

James, Leslie; Leake, Elisabeth (Hrsg.): *Decolonization and the Cold War. Negotiating Independence*. London: Bloomsbury Publisher 2015. ISBN: 9781472571199; 328 S.

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The title under review was published in a new Bloomsbury series entitled 'New Approaches to International History'. University of Colorado Boulder's Thomas Zeiler, editor of the text, emphasizes that this new series „serves a dual purpose that is unique from other large-scale treatments of international history: it applies to scholarly agenda and pedagogy“ (p. vii). For its intent to serve and inspire history scholars, teachers, and students of various disciplines—and for its ability to make „current research, methodology and themes“ (p. vii) more accessible to students—the series is greatly praised. One of the luminaries of Cold War history, Odd Arne Westad, prefaces the volume with a foreword (pp. xi–xiii) that commends the text's attempt to contextualize diverse Cold War interrelationships and decolonization after the Second World War, the latter of which is „one of the big questions for historians of the twentieth century“ (p. xi). Westad also provides an overall evaluation of the book: „One of the strengths of this volume is that its editors and authors are not out to (re-)create hierarchies of significance and meaning. Their point is not to prioritize one aspect of global developments over others. The Cold War and decolonization both had causes and effects that were independent of each other, even though the two processes were roughly parallel in time“ (p. xii). Scholars would agree with this claim even without exploring the volume, but this review's purpose is not to assess the work's originality; rather, it seeks to scrutinize the text's content and assess the scope of its use in the academic world.

The volume's editors, Leslie James and Elisabeth Leake, extensively explain their approach in the introduction (pp. 1–17). They highlight that „decolonization frequently coincided and merged with, or contradicted

and undermined, the Soviet Union's and the United States' fight for global ideological, and frequently political, dominance“ (p. 1), and they assert that decolonization during the Cold War was a multi-faceted, vivid process of transformation that paralleled the events of the era (p. 3). Like Immanuel Wallerstein did before¹, the editors also point out that the Cold War and decolonization – contrary to popular belief – can be characterized by violence, even outside of Europe (p. 3). The volume relates the two phenomena by assembling and reviewing case studies that enforce this idea, all the while considering the perspectives of high-level decision makers and subaltern contributors alike (p. 6). It suggests „several crucial areas for scrutinizing the Cold War and decolonization without claiming an exhaustive framework“ (p. 9).

In the book's first part, „Developing the Nation: Economics, Modernity, and the 'State-project',“ writers Benjamin Siegel, Simon Toner, and Patrick Neveling highlight problems with national developments during Cold War decolonization, as well as the „influence wielded by both political statesmen and everyday citizens“ (p. 19). Siegel focuses on the issue of food distribution in independent India (pp. 21–42) and emphasizes that „the Cold War battle over aid to India was as much a battle of ideas and narratives as it was one of grains and geopolitics“ (p. 21). The food problem thus became emblematic for the struggles and successes of the great powers of the Cold War, as well as for the ideological system it represented (p. 22). Consequently, pragmatic matters determined the relationship between the Cold War and decolonization in India. In his chapter, Toner focuses on peasantry in the Mekong Delta in the 1970s (pp. 43–61), asserting that the close analysis of „state-led agricultural development in Vietnam's Mekong Delta in the long 1970s [should demonstrate] the difficulty that postcolonial states had in implementing modernization projects“ (p. 44). Toner outlines that the peasants' reactions to these changes were not spurred by a desire for future po-

¹ Immanuel Wallerstein, What Cold War in Asia? An Interpretative Essay, in: Liu Hong / Michael Szonyi / Yangwen Zheng (eds.), *The Cold War in Asia. The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, Leiden 2010, p. 19.

litical improvement, but rather by their existing wishes and needs, and „the challenges that confronted the two Vietnamese states demonstrate the difficulties of postcolonial development in a heavily contested theatre of the Cold War“ (p. 45). New technologies and infrastructures were also far more important in the progression of the „Rice War“ (pp. 53–54) than in realizing political ideals. Patrick Neveling concludes this section with an analysis of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) during the Cold War, specifically focusing on Puerto Rico (pp. 64–84). The U.S. territory on the periphery of the Cold War functioned as a testing zone for contemporary American policies regarding decolonization (pp. 63–64), and the EPZs were models for capitalist developments. These zones were thus „an indispensable tool for the United States [...] for promoting capitalist development policies in the Third World“ (p. 77).

Part two, „Intellectual Assertions in the Anti-Colonial Era,“ is concerned with the thoughts and claims of intellectual figures during Cold War decolonization. It „incorporates individuals and groups who asserted their own perspectives and ideas into the major, often clashing, ideologies of the period“ (p. 85). John Munro begins this section with a close reading of a journal called *Political Affairs* (pp. 87–105) to „devote attention to the details of one slice of anti-colonial Cold War culture within the United States“ (p. 87) and to highlight „the ways in which decolonization and the Cold War interacted within one of the superpowers“ (p. 99). Andrew Arsan concludes this part with a biographical approach, reconsidering the impact of Lebanese philosopher and politician Charles Malik (1906–1987) in 1946–1962 (pp. 107–121), which were the early years of the Cold War. As Lebanese ambassador in the United States and Foreign Minister of Lebanon, Malik had a decisive role in fostering the relationship between the two nation-states. Arsan wants to „examine afresh, and complicate Malik’s historiographical reputation as an unquestioning proponent of American interests“ (p. 109) and argues that Malik’s pro-Americanism was not a predetermined factor in the history of decolonization and the early Cold War, but rather the result of extensive thought and reflection

(p. 110). More importantly, „for Malik, [...] the Cold War offered a means of escaping the quandaries of decolonization“ (p. 119) and presented a solution for Lebanon’s regional insecurity.

„Contesting Heritage and Identification,“ the volume’s third section, observes the creation of national identities in Malaysia (pp. 125–144), the „Oriental Soviet Union“ (pp. 145–166), and Egypt (pp. 167–182). Anna Belogurova first examines the roles of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP, pp. 128–133) and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA, pp. 133–137) between 1920 and 1960 to analyze the impact that nationalism and internationalism had on these two organizations. As Belogurova asserts, internationalism played a key role in creating the Malayan nation-state’s multi-ethnic principles. In her chapter, Hanna Jansen focuses on the methodical creation of nationalism in the Central Asian regions of the Soviet Union by providing an insight of the life and impact of Bobodzhan Gafurovich Gafurov (1908–1977), the Director of the Institute for Oriental Studies in Moscow. She wants to „situate Soviet modernizing strategies of nation-building in Central Asia in the broader contexts of globalization and Cold War“ (p. 146) and demonstrate that the scholarly views on Central Asian civilization were largely „the result of Moscow’s political Cold War strategies“ (p. 160). William Carruthers concludes part three with his analysis of the relationships between archaeology, decolonization, and the Cold War. He focuses on the excavation of the Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at Mit Rahina (pp. 173–176) and concludes that „archaeological events [seem] to reflect political meta-narratives,“ since the „events at Mit Rahina illustrate the particular ways in which this meta-narrative could emerge“ (p. 178).

The fourth and largest part of the book, „(Re)conceiving Sovereignty and Statehood,“ seeks to „[reconsider] the meaning of sovereignty and the state at the crossroads of the Cold War and decolonization“ (p. 183) and indicate the nature of sovereignty and statehood during these years. It thereby focuses not only on the United Nations and the Commonwealth as alternatives to the Cold

War blocs, but also on the importance of contemporary trends in international relations. In his chapter, Daniel Haines (pp. 185–202) „examines the effect of Commonwealth membership on sovereignty and state-formation in India and Pakistan“ (p. 186) and analyzes the United States’ position toward the Commonwealth. The U.S. did consider joining the Commonwealth, but when the conflict between the then-independent nation-states India and Pakistan became unmanageable, Washington had to interfere. Haines therefore concludes that the Indian and Pakistani status „as fully independent nation-states was far from settled during the early days of decolonization“ (p. 198). Ryan M. Irwin’s chapter (pp. 203–218) shifts the focus from South Asia to Africa, stating that „[t]he Congo was simultaneously a hotbed of inter-African intrigue, a playground for the superpowers and a turning point in the decolonization progress“ (p. 203). The chapter describes the succession of the Katanga province and emphasizes the UN’s failure to react to developments caused by decolonization in that region. Irwin also highlights the diversity of the groups that longed for independence and were not always united by anti-imperialist values (p. 214). In his chapter, Moshik Temkin demonstrates the impact of these ideals on the historical events of the time. He explains the French government’s refusal to allow Malcom X into the country in 1965 (pp. 219–238). Since the African-American figurehead of anti-imperialism „operated at the touchy meeting point between the aftermath of decolonization and the global effects of the Cold War“ (p. 220) and represented an anti-Western lobby, the nation-state of France restricted Malcom X’s entry into France to preserve its own interests. It is thus apparent that „French authorities were reacting to a political type, not necessarily to an individual“ (p. 232). The fourth and final chapter of this section deals with Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Asia (pp. 239–253). Christopher Miller „traces the fall and rise of special zones for foreign investors in China“ (p. 240) and examines how state economies interacted during the Cold War. By examining Taiwan’s Kaohsiung export processing zone (pp. 242–247), Miller points out that

nations’ desires for stabilized economies are often much stronger than specific ideologies (p. 250).

„Defending the State: Intelligence and Violence“ is the book’s final section and deals with the role of intelligence in the state’s defense. The section „re-examines old evidence and gives it a new twist“ (p. 255). It tries to highlight the „uses and abuses of intelligence“ in decolonized environments (ibid.). Caroline Elkins discusses the colonial powers’ archival policies in the days of decolonization and the early Cold War; she states that in Kenya, „massive numbers of incriminating files were torched [...] documents had been put to the wind, and those that remained in Nairobi told an incomplete story, at best, of British colonial rule“ (p. 261). Eventually, Paul M. McCarr analyzes the intelligence relations that India and Pakistan had with Great Britain and the United States. He explains how both South Asian nation-states not only had ideological reasons for cooperating, but that they „viewed Western intelligence services as an instrument that could be used to consolidate state power and bolster postcolonial nation-building“ (p. 297).

Decolonization and the Cold War is a solid collection of historical reviews that offers new perspectives on the relationship between decolonization and the Cold War; consequently, it serves scholarly agendas well. For students interested in a mere introduction to Cold War history, however, it is far too exorbitant. The volume makes for valuable additional reading in a seminar setting, or perhaps as a point of discussion for graduate students who have already taken courses in Cold War history. However, for the general student reader, the book is too advanced—it is structured under the assumption that readers have existing knowledge on the topic. The purpose of the series is thus partly fulfilled, since the volume itself is a must-read for scholars interested in either the Cold War and decolonization or the interrelated history of both historical phenomena.

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