the region capitalized on the enlargement of the United Nations in the early 1960s to generate a new opportunity to tackle economic development questions and prompt a debate on how to best cooperate within the international system. Krepp argues not just for the importance of transcending

the decolonization divide between the Latin American and Asian and African actors of the Global South but also points to how the entangled histories of development demonstrate clear agency and effect on UN policies, practices, and the global economic agenda.

In their article, Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and José Pedro Monteiro examine Global South challenges to the Portuguese colonial empire 1949–1962, a moment during which national self-determination and universal human rights were already inscribed as cornerstones of the post-WWII world order. They take two interrelated aspects of the international and transnational disputes related to Portuguese colonialism, highlighting the value of the UN as a dynamic “force field” for international and transnational cooperation and for crucial interaction between the West and the Global South. They also throw light on the ways in which the latter, in its plurality of actors and agendas, shaped international organizations and the configuration of the global order. To do so, they assess how new coalitions gathered at the UN and its specialized agencies challenged the Portuguese empire-state, mobilizing, alternatively or interchangeably, the languages of self-determination, human rights, and nondiscrimination. From the lack of political rights to the widespread social inequalities that characterized colonial regimes, several topics were used as instruments of criticism and justification for political action at the UN and other international “force fields.”

They argue that questions of human rights, labor extraction, and economic (under)development and exploitation were privileged laboratories for the formation of alliances and solidarity networks—regional, international, and transnational—that systematically questioned the empire and shaped the workings of venues such as the UN’s Commission of Human Rights and the Economic Commission for Africa. The article reveals the diplomatic, political, ideological, and administrative innovations brought about by the Portuguese officials to cope with these new challenges, shed light on the effects in the colonies—partially in response to bottom-up demands for reform—and show how they transformed the Portuguese strategy in international *fora* along the way. These included, for instance, the abrogation of the *indigenato* regime, the interdiction of coerced labor, and the formation of a new discourse on human rights that aimed to decouple human rights from collective self-determination.

Each of the articles here demonstrates why the UN serves as a valid site to assess the empirical footprint of Global South actors in this co-constitution of liberal order. The engagements, entanglements, and estrangements of the actors from the Global South vis-à-vis the United Nations reflect a plurality of politics thick with conceptual complexities. Indeed, from the moment of its inception, actors from the Global South began to organize in formal and informal groups around specific issues at the UN. The organization offered a promising platform for creating a more equitable and just world order. As decolonization became the primary focus of countries from Africa and Asia, the decolonization movement in the public debates in the General Assembly, and in the corridors and working groups of the UN, shifted from the assertion of territorial sovereignty and the right to self-determination to a host of other claims for a broad range of social, economic, and political rights. Alongside Latin American countries and smaller neutral nations, the African and Asian groups and the Afro-Asian bloc cooperated at the UN on a range of issues, from economic development and human rights to the struggle against apartheid. In the process, these rights and the discourses surrounding them were contested within and between the actors from the Global South, impacting the rights regimes and practices

of the liberal world order. This gives rise to new views of the UN, as non-Western actors sometimes shaped its structures and activities, which offers a new perspective of the institution, contributing to recent publications in this vein from Jessica Reinisch and others but departing from their focus on Western-based internationalisms within the system.²⁰ Instead, the articles here highlight how the UN often served to reinforce the biases and inequalities created by liberalism, even as it sought to address the problems caused by those policies.

Finally, then, what is important about the claiming of different rights by Global South actors at the UN is not a question of whether those campaigns ultimately produced significant shifts in terms of policy, but rather that the process of formalizing, mediating, and realizing those claims shifted the discursive and normative environment at the international level. This means that even when some issues were absorbed by the baked-in-liberalism of the UN environment, they still represent Global South ownership and contestation of the liberal international order that is usually considered a given, rather than constructed over time.

Conclusion

Through these myriad contributions therefore, the dossier addresses the limitations of the existing historiography by emphasizing the formal and informal agency of the Global South in outlining new genealogies of the UN. Each of the contributions offers a perspective of decolonization from the Global South, but importantly, nuances that agency, highlighting its advantages and limitations and focusing on interactions with and within the UN. The UN emerges as a force field that, on the one hand, galvanizes the role of Global South actors, but on the other tends to disenfranchise some less powerful states, as South-South dynamics unfold.

We provide here an innovative dossier that contributes to a new history of the UN and the Global South while also comparing and contrasting a variety of different views, which is essential given the scope of the subject. This dossier transcends conventional perspectives in the existing historiography of states and regions by taking a global approach. Crucially, it also moves beyond a purely “international” view of the UN, by incorporating comparative and transnational actors, spaces, and themes, and in doing so, aims to capture a snapshot of the dynamic history of the interaction between the Global South and the UN.

NOTES

1. Existing UN histories include laudatory: Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga, “New Histories of the United Nations,” *Journal of World History* 19, no. 3 (September 2008): 251–74; Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Amy L. Sayward, *The United Nations in International History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Corinna Unger, *International Development: A Postwar History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); and more critical: Paul Kennedy, *Parliament of Man, The United Nations and the Quest for World Government* (London: Penguin, 2007); Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2012); Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

2. Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999); Beate Jahn, *Liberal Internationalism: Theory, History and Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

3. Inis L. Claude, *Swords into Plowshares: The Problems and Progress of International Organization* (New York: Random House, 1956).

4. Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (London: Duke University Press, 2011).
5. Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007).
6. Terence Shone to Secretary of the Cabinet, April 25, 1947, British Library, India Office Records and Private Papers, Despatch No. 36, File 20/1 1947, IOR/L/I/1/152, p. 4.
7. Siba Grovogui, "A Revolution Nonetheless: The Global South in International Relations," *The Global South* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 175.
8. Sebastian Haug, Jacqueline Braveboy-Wagner, and Gunther Maihold, eds., "The 'Global South' in the Study of World Politics: Examining a Meta Category," special issue, *Third World Quarterly* 42, no. 9 (2021). For further on the use of and criticisms of the term Global South, see Arif Dirlik, "Global South: Predicament and Promise," *The Global South* 1, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 12–23; Achille Mbembe, ed., *Symposium Theory from the South* (Johannesburg: The Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism, 2012): 5–115.
9. Manu Bhagavan, *The Pacemakers: India and the Quest for One World* (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2012); Steven L. Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonisation and the Reconstruction of Global Values* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-determination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).
10. Regrettably, the inequality of the archival labor—where the Global South scholar becomes the "local informant" for the Global North scholar writing "Global" histories—continues to be the dominant template in the field. However, some examples of this approach include Pamila Gupta, *Portuguese Decolonization in the Indian Ocean World: History and Ethnography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Karim Makdissi and Vijay Prashad, *The Land of Blue Helmets: United Nations in the Arab World* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017); B. S. Chimni, *International Law and World Order, A Critique of Contemporary Approaches* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
11. Current debates about the impending demise of the liberal order continue to view liberalism primarily as a Western value. See, for instance, Robert Kagan, "The Twilight of the Liberal World Order," Brookings Report, January 12, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-twilight-of-the-liberal-world-order/>; Jeff D. Colgan and Robert O. Keohane, "The Liberal Order Is Rigged: Fix It Now or Watch It Wither," *Foreign Affairs* 96, no. 3 (May/June 2017): 36–44; Ulrich Speck, "The Crisis of Liberal Order," *The American Interest*, September 12, 2016; Edward Luce, *The Retreat of Western Liberalism* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017); Bill Emmott, *The Fate of the West: The Battle to Save the World's Most Successful Political Idea* (New York: Public Affairs, 2017); Graham Allison, "The Myth of the Liberal World Order: From Historical Accident to Conventional Wisdom," *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 4 (July/August 2018): 124–33; John G. Ikenberry, "The End of Liberal International Order?," *International Affairs* 94, no. 1 (2018): 7–23.
12. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007); David Chandler, "The Responsibility to Protect? Imposing the Liberal Peace," *International Peacekeeping* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 59–81; Mark Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples* (New York: Polity, 2007); Neil Cooper, Mandy Turner, and Michael Pugh, "The End of History and the Last Liberal Peacebuilder: A Reply to Roland Paris," *Review of International Studies* 37, no. 4 (October 2011): 1–13; Donald J. Puchala, "World Hegemony and the United Nations," *International Studies Review* 7, no. 4 (December 2005): 571–84.
13. See, for instance, Cyril Lionel Robert James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (London: Vintage, 1989); Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization, 3 Volumes* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987–2006); Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America Es Evolving Toward Africa* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2011); Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Gauri Viswanathan, "Currying Favor: The Beginnings of English Literary Study in British India," *Social Text*, nos. 19 and 20 (Autumn 1988): 85–104; Christopher A. Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004); George Saliba, *Islam and the Making of the European Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007); John M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
14. Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).
15. Madeleine Herren, *Networking the International System: Global Histories of International Organizations* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2014); Philippa Hetherington and Glenda Sluga, "Liberal and Illiberal Internationalisms," special issue, *Journal of World History* 31, no. 1 (March 2020).
16. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Legacies of Bandung: Decolonization and the Politics of Culture," in *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives*, ed. Christopher J. Lee (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 45–68; Julian Go, "Modelling States and Sovereignty: Postcolonial Constitutions in Asia and Africa" in *Making a World After Empire*, 107–40.
17. Jensen's and Getachew's works focus more on the influence of African American and Caribbean intellectuals, networks, and states (Jensen, *Making of International Human Rights*; Getachew, *Worldmaking*

after Empire). We expand on the conceptual and practical possibilities (and limits) of decolonization by navigating other geographies and networks.

18. Natasa Miskovic, Harald Fischer-Tine, and Nada Boskovska, eds., *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delhi - Bandung—Belgrade* (London: Routledge, 2014); Lisandro E. Claudio, “Defending Liberalism in the Global South: Notes from Duterte’s Philippines,” *The Global South* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 92–107; Alanna O’Malley, *The Diplomacy of Decolonisation, America, Britain and the United Nations during the Congo Crisis 1960–64* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018); Vineet Thakur, “The ‘hardy annual’: A History of India’s First UN Resolution,” *India Review* 16, no. 4 (2017): 401–29.

19. Also see, Christy Thornton, “Mexican International Economic Order? Tracing the Hidden Roots of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 9, no. 3 (Winter 2018): 389–421.

20. Jessica Reinisch, “Introduction: Agents of Internationalism,” in “Agents of Internationalism,” special issue, *Journal of Contemporary History* 25, no. 2 (May 2016): 195–205; Patricia Clavin, “Defining Transnationalism,” *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (November 2005): 421–39.