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From global to local and back: the 'Third World' concept and the new radical left in France*

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Abstract

In the second half of the twentieth century, the transnational 'Third World' concept defined how people all over the globe perceived the world. This article explains the concept's extraordinary traction by looking at the interplay of local uses and global contexts through which it emerged. Focusing on the particularly relevant setting of France, it examines the term's invention in the context of the Cold War, development thinking, and decolonization. It then analyses the review Partisans *(founded in 1961), which galvanized a new radical left in France and provided a platform for a communication about, but also with, the Third World. Finally, it shows how the association Cedetim (founded in 1967) addressed migrant workers in France as 'the Third World at home'. In tracing the Third World's local–global dynamics, this article suggests a praxis-oriented approach that goes beyond famous thinkers and texts and incorporates 'lesser' intellectuals and non-textual aspects into a global conceptual history in action.*

Keywords anti-colonialism, conceptual history, decolonization, France, political left, Third World

> We speak with you, comrades, because we wish to make clear that we understand that our destinies are intertwined. Our world can only be the Third World; our only struggle, for the Third World; our only vision, of the Third World.[1]

The man who spoke these words in August 1967 was Fidel Castro's 'delegate of honor'. Of the roughly 450 participants at the first conference of the Organization for Latin American Solidarity (OLAS), the Afro-American activist Stokely Carmichael was the only individual to be afforded this distinction.[2] The Cuban leaders had convened representatives from twenty-two

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1 Stokely Carmichael, *Black power and the Third World: address to the Organization of Latin American Solidarity in Havana, Cuba, August 1967*, Thornhill, Ontario: Third World Information Service, 1967, unpaginated.

2 On Carmichael's journey, see Sarah Seidman, 'Tricontinental routes of solidarity: Stokely Carmichael in Cuba', *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 4, 2, 2012, pp. 1–25 (quotation from p. 7).

revolutionary movements in Latin America. For ten days, Cuba promoted its model of revolution and preached the primacy of armed struggle in Latin American liberation and anti-imperialist internationalism. In his contribution to the gathering, speaking at the Habana Libre Hotel, the charismatic 'Starmichael', already notorious in the US, expounded his ideas on Black Power. He defined it as 'a fight for cultural integrity' of African Americans suffering from internal colonialism. If they wanted to win that fight, he argued, black Americans – following the examples of Frantz Fanon, Malcolm X, and 'Che' Guevara – had to merge with anti-imperial struggles in Asia, Africa, and Latin America: 'Black power means that we see ourselves as part of the Third World'.[3] For Carmichael, the Third World was not a geographical space outside the West. Rather, he invoked the Third World as a border-transcending perspective, as a project, and as an identity for a variety of actors who were committed to racial equality and socialist revolution on either side of the north–south divide.[4]

In recalling how a prominent US activist visiting Cuba linked Black Power to emancipatory struggles worldwide, I am not the first author to note that, from around 1960 onwards, the 'Third World' concept reframed and encouraged communication and cooperation between people who fought for change in different parts of the globe. In Asia and Africa, the Third World was a 'mobilization myth' that accompanied the promises, achievements, and disenchantments of decolonization.[5] Associated, albeit only retrospectively so, with the landmark 1955 Bandung conference, the concept stimulated national liberation movements as well as the Non-Aligned Movement, a coalition of mostly 'young' nation-states that rejected the binary logic of the Cold War. In Latin America, Cuban leaders linked their revolution to the historical tide of Afro-Asian decolonization; they promoted a 'tricontinental' movement that would push for change in other American countries and support anti-imperialist forces from Harlem to Algiers and Saigon.[6] In western Europe and the US, new radical leftists broke with the traditional left, but tried to revive the spirit that had animated it initially: they celebrated the Third World as a renewal of the socialist tradition, as the driving force towards world revolution, and as a forceful push for their own project of altering First World societies.

In short, we know that the Third World was a powerful global concept for social and political movements throughout the long 1960s. But we are only beginning to understand how exactly this potent, yet somewhat abstract and 'thin' global concept became anchored in a variety of settings where activists put it to concrete and 'thick' local uses.[7] My contention is

3 Quotes from Carmichael, *Black power*.

4 This contemporary understanding of the Third World also guides Vijay Prashad, *The darker nations: a people's history of the Third World*, New York: The New Press, 2007, p. xv: 'The Third World was not a place. It was a project.'

5 Mark T. Berger, 'After the Third World? History, destiny and the fate of Third Worldism', *Third World Quarterly* 25, 1, 2004, pp. 9–39, quote p. 36.

6 Albert-Paul Lentin, *La lutte tricontinentale. Impérialisme et révolution après la conférence de La Havane*, Paris: F. Maspero, 1966. On the Non-Aligned Movement, see Jürgen Dinkel, *Die Bewegung Bündnisfreier Staaten. Genese, Organisation, Politik (1927–1992)*, Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015.

7 Recent studies on this question include Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign front: Third World politics in sixties West Germany*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012; Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Radicals on the road: internationalism, orientalism, and feminism during the Vietnam era*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013; Dorothee Weitbrecht, *Aufbruch in die Dritte Welt. Der Internationalismus der Studentenbewegung von 1968 in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2012; Daniel A. Gordon, *Immigrants & intellectuals: May '68 and the rise of anti-racism in France*, Pontypool: Merlin Press, 2002; Konrad J. Kuhn, *Entwicklungspolitische Solidarität. Die Dritte-Welt-Bewegung in der Schweiz zwischen Kritik und Politik (1975–1992)*, Zürich: Chronos, 2011; Samantha Christiansen and Zachary A. Scarlett, eds., *The Third World in the global 1960s*, Oxford: Berghahn, 2013; Robert Malley, *The call from Algeria: Third Worldism, Revolution, and the turn to Islam*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996; Jeffrey James Byrne,

that we can grasp the concept's extraordinary career best if we look at the interplay of these local uses that people made of the Third World idea on the one hand, and the global contexts that endowed it with meaning and in which it circulated on the other hand. The Third World concept is inherently transnational; it is a concept shaped by global forces and local uses that in turn came to shape global forces itself.[8]

To substantiate my argument, I will chart the trajectory of the Third World concept from the 1950s through to the 1970s in a particularly relevant local setting: that of France, the historical centre of Third Worldism.[9] It was there that the Third World concept was invented, first became a key concept in the social sciences, and transitioned to the field of politics during decolonization. Although inextricably linked to the rise of a new radical left that marked France from the Algerian War through May 1968 and into the mid 1970s, this politicized Third World concept played a part in a broader turn towards radical politics throughout the Western world, but also in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.[10] I will examine three stages of this local development and its global contexts. The first will be the early years, between 1952 and 1961, when the demographer Alfred Sauvy coined the concept within a specifically French republican tradition, when his colleague Georges Balandier anchored it in French social sciences, and when the philosopher-activist Frantz Fanon pushed it forcefully from academia and journalism into the field of anti-colonial politics. Second, I will turn to the period between the Algerian War and the culmination of protest movements worldwide around 1968, a time that was marked by the translation – literally and figuratively – and the spread of the Francophone Third World concept across the globe. The focus here will be on the publisher François Maspero and the review *Partisans*. This review galvanized a new radical left in France and provided a platform for communication not only about but also with the Third World,

Mecca of revolution: Algeria, decolonization, and the Third World order, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. For a detailed study of the French context, see Christoph Kalter, *The discovery of the Third World: decolonization and the rise of the New Left in France, c.1956–1970*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

8 For important discussions on the conceptual history of the Third World, see Carl E. Pletsch, 'The three worlds, or the division of social scientific labor, circa 1950–1975', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 23, 1981, pp. 565–87; B. R. Tomlinson, 'What was the Third World?', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38, 2, 2003, pp. 307–21; Erik Tängerstad, 'The "Third World" as an element in the collective construction of a post-colonial European identity', in Bo Stråth, ed., *Europe and the other and Europe as the other*, Brussels: Presses Interuniversitaires Européennes, 2000, pp. 157–93; Arif Dirlik, 'Three worlds or one, or many? The reconfiguration of global relations under contemporary capitalism', in Arif Dirlik, ed., *The postcolonial aura: Third World criticism in the age of global capitalism*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998, pp. 146–62; Berger, 'After the Third World'; Daniel Speich Chassé, 'Die "Dritte Welt" als Theorieeffekt: ökonomisches Wissen und globale Differenz', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 41, 4, 2015, pp. 580–612.

9 Given France's importance for the phenomenon, astonishingly few studies reflect on Third Worldism in France. Those that do – such as Thomas Neuner, *Paris, Havanna und die intellektuelle Linke. Kooperationen und Konflikte in den 1960er Jahren*, Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2012; Richard Wolin, *Wind from the east: French intellectuals, the cultural revolution, and the legacy of the 1960s*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010, or Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its afterlives*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002 – address Third Worldism only as part of a broader argument about French–Cuban relations in the 1960s, an intellectual history of French Maoism, or the memorialization of May 1968, respectively. An attempt at a broader understanding is Kalter, *Discovery*. For the English term 'Third Worldism', see Berger, 'Third World'. For a historicization of the French term *tiers-mondisme* and the polemics surrounding it, see Maxime Szczepanski-Huillery, '"L'idéologie tiers-mondiste": constructions et usages d'une catégorie intellectuelle en "crise"', *Raisons politiques*, 18, 2, 2005, pp. 27–48.

10 My focus on the radical left does not imply that East–West contacts channelled through the communist parties as well as less markedly leftist Catholic circles or development NGOs were not important for Western–Third World solidarity. That they were has recently been stressed by Kim Christiaens, 'From the East to the South, and back? International solidarity movements in Belgium and new histories of the Cold War, 1950s–1970s', *Dutch Crossing*, 39, 3, 2015, pp. 215–31.

making the voices of non-European actors heard throughout its pages. Third, through a focus on the association Cedetim (Centre of Documentation and Studies on the Third World, founded in 1967), I will shed new light on the concept's role after 1968, when the idea of a combative Third World as an ally of First World radicals began to decline and the new radical left gradually dissolved. The history of the Cedetim – an association rooted in Paris but at the centre of a transnational network – shows, however, that the concept still mattered for local activists who reached out to what they saw as 'the Third World at home': migrant workers in France.

In moving from prestigious academics such as Sauvy and famous theorist-activists such as Fanon to someone like Maspero, who belonged to a broader field of less well-known activists and intellectuals revolving around his publishing house and bookstore, and finally to the association Cedetim, whose supporters and activities are for the most part forgotten today, I wish to drive home a further point. It is not just that 'big' concepts such as the Third World, which are universalist in their pretensions and global in their reach, are best studied with a focus on the local contexts in which they were being used.[11] In addition, I contend that we get most out of such an intellectual and conceptual history if we avoid the elitist and text-based confinements that at times have limited these historiographical approaches. 'Great' intellectuals and canonical texts certainly play an important role for the production and circulation of 'big' ideas, but 'lesser' intellectuals and activists were the agents who put the three-worlds concept to use on a daily basis, transforming it into a powerful tool of political and social praxis. Their forgotten texts, but also the non-textual modes of their engagement – the experience of clandestine support for the Algerian liberation movement that fed into *Partisans* or the evening school for migrant workers that the Cedetim organized – provide us with a fuller picture of how the Third World as a global concept came to matter locally and show what we can gain from a praxis-oriented conceptual history.

Third World other, Third World self: a French invention goes global

Frantz Fanon (1925–61), today a leading reference in Anglophone postcolonial studies, published his first book, *Black skin, white masks*, a study of the psychosocial workings of racism against black people, in 1952. At the time, he had just qualified as a psychiatrist in Lyon, having been born in the French colony of Martinique. In the same year, Alfred Sauvy (1898–1990), a demographer, economist, social democrat, and prolific public intellectual, authored an article in the French newspaper *L'Observateur*.[12] As is widely known today, it was in this article that Sauvy, the head of the French National Institute of Demographic Studies (INED), coined the Third World concept. What is less known is that, in doing so, he used two different expressions: he first spoke of a *troisième monde*, then switched to *tiers monde* only in the closing line of his text. The latter soon became the default term in French, but it is instructive to reflect on the differences between these original uses of the 'Third World'.

11 For inspiring perspectives on global intellectual history, see Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, eds., *Global intellectual history*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

12 Alfred Sauvy, 'Trois mondes, une planète', *Vingtième siècle*, 12, October–December 1986, pp. 81–3 (first published in 1952).

In 1952, the Cold War loomed large. In Sauvy's view, the competition of the capitalist First World and the communist Second World was fuelled by their fierce struggle for influence on the world outside the blocs, a world that he called the *troisième monde*. By choosing this term, Sauvy did not therefore primarily convey the idea of an inferior, third-rate space, but rather diagnosed a novel configuration of global politics. This also becomes clear through the title of his piece, 'Trois mondes, une planète', which evoked a world that had become intensely interdependent through the very rivalry between its separate power centres – a world split into three, but entangled at the same time.

Nevertheless, the idea of inferiority, insufficiency, and backwardness was present in the term's coinage, too. The centuries-long history of Europe's Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, and overseas expansion had firmly established ideas of progress and development. This paved the way for the notion of underdevelopment, a new term that spread only after the inaugural address of President Harry S. Truman in 1949, accompanying the gradual shift from Europe's colonialism to the US-dominated development age after 1945.[13] Sauvy referred to this novel notion, and described the *troisième monde* as the underdeveloped, demographically expanding regions of the world. However, he also argued that the Third World's very backwardness held potential for a change of status, and it was at this point of his reflection that he introduced the soon-to-be famous term. Since the fast-growing populations in this newly defined domain were increasingly questioning their disenfranchisement, Sauvy described the *tiers monde*, analogous to the *tiers état* in the French Revolution, as a powerful, revolutionary force. Although 'ignored, exploited, and scorned as the Third Estate' had been before 1789, the Third World was now striving for recognition, and pushing itself to the centre of contemporary politics. Sauvy's analogy corresponded with the Zeitgeist of the incipient decolonization and anticipated a near future of non-European revolutions. By symbolically linking these to the founding event in modern French history, he lent the coming Third World emancipation historical legitimacy. At the same time, however, this analogy put the Third World in a Eurocentric perspective and provided its global career with a specifically French basis.

Rather casually and in a non-academic publication, Sauvy had invented a new word. His colleague at the INED, the sociologist and Africanist Georges Balandier (born in 1920), established Sauvy's catchphrase as a paradigm of the social sciences. In 1956, Balandier edited *Le 'tiers monde'*, the first book ever to have the neologism on its cover.[14] The scholars contributing to the volume emphasized that, historically, all Third World countries had been colonized by Europe. They thus added a third criterion to Sauvy's original definition that had described the Third World through insufficient development and a neither-nor position in the Cold War. In 1960, the academic journal *Tiers Monde* appeared,[15] and further books on the *tiers monde* were published in France in the succeeding years.[16] From 1963 onwards,

13 Gilbert Rist, *The history of development: from Western origins to global faith*, New York: Zed Books, 2002, pp. 72–3. See also Arturo Escobar, *Encountering development: the making and unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

14 Georges Balandier, ed., *Le 'tiers monde'. Sous-développement et développement. Préfacé d'Alfred Sauvy*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956.

15 It was published under this heading until 2006.

16 The first were Robert Descloitres, Jean-Claude Reverdy, and Claudine Descloitres, *L'Algérie des bidonvilles. Le tiers monde dans la cité*, Paris: Mouton 1961; Marc Bonnefous, *Europe et tiers monde*, Leyde: A.W. Sythoff, 1961; H. Chambre, J.-P. Saltiel, and A. Nowicki, *Tiers monde et commerce des pays de l'est*, Paris: I.S.E.A., 1962; Jean Lacouture and Jean Baumier, *Le poids du tiers monde. Un milliard d'hommes*, Paris: Arthaud, 1962.

the concept – with its triple notion of non-alignment, underdevelopment, and colonialism – was translated into English, German, and Swedish, then into dozens of other languages.[17]

Initially, therefore, the Third World concept evolved in the West as a means of talking about the global reconfigurations of the post-war era and Europe's colonial other. However, the Algerian War formed fissures in this Eurocentric perspective, opening up the concept for new semantics and uses: the people it referred to would themselves appropriate the Third World. This appropriation was launched through Fanon's 1961 anti-colonial manifesto *The wretched of the earth*. A year after his first book and Sauvy's article, Fanon had left metropolitan France and had relocated to Blida-Joinville in Algeria, where he worked as a psychiatrist, but he soon joined the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN). He supported the FLN throughout the war against the French, and *The wretched of the earth* was his call for unity and perseverance in the final stages of a conflict that the Algerians were about to win. In the text, Fanon described decolonization as a nationalist project, responding to the specificity of each colonized people. At the same time, though, he defined it as a transnational movement of solidarity, irrevocably linked to the totality of what he referred to as the *tiers monde*, as the 'Third World … facing Europe as one colossal mass'.[18]

Fanon's 1961 book was thus highly significant. For the first time, a black anti-colonial activist had publicly used a phrase coined by white French scholars in order to designate a global collective of revolutionaries. With Fanon, the notion of a *troisième monde* and a tripartite world order receded into the background. Instead, the othering implicit in the French term *tiers* – which carries connotations of 'outsider' and can be translated as 'other' instead of 'third' – was foregrounded, but now reversed in its perspective. Instead of describing a Third World other, Fanon asserted a Third World self. He openly stated that he no longer cared to address European readers, but only spoke to his equals, to those of the Third World. He dismissed Europe as morally deprived and politically irrelevant, and talking to Europeans was a task that he left to Jean-Paul Sartre in the famous preface to his book. Fanon did, however, clearly connect with the radical aspirations that Sauvy's analogy with the French Revolution had established. He also drew on Europe's philosophical traditions of humanism, Marxism, and existentialism, calling upon the people of the Third World to create a new man in the anti-colonial struggle, bring progress and justice to all, and thus finally restore humanity to all humankind.

Following the release of *The wretched of the earth*, the people of the Third World could speak for themselves, using a term that had actually been created to talk *about* them. Liberation movements and governments in Africa, Asia, and Latin America started using the concept in their struggles for independence, social revolution, and autochthonous modernization – or as a means to legitimize dictatorial post-independence regimes. The Non-Aligned Movement, founded in 1961 and commonly associated with its leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru from India, Jamal 'Abd al-Nassr from Egypt, and Josip Broz Tito from communist Yugoslavia, introduced new forms of international cooperation that relied symbolically on the concept. So did the Group of 77, a coalition of countries against the economic world order dominated by the richer nations.[19]

17 Tängerstad, 'Third World'.
18 Frantz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth*, New York: Grove Press, 2004, p. 238.
19 See Dinkel, *Bewegung*; Sönke Kunkel, 'Zwischen Globalisierung, internationalen Organisationen und global governance: eine kurze Geschichte des Nord-Süd-Konflikts in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 60, 4, 2012, pp. 555–77.

But the new meaning that Fanon had given to the Third World also attracted intellectuals and activists of an emerging radical left in First World countries. In France, this left included those attached to older dissident currents such as Trotskyism or Anarchism, but also newly formed groups belonging to the new left, or, later, to Western Maoism.[20] Although there was fierce competition between them, all groups of the new radical left shared two commonalities. First, they were Marxists aspiring for world revolution, but had moved away from both the old socialist and the communist parties, which they accused of having given up on this goal. Second, they unreservedly backed decolonization and saw the Third World, rather than the workers' organizations in either East or West, as the new agent of revolutionary change. In France, many activists moved away from the Socialist Party (Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière, SFIO). The socialists were ambiguous about decolonization, the SFIO-led government having even escalated the war against the FLN in Algeria when its deputies passed the 'special powers' in March 1956.

The position of the French Communist Party (Parti Communiste Français, PCF) was hardly more consistent: Despite its programmatic anti-colonialism as part of Comintern, and despite its earlier opposition to the Indochinese War, the party never clearly positioned itself in favour of the FLN and Algerian independence either. Rather, its deputies actually supported the socialist government's 'special powers'. The Stalinist character of the PCF and the intervention of the USSR in Hungary in 1956, as well as the Suez Crisis, delegitimized the parties of the old left in France even further.[21] A space for dissent was opening up, and diverse strands of a new radical left converged in that space in ways that would have been unthinkable had it not been for their discovery of a Third World as they followed in the footsteps of Sauvy and, especially, Fanon.

The attraction that the concept exerted worldwide can best be explained by its ability to address three major reconfigurations of the post-war world: the growth of capitalist consumer societies that contrasted with what came to be perceived as the alarming underdevelopment of two-thirds of the global population; the competition of the Cold War, which created not a bipolar but a tripartite world order with dynamic interactions; and the decolonization that ended European rule in Asia and Africa and, in the process, demolished the idea of colonial empires as a legitimate form of political organization. The first and second of these global contexts directly informed the original concept; however, Sauvy had channelled them into the notion of a revolutionary space that he imagined as the continuation of a local, French tradition. Meanwhile, the third global context set the stage for Fanon's intervention during the Algerian War, a conflict that was both a domestic and an international affair. On the one hand, it nearly led to a civil war in France and fundamentally altered the political and intellectual

20 For a more detailed discussion, see Kalter, *Discovery*, pp. 66–104. Essential readings on the left in twentieth-century France are Michel Winock, *La gauche en France*, Paris: Perrin, 2006; Tony Judt, *Marxism and the French left: studies on labour and politics in France, 1830–1981*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986; Sunil Khilnani, *Arguing revolution: the intellectual left in post-war France*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993; Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The spirit of '68: rebellion in western Europe and North America, 1956–1976*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

21 On the SFIO and Algeria, see Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's undeclared war*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. On the PCF, see Alain Ruscio, *Les communistes français et la guerre d'Indochine, 1944–1954*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985; Danièle Joly, *The French Communist Party and the Algerian War*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991. On the French left and colonialism more broadly, see Claude Liauzu, *Histoire de l'anti-colonialisme en France. Du XVIè siècle à nos jours*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2007; and the journal issue 'Les gauches et les colonies', *Vingtième siècle*, 131, 3, 2016. On the watershed year 1956, see Evans, *Algeria*; Horn, *Spirit of '68*, pp. 131–55.

landscape there.[22] On the other hand, as an emblematic part of Afro-Asian decolonization, this conflict was fought not only in Algeria but also in the international media, in diplomatic circles, and in the United Nations.[23] This international visibility propelled the Francophone concept – with its potential for ascribing underdeveloped/revolutionary otherness – further into the wider world. It had instant appeal not only in France, Germany, and other European countries where a new radical left clustered around the idea of a combative Third World, but increasingly also in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Within roughly a decade of Sauvy's invention, the concept, oscillating between global and local use, had acquired worldwide traction.

Partisans: the Third World as an ally

When Stokely Carmichael spoke at the OLAS conference in Havana in 1967, François Maspero was there too. Born into a family of intellectuals and *résistants* to the German occupation of France, Maspero (1932–2015) joined the PCF, but left it in 1958 with firm anti-Stalinist convictions. The following year, he set up the publishing house Éditions Maspero in the basement of his bookstore, La Joie de lire. Situated in the Latin Quarter of Paris, La Joie de lire was a hub for a leftist clientele. Opening hours until midnight, lectures and events, and a broad range of political, theoretical, and fictional books attracted not only students of the nearby Sorbonne but an international audience. Meanwhile, Éditions Maspero built its catalogue on unorthodox leftist currents and Third World texts. Soon, the one-man enterprise had become a renowned and expanding, albeit economically shaky, publishing house.[24]

Maspero, like many of his collaborators at the publishing house or at the review *Partisans* – among them Georges Mattéi, Gérard Chaliand, and Nils Andersson – helped Algeria's liberation movement as a 'suitcase carrier'. This term referred to Frenchmen who transmitted information on behalf of the FLN or transported money, weapons, or clandestine members for the organization.[25] For Maspero and others among this self-proclaimed *génération algérienne*, the Algerian War, in which the French army routinely used extreme violence (including torture) against combatants and civilians, was also an intellectual convulsion. They felt that the brutality of Algerian decolonization irrevocably destroyed French and Western claims to embody universal civilizational values. At the same time, this destruction of Eurocentric certainties opened up new perspectives and encouraged emerging leftist groups in France to focus on the Third World as a fresh political force and potential ally. Maspero was at the heart of this discovery of the Third World. It was he who in 1961 had published Fanon's *Wretched of the earth*, which became his most successful long-time seller. The book's central ideas – that the Algerian War epitomized the awakening of a revolutionary Third World, and that solidarity with this world offered a decadent Europe the last chance to avert

22 Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, state terror, and memory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006; Todd Shepard, *The invention of decolonization: the Algerian War and the remaking of France*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006.

23 Matthew Connelly, *A diplomatic revolution: Algeria's fight for independence and the origins of the post-Cold War era*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

24 On Maspero and his publishing house, see Julien Hage, 'Une brève histoire des librairies et des éditions Maspero: 1955–1982', in Bruno Guichard, Julien Hage, and Alain Léger, eds., *François Maspero et les paysages humains*, Lyon: A plus d'un titre/La fosse aux ours, 2009, pp. 93–160; and the autobiographical François Maspero, *Les abeilles & la guêpe*, Paris: Seuil, 2002.

25 Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Les Porteurs de valises. La résistance française à la guerre d'Algérie*, Paris: Seuil, 1979.

its own downfall (Sartre's preface) – also formed the intellectual grid of the periodical *Partisans*, whose first issue Maspero published in the same year as Fanon's book.[26]

The periodical's name was programmatic. First, as Jean Bruller (writing under the alias Vercors) explained in *Partisans*' first editorial, it reflected the passionately partisan struggle against oppression and for socialist revolution. Second, Vercors declared that the editors were ready for partisan warfare against 'fascists, racists, and colonialists'.[27] This statement resonated with his past – as co-founder of the Éditions de Minuit and author of *Le Silence de la mer* in 1942, he was a symbol of the fight against Nazi occupation in France – and with the new radical left's memory politics, which portrayed anti-colonialism as the continuation of the historical Resistance.[28] Third, the name also pointed to the violent atmosphere of 1961 Paris, where fighting between rival Algerian nationalists, the violence exhibited by the French police against Algerians, and the terrorism of the ultra-colonialist Organisation de l'armée secrete (OAS) turned the capital into a theatre of the war.[29] Fourth, the name *Partisans* pointed to the 'small wars' fought by Third World actors in Vietnam, Algeria, and Cuba, whose guerrilla soldiers raised their rifles on the front cover photograph of *Partisans*' first edition.

The rhetorical militancy of this first issue shaped the periodical that lasted from 1961 to 1972 and sold 3,000–4,500 copies per issue. Soon, Maspero's review expanded, publishing articles on schooling, psychiatry, working regimes, cultural production, consumerism, and sexuality in Western societies. It functioned as a bridge between the Algerian generation, the '68ers and the post-1968 radicals of Trotskyist or Maoist obedience in France.[30] But *Partisans* also radiated beyond France. In Belgium and Switzerland, the review had collaborators such as the economist Ernest Mandel and the publisher Nils Andersson, and monthly subscribers. In both countries, as well as in Italy, *Partisans* was also sold in bookshops. However, contacts with Great Britain were scarce, while the West German extra-parliamentary opposition was covered belatedly, but extensively, in 1968. Coverage of the United States initially relied on contacts with the *Monthly Review*. In the late 1960s, younger and more radical US voices – for example, from the Black Power and feminist movements – could also be heard in *Partisans*. Several thematic issues took an explicitly transnational perspective, addressing topics such as the 1968 upheavals or the relationship between national liberation movements and internationalism through comparisons and connections across several continents.[31]

Growing attention to First World problems never undermined the review's primary interest in the Third World, and the communicative space that *Partisans* established extended well beyond the West. Third World nationalists frequented Maspero because they saw him as a likely and influential supporter of their causes.[32] *Partisans* was sold in select bookshops in Morocco and Tunisia, and Chaliand gave copies as a gift to his hosts in Guinea-Bissau, Mali, or Vietnam. Chaliand also organized a special issue of *Partisans* that, published when the

26 A short introduction to *Partisans* is Julien Hage, 'Sur les chemins du tiers monde en lutte: *Partisans*, *Révolution*, *Tricontinental* (1961–1973)', in Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, eds., *68. Une histoire collective. 1962–1981*, Paris: La Découverte, 2008, pp. 86–93.
27 Vercors, 'Nous sommes des partisans', *Partisans*, 1, 1961, pp. 3–5.
28 See Kalter, *Discovery*, pp. 104–87; Martin Evans, *The memory of resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War (1954–1962)*, Oxford: Berg, 1997; Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional memory: remembering the Holocaust in the age of decolonization*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.
29 House and MacMaster, *Paris 1961*.
30 On Maspero's role in the French unrest in May 1968, see Hage, 'Brève histoire'.
31 For the transnational issues, see *Partisans*, 44, 1968: 'Le complot international'; *Partisans*, 59/60, 1971: 'Le domaine national', pt 1; *Partisans*, 61, 1971: 'Le domaine national', pt 2.
32 Interview with Jean-Philippe Bernigaud-Talbo, Paris, 18 January 2007.

Tet-offensive grabbed the headlines, condemned the American war in Vietnam and opened its columns to Vietnamese authors.[33] The special issue had been prepared in collaboration with *Études Vietnamiennes*, a French-language review edited by the Vietnamese Communist Party. The man behind it was Nguyen Khac Viên, who had studied medicine in France. Joining the PCF in 1947, Viên started mobilizing for the Vietnamese liberation movement, the Front National de Libération, among Frenchmen and exiled Vietnamese in the 1950s, which led to his expulsion from France in 1963. Back in Vietnam, he headed the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Hanoi, which financed translations of Vietnamese books and distributed *Le Courrier du Vietnam* and *Études Vietnamiennes* in France.[34]

Roughly half of all articles in *Partisans* dealt with Asian, African, and Latin American topics, and roughly 100 of the 438 authors who wrote in *Partisans* represented what the journal's readers came to perceive as the Third World.[35] Among them were famous Latin Americans such as Guevara, Fidel and Raul Castro, and Adolfo Gilly, alongside numerous Vietnamese authors, and Africans with distinctly transnational biographies (often including stays in France), such as Samir Amin, Marcelino dos Santos, Amílcar Cabral, or the Senegalese activist for migrant rights Sally N'Dongo.

Whether they were French, Western, or representative of Asia, Africa, or Latin America, the authors writing in *Partisans* concurred with the idea expressed by Chaliand three months after Algeria's independence that 'the emergence of the Third World in the revolutionary struggle forces us to rethink each and every problem anew'.[36] He maintained that decolonization was an epistemic rupture, revealing that conventional Marxist models could not be mechanically applied to non-European settings, since, in the Third World, nationalist leaders and peasant masses rather than the proletariat drove the revolution. This assessment was indebted to prominent forerunners such as Lenin, Manabendra Nath Roy, Said Sultan Galijew, Mao, Guevara, and Fanon. These thinkers had stressed not only the peculiar nature of socialist revolutions in the agrarian peripheries but also their prodigious contribution to the project of world revolution.[37]

Partisans diagnosed a crisis of radical politics in the West. By contrast, it saw Third World liberation movements as a vigorous challenge to the corrupting forces of consumerism and welfare benefits in Western societies more generally, and to the lukewarm politics of the European socialists and communists specifically. Their parties and unions looked pale when compared to the sheer force of the 'colonial revolution', its popular basis, astonishing simultaneity, and broad geographical scope. Yet this new outlook on the Third World entailed questions: while all radical leftists agreed that decolonization changed the workings of revolutionary politics worldwide, it was contested as to how European activists should conceive of their relationship with the Third World concretely, how they should put a new internationalism into practice, and how this would influence their struggles in Europe.

The conversation about these issues was mainly one among European authors, but Third World actors were intervening in the debate. In 1962 Nils Andersson, a member of the editorial board of *Partisans*, participated in a colloquium on 'Africa's future and the European left' in

33 *Partisans* 40, 1968: 'Le peuple vietnamien et la guerre'. *Études Vietnamiennes* and *Partisans* produced a second special issue together, this time including contributions by American intellectuals such as Noam Chomsky: *Partisans*, 48, 1969: 'Le peuple vietnamien à la veille de la victoire'.
34 Elisabeth Hodgkin, 'Obituary: Nguyen Khac Vien', *The Independent*, 26 May 1997.
35 Kalter, *Discovery*, p. 198.
36 Gérard Chaliand, 'La France et sa décolonisation', *Partisans*, 6, 1962, pp. 51, 50.
37 Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: an historical introduction*, Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001.

Milan, and soon after published excerpts from the discussions in *Partisans*. Sergio Spazzali had organized the colloquium. At the time, he was a member of the Partito Socialisto Italiano (PSI). Shortly after, in January 1963, Spazzali founded the Centro Frantz Fanon in Milan; he later became known as a lawyer defending leftist militants in the Soccorso Rosso Militante.

During the 1962 colloquium, Spazzali, Andersson, and other European participants admitted that 'the European left has not been very combative in the process of decolonization', as a Frenchman named Jean Calvez put it. 'Depending on whether they are benefiting more or less from Europe's economic development', Spazzali added, the 'working masses of Europe' had become more or less corrupted victims of a 'political alienation' that prevented them from seeing that they were being exploited by the same classes as the 'peoples of Africa'.[38] This exploitation was not over with decolonization: European workers and parties, in order to help Africans and, by the same token, to help themselves, needed to mobilize in Europe, attack their countries' neo-colonial policies (thus weakening capitalism in the centres), and converge in an anti-colonial platform unambiguously supporting African struggles. All told, the discussants from Italy and France gave an inkling of self-critique, but mainly professed their desire to define a political strategy for the future that would see the Third World as an ally but would still be centred on the fight in Europe.

Lakdar and Ramdame, however, the discussants representing Algeria, wished to recall the past before discussing the future.[39] Ramdame asserted that Europeans had all too often attached conditions to their support. As for Lakdar, he diagnosed 'a sclerosis of the European left' and recalled that, during the Algerian War, 'we have all been very sad to have not been understood by this left' – except by some isolated militants. Ramdame said that a future alliance would only be possible on the grounds of an 'unconditional anti-colonialism', but the road seemed long because 'all Europeans, either actively or passively, through their silence or their ignorance of the reality, are accomplices' of colonialism. Kissanji and Mavinga, representatives of the Angolan liberation movement (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, MPLA), 'absolutely' needed to express a similar 'malaise'. Their organization had only recently started the armed insurrection against Portuguese colonial rule, and they wondered what 'concrete support' they could expect to receive from Europeans. Spazzali acknowledged errors, but maintained that Europe's left was not a homogeneous bloc. He called for a political instead of a moral debate about past mistakes and future opportunities. Notarianni, from the communist Partito Comunista Italiano, equally declared that this was not a Third World versus First World issue, since internal contradictions characterized both, and 'there is no absolute unity of the Third World, … in stark contrast to those who would have us believe what we could call the Bandung mythos'.

This remark irritated Lakdar; he made it clear that the first large-scale Afro-Asian conference, held in 1955 in the Indonesian city of Bandung (to which the Algerian FLN had been invited alongside the representatives of twenty-nine newly independent states), had been crucial for the Algerian liberation movement: 'For us, Bandung is not a myth; it may seem like a myth to you, but for us it is the beginning of the concretization of Africa's and Asia's struggle against colonialism.' Concretely, he recalled the unity of the Bandung Conference, where attendees had provided funding for the Algerians. In so doing they had greatly enhanced the international visibility of the FLN at a moment when the European left played a 'negative role'.

38 All quotations relating to the 1962 colloquium are taken from 'Colloque de Milan: gauche européenne et tiers-monde', *Partisans*, 6, 1962, pp. 3–12.

39 Unfortunately, most of the conference's participants were only introduced by surnames in *Partisans*.

And the Congolese participant M'Bolo, drawing on the notion of a superior Third World self established by Fanon, endorsed Lakdar's remark and added that, notwithstanding examples of poor postcolonial governance, 'Africa in its entirety has preserved … a moral integrity that Europe has lost'. Clearly, the tension at the colloquium in Milan was palpable.

Baccalini, like Spazzali a PSI member, now back-pedalled, explicitly saluting the combative 'unity' of the Third World. Giaro Daghini, later a well-known theorist of the Italian *operaismo*, also acknowledged that this unity had forced a change of revolutionary politics worldwide, while 'the revolutions of the Third World … have revealed the impotence of the European left on every level'. The call for Europeans was therefore less to 'help' the Third World, and more to take 'revolutionary action within our own country'. Only if the left resolved its internal contradictions and became truly revolutionary again would it be able to 'establish relations of reciprocity with the Third World'. Daghini agreed with M'Bolo that 'what the Third World has brought us is the unveiling of our barbarity'. He conceded that this revelation made it necessary to accept the criticisms by the Third World representatives, but 'only if these criticisms are dialectic, if they do not come from people who think they are the sole beholders of the revolutionary truth'.

Daghini wanted 'a dialogue, a mutual unveiling, the elaboration of a common strategy', but, as his testy comment on non-dialectic criticisms showed, this dialogue was difficult. The renegotiation of the relationship between European leftists and the Third World was framed in terms of solidarity, aid, and alliance, but it was also ridden with conflict, mutual accusations, and pangs of conscience. While European activists admitted their failure, they criticized a morally charged dichotomy of Europe/Third World as theoretically and politically flawed. The Algerians, however, who invoked 'our great late Fanon' and his concept of the 'new man' as the model for the 'irreversible' change sweeping through Africa and Asia, demanded that the French left undergo a 'radical therapy' in order to get rid of its 'deeply paternalist spirit' and fully grasp the revolutionary agency of the decolonizing Third World.[40]

Partisans did not explicitly comment on the opinions expressed in Milan, but it clearly quoted the Algerians most extensively. The relationship of the European left and the Third World continued to be debated in the journal, however. One is hard-pressed to systematize the numerous positions on this question expressed in *Partisans*, but we can sketch the extremities of a broad spectrum. The maximalist viewpoint – mostly, but not exclusively, held by Third World authors – pictured the colonial revolution as the most significant event in the historical trajectory towards a global socialist society, supplanting the October Revolution and class struggle in Europe. Those who had long been viewed as marginal would liberate the historical centres, which also meant that unconditional support for Third World revolutionaries was in the best interest of the European left. By contrast, the minimalist position – adopted exclusively by Western authors – acknowledged the colonial revolution's dynamic, but cautioned against an idealization of the Third World masses. These, it was held, could only be liberated under the guidance of Western revolutionary workers, the Soviet Union, and communist parties of the Third World.

Early in 1962, a young student, Régis Debray (b. 1940), took this minimalist stance and criticized *Partisans* for its emotional, apolitical approach to decolonization. He claimed that the editors projected their revolutionary desires onto the 'myth of the Third World'. This

40 Quotation from an Algerian contribution to the colloquium reproduced in the preceding issue: 'La gauche européenne et l'avenir de l'Afrique', *Partisans* 5, 1962, pp. 122, 125.

compensation, he argued, prevented *Partisans* from taking a clear stance in France and in the global fight between capitalism and socialism as outlined by the Soviet two-camp theory in 1947. Débray urged the editorial team to relegate the Third World to the background and to firmly side with Moscow and the PCF – a demand soon turned down by Maspero himself, who retorted that the 'Third World revolutions' were 'giving us a burning lesson' and had become 'the avant-garde of the revolutionary forces of the socialist camp'.[41]

Tiennot Grumbach (b. 1939), together with Guy Dhoquois, also disagreed with Debray in the same edition of *Partisans*.[42] Far from defending the PCF, Grumbach and Dhoquois attacked it. They drew their arguments from a curious mix of Fanon, Castro, and a rather idiosyncratic interpretation of Khrushchev and the Soviet doctrine of peaceful coexistence. In addition, they attacked Mao Zedong, thus reacting to the Sino-Soviet split in the communist world. Mao had portrayed Western imperialism as nothing but a 'paper tiger' and had criticized the 'revisionist' Soviets for not overtly fighting it, arguing that they were hesitant to give anti-colonial revolutions full support. Grumbach and Dhoquois, however, held that Mao's 'naïve and demobilizing optimism' was 'dangerous'. In their view, capitalist imperialists were highly flexible and would switch from direct colonial rule to neo-colonial exploitation in order to safeguard their interests. Therefore, independence in Africa and Asia would never suffice to bring about world revolution. To trust solely in the colonial revolution was an impasse; although Grumbach and Dhoquois valued the Third World as the place where 'the future of socialism is being played out', they insisted that it was still every socialist's duty 'to fight against his proper capitalism' and that much remained to be done in France: leftists needed to help Third World actors with 'propaganda', spreading the ideas of Castro and others. They should criticize France's neo-colonial politics, for example in the realm of development cooperation. Becoming 'the vehicle of the revolution', they should also go to the new nation-states as teachers, doctors, and intellectuals. In doing so they would not only support the Third World but also, by the same token, prepare the left's victory in France.[43]

The Milan colloquium and the interventions by Debray, Maspero, Grumbach, and Dhoquois in *Partisans* all engaged with the question of how changes in the global order, namely decolonization, interacted with local – that is, French and European – politics. This question at first sparked conflict-ridden conversations with Third World representatives and among French activists. However, through the 1960s, the positions in *Partisans* became more clear-cut: The Third World was the centre of revolution and French leftists had to show unconditional solidarity with their ally. This was not only a moral obligation, but was thought to serve their political interest: the Third World's victories, weakening the same global system of capitalist oppression that French leftists were fighting, would help shake off the old left's apathy and directly benefit a new radical left in Europe. To the detriment of socialist and communist parties in the First World, to the detriment also of the Soviet Second World, the Third World had come to be seen as the most dynamic space on a tripartite globe. The political trajectories of many French activists illustrate this shift. While Debray, for example, still sided with the PCF in 1962, he soon toyed with proto-Maoist ideas before emerging, in direct collaboration with Castro and Guevara, as the most prominent theoretician of

41 François Maspero, 'Nous précisons', *Partisans*, 3, 1962, p. 169.
42 Guy Dhoquois and Tiennot Grumbach, 'La coexistence pacifique, arme révolutionnaire adaptée à la lutte contre l'impérialisme dans le Tiers Monde', *Partisans*, 3, 1962, pp. 83–97.
43 *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 96.

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guerrilla warfare in Latin America.[44] Ultimately, he was driven not by loyalty to the Communist Party but by the search for the most dynamic revolutionary power, which he soon came to locate in the Third World.

The Third World also guided the political choices of Grumbach.[45] Active against the Algerian War in political groups and as a suitcase carrier, he practised the solidarity he preached. In 1962 he went to Algiers, where he remained until 1964, hoping to build up socialism after independence. There he met Guevara, who invited him to Cuba, from where Grumbach returned to Paris as an ardent admirer of the Cuban revolution. Soon after, he joined the French Maoists of the Union des jeunesses communistes marxistes-léninistes, despite having sided with the USSR against China in 1962. He formed part of their inner circle and from 1967 was fully engaged in the radical opposition, the Maoist Comité Vietnam de Base, set up in protest against the Vietnam War.

As for Maspero, he was ever more critical of the political evolution in many Third World countries, notably Algeria and Cuba, and became increasingly frustrated with the projective idealizations and limited political gains of Third Worldism in Europe. Nevertheless, he turned his publishing house into a mouthpiece of Third World actors. On the heels of the Tricontinental Conference held in Havana in 1966, he started publishing the French edition of *Tricontinental* (1968–71), the official organ of the Cuban-led OSPAAAL (the Organización de Solidaridad con los Pueblos de Asia, Africa y América Latina), which Robert J. C. Young has distinguished as the birthplace of postcolonialism.[46] Upon returning from his 1967 visit to the OLAS conference, Maspero published the communiqués of the conference and dedicated a special issue of *Partisans* to it, declaring that he 'wanted to make the very voices of those heard who in Latin America have taken on the task of creating two, three, many Vietnams', because 'we think indeed that it is not from Paris that we can offer the analyses and evaluations on the revolution that are indispensable for it'.[47]

To put it paradoxically, the reference to the Third World thus formed a dynamic constant in many activists' biographies. Their disconnection from the old left had become irreversible by the mid 1960s, while at the same time they followed what seemed to be the most radical Third World ideas available. For *Partisans* and these activists, such ideas – together with a set of emotionally charged and internationally recognizable symbols such as Castro, Guevara, Patrice Lumumba, Ho Chi Minh, Mao, and Amílcar Cabral – provided the frame for seeing local politics within the bigger picture of a global anti-imperialist movement. Through the concept of the Third World, they creatively updated the Marxist notions of revolution at home and worldwide. The 'Third World' enabled them to make sense of a new international order marked by decolonization, Cold War, and divergent levels of development, but also allowed them to create a distance from competing political forces in France, attract new militants, and invent new forms of mobilization, processes that were most obvious in the protest movements against the Algerian War and the Vietnam War.

Cedetim: the Third World at home

The war in Vietnam marked the high point of Third Worldism: a poor, underdeveloped people of peasants suffered the deadly effects of Cold War competition and the attempts at

44 Bernhard Gierds, 'Che Guevara, Régis Debray und die Focustheorie', in Wolfgang Kraushaar, ed., *Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus. Vol. 1*, Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006, pp. 182–204.
45 On Grumbach, see Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Génération*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987–88.
46 Young, *Postcolonialism*, p. 213.
47 François Maspero, 'Amérique latine – solidarité – guérillas', *Partisans*, 38, 1967, p. 3.

domination first by the retreating French colonial power and then by US imperial designs, but resisted heroically and proved, once again, the astonishing moral, military, and political power of Third World liberation. This, at least, was the perception dominating the solidarity movements that, after 1965, mobilized people worldwide in unprecedented numbers under the Third World banner. These protests intensified transnational communication and made it obvious how a concept born in French journalism, social sciences, and decolonization had come to matter in a myriad of local political contexts. In France, the mobilization pitched rivalling factions of the radical left against each other, but also reached those who had been less politically active before, and fed directly into the protests of May 1968, the biggest social movement since the end of the Second World War.[48]

However, this impressive connection between Third World and domestic unrest also marked a turning point. In the actual protests of May–June 1968, Vietnam and the Third World played only a minor role, and, in the years following the event, the new radical left disintegrated in a cycle of radicalization and demobilization, while its political vision of the Third World as an ally and a motor for revolution in France first receded into the background, and then, from the end of the 1970s, was severely criticized by those who felt disillusioned with Third Worldism.[49] As a radical leftist ideology in France, the notion of the Third World was dead.

This broader picture, however, tends to obfuscate the fact that the Third World continued to motivate solidarity movements outside the hard core of radical leftists, for example in church circles. The narrative of decline also obscures how the Third World still mattered for activists of a non-dogmatic radical left that resisted demobilization after 1968 and sought a hands-on approach to international solidarity. The association Cedetim, founded in 1967, provides an excellent example. Reaching out into the world from its base in Paris through its manifold activities, supporters, and sympathizers, the Cedetim also targeted 'the Third World at home' – that is to say, migrant workers in France. While conceptual history is at times reduced to the study of (major) texts alone, the Cedetim allows us to see how everyday social practices clustered around the three-worlds model and what might be gained from a more praxis-oriented approach to conceptual history.

The Cedetim emerged as an offshoot of the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU). Capitalizing on the crisis of the old socialist and communist left, this party made its appearance as a leading actor of the opposition to the Algerian War in 1960. It never surpassed 4% of the electorate's vote or 16,000 members, but we can hardly overestimate its influence on the French left through the mid 1970s. The PSU was highly visible in the mobilization against the Vietnam War and throughout May 1968. Its watchword of *autogestion* (workers' self-management) marked debates on participatory democracy. Outwardly, the PSU competed with the SFIO, with the PCF, and with radical leftist splinter groups, while internally it was riven with conflicts between social democratic, left socialist, left catholic, Trotskyist, and Maoist factions.

48 See Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand and Jacques Portes, 'Les interactions internationales de la guerre du Viêt-Nam et Mai 68', in G. Dreyfus-Armand, J. Portes, R. Frank, M.-F. Levy, and M. Zancarini-Fournel, eds., *Les Années 68. Le temps de la contestation*, Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2000, pp. 49–68; Laurent Jalabert, 'Aux origines de la génération 68: les étudiants français et la guerre du Vietnam', *Vingtième siècle*, 55, 1997, pp. 69–81; Nicolas Pas, *Sortir de l'ombre du Parti communiste français. Histoire de l'engagement de l'extrême-gauche française sur la guerre du Vietnam 1965–1968. Mémoire de DEA*, Paris: Institut d'études politiques, 1998.

49 Reflections on the absence of the Third World in May '68 appeared in Manuel Bridier, 'Mai 1968 et le Tiers-Monde', *Bulletin de liaison du CEDETIM*, 2, 7, 1968, pp. 7–11. For the contemporary critiques of Third Worldism, see Jean Daniel and André Burguière, eds., *Le Tiers monde et la gauche*, Paris: Seuil, 1979.

These heterogeneous components, held together only by their commitment to the Third World and May '68, epitomized the new radical left's diversity.[50]

Transforming this commitment into politics was the task of the party's International Commission. It maintained contacts with leftist parties and anti-colonial movements worldwide and prepared the PSU's positions on international relations. From 1967 until 1972, Manuel Bridier and Gustave Massiah chaired the Commission, which called for 'the connection between the workers' movement of the developed countries and the national and social liberation movements of the Third World'.[51] In 1967, the two men also co-founded the association Cedetim as a supplementary, but legally and financially independent, structure outside the PSU. The Cedetim defined itself as a meeting place, documentation centre, leftist think tank, and counselling body for all those who were looking for 'socialist' solutions to the 'problems of the Third World'.[52]

All of the Cedetim's founders had experienced the Algerian War as a caesura in their political socialization. All had an academic background, all had been engaged in postcolonial development cooperation, and all had spent important periods of their lives in African countries.[53] In its early days, the Cedetim recruited members in France, in France's overseas departments, and in newly independent countries, where it wished to further 'socialist' politics. The association hoped to do so through French activists who went as development workers to former French colonies such as Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, and Cambodia. There they formed Cedetim groups, in which they debated and mobilized for local causes together with local activists. Around 1970, however, the Cedetim changed this approach. The first reason for this was increasing frustration: the Frenchmen felt that a meaningful socialist approach to development was impossible within the framework of an international aid regime that they saw as a capitalist, neo-colonial enterprise. Second, especially following governmental repressions of activists after Senegal's 1968 unrest, the association feared that membership in local Cedetim groups compromised local activists, posing a threat to their political work and even personal security. Third, the Cedetim, opposed to the hierarchical organization prevalent in many leftist groups, wanted to work differently. Prolonging the '68 spirit of participatory politics, it aimed to become a decentralized, politically pluralist structure for autonomous activists in France and abroad who would no longer hold formal Cedetim membership.

Around 1970, the Cedetim therefore evolved into a looser network that assisted groups and individuals with its widespread contacts and its Parisian facilities, and with promoting their activities in the association's bulletin. It became the 'surrogate mother breastfeeding a broad array of activist groupings', as Massiah claims – or a transnationally anchored agent of meso-mobilization, as the sociologist Eric Agrikoliansky has argued.[54] At the same time, the Cedetim redefined the priority of its France-based activists as the 'fight against French imperialism', and

50 On the PSU, see Vincent Duclert, 'Le PSU, une rénovation politique manquée?', in Artières and Zancarini-Fournel, *68. Une histoire collective*, pp. 152–8; Victor Fay, 'Les vingt ans du Parti socialiste unifié: un échec?', *Politique aujourd'hui*, 5–6, 1980, pp. 85–92.

51 Archives Nationales, Paris (henceforth ANP), 581AP/35, dossier 151, 'Projet de plan de travail pour la Commission des Affaires internationales, 19.09.1967'.

52 'Orientation du Cedetim', *Bulletin de liaison du CEDETIM*, 1, 1, 1967, pp. 2–3.

53 See their biographies in Kalter, *Discovery*, pp. 311–18.

54 Interview with Gustave Massiah, Paris, 21 June 2007; Éric Agrikoliansky, 'Du tiers-mondisme à l'altermondialisme: genèse(s) d'une nouvelle cause', in Éric Agrikoliansky, Olivier Fillieule, and Nonna Mayer, eds., *L'altermondialisme en France. La longue histoire d'une nouvelle cause*, Paris: Flammarion 2005, pp. 43–73.

within this logic, it reached out to *travailleurs immigrés*, that is, migrant workers in France.[55] Regarding them as living bridges between the First World and the Third World, the Cedetim claimed that they had a special role in the political struggles of both settings. Although migration to France not only originated in former colonies such as Algeria and Morocco, but also included sizeable groups from European countries, especially Portugal,[56] the Cedetim framed *travailleurs immigrés* as the embodied intersection of centre and periphery, or as 'our local Third World', as one activist put it.[57]

The Cedetim's initial approach to migration neither came early nor was it innovative.[58] Rather, it followed a trend among leftist activists, who had discovered foreign workers as a political force only in May '68 but who approached them with ambiguity.[59] On the one hand, the Cedetim presented them as migrants. This implied the assumption that they would uphold a connection with their home countries. It also implied that their needs differed from French co-workers because of their specific experiences, among them the uprooting caused by their migration, as well as the racism and 'overexploitation' they suffered. On the other hand, the Cedetim addressed them as workers and as part of an 'international proletariat' in France that should align with the French working class.[60] Concretely, the Cedetim advised the foreign workforce to refrain from building its own labour unions or parties. It declared that any further division of the working class in France must be avoided and that 'direct' forms of 'overexploitation' (such as short-term contracts, bad working conditions, overtime, and underpayment) would be best countered by enrolment in French labour unions. These would defend the interests of the foreign workforce. However, regarding 'indirect overexploitation' outside the factory gate, namely racism, the Cedetim encouraged the migrants to form 'ethnic associations', explaining that, in these, 'solidarity' would be greatest.[61]

With this ambivalent outlook, the new radical left – which associated the migrants with the Third World because of their origins but also because of the revolutionary potential ascribed to these 'sub-proletarians' – situated foreign workers within overlapping strategies. First, adding to the ranks of French activists, it hoped that they would exacerbate class struggle in France and prove efficient at the domestic frontline of the fight against French imperialism. Much like the decolonizing Third World some years earlier, they were supposed to stimulate a new radical left in search of a revolutionary outlet. Second, this same left often argued about how to

55 On the fight against imperialism, see 'Rapport d'ouverture à l'Assemblée Générale', *Nouvelles du CEDETIM 1972*, pp. 1–3; 'Introduction: impérialisme français et coopération', *Bulletin de liaison du CEDETIM*, 5–6, 20–21, 1971–72, pp. 2–8; 'La plateforme du Cedetim (extraits de la résolution générale d'orientation adoptée le 3 février 1973)', in *Le CEDETIM, pour quoi faire?*, Paris, n.d. [1973]; Cedetim, *L'Impérialisme français en 1977*, Paris: Maspero 1978. On reaching out to migrant workers, see ANP, 581AP/35, dossier 152, 'PSU Commission Internationale: compte rendu de la réunion du samedi 18 avril 1970, 23.04.1970'

56 Alexis Spire, *Étrangers à la carte. L'administration de l'immigration en France (1945–1975)*, Paris: Grasset 2005, p. 9. On French immigration policies in this period, see also Vincent Viet, *La France immigrée. Construction d'une politique, 1914–1997*, Paris: Fayard, 1998.

57 Interview with Michel Capron, Paris 29 June 2007. A similar sentiment was expressed in an interview with Elisabeth Courdurier, Paris, 30 June 2008, who remarked that 'They were our Third World arriving at our home.'

58 The Cedetim's first and very short statement on migrants in France is in Bridier, 'Mai 1968'.

59 The most important and recent discussion of the links between May '68 and immigration is Gordon, *Immigrants*. See also Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand, 'L'arrivée des immigrés sur la scène politique', *Lettre d'information 'Les années 68: événements, cultures politiques et modes de vie'*, 30, 1998, pp. 1–10; Yvan Gastaut, 'Le rôle des immigrés pendant les journées de mai–juin 1968', *Migrations Société*, 6, 32, 1994, pp. 9–29.

60 Pierre Manghetti, 'Les travailleurs immigrants dans la société industrielle', *Bulletin de liaison du CEDETIM*, 3, 8, 1969, pp. 11–14.

61 *Les Travailleurs immigrés*, PSU documentation no. 16, Paris: Service formation du P.S.U., 1970, pp. 6, 7.

integrate migrant workers into local struggles and used them to enforce intra-leftist distinctions between competing political groups.[62] Third, white French activists with their privileged access to legal, institutional, financial, and cultural resources ascribed ontological uncertainty to the migrants: were they more 'here' or 'from there'; should they be defined via class position, citizenship, ethnic origins, cultural background, or their specific experiences? Based on this uncertainty, French activists tended to speak for the migrants instead of letting them represent themselves – and on a practical level they often behaved paternalistically towards the *travailleurs immigrés*, whom they saw as being in need of political instruction.[63]

Regarding this instruction, the Cedetim maintained that existing offers were unsatisfactory, since humanitarian associations lacked political punch, while courses offered by trade unions, the PCF, and the Maoist Gauche Prolétarienne (GP) attracted few migrants. The Cedetim claimed that this was understandable because trade unions and the PCF failed to recognize the migrants' needs, subjugating them to a 'strictly French scheme', while the GP tried to manipulate them to prove its erroneous theories.[64] Therefore, the Cedetim held that the leaders of the migrant associations which it wished to promote urgently needed adequate political education, and that it was timely to initiate this education itself. In 1971, the association thus founded a 'Formation School for Immigrant Workers', where the cadres of migrant associations were to be trained in Marxist theory and activism.[65]

The Cedetim stressed that the Formation School was a joint project that had been initiated by the migrants in the Paris region themselves.[66] Three associations, claiming to represent the workforce from the French overseas departments and territories of Guadeloupe, Guyana, Martinique, and La Réunion, as well as from 'underdeveloped' Spain, sent the first cohort of pupils. These fifteen trainees faced a collective of six teachers, three of them Cedetim members, the others provided by the participating associations. The teachers had 'collectively' decided on the curriculum, while the migrants' associations nominated their trainees without the Cedetim's interference.[67] In class, the pupils learned about the quantitative and political dimensions of labour migration to France, with a special emphasis on their countries of origin as well as on Algeria and Senegal. They discussed push and pull factors of migration and the history of anti-colonial and workers' movements in their home countries and in France. The subsequent units taught them a Marxist perspective on the role of migration for imperialist

62 For a case study of these dynamics, see the 1970 example of migrant protests in Ivry-sur-Seine as related in André Gorz and Philippe Gavi, 'La Bataille d'Ivry', *Temps modernes*, 26, 284, 1970, pp. 1388–1416; also analysed in Kalter, *Discovery*, pp. 386–90.

63 Manghetti, 'Travailleurs', pp. 12–14, advocated their political education, but did *not* demand their right to vote or to receive the same pay as their French counterparts. He also stated that they should not receive French citizenship. However, the Cedetim soon moved beyond this early position. From 1973 on, demanding the right to vote for migrants became the Cedetim's and the PSU's distinctive policy. See Séverine Lacalmontie, 'De la recherche à l'invention d'une cause: les militants du PSU et le droit de vote des immigrés', in Tudi Kernalegenn, François Prigent, Gilles Richard, and Jacqueline Sainclivier, eds., *Le PSU vu d'en bas. Réseaux sociaux, mouvement politique, laboratoire d'idées (années 1950–années 1980)*, Rennes: Presses Universitaires, 2010, pp. 317–26. On the PSU, see also Gordon, *Immigrants*, pp. 176–9.

64 Quote from ANP, 581AP/36, dossier 159, Gustave Massiah, 'Note préparatoire à la réunion du 26/11/70 sur "l'Ecole de formation", 24.11.1970'; ANP, 581AP/36, dossier 159, untitled [Evaluation of the Ecole de Formation Travailleurs Immigrés' first teaching cycle], '24.09.1971'.

65 Interview with Gustave Massiah, Paris, 30 June 2008, in which Massiah claimed that the School was operative from May 1971 until July 1973. While there is no reason to doubt this assertion, it must be stressed that I could only access written documentation of the first teaching cycle, which ended in July 1971.

66 ANP, 581AP/36, dossier 159, Jean-Yves Barrère, 'Commission Internationale – Ecole de formation des travailleurs immigrés, 28.12.1970'.

67 *Ibid*.

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capitalism, but also addressed more practical questions. Under the headings 'What to do here?' and 'What to do there?' participants discussed how to contribute to the social movements in their home countries and in France, as well as to world revolution. This included instruction on such down-to-earth issues as designing leaflets and posters or organizing political assemblies.[68]

It proved difficult to fit such a comprehensive programme into the eight evening classes that were taught starting in May 1971, and the uneven attendance of some trainees made their teachers doubt their 'activist discipline'. Differences in habitus between the (academically trained) teachers and the attending workers complicated matters further. The latter complained that the practical challenges they faced in their associations were not adequately addressed. These 'vehement criticisms' notwithstanding, the experiment was evaluated as a success. Consequently, the Cedetim decided to continue and to expand the programme: as of September 1971, representatives of Portuguese, Moroccan, Tunisian, Algerian, Senegalese, and Malian migrant associations joined the Formation School.[69]

Unlike *Partisans*, the impact of this project on the history of France's new radical left is certainly negligible. Nevertheless, it is of exemplary relevance: it shows how activists translated the Third World concept of global interconnectedness into local, concrete political practices and institutionalized a multilateral, transnational communication about France as a capitalist, postcolonial society. Owing to a lack of sources, it must remain an open question how the migrant trainees benefited from this communication. What the Cedetim as an institution gained from these encounters, however, can be drawn from a book entitled *Les Immigrés*, which the association published in 1975.[70]

Using a decidedly historical perspective, this 400-page book undertook a well-researched, Marxist interpretation of labour migration in Western societies. It analysed migrant communities in France and discussed the links between immigration and social conflicts. The book's theoretical approach to the *travailleurs immigrés* was not innovative: in a manner consistent with earlier statements, it portrayed the migrants as transnational figures belonging both 'here' and 'there', while it also stressed that 'here' they suffered hardships unknown to their French colleagues. What was new, though, was the self-reflexive tone of the French activists, their heightened sensibility in regard to the power effects of representational discourses, and their willingness to give a voice to the migrants themselves. The Cedetim stated that the migrant workers were

> carriers of their own demands and problems, which arise from their situations as immigrants as well as from the level of development of the struggles in their home countries. Therefore, for the … French proletariat, they can neither be the infantry that some would like to use for themselves nor the miraculous avant-garde that the most hasty ones might dream of. They can only be autonomous partners who, while sharing a common situation of exploitation, have specific characteristics and particular interests.[71]

Many concrete examples throughout the book showed in detail how migrants actually pursued these interests and organized themselves. The Cedetim thus highlighted their agency. At the same time, it criticized the new radical left for assigning the revolutionary hopes

68 [Evaluation of the Ecole de formation], pp. 3–4.
69 *Ibid.*
70 Cedetim, *Les Immigrés. Contribution à l'histoire politique de l'immigration en France*, Paris: Stock, 1975.
71 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

associated with the Third World to the migrant workers. As before with the movements of national liberation, the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie in France – the class with which the Cedetim activists identified – was in danger of projecting revolutionary dreams on to the immigrants, thereby escaping rather than assuming its own political responsibilities.[72]

In light of this auto-critique, the Cedetim continued, it would have been flawed to write another book *about* the migrants. None of the chapters noted individual authors, but the Cedetim explained that migrants had written the various chapters on their specific communities themselves. For example, the authors of the section on Algerians – a community that at the time numbered around 750,000 people – placed these migrants in the long historical perspective of (post-)colonial migrations, ethnic associations, and Algerian nationalism in France – painting the picture of a thick Franco-Algerian 'entangled history'.[73] The book's other chapters, concerned with overarching questions on immigration, resulted from discussions that the Cedetim authors had carried out with representatives of these communities, some of whom had taken part in the Formation School.[74] The knowledge and the network created at the school thus directly benefited the association's expertise on migration issues.

In the book, the Cedetim also discussed the migration policies of French society. After examining how migration served the ruling classes, a survey laid out the positions of political parties, labour unions, and left splinter groups on migration matters. While these pages provided useful information to migrant readers, they also positioned the Cedetim in the competition within the new radical left. Here, the authors mainly criticized the PCF and the labour union for their legalistic and paternalistic attitudes towards migrants. They also criticized many groups of the radical left, claiming that they lacked an internationalist perspective on migration, or, worse, exploited migrants for their factionalist rivalries. Good grades were assigned to the Trotskyist groupings Révolution! and Révolution africaine!, as well as to the Maoist Comités unitaires français immigrés, which were run by Jean-Yves Barrère and Michel Villaz, who had been teaching at the Formation School.[75]

At the apex of labour migration to Europe, the new radical left was attentive to the *travailleurs immigrés*. The Cedetim only followed this trend, but tried to make up for its late arrival through intense theoretical and practical work. Short-term difficulties notwithstanding, the mid-term reward for reaching out to the migrants in its Formation School was an improved network and a growing complexity in the association's perspective on foreigners in France. Communicating with the migrants as autonomous partners offered insight into and recognition of their agency, while at the same time allowing for critical self-reflection on the part of the French activists.

Contemporaries and historians alike have criticized the new radical left for using the Third World as a projection screen for their Eurocentric agendas. While this assessment cannot be applied to all groups without distinction, it is particularly ill-suited to the Cedetim. This association went a long way in transforming the 'three-worlds' concept into concrete, localized politics that addressed the conflicts and potential benefits stemming from the postcolonial character of French society. The Cedetim's critique of French development cooperation,

72 *Ibid*., pp. 11–13.
73 'Histoire entrecroisée' in the original.
74 *Ibid*., p. 13. According to Massiah (interview, 30 June 2008), chapter drafts were discussed at the Formation School.
75 Cedetim, *Immigrés*, pp. 315–77.

convivial gatherings such as the 'days of anti-imperialist culture' that it organized in 1975, the activist beehive that it established in a collectively run building in the eleventh arrondissement, and its work with migrants that I have analysed here, all testify to a political commitment that was rooted in France but stretched out into the world. Pointing back in time to the politicization of the Third World concept in the Algerian War, the Cedetim also pointed forwards: creating durable projects and contacts, the association initiated an activist network that, although it has lost some of its initial drive, has survived to this day.[76] Its Third Worldist commitment has developed into an ongoing engagement with migrant communities and the fight against racism in France today, and has expanded since the 1990s to a full-blown critique of contemporary globalization, thus illustrating some of the legacies that the new radical left's discovery of the Third World as a political project has bequeathed to us.[77]

Conclusion

Today, hardly anyone speaks of the 'Third World', and the questions that the concept opened up are now discussed under the heading of 'globalization'. But for roughly three decades the concept defined how people all over the globe perceived the world. Having its origins in France, it enabled a new mapping of the world and promised to challenge global hierarchies. The concept's local origins mattered. First, they inspired the concept's inventor, Alfred Sauvy, to suggest a historical analogy with the Third Estate of the French Revolution. The revolutionary potential thus ascribed to the underdeveloped, (formerly) colonized, non-aligned countries made the term an ideal candidate for Frantz Fanon's appropriation of the Third World in the Algerian War, the second important French stage in the concept's evolving history. Third, on the heels of this war and the imprint it left on a self-styled Algerian generation of activists, the Third World concept became the means for a new radical left to creatively update the Marxist heritage and to situate its own revolutionary aspirations in a global framework, one that promised that the Third World as an ally of First World activists would provide the much-needed impulses for mobilization in France. François Maspero's publishing house and the review *Partisans* were at the centre of this discovery of the Third World, a discovery that involved an often difficult dialogue with the representatives of that world. Finally, although leftist Third Worldism in general declined after 1968, the history of the Cedetim and its turn to migrant workers as the Third World at home shows how the concept still mattered for activists who tried to understand and change France as a postcolonial society while at the same time reflecting on the global context of their activism.

This local history of the Third World concept was never a self-contained French story. The Cold War and global economic inequalities had motivated Sauvy's invention of the term, which then spread through social sciences and journalism worldwide. Decolonization, a major process in post-war global history, provided the backdrop for Fanon's reinvention of a Third World self. His understanding of the Third World as the centre of world revolution appealed not only to French activists but also to millions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In the process, an originally French invention with a Eurocentric backdrop had indeed travelled far and wide.

76 See www.cedetim.reseau-ipam.org (consulted 25 February 2015).
77 Massiah, the Cedetim's co-founder, was the vice-president of the French *Attac* branch (2003–06), and continues to be a member of the organization's Scientific Committee, as well as of the International Committee of the World Social Forum. See also Agrikoliansky, 'Tiers-mondisme'.

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In understanding these trajectories from the global to the local and back, I have argued that we gain most from focusing on localized uses of this globalized idiom – in this case, French ones – including those by 'lesser' intellectuals and those that go beyond texts. Texts were obviously important for the Third World, but the concept was also put to use through political action. A revolutionary idea framed and facilitated a broad range of activist practices, and this connection between concept and politics not only made the Third World so compelling, but, on the level of historiography, calls for a praxis-oriented approach that can provide inspiration for other intellectual and conceptual histories in a global perspective.

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