

**CFP: Challenging the Liberal World Order:
The History of the Global South, Decolonization and the United Nations,
1955-2000.**

Leiden University, 8-9 May 2018

Keynote Speaker: Vijay Prashad (Trinity College, Connecticut)

The United Nations is the central node in the system of global governance, organizing and managing the interaction and cooperation of the organs and specialized agencies of the institution with NGOs, corporate and civil society actors and increasingly, the global public. Despite the important role of the UN in this nexus, existing histories of the organization place an emphasis on the role of Western actors and often overlook the agency of countries from the Global South. This workshop will investigate how individuals, organizations, civil society actors and states from the Global South impacted upon the UN and the system of global governance in the latter half of the 20th century as they expanded the meaning of decolonization to address a range of North/South inequalities.

Significance of workshop:

From the moment of its inception, countries from the Global South began to organize in formal and informal groups around specific issues at the UN, an organization that was perceived as being full of promise for the construction of a more equitable and just world order. Through discussions and public debates in the General Assembly, and in the corridors and working groups of the UN, the campaign for decolonization became the primary focus of countries from Africa and Asia. As more countries became independent, the decolonization movement shifted from the assertion of sovereignty and the right to self-determination, to a host of other claims for a broad range of social, economic and political rights. Alongside Latin American countries and smaller neutral nations, the African and Asian groups and the Afro-Asian bloc cooperated at the UN on a range of issues from economic development to human rights, to the struggle against apartheid. The workshop seeks to analyze this cooperation to trace the way this dynamic activity changed the UN and impacted upon the various issues around which the Global South groups came together through issue based alliances and solidarity networks.

In recent years the historical role of international organizations has been the subject of increased attention from historians seeking to reassess their role in shaping the global order. Leading historians from Mark Mazower to Matthew Connolly have encouraged scholars to 'take off the Cold War lens' in analyzing international institutions and their impact on local, national and international politics. Others, such as Susan Pedersen have reminded us about the long-term significance of organizations in functioning as networked platforms and agents of international change. Drawing on this scholarship, the workshop will invite proposals which take innovative views of the UN as a space for international and transnational cooperation, a dynamic forum which reveals interactions between the Global South and the West as the latter tried to challenge the liberal world order leading to the resurgence of UN activism from 1990-2000.

This workshop will consider a variety of contributions using sources from empirical research while also taking account of interdisciplinary reflections on the historical role of international organizations from a transnational and global perspective. Topics may include:

- The emergence of ‘Third-Worldism’;
- How decolonization interacted with the Cold War at the UN;
- The evolution of the Afro-Asian Bloc and cooperation between the African and Asian groups;
- Economic Development, NIEO, UNCTAD, etc.;
- The response of the major powers to Global South demands for reform;
- The role of Global South countries in the campaign for human rights;
- The dynamism of Latin American states at the UN;
- The role of UN officials and the UN Secretariat;
- The participation of non-state actors and NGOs;
- The influence of officials from the Global South across these dimensions;
- The formation and import of transnational groups such as the G77 and the Non-Aligned movement;
- South-South and South-Soviet interactions;
- The resuscitation of the UN in 1990.

The workshop will take place from 8-9 May with a Keynote Lecture from Vijay Prashad during the afternoon of 8 May followed by a selection of workshop panels on 9 May. Adopting a different format in order to allow for more panels, there will be no formal presentations of work but a commentator will give a brief reflection of the papers to kick-off each panel. In this way it is hope that all participants will read the papers and a deep discussion will follow.

Submission of abstracts

Please send an abstract of max. 500 words and a short CV to the following email address: a.m.omalley@hum.leidenuniv.nl by 1 January 2018. Authors will be notified regarding the acceptance of their contribution by 31 January. Invited speakers will be expected to submit a draft paper 1 month prior to the event, which will be circulated among all other participants. Some funding will be available for travel and accommodation.