

beiten. Einerseits betont Hüsgen die „Exklusivität und Hierarchie“ sowie die starke Sozialkontrolle der sich um die Missionare entwickelnde Gesellschaft, andererseits die Möglichkeit sozialer Mobilität für beide Geschlechter. 1856 kam es zur ersten Ordinierung eines schwarzen Pfarrers in der westindischen Brüdergemeine. Hüsgen analysiert die Rolle von Missionsschulen und die Debatten innerhalb der Brüdergemeine darüber, ob man für den Unterricht anstatt Mitglieder der englischen Brüdergemeine (die wegen ihrer Sympathie für die Sklavenemanzipation ungeeignet erschienen) schwarze Lehrer einstellen sollte. Generell sind Hüsgens Urteile quellenkritisch und differenziert. Mir gefällt besonders die Art, wie er Zitate kommentiert und zwischen den Zeilen liest. Der Text wird durch fünf Diagramme und zehn Tabellen bereichert. Leider gibt es keine Karte, keinen Index und viele Schreibfehler. Trotzdem stellt dieses Buch einen Meilenstein in der Historiographie der Herrnhuter und der Karibik dar.

Michael Kemper / Artemy M. Kalinovsky (eds.): Reassessing Orientalism: Interlocking Orientalologies during the Cold War (= Routledge Studies in the History of Russia and Eastern Europe, vol. 23), London: Routledge, 2015, 236 S.

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The present volume continues what Michael Kemper & Stephan Conerman (eds.) have begun with *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies* (2011), namely to “integrate the Russian and Soviet traditions of Oriental studies into current Western debates on the study of the Orient, and also of ‘Orientalism,’ where the Eastern European and Central Asian cases have so far hardly been visible” (p. 3). Both books argue that, on the whole, Edward Said’s thesis of Orientalism as “a Western style for domination, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient”¹ also applies to Soviet Oriental studies: “Our assumption is that Soviet studies on the Orient fit very well into this [Saidian, MB] definition[,]” Kemper and Conerman argued in 2011.² Likewise, in *Reassessing Orientalism* Artemy Kalinovsky and Kemper write that the connections between “power and knowledge, between research and policy, between a discursive ‘Orient’ and real administrative power exercised there, are all present in [...] the Soviet case” (p. 3). At the same time, both books do not merely apply Said’s thesis of Oriental studies as

a handmaid of imperialism to the Soviet case, but qualify it by highlighting the domestic specificities of Soviet Orientalology. *Reassessing Orientalism*, moreover, goes further than that by placing the development of the discipline “in a broader Cold War setting[,]” (ibid.) and by scrutinising the global connectedness of Oriental studies across the geopolitical and ideological divide.

Like its predecessor, the present volume argues that several factors need to be taken into account to better understand the nexus of Orientalist knowledge and power in the Soviet case: The huge political pressures under which Soviet Orientalists worked (this is especially apparent in Alfrid Bustinanov’s chapter on Soviet Oriental studies in Kazakhstan); the active integration of “national cadres,” including scholars from a traditionally Muslim background, into the academic process (see Bakhtiyar Babajanov’s chapter on the careers of *madrasa* graduates-turned Soviet Orientalists); the fact that the discipline “became part of a broader dynamic of nation building within a Soviet framework” (p. 2). (I will elaborate on this later); last but not least, the distinct anti-colonialist and internationalist agenda of Soviet Oriental studies, which entailed an explicit critique of West-European Orientalist scholarship³ (see both the introduction and Masha Kirasirova’s chapter on US and Soviet imaginaries of the modern Middle East).

However unlike its predecessor, which focussed on the domestic history of Soviet Oriental studies, *Reassessing Orientalism* aims to “transcend the framework of domestic dynamics and develop a focus on processes of interaction with other scholarly traditions” (p. 4). In particular, it com-

pares “the Soviet production of knowledge on the Orient with the ways Oriental studies developed in the US [...]” (p. 3.). For that reason, the book contains a chapter by Ruud Janssens on the history of Japanese studies in the United States, which “points to the necessity to nuance Said’s ideas about Orientalism” (p. 146). Moreover, the volume argues that Cold War rivalry led to the politicisation and institutional expansion of Oriental studies in both countries and, more importantly, that this scholarly and political rivalry led to direct and indirect interactions between scholarly communities in the USSR and US. Challenging “the widespread assumption that Soviet Oriental studies developed largely in isolation[,]” (p. 6) the authors place the discipline in an international and “interlocking” web, in which “different actors in scholarship and politics, on national and international levels, are so closely linked to each other that any movement of one of them will also affect the functioning of the others” (p. 4).

“Orientalology in both the USSR and the United States was as much about the ‘other superpower’ as it was about the ‘Orient,’” (p. 3) reads one of the volume’s main arguments. While it is a compelling sentence, it is arguably also a slight exaggeration. After all, the volume itself provides ample evidence of the importance of the *internal* rationale of Soviet Oriental studies: Babajanov’s excellent (if somewhat misleadingly titled)⁴ chapters, for example, quotes a prominent Soviet Orientalist who described Islamic manuscripts and their study as “an important resource for the histories of the peoples of the USSR as well as an integral part of the ‘culture-building’ of the new nations” (p. 88).

Armina Omerika stresses that “[i]n both Bosnia and Serbia, Oriental studies were established primarily to serve the purposes of national historiographies and were thus closely linked to the national projects of the two sponsoring republics” (p. 154). Bustanov, too, argues that the various Orientalological disciplines in the Soviet Union “were deeply embedded in Soviet nationality policies” (p. 48).

Still, the volume’s objective of exploring Soviet Orientology in a global and Cold War context (and the stress on the importance of the ‘other superpower’) is entirely justified. The authors are right to maintain that “current research on ‘Orientalism’ has a tendency to focus on particular national schools, in isolation from each other [...]” (p. 4) – a sin that I am myself somewhat guilty of. Moreover, elsewhere in the book this global and comparative Cold War perspective is more present: Masha Kirasirova, for example, argues that the Soviet vision of the Middle East as “a site for internationalist solidarity” and the American view of it as “a vulnerable *terra incognita* [...] reflected both superpowers’ fears about the other superpower” (p. 36). Similarly, Kalinovsky’s topical and fascinating chapter on the study of the “Soviet East” in the US during the 1970s and 1980s demonstrates how anti-Soviet sentiment led to a politicised and flawed scholarly agenda that promoted engaging (Central Asian) Islam in a Cold War struggle against the Soviet Union. Kemper’s chapter on Soviet strategies at 1960 International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow tells the intriguing story of how Soviet Orientalists, in particular “the Tajik politician-com-scholar [Bobodzhon Gafurov]” (p. 200), managed to skilfully exploit the event by impress-

ing Western participants with high quality and rather traditional scholarship, while presenting participants from non-Western countries with more propagandistic and anti-colonial works.

Reassessing Orientalism provides fascinating insights into the practical “relationship between knowledge of the Orient and domestic and foreign politics” (p. 2f). But it also sharpens our theoretical understanding of (Soviet) Orientalism by adding a comparative Cold War-perspective to it, even if this perspective is not always entirely obvious to the reader. On the whole, the book makes a compelling argument for the need to take into account the global dynamics of the Cold War in order to understand the development of Soviet Oriental studies and, in particular, the paradox why a discipline that after 1917 was “officially called upon to transform from a tool of oppression into an instrument of liberation” (p. 3) turned into a more effective instrument of politics and state power than had been the case before the revolution.

Notes

- 1 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, London 2003, p. 3.
- 2 Michael Kemper/Stephan Conermann (eds.), *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies*, Abingdon, Oxon/New York, NY 2011, p. xiii.
- 3 Vera Tolz, *Russia’s Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods*, Oxford/New York 2011) pp. 85-111.
- 4 While the chapter speaks of “[m]adrassa graduates at the Soviet Institute of Oriental Studies”, implying a central metropolitan institution, it does in fact refer to the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences.