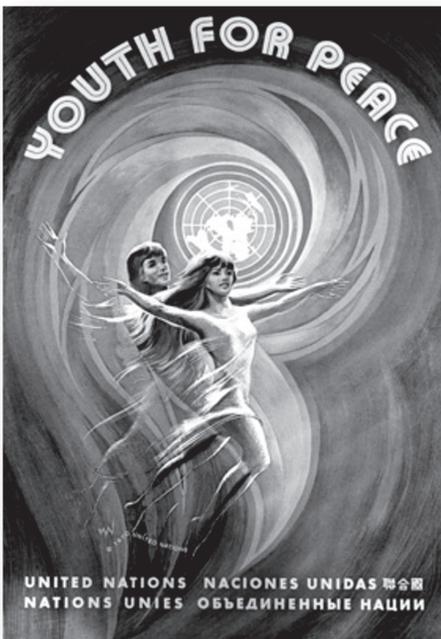




## South Asian Studies at ZMO

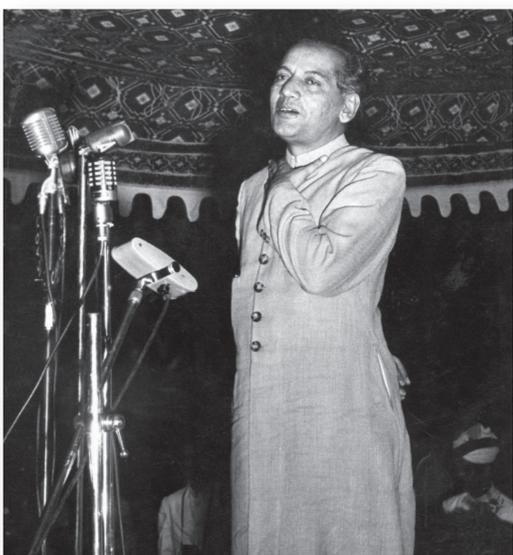


Poster for the World Youth Assembly of the UN, 1970; Dag Hammarskjöld Library, New York.

### Independent and Non-aligned? South Asian Youth and Student Groups, Cultural Encounters and International Engagements beyond the Cold War Blocs

Franziska Roy

This project grapples with the contradictions and dissonances of Cold War confrontations by focussing on youth and student groups in the newly independent states, India and Pakistan. While India competed with China for a pre-eminent position as spiritual leader of anti-colonial liberation movements, Pakistan was a close ally of America during the height of the Cold War. The activities of youth and student groups in these states reflect the challenges of negotiating the complicated field of force in which the two blocs competed for the loyalty of the Third World through regimes of aid and advice, as well as concerns over nation-building and a developmental agenda, citizenship ideals and internal political struggles. This cultural lens is one of the few possible approaches since most of the archive of both states remains classified. The project therefore looks at the activities of these groups, some of whom were part of international organisations such as the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the International Union of Students and the World Assembly of Youth who acted as (sometimes unwitting) Western or Soviet front organisations.



Faiz Ahmad Faiz addressing a public gathering. Source: Adabnuma, n.d.

### A Future in Question: Literary, Cultural and Political Debates in Pakistan, 1947 to 1977

Dr Ali Raza

This project seeks to examine the history of envisaged futures in Pakistan. It focuses on the cultural, literary, and political debates that animated Pakistan from its formative period to the end of the 1970s. Conducted between individuals and groups belonging to various political and ideological camps, these debates aptly reflected the anxieties accompanying Pakistan's formation as an independent nation state. At stake was nothing less than the all-encompassing future of Pakistan and the various peoples who inhabited it. These discussions emanated from a rich and diverse social, cultural, political and intellectual milieu that promised various trajectories towards a glorious and utopian future. When placed in the moment itself, this milieu was also reflective of the wider politics of the Cold War in which Pakistan played a key role. These debates were thus seminal in influencing official policies and wider public opinion in a way which had profound implications for the future direction and orientation of the nation state. As such then, this study is important not just for highlighting an understudied aspect of Pakistan's history, which has all too often been viewed in teleological terms, but also for its contribution to the study of the Cold War and its global impact.



Aligarh Muslim University. Heike Liebau 2015.

### Missionaries, Scholars, Politicians and Journalists: Life Trajectories and World Views of the Brothers Kheiri

Dr Heike Liebau

This research centres on the intertwined lives and changing world views of the South Asian Muslims Abdel Jabbar Kheiri (1880-1958) and Abdel Sattar Kheiri (1885-1953). Originating from Delhi, the brothers carried out political, religious, journalistic, pedagogical and scholarly activities in South Asia, the Middle East and Europe. By taking a comparative approach, the project focuses on their respective networks and explores the world views of the two brothers, both in their constant entwinement as well as individually. Their life trajectories will be placed into a global context of political changes, crises and wars during the first half of the 20th century and will be related to the growing national movement in India and the partition in 1947. A major question concerns how the Kheiris positioned themselves with regard to the British Empire, Europe and Germany, and how their views developed on the role of Islam as a religious and political category in Europe and South Asia. Another aim is to consider the reception of and reactions to their ideas, both during their life time as well as later.



## South Asian Studies at ZMO



Informal housing in Pakistan. Photo: Sanaa Alimia, 2012

### Contesting Modernity in Urban Pakistan: Street Politics, Moral Lives and Transnationalism

Dr Sanaa Alimia

This project will explore how cities in Pakistan are composed of different local, national, transnational, and multinational actors that are introducing rapid changes to physical landscapes and forms of belonging in the city, in order to question the increasingly naturalised “national order of things”. In addition, the project analyses the different ways in which alternative forms of belonging, being, and modernity are negotiated and expressed within the city. In particular, the project explores how informal structures and spaces, such as social solidarity networks in katchi bastis (squatter settlements) or the bazaar (rather than the shopping mall) are indicative of a “modern” culture – albeit in a different way to hegemonic understandings that are articulated by neoliberal structures in Pakistan.



A flood affectee in Pakistan’s southern Punjab criticizes the government for its slow response to the 2010 floods. Still from the documentary Waseb [Nation] (2015), directed by Ali Nabil Ahmad.

### Violent Environments: Ideology and the Politics of Ecology in Pakistan’s Peripheries

Dr Ali Nabil Ahmad

Ideological conflict and political violence in Muslim societies are often seen as processes of cultural clash between different strands of religious belief and political conviction – battles over religion, secularism and democracy, in which “Islamists” and “liberals” decide the fate of women’s education, human rights and the treatment of minorities. But even where mobilisation and political violence is outwardly religious, it is invariably the case that resource struggles underpin, mediate and structure the way political processes in Muslim societies such as Pakistan are generated and played out.

This project explores the ecological dimension of political violence and conflict in Pakistan and its peripheries. The question of how material struggles over natural resources relate to social histories and discourses to generate violence will be explored through the study of local battles over land and other forms of resource conflict. Special attention will be paid to peripheral regions and urban areas across Pakistan. It is hoped that the project will contribute to the development of a multi-layered political ecology of Pakistan.