

SHOBANA SHANKAR

An Uneasy Embrace

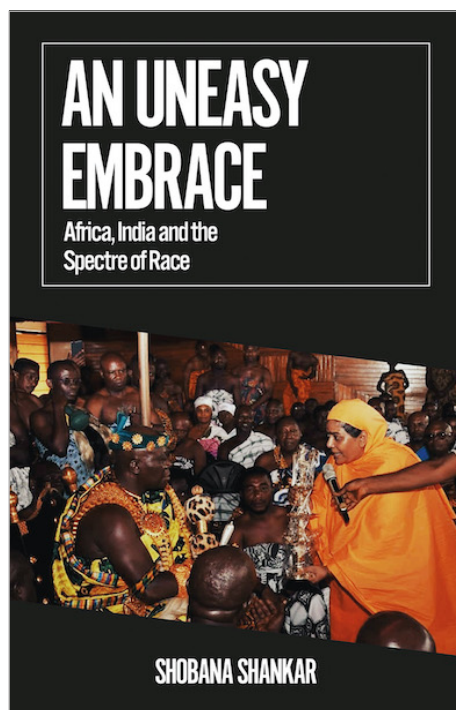
Africa, India and the Spectre of Race

The entwined histories of Blacks and Indians defy easy explanation. From Black Lives Matter protests against Gandhi statues to Kamala Harris's historic election, this relationship—withstanding moments of common struggle—seethes with conflicts that reveal important lessons about race in the modern world.

Shobana Shankar's groundbreaking intellectual history tackles the controversial question of how Africans and Indians see their differences. Drawing on archival and oral sources from seven countries, she traces how economic tensions surrounding the Indian diaspora in East and Southern Africa collided with the twentieth century's widening Indian networks in West Africa and the Black Atlantic. Decolonisation brought a reckoning with Euro-American racial hierarchies, as well as discord over caste, religion, sex and skin colour, simmering beneath the rhetoric of Afro-Indian solidarity.

This book illuminates how postcolonial peoples remade race by reinvigorating cultural movements, from Pan-Africanism to popular devotionalism, in Africa, India and the United States. This new race consciousness was meant as a redemption from the moral dangers of economic rivalry. Yet rising wealth and nationalist amnesia now threaten this postcolonial ethos. Calls to dismantle statues, from Accra to Washington DC, are not merely symbolic. They seek to preserve dissenting histories, and the possibility of alternative futures.

Shobana Shankar is Associate Professor of History at Stony Brook University. She is the author of *Who Shall Enter Paradise? Christian Origins in Muslim Northern Nigeria, c. 1890–1975*; and co-editor of *Religions on the Move!* and *Transforming Africa's Religious Landscapes: The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), Past and Present*.



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A definitive cultural and political history of how race and racialisation have brought Africans and Indians together, yet also driven them apart.

