

Weltentwicklung in Fukuyamas postuliertem „Ende der Geschichte“ gipfelte, ist längst keine Spur mehr. Dass zumindest Schmalz und Strittmatter eine militärische Eskalation des chinesischen Aufstiegs explizit für möglich halten, sollte uns aufhorchen lassen.

Judith Devlin / Maria Falina / John Paul Newman (eds.): World War I in Central and Eastern Europe. Politics, Conflict and Military Experience, London / New York: I. B. Tauris 2018, xvi + 336 pp.

Reviewed by
Sabine Rutar, Regensburg

This collective volume is a welcome addition to the recent (centennial) literature on the First World War. It features chapters spanning from today's northeastern Italy, to Serbia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Russia. The editors gathered an impressive transnational team, joining scholars from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Serbia, and the United Kingdom. With the Introduction (Judith Devlin) and the Conclusion (John Paul Newman and Maria Falina), the editors provide a fitting, if concise, frame to the chapters. These are grouped under two headings: "New Frontiers of War: State Treatment of Non-Combatants" and "Soldiers and Veterans: Experience, Understanding and Memory". The book's subtitle, "Politics,

Conflict and Military Experience", turns out to be a prioritizing order of words, placing the military second to politics targeting non-combatants, which include prisoners of war. The First World War was, as Judith Devlin underlines in her, a little too Russia-centric, introduction, the first war which "rapidly led to the erosion of the distinction between soldiers and civilians" (4). While hers is a generally existent perception, in reality the mass atrocities of the Balkan Wars of 1912/13 had already been a herald of such erosion.

John Paul Newman and Maria Falina, in their conclusion, rightly sum up that 'many of the chapters in this book have shown how institutional, imperial, local, and regional factors were likely more important to contemporary actors than retrospectively applied nationalism' (256). Given however that such "retrospectively applied nationalism" includes heavily nation-state-related historiographies, it makes sense to assess the volume also along these lines.

The three "Italian chapters" are a case in point. In Part I, Francesco Frizzera writes about "policies developed by both the Austrian Army and the Government to manage the refugee crisis" (60-61). He convincingly lays out how these policies of relocation ended up playing "a significant role in the process of disintegration of the Habsburg Empire" (71). They went beyond mere military considerations: the fact that people were shipped from the borderlands to the inner provinces reveals how much the Austrian authorities feared the population that lived near the frontline and spoke the same language as the enemy, such as Austro-Italians. Those who were relocated were confronted with a perpetuated, if implicit, accusation of disloyalty,

while at the same time their men and sons were fighting in the Austrian Army against Russia, Italy and Serbia.

Alessandro Salvador analyses the state of Italy's involvement with the Eastern Front. He focuses "on the efforts [...] to repatriate Italian prisoners in Russia efficiently" (74). At the centre stood those POWs who originated in the Habsburgian areas claimed by Italy. However, as Salvador proves, the POWs were often of a not-so-clear nationality. Similar to Frizzera's relocated civilians, they too posed an (alleged) threat to the Austrian state. For Italy, however, the captive soldiers were 'mostly passive subjects partially involved in the role that Italy was trying to play in the international context' (87). The brainchild of traditional (nationalist) historiography that Italy sought to "liberate" them from Austria in order to employ them at the front against their former homeland, is convincingly disproven.

Simone Bellezza's chapter on Italian POWs in Russia pertains to Part II. He focuses on soldiers from the Austrian region of Trentino, examining "how the national (and to some extent social) identity of these Italian POWs in Russia changed over time" (120). Rather than ethnic kinship or imperial loyalty, it was "solidarity with other men of the village" that were "the first reason people did not resist recruitment" (121). He, like Salvador, turns matters on their feet, stating that "the high number of defections from the Austro-Hungarian Army [...] can be considered more a failure of Habsburg patriotism than as a sign of the support for the Italian state" (123). And here is the link to Frizzera's chapter, too. All three chapters are excellent contri-

butions to the sociopolitical history of the war and to nationalism studies.

The seemingly at odds distribution of the "Italian" chapters over the two thematic parts of the volume does mirror its rationale of transnationalising the war experience. In Part I, Frizzera's research on relocation policies adds on nicely to the preceding chapter by Mark Lewis. He too shows how the empire's fear of its multinational subjects eventually led precisely to that which it sought to avoid: chaos and ultimately dissolution. Lewis analyses the Austrian political police's "desire to create a total information bureau to watch the population for suspicious activity" (38), a process that started long before the war. Especially Czechs, Serbs, pro-Yugoslav Croats, Ruthenes, and Galician Poles were suspect of undermining the state. In the war, emergency decrees made arrests, interrogations, and civilian court convictions easy. Lewis calls this extended "information bureaucracy" a symptom of the eroding empire rather than of a secret police created to terrify the population. Kathryn E. Densford completes this topical trias with another narration of inner-Austrian displacement, of the multiethnic crowd of refugees from the Eastern Front who ended up in Moravia.

Two chapters, in Part I, go beyond the ailing Austrian empire. Dmitar Tasić shows how Serbia had a loyalty problem, too. The territorial gains of the second Balkan War, which had ended a scarce year before, did not help Serbia's renewed war effort. A considerable number of the new citizens were Muslims, Turks, Albanians, or pro-Bulgarian Slavs, "who tried to avoid fighting on the Serbian side" (93). Beyond this remark, Tasić rather overlooks

the Balkan Wars. Had he interlinked them analytically, he might have been more cautious assessing the atrocities committed by Austro-Hungarian forces as happening in ‘the first Serbian areas to experience the destructive nature of modern warfare’ (89). The preceding Balkan Wars had really already been the first to be modern in this sense.

Jan Szkudliński scrutinises “the way German troops perceived the land, its inhabitants and the enemy in 1914” (101) when invading Poland, and compares it to 1939, when the Germans invaded again. Attitudes were not so different, the practices however were: in 1939, soldiers had been exposed to “the propaganda machine of a racist, totalitarian regime and by inflammatory orders issued by the Army command” (116). His observations of the horrific evolution of violence is analogous to Lewis’, who points out how the inquisitive imperial police were a far way from the terror installed by later regimes.

Part II focuses on the military war experience and attempts to come to terms with it. Steven Balbirnie gathers British orientalist attitudes towards the Russian “Other” during their intervention in the civil war following the October Revolution. His chapter is complemented by Shannon Brady’s interesting micro-study of the Anglo-Russian Hospital in St. Petersburg (Petrograd at the time). Georg Grote examines about fifty field postcards German-speaking South Tyrolean soldiers wrote home from the frontline – increasingly conscious that this faraway homeland was ceasing to exist. Andreas Agocs traces ‘a common cultural consciousness that crossed national and ethnic lines’ (180) among Jewish, German, Austrian,

and Hungarian witnesses to the Eastern Front, consisting of a waning monarchical symbolism and a transformation of patriarchal structures. His and Grote’s chapters link to the “Austrian” chapters in Part I, and the lot amounts to a substantial contribution to the social history of Austria-Hungary’s final (war) years.

Part II then moves on to veterans. Alexandre Sumpf writes on disabled ex-servicemen of the Tsarist Russian Army, illustrating how the newly created category of “invalids” was a “source of public action and patriotic mobilisation” (197). Isabelle Davion gives a fascinating overview of the monuments and the debates around the Unknown Soldier, and on what it meant to be a veteran in the newly-founded states of Central and Eastern Europe: It was hard to create war heroes in polities which engulfed both “winners” and “losers”. In the final chapter, Joanna Urbanek’s analysis of the rivalry and fragmentation of veterans’ associations in Poland, in the aftermath of the First World War and the ensuing Polish-Soviet war, adds another important piece to the puzzle of divisive remembrance.

With an eye on present relevance, Newman and Falina conclude how “old wounds have not healed, but have rather been re-opened, as in the political ‘trauma’ of Hungary’s Trianon, played to maximum effect by the country’s nationalist right, or in Serbia and Bosnia, where figures such as Gavrilo Princip remain deeply divisive” (256). Nationalist frames continue to be a driving factor in the coming to terms with, or rather: instrumentalisation of, the events of the centennial Great War. Possibly, the editors arranged the chapters to thoroughly counteract such nationaliza-

tion and emphasize the transnationality of the war experience. After all, history has always been more complex than nationalists would have it.

Ang Cheng Guan: Southeast Asia's Cold War. An Interpretive History, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 2018, 306 pp.

Reviewed by
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A concise political history of Southeast Asia during the Cold War provides orientation in a complex international setting. This is what Ang Cheng Guan achieves with his survey over 70 years (1919–1989), the “interpretive” elements being on the one hand the Asian perspective instead of US or European points of view (p. 1), on the other hand a focus on communist parties and leftist movements. Ang indicates that since the latter had turned out to be the “losers” of the Cold War, their perceptions might otherwise sink into oblivion (p. 194).

With some exceptions of US, British, and Australian archival documents, Ang Cheng Guan's book is based on published sources exclusively in English, including his own works on the war in Vietnam, on Singapore and Cambodia. Ang narrates the key political developments in mainly chronological order arguing that what might be regarded as a somewhat old-fashioned

treatment (p. 198) in fact serves as a basis for other, more recent research interests.

The six chapters vary with regard to time span, length and emphasis. To begin with, Ang defines a period of 30 years (1919–1949) as a pre-history to the classical Cold War period. He traces the antagonisms in the region and the rising of global communist forces. Somewhat schematically, Ang states that before World War II, communists did not pose a threat to European colonial powers (p. 36), and even the famous Calcutta conference in 1948 seems to him “a somewhat messy gathering” (p. 51), by which he indicates a lack of discernable guidance. Besides, communist China (PRC) is introduced as a new major political power.

The period dealt with in chapter two comprises the five years until the Vietnamese communists' Dien Bien Phu victory in 1954 with the overall focus on the PRC's influence in the region and the development of each regional state as well as global interconnections, touching upon Japan from a US point of view.

In chapter three, covering a mere two years (1954–1955), attention shifts to multinational agreements, organisations and movements such as the Geneva agreement on Indochina, the founding of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the global outreach of the non-alignment movement initiated at Bandung. These three events constitute quite different approaches to Southeast Asian development: the military victories of regional forces in Indochina against colonial powers, the establishment of a Western inspired organisation with just two South-east Asian members of the SEATO, Thai-