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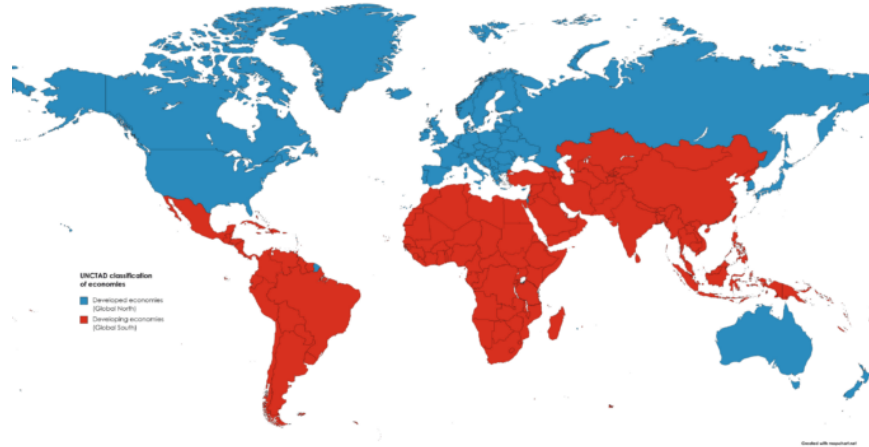
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زبانهای اروپایی

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The Global South and the Hyper-Imperialist Global North.



Economic classification of the world's countries by the UNCTAD: the Global North (i.e., developed countries) is highlighted in blue and the Global South (i.e., developing countries and least developed countries) is highlighted in red. – [CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Chu Guofei: You argue that the term Global South refers not just to a geographical space but to a series of protests against neoliberalism. Could you elaborate on this concept and its significance?

Vijay Prashad: In the immediate years of decolonization (from around 1945 to 1974), the countries that emerged out of colonialism formulated a joint agenda that was encapsulated in the Bandung Declaration of 1955 and the Non-Aligned Movement (1961). This was the Bandung-NAM project, which was also known as the Third World Project. In the 1980s, due to the concerted attack by the old colonial powers (now shaped into the Western bloc) and due to the Third World debt crisis, the political confidence and clarity of the Third World

Project waned. Governments across the formerly colonized world became subordinated to the Western project, particularly after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. In that period, the new agenda – neoliberalism – drove society into deep austerity, which generated its own range of spontaneous protests.

In 2013, I said that the idea of the Global South is defined by these protests. But, in the decade since, there has been the emergence of a ‘new mood’ in the Global South that includes not only protests against neoliberalism but an attitude of ‘defiance’ against the neoliberal regime and the US management of the world affairs. The illegal US war on Iraq (2003) and the Third Great Depression (from 2007) sharpened the changes in the world order, showing that the United States is neither a sensible manager of world affairs nor is it a reliable anchor of the global economy. The Global South now comes to represent not only the peoples of the South, but – in many cases – their governments as well. If previously the governments of the South had represented the Washington Consensus on behalf of the Global North, now these governments – regardless of their political orientation – understand to lesser or greater extent the limitations of that neoliberal agenda and that imperialist mindset (or as the Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar called it, the ‘NATO mindset’).

CG: How has the understanding of the Global South evolved over time, and what role does it play in shaping alternatives to neoliberalism, and what challenges does it face?

VP: The twin events of the illegal war on Iraq (2003) and the start of the Third Great Depression (2007) set in motion an interesting set of processes in the larger states of the former Third World. These countries took advantage of the contradictions set in place by globalization: industry was transferred from the North to the South to take advantage of lower wages in the South; science and technological knowledge had been developed in the aftermath of colonialism, and new scientific and technological knowledge came to the South alongside the transferred industries; capital from the North orphaned these industries to sub-contractors, who now grew their firms and sectors to become global value creators; high commodity prices due to the increase in global industry brought higher revenues to the metal, mineral, and energy exporters in the South. The creation and development of the BRICS in 2009 and subsequent years was a product of these processes that advantaged countries such as these five states and several others (Nigeria, Indonesia, Mexico). It was the emergence of the BRICS and these other locomotives of the South that provided the other states of the South with choices when it came to external financing from either the private or state sector, and therefore weakened the overwhelming power of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, both institutions of the Washington Consensus.

The BRICS inspired institutions – such as the New Development Bank – initially borrowed much of the architecture and ideology from the Washington Consensus institutions, but then gradually began to develop their own program and their own policy frameworks. For instance, in the early period, the BRICS projects did not encourage industrialization around the world. Now, such as with China’s industrialization agenda for the African continent, this has dramatically changed. It is important to point out that the Global South is not a socialist project. It is merely oxygenating an international landscape that had been asphyxiated by neoliberalism and by the domination of the Global North states through the G-7, the NATO+ military bloc, and the Fourteen-Eyes intelligence community.

CG: How can individuals and movements globally contribute to the vision of a more just and equitable world?

VP: The ‘new mood’ in the Global South is part of the actual movement of history. It is now a fact of our times. Some states in the Global South are more attuned to these changes than others, but all of them recognize that these changes are afoot. It has become apparent to many social movements and political parties in the Global South that there will be new space to put forward propositions that go beyond the neoliberal agenda. If there are new discussions about industrialization, it might be well worth having a serious conversation about social wages and about worker power in the production process. When the world is churning, it is important for all sectors to come forward with propositions for a better life and not allow this moment to be lost.

CG: About your book, The Poorer Nations: Possible History of the Global South: Can you provide a very brief overview of The Poorer Nations and its main objectives?

VP: In 2001, I began to work on a long history of the former colonized world in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This study went back to the formation of the Third World Project and its breakdown in the 1980s. That part of the study was published in 2007 as The Darker Nations. Right after that I began working on the second part of the study, which took me back to the 1980s when the South Commission met over several years to create a new Project. Their main orientation was to fight for industrialization – which they saw was off the agenda – and to allow the larger countries of the South to begin to develop on their own. In fact, the agenda of the South Commission was closed with the formation of the BRICS, which is the culmination of their vision. That study, from the South Commission to the BRICS, was The Poorer Nations (2013). I am now working on the third part of this study, The Brighter Nations, which will begin with the illegal US war on Iraq (2003) and the Third Great

Depression (2007), and then focus on the ‘new mood’ in the South. This third volume will be out in 2025.

GC: In the foreword to The Poorer Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali mentions that your book helps readers understand the complex events preceding today’s global situation. How do you see the insights from your book informing our understanding of current global challenges?

VP: Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, who led the United Nations in a most difficult period, was very kind to write the foreword to *The Poorer Nations*. He argued in the preface that the book provided the immediate historical trajectory of the newly growing conflict between the Global North and the Global South, a conflict that had been stifled during the era of neoliberalism. I wish Boutros-Ghali was alive to see this time, this ‘new mood’, and to appreciate that his Nasserism of the 1950s has not died out but continues to return in different forms.

CG: Who do you hope would read The Poorer Nations, and what did you hope they would take away from it?

VP: I hope that readers will read the trilogy and come to see that these books track the hunger for freedom and equality that has governed the states of the Third World and the Global South for the past century. I’m proud that the general orientation of these books defines the work of the research institute that I lead, [Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research](#). I hope that your readers keep abreast of the materials we produce and engage our ideas, particularly our new study, *Hyper-Imperialism*, which makes an important argument for our times. Faced with the rise of the Global South but seeing its economic and political power depleted over the course of the past decade, the bloc of the Global North – led by the United States – has amplified a belligerent response to this depletion. Three quarters of the share of world military spending is by the NATO+ states, and they use that military power in an aggressive way against anyone who stands up and defies the US orders. ‘Hyper-imperialism’ refers to that dangerous and decadent reliance upon force to insist on obedience. My own trilogy (*Darker Nations*, *Poorer Nations*, *Brighter Nations*) and the Tricontinental study (*Hyper-Imperialism*) allow us to understand why the US, for instance, has used Ukraine and Taiwan to provoke conflict rather than used the rise of the South as a platform for collaboration.

GC: How can the perspectives and knowledge shared in your book resonate with a diverse global audience, including academics, activists, and policymakers?

VP: The other day I spent two hours speaking with Gita Wirjawan, the former minister of Trade of Indonesia. We talked about this ‘new mood’. I found our conversation to be greatly stimulating. Gita is not from the left, but he is from the South, and is therefore aware of these

changes and this ‘new mood’. In our conversation, I shared the broad outlines of what I argue in my trilogy, and based on that we spoke about democracy, justice, and the need to end inequality. I believe that this journey to enhance democracy and to end inequality (ending hunger, illiteracy, homelessness) is the great social process of our times. I hope that it resonates and captivates large numbers of people.

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