

The uses of history in international society: from the Paris peace conference to the present

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Abstract

History has been used—and abused—for centuries. Yet the more familiar notion of ‘history’s lessons’—a notion which tends to make most historians uncomfortable, and which surely demands thoroughgoing skepticism—is far from exhaustive of history’s uses in the practice and study of international relations. One important and timely subject is the more constitutive role of history in international deliberations over the creation, fragmentation and transformation of nation-states. What follows is a historical comparison of the changing ways in which the past has been used to frame the terms and content of such debates. While we will be exploring the uses of history as a guide or teacher, we propose to examine more specifically and at greater length the growth and persistence of newer uses: first, to bolster claims to independence and territory; and second, in demanding restitution in the form of financial reparations, apologies and other social privileges. By examining the ways in which history was used 100 years ago at the end of the First World War and in recent episodes of the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, we hope to show continuities and differences. What specialists must appreciate is that history is being used and will continue to be used not only within the confines of the academy, but within international society itself, where it may serve as a foundation for arbitrating political disagreements. If anything, non-specialist and popular reliance on history has grown, possibly because other forms of authority have attenuated.

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History has been used—and abused—for centuries. In the fifth century BC the father of modern history, Thucydides, famously declared in his *Peloponnesian Wars* that ‘the past was an aid to the interpretation of the future’ and expressed the optimistic hope that his work would serve as a guide for ‘all time’.¹ Over a millennium later, the Europe of the Renaissance found in the rediscovered texts of ancient Greece and Rome practical advice on government and the relations among states. Machiavelli in his *Discourses on Livy* made it clear that his purpose was to decipher the lessons of the past as an aid to statecraft in the present.² Imperial China shared a similar deep respect for the wisdom of the past; civil service examinations from the Han to Qing dynasties were based on knowledge of great classics.

The Chinese also discerned, or thought they did, an invariable cycle in history of decay and renewal. That attempt to find grand patterns in history which could unveil the mystery of the future exists in many cultures. In the Middle Ages, Christian histories explained the past and

future through the triumphalist lens of the spread of their universal faith; and in the Victorian era, British histories typically did something similar with the emergence of constitutional government, the Industrial Revolution and the British empire.³ Karl Marx saw a different working-out of history through the mechanism of economic change and class warfare towards the inevitable triumph of the proletariat.

That faith in history as a mentor, and the concomitant belief that its laws can be discerned, have persisted into the present. History has been and still is used in an attempt to work out the principles and discover the factors shaping relations between different peoples and institutions. Thucydides' statement that 'the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must' is much cited still, especially by the realist school of International Relations theory. At Harvard University the Belfer Center runs a programme to examine case-studies from the past to support the notion of the 'Thucydides trap' which posits that declining and rising powers almost invariably come into conflict.⁴ Statespeople and others repeatedly use examples and analogies from the past to speculate about the present, guess at the future and thereby prescribe courses of action. The decline and fall of Rome has been used in an attempt, for example, to discern the future path of the United States, while the appeasement analogy has become shopworn with repeated use since 1945.⁵

Yet the familiar notion of 'history's lessons'—a notion which tends to make most historians uncomfortable, and which surely demands thoroughgoing scepticism—is far from the only use of history in the practice and study of international relations.⁶ One very important and timely subject is the more constitutive role of history in international deliberations over the creation, fragmentation and transformation of nation-states. What follows is a historical comparison of the changing ways in which the past has been used to frame the terms and content of such debates. While we will be exploring the uses of history as a guide or teacher, we propose to examine more specifically and at greater length the growth and persistence of newer uses: first, to bolster claims to independence and territory; and second, in demanding restitution in the form of financial reparations, apologies and other economic and social privileges.

By examining the ways in which history was used 100 years ago at the end of the First World War and in recent episodes of the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, we hope to show both continuities and differences. What specialists must appreciate is that history is being used and will continue to be used not only within the confines of the academy, but within international society itself, where it may serve as a foundation for arbitrating political disagreements, including those regarding the boundaries, assets, rights and duties belonging to states. Indeed, if non-specialist and popular reliance on history has changed at all, it has grown, possibly because other forms of authority have attenuated. Sovereign governments no longer acknowledge territorial and other gains won through discretionary military force as lawful or appropriate. Nor do they tend to call on religion or on theories of empire or racial superiority as formal justifications for state boundaries or sovereignties, as they did in centuries past. Perhaps because we often believe the past is the past and cannot be changed, history has increasingly been seen in this century and the last as a legitimate source of authority.

The twentieth century marked the high point of the nation-state and international relations— itself a new term—focused on state-to-state relations. An increasingly important use of history was as a building block and justification for autonomous nations with their own states and territory. The Paris peace conference of 1919 took place as multinational empires in Europe and the Middle East were disappearing, leaving vast amounts of territory up for grabs. History was adduced by the representatives of would-be nations as an important and sometimes clinching argument. It is true that arguments based on security, economics, access to such assets as railway networks, ports and raw materials, or treaty obligations were also used, but assertions about the national identity of a particular piece of territory necessarily drew heavily on history. Interestingly, conquest, for so long accepted in international law as a basis for acquiring territory, was no longer compatible with self-determination.

While history was also employed in Paris to support demands for restitution unrelated to territory, that application became most prominent later on with crucial changes in the international environment. As the twentieth century wore on, conquest fell away even further than it had done by 1919 as a basis for claims. Furthermore as both old and new states proved reluctant for various reasons to open up border questions or tolerate secession, history was used less as a basis for territorial claims and relatively more to buttress claims for other types of recompense, including financial reparations and the revision of norms and rules deemed incompatible with the principle of sovereign equality. The era of decolonization and anti-colonial liberation, which witnessed a proliferation of new members of international society, was largely a story of demands for a more genuine and multifaceted self-determination without dissolving the borders drawn by colonial Europe. The use of history as restitution persists into the post-Cold War period, where outright territorial annexation remains rare, but where more general questions of state-making and interstate relations are often answered by reference to distant pasts and memories. Thus history continues to serve as a legitimate authority, even a distinct ethic, in international deliberation, although its use should be interpreted according to the political interests it has furthered.

Then: Paris, 1919

The Paris peace conference itself was in part modelled on earlier international negotiations, such as the Congress of Vienna of 1814–15, but it dealt with problems and issues on a different and greater scale. Although the peacemakers assembled in Paris understood that they were dealing with an unprecedented range of problems in a new and uncertain world, they repeatedly sought support and advice from history, even if they could not agree on what that meant. (Their Bolshevik opponents in Moscow were surer that the great pattern of history was simply unrolling itself, as it ought, towards a world without classes and borders.) After all, what other guides were available to help in the many decisions that had to be made?

The peace conference was, not coincidentally, the first time that academics participated in significant numbers in international negotiations. Even before the war ended, the British, the French and the Americans had indeed set up special committees of experts (France's was the *Comité des Etudes*, America's *The Inquiry*) to examine the demography, history and geography of the vast territories up for disposal as old empires vanished in the centre of Europe and the

Middle East. Many of their members, among them the historians Lewis Namier and Arnold Toynbee, came along to Paris. And the delegations of the lesser allies and all those nations struggling to emerge brought along their own academic experts to give their claims a proper scientific veneer.

The treaties signed with the defeated nations—Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman empire—reflect attempts to rectify the past and support new specific claims for restitution. They are a curious mix, incorporating as they do both the lofty ideals of the League of Nations, intended to overcome the evils of the ‘old’ diplomacy, and some very specific provisions about items that the Allies wanted replaced or returned on the grounds that they were seized illegitimately in the past. The Treaty of Versailles, for example, demands the return to Britain of the skull of an African ruler, apparently pickled by a German soldier, and of two priceless triptychs, and to France of flags, archives and works of art seized by Germany after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. When Belgium, however, tried to claim works of art taken from what were then the Low Countries to Vienna in the eighteenth century by their Habsburg rulers a special committee ruled that the transfer was legitimate at the time.⁷

The most disputed use of the past as a basis for claiming restitution came in the Allied insistence that the war was the responsibility of Germany and its allies. The damage, loss and costs had been so great that Allied publics and their statesmen felt strongly that the defeated must pay up. The infamous article 231 in the Treaty of Versailles was intended, so it was later said by the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, and others, to provide the legal basis for assessing the reparations to be paid by Germany. The Germans, probably correctly, took it in a moral sense, as making Germany bear sole guilt for the war. It was not an apology that was being demanded but close to it. The ‘war guilt clause’ as it came to be known, further stimulated the ‘war of the documents’, which had started as early as the first months of the war as all the combatant nations tried to assure their own publics and neutral opinion that they were merely defending themselves against aggression. The powers selectively released documents to show their innocence and the guilt of others. In the 1920s, a special unit within the German foreign office published an enormous collection of material designed to prove that Germany had not started the war and so should not be obliged to pay reparations. Die Grosse Politik, as this unit was called, shortened or omitted key documents dealing with, for example, the July crisis of 1914. The Germans also singled out foreign academics, prominent among them the American Harry Elmer Barnes, for special attention. In return they got interpretations of the war's origins sympathetic to the German point of view that no single country was responsible—or, alternatively, that all were.⁸

The main and repeated use of history in Paris was to support national claims for recognition and territory. The breakdown of political order as a result of the First World War and the collapse of the old multinational empires of Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans opened the door to independence for a host of would-be nations and to competing claims for territory. History had already played a crucial role long before the war in creating such national groups. The nineteenth century had seen the development of strongly held and articulated national identities. While national identity can be composed of many elements from shared religion to culture, historical myths played a key role in positing the continuous

existence of a people whose essence somehow remained intact down through many centuries. In reality, many of what came to be seen as the building blocks of national identity were created or at the very least embellished by linguists, ethnographers and historians in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most of the history written and taught in schools and universities in the nineteenth century was national, depicting past glories or humiliations. Governments, and their publics, enthusiastically commemorated triumphs such as Trafalgar or the Battle of Leipzig and, in the case of Serbian nationalists, their nation's greatest defeat at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. As Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out, 'modern nations and all their impedimenta generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so "natural" as to require no definition other than self-assertion'.⁹

The movements for Italian and German unification, which caused so much tension in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, were fuelled by the growing public awareness of and support for an Italy or a Germany, and they by no means exhausted the trend. Indeed, the appearance of Italy and Germany on the map of Europe encouraged other peoples, within the multinational and multilingual Austria-Hungary, Ottoman empire and Russia, to think of gaining, at the very least, political, legal and cultural rights to protect the 'nation'. Nor should we forget the well-developed and increasingly assertive Irish national movement with which the British repeatedly failed to come to terms.

While identification as a nation in a cultural or historical sense does not necessarily imply a separate independent state or clearly defined territory, that is how it came to be seen. Without full independence on its own land, the nation was somehow incomplete. Such an intertwining of nation, state and territory was fostered by the spread of the radical ideas set loose by the French Revolution, by increased democracy and by the concomitant transformation of the subject into the citizen.¹⁰ Older ideas such as Montesquieu's that a people were shaped by climate and geography seemed to suggest that the land and the nation were inextricably part of each other and that the nation was justified in claiming 'its' land. An added impetus was given by Social Darwinism, that misapplication of the theory of evolution of species in the natural world to human societies. The human race, so it was held, was divided into species which, as in nature, jostled for survival. Long before the term itself came to be widely used at the Paris peace conference, national self-determination based in large part on the sense of a shared culture and history had become a significant factor in domestic and international relations, causing wars and threatening the existence of the multinational empires.

The chaos and fluidity that prevailed at the end of the First World War encouraged both established and would-be nations to move quickly to gain what they could, whether independence or territory, before things settled down again. The Paris peace conference is often seen as creating Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia and permitting the re-emergence of countries such as Poland and the Baltic states, but in reality these nations were busy creating themselves on the ground by 1919. What the peacemakers could do was grant recognition, which was usually forthcoming, and adjudicate borders, which was much more difficult.

Three main arguments for territory were brought by the numerous petitioners who now made their way to Paris: economic necessity, strategic importance, and that intermingled pair of history and ethnicity. Czechoslovakia and Poland both claimed the Duchy of Teschen (Cieszyn), for example, because it was rich in coal and was a centre of railway connections; Italy wanted to extend its northern borders up to the highest line in the Alps and the Dolomites to protect against future invasions from the north. It was the last set of grounds, however, which often carried the greatest weight. After all, the American President himself had given approval to the principle of the self-determination of peoples (although he had not been clear as to whether that meant a fully independent nation-state or something less). And Wilson came to Paris with tremendous moral authority and the weight of a growing economic and military power behind him. The other two leading statesmen, Lloyd George and Clemenceau, had, willingly or not, gone along with the principle.

Although the peacemakers tried to rationalize and speed up the proceedings of the conference by setting up special territorial commissions, the Council of Ten (comprising the representatives of Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the United States) and the later and smaller Council of Four (Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Wilson and Vittorio Orlando of Italy) frequently found themselves listening to lengthy disquisitions on history, intended to prove beyond doubt the rightfulness of a particular claim to territory, from existing or would-be nations. The first spokesman for the Zionist delegation started his presentation on 27 February 1919 by saying that 'the solemn hour awaited during 18 centuries by Jewish people had, at length, arrived', and that the delegates were there to assert their 'historic rights to Palestine'.¹¹ An American expert who sat in on another day to hear Roman Dmowski from Poland and Edvard Benes from Czechoslovakia complained:

When Dmowski related the claims of Poland, he began at eleven o'clock in the morning and in the fourteenth century, and could only reach the year 1919 and pressing problems of the moment as late as four o'clock in the afternoon. Benes followed immediately with the counter claims of Czecho-Slovakia, and, if I remember correctly, he began a century earlier and finished an hour later.¹²

Yet despite the sarcasm and the frequent impatience with which the peacemakers and their advisers greeted such disquisitions, they accepted the validity of history as a basis for territorial claims.

History had acquired such weight by 1919 because other grounds had fallen away completely or were increasingly questioned. No one believed any longer that dynastic marriage should result in the transfer of land, whatever its inhabitants might prefer. Those inhabitants, at least in the 'civilized' world, were understood to have the right to choose their rulers. Purchase, despite the relatively recent instances in Louisiana and Alaska, was also no longer widely accepted. Conquest, the oldest and most common mechanism for the transfer of territory, was still seen as justifiable, although in the course of the nineteenth century that too had been

increasingly questioned in the new and growing field of international law.¹³ Although conquest was still accepted by the Great Powers as valid in claiming territory, they frequently protested, especially if they had not been consulted beforehand.¹⁴ As a leading legal expert, Coleman Phillipson wrote in 1916: 'Of all the titles by which sovereigns hold and govern territories, title by conquest is now generally considered the least desirable.'¹⁵

That, it should be noted, was not considered to be the case for 'uncivilized' parts of the world, where the forcible seizure of territory in, for example, Africa or Asia, by European or other 'advanced' powers such as the United States or the self-governing parts of the British empire, was accepted on the grounds that it was spreading civilization.¹⁶

When conquest took place in the nineteenth century, history, along with its close relative ethnicity, was increasingly brought in as a further support. When Germany annexed Alsace and Lorraine after the Franco-Prussian war, German nationalists argued that the provinces had been seized illegitimately by Louis XIV and that, since their inhabitants had remained essentially German in their nature, there was no need for a referendum to ascertain their wishes. All that was needed to restore the newly acquired peoples to their rightful nature was German rule. As the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* put it: 'We must begin with the rod. The alienated children must feel our fist. Love will follow the disciplining, and it will make them Germans again.'¹⁷ The architect of the new Germany, its Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, was happy to play to such sentiments in order to gain the support and votes of German nationalists.

At the Paris peace conference the issue of conquest as a basis for territorial claims scarcely came up, partly because most of the seizures of territory during the war had been done by the defeated powers who, in their armistice agreements, had been obliged to evacuate their troops from all occupied lands. When Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia¹⁸ invaded Hungary in 1919 the peacemakers ordered them to withdraw—which, after some resistance on the part of Romania, they did. Using history in place of conquest to assert claims, however, turned out to be complicated. While clear-cut rules regarding conquest—treaties imposed on defeated powers as well as effective occupation of the territories in question—had been developed over the preceding centuries, history proved an unreliable guide. Apart from anything else there was too much of it. The movements of peoples over time, the rise and fall of empires, and the expansion and contraction of borders had left in their wake a host of overlapping claims. Romania's claim to the Banat, that rich piece of farmland also claimed by Serbia on behalf of what was to become the new state of Yugoslavia, is just one example among many of the difficulties that the peacemakers faced in Paris.

Romania used the legal argument that it had been promised the Banat in the secret clauses of the Treaty of Bucharest of 1916 as well as economic arguments, but laid particular stress on the assertion that the region had been inhabited by Romanians 'for many centuries'.¹⁹ Serbia produced a counter-history. 'Since the Middle Ages,' its representatives in Paris argued, 'the portion of the Banat claimed by Serbia had always been closely connected with the Serbian

people.' It was the cradle of Serbian nationalism. 'Serbian Renaissance had taken root in the Banat in the 17th Century; there Serb literature, art, theatre, etc., had reappeared. There the great Serbian ideal had been conceived.' When the Serbian royal family had been exiled, it had naturally taken refuge there.²⁰ In a discussion with his fellow peacemakers, Wilson noted that the delegates coming before them did not 'represent their facts in the same way, and there would always be something that was not quite clear'. The United States was always ready, he said, to approve a settlement based on facts. The mission of his Inquiry was to study 'such questions of fact as racial aspects, historical antecedents, and economic and commercial elements'.²¹

Collecting statistics on economic activities was relatively easy. Ethnicity and history were a different matter, open to a multitude of competing interpretations and narratives. The Magyars or the Germans, for example, had migrated westwards over many centuries; was their natural 'home' their starting-point or where they had finally settled? Poland, fighting to re-establish itself on the map of Europe, had already been deprived of much of its territory before the partition between Austria, Russia and Prussia in 1795. There were profound disagreements among both Polish patriots and the peacemakers to whom they were appealing about how extensive the Poland of 1919 should be. Józef Pilsudski, who controlled the government in Warsaw, preferred a relatively compact Poland, while Dmowski and his Polish National Committee based in Paris wanted to bring back under Polish rule much of the territory lost in the eighteenth century, even though it would include large numbers of Germans, Byelorussians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians. Lithuanian and Ukrainian nationalists who were themselves struggling to create independent nations regarded the Poles as their rivals. Serbian nationalists looked longingly back at the fourteenth-century kingdom of Stefan Dušan which had stretched from the Danube to the Aegean. Bulgaria claimed much of the same territory based on the even earlier kingdom of Simeon. That in turn raised further questions. Was the oldest historic claim the most valid? Or did there have to be something like a continuous presence of a particular people? And how did you establish that there was such a thing as a German or an Italian people centuries before the notion of being German or Italian had ever existed? The assumption, so strongly held by nationalists then and since in spite of all evidence to the contrary, was that peoples had an essential character which travelled unchanged through time.

Greece's claims at the peace conference, for example, were largely based on the argument that the present-day citizens of what was a poor and backward state at the southern tip of the Balkans were the lineal descendants of the ancient Greeks. This ignored the centuries-long mixing of peoples which had come about as the Slavs pushed west and south and the more recent Turkish incursions, as well as the rise and fall of successor empires from the Romans to the Ottomans. It also gave Greek nationalists a basis for claiming the territory once ruled by ancient Greek kingdoms. Nature might set limits to the aspirations of other peoples, said a leading Greek nationalist, 'but not to those of the Greeks. The Greeks were not in the past and are not now subject to the laws of nature.'²² In Paris, Eleutherios Venizelos, the Greek prime minister, claimed Asia Minor on the grounds that it had belonged to Greek civilization in the past and still did in the present. ²³ In his attempt to recreate a mythic past, Venizelos sent his forces to seize a large piece of Asia Minor and so created a catastrophe for Greece and for the

million Greeks, many of them defined as such only by religion, who had to leave a newly resurgent Turkey.

Venizelos was by no means alone in trying to explain away the uncomfortable reality that many of those who were claimed as part of a nation did not in fact regard themselves in that way. The Italians argued for the South Tyrol, which was overwhelmingly German-speaking, on the grounds that the Tyrolese were descendants of an earlier non-German people who had lost their culture and language over the centuries and who needed, therefore, to be restored to their real community. The French used similar arguments with both the Saar and the Rhineland, asserting that they were French originally and had been lost to German rule. The Rhinelanders, so those advocating annexation argued, had been obliged to speak German over the years, but in their appreciation of good wine and their *joie de vivre* they were obviously French.²⁴

Not surprisingly, those who were being reclaimed for a particular nation did not always welcome the invitation. The South Tyrolese never accepted Italy's attempts to make them Italian again, and indeed struggled to maintain a degree of autonomy and to protect their own language and culture.²⁵ Moreover, the new borders left significant national minorities throughout the centre of Europe. The League of Nations oversaw numerous plebiscites intended to allow the inhabitants of disputed areas—Upper Silesia, for example, or parts of the Polish Corridor—to decide for themselves which country they wished to belong to; but this by no means settled all secessionist or irredentist impulses over the following decades. Yet again, history could be and was brought in to justify secessionist movements, among the Sudetenland Germans, for example, or the Slovaks inside Czechoslovakia.

In some cases in Paris, the use of history was intermingled with assertions, familiar in the scramble for colonies, that a superior civilization had the right and indeed the duty to take over an inferior. Venizelos was fond of saying that the Greeks with their advanced, more vigorous culture were bound in time to dominate and civilize the backward Turks. The Italians, who also claimed kinship with a glorious empire in the distant past, in this case the Roman, marshalled varieties of history to persuade their allies to give them a swathe of the Dalmatian coast including the port of Fiume (Rijeka) at the top of the Adriatic, which the new state of Yugoslavia had every reason to expect would remain with it. 'The whole of Dalmatia', the Italian government argued, 'was united to Italy in the centuries of Rome and Venice, for its own good fortune and for the world's peace.'²⁶ (Mussolini also used the argument of spreading peace and civilization when he invaded Ethiopia in 1935.)

The introduction of mandates, with their provision that the former German and Ottoman territories in Africa, the Middle East and Asia be administered with the welfare of their inhabitants in mind, served to modify somewhat the rights conveyed on 'advanced' powers by their presumptive civilizing mission. In 1928 the Pact of Paris, known more familiarly as the Kellogg–Briand pact, which was eventually signed by over 50 nations, outlawed aggressive war and conquest. That did not stop Hitler, Mussolini or the Japanese militarists; but, as Scott

Shapiro and Oona Hathaway point out in *The internationalists*,²⁷ the fact that they were defeated served to further discredit conquest. This has left history and self-determination as key bases for claims for territory in the later twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Now: the later twentieth century

While history was again summoned to the service of diplomacy after 1945, there were significant differences in how, where and by whom it was used to back up claims. History was still used to frame demands for independence or secession, but increasingly was also employed to exact apologies and restitution for past wrongs, the stakes of which were not limited to the territorial. On the whole, one of the consequences of the Cold War was to weaken incentives for the formal expansion of state borders, even though the de facto or de jure sovereign authority within pre-existing borders often changed. That has held true until the present, with some notable exceptions that will be discussed later in this section. And so, while there was on the whole little appetite for territorial aggrandizement among national leaders and their representatives, historical argument did prove an important justification in transforming the membership of international society in other ways.

Particularly with the emergence of the so-called Third World during the era of decolonization, histories of imperial exploitation and stolen 'destinies' became tied to moral and legal claims about national independence. Self-determination had of course been applied in important ways before the Cold War—Hitler, for one, referred to the 'inalienable right to self-determination' of national minorities when he invaded Czechoslovakia in 1938—but the idea found new political meanings and expressions with its adoption by the international anti-colonial movement. These claims were usually about liberation within existing colonial borders, whereby the land, resources, property and institutions of the colonizers were to be returned to the colonized.

Important intellectual foundations for decolonization were laid at the Bandung conference in 1955, where 29 states from Africa and Asia gathered to discuss various matters of common concern. Although participants represented nations of different sizes, ethnicities, religions, languages and indeed political alignments—many were pro-western, some were pro-communist and others could have been described as neutralist—there were principles upon which all could agree. The reason, explained the head of the Philippines delegation Carlos Romulo (with characteristic rhetorical flair), was that they shared 'generally speaking, a common historical experience. We belong to the community of hurt, heartbreak, and deferred hopes.'²⁸ The statespeople at Bandung asked varied questions of the past: on the one hand, questions about who they were, and on the other, questions about what they were justified in doing, domestically and internationally. For both sorts of questions, answers were sought in the scars and traumas of colonial injustice.

As Romulo recalls in his memoirs, it would be quite incorrect to treat the racial makeup of the conference—no white nation was invited—as its only defining feature.²⁹ Equally if not more notable was that participants succeeded in constructing a common identity and shared

commitment to particular 'standards and procedures of present-day international relations' and to 'the formulation and establishment of certain norms', as Roeslan Abdulgani, the Indonesian secretary-general of the conference, once put it.³⁰

One component of this newly forged and cross-continental identity (what participants were calling the 'Bandung spirit') had to do with their common poverty and low standards of living. But a second and more important component, related to the first yet different, had to do with experiences of subjection at one time or another by a foreign power, usually European. This latter emphasis made western powers so uneasy that President Eisenhower refrained from sending routine greetings to the historic event. (It is a little-known fact that the only western country to do so was Canada.³¹) But Bandung was neither a communist-inspired gathering nor an anti-western revolt—provided the West was willing to dissociate itself from its imperial attitudes and practices. The conference was instead a re-evaluation, furthered by historical argument, of what ought to be considered legitimate and illegitimate, right and wrong, even legal and illegal, in the management of statehood in international society.

The Algerian War was a case in point. France had seized Algiers in 1830 and by 1875, after decades of extremely bloody conquest, was administering Algeria as a very precious colonial possession; indeed, Algeria's Mediterranean region was treated as an integral part of France. 'The Algerian departments are part of the French Republic ... Between them and metropolitan France there can be no conceivable secession ... Ici, c'est la France!' reiterated President Pierre Mendès-France in November 1954.³² Were the Algerians to unilaterally declare themselves independent, their actions would constitute an illegal debasement and denial of France's sovereign authority. Yet much of the newly emerged Third World took a different view: independence was the 'lost heritage' of the Algerian people, from whom sovereignty had been robbed in a process of violent subjection by foreign powers, a process that accounted for much of the suffering and exploitation of the present. Such obstinate and longstanding denials on the part of the empires of the right of the colonized to self-determination were said to be contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and an impediment to the spirit and promotion of international law, world peace and cooperation.³³ As reflected in a growing list of UN General Assembly resolutions and international agreements, the principle of self-determination of peoples and nations was also deemed a prerequisite to the full enjoyment of universal human rights.³⁴ And hence liberation to regain control of captured territories and captured identities, the Third World asserted, was not only legitimate; it was an espousal of the liberty, equality and fraternity which represented the guiding principles of France since the Revolution.

It was this general argument (that respect for self-determination should lead to restored sovereignty for what were understood as enslaved but distinct nations) that justified a great many national liberation struggles during the Cold War.³⁵ The Non-Aligned Movement, formed in Belgrade in 1961, called upon the entire developing world to support liberation struggles by 'all possible means', convinced both of the just cause of struggle and of the prospect that metropolitan states would attempt to cling onto their 'prizes' and 'jewels' with ferocious persistence (as reflected in incidents such as the 1956 Suez invasion and the Congo crisis of the early 1960s). Of course, most in the West disagreed. But the increasingly large

majority exercised by the Third World in the UN General Assembly (and the support offered to that majority by the Soviets) provided a channel through which to contest prevailing conceptions of international normative order and a venue in which historical arguments about self-determination could flourish. As the renowned International Relations theorist Martin Wight observed nervously in a 1956 lecture at the London School of Economics, the 'Bandung powers', as a kind of 'Mazzinian revolutionary league', were transforming the UN into 'an organ of the anti-colonial movement, a kind of Holy Alliance in reverse'.³⁶

That self-determination occupied such a venerable place in the annals of many 'civilized' powers themselves made its arrival as an organizing principle of international society difficult to deny completely. Most of all, Third World revolutionaries were fond of reminding the United States of the role of liberation struggle in its own history. What could be more legitimate than the battles waged by the brave peoples of the United States to gain independence from British colonial rule? Ho Chi Minh's proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, for instance, repeated verbatim the words of Thomas Jefferson in the second paragraph of the 1776 American Declaration of Independence. (He regularly identified his ideals with those of famous American patriots: 'Was not Washington considered a revolutionary? I, too, want to set my people free!') Sukarno had adopted a similar approach at the opening of the Bandung conference, referring to the American War of Independence as the 'first successful anticolonial war in history' and quoting the poet Longfellow, who wrote of Paul Revere's midnight ride through the New England countryside on 18 April 1775 to warn of the arrival of British troops.³⁷

The mingled use of self-determination and history reached a sort of apogee when it was applied to validate violence, including the international use of force to support liberation movements. Such militancy was symbolized in the 1966 tricontinental conference in Havana, where revolutionaries invited by Fidel Castro, many still dressed in their military fatigues, declared 'revolutionary armed violence' a 'right and duty of the peoples' and a necessary, wholly inescapable condition for the ending of colonialism.³⁸ Imperialism was perceived, echoing the writings of Frantz Fanon, as an intrinsic act of violence which could not be overthrown except through violent means.³⁹ (The many legacies of Gandhian non-violent resistance and negotiated transfers of power had been forgotten or, more likely, ignored on the grounds that they contained an implicit threat of violence derived from colonial wars elsewhere.⁴⁰) 'History, logic, and reason' proved that the 'effective channel to reach victory is armed insurrection' and that 'there is not and cannot be room for withdrawal'. That history embodied a mortal struggle or dialectic between protagonists and antagonists, which marched forward towards anti-colonial justice, was of course a recurring theme in revolutionary discourse of the 1960s and 1970s. And indeed, within the guerrilla movements of Latin America, the hero-worship of figures like Simón Bolívar, José de San Martín and Antonio José de Sucre, in addition to the living insignia and ubiquitous visage of Che Guevara ('the most complete human being of our age', Jean-Paul Sartre once allegedly gushed), made ultra-radical ideology something of a mythical experience.⁴¹

The impact of decolonization on the number of newly independent actors within international society was staggering. In 1945, there were 51 members in the United Nations; by 1976 there

were 147, the vast majority of which were former colonies. Even after independence had been won, history continued to promise important dividends for the Third World, reaching beyond territory, flags and constitutions. Economically, much of the developing world was still bound to the former colonial powers. As reflected in the Non-Aligned Movement's formal embrace of concepts such as neo-colonialism and dependency, the command levers of the world political economy were largely perceived to be in the hands of a privileged few.⁴² And so, to the developing world, the economic aspects of the right of self-determination and the historical origins of such disparity between the rulers and the ruled could not be dissociated from other rights and freedoms which gave them dignity and allowed them to take their rightful place in the community of nations. Third World leaders, negotiating, as they stressed, for a majority of the world's citizens, again drew from the past to argue for forms of restitution ranging from reparations to the reform of international economic governance and law.

The call for a new international economic order (NIEO) was first formally made at the Algiers non-aligned summit in 1973. On one level, the NIEO can be understood as a series of demands and considerations embodied in official documents adopted at and negotiated within international meetings over the course of the 1970s (and to a lesser extent the 1980s).⁴³ In this sense, the essence of the NIEO was the right to economic development, premised on the observation that 70 per cent of the world's population accounted for just 30 per cent of the world's income. Its key proposals took the form of international principles, including: full permanent sovereignty of every state over its natural resources and all economic activities; the right of all states that were suffering or had suffered from foreign occupation, colonial domination or apartheid to full compensation and financial reparations; the right to carry out nationalization and regulation of foreign corporations operating within domestic borders; a just and equitable relationship between the prices of goods exported and those imported by developing countries; international monetary reform to promote an adequate flow of real resources; and the facilitation of producers' associations.⁴⁴

At its outset, the debate over the NIEO was marred by the 1973 oil crisis, itself precipitated by OPEC during the 1973 Arab–Israeli War. In taking this action, OPEC had made a dramatic and abrasive display of Third World assertiveness. The response came in kind. Any attempt to strangle or destabilize advanced western economies, warned US Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, could invite the use of military options. Washington, he growled, 'would not tolerate blackmail' and the 'Arabs' whip-hand'.⁴⁵ (There was considerable irony in Schlesinger's advocacy of gunboat diplomacy, associated as it was with the age of overseas empires, the imposition of 'unequal treaties' and extraterritoriality.) At the sixth special session of the UN General Assembly in 1974, non-aligned states and members of the Group of 77 boldly presented the NIEO as a response to deeply entrenched patterns of history— patterns that over the passage of centuries and because of international power distributions had become ordinary but unjust features of global order. Convening the special session was itself an attempt to redress economic inequalities that had 'developed as a result of a historic process of domination over the resources and the productive forces of the countries of the Third World'.⁴⁶ Under consideration, then, was nothing less than the economic and ecological ramifications of centuries-old European empires.

Smaller states concluded that history had presented a bill to the wealthiest and most privileged: the opulence and lavish consumption levels of western society were owed to 'the collection and historical accumulation of capital generated by colonialism'. A recurrent theme was that 'the rich have not become rich by divine design' but by 'expropriating the fruits' of developing-world labour. The poor countries 'are not what they are because of congenital incompetence; they are so because of history, which has resulted in certain countries dominating, exploiting and robbing others in order to get rich themselves'. The delegation from Tanzania announced: 'An historical analysis reveals that the present state of affairs of the underdevelopment in the third world is by no means a natural phenomenon.' And so by demanding change, the developing world was refusing 'to be a mere object of history'. Houari Boumédiène, head of the Revolutionary Council of Algeria and chairperson of the special session, summarized: the privileges conferred by the NIEO to developing states, from nationalization to commodity price fixing, constituted 'acts of development'. They acquired this special meaning because of a historical context of oppression.⁴⁷

The West's response was not to 'make the case for colonialism' in the straightforward sense, but to downplay its structural impacts, to allege irrationality and imprecision in the arguments made by the Third World (the then US Ambassador to the UN, John Scali, openly denigrated the NIEO as an 'amorphous glob'), and ultimately to shift discussion away from the past towards an increasingly interdependent future, where all states, indiscriminately and as sovereign equals, ought to work together without injuring what was being called the general interest.⁴⁸ Henry Kissinger's address, published that year in the journal *International Organization*, called for the abandonment of 'outdated generalities and sterile slogans' and 'traditional stereotypes' such as the 'northern rich and southern poor' (presumably in view of the very real but unequally distributed riches collected by a minority of oil-producing southern states) and a focus instead on the present. Indeed, Kissinger's most memorable and by all accounts unlikely statement, given his low opinion of India and Indian leaders, was a reference to the Indian President and philosopher Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan: 'We are not the helpless tools of determinism. Though humanity renews itself from the past, it is also developing something new and unforeseen. Today we have to make a new start with our minds and hearts.'⁴⁹

On the one hand, Kissinger's argument was for letting bygones be bygones. But he also seemed to imply that the historical claims of the developing world ought not to be taken seriously—that they were either unconvincing or politically irrelevant. Certainly for realists such as Kissinger, the content of historical arguments had less salience than the relative power of those making and receiving the charges. Kissinger, himself a historian and political scientist, has always been fond of civilizational analysis, and had given much thought not only to why history matters, but to whose histories matter.⁵⁰ He remarked privately that 'the axis of history starts in Moscow, goes to Bonn, crosses over to Washington, and then goes to Tokyo. What happens in the South is of no importance.'⁵¹

The developing world would soon give up on the NIEO, which over the course of nearly two decades of deliberation in and around the UN never lived up to its expectations. In particular, the end of the Cold War and the events of the 1990s seemed to mark decisively the

capitulation of Third World activism under the systematic pressures and incentives of the global economy. Many developing countries, willingly or not, adopted neo-liberal economic policies associated with the IMF and World Bank, apparently confirming the intellectual hegemony of the so-called Washington Consensus. With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, many were idealistic enough and blinkered enough to believe that we were witnessing an unprecedented normative convergence around the values of western democracy and the 'new world order' led by the United States.⁵² Yet proclamations of 'the end of history' were not accompanied by the end of history's uses and abuses in arbitrating statehood. Very briefly, a few examples may be highlighted here to attest to the continued potential of history in the more traditional sense of reconstituting international borders.⁵³

First, history has continued to justify a whole series of identity wars, some of which have proved fatal to nation-states. Such was the case when Yugoslavia broke apart under the weight of competing ethnic nationalisms. We must not exaggerate the role played by 'ancient ethnic hatreds' in the Yugoslav wars: it was not irresistible forces of primordial tension that dissolved the imperfect yet enduring federalism successfully maintained by Josip Broz Tito. But it would be a mistake to ignore the skilful manipulation of the past in the nationalist programmes implemented by politicians such as Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman. In seeking international recognition and local support, irredentist cries for the re-establishment of a 'Greater Serbia' and 'Greater Croatia' turned to nostalgic visions of once-upon-a-time homelands, anniversaries of historic battles fought hundreds of years ago and charges of intergenerational victimization. In the case of Serbia, the call to 'rally all the Serbians into one Serbian state' (to do, once and for all, 'what Serbian politicians after World War One did not') was sometimes premised on the existence of Stefan Dušan's fourteenth-century kingdom that existed prior to the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans.⁵⁴

History has also been used in the rare instances of military invasion and annexation in the past 30 years. Saddam Hussein invoked historical arguments to justify his occupation of Kuwait in 1991. Seeking the approval of world public opinion, he claimed that Kuwait had submitted to Iraqi suzerainty in the eighteenth century. Iraq, in fact, had not existed then—its borders as a sovereign state were drawn in the twentieth century, by British colonial administrators—but this small detail mattered little to Hussein: by presidential decree, Kuwait City was renamed al-Kadhima, an Arabic name for the region which had been used during the early Islamic era, and the Iraqi government tried its best to obliterate any notion of 'Kuwait' by renaming its southern neighbour Province 19. Of course, Hussein was eventually defeated and Kuwait restored, but arguments such as the one he made that certain territories 'are and always have been' part of national homelands are heard across contested territories throughout the world. It is true that many such territories, like those in the South and East China Seas, have remained more or less peaceful, but others have experienced outright armed conflict.

The most obvious example of such violence is Vladimir Putin's seizure of Crimea and his claims to eastern Ukraine. In a recent speech to a joint session of the Russian parliament, redolent with patriotism, he presented Crimea's secession and union with Russia as the latest chapter in a continuous epic of spectacular victories and common bloodlines.⁵⁵ 'Everything,' he said, 'in

Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride.' This was the location of 'the ancient Khersones where Prince Vladimir was baptised, whose spiritual feat of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilisation, and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.' It was also home to 'graves of Russian soldiers whose bravery brought Crimea into the Russian empire', to Sevastopol, a 'legendary city' and 'birthplace of Russia's Black Sea Fleet', and to 'Balaklava and Kerch, Malakhov Kurgan and Sapun Ride. Each of these places is dear to our hearts, symbolising Russian military glory and outstanding valour.'⁵⁶

Conclusion: the uses of history

History plays many roles in international society and the practice of its politics. While recognizing the potentially edifying (or disorientating) role of the past as a guide for predicting the outcomes of particular foreign policy decisions, in this article we have instead historicized the intimate relationship of historical argument to the terms and content of debates concerning statehood. In particular, we have drawn attention to two themes which in practice overlap and inform each other, but which may be separated for analytical purposes: first, history as a basis for claims to independence and to territory; and second, history as a ground for restitution in the form of financial reparations, apologies and institutional reform. By comparing the use of histories across a broad chronology, we have pointed out both continuities and differences, and sketched out a line of argument to suggest that history has increasingly been seen, in this century and the last, as a legitimate source of authority.

When the peacemakers met in Paris in 1919, they were faced with the task of apportioning vast amounts of territory, resources and people, whether among the victors or among states appearing or reappearing on the map. When older forms of authority—in particular, conquest—proved unavailable or inappropriate, statespeople turned to the past to identify or construct claims. While history was employed to support demands for non-territorial kinds of restitution, including through the war guilt clause that underpinned Allied claims for German reparations, its main and most consequential use was to support national claims for recognition and territory.

The collapse of the remaining empires, namely the overseas empires of European states, took place more gradually through the twentieth century. Here again, discussions regarding the extension and transformation of membership in international society would be framed by historical argument. Even more strongly than before, the past became tied to self-determination, and served as the moral and legal thrust behind various anti-colonial movements. History would soon be employed to justify those movements' many material and non-material demands, including a new international economic order. However, while history was still being used to justify territorial expansion, that particular use was relatively less influential during this period than it had been at Paris: the argument for decolonization was not usually a call for the reconstitution of international borders, but more often one for a more genuine and multifaceted self-determination of nations within the territorial borders drawn by European colonizers. As the Cold War came to an end, this basic trend of history's use has continued.

What additional conclusions are to be drawn from our account? On the one hand, it seems obvious that appeals to the past have affected the political behaviour of states. Even if we assume that states act purely according to self-interest, or that statecraft is exclusively motivated by a cold and narrow *realpolitik*, we ought to recognize that states must nonetheless rationalize and legitimate otherwise controversial behaviour. True, history is rolled out with varying degrees of (and sometimes a shameless disregard for) accuracy, but it remains useful from a diplomatic perspective in so far as it succeeds in justifying otherwise controversial action.⁵⁷ In noting this, the point is not to say that the use of historical argument is necessarily instrumentalized and therefore inevitably false, irrational or distorted (though of course botched histories are commonplace). It is to suggest that the record of its use, which is often treated as an adroit but negligible rhetorical diversion, should be more broadly viewed as worthwhile subject-matter in itself.

It is also worth noting that such use of history raises a number of important historical and philosophical questions of its own: questions about the relationship of history to other accepted forms of authority in international deliberation, including international law; about whether we can ever treat the present as separate from the past; and about the extent to which memories of the past are malleable in the hands of the powerful, for example. And if history is to act as an arbiter of the terms and content of international discussion, there emerge important normative questions about the context and criteria through which to assess claims. In brief: if history, then whose history, why, and how?

Today we see populists whose longing for golden ages (many of which never existed in the first place) is used to justify controversial policy reforms. Donald Trump's 'Make America Great Again' reflects a wistful yearning for a bygone prosperity mixed with regret for the relative decline of the United States as world hegemon, and echoes earlier nativisms which fuelled the 'Know-Nothings' of the mid-nineteenth century or the isolationists of the interwar years in the twentieth. In Britain's referendum on EU membership in 2016 history was called in, most effectively by the Leave campaign, to argue for a restored sovereignty which would somehow enable Britain to become a global power once more. Brexiteers on the far right continue to exploit foggy memories of past grandeur. And in both Hungary and Poland right-wing populist governments refer to what they see as a gloriously white and Christian past, one in which the ethnic and religious complexities of modern-historical Europe conspicuously disappear. To them, historical accuracy hardly matters; and, as President Trump has made abundantly clear, nor do 'facts'. His claims about the past fail to meet even the most basic standards of evidence and reason.

Equally dishonest and opportunistic abuses of history abound, and they are not limited to Europe. In India, for instance, the Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies are arguing that 'true India' is an exclusively Hindu nation, which ought to see its Muslim and other religious minorities as destructive aliens.⁵⁸ Some months ago the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, appointed a committee to prove that Hindus are 'directly descended from the land's first inhabitants many thousands of years ago, and make the case that ancient Hindu scriptures

are fact not myth'. The committee's chairman told the Reuters news agency that he was 'asked to present a report that will help the government rewrite certain aspects of ancient history'.⁵⁹

It is a paradox that the less the past is understood and appreciated in its complexity, the more it is being used. It is also curious that while much of the authority derived from modern historical argument has to do with an assumption that it is 'true' and evidence-based, its validity is so often ignored or undermined by those who use it. It is too easy to say we are entering a 'post-truth' world where veracity no longer matters. The continued use of history in both domestic and international politics surely attests to its enduring appeal as a source of legitimate authority. In the past century, as we have attempted to show, this role has been an important one in international society, particularly in supporting claims of various sorts and informing the existence of our shared institutions. We need, of course, to remain aware that historical argument, whether it is being made by our politicians, our diplomats, our journalists or even our professional historians, is never perfectly value-neutral. And even where it is made with proper attention to 'the facts', it is not necessarily objective. Because our interpretation of the past is connected to our present concerns, we need to manage and at times struggle against how those concerns limit or shape our understanding. We, and our leaders, will continue to call on history, and we need to recognize both its power and its perils. That much was true in 1919, and it remains true in 2019.

1 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian war*, trans. Richard Crawley (Urbana, IL: Project Gutenberg, 2009).

2 John Najemy, 'Society, class, and state in Machiavelli's Discourses on Livy', in John Najemy, ed., *The Cambridge companion to Machiavelli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 96–111.

3 See e.g. Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig interpretation of history* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

4 Graham Allison, *Destined for war: can America and China escape Thucydides' trap?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2017); <https://www.belfercenter.org/thucydides-trap/overview-thucydides-trap>. (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessible on 12 Nov. 2018.)

5 Useful explorations of the role of history in decision-making include Hal Brands and Jeremi Suri, *The power of the past: history and statecraft* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2015); Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at war: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu and the Vietnam decisions of 1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in time: the uses of history for decision makers* (New York: Free Press, 1986).

6 David Stevenson, 'Learning from the past: the relevance of international history', *International Affairs* 90: 1, Jan. 2014, pp. 5–22.

7 *The Treaty of Versailles and after: annotations of the text of the treaty* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1947), pp. 522–6.

- 8 See Holger Herwig, 'Clio deceived: patriotic self-censorship in Germany after the Great War', *International Security* 12: 2, 1987, pp. 5–44.
- 9 Eric Hobsbawm, 'The nation as invented tradition', extracted in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds, *Nationalism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 76; see also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities* (London: Verso, 1991).
- 10 See e.g. Charles Maier, *Once within borders: territories of power, wealth, and belonging since 1500* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2016), p. 192.
- 11 Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States [hereafter FRUS]: the Paris peace conference 1919, vol. 4 (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 162.
- 12 Cited in Neil Smith, *American empire: Roosevelt's geographer and the prelude to globalization* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2003), p. 150.
- 13 See Sharon Korman, *The right of conquest: the acquisition of territory by force in international law and practice* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), ch. 3 *passim*.
- 14 Korman, *The right of conquest*, p. 80.
- 15 Quoted in Korman, *The right of conquest*, p. 93.
- 16 Korman, *The right of conquest*, ch. 2 *passim*.
- 17 Cited in Gordon Craig, *Germany 1866–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 30.
- 18 The name 'Yugoslavia' was not used until later, but for convenience we shall use it here.
- 19 FRUS: the Paris peace conference 1919, vol. 3, pp. 830–31.
- 20 FRUS: the Paris peace conference 1919, vol. 3, pp. 824–5.
- 21 FRUS: the Paris peace conference 1919, vol. 3, p. 854.
- 22 Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers: six months that changed the world* (London: John Murray, 2011), pp. 358–9.
- 23 FRUS: the Paris peace conference 1919, vol. 3, pp. 867–8.
- 24 MacMillan, *Peacemakers*, p. 182.
- 25 Antony Alcock, 'Trentino and Tyrol: from Austrian crownland to European region', in Seamus Dunn and T. G. Fraser, eds, *Europe and ethnicity: World War I and contemporary ethnic conflict* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 68–70.
- 26 MacMillan, *Peacemakers*, p. 300.
- 27 Oona A. Hathaway and Scott J. Shapiro, *The internationalists: how a radical plan to outlaw war remade the world* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017).
- 28 See Romulo's address in Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Asia–Africa speaks from Bandung* (Jakarta, 1955), p. 202.

- 29 Carlos Romulo, *Forty years: a Third World soldier at the UN* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986), pp. 137–9; Carlos Romulo, *The meaning of Bandung* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956), p. 2.
- 30 Roeslan Abdulgani, *Bandung spirit: moving on the tide of history* (Jakarta: Prapantja, 1964), pp. 72, 103.
- 31 David Webster, 'Foreign policy, diplomacy, and decolonization', in Karen Dubinsky, Sean Mills and Scott Rutherford, eds, *Canada and the Third World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), p. 175.
- 32 Quoted in Alistair Horne, *A savage war of peace: Algeria 1954–1962* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2006), p. 98.
- 33 See esp. the Bandung final communiqué, repr. in Romulo, *The meaning of Bandung*, pp. 92–102.
- 34 See e.g. UN General Assembly, A/Res/637(VII), 20 Dec. 1962.
- 35 The use of history is of course fundamental to the politics of revolutionary actors (both state and non-state), for the revolution is often defined in contrast to the history which precedes it.
- 36 Quoted in Mark Mazower, *Governing the world* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), p. 309.
- 37 Quoted in David Marr, *Vietnam 1945: the quest for power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 289. See also Sukarno's opening address in Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Asia–Africa speaks from Bandung*, pp. 19–29.
- 38 First solidarity conference of the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Havana: Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America, 1966), p. 34.
- 39 Frantz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth* (London: Penguin Classics, 2001).
- 40 See the political report approved by the conference in First solidarity conference, pp. 4–26.
- 41 Quoted in Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: a revolutionary life* (New York: Bantam, 1997), p. 468.
- 42 See e.g. Programme for peace and international cooperation: declaration as adopted by the second conference of the heads of state or government of non-aligned countries, Cairo, 10 Oct. 1964, A/5763.
- 43 See Robert Cox, 'Ideologies and the new international economic order', *International Organization* 33: 2, Spring 1979, pp. 257–302.
- 44 Declaration for the establishment of a new international economic order, UN General Assembly, A/Res/S-6/3201, 1 May 1974.
- 45 FRUS: 1969–1976, energy crisis, vol. 36 (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 2011), pp. 690–93.
- 46 Statement delivered by Peru in UN General Assembly, A/PV.2213 (verbatim records of the special session).

- 47 Quotations in this paragraph are taken from speeches by delegates from Peru, Pakistan, Zaire, Tanzania, Guinea and Algeria. See A/PV.2207–A/PV.2231.
- 48 Quoted in Robert Mortimer, *The Third World coalition in international politics* (London: Westview, 1984), p. 52. See also esp. A/PV.2209 and the comments delivered by France, which admitted that ‘what is called colonialism or neo-colonialism’ has been marked by ‘unilateral imbalances’, but claimed that ‘this is no reason to go to the other extreme and to injure the general interest by substituting, for past or present injustices, not only other injustices’ but ‘even policies detrimental to all’.
- 49 Henry Kissinger, ‘Address to the sixth special session of the United Nations General Assembly’, *International Organization* 28: 3, Summer 1974, pp. 573–83 (emphasis added).
- 50 See Andrew Hurrell, ‘Kissinger and world order’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 44: 1, 2015, pp. 165–72.
- 51 Quoted in Hurrell, ‘Kissinger and world order’, p. 170.
- 52 Francis Fukuyama, *The end of history and the last man* (London: Penguin, 1992).
- 53 Not discussed here are the important but unusual cases of internationally recognized states which emerged after 1989, such as Eritrea and South Sudan.
- 54 See the Aug. 1991 comments of Belgrade newspaper *Borba* in Final report of the UN Commission of Experts established pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780, S/1991/674 (New York, 1992), annex IV, ‘The policy of ethnic cleansing’, 28 Dec. 1994.
- 55 Roy Allison, ‘Russia and the post-2014 international legal order: revisionism and realpolitik’, *International Affairs* 93: 3, May 2017, pp. 519–44.
- 56 Address by the President of the Russian Federation, Kremlin, 18 March 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.
- 57 See e.g. on China's activities in the South China Sea: Zhou Fangyin, ‘Between assertiveness and self-restraint: China's South China Sea policy’, *International Affairs* 92: 4, July 2016, pp. 869–90; Katherine Morton, ‘China's ambitions in the South China Sea: is a legitimate maritime order possible?’, *International Affairs* 92: 4, July 2016, pp. 909–40.
- 58 Manjari Chatterjee Miller and Kate Sullivan de Estrada, ‘Pragmatism in Indian foreign policy: how ideas constrain Modi’, *International Affairs* 93: 1, 2017, pp. 27–50.
- 59 Rupam Jain and Tom Lasseter, ‘By rewriting history, Hindu nationalists aim to assert their dominance over India’, *Reuters*, 6 March 2018.