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# The Form of Ideology and the Ideology of Form

## Cold War, Decolonization and Third World Print Cultures

https://www.openbookpublishers.com





ISBN Paperback: 978-1-80064-188-4
ISBN Hardback: 978-1-80064-189-1
ISBN Digital (PDF): 978-1-80064-190-7
ISBN Digital ebook (EPUB): 978-1-80064-191-4
ISBN Digital ebook (AZW3): 978-1-80064-192-1
ISBN Digital ebook (XML): 978-1-80064-193-8
ISBN Digital (HTML): 978-1-80064-687-2
DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0254

Cover image: installation view of *Two Meetings and a Funeral* (Naeem Mohaiemen, 2017) at NTU Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore, 2020.
Cover design by Anna Gatti.

# Afterword
## A World of Print

*Peter Kalliney*

In *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*, Vijay Prashad says the Third World 'was not a place. It was a project'.[1] Invoking an idea or an intervention, not a set of boundaries or even material conditions, Prashad thus begins his narrative about the hopes and disappointments of the independence movements that transformed the world in the middle decades of the last century. For decolonizing regions, this project's main aims included self-determination, a more egalitarian economic system, an end to racism, and the development of cultural independence. Understanding the nature of these claims requires us to study political history, to be sure, but it also invites us to revisit the documents and other written records that outline the movement's shared principles and objectives. Echoing Prashad, Christopher J. Lee, Pheng Cheah, and Adom Getachew all describe decolonization in terms of 'worldmaking', a process during which anticolonial activists launched efforts to overcome 'international structures of unequal integration and racial hierarchy'.[2] The Third World was a project of collectively thinking 'freedom time', in Gary Wilder's formulation, happening as much in articulations of solidarity and in imagining 'alternatives that might have been' as in demonstrations of revolutionary praxis.[3] To write of the Third

1 Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007), p. xv.

2 Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), p. 2.

3 Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), p. 16.

 https://doi.org/10.11647/obp.0254.09

World is to participate in the reconstruction of this intellectual legacy, a movement based on ideas as well as a history of places and events and political figures.

This collective imaginative effort happened, in large part, through the vibrant print networks described in the foregoing essays. As a field, postcolonial studies has taught us a great deal about how cultural production in the decolonizing world has been determined by lingering forms of imperialism. Without negating the force of this critique, the current volume adds layers of complexity to this account by showing how Third World intellectuals used Cold War cultural networks both to reach new audiences abroad and to add a range of voices to their local literary cultures. The Cold War's cultural diplomacy initiatives sometimes built upon colonial print networks in the Third World, but just as often they created new infrastructures to support different patterns of literary traffic. Most intriguing, perhaps, is the realization that the Cold War superpowers did not unilaterally dictate terms of exchange to Third World intellectuals, who proved to be nimble and adaptable operators, willing to collaborate with various interest groups to make their projects viable. This collection of essays also complicates the simplistic parcelling of Third World print culture into antagonistic, ready-made spheres of influence, with writers from the decolonizing regions pledging allegiance to one ideological bloc or expressing unequivocal preference for one aesthetic doctrine. Without denying or negating the real ideological pressures faced by Third World intellectuals, this volume suggests that intellectuals in the decolonizing world pursued their own agendas with more success than a straightforward conspiracy narrative would suggest.

As Neelam Srivastava's contribution reminds us, figures such as Amílcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, Che Guevara, Nelson Mandela, and Mao Zedong were leading political figures of an international anticolonial vanguard because they were practicing intellectuals, too. Their speeches and writings circulated widely through overlapping networks of transnational exchange. Sometimes, as Srivastava shows us, these networks were geared to transmit ideas generated by intellectuals from the Global South to readers in the Global North: European audiences consuming the fruits of anticolonial intellectual labor. What Feltrinelli and Einaudi publishing houses accomplished in Italy was mimicked

in places such as the United States with Grove Press, which brought anticolonial radicals to expectant university students in North America.[4] It is important to remember that dissidents in metropolitan regions were nourished by their reading of Third World intellectuals.

Laetitia Zecchini's essay, on the Indian branches of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) and International PEN, approaches this problem of north-south relations from a different perspective. Zecchini argues for the significance of liberalism in the context of the anticolonial struggle, suggesting that Indian intellectuals used cultural diplomacy networks to bolster spaces of dissent and 'creative Non-Alignment' that included both radicals and their less revolutionary cousins. In *Transition* magazine in 1966, the CCF's Ugandan periodical, Rajat Neogy defined his editorial philosophy as 'aggressive non-prejudice', calling it a 'disciplined permissiveness' that encourages different points of view to engage one another.[5] Neogy believed that ideological as well as cultural diversity were important for developing Ugandan independence through autonomous political structures but also through a functioning intellectual community. Shielding a decolonizing people from conflicting political viewpoints and different cultural traditions would ultimately stunt development by denying Ugandans the ability to learn from the experiences of others. Believing that cultural decolonization could be facilitated by tactical engagement with, rather than withdrawal from, the wider world, Neogy feared populist nativism and isolationism more than he worried about Africans being overrun by exogenous influences. Without the coercive structures of imperialism, Ugandans would be free to learn from other decolonizing nations as well as from the metropolitan cultures that once held most of the Global South in bondage.

It would be easy thereby to speculate that this movement of ideas between Third and First Worlds was part of a neo-colonial attempt to defuse the spark of revolutionary movements. There are a number of scholars who argue that Cold War cultural diplomacy initiatives helped adapt colonial structures of domination to global literary culture (Andrew Rubin; Caroline Davis). But such a conclusion underestimates the sophistication of Third World writers and readers, who were never

4 Loren Glass, *Counterculture Colophon: Grove Press, the* Evergreen Review, *and the Incorporation of the Avant-Garde* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

5 Rajat Neogy, 'Do Magazines Culture?', *Transition*, 24 (1966), pp. 30–32 (p. 31).

passive, uncritical consumers of cultural products and ideological messages from their First World counterparts. Likewise, it downplays the extent to which civil rights campaigners and other social activists in the Global North learned from their deepening acquaintance with the anticolonial struggle. The ideas of Third World intellectuals spilled across cultural and ideological boundaries, influencing activists and dissidents in a wide variety of contexts. As Michael Denning shows us in *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds*, it is possible to write a transnational literary history of the twentieth century by putting Global South writers at the center of a Novelists' International, peaking in the 1960s and 1970s. A story written from this perspective acknowledges the enormous impact of anticolonial worldmaking without then ignoring the unequal terms of cultural trade between First, Second, and Third Worlds. The political and cultural dominance of the First World was not uncontested during these decades, and it is part of this collection's ambition to show how the Global South's print cultures nurtured alternative points of view.

Cultural exchanges between Third and First Worlds, however, are only part of the picture we see developing in this collection. Following Katerina Clark's work in *Moscow, the Fourth Rome* and Rossen Djagalov's research in *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism: Literature and Cinema between the Second and Third Worlds*, we know that the Soviet Union fabricated its own cultural diplomacy networks that were attractive to many Global South writers. This story stretches back to the first Union of Soviet Writers conference of 1934, when, as Steven Lee remarks, more than half of the attendees came from Soviet Asia. The work of the All-India Progressive Writers' Association in the 1930s refitted some of the principles of the Soviet model to an anticolonial literary project. These efforts laid the groundwork for the 1956 Asian writers conference in New Delhi, close on the heels of which followed the first Afro-Asian conference in Tashkent, in 1958. Complementing research on the Afro-Asian Writers' Association by Monica Popescu, Duncan Yoon, and myself, this collection of essays suggests that Beirut, Cairo, New Delhi, Luanda, and Tunis challenged the London-New York-Paris axis that dominated routes of cultural exchange at mid-century. The AAWA held up Soviet Asia as an example to decolonizing peoples, arguing that growth of literatures in the languages of the Soviet Union's 'national minorities', as they were sometimes called, could be replicated

in other parts of the world. The appeal of this argument to decolonizing writers was enormous. Furthermore, as Lydia H. Liu points out, this message about cultural development was backed by the world's largest translation industry, facilitating exchange between writers who did not work in the preeminent global literary languages, English and French. Paulo Lemos Horta's research on Roberto Bolaño in this volume shows how a South American dissident writer could be spotted first in (East) Berlin before earning recognition in the wider hispanophone world. Simply because these forms of cultural exchange did not survive the end of the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union does not mean they were not integral to the development of Third World print cultures, stimulating literary production throughout the Global South during the decolonization movements.

Not all literary production in the decolonizing world depended on superpower sponsorship. *Présence Africaine* and *Tricontinental Bulletin* provide two examples of important international anticolonial publications that did not emerge out of cultural diplomacy programs orchestrated by global powers. Anne Garland Mahler's research on the sprawling Tricontinental project shows how antiracist and anticolonial movements informed print culture in a multilingual Third World, influencing the Black Arts Movement, Third Cinema, and progressive literature from the southern cone. Launched in the mid-1960s and published simultaneously in several languages, the *Tricontinental Bulletin* was an explicit attempt to connect the anticolonial movement in Africa and Asia with a loose coalition of leftist movements in the Americas, including the Cuban revolution and the civil rights struggle being waged by African Americans (see also Srivastava's essay in this volume). Patrick Iber's research on the cultural Cold War in Latin America also demonstrates how Cuban cultural projects such as Casa de las Américas and the magazine *Humanismo* were designed to promote Latin American solidarity through support for intellectuals and the arts.

*Présence Africaine* began life almost two decades before the Tricontinental movement began, in 1947, when the political fault-lines of the Cold War were just emerging. The magazine's editors and main contributors regarded these developments, with client states and proxy wars throughout the Global South, as a new form of imperialism. On the eve of the 1er Congrès International des Écrivains et Artistes

Noirs, convened in Paris in 1956—often called the cultural Bandung conference—the magazine's editors, who served as hosts for the event, reminded their readers that they viewed superpower maneuvering in the Third World not as a new problem, but instead as a continuation of older imperialisms:

> But the crushing weight of colonialism is now to be doubled. Europe, overshadowed by two giants, sees her prestige and power condemned by the excessive development of these two great nations. European culture is in turn experiencing colonialism. It is threatened, for culture is linked with power. It is therefore turning now to the African continent to seek a guarantee of its survival and security, if not of its lost hegemony. [...] The situation is aggravated by the appearance of new appetites, those of the non-colonizing nations which call for a « more equitable » sharing out of African resources. It is not hard to foresee the future of insecurity, violence and exploitation that such European national cupidity holds out for us.[6]

Formerly non-colonizing nations, especially the United States and the Soviet Union, this editorial argues, were making their designs on the decolonizing world clear. In response, the journal fought hard to maintain its ideological independence. The journal's focus on the cultural autonomy of the Black Atlantic world was notable for its stubborn nonalignment. Cultural development in the Third World did not need to follow the patterns designed by either of the dominant ideological blocs. Precarious but vibrant connections between Global South writers, forged outside or beyond the ideological traps of the Cold War, were yet another major part of the Third World's burgeoning print culture during this period. As the essays by Supriya Chaudhuri, Jia Yan, Karima Laachir, and Itzea Goikolea-Amiano show us, Third World print cultures were developing their own models of cultural exchange based on mutual interests and a desire to know more about other literary traditions. Travelogues and friendship narratives provided flexible generic types for articulating cross-cultural exchange among Global South writers.

Francesca Orsini's research on Hindi (little and not-so-little) magazines gives us a sense of what these ideological alternatives looked like in literary practice. Eric Bulson's description of the little magazine

6 Foreword, *Présence Africaine*, 1–2 (1955), p. 9.

as a world form anticipates some of the generic attributes Orsini finds in the Hindi periodicals. Bulson depicts the literary magazine's infinite regional variety not as a liability but as a source of imaginative capacity, showing the little magazine's ability to adapt to local contexts without sacrificing its specific qualities. As Orsini demonstrates in her essay, Hindi periodicals were instrumental in bringing short stories from all over the world to Indian readers. Some periodicals showed clear ideological preferences by confining themselves to stories from either First or Second Worlds. It was more common, however, to discover 'multiple and competing visions of world literature [...] in the same magazine at the same time'. Magazines such as *Nai Kahaniyan* and *Sarika* turned to many foreign literatures as means of producing a 'Third World internationalism' for domestic consumption. As a result, these magazines built a readership that could be more worldly and more ideologically savvy than their counterparts in either First or Second World blocs. This is what *Transition* editor Neogy has in mind when he insists that a good magazine develops its audience, providing access to conflicting political ideas and diverse literary traditions. Surprisingly, perhaps, Third World readers were more receptive to this kind of political and cultural heterogeneity because they were engaged in the project of imagining new possibilities rather than defending an international order. They could see and absorb more because they were less invested in maintaining a status quo.

If Third World print cultures were more vibrant than existing theories of global literature have readily acknowledged, these networks of cultural production were also susceptible to manipulation and interference. First- and Second-World cultural diplomacy were major sources of external pressure. Censorship and intimidation of intellectuals were other recurrent threats. Neogy's editorship of *Transition* and Yussef El-Sebai's editorship of *Lotus* illustrate how foreign patronage and political intimidation of intellectuals could lead to precarity for print networks in the Third World. Although Neogy launched *Transition* with no major investors, South African exiled writer Es'kia (known then as Ezekiel) Mphahlele convinced him to accept relatively small subventions from the CCF after a few successful issues. The funding came with few strings attached, the main requirement being cross-promotion of other magazines in the network. Neogy was well aware of the CCF's

position on intellectual freedoms and the Communist Party, but an attentive reading of the magazine suggests that Neogy was willing to give a range of political partisans the space to air their views.[7] When news of the CIA's involvement broke in 1966–1967, Neogy found himself in the position of defending his editorial integrity. Not long thereafter, Ugandan dictator Milton Obote, despite being a staunch US ally in the Cold War, detained Neogy on unspecified charges. The funding scandal and Neogy's detention broke the magazine. Relocating *Transition* to Ghana and Neogy stepping down as editor could not preserve it. New editor Wole Soyinka, who even tried to revive the flagging publication under a different name, could not salvage it.

The *Lotus* story, though different in the details, reflects many of the same threats to cultural autonomy for Third World intellectuals and their cultural institutions. After a decade as editor of *Lotus*, El-Sebai was assassinated during a trip to Cyprus in 1978. As Egyptian Minister of Culture, El-Sebai had been a vocal proponent of the Palestinian cause until Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977, which opened the door to US military aid for Egypt in exchange for détente. El-Sebai backed his government's stance, leading to his death at the hands of a militant Palestinian group that killed him during a meeting of the Afro-Asian solidarity group he chaired alongside his editorial duties. *Lotus* headquarters were transferred to Beirut in the aftermath of the assassination. Publication of the magazine became more irregular, worsening throughout the 1980s. In 1982, editorial headquarters were relocated to Tunis following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the destruction of the magazine's offices. *Lotus*, already struggling to maintain its relevance, would not survive the breakup of the Soviet Union.

By far the most common form of external pressure on Third World print culture was state intimidation of intellectuals themselves. The list of writers who were censored, spied on, imprisoned, deported, and even executed is depressingly long. Through 1990, South Africa was probably the Global South state with the worst record on censorship, as Peter D. McDonald shows in *The Literature Police*. But South Africa's apartheid regime was hardly unique in its stance toward intellectuals. Third World writers faced harassment at home and abroad, from independent

7 'Rajat Neogy on the CIA', Interview with Tony Hall, *Transition,* 32 (1967), pp. 45–46.

postcolonial states as well as from colonial and semi-colonial regimes. Trinidadian intellectuals C. L. R. James and Claudia Jones were both targets of an FBI surveillance program in the US and were eventually deported. Doris Lessing was a subject of MI5 surveillance for years. Israeli security forces assassinated Palestinian activist-poet Ghassan Khanafani. The Nigerian Soyinka, the Kenyan Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, the Egyptian Nawal El-Saadawi, the Malawian Jack Mapanje, the Pakistani Sajjad Zaheer, and the Cuban Heberto Padilla are some of the most well-known writers who spent time in prison under postcolonial or post-revolutionary regimes. Pablo Neruda's death shortly after Augusto Pinochet's coup may have been orchestrated by forces loyal to the new regime, of which Neruda was an outspoken critic. Ken Saro-Wiwa was imprisoned several times and ultimately executed by the Nigerian government. As this very abbreviated list demonstrates, a number of writers from the Global South faced the most extreme forms of state terror and violence.

In *The Mute's Soliloquy*, the great Indonesian writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer tells a story that is all too familiar to students of Third World print culture. Imprisoned in the 1940s under Dutch colonial rule, Pramoedya was detained, without charge, for a further fourteen years in the 1960s and 70s, two decades after Indonesia had declared its independence. He spent more than ten years in the Buru island penal colony, where he first drafted what has become known as the 'Buru Quartet'. The four novels narrate the history of the anticolonial movement through the experiences of a nationalist journalist, Minke. The fourth volume takes an interesting turn by utilizing a collaborationist policeman, who monitors the journalist's activities, as a narrator: a stark reminder that the Dutch colonial apparatus always had its eyes on writers, just as the postcolonial Indonesian state would in its turn. This culminating volume reminds us, by way of an analogy with the colonial period, that the postcolonial state and its security apparatus had an outsized role in determining how the story of decolonization might be narrated.

The conditions Pramoedya and his fellow political detainees met at Buru were harsh. He says that imprisonment at the hands of the Dutch authorities had been like 'heaven' compared to the hell he found in the penal colony. There, detainees were left to fend for themselves on an undeveloped area of the island: scavenging for food in the rivers and

dense forests, clearing brush for planting, laying roads and footpaths, fabricating tools, harvesting wood for the profit of the prison guards, and even the tasks of building shelter were left mostly to them. Disease and malnutrition were endemic in the camp but medical provisions virtually non-existent. Prior to his Buru ordeal, Pramoedya writes, he had been 'detained a number of times before, visited the Nazi concentration camps of Ravensbruck and Buchenwald'. He had seen the Indonesians who had been detained by the Japanese during their relatively short occupation and had also 'toured Siberia' where he got a sense of the gulag system. 'I, too, was going into exile, entering yet another barbed-wire dominion', he wrote,[8] suggesting that his imprisonment made him part of an international cohort of writers who faced political pressure. Denied writing materials for several years, Pramoedya developed the narrative of the 'Buru Quartet' by reciting what was in his mind to fellow detainees. He writes very touchingly of the support and encouragement he received from the other prisoners, many of whom did not survive their time on the island. Paper and permission to write were granted towards the end of his stay, but even after his release his publications were banned in Indonesia for years.

The damage to Third World print cultures caused by state intimidation of writers and of the publishing apparatus is not something we can quantify easily. We know from what has survived that there are gaps, absences, holes in the literary record: novels and poems and essays not written, destroyed, or not published because of political restrictions on literary production. This stunting of literary culture represents another form of underdevelopment inflicted upon the peoples of the Third World. When the contributors to this volume speak of the form of ideology, these gaps and deformations are part of their reckoning, too. Just as short stories and travelogues could be squeezed into particular forms as they traveled to different contexts, we must keep in mind that state coercion also stunted the development of writing and writers in many parts of the decolonizing world.

One of the lasting ironies of this pattern of state intimidation is that political interference in literary production also helped internationalize Third World print culture. Although Pramoedya could not be published

8 Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *The Mute's Soliloquy: A Memoir* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), p. 25.

in Indonesia for some time after his release, he found publishers and translators and readers overseas, many of whom were interested in his story as a humanitarian cause. This is not a simple story of redemption or overcoming. Third World print culture is not better because it was forced in many places to seek audiences beyond the nation-state. The consequences and distortions of this situation each have their place in this story: Pramoedya's wide international readership does not compensate him for his suffering, or even for the difficulty of reaching an audience in his native tongue. But political interference in Third World literary production—through positive inducements, such as state-sponsored cultural diplomacy programs, or through prohibitions and restrictions, such as censorship and detention of writers—means that the story of postcolonial nation-building often happened in an extranational context. The 'Buru Quartet''s narration of the Indonesian anticolonial movement speaks both to domestic audiences, imagined in a future of which Pramoedya could not be certain, and to an international readership. There is a kind of syncopation at work as these texts move in and out of different contexts. This complicated relationship between Third World print cultures and the anticolonial nationalist movements out of which they emerged helps explain the startling mixture of vibrancy and trepidation that these texts communicate to us even still.

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