

Even more than these broad claims and contributions, perhaps the most significant aspect of this book is its detailed attention to the encounters between its main characters and the PRC. In each of the four main chapters, there is something new to be learned about both the function of China in the Black radical imaginary and the individual or individuals under discussion. In terms of the Du Boises, we see how the PRC aided W.E.B.'s reformulations of Western Marxism and Shirley Graham's evolving feminism, and how Mao's government successfully steered the couple away from a critical analysis of either Great Leap Forward-induced starvation or Chinese repression in Tibet. Regarding William Worthy, we are treated to a gripping account of the relatively understudied career of the first foreign correspondent from the United States to report from Communist China, and shown that despite his mixed appraisal of PRC accomplishments overall, Worthy did not pay particular attention to ideologies of anti-Blackness in China. For the Williamses, we gain insight into a chapter of the couple's biography that few scholars have explored in detail, while also learning more about how PRC solidarity with the Black freedom struggle served the strategic interests of the Chinese state. And concerning Vicki Garvin, we get a welcome addition to Dayo Gore's fine scholarship on this global thinker and pedagogue who brought a sense of African American political struggle to her Chinese students, but was also constrained by the authoritarian realities of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution era. In each case, Frazier carefully demystifies romanticized views of the Chinese Revolution that were hardly unique to African American leftists, giving us a balanced interpretation of limitations and openings, misunderstandings and identifications, that were not always present in the media output of the six figures he chronicles. We have needed a book like *The East Is Black* for a while now. Luckily for us, it was well worth the wait.

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Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World, by Masuda Hajimu. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2015. vi, 388 pp. \$39.95 US (cloth).

The time has long past when the 1950–1953 conflict in Korea could be called “the forgotten war.” Of course, the war has never been forgotten on the Korean peninsula itself, where a heavily fortified armistice line still separates two mutually hostile regimes more than sixty years after the

ceasefire. In China, the “Aid Korea, Resist America War,” as it is called, remains a source of pride for the People’s Republic even if relations with both Korea and America have changed radically since the war. In the West, including the United States that contributed by far the largest number of United Nations forces to the conflict (followed by Britain and Canada), scholarship and memorialization of the war has recently come into its own, after decades of being overshadowed by World War II and Vietnam. Masuda Hajimu’s *Cold War Crucible* is a unique and valuable contribution to the historiography of the Korean War — or more precisely, to the history of the Cold War and the Korean War’s central place in the emergence of that global conflict.

Masuda Hajimu, a US-trained Japanese historian based in Singapore, admits that his book is not about the Korean War itself. Rather, it explores how the war “functioned as a catalyst in the crucible of the postwar world and contributed to the materialization of the Cold War world” (6). Hajimu reverses the usual logic about the relationship between Korea and the Cold War: rather than see the Korean War as an *effect* of the emerging Cold War, Hajimu argues that Korea in important ways *produced* the Cold War. As Bruce Cumings and others have long pointed out, the Communist invasion of South Korea in June 1950 justified the rapid and long-lasting expansion of US forces around the world and hardened the geopolitical lines of Cold War conflict between the Soviet Union and China, on the one side, and the United States-led “Free World,” on the other. But Hajimu is not primarily interested in Cold War geopolitics. He focuses instead on the effects of the Korean War on domestic societies in Asia, North America, and Europe.

The Korean War, Hajimu claims, turned domestic societies into “battlefields” in which people were forced to choose sides in a global conflict expressed at the local level. *Cold War Crucible* is interested less in geopolitical realities than in discursive imaginings. The Korean War created bipolarity within societies on both sides of the “East-West” divide, and the bipolar division of the Cold War became a simplified prism for seeing a postwar, decolonizing, post-imperial world whose realities were far more multi-dimensional and complex. It is an innovative and compelling argument, and for the most part Hajimu supports it persuasively.

Hajimu mainly focuses on the United States and China, where — in parallel if very different ways — the Korean War fed into collective fears and purges of alleged domestic threats. Once China entered the conflict in late October 1950, Korea became a proxy battleground between the United States (fighting under the flag of the United Nations) and the newly established People’s Republic of China. McCarthyism in America and land reform and political purges under the Communists in China were different in scale and in the level of violence, but both were shaped by this confrontation. Hajimu also explores domestic reactions to the Korean War in

Japan, Britain, Taiwan, and the Philippines, among other places. Throughout, he connects the big picture of Cold War politics and government policy to local concerns, popular culture and social conflict. From a domestic perspective, Hajimu argues, the Cold War was less a global East-West conflict than an attempt “to maintain harmonious order and life at home... the creation and maintenance of a gigantic imagined reality in the postwar world” (279). A few scholars have noted this, especially American and South Korean historians in the context of their own respective societies, but this is the first book to see the Korean War as global social history.

While Hajimu looks at several examples from different parts of the world, there are unfortunately some glaring absences. Korea itself, where the war had obviously the greatest social impact, is not examined in depth. Nor is there any discussion of domestic affairs in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, or Western Europe outside of Britain, where the Korean War also had a major impact. Partly this is a question of sources: Hajimu deals with an impressive and diverse range of sources in English, Chinese, and Japanese, but sources in Korean, Russian, German, Czech, Italian, or French would have enriched and probably reinforced his argument. On the other hand, there are large areas of South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa where the Korean War had much less of an impact than in Hajimu’s main case studies. The impact of the Korean War for the entire postwar world was quite uneven. The Korean War was a Cold War crucible for many, but perhaps not for all.

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