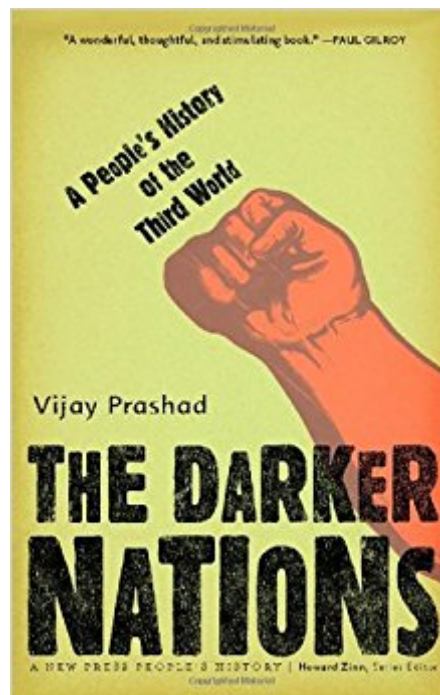




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The Darker Nations: A People's History Of The Third World (New Press People's History)



Synopsis

Here, from a brilliant young writer, is a paradigm-shifting history of both a utopian concept and global movement—the idea of the Third World. The Darker Nations traces the intellectual origins and the political history of the twentieth century attempt to knit together the world's impoverished countries in opposition to the United States and Soviet spheres of influence in the decades following World War II. Spanning every continent of the global South, Vijay Prashad's fascinating narrative takes us from the birth of postcolonial nations after World War II to the downfall and corruption of nationalist regimes. A breakthrough book of cutting-edge scholarship, it includes vivid portraits of Third World giants like India's Nehru, Egypt's Nasser, and Indonesia's Sukarno—as well as scores of extraordinary but now-forgotten intellectuals, artists, and freedom fighters. The Darker Nations restores to memory the vibrant though flawed idea of the Third World, whose demise, Prashad ultimately argues, has produced a much impoverished international political arena.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Scholarly but accessible, this history of Third World intellectual thought and politics captures the shared ideals, institutions and strategies that have united the Latin American countries and the new Asian and African states that have stood outside U.S. and Soviet spheres of influence since WWII. This Third World project did more than steer a neutral course between the nuclear-armed contenders of the Cold War era, claims Prashad (The Karma of Brown Folk). Anticolonial

nationalism was also the basis for an alternative world order premised on peace, autonomy and cooperation. But Third World unity was also fragile. The optimism of newly independent nation-states that shaped the United Nations into their principal global platform gave way after the 1960s to frustration, conflict, compromised sovereignty and diminishing expectations. Prashad reveals the close interrelations among such obstacles as the persistence of old social hierarchies, the mobilization of religious views and reinvented tribalism, and punishing debt burdens designed to maintain Western hegemony over a "developing" world. Indeed, he argues, "cultural nationalism" easily becomes "the Trojan-horse of IMF-driven globalization." While the subtitle is misleading—Prashad necessarily concentrates on towering figures like India's Nehru, Indonesia's Sukarno and Egypt's Nasser—the book offers a vital assertion of an alternative future, grounded in an anti-imperial vision. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Elegiac, combative, revisionist, incisive—and recalling the vivid thoughts and words of scores of extraordinary intellectuals, artists, and freedom fighters—The Darker Nations is destined to become a classic. A landmark work from a brilliant young scholar, The Darker Nations chronicles the rise and fall of the Third World. Its hardcover publication was hailed by renowned scholar Immanuel Wallerstein as "essential background for rethinking history." Publishers Weekly recognized its relevance for global activists today, noting its "vital assertion of an alternative future, grounded in an anti-imperialist vision." The first comprehensive political history of the third world as concept and as project. --Immanuel Wallerstein The Darker Nations has been named a finalist for the 11th Annual Asian American Literary Awards. --Ken Chen, Executive Director,

Excellent overview combined with a cogent, thoughtful analysis. Very readable and well-organized.

This book is an ambitious effort to chart the fortunes of the political project of unifying the postcolonial world into 'the third world'. It is not, however, a 'people's' history, either in the senses of charting the demographic transformations of ordinary people (literacy, urbanization, etc) or anthropologically describing how they understood the dramatic events (revolutions, counterrevolutions, development experiments, etc) unfolding. It is almost exclusively concerned with the major leaders and some of the intellectuals and artists who shaped the consciousness of the period. Indeed, even if it was not titled 'people's history', I think it could be faulted by being a little

vague about 'the people'. In any case, the book is basically divided into three parts. The first section, 'Quest', considers some themes (economics, nationalism, gender, etc) through the optic of major conferences. The second, 'pitfalls', highlights places that epitomize themes like military coups and socialism from above. The third section, 'Assassinations' describes the demise of the third world as a subject as a result of neoliberalism, the IMF, the rise of East Asia, and religious fundamentalism. In all sections, Prashad tends to move between the focus of the chapter and historical geographical events that are far afield and occur before and after the moment in question. The effect can be a little vertiginous. Certainly he deserves credit for attempting such an expansive work, and his knowledge about the time period appears to be vast. However, I found his organization a little too tidy, and his political perspective restricted by his focus on state leaders. Particularly since he regards the UN as something of an instrument for third world advancement (an interesting contrast with Perry Anderson, who claims its just a front for the US), why does he disregard the international conferences held under its auspices in the last fifteen years regarding the environment, women, and racism? Although attended by people from countries in the North as well as the South, at these forums it is probably fair to say that Southern perspectives tended to prevail and throw the North on the defensive. And why is not a word breathed about the World Social Forum? Is it because he regards NGOs (also almost completely absent from his book) as instruments of Northern domination, or because he regards social movements as insignificant compared to states? The absence of any discussion of these issues seems almost sectarian, as does his fairly crude analysis of religion (focused on Saudi-backed Wahhabi Islam--the Iranian revolution is practically unmentioned). Finally, he doesn't seem to have noticed, as have some other writers, that a number of third world states have begun to recover from neoliberalism and seem to be gradually reasserting themselves.

I learned about this book on WBAI. This an excellent book.

speedy

I have spent years in the author's country and quite a lot of time in the Arab world (Syria, Libya) and am happy to have the opportunity to read such an excellent work on the life of "darker nations", who accepted me as their friend.

clean copy

This text is one of the more difficult reads I have experienced this year. My timing was wrong for meeting the necessary concentration to absorb the content. I immediately reread it in the same head space. Fortunately I discussed the text while I reread his work. This is one of the most important texts on the current airwaves concerning the third world project. I am glad to have consumed this book. I will reread this text again. American financial Ingenuity and competition practiced upon the third world nations comes to light clearly, if one takes the time to really consume this author's work. Vijay Prashad is poking his thoughts on the web with this text and everyone who knows anything seems to consume and write deep understanding in corroboration for his concepts of reality. I will hold on to this text until I die.ChangelitOrDrownItB 36 Ears

I actually bought it to help study for my final but it took forever to get to me because of winds shutting down airlines, but I still enjoyed the book. It was huge compared to other college texts and was an easy read. When I saw Howard Zenn as the editor I knew it was going to be good because the books he is involved with are generally much more interesting than normal history texts. This gives a great account of the sie of history people don't normally hear of and even if it isn't for school i would recommend it to history enthusiasts.

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