Britain, India, and the United Nations: colonialism and the development of international governance, 1945–1960[*]

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Abstract

This article argues that the manner by which colonial societies achieved independence as sovereign states in the late 1940s and 1950s fundamentally shaped the parallel emergence of ideas and institutions of international governance, particularly at the newly created United Nations. Using Anglo-Indian relations as its primary focus, it argues that the internationalization of imperialism was particularly evident in two areas: postcolonial states' negotiation of relations with their former colonial power within the UN system; and the influence of colonialism on international governance, particularly through the idea and practice of planning. The article assesses these developments through an analysis of British debates about United Nations membership for postcolonial states, India's role at the San Francisco Conference in 1945 where the United Nations was formed, India's campaign for a seat on the Security Council and its engagement with ECOSOC, the applicability of existing international conventions to postcolonial states, and the transfer of the ideal of planning from colonial to international governance.

A central component of the peace settlement after the Second World War was the creation of international organizations designed to ensure stability within the international system. The United Nations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (now the World Bank) comprised the core of this new international order. Yet many of the nascent practices of international governance taken up by these and other international organizations in the early post-war years drew on wider influences than just the geopolitics of the 1940s. The pre-war League of Nations was one

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such influence.[1] Another was colonialism. Colonial empires had long provided Europeans with opportunities abroad,[2] and it was through colonial service that many individuals came to enter the international civil service after 1945. Ian Buist, who worked in Kenya in the 1950s as Secretary to a Commission investigating the Kenya Police, believed this experience 'contributed to my later membership of Amnesty International!'[3] Richard Symonds, who had a distinguished career at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and as an imperial historian at Oxford, first undertook international work with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the United Nations Kashmir Commission in the late 1940s on the strength of his prior experience working in India for the Friends Ambulance Unit and the government of Bengal.[4] For Symonds, the United Nations was the political and ideational space where imperialism and internationalism coalesced.

The intersection of imperialism and internationalism was especially evident in debates about decolonization at the United Nations in the late 1940s and 1950s. Using Anglo-Indian relations as its primary focus, this article argues that the internationalization of imperialism was most clearly reflected in two areas: postcolonial states' negotiation of relations with their former colonial power within the UN system; and the influence of colonialism on international governance, particularly through the idea and practice of planning. These shifts took place within an international context where colonialism, and its dominant ethos of racial whiteness, had become increasingly illegitimate.[5]

The role of the UN in the history of decolonization has been well studied by historians.[6] Less attention has been devoted to the influence on international governance at the UN of ideas and personnel drawn from the late colonial period, especially in the organization's first years. This influence was particularly evident in the case of India. The negotiations between

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1   See Benn Steil, *The battle of Bretton Woods: John Maynard Keynes, Harry Dexter White, and the making of a new world order*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013; Mark Mazower, *Governing the world: the history of an idea*, New York: Penguin, 2012; and Patricia Clavin, *Securing the world economy: the reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920–1946*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

2   See Gary Magee and Andrew Thompson, *Empire and globalisation: networks of people, goods and capital in the British world, c.1850–1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Robert Bickers, 'Introduction', in Robert Bickers, ed., *Settlers and expatriates: Britons over the seas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 1–17; D. Lambert and A. Lester, eds., *Colonial lives across the British empire: imperial careering in the long nineteenth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006; and Bronwen Everill and Emily Baughan, eds., 'Special edition: empire and humanitarianism', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40, 5, 2012.

3   British Diplomatic Oral History Programme, Churchill College Archives, Cambridge (henceforth DOHP), DOHP 118, Interview transcript, John Latto Farquharson (Ian) Buist, p. 7, https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Buist.pdf (consulted 28 May 2013).

4   Richard Symonds, *In the margins of independence: a relief worker in India and Pakistan (1942–1949)*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 2, 4; United Nations Career Records Project, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. C. 4703/127–8, Symonds, UNCRP questionnaire, pp. 1–2.

5   Bill Schwarz, *The white man's world*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 11–13.

6   See for instance W. Roger Louis, 'Public enemy number one: Britain and the United Nations in the aftermath of Suez', in Martin Lynn, ed., *The British empire in the 1950s: retreat or revival?*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 186–213; Oliver Turner, '"Finishing the job": the UN special committee on decolonization and the politics of self-governance', *Third World Quarterly*, 34, 7, 2013, pp. 1193–1208; Martin Thomas, ed., *European decolonization*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007; Mark Berger, 'After the Third World? History, destiny and the fate of Third Worldism', *Third World Quarterly*, 25, 1, 2004, pp. 9–39; and W. Roger Louis with Ronald Robinson, 'The imperialism of decolonization', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 22, 3, 1994, pp. 462–511.

Indian actors and the British in the 1940s that led to the creation of the ethno-linguistic states of India and Pakistan in 1947 established the tenor and substance of Anglo-Indian relations at the UN. They also foreshadowed the discursive tension within the UN between the principle of state sovereignty and the normative support expressed within many UN documents for the rights and aspirations of the broader and more ambiguous identity group of 'peoples'. Political figures and colonial administrators active in the late colonial period often transitioned to work in the international civil service, and brought their colonial experiences to debates about the relative place of 'nations' and 'peoples' in international affairs. The emergence of international planning within the UN by the 1950s, for instance, owed much to the legacy of late colonial development discourse. These subjects form the framework of this article.

India's significance as an international actor was based on the leadership role that it assumed both at the UN and within the broader postcolonial world, a reflection of Jawaharlal Nehru's 'One World' vision. As he told the General Assembly in 1946, 'we in Asia, who have ourselves suffered all these evils of colonialism and of imperial domination, have committed ourselves inevitably to the freedom of every other colonial country'.[7] India sought to use the UN as a forum in which to challenge the remaining manifestations of imperialism in the international system, resist the politics of the Cold War through a policy of non-alignment, and argue for a global redistribution of material aid to the colonial and postcolonial world.[8] This was a self-consciously transnational endeavour, as India linked the negotiation of its emerging postcolonial relationship with Britain within the UN to the broader global cause of colonial autonomy.

Anglo-Indian relations at and about the UN reflected some of the broader ways in which imperialism and internationalism intersected in the late 1940s and 1950s. These intersections are investigated first through an assessment of some of the transnational reverberations of the Partition of India in 1947. The article then analyses Anglo-Indian debates about UN membership for postcolonial states, and India's leadership role in the global anti-colonialist movement. It concludes by assessing some selected colonial influences on post-1945 international governance. These include India's attempts to undermine Britain's position that its remaining colonial affairs were an 'internal' issue by using the emerging language of universalism, debates over the applicability of existing international conventions to postcolonial states, and Indian actors' subversive use of the language of late colonialism to support redistributionist initiatives for the benefit of the global South.

The transnational implications of Partition

India was a major contributor to the multifarious project of 'Third Worldism'. It was a key participant at the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in 1947, the Asian Socialist Conference in 1953, meetings of the Colombo Powers (Ceylon, India, Pakistan, Burma, and Indonesia) in 1954, and the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955. The representatives of twenty-nine African and Asian states – the majority of which come

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7   Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Firm adherence to objectives', speech in the UN General Assembly, Paris, 3 November 1948, in Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's foreign policy*, New Delhi: Government of India, 1961, pp. 164–6.

8   Jawaharlal Nehru, 'An evolving policy', speech delivered at the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, 22 March 1949, in Nehru, *India's foreign policy*, pp. 48–9; Manu Bhagavan, *India and the quest for one world: the peacemakers*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 3–4, 53–5.

into being after 1945 – who met at Bandung represented both the transnational force of anti-colonialism and the struggles of newly emergent 'represented communities' to find a place for themselves in the post-war international system.[9] The project of Third Worldism reached its apogee at the UN with the Declaration on Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, 1960, which signalled the UN's symbolic support of decolonization.[10]

As postcolonial states joined the UN and became members of its constituent bodies which addressed decolonization, notably the General Assembly's Third Committee and, after 1960, the Committee of 24 (the Special Committee on Decolonization), they directed the UN's collective anti-colonial attention primarily to European maritime empires. Colonial powers such as Britain, France, and the Netherlands thus came under great rhetorical and political pressure. Meanwhile, the land-based empires of Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC), with whom some postcolonial states expressed a political affinity and under whom none had been colonized, largely escaped scrutiny at the UN.[11] A rare exception was the criticism of the PRC's occupation of Tibet in the General Assembly in 1950, led by El Salvador, and again in 1959, with Ireland and the Federation of Malaya the loudest critics.[12]

Decolonization was a haphazard and uneven development, as much about the global expansion of nationalism as the liquidation of imperialism.[13] These dynamics were evident in the Partition of India, which Mushirul Hasan has termed the subcontinent's 'bloody vivisection'.[14] Nehru championed independence at home and opposed colonialism abroad, but he and other Indian elites denied self-determination to Kashmir and did little to defend neighbouring Tibet from annexation by the PRC in 1950.[15] Muslim politicians had no analogous sense of nationalism. Some Indian Muslims advocated an Islamic state, governed by the Islamic rule of law (sharia). For Sir Muhammad Iqbal, poet, philosopher, and inspiration of the Pakistan movement, 'political power was essential to the higher need of establishing God's Law'.[16] More

9   Talbot C. Imlay, 'International socialism and decolonization during the 1950s: competing rights and the postcolonial order', *American Historical Review*, 18, 4, 2013, pp. 1105–6; Vijay Prashad, *The darker nations: a people's history of the Third World*, New York: New Press, 2007, pp. 31–44; John D. Kelly and Martha Kaplan, *Represented communities: Fiji and world decolonization*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001, cited in Christopher Lee, 'Introduction', in Christopher Lee, ed., *Making a world after empire: the Bandung moment and its political afterlives*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010, p. 3. For a critical view, see Robert Vitalis, 'The midnight ride of Kwame Nkrumah and other fables of Bandung (Ban-doong)', *Humanity*, 4, 2, 2013, pp. 261–88.

10 UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV), 14 December 1960.

11 Claire Clark, 'Soviet and Afro-Asian voting in the UN General Assembly', *Australian Outlook*, 24, 3, 1970, pp. 296–308; Odd Arne Westad, *The global Cold War: Third World interventions and the making of our times*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 67–9; David Engerman, 'The Second World's Third World', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 12, 11, 2011, pp. 194–6, 200–2; Mohamed el-Khawas, 'Africa, China and the United Nations', *African Review*, 2, 2, 1972, pp. 277–87.

12 Roger Lipsey, *Hammarskjöld: a life*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013, pp. 373–80.

13 Nicholas Guilhot, 'Imperial realism: post-war IR theory and decolonisation', *International History Review*, 2013, doi:10.1080/07075332.2013.836122, p. 5.

14 Mushirul Hasan, 'Partition narratives', in David Page et al., *The partition omnibus*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. xii. There is an immense literature on the Partition of India. An excellent recent study is Yasmin Khan, *The great partition: the making of India and Pakistan*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.

15 Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi: the history of the world's largest democracy*, New York: HarperCollins, 2007, pp. 176–8.

16 Ian Talbot, *India & Pakistan*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 54.

radical voices, such as the theologian Sayeed Abul Ala Maududi, believed that a prospective Pakistan should be governed by an emir, acting as God's representative on earth, to maintain religious purity. He formed the Jamaat-i Islami party in 1941 to pursue this goal. It later aided Pakistani forces in East Pakistan during the Bangladeshi Liberation War of 1971, as it opposed the secularism which drove the Bangladeshi independence movement.[17] Other Indian Muslims, including the leader of the Muslim League, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, preferred a Muslim state, such as then existed in Turkey, where Muslims were a majority but where the constitution and legal system remained secular.[18]

Jinnah nonetheless courted other Muslims, particularly during provincial elections in the decade before Partition. He suggested that the Muslim League represented all 'true' Muslims, and that those who opposed the idea of Pakistan were unbelievers.[19] The League, however, did not have a monopoly on Muslim support, particularly among the well-educated. Figures such as Abul Kalam Azad, a Congress colleague of Gandhi and Nehru, Zakir Hussain, later India's first Muslim president, and Adbul Gaffar Khan, the 'frontier Gandhi', all favoured a united India.[20] While Jinnah's vision prevailed at Partition – he declared on the eve of Pakistan's independence that 'in the course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state'[21] – Pakistan became Islamicized after his death in 1948. The 1949 Objectives Resolution proclaimed that Muslims should order their individual and collective lives 'in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam', a vision developed further by Pakistan's subsequent leaders.

As a state based on religion rather than ethno-linguistic ties, Pakistan was a poor fit in a post-war international system where secular national states had become normative. Attempts elsewhere in the postcolonial world to follow the Pakistani model failed. Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosuwirjo's Darul Islam movement in Indonesia, created in 1942 under the Japanese occupation and which opposed both the returning Dutch colonialists and Sukarno's secular state, is the most notable such case. It recruited armed militias from *madrasas* to form two guerrilla organizations, *Hizbullah* and *Sabilillah*, and established a base of operations in a self-proclaimed Islamic state (Darul Islam) in West Java in 1949. The Indonesian Republic ultimately defeated Darul Islam, and with it an Indonesian variant of Islamic nationalism, by the early 1960s using counter-insurgency tactics modelled on British methods in Malaya and Dutch methods in Indonesia itself.[22] By the 1980s, some veterans of

17 Jon Armajani, *Modern Islamist movements: history, religion and politics*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp. 167–8; Ishtiaq Hossain and Noore Alam Siddiquee, 'Islam in Bangladeshi politics: the role of Ghulam Azam of Jamaat-i Islami', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 5, 3, 2006, p. 387.

18 Stephen P. Cohen, *The idea of Pakistan*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2004, p. 30.

19 Jai Narain Sharma, *The political thought of M.A. Jinnah*, New Delhi: Concept, 2008, pp. 73–5.

20 Talbot, *India & Pakistan*, p. 86.

21 Muhammad Ali Jinnah, quoted in Ziad Haider, *The ideological struggle for Pakistan*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2010, p. 5.

22 Chiara Formichi, *Islam and the making of the nation*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012; Hiroko Horikoshi, 'The Dar ul-Islam movement in West Java: an experience in the historical process', *Indonesia*, 20, 1975, p. 63; Greg Fealy, 'Half a century of violent jihad in Indonesia: a historical and ideological comparison of Darul Islam and Jema'ah Islamiyah', in Marika Viciany and David Wright-Neville, eds., *Islamic terrorism in Indonesia: myths and realities*, Melbourne: Monash University Press, 2005, p. 22.

Darul Islam had formed the terrorist groups *Komando Jihad* and *Jema'ah Islamiyah*, members of the latter responsible for the Bali terrorist bombings in 2002.[23] Not all postcolonial transitions were as violent as in the subcontinent or Indonesia, but as Frantz Fanon observed, all presented the challenge of defining new national identities where none had existed before.[24]

Anglo-Indian relations and the founding of the United Nations

While religious nationalism foundered in Pakistan and Indonesia, the secular state of India assumed a prominent role in post-war international affairs. Indeed, it was active even before independence, participating in the creation of the United Nations in 1945 in preliminary Commonwealth deliberations in London designed to craft a united front in upcoming negotiations, and then at the San Francisco Conference itself. Appointed by the British, India's delegation was led by Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar. It also included Sir Firoz Khan Noon, Sir V. T. Krisnamachari, Chief Advisor Kumar Padma Sivasankar Menon, and Sir John Bartley and the Australian Major-General Walter Joseph Cawthorn. At the Commonwealth preparatory conference, the Indian delegation decided that its 'safest course will be to follow the UK' at San Francisco on the UN's structure and charter, with the hope that this would help secure support for international issues of 'special importance' to India.[25] The government of India avoided using the words 'sovereign equality' for itself at this point. For their part, British officials believed that India held a comparable international position to middle powers such as Canada, and gave it a free hand at San Francisco save for 'matters affecting foreign relations and defence'.[26]

In the event, the Indian delegation stuck closely to Britain's positions on the major issues debated at San Francisco. The Indian delegation was realistic, though unhappy, about the Permanent Five's (P5) veto power in the Security Council, observing that it 'is characteristic of an age which has no illusions as to universal peace, an age which realizes that the world has not yet seen the last of the play of power politics'.[27] Mudaliar did hope, in the event in vain, that the veto power might draw the Soviets more directly into the international community. The Indian delegation also argued that the veto question should be revisited in the future when the UN's membership would invariably expand. It further wanted the procedures for electing non-permanent members of the Security Council clarified.[28] India was treated as an autonomous member of the UN even though it was not yet independent,

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23 Verena Beittinger-Lee, *(Un)civil society and political change in Indonesia: a contested arena*, London: Routledge, 2009, pp. 199–200.

24 Frantz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth*, New York: Grove Press, 2004, p. 54.

25 British Library, India Office Records (henceforth IOR), L/E/9/1378, 180/1(5), 'Description of the meeting of Commonwealth nations prior to going to San Francisco'.

26 IOR, L/E/9/1378, 180/1(5), 'Brief for the Indian delegation to the London conference on world security'; IOR, L/E/9/1378, 180/1(5), Tompkins to Peel, 13 March 1945; *Hansard*, 15 March 1945.

27 IOR, L/E/9/1378, 180/1(5), *Report of the Indian delegation on the UN conference at San Francisco*, p. 15.

28 K. P. S. Menon, *Many worlds: an autobiography*, London: Oxford, 1965, pp. 218–19; *Report of the Indian delegation*, pp. 26, 36.

and thus should have been considered under the Charter's provisions for non-self-governing territories (Chapter XI). While this issue was noted by other delegations and by the press at San Francisco,[29] India had enjoyed a similarly anomalous position at the League of Nations.

Britain's support for India's place in the UN paralleled the Soviet Union's designs for Ukraine and Belarus (White Russia) as independent UN members. The Soviets had insisted at the Dumbarton Oaks planning conference in 1944 on UN membership for all sixteen Soviet Republics, in part to counter Britain's perceived ability to control Commonwealth votes and the Americans' perceived influence over Latin American votes.[30] Stalin's caution was not entirely unwarranted. The British empire delegation had often worked in concert at the League of Nations. Internally, the Foreign Office maintained a similar position. The United Nations plan that it submitted to the War Cabinet in 1943 declared that 'the leadership of the United Nations will have to come from three, at least of the Great Powers – *the British Commonwealth*, the United States, and Russia'.[31] Because Britain wanted India to be a member of the UN, despite its colonial status, the British delegation left it to the Americans to rebut the Soviet position, and the issue was unresolved by the end of the Dumbarton Oaks conference.

The Yalta Conference in January 1945 produced a compromise. Belarus and Ukraine were granted UN membership in exchange for Russian support for a veto formula whereby the five Great Powers had an absolute veto in the Security Council on 'substantive' matters, but not 'procedural' matters.[32] It was also at Yalta that Churchill retreated from his previous intransigent opposition to the proposed UN trusteeship system designed to succeed the League of Nations mandates system (as well as incorporate additional non-self-governing territories). Ironically, Churchill's earlier fears that the trusteeship system would provide a means for anti-colonial opponents to criticize the British empire proved well founded.[33]

Like the Soviets, Britain wished to utilize its global imperial presence in the emerging post-war institutions of international governance. It sought to incorporate in its delegations to the UN those territories which were on the path to independence, but still part of the Commonwealth. Examples in the early years of the UN included Southern Rhodesia, Ceylon, Newfoundland (a dominion under British Commission governance until 1949, when it became a Canadian province by referendum), and, before it attained independence in 1948, Burma.[34] While Burma's leaders declared their intention to leave the Commonwealth,

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29 *New York Times*, 29 April, 1945.

30 Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of creation: the founding of the United Nations*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003, p. 127.

31 The National Archives, Kew (henceforth TNA), Cabinet Papers 66/33/31, 'The United Nations plan', p. 2, emphasis added.

32 David Bosco, *Five to rule them all: the UN Security Council and the making of the modern world*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 30–1; Schlesinger, *Act of creation*, pp. 193–4.

33 Richard Toye, *Churchill's empire: the world that made him and the world he made*, London: Macmillan, 2010, pp. 252–3. For an overview of the UN Trusteeship system, see Ralph Wilde, 'Trusteeship council', in Thomas G. Weiss and Sam Daws, eds., *The Oxford handbook on the United Nations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 149–59.

34 IOR, L/E/9/1408, 180/10(1), 'Second session of the preparatory committee on trade and employment: British Commonwealth talks [Palais des Nations, Geneva]', 12 May 1947; IOR, L/E/9/1408, 180/10(1), S. D. Listowel (Burma Office) to H. E. Rance (Governor of Burma), [25 July 1947, Burma no. 53].

they wished to join the UN and sought British diplomatic support for its accession. Beyond the mark of international recognition that membership constituted, Burma also wished to apply for reconstruction resources from the International Labour Organization (ILO), the IMF, and the World Bank, which required UN membership.

The inclusion of India and other non-sovereign polities as founding members of the UN reveals the anomaly in the UN Charter between reference to 'we the peoples of the United Nations' in the Preamble and the definition of UN membership in Chapter II as consisting of 'peace-loving states'.[35] The ambiguity between the meaning of 'people' and 'states' suggested, among other concerns, the question of state sovereignty and international intervention. Within the Commonwealth, both India and Australia were concerned about the Charter's express contradiction between ensuring the sanctity of state sovereignty (Chapter I, Article 2) and permitting external intervention to preserve international peace (Chapter VII).[36] India had drafted its own amendment regarding the promotion of human rights irrespective of race, before accepting the similar resolution proposed by the United States. This principle of racial equality signalled progress from the Versailles negotiations in 1919, where Japan's call for a racial equality clause was rejected out of hand. Even before it became independent, India articulated what would become a key postcolonial precept of international affairs: defence of state sovereignty internally, and the pursuit of the international principles of anti-colonialism, development, and human rights abroad.[37]

Where India took an independent line at San Francisco was, unsurprisingly, on questions of colonialism and sovereignty. The leading anti-colonial voice at San Francisco was the Philippines' delegate, Carlos Romulo, followed by the Australian and Egyptian delegations. As one of the few delegates representing a colonial society, Romulo fashioned himself 'the voice of the voiceless millions'.[38] Though an experienced diplomat in the United States, and not immune to Western claims that colonialism contained a moral component,[39] Romulo fought to ensure that trusteeship did not maintain colonialism in a new guise. He was instrumental in ensuring that the Trusteeship Council's aspiration for colonial peoples became 'self-government *or independence*', rather than simply 'self-government', as proposed by Britain's Colonial Secretary, Lord Cranborne, and Belgium's Henri Spaak.

While Romulo accepted that independence was not an immediately practical goal for many colonial societies, he was convinced that freedom was the necessary goal, and that colonial powers had to take immediate steps to bring it about. This view, he later argued, 'opened the door for the non-self-governing peoples which were under trusteeship at that time, to enter the United Nations'.[40] The limits of Romulo's anti-colonialism emerged in 1947, when he delivered a speech against partition, but then conspicuously left New York

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35 Charter of the United Nations, Preamble and Chapter II, Article 4.1.

36 *Report of the Indian delegation*, p. 11.

37 Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the evolution of international human rights*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010, pp. 6–9, 14–15; Lee, 'Introduction', p. 15; Westad, *Global Cold War*, pp. 97–103; and Bhagavan, *India*.

38 United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library, Interview with General Carlos P. Romulo, 30 October 1982, p. 11, http://www.unmultimedia.org/oralhistory/ (consulted 20 May 2013), emphasis added.

39 Archie Mackenzie, *Faith in diplomacy: a memoir*, London: Grosvenor Books, 2002, pp. 53–5.

40 Interview with General Romulo, p. 8.

just before the General Assembly vote which authorized the partition of Palestine. An alternate Filipino representative voted in favour of the measure, probably in exchange for continued American financial and military assistance.[41]

While Romulo's rhetoric helped to galvanize international support for the principle of trusteeship, he was also pushing against an open door. The most influential delegation at San Francisco, the United States, had made anti-colonialism a plank of its war aims in the Atlantic Charter (though Franklin Roosevelt balanced his commitment to global self-determination with an appreciation of great power hegemony), and would not accept a return to the pre-war colonial status quo ante.[42] The Americans' lead negotiator on trusteeship at San Francisco, the African American diplomat and scholar Ralph Bunche, had written a doctoral dissertation on the League's mandates system and colonialism. He ensured that the Charter augmented the principle of international responsibility for trust territories with greater accountability provisions. These included mandatory reports from trustees to the Trusteeship Council and periodic inspection visits to trust territories by UN delegations.[43]

The strongest Indian anti-colonialist at San Francisco was not an official delegate. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Nehru's sister, had been travelling in the United States by special permission of Roosevelt since December 1944, meeting dignitaries and speaking in favour of Indian independence. She attacked Mudaliar, Noon, and Krisnamachari as British 'stooges', and, in a memo on Indian independence to the conferences' delegations, asserted that colonialism 'is irreconcilable … with the concepts that have inspired the United Nations Conference'.[44] The more moderate Indian delegation followed Romulo's and Bunche's lead, supporting trusteeship as a piecemeal step towards colonial self-determination. It was particularly sensitive to the ambiguity in Chapters XII and XIII of the UN charter, which deal respectively with the international trusteeship system and the Trusteeship Council which was tasked with governing the new system. Chapter XII, Article 78, specifically excluded India, as a member of the UN, from the provisions of the trusteeship system. Chapter XI suggested otherwise, as India fell within its definition of 'territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government'. The trusteeship system, however, was not intended to apply to those colonial territories deemed 'mature', including India and also non-UN members such as Ceylon and Malta, and this contradiction was made moot by independence.

The Indian delegation also diverged from Britain in insisting that the General Assembly have the right to frame social and economic conventions.[45] Here the Indian delegation

41 *Time*, 8 December 1947; Carlos Romulo, *I walked with heroes: the autobiography of General Carlos P. Romulo*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961, pp. 285–8; Milton Walter Meyer, *A diplomatic history of the Philippine Republic: the first years, 1946–1961*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1965, p. 74.

42 Brad Simpson, 'The United States and the curious history of self-determination', *Diplomatic History*, 36, 4, 2012, pp. 678–9; Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the world: America's vision for human rights*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2005, pp. 23–4, 28–9.

43 Neta C. Crawford, 'Decolonization through trusteeship: the legacy of Ralph Bunche', in Robert A. Hill and Edmond J. Keller, eds., *Trustee for the human community: Ralph J. Bunche, the United Nations, and the decolonization of Africa*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010, pp. 98, 102–3.

44 Bhagavan, *India*, pp. 24–32, 42.

45 *Report of the Indian delegation*, pp. 22–3.

mirrored the interest in social and economic development of nationalist India. Political self-determination was a necessary but not sufficient international goal. It would only be given full meaning if the colonized world's relative impoverishment was alleviated, and thus the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was a key organization. India saw ECOSOC as a venue where it could advance its interests in economic and industrial development, and stressed that the rapid development of less developed countries was in the global common interest.[46] Britain supported Mudaliar for the chairmanship of ECOSOC in 1946. He had been a member of Churchill's war cabinet in addition to representing India at the San Francisco conference, and was thus a 'safe' choice from Britain's perspective. British officials tellingly identified him as both the 'best *British* candidate' and a selection which would be a 'big feather in India's cap [which would] make it easier to secure the election of Indians for other big posts in [the] UNO'.[47] While the British considered supporting Canada's Paul Martin for the post in 1947, they ultimately decided again on backing Mudaliar.[48]

In addition to its presidency of ECOSOC, India campaigned in 1946 for election to a non-permanent seat on the Security Council and membership on the Trusteeship Council. Britain was tolerant of the former, as it would secure what at the time was presumed to be a reliable anti-communist vote, as well as a potential ally on divisive British security interests such as Palestine. It preferred a Dominion representative, however, on the Security Council.[49] India nonetheless again put forward its candidacy for the Security Council immediately after independence in advance of the membership vote in autumn 1947. The UN had not yet adopted its present regional bloc system for electing non-permanent members, and, with Canada certain of election, India was in competition with Ukraine, the latter supported by the communist bloc. No winner was selected during the first round of ballots on 30 September 1947, as Ukraine failed to secure the necessary two-thirds majority. India subsequently dropped out of the election, as Latin American opposition to its candidacy hardened over the attacks of Pandit, now leader of India's UN delegation, on Argentina for supporting fascist Spain, then barred from the UN and under an economic embargo.[50] India did not secure a non-permanent Security Council seat until 1950–51, though it made frequent invited submissions from the late 1940s, when its dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir was discussed.[51]

If supporting Indian membership on the Security Council could potentially serve Britain's Cold War interests (this in the years before India tacked more strongly to a non-aligned position), Indian membership on the Trusteeship Council directly threatened British imperial

46 IOR, L/E/9/1414, 180/14(a), 'Brief for the 4th session of ECOSOC', 28 February 1947.

47 IOR, L/E/9/1376, 180/1(3), Secretary of State to Viceroy of India, 17 January 1946; IOR, L/E/9/1376, 180/1(3), Telegram, H. A. F. Rumbold to Richard Turnbull.

48 IOR, L/E/9/1414, 180/14(a), copy, Foreign Office to UK Delegation, UN, 22 February 1947, emphasis added.

49 IOR, L/E/9/1483, 180/67, Circular Telegram from the UK delegation to the Foreign Office and Dominions, 21 October 1946.

50 Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, 'India and the United Nations', in Atish Sinha and Madhup Mohta, eds., *Indian foreign policy: challenges and opportunities*, New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2007, pp. 196–7.

51 For instance, United Nations S/1188, 'Report to the president of the Security Council concerning the credentials of the representative of India to the Security Council', 6 January 1949. See also A. Z. Hilali, 'Kashmir dispute and UN mediation efforts: an historical perspective', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 8, 2, 1997, pp. 69–72, 74–5.

interests. The British Foreign Office believed that India was 'likely to be more concerned with the protection of the interests of persons of Indian origin than with the general welfare of trust territories'. It feared that Indian criticism at the Trusteeship Council could destabilize British colonial control in East Africa, where the Indian community had long lobbied for greater rights. The British delegation was thus instructed to oppose India's 1946 request for British support for a seat on the Trusteeship Council, and instead supported the bids of Iraq and Uruguay.[52]

Britain's opposition to the trusteeship system ironically led it to unintentionally embrace an expansive conception of international governance. Internal British government documents in the late 1940s and early 1950s tellingly use the terms 'interfere' and 'interference', rather than 'accountability' or 'oversight', when discussing the trusteeship system, demonstrating the anti-colonial tenor with which British officials believed the UN was imbued. But because Britain could no longer defend colonialism with the older language of 'civilization' and tutelage, it resorted to other defences.[53] One argument was that, because it had already devolved much domestic autonomy to local governance bodies in the colonies (in fact, a partial process at best), any international oversight mechanisms would actually apply to local colonial bodies, not London, and thus run counter to the principle of colonial nationalism.

The Colonial Office International Relations department suggested that UN oversight 'would engender that very sense of inferiority among colonial peoples which any enlightened colonial policy should aim to remove'.[54] Its officials advocated that any international public administration should be universal in scope, rather than applied only to colonial societies, and be implemented on functional rather than political lines. The relevant UN bodies which had the expertise in functional areas which the Trusteeship Council lacked should be the appropriate actors of international governance: 'whatever international measures are necessary in respect of a particular field of administration should be adopted wherever the problem arises, and every legitimate constitutional and diplomatic step should be taken to persuade all Governments concerned (colonial and sovereign) to come into line'.[55] This was a self-serving argument designed to fend off UN oversight of British colonial territories by appealing to a higher universal principle. In appealing to universal harmonization, however, the Colonial Office was in fact arguing for a more extensive form of international governance than that represented by the Trusteeship Council. This is one bridge between colonialism and the subsequent emergence of international development and humanitarian intervention.

Following on from its position at the League of Nations, Britain asserted the authority to apply to its colonial and trust territories the international regulations and conventions which it had itself ratified, with the further right to modify them to account for 'local conditions'.[56]

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52   IOR, L/E/9/1483, 180/67, Government of India to Secretary of State for India, 9 October 1946; IOR, L/E/9/1483, 180/67, copy, Foreign Office to UK delegation, UN, 24 October 1946.

53   On the discursive history of 'civilization' as a defence for imperialism, see Brett Bowden, *The empire of civilization: the evolution of an imperial idea*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

54   Colonial Office International Relations Department, 'The colonial empire today: summary of our main problems and policies', CO 537/5698, in Ronald Hyam, ed., *British documents on the end of empire: the Labour government and the end of empire, 1945–1951*, London: HMSO for the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, vol. 1, p. 356, document 72, paragraph 80.

55   *Ibid.*, p. 356, paragraph 81.

56   IOR/L/E/9/1391, 180/6(1), Sir Alexander Cadogan, United Kingdom Delegation to United Nations to the Foreign Office, No. 545, 5 July 1946.

The *de jure* situation upon independence was thus that such regulations and conventions also applied to postcolonial states unless their government renounced them, a process that required resources not always available in postcolonial states. India was a partial exception, as it had ratified some interwar international agreements as an independent signatory. This precedent of de facto international autonomy carried over to the UN. Nehru told a press conference in September 1947 that India would assume an active role in the UN, to 'which her geographical position, population and contribution towards peaceful progress entitle her', and would make clear that it 'stands for the independence of all colonial and dependent peoples'.[57]

India established a UN Liaison Office in New York by the late summer of 1946, with Samarendranath Sen of the Indian Political Service as liaison officer. It was set up with the help of the India Office and Britain's own UN mission under Sir Alexander Cadogan, with the goal of securing a smooth transition in Anglo-Indian relations at the UN after Indian independence.[58] Sen was replaced in 1947 by Dr P. P. Pillai, who had worked at the League of Nations Secretariat before the war, and also served as India's representative at the ILO.[59] India's representation on the UN Secretariat's staff, however, was negligible (six out of the initial 3,000 employees). Nehru and Pandit both pushed the UN's first Secretary-General, the Norwegian Trygve Lie, on this issue.[60] Meanwhile, the UN began to establish a presence in India. At Mudaliar's request, an existing League of Nations office in New Delhi was converted into a UN information centre in January 1947. Indian non-governmental organizations also began to petition for consultative status at ECOSOC and the General Assembly, led by the All-India Women's Conference (affiliated with the International Alliance of Women for Equal Rights and Equal Responsibilities).[61]

While Mudaliar sometimes clashed with his Western colleagues, and did his best especially to support development and reconstruction initiatives for India, he was still a 'United Nations man'. Less moderate Indian nationalists characterized him as a British pawn.[62] In contrast, the other two leading Indian figures at the UN after Partition were both strong nationalists. One was Pandit, later President of the General Assembly. The other was V. K. Krishna Menon. Lauded in Indian nationalist mythology as a 'committed freedom-fighter and a near-Gandhian, Mephistophelean figure in a Savile Row suit',[63] Menon rarely missed

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57 Jawaharlal Nehru, 'On India's foreign policy', press conference, 27 September 1946, in Jawaharlal Nehru, *The first sixty years, vol. II*, New York: The John Day Company, 1965, p. 267.

58 IOR, L/E/9/1454, 180/41, B. R. Curson to P. H. Gore Booth (Foreign Office), 27 August 1946; IOR, L/E/9/ 1454, 180/41, Sd. S. Sen (Indian Liaison Officer) to L. A. C. Fry (Deputy Secretary, External Affairs Department, Government of India), 18 September 1946.

59 IOR, L/E/9/1454, 180/41, S. Sen to Trygve Lie, 21 July 1947; IOR, L/E/9/1454, 180/41, A. C. B. Symon (Deputy High Commissioner for the UK in India) to Secretary of the British Cabinet, despatch no. 74, 2 July 1947.

60 IOR, L/E/9/1417, 180/16, Jawaharlal Nehru to Trygve Lie, 8 January 1947.

61 IOR, L/E/9/1440, 180/33, Mudaliar to UN Secretary-General, 4 July 1946; IOR, L/E/9/1440, 180/33, Assistant Secretary-General of UN to External Affairs Department of India, 9 January 1947; IOR, L/E/9/ 1435, 180/29, Department of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations (India) to Secretary-General of UN, 28 July 1947; IOR, L/E/9/1435, 180/29, Memorandum, Helen Tang (UN Department of Public Information), 27 November 1946.

62 *Christian Science Monitor*, 14 February 1946.

63 *Times of India*, 3 May 2007.

an opportunity to attack the British, and colonialism more broadly. His communist sympathies had long worried British intelligence.[64] The Foreign Office was anxious about his potential to inflame broader anti-colonial attacks against Britain at the UN. By late 1946, it was complaining internally of the 'many bitter speeches made by Mr. Menon, who represented India as a country seared by imperialist oppression and anxious to succour other subject peoples'.[65]

Menon saw India as 'an old country but a new nation'.[66] With this appeal to India's historical stature as the backdrop, he advocated for the protection of national sovereignty, social justice, non-alignment, reciprocity as the basis of international affairs, and peace, disarmament, and development as India's international priorities. He acted as Nehru's 'roving ambassador' in the late 1940s and 1950s.[67] Menon's forceful and dynamic international presence helped shape India's independent place in the international system, especially in the eyes of Western observers, for whom his UN appearances provided a rare opportunity to hear Indian viewpoints. While the American press portrayed him in crude terms as 'India's Rasputin', castigating his alleged mendacity, he inspired Indian nationalists at home.[68]

The future Indian president Ramaswamy Venkataraman (known as 'RV' to his supporters), who worked in India's UN delegation with Menon, reflected later in life that this experience 'was to share in the articulation of India's renascent ethos. After every address of Krishna Menon, we on the delegation felt inches taller – as Indians, Asians and as representatives of a whole generation of newly emerging nations.'[69] It was important for nationalists such as Venkataraman, Menon, Pandit, and Arthur Lall, India's permanent representative to the UN from 1954 to 1958, that India's autonomy and international standing be respected. In this sense, India's work at the UN in the organization's first fifteen years can be judged a success. While it did not attain many of its practical international goals – a permanent seat on the Security Council, greater rights and freedoms for Indians in South Africa and elsewhere in the diaspora – it nonetheless played a central role in most of the organization's key debates. India was a valuable mediator between the United States and the PRC during the Korean War, especially concerning the controversial question of the repatriation of Chinese prisoners.[70] It was also a key intermediary with Egypt during the Suez crisis, and its provision of troops for the

64   Paul M. McGarr, '"A serious menace to society": British intelligence, V. K. Krishna Menon and the Indian High Commission in London, 1947–52', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 38, 3, 2010, pp. 443, 447–8; Christopher Andrew, *The defence of the realm: the authorized history of MI5*, London: Penguin, 2009, p. 443.

65   IOR, L/E/9/1396, B. R. Curson to R. M. A. Hankey, Foreign Office, 28 November 1946.

66   Krishna Menon, 'Statement in the general debate at the General Assembly on 8 October 1957', in E. S. Reddy and A. K. Damodaran, eds., *Krishna Menon at the United Nations: India and the world*, New Delhi: Krishna Menon National Memorial Committee, 1990, p. 149.

67   Ramaswamy Venkataraman, 'Foreword', in Reddy and Damodaran, *Krishna Menon*, p. xii; Judith Brown, *Nehru: a political life*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003, pp. 248.

68   Paul M. McGarr, '"India's Rasputin"?: V. K. Krishna Menon and Anglo-American misperceptions of Indian foreign policymaking, 1947–1964', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 22, 2, 2011, pp. 241–2.

69   Venkataraman, 'Foreword', p. xiii.

70   Rudra Chaudhuri, *Forged in crisis: India and the United States since 1947*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 52, 70–7; Benjamin Zachariah, *Nehru*, London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 201–3.

UN's mission in Katanga in the early 1960s projected India's power abroad and demonstrated its support for the UN's guiding principles.[71]

For the British, India's position was a constant source of attention, and often concern and irritation. British delegates opposed India's complaint against South Africa in the General Assembly and the Trusteeship Council. Nehru had authorized the complaint in 1946, in response to the passage of South Africa's discriminatory Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act, as one of his first decisions upon becoming Vice-President of the Interim Government of India. India's opposition to South Africa's policies of racial discrimination against Indians were long-standing, but the UN provided a forum for it to internationalize what had henceforth been mainly an intra-imperial dispute. India also criticized South Africa over the latter's designs on incorporating its former League of Nations mandate and present trust territory of Southwest Africa into South Africa proper. Britain had tried to ignore these questions when they were disputed within the 'imperial family', but was placed on the defensive in the international spotlight of the UN. A series of military and economic interests, as well as the lingering bonds of a shared imperial identity of whiteness, precluded Britain from denouncing South Africa.[72] At the same time, it wished to nurture the Anglo-Indian relationship, and thus made strenuous efforts to include India in Commonwealth deliberations before and during UN sessions.[73]

Nehru was exultant at India's rhetorical victories over South Africa in the General Assembly. He wrote to his delegation in 1947 that their performance was a 'convincing demonstration that the UN will be a real force for peace and for the improvement of human relations'.[74] He was careful not to push too far, however, lest relations with the British be compromised. He also made clear to his chief ministers, including India's UN delegation, that the Indian question in South Africa must be tied to progress for Africans, without which 'there will be no place' for Indians in Africa.[75] For Subimal Dutt, the Secretary of the Commonwealth Relations Department in the Indian Foreign Office, India's criticism of South Africa at the UN was a 'preview of the free, fearless and independent policy' which it would pursue in international relations. Pandit saw the General Assembly's vote in favour of India's resolution condemning South Africa as an 'Asian victory'.[76]

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71 United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library, Interview with Arthur Lall, 27 June, 1990, pp. 8–11, 13–16, http://www.unmultimedia.org/oralhistory/ (consulted 20 March 2014); Gerard McCann, 'From diaspora to Third Worldism and the United Nations: India and the politics of decolonizing Africa', *Past & Present*, 218, supplement 8, 2013, pp. 276–7.

72 Peter Henshaw, 'Britain, the United Nations, and the "South African disputes", 1946–1961', in Ronald Hyam and Peter Henshaw, *The lion and the springbok: Britain and South Africa since the Boer War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 146–67; Lorna Lloyd, '"A family quarrel": the development of the dispute over Indians in South Africa', *Historical Journal*, 34, 3, 1991, pp. 703–25; Mark Mazower, *No enchanted palace: the end of empire and the ideological origins of the United Nations*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009, pp. 171–80.

73 IOR, L/E/9/1393, 180/7(1), B. R. Curson, Circular note, India Office, September 1946.

74 IOR, L/E/9/1393, 180/7(1), Nehru to Indian UN delegation, 28 September 1947.

75 Nehru to Chief Ministers, 14 May 1949, in G. Parthasarathi, ed., *Letters to chief ministers, vol. I, 1947–1949*, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1985, pp. 346–7.

76 Subimal Dutt, 'With Nehru in the Foreign Office', Calcutta: Minerva, 1977, p. 8; Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, *The scope of happiness: a personal memoir*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979, p. 210.

India took a separate position on other international questions at the UN in the late 1940s. It supported the Soviet position, for instance, that foreign troop movements should be publicized internationally. However, on other major issues of the period – the importance of economic and social development, the isolation of Franco's Spain, the UN's role in aiding refugees, the location of the UN headquarters – India supported Britain and the Dominions. It was also a significant financial contributor to the UN: it gave US$487,757 in 1946, and its 1947 contribution of US$1,084,275 constituted 4.4% of the UN's total, an identical percentage to Canada. By comparison, the United Kingdom contributed 14% of the UN's 1947 budget, and the United States 24%.[77]

Colonialism and international governance

India thus used the UN to establish itself as an international actor, and as a platform to challenge the dominant actors of the global North. In the latter activity it was joined by many postcolonial states, using the language of colonial development to argue for international aid and planning initiatives, and benefitting from the parallel rise of international governance initiatives, whose universalist and progressive goals undermined colonial states' efforts to defend the colonial status quo. By the early 1950s, as colonial wars and counter-insurgency campaigns from Algeria to Kenya to Malaya further delegitimized colonialism in international public opinion, and as the Kashmir dispute began to calcify, India increasingly pursued an independent line at the UN.[78] Mervyn Brown, who worked in the social and economic section of the United Kingdom's UN mission in New York (UKMIS), had a first-hand view of the heated debates at ECOSOC over British colonialism. As he later recalled, 'one reason why people have always attacked the British government in that kind of situation is that they are very responsive to public opinion'.[79] Anti-colonialism permeated the UN in the 1950s. This was true not just of explicitly political issues, such as the ongoing case of South Africa's claim to Southwest Africa, but also the social and economic issues with which ECOSOC was concerned. Human rights were a case in point. Anti-colonial claims of self-determination for all peoples dominated deliberations in the Human Rights Commission and the Third Committee of the General Assembly, and then up through ECOSOC and the General Assembly itself as the International Covenants on Human Rights were negotiated.[80]

Brown was critical of the expansive definition of 'peoples' employed by the anti-colonial lobby at the UN in the 1950s: 'How do you define "peoples" – does Northern Ireland have

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77　Jawaharlal Nehru, Note to Foreign Secretary, 28 October 1946, in *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru, second series, vol. I*, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1984, pp. 458–9; IOR, L/E/9/1398, 180/5(2), Administrative and Finance Service of UN to Nehru, 8 April 1947 and 12 June 1947. On debates over the UN's location, see Charlene Mires, *Capital of the world: the race to host the United Nations*, New York: New York University Press, 2013.

78　David French, *The British way in counter-insurgency, 1945–1967*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012; Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial endgame: Britain's dirty wars and the end of empire*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011; David Anderson, *Histories of the hanged: Britain's dirty war in Kenya and the end of empire*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2005; Caroline Elkins, *Britain's gulag: the brutal end of empire in Kenya*, London: Jonathan Cape, 2005.

79　DOHP 18, Interview transcript, Sir Mervyn Brown, 24 Oct. 1996, p. 7, https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Brown.pdf (consulted 20 June 2013).

80　Mazower, *No enchanted palace*, pp. 185–8 and ch. 4 *passim*.

the right to self-determination? Do the Somalis in Ethiopia have the right to self-determination? Does Kashmir have the right to self-determination?'[81] Here Brown identified one of the inherent tensions between the UN's normative universalism and its state-based membership, namely the rhetorical and legal meaning of 'peoples'. Some international law scholars have concluded that self-determination entails the right of people to 'determine their international status', wherein 'people' is defined as a territorially delimited community. During the 1940s and 1950s, this connotation was applied to colonized societies who could be identified within territorial borders (that had been applied to them by colonizing powers), but not secessionist groups within existing states, for the latter challenged the UNs' goal of maintaining international peace.[82]

Many member states believed that the UN's universal precepts and support for the principle of self-determination permitted its constituent bodies to express views upon member states' colonial affairs. Colonial states disagreed, arguing that their colonial territories were 'domestic' and thus, in accordance with Chapter II Article 7 of the UN Charter, immune from outside intervention.[83] Anti-colonialism within the General Assembly and the Trusteeship Council increased, however, as the UN's membership grew between 1945 and 1960. In 1945 only eight of the original fifty-one member states was African or Asian. By 1955 there were twenty-three such states out of seventy-six, when sixteen new states were admitted under an omnibus membership resolution. With the mass decolonization of French Africa in 1960, forty-five of the now ninety-nine member states were African or Asian. When Latin American states are considered, many of whom were sympathetic to the Afro-Asian bloc, the UN system was from its earliest days a welcoming environment for the assertion of postcolonial positions. By 1955, forty-three of the UN's seventy-six member states were located in Asia, Africa, or Latin America.[84]

Alongside the politicized discourse on self-determination within the UN system was the expansion of the UN's functional activities. The UN system's first decades thus featured the simultaneous expansion of anti-colonialism, whereby the influence of foreign powers was renounced, and of international development and, more gradually, humanitarian intervention, whereby the influence (and capital) of foreign powers was encouraged. That these parallel practical and normative processes were not seen as mutually exclusive is testament to the UN's capacity to mediate political differences, and its assumption of the international personality and conventions of the League of Nations. Hugh McKinnon Wood, a former acting legal advisor of the League of Nation's Secretariat, identified cases where the League's collapse would leave functions of international treaties without a body to perform them, and advised on how the UN or other international organizations could

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81 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

82 Helen Quane, 'The United Nations and the evolving right to self-determination', *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 47, 3, 1998, p. 572.

83 TNA, Colonial Office 537/2057, John Bennett, 'International aspects of colonial policy, 1947'; Ronald Hyam, *Understanding the British empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 282–4, 293 n. 59; Caroline Pruden, *Conditional partners: Eisenhower, the United Nations, and the search for a permanent peace*, Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1998, pp. 181–2.

84 Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its 10th session, A/RES/995X, 'Admission of new members to the United Nations'; 'Growth in United Nations membership, 1945–present', http://www.un.org/en/members/growth.shtml#1960; Pruden, *Conditional partners*, pp. 189–92.

provide institutional solutions.[85] As the UN's postcolonial membership grew by the later 1950s, an array of cross-cultural and cosmopolitan initiatives was launched within the UN family of commissions, specialized agencies, and programmes, with UNESCO at the forefront.[86]

ECOSOC, where (as we have seen) India took an active role, was concerned in the 1950s with the continuation of several of the League of Nations' social campaigns. These included efforts to regulate the international trades in narcotics and persons, as well as newly perceived problems such as the world's rapidly expanding population. The latter issue was particularly pertinent for the Anglo-Indian relationship, a point made by the historian Arnold Toynbee in his 1952 Reith Lectures. While Toynbee's ideas about 'world civilizations' were opaque, his ideas about global ecology and demography aligned with those of the international technocracy.[87] He believed that the greatest threat to Anglo-Indian relations was India's rapidly growing population. The British Raj had been relatively inefficient at large-scale planning, even during the emergency years of the Second World War (the Bengal famine being the tragic result).[88] To the extent that its increased wartime interventionism left a direct imprint on millions more Indians than ever before, however, it shaped independent India's conceptions of the state's potential power to organize and govern society.

One indication of this influence was Nehru's support for food governance. In the late 1940s, 85% of India's population of 350 million lived without proper irrigation facilities.[89] In 1949 Nehru invited John Boyd-Orr, director-general of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) from 1945 to 1948, to India to advise his government on food governance. Upon taking power, Nehru had renewed the Grow More Food campaign launched by the Raj in April 1942, and directed provincial governments to begin to collect data on food and agriculture for the FAO's World Agricultural Census. He also engaged in bilateral aid discussions with grain-exporting states on either side of the Cold War divide.[90]

Late colonial development officials were also concerned that 'surplus population' would create social and political problems, leading to a proliferation of colonial development initiatives in the 1940s and 1950s, especially in Africa. Examples include the consolidation of farms, the encouragement of mixed farming methods, and a wide array of conservation

85 IOR, L/E/9/1390, 180/6, Hugh McKinnon Wood, Memorandum, 1946. On the League and interwar internationalism, see Andrew Arsan, Su Lin Lewis, and Anne-Isabelle Richard, eds., *Journal of Global History*, 7, 2, 2012.

86 Laura Elizabeth Wong, 'Relocating East and West: UNESCO's major project on the mutual appreciation of Eastern and Western cultural values', *Journal of World History*, 19, 3, 2008, pp. 349–74; Charles Dorn and Kirsten Ghodsee, 'The Cold War politicization of literacy: communism, UNESCO, and the World Bank', *Diplomatic History*, 36, 2, 2012, pp. 373–98.

87 Arnold Toynbee, transcript, 'The world and the West', Reith Lectures, 1952, Lecture 3: 'India', transmission 30 November 1952, BBC Home Service, p. 3, http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/radio4/transcripts/1952_reith3.pdf (consulted 20 May 2013); Michael Lang, 'Globalization and global history in Toynbee', *Journal of World History*, 22, 4, 2011, p. 780; Matthew Connelly, 'Seeing beyond the state: the population control movement and the problem of sovereignty', *Past & Present*, 193, 1, 2006, pp. 217–19.

88 Indivar Kamtekar, 'A different war dance: state and class in India 1939–1945', *Past & Present*, 176, 1, 2002, 211, pp. 214–15.

89 Chaudhuri, *Forged in crisis*, p. 37.

90 Nehru, Letter to Chief Ministers, 19 December 1947, in Parthasarathi, *Letters to chief ministers*, pp. 38–9; Chaudhuri, *Forged in crisis*, pp. 36–8, 44, 65–8.

undertakings. These rural improvement schemes were predicated on the late colonial planning doctrine by which agricultural development would begin with rural elites, and then diffuse to the broader rural population. Many of the colonial technocrats involved in these schemes were 'remobilized' in the international civil service after decolonization, where their late colonial ideas and practices took hold in places such as the FAO's world food programme, the UNDP, and the World Bank's integrated rural development strategies.[91]

Toynbee thought that, while technological improvements in India had brought about increased agricultural yields, the dividend had not resulted in an improved standard of living but in 'maintaining the largest possible population on the old level, which was and is only just above starvation point'.[92] He pressed this point on international organizations, including the FAO. While his early advocacy for birth control was controversial – although later adopted by many international organizations by the mid 1960s[93] – his broader thinking about the relationship between human population and the environment's capacity to support it echoed those of many international technocrats, activists, and civil servants in the 1950s. This concern was tied to the rise of development economics in these years, and anticipated the fears of overpopulation and threats to global sustainability articulated in the landmark Club of Rome's *Limits to growth* report in 1972.[94]

Ideas of planning had thus migrated from the decaying colonial imperial framework, shed their patina of moral rectitude, and become embedded within the growing post-war network of international agencies. Some of these were arms of state foreign services, such as President Kennedy's USAID, while others were international organizations, such as the World Bank, within and outside the UN family. Such international activism constituted the 'common machinery of action' of which Roosevelt had spoken optimistically in 1943 after the international food conference at Hot Springs, Virginia.[95] It was not for nothing that the 1960s would be the UN's first 'development decade'. In global food policy circles, international bureaucrats looked increasingly to technical planning and the separation of food aid from politics, a key precept of the FAO in the 1950s, to address hunger, that most basic of global inequalities.[96] Indian experts played a key role in this embrace of global planning. The economists V. K. R. V. Rao, at the

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91 Joseph Hodge, 'Colonial experts, developmental and environmental doctrines, and the legacies of late British colonialism', in Christina Folke Ax et al., eds., *Cultivating the colonies: colonial states and their environmental legacies*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011, pp. 302–3, 305–7, 309, 312–13; Uma Kothari, 'Spatial practices & imaginaries: experiences of colonial officers & development professionals', in Mark Duffield and Vernon Hewitt, eds., *Empire, development & colonialism*, Woodbridge: James Currey, 2009, pp. 170–3.

92 Toynbee, 'India', p. 6.

93 Alison Bashford, 'Population, geopolitics, and international organizations in the mid twentieth century', *Journal of World History*, 19, 3, 2008, pp. 333–4, 347; Connelly, *Fatal misconception: the struggle to control world population*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010, esp. ch. 6.

94 Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jorgen Randers, and William W. Behrens III, *Limits to growth*, New York: New American Library, 1972; Mazower, *Governing the world*, pp. 292–4.

95 Cited in Mackenzie, *Faith in diplomacy*, p. 44.

96 Eric Helleiner, 'The development mandate of international institutions: where did it come from?', *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 44, 3, 2009, pp. 189–211; Michele Alacevich, 'The World Bank and the politics of productivity: the debate on economic growth, poverty, and living standards in the 1950s', *Journal of Global History*, 6, 1, 2011, pp. 53–74; Ruth Jachertz and Alexander Nützenadel, 'Coping with hunger? Visions of a global food system, 1930–1960', *Journal of Global History*, 6, 1, 2011, pp. 112–17; Amy Staples, *The birth of development: how the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization changed the world, 1945–1965*, Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2006, ch. 6.

Special UN Fund for Economic Development, and I. G. Patel, at the IMF, were instrumental in advocating the idea of concessional aid which would become central to the practice of international development aid. Nehru himself argued even before independence that India must take an active role in international social and economic organizations, and that 'special opportunities' must be accorded to less industrialized states in these forums.[97] This embrace of international planning in tandem with the period's anti-colonial rhetoric and activism compromised European colonial empires underwritten by older principles of paternalism and global *noblesse oblige*.

The structural shift created by the rise of rational planning was further significant because the emerging Third World's anti-colonial unity often fissured over the sorts of functional and rights issues pursued by international planners. To give but one example, following an ECOSOC speech by the Saudi Arabian delegate castigating Western colonial powers for not granting the vote to women in some of their colonies, Menon asked 'how is it that this gentleman from Saudi Arabia can criticise the lack of vote for women in colonial countries when in his country even the men do not have the vote'.[98] For their part, the Soviets encouraged anti-colonial attacks on Western powers, but in the 1950s were largely immune from criticism of their own imperialism. This was a dynamic which Colonial Office officials termed 'the salt water fallacy'[99] – it was permissible to have acquired colonies over land, but not by sea.

By 1960, when Harold Macmillan became the first British prime minister to visit sub-Saharan Africa and delivered his famous 'wind of change' speech, and the UN passed the Declaration on Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, colonialism had become close to anathema in international politics.[100] The British anthropologist and colonial administration expert Marjory Perham lamented in 1961 that 'I reckoned, as I put down my daily newspaper, that out of some thirty-eight overseas news items no less than twenty-two dealt with different kinds of reaction against the dealings of white peoples with coloured peoples'. She feared that anti-colonial attacks on Britain 'condemns our past record [and] weakens our present influence. It also threatens to harm our future relations with many of our former subjects and other coloured peoples.'[101] The American diplomat George Kennan had similar concerns, warning in his 1957 Reith Lecture about the threat of what he termed 'irresponsible new nationalism', a 'bundle of impulses and reactions' of a collective anti-Western nature which he feared would lead 'Third World' nations into the communist camp.[102]

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97 The Oral History Interview of I. G. Patel, 9 March 2001, in *The complete oral history transcripts from UN voices, CD-ROM*, New York: United Nations Intellectual History Project, 2007, pp. 7–8; Nehru, 'Instructions to Indian Delegates at the Economic and Social Conference', 12 February 1947 in Nehru, *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru, second series, vol. II*, pp. 486–7.

98 Interview with Mervyn Brown, p. 6.

99 *Ibid.*

100 See L. J. Butler and Sarah Stockwell, eds., *The wind of change: Harold Macmillan and British decolonization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

101 Marjory Perham, transcript, 'The colonial reckoning', Reith Lectures, 1961, Lecture 1: 'Anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism', transmission 16 November 1961, BBC Home Service, pp. 1, 2, http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/radio4/transcripts/1961_reith1.pdf (consulted 15 May 2013).

102 George Kennan, transcript, 'Russia, the atom and the West', Reith Lectures, 1957, Lecture 5: 'The non-European world', transmission 8 December 1957, BBC Home Service, p. 5, http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/radio4/transcripts/1957_reith5.pdf (consulted 16 May 2013).

Perham and Kennan reflected the broader unease felt by some in the West at the end of fixed certainties of colonial hierarchies. This unease was demonstrated acutely within the international arena of the United Nations system, in which ideas of 'peoples' and states were conflated, and where postcolonial states had greater scope than elsewhere to exercise autonomy.

Conclusion

We might be cautious, however, of constructing a neat narrative trajectory from pre-war colonial confidence to post-war colonial crisis. History can sometimes provide order to events that lacked meaning in the moment. The Bandung conference and the 'rise of the Third World' in the 1950s is a case in point. Brian Urquhart, then an advisor to the UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, remembers Bandung not as a key moment in the forging of a Third World identity amid the evolving decolonization of European empires, as it now appears in retrospect, but because of the CIA's attack on the Chinese plane which it thought was bringing the Chinese premier, Zhou Enlai, to the conference. 'I don't remember that we were thinking about the Third World or the Non-aligned Movement just then', he recalled in 2000. 'It was something that was happening, like so many other things that didn't seem to be more or less significant than anything else. Most historical events, at the time, don't seem like historical events.'[103] Perhaps the same is true for the parallel decline of colonialism and rise of international governance in the years after the Second World War.

The international civil service work embraced by men and women such as Richard Symonds, whose UN service in Kashmir was noted in the introduction to this article, reveals how international and imperial experiences and perspectives often overlapped in the late 1940s and 1950s. As demonstrated by this article's focus on Indians' engagement with the UN, elites in postcolonial societies were also drawn to internationalism. For them, it represented a political arena in which they hoped that, unlike under empire, they would be accorded the status of equal partners. While India's international interests were often frustrated, securing a place in the international system proved less fractious for postcolonial elites from states such as India, whose secular nationalism fit more neatly into the post-war international state system, than for those in Pakistan and Indonesia who pursued forms of religious nationalism.

The substance and tenor of Anglo-Indian relations at the UN in its early years further suggests that the imperialism of internationalization, conceived of as the growing global imperative of internationalism as a governing concept, and the internationalization of imperialism, most notably through the challenge of progressive ideas to colonial powers, proceeded in lockstep in the immediate post-war period. The negotiation of postcolonial relationships in international, as opposed to imperial, space was a challenge for which no blueprints yet existed.

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103 The Oral History Interview of Brian Urquhart (6 January 2000), in *UN voices*, p. 13.