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Jill Campbell-Miller. "From Disaster to Development?: The Role of the Second World War in Shaping Canadian Humanitarian Aid." *International Journal* 73:4 (December 2018): 609-622. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702018812027>.

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Review by **Matthew S. Wiseman**, University of Toronto

Historian Jill Campbell-Miller opens her article with a well-known axiom: "War is antithetical to development," she writes, using a clear point of reference to introduce her topic (610). From there Campbell-Miller asserts otherwise, tracing the history of Canadian humanitarian aid in the post-1945 period to demonstrate the influence of war and conflict on international development policies and non-governmental support efforts. She builds on the work of historians Hector Mackenzie, Susan Armstrong-Reid, and David Murray, who have examined the economic motivations behind Canadian aid efforts during and after the Second World War.¹ "Many scholars have examined the 'why' of postwar development assistance," writes Campbell-Miller. "It is less common to explore the 'how,' and the ways in which the war both influenced the outcomes of the postwar international aid regime and how the humanitarian response to war overlapped with the new field of international development (ID)" (610). The author not only suggests that historians have overlooked the impact of the war on Canadian humanitarian aid, but also contends that international development is central to understanding Canada's foreign policy goals for postwar peace and world order.

Campbell-Miller analyzes two aspects of the postwar Canadian aid regime: government policy and civil society. The first half of the article examines Canada's policy of official development assistance (ODA), which is characterized by the author as a primary mechanism for achieving development in impoverished economies. Although scholars commonly associate Canada's postwar aid history with the establishment of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in 1968, Campbell-Miller argues that the Second World War fundamentally influenced Ottawa's overall policy approach toward international aid during the Cold War. Senior officials saw war-torn Europe as an economic opportunity, supporting recovery efforts to build and strengthen markets for Canadian goods while creating new jobs for Canadians at home. "In this way," the

¹ Hector Mackenzie, "Sinews of War and Peace: The Politics of Economic Aid to Britain, 1939-1945," *International Journal* 54:4 (Autumn 1999): 648-670. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/40203420>; Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

author explains, “the war helped create a three-pronged and interlinking structure for Canadian aid that remains in place today through military aid, aid for economic security and growth, and aid for humanitarian relief” (612).

The second half of the article examines the Unitarian Service Committee (USC), an international development non-governmental organization (NGO) established in 1939. Campbell-Miller traces the origins and early history of USC’s Canadian chapter, which was founded in 1946 by Czechoslovakian-born Dr Lotta Hitschmanova, who travelled extensively in Canada and around the world promoting international aid efforts during the 1950s and 1960s. USC Canada gained widespread attention and support under Hitschmanova’s leadership, arranging food and relief supplies for countries in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Southern Africa. In addition to fundraising and distribution, USC recruited women to expand and strengthen its humanitarian efforts. Indeed, as Campbell-Miller acknowledges, “the USC allowed Canadians, and particularly women, to carry on the same kind of work they had performed during the war, using their handicraft and organizational skills for charitable purposes” (618).

Campbell-Miller is at her best when discussing Hitschmanova. The author skillfully explains the origins and development of USC Canada through Hitschmanova’s perspective, using biography to illustrate the wartime roots of a humanitarian relief organization that flourished into a leading international development NGO in the postwar period. Campbell-Miller credits Hitschmanova, who is lauded as a “tireless organizer and traveller ... [whose] personality and celebrity” appealed to the emotions of many Canadians and “made the donor-charity relationship uniquely personal,” with the success of USC Canada (618–619). She does so by focussing on Hitschmanova’s creativity and work ethic, demonstrating how Hitschmanova cultivated a passion for humanitarianism into the managerial and promotional skills necessary to expand USC’s Canadian chapter.

Published in the “Lessons of History” series of *International Journal: Canada’s Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, this ambitious article promises a historical analysis of postwar Canadian aid that also contextualizes “current debates about the securitization of aid and its harmonization with other aspects of Canadian foreign policy” (610). Targeted at historians, social scientists, and policymakers, “Lessons of History” is a well-established series of articles. Written as short think-piece essays rather than theoretical research papers, the articles provide historical perspectives on contemporary topics. Scholars have explored the contextual relevance of such events and issues as South Africa and the anti-apartheid movement in Canada, Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO), the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the functional principle, and the United Nations, among others.²

² See, in order of publication date, Elizabeth Riddell-Dixon, “Canada at the United Nations 1945–1989,” *International Journal* 62:1 (March 2007): 145-160. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/002070200706200112>; David S. McDonough, “Canada, NORAD, and the Evolution of Strategic Defence,” *International Journal* 67:3 (September 2012): 797-811. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/002070201206700314>; Ruth Compton Brouwer, “Canada’s Peace Corps”? CUSO’s evolving relationship with its US cousin, 1961–1971,” *International Journal* 70:1 (December 2014): 137-146. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702014562539>; Stephanie Bangarth, “Vocal but not Particularly Strong”? Air Canada’s Ill-Fated Vacation Package to Rhodesia and South Africa and the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Canada,” *International Journal* 71:3 (August 2016): 488-497. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702016661184>; and Adam Chapnick, “Canada’s Functional Principle: 75 Years On,” *International Journal* 72:2 (June 2017): 269-278. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702017709978>.

Campbell-Miller's article is a useful addition, one which is categorically aligned with the direction and scope of the series. The author writes in clear and accessible prose, surveys the existing literature in a concise yet comprehensive manner, and incorporates archival sources for the empirical portions of the article that address Hitschmanova and USC Canada. References to the USC fonds held at Canada's national repository, Library and Archives Canada, are particularly encouraging and valuable for scholars working on the history of humanitarian aid.³ Hitschmanova's papers need to see the light of day, and Campbell-Miller deserves credit for unearthing documentary records about an understudied and important international development NGO in Canada.

Nevertheless, this article has its limitations. Campbell-Miller touches briefly on the First World War and the interwar period, claiming that Canada's history of international development and humanitarian aid has deeper roots in the Second World War. While the second global conflict of the twentieth century certainly shaped and influenced the postwar years addressed in this article, recent scholarship illustrates the significance of earlier events for understanding the origins and trajectory of humanitarian aid in Canada. As historian Sarah Glassford contends in her work, 1914 to 1918 saw the Canadian Red Cross Society (CRCS) blossom from a small Ontario-based committee into a strong and successful national organization.⁴ Since the CRCS remains Canada's leading humanitarian aid organization, it seems appropriate and important to acknowledge the core foundational years that left an indelible mark on the history of Canadian aid.

Other comments speak to the relative limitations of the article publishing format. Even though Campbell-Miller credits women for the success of USC Canada, for instance, the author misses an opportunity to contextualize Hitschmanova's achievements in relation to the feminist movement of the 1960s. "Ever the pragmatist, Hitschmanova was a utilitarian, not a theoretician," the author explains (619). But did Hitschmanova advocate for women's rights? Did she associate fundraising and development work with feminist activities? Knowing more details about how Hitschmanova wielded her celebrity and public appeal to champion humanitarian causes would add to the article's worth as a work of both aid history and the history of women's rights. Perhaps future work that is not limited by the size constraints of a relatively short article will further illuminate Hitschmanova's centrality and influence.

There also seems to be a contradiction at play in the history covered. Campbell-Miller ties Canada's ODA to global conflict on more than one occasion, reiterating the underlying impact of the Second World War on the evolution of postwar Canadian aid policies and particularly during the CIDA years. Yet the founding of CIDA in 1968 coincided with a period of drastic change in Ottawa. Between 1964 and 1968, major organizational restructuring in the Department of National Defence led to the integration and unification of the Canadian Armed Forces.⁵ Drastic cuts to the federal defence budget reduced Canada's military capacity at

³ Unitarian Service Committee of Canada fonds (MG28-I322), Library and Archives Canada.

⁴ Sarah Glassford, *Mobilizing Mercy: A History of the Canadian Red Cross* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017).

⁵ In March 1964, Canada's Minister of National Defence Paul Hellyer tabled a *White Paper* that outlined a restructuring of the Department of National Defence and the unification of the three separate armed services. Under the Canadian Forces Reorganization Act of February 1968, the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army, and Royal Canadian Air Force merged into a single Canadian Armed Forces.

home and abroad during the 1970s. “Peacekeeping formalized a framework for discourse through which Canadian military resources could be deployed using the language of humanitarianism as a primary rather than secondary motivation, which is arguably one of peacekeeping’s most enduring legacies,” Campbell-Miller asserts (614). But what explains the growth of Canadian aid internationally in a period that was marred by cuts to the federal defence budget? Did support for humanitarian efforts derive increasingly from non-military resources, and if so, does this challenge the author’s thesis about the conflict-driven undercurrents of postwar Canadian aid?

More generally, have the words ‘Global South’ merely replaced the now-taboo-term ‘Third World’? Perhaps policy and international relations scholars need to consider the spatial meaning(s) of the Global South concept, lest the prospect of a ‘Global North’ be associated with ‘privilege’ and living outside the regions of the world that are perceived as improvised and underdeveloped. This is not a criticism of Campbell-Miller’s work, but rather a wider reflection on a current and potentially alarming trend in scholarly publishing. By dichotomizing North-South, the term Global South may actually reinforce some of the very practices of inequality and domination that scholars in the field seek to expose and address.⁶

Overall, Campbell-Miller’s article is a worthwhile contribution to the history of international development and humanitarian aid in the twentieth century. Scholars working on Canadian topics will find the article particularly engaging and valuable, but so too will scholars working on non-Canadian policies or NGOs. Campbell-Miller ultimately delivers on her promise, effectively demonstrating the immediate and long-term impact of the Second World War on the creation and evolution of Canada’s postwar aid regime. In the author’s own words, “the whole-of-government approach that attempts to align defence, commercial, and diplomatic priorities alongside those of ODA represents a continuum of a Canadian foreign policy approach that extends back to the postwar period” (616). Perhaps war is not antithetical to development after all.

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⁶ For critical reflections on using the Global South concept in scholarly research and writing, see Nina Schneider, “Between Promise and Skepticism: The Global South and Our Role as Engaged Intellectuals,” *The Global South* 11.2 (Fall 2017): 18–38; Russell West-Pavlov, *The Global South and Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018).