

Introduction

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Perhaps more than any other historical process, the struggle for self-determination by colonized people defined the international history of the twentieth century. That struggle transformed a world governed by a handful of sprawling global empires at the dawn of the century into one of some two hundred independent, sovereign states by its end. For decades, historians responded to this transformation by exploring the multiple stories behind the emergence of these new states. The histories that resulted both took the advent of new nation-states as natural and inevitable, and focused on the mass-based, constitutionalist, nationalist parties that developed in nearly every colony by mid-century.¹ Although the various paths to decolonization differed widely, most histories of this process nevertheless followed a narrative in which anticolonial movements emerged and eventual decolonization occurred within bilateral relationships between imperial metropolises and their colonies, with little reference to external events or issues.

In recent years, scholars have begun to rewrite this narrative in ways that point toward a fundamental reassessment of how and why decolonization occurred.² This scholarship has shown that many anticolonial movements drew extensively on extra-national connections and

¹ This historiography is particularly large for the Indian and African National Congresses. For example, Amales Tripathi, *Indian National Congress and the Struggle for Freedom, 1885–1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Sheridan Johns and R. Hunt Davis, Jr., *Mandela, Tambo, and the African National Congress: The Struggle Against Apartheid, 1948–1990, A Documentary Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

² Historians of the British empire have been particularly active in this regard. See, for example, Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire: Challenges to Modern British*

organizations to realize their goals or imagined different arrangements for the postcolonial world than the collection of independent nation-states as we now know it. These included communist anticolonial movements that envisioned decolonization as a drive toward a confederation of nations bound together through the Communist International (see chapters by Louro, Aziz, and Wood); movements that imagined the realignment of international society based on visions of common religion or heritage, such as pan-Islamism, pan-Asianism, or pan-Africanism (see chapters by CuUnjieng Aboitiz, Dunstan, and Swan); and movements that sought to drive change from outside the colonial–metropolitan relationship altogether (see chapter by Ewing).³ Just as important, recent scholarship has consistently demonstrated that even the mass-based nationalist parties (including the Indian National Congress, the African National Congress, and the Nationalist Party of Indonesia, to name only a few) were in fact transnationally oriented from the outset.⁴ This scholarship

Imperialism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), and Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent* (London: Verso Books, 2019).

³ For example, Frederik Petersson, “We Are Neither Visionaries Nor Utopian Dreamers’: Willi Münzenberg, the League against Imperialism, and the Comintern, 1925–1933” (Abo Akademi University, 2013); Ali Raza, Franziska Roy, and Benjamin Zachariah, eds., *The Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds, and World Views, 1917–1939* (New Delhi: Sage, 2014); N. K. Barooah, *Chatto: The Life and Times of an Indian Anti-Imperialist in Europe* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004); Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Leslie James, *George Padmore and Decolonization from Below: Pan-Africanism, the Cold War, and the End of Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Susan Pennybacker, *From Scottsboro to Munich: Race and Political Culture in 1930s Britain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Maia Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar Movement Charted Global Radicalism and Attempted to Overthrow the British Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Heather Streets-Salter, *World War One in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Heather Streets-Salter, “The Noulens Affair in East and Southeast Asia: International Communism in the Interwar Period,” *Journal of American East-Asian Relations* 21 (2014); Margaret Stevens, *Red International and Black Caribbean: Communists in New York City, Mexico, and the West Indies, 1919–1939* (London: Pluto Press, 2017); Christopher Dietrich, *Oil Revolution: Anticolonial Elites, Sovereign Rights, and the Economic Culture of Decolonization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); David Featherstone, *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism* (London: Zed Books, 2012); Seema Sohi, *Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism in North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁴ For example, Michele Louro, *Comrades against Imperialism: Nehru, India, and Interwar Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Harald Fischer-Tiné, “Indian Nationalism and the ‘World Forces’:

has shown how nationalist leaders drew inspiration, developed policy, and formulated plans of action as a result of their contacts with other anticolonial leaders and movements from around the world. Often this was because anticolonial leaders developed personal relationships with their counterparts from other colonies, but it was also aided by the wide, transnational dissemination of news and literature about anticolonialism through this period.⁵ As it turns out, anticolonialism in the twentieth century, and even beyond, was almost invariably transnational in both thought and action.

In spite of the recent surge of work exploring the anticolonial transnational, no single volume yet exists that explores it as a general phenomenon that operated in all regions of the world and across the chronological divide of World War II.⁶ This volume takes up that challenge, and in doing so seeks to model both a broadening of the conversation and of the collaboration necessary to do justice to the scope of this vibrant field. The essays featured here, then, are designed to showcase the work of scholars who are actively engaged in exploring what we are calling “the anticolonial transnational” in multiple (and sometimes

Transnational and Diasporic Dimensions of the Indian Freedom Movement on the Eve of the First World War,” *Journal of Global History* 2:3 (2007); Christopher Goscha, *Thailand and the Southeast Asian Networks of the Vietnamese Revolution, 1885–1954* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999); Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonisation and the Third World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019); Su Lin Lewis, *Cities in Motion: Urban Life and Cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia, 1920–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Jonathan Derrick, *Africa’s Agitators: Militant Anticolonialism in Africa and the West, 1918–1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

⁵ Nicholas Owen, “The Soft Heart of the British Empire: Indian Radicals in Edwardian London,” *Past & Present*, 220:1 (August 2013); Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁶ Among those that have attempted a global scope are the following, though these are focused around single institutions or a single historical moment. See Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Michele Louro, Carolien Stolte, Heather Streets-Salter, and Sana Tannoury-Karam, *The League against Imperialism: Lives and Afterlives* (Leiden and Chicago: Leiden University Press, 2020); Christopher J. Lee, ed., *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010); Holger Weiss, *International Communism and Transnational Solidarity: Radical Networks, Mass Movements, and Global Politics, 1919–1939* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

understudied) geographical regions, from a variety of perspectives, and at many different times across the long twentieth century.

Our intention is that individual essays should be read as part of the greater whole rather than merely as stand-alone pieces. In our desire to move the field forward and to stimulate conversation and collaboration, our process for this volume deliberately created space for both among all of the authors, the editors, and three outside commenters when essays were still in early draft form.⁷ Authors read all of the essays, and then participated in an intensive workshop in which the entire group thought together about the structure, themes, and individual contributions they surfaced. Only then did the authors redraft their essays into their final form. The result, we believe, is a series of essays about very different places, times, and people that nevertheless speak to one another and to the wider field as a whole.

Of course, no single volume seeking to explore such a vast issue as the anticolonial transnational writ large can be encyclopedic. Much excellent work on important topics, for reasons of timing or space, could not be included. Some well-known actors or events do not appear in these pages, while lesser-known counterpoints do. Yet the intention was not to be exclusive but rather to offer a kaleidoscopic view of the geographical, chronological, and thematic possibilities offered by attention to the global anticolonial transnational. Taken together, we believe the essays gathered here demonstrate that viewing anticolonialism as a fundamentally transnational phenomenon has deep implications for understanding both the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries. Not least, they highlight the fact that many anticolonial activists and organizations – and not just those on the far-left – understood imperialism as a global challenge that required coordinated strategies and networks of solidarity on a transnational scale. Essays in this volume also demonstrate that centering once-marginalized transnational connections can change our understanding of the anticolonial past more generally, and indeed that the legacies of transnational anticolonial strategies and networks shaped the world we live in today, right up to the present.

The definition of “the anticolonial transnational” we agreed upon for this volume is capacious. If we apprehend the *international* as interactions that happened *between* recognized, sovereign states, then *transnational*

⁷ We were aided in this task by a generous grant from Harvard University’s Weatherhead Center, which funded the workshop, and by Michael Goebel, Cemil Aydin, and Durba Ghosh, who served as commenters.

space, by its very nature, existed outside or went beyond such formal spaces, centered instead in networks and connections that were either informal or operated through institutions – such as the League against Imperialism – that existed on the margins of international society.⁸ The anticolonial transnational and those who operated within it often intersected with and even crossed into formal international spaces; indeed, this transition was, more often than not, an explicit goal of their efforts. Thus, we see the anticolonial transnational intersecting with formal international institutions in petitions written by still-colonized people to formerly colonized members of the United Nations (Ewing), in the creation of informal anticolonial networks by officials in the US government, or in the corporate world (Walker). We also see its legacies in the tensions between class-based and race-based imaginaries that inflected the relations between the People's Republic of China and post-colonial nations in Africa (Duan).

Transnational anticolonial activities pervaded the interstices of international society, reflected in connections between individuals and organizations who were forced to operate outside the formal spaces of sovereignty or at their margins. Many of the subjects in these essays were barred from participating in formal international networks and thus established their own counter-organizations (Wood and Aziz) or created their own informal networks that transcended racial, colonial, or cultural boundaries (Louro, CuUnjieng Aboitiz, Swan). Different though the context of each essay is, a persistent theme across many of them is the ways the relationships and networks chronicled within them pushed *beyond* national, regional, imperial, social, racial, organizational, or institutional boundaries. Taken together they constituted what we are calling here “the anticolonial transnational.”

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The actors and organizations that made up the anticolonial world throughout the twentieth century were transnational in at least three different ways. First, they were transnational in their imaginaries, that is, in how they thought about the world and imagined its possible futures. Second, they were transnational in their mobilities, in how they moved about the world as they pursued their struggle against colonialism and imperialism. And third, they were transnational in their networks,

⁸ See Louro et al., *The League against Imperialism*.

meaning in the people they met and the connections they made with them, whether through in-person meetings or through correspondence and other writings. Understanding how each of these aspects of the anticolonial transnational worked and how they intersected has for some time now been at the forefront of new scholarship on anticolonialism. The essays collected in this volume exemplify and probe all of them, extending our understanding and offering fresh perspectives on each aspect separately and on how they interacted across the twentieth century.

Anticolonial *imaginaries* were transnational because, from early on, those who struggled against empire recognized that their struggle was global in scope. The new world order they were seeking to bring into existence, they realized, could not come into being or persist for long solely within individual national, regional, or imperial spaces. Rather, the transition from the imperial to the postcolonial order would necessarily be a transformation of global scope, and it required not simply the withdrawal of colonial rule but the complete reorganization of international society through the delegitimization and elimination of imperialism everywhere. The struggle for self-determination in any one place or context, therefore, was inextricably linked to similar struggles elsewhere across the world. For this reason, the activists who operated in the spaces of the anticolonial transnational were exquisitely attuned to events and developments across the world and to ideas and discourses that circulated transnationally. Sarah Dunstan's essay, for example, shows us how Cheikh Anta Diop's rewriting of African history was fed by multiple scholars across the African diaspora, while Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz demonstrates that early Filipino nationalists were inspired by other Asian nationalist movements as well as by Japan's success in keeping the European imperial powers at bay. Writing about a much later period, Kristin Oberiano's chapter illustrates how native Chamorros seeking self-determination on the US-controlled island of Guam were inspired and mobilized by the movements of other Pacific peoples seeking independence.

The anticolonial world was a transnationally *mobile* world, too. This was because many colonial peoples, whether they were self-consciously activists against empire or not, were themselves supremely mobile, sometimes by choice but more often out of necessity. Some moved as students, sometimes to the colonial metropole but elsewhere as well. This was true, for example, of Cheikh Anta Diop and the Filipino nationalist Carlos Romulo. Others, like the Indian communist leader M. N. Roy or the American radical activist Agnes Smedley, moved to escape the reach of colonial authorities, while still others moved as itinerant laborers,

merchants, working professionals, or political leaders. Often, a single individual could claim several of these identities, either in succession or at once, donning and doffing them as circumstances required. In the cases of many such individuals, the development of a transnational imaginary grew and was fed by their very mobility. This mobility allowed and indeed required them to view their peoples' experiences with colonialism at a remove, to encounter new realities, new places, and new ideas and, sometimes, afforded them greater freedoms of movement, publishing, and association.⁹

Such mobility also played an important role in constructing the complex, shifting, transnational *networks* that connected anticolonial activists across the world. Indeed, in many cases mobility allowed anticolonial activists the chance to meet and organize with others fighting colonialism in different ways and places. These networks, plotted across global space, often were initially centered on what Michael Goebel has called, in reference to Paris, the “anti-imperial metropolis.”¹⁰ In the early years of the twentieth century, perhaps the most notable of these places were imperial metropolises that, in addition to Paris, included London, Berlin, and Tokyo (CuUnjieng Aboitiz). These were soon joined by centers of fervent revolutionary activity, like Mexico City after 1910 (Wood) and Moscow after 1917 (Aziz), with additional ancillary sites in Europe (Geneva) and Asia (Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore) emerging in the first half of the twentieth century. In the post–World War II era, however, the centers of activity of these anticolonial networks shifted decisively southward, as cities such as Delhi, Bandung, Dakar, Cairo, Algiers, and Dar es Salaam became major nodes after they transitioned from colonial to postcolonial status.¹¹

Yet transnational anticolonial networks did not have to rely on travel and in-person meetings. Just as often, as a number of the chapters in this volume show, they were knitted together through correspondence,

⁹ This greater freedom of movement was sometimes limited by metropolitan surveillance networks, as Seema Sohi, Daniel Brückenhaus, and Klaas Stutje demonstrate. See Sohi, *Echoes of Mutiny*; Daniel Brückenhaus, *Policing Transnational Protest: Liberal Imperialism and the Surveillance of Anticolonialists in Europe, 1905–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); and Klaas Stutje, *Campaigning in Europe for a Free Indonesia: Indonesian Nationalists and the Worldwide Anticolonial Movement, 1917–1931* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2019).

¹⁰ Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis*.

¹¹ Stephen Legg et al., eds., *Placing Internationalism: International Conferences and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021).

messages moving through couriers, and the flow of ideas about the purposes of the struggle and the means for carrying it out. Moreover, by the latter part of the twentieth century, these transnational networks increasingly penetrated into the official organizations of international society, such as the United Nations, as more and more postcolonial nations joined that organization (Ewing and Chang), or were shifted into international, state-to-state relations as anticolonial movements became ruling parties (Duan). At the same time, even in a notionally postcolonial era struggles against colonial arrangements, as in Guam (Oberiano), or neocolonial relationships, as in Bermuda (Swan), continued to sustain and redefine the spaces of the anticolonial transnational. Taken together, the essays collected here show the myriad ways in which the imaginaries, mobilities, and networks that together made up the anticolonial transnational shaped the lives of individuals and movements and were, in turn, shaped by them.

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Just as we no longer speak of “internationalism” in the singular but rather, following Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin,¹² of internationalisms in the plural, this volume prompts us to consider the existence not of a single anticolonial transnational but of many. To date, perhaps the most widely studied type of anticolonial transnational activity has been the left variety, tracking a strong though not uncomplicated association throughout the century between anti-imperialism and radical left-wing politics. Still, as the essays by Tony Wood and Zaib un Nisa Aziz in this volume demonstrate, left-wing anticolonialism, too, came in several flavors. The radicals of Mexico City in the 1920s, on whom Wood’s essay centers, differed in multiple ways from those about whom Aziz writes, seeking as they did proletarian revolution in British India, even if they were both inspired by and sought leadership and aid from the Communist International after 1920 and often intersected with each other along various anticolonial transnational circuits.

In the 1920s, anticolonial activists in Mexico City established the city as a hub of transnational anti-imperialist activism in the western hemisphere. Until the end of the decade – when government authorities in Mexico stopped tolerating such visible leftist radicalism – the metropolis

¹² Glenda Sluga and Patricia Calvin, eds., *Internationalisms: A Twentieth Century History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

served as a beacon of solidarity and locus of connection between the colonized people of the world and those in Latin America suffering under US economic imperialism. At the same time, the Bolshevik Revolution and the establishment of the Comintern gave Indian anticolonialists a new language and impetus for rising up against British rule. Yet, as Aziz shows, systematic repression by the colonial authorities compelled Indian communist revolutionaries further into the anticolonial transnational, as they were forced to operate either underground or from exile in Europe, North America, or elsewhere. Meanwhile, the Comintern worked to harness the anticolonial transnational for its own purposes, leading to the establishment in Brussels in 1927 of the League against Imperialism as a counter-organization to the Geneva-based League of Nations, where the major imperial powers held sway.¹³

Throughout the twentieth century many anticolonial circuits, like those just mentioned, were also anticapitalist. In fact, in much of the historical scholarship on anticolonialism there prevails the (sometimes explicit, often implicit) assumption, following Lenin's famous dictum, that this connection is a necessary and intrinsic one. However, several essays in this volume demonstrate that not all anticolonial activists saw themselves in those terms. Some, like the protagonist of Mark Reeves' essay, the Filipino diplomat Carlos Romulo, couched their demands for self-determination in the language of Wilsonian liberalism and saw independence as a path to fuller participation in the capitalist world order rather than to its dismantling.¹⁴ Others, like Winifred Armstrong, the American consultant who is the subject of Lydia Walker's essay, saw support for self-determination and decolonization in the Global South as part of the push to reform, rather than overturn, the machinery of global capitalism. Since Armstrong advised not only politicians but also corporate leaders, Walker's essay also raises the question of how multinational corporations, many of which were long among the major beneficiaries of colonial exploitation, came to support decolonization even as they sought to use transnational advocacy to shape its dynamics in ways that advanced their interests. By interrogating the intersections between anticolonialism and capitalism in the twentieth century, Reeves

¹³ Louro et al., eds., *The League against Imperialism*.

¹⁴ For another example of a liberal (but not radical left-wing) anticolonialist, see Harald Fischer-Tiné, *Shyamji Krishnavarma: Sanskrit, Sociology and Anti-Imperialism* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014).

and Walker ask us to reconsider the scope and nature of the anticolonial transnational.

If debates over social and economic arrangements – whether anarchist, socialist, communist, or capitalist – were central features of the anticolonial transnational, so were projects centered on commonalities of culture, history, and race. These included, as already mentioned, political projects and connections predicated on a variety of “pan” ideologies, as in the proliferation of pan-Asian, pan-African, pan-Turkic, or pan-Islamic anticolonial networks, each with its own subvariants and groupings (there were different versions of pan-Asian ideologies, for example, that centered on Japan, or China, or India, or on perceived cultural affinities, such as Buddhism). Such projects sometimes served as vehicles to advance the nationalist or imperial agenda of one power or another, most notably with the Japanese promotion of a pan-Asian “co-prosperity sphere” in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁵ But more often than not such projects were viewed by their promoters and adherents as designed to transcend rather than reinforce narrow nationalisms, as was the case with the advocacy of pan-Asian connections by such figures as the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore or the Chinese intellectual Liang Qichao.¹⁶

Placing oft-ignored Filipino activists and intellectuals at the center of the early development of pan-Asian anticolonial circuits, Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz argues that histories of the Philippines’ struggle for independence have tended to ignore Filipino imaginaries and networks that tied them to the larger East and Southeast Asian region. She demonstrates how Filipino activists consciously sought to connect the history of the islands with the nearby Malay world, and to draw inspiration – and seek aid – from the Japanese, who provided an example of successful Asian modernization. CuUnjieng Aboitiz’s story highlights the intellectual and affective power of pan-Asianism as a means of transcending the isolation of the Filipino struggle, and it also underlines the limitations of this ideological formation and the solidarities it engendered when, for example, the Japanese failed to deliver military aid to Filipino rebels and instead transferred it to fellow Asian anticolonialists in China.

Moving from a pan-Asian context to a pan-African one, Sarah Dunstan brings another fresh perspective to the role of culture, race,

¹⁵ See Jeremy Yellen, *The Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere: When Total Empire Met Total War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019).

¹⁶ Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (London: Penguin, 2012).

and history in the anticolonial transnational, showing how the work of Senegalese historian Cheikh Anta Diop sought to decolonize African history and recover it from western frameworks that portrayed it as primitive, unchanging, and unworthy of study. Diop was part of a global network of anticolonial and antiracist thinkers who believed that the recovery of a complex, dynamic African past was crucial to the pan-African, anticolonial politics in the present.

Whether operating through ideology or culture, the exchanges and connections that made up the anticolonial transnational both reflected and facilitated expressions of solidarity among colonial peoples fighting for self-determination. Moreover, as Michele Louro's essay about the American radical Agnes Smedley reminds us, anticolonial solidarities were not just performed among institutions or movements, but also between individuals, and could be intimate as well as political. Indeed, Louro traces the way that Smedley's personal choices can be read as deeply political statements about both racial and class solidarities. Smedley's romantic partnership with the Indian revolutionary Virendranath Chattopadhyaya ('Chatto') challenged established racial boundaries and scandalized many of her contemporaries, as did her later choice to live independently in China and associate with Chinese revolutionaries. Similarly, her romantic partnership there with the German journalist and Soviet spy Richard Sorge signaled Smedley's willingness to prioritize class solidarity over national ethos, even in her personal life.

Smedley's life story, along with that of Winifred Armstrong explored in Lydia Walker's chapter, also highlight the roles that women played within the spaces of the anticolonial transnational, an important contribution to a literature that has so far overwhelmingly focused on men and their homosocial institutional worlds.¹⁷ Louro's chapter raises a range of issues about the place of women in transnational anticolonial networks, calling for more attention to the role of women in building and sustaining these networks and in working within them. Winifred Armstrong, who worked behind the scenes to encourage anticolonial policy within the United States government and to undermine apartheid through corporate strategy, seems to fit uncomfortably with Agnes Smedley's radical leftist politics and support for women's rights. Indeed, Armstrong herself seems

¹⁷ This is certainly the case in Louro et al., *The League against Imperialism*. Tim Harper's recent *Underground Asia: Global Revolutionaries and the Assault on Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021) does try to surface women revolutionaries, though it, too, is mostly a story of men.

not to have identified as a feminist and did not see her work in terms of her gender, in spite of the fact that her influence and independence as a woman were unusual for the time. Even so, Armstrong's story invites us to think about the ways other centrist, practical, and even conservative women may also have played roles in the many anticolonial transnationals operating over the course of the twentieth century.

In the post-World War II era, as the acceleration of decolonization gave birth to dozens of newly sovereign, postcolonial states, transnational anticolonial activism began to spill more often from the transnational realm into the international arena, thus giving rise to new mechanisms for solidarity. One such mechanism is illuminated in Cindy Ewing's essay, which focuses on petitions claiming human rights abuses submitted to the United Nations by colonized peoples living in UN trust territories in the 1940s and 1950s. Ewing shows how UN representatives from nations that had only recently gained their independence – initially dubbed the Arab-Asian group – worked in concert to bring international attention to the complaints made in these human rights petitions. Thus, not only did members of the Arab-Asian group work in solidarity with one another, they also used the UN as a platform to foster solidarity with groups who had not yet attained the right to self-determination. While the Arab-Asian group could not always effect the desired outcomes, it did achieve important victories that had real impact on the timeline of decolonization, including, for example, turning the UN against Dutch efforts to reassert colonial control in Indonesia.

If solidarity against imperialism was a main feature, indeed a major purpose, of the anticolonial transnational, several of the essays here also remind us of the limits and contradictions that often complicated such solidarities. Ruodi Duan explores this theme in the context of Chinese-Tanzanian relations in the first half of the 1960s. When Tanzania became independent in 1961, representatives of the People's Republic of China who hoped to gain influence in the new East African state bonded with Tanzanian socialists over a common critique of Indians. For the Tanzanians, Indian merchants in East Africa had been despised collaborators with British imperialism, while the Chinese had just fought a brutal border war with India, and thus solidarity was built over this mutual antipathy. However, when Tanzanian nationalists later targeted Arabs in their midst for similar reasons, this collided with the Chinese view of Arabs and Africans as part of a united, global working class. Thus, the Tanzanian view of Arabs in Zanzibar through a racial lens as exploitive others conflicted with Chinese class-based visions of an anticolonial

international rooted in a global working class that encompassed all victims of Euro-American imperialism.

This volume also challenges the typical timeline of anticolonialism and decolonization. According to the common chronology, modern anticolonialism emerged in various places across Asia and Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It then accelerated in the years that followed the World War I and the transformations it wrought in international society, and finally came to fruition in the decades that followed the World War II. In those years, dozens of overseas colonial possessions of the British, French, Dutch, and finally the Portuguese empires threw off the shackles of colonial rule to become sovereign nation-states, a status that was cemented with the formal recognition represented in their admission to full membership in the United Nations. This timeline is, of course, broadly accurate as far as it goes. But as several of the chapters that follow suggest, it arguably obscures as much as it reveals.

First, as Vivien Chang's chapter reminds us, the political sovereignty that was gained with decolonization left many of the promises of anticolonialism unfulfilled, a phenomenon that might be called "arrested decolonization."¹⁸ The disappointment was most notable in the realm of economic development, as colonial era relations of economic exploitation were replaced by what many in the newly independent nations saw as neocolonial dependency. In response, newly independent states in Asia and Africa, joined by many long-independent yet economically underdeveloped Latin American nations, worked in international forums to advance demands for a New International Economic Order (NIEO).¹⁹ The advocates for the NIEO argued that it would help to make up for centuries of colonial exploitation, promote a fairer distribution of resources globally, and bring postcolonial nations closer to their long-deferred goal of economic prosperity and self-determination. But Chang's contribution moves beyond the familiar story of the rise and fall of the NIEO to argue that when the push for a New International Economic Order faltered in the face of resistance led by the United

¹⁸ We are grateful to Kristin Oberiano for this phrase. For a similar usage, see Alessandro Iandolo, *Arrested Development: The Soviet Union in Ghana, Guinea, and Mali, 1955–1968* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022).

¹⁹ See essays in *Humanity* 6:1 (Spring 2015), Special Issue: Toward a History of the New International Economic Order.

States, some Third World nations then turned to a strategy of economic self-reliance as an alternative path toward economic independence.

Another perspective on the persistence of anticolonialism after decolonization emerges from the recognition that for every successful claim for self-determination that led to decolonization and independence there were numerous other, conflicting claims that could not succeed and that therefore remained, and often still remain, unfulfilled. This dynamic often manifested as what Lydia Walker has identified as “states-in-waiting”; that is, separatist ethnic groups living within newly independent states who claim the right to secede from the postcolonial state and often continue to fight toward that goal both on the ground and around the world.²⁰ Perhaps the bloodiest example of this phenomenon in the post-war era was the short-lived Republic of Biafra, predominantly populated by Igbo people, whose attempt to separate from the postcolonial Nigerian state was suppressed by the central authorities in a brutal civil war that lasted from 1967 to 1970. But there were many others.

Some of the most innovative recent work on the dissemination and deployment of discourses of self-determination has emphasized the ways in which such claims have been used throughout the twentieth century to advocate for something other than the establishment of an independent, internationally recognized sovereign state. In this vein, Kristen Oberiano’s chapter in this volume looks at this question from the rarely examined perspective of the Chamorro people, the Indigenous people of the US-ruled Pacific Ocean island of Guam, whose fight for the recognition of their right to self-determination has persisted well into a time which, for most of the world, would count as a postcolonial era.²¹ In a context both very different and yet quite similar in its relationship to US empire in the late-twentieth century, Quito Swan’s chapter examines the resonance of colonialism and decolonization in the reggae music scene in Bermuda. Taken together, the two chapters show us how, in a postcolonial era, the scope of the anticolonial transnational has simultaneously narrowed and broadened. The first, because many nationalist movements that had previously been forced to operate in the transnational space won recognition and, with it, the right to shift into the international realm. The

²⁰ Lydia Walker, “States-in-Waiting: Nationalism, Internationalism, Decolonization.” Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 2018.

²¹ There is a burgeoning literature on Indigenous struggles for self-determination in transnational contexts. See, e.g., Brad Simpson, “The United States and the Curious History of Self-Determination,” *Diplomatic History* 36:4 (2012), pp. 675–694.

second, because those anticolonial claims that remained had to evolve their language and tactics to suit the postcolonial era and to shift the struggle into new realms, including that of popular culture.

The persistence of anticolonial transnational networks in the postcolonial era is a reminder that, beyond the substantial material interests involved in the fight for self-determination, that struggle is also, and in some cases perhaps centrally, a quest for recognition and dignity. Indeed, Charles Taylor's famous notion of the "politics of recognition" was informed and shaped by the struggles of Indigenous peoples in places such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, where the goals have most often not been framed in terms of the attainment of full, international sovereignty but rather defined in terms of the recognition of collective identity and rights by and within an existing polity.²² Yet the insights suggested by the idea of the politics of recognition also apply to more "traditional" struggles of self-determination; that is, to the struggles that the term "anticolonialism" has traditionally conjured up, and particularly to their relationship to the history of the anticolonial transnational. Anticolonial movements and activists, after all, were compelled to operate in the *transnational* space precisely because they were denied recognition in the *international* arena and their demands were therefore generally excluded from formal international institutions. It is hardly surprising, then, that in many cases such actors retreated from the anticolonial transnational to the extent that they achieved the international recognition and status they demanded and fought for.

Thinking about anticolonialism as a struggle for recognition within international society highlights yet another important theme in this volume: the centrality of questions of inclusion and exclusion as they were understood by anticolonial actors throughout the twentieth century. Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz's essay, for example, centers on the Philippine quest for inclusion within emerging ideas of Asia. Sarah Dunstan's chapter shows how Cheikh Anta Diop's struggle for the inclusion, indeed the centering of Africa within world history was crucial to his anticolonial practice. Mark Reeves, meanwhile, borrows the concept of "clubbability" from Mrinalini Sinha's work on British India and applies it to international society to characterize the aspirations of anticolonial activists

²² Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition": An Essay* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992). Implications of this concept for international politics are explored in Thomas Lindemann and Erik Ringmar, eds., *The International Politics of Recognition* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2012).

such as Carlos Romulo for acceptance and inclusion in international forums – it was not a “family of nations” as much as it was an exclusive club.²³ This was an aspiration that in the post–World War II era became codified in, but was by no means limited to, the formal admission to membership in the United Nations, an organization that displays many of the characteristics of the exclusive clubs that Sinha originally wrote about.

Like the concept of “sociability,” which has also recently been applied to international affairs and interactions,²⁴ the idea of “clubbability” highlights the social and interpersonal aspects of the anticolonial struggle. But it underscores more emphatically the bright line that separates exclusion from the club of sovereign nations from inclusion in it and, therefore, highlights the central significance of making the transition from the former status to the latter. As many of the essays in this volume show, in the course of the twentieth century many of those who operated within one or more anticolonial transnational spaces made that transition to recognition when they were “admitted” into the international realm. Others, however, remained on the outside looking in, explaining the persistence of the anticolonial transnational, *mutatis mutandis*, into the twenty-first century. Our hope is that the essays in this volume, taken together, will help to expand the boundaries of scholarship on anticolonialism, decolonization, and the postcolonial condition in their innovative treatment of some of the complex issues, places, and contexts that have constituted the anticolonial transnational in the twentieth century and beyond.

²³ Mrinalini Sinha, “Britishness, Clubbability, and the Colonial Public Sphere: The Genealogy of an Imperial Institution in Colonial India,” *Journal of British Studies* 40:4 (October 2001), pp. 489–521.

²⁴ Deepak Nair, “Sociability in International Politics: Golf and ASEAN’s Cold War Diplomacy,” *International Political Sociology* 14:2 (2020), pp. 196–214.