

with a new introduction at some point, one that more forcefully states all that is new in Janis's perspective on a diverse, women-led, bottom-up, global solidarity movement for the right to land that was launched by Greater Ireland. If so, they would do a service to World History and to Janis himself, who has written a carefully researched, deeply thought out political and social history. It deserves to be read not merely by specialists.

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*Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World.* By MASUDA HAJIMU. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015. 388 pp. \$39.95 (cloth).

*Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War, 1954–1965.* By PIERRE ASSELIN. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013. 319 pp. \$55.00 (cloth), \$29.95 (paper).

If the “origins of the Cold War” is a well-trod subject for historians, Masuda Hajimu offers an innovative approach to the topic. The Cold War, he argues, was not “something that existed as an objective situation immediately following World War II.” Instead, the Cold War was an “imagined reality” that “existed . . . because people *thought* that it existed.” *Cold War Crucible* is “a history of the *fantasy* of the Cold War, focusing on its imagined and constructed nature as well as the social need for such an imagined reality” (p. 2). According to Masuda, the “imagined reality” of the Cold War initially took hold in the United States, East Asia, and Europe—areas that had potent recent memories of wartime experiences. (Africa and Latin America would be slower to adopt the “Cold War” construct because they tended to view international events through a postcolonial lens.) But even in areas where the “Cold War” reality took hold, it was as much a product of local conditions as it was the reflection of a global conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In the immediate post–World War II years, the United States, Japan, and China experienced periods of intense social and political conflict. In the United States, a grass-roots conservative movement attacked groups or individuals perceived to be “un-American.” In Japan, conservatives pushed back against postwar occupation reforms intended to reshape Japanese society. In China, anger at America’s “reverse course”

in Japan led to growing support for the Chinese Communist Party and vocal denunciations of America's Guomintang allies. While all of these disputes would later be identified as part of the early Cold War, Masuda sees them as outgrowths of local political and social conditions.

It was not until the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 that people in the United States, Japan, and China—and in other parts of the world—began to interpret domestic politics through a Cold War lens. Particularly in areas affected by World War II, people came to see the Korean War as the beginning of a new global conflict—the first salvo in World War III. In this heightened atmosphere, the political differences that had emerged after 1945 intensified and hardened. Moreover, political and social conflicts took on a distinctly “Cold War” cast, reflecting the growing perception of a global conflict between communism and capitalism.

The Korean War has long been understood as a key event in the hardening of American and Chinese Cold War policies. Masuda echoes this view, though he explains the relationship differently. In both the United States and China, common people reacting to the conflict in Korea pressured their governments to respond firmly. On the American side, Masuda argues that public opinion influenced the Truman administration's decisions to cross the 38th parallel and to adopt NSC-68. On the Chinese side, the Chinese Communist Party similarly responded to growing public pressure to intervene in the conflict on the Korean peninsula. Both cases illustrate “the encroachment of the social into the sphere of high politics” (p. 143). They also show that “the Cold War was not necessarily a product created through policymakers' conduct and misconduct; numerous nameless people were, more or less, also participants in the making of such a world” (p. 144).

*Cold War Crucible* concludes with a section describing the suppression of dissent—often violently—during the Korean War. In Korea itself, massacres of civilians were perpetrated under the guise of eliminating Communists or class enemies. Masuda suggests that a similar dynamic was at work elsewhere: at roughly the same time, “China cracked down on counterrevolutionaries; Taiwan implemented the White Terror; the Philippines suppressed ‘un-Filipino’ activities; Japan conducted its Red Purge; Britain launched vigorous anti-labor initiatives; and the United States allowed McCarthyism to take root” (p. 200). In these cases, “local actors . . . utilized the logic of East-West confrontation in their own social conflicts. . . . Viewed in this way, these local conflicts were not so much results of the Cold War, as is usually assumed; rather, each was itself part of the engine, a core component, of the Cold War, contributing to the realization of a gigantic social construction, with the partic-

ipation of ordinary people in their own domestic ‘wars’ fought for the sake of order in each society” (pp. 7–8).

*Cold War Crucible* is an ambitious book that covers numerous countries and attempts to untangle the complicated relationship between public attitudes and foreign policy. Masuda relies on an impressive collection of primary and secondary sources, including archival sources from nine different countries. While at times the narrative can be a bit fragmented, Masuda succeeds in reevaluating some of the common assumptions about the origins of the Cold War. To many observers, social manifestations of the Cold War—such as the Red Scare—can be understood as consequences of the Cold War. In other words, *because* the “Cold War” existed, Americans searched for Communists in their midst. Masuda, however, argues that the truth is just the opposite: The very fact that Americans tried to root out communism at home helped to create the reality of the Cold War. As Masuda explains, “This book does not treat popular myths, rumors, and emotions among everyday people merely as *effects* of the Cold War; rather, it casts light on them as *factors creating* the ‘reality’ of the conflict” (p. 4).

Historians of the Vietnam War have spent years analyzing America’s intervention in Vietnam and its subsequent decision to escalate the conflict. In *Hanoi’s Road to the Vietnam War*, Pierre Asselin upends this traditional approach, focusing on officials in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (the DRV, or North Vietnam) and their role in the eventual outbreak of hostilities between the United States and North Vietnam. According to Asselin, in the decade before 1965, officials in Hanoi abandoned their “cautious approach centered on non-violent political struggle” in favor of a “risky, even reckless strategy predicated on major combat operations and decisive victory over enemy forces” (p. 1). While their decision was based largely on their assessment of conditions in the south, it also reflected Hanoi’s perceptible shift toward China in the midst of the Sino-Soviet split.

Asselin’s narrative centers on the post–Geneva Convention debates between “moderates” and “militants” in the Vietnamese Workers’ Party (the VWP, as the Communist Party in North Vietnam was known). The moderate camp included such luminaries as Ho Chi Minh, Vo Nguyen Giap, and Truong Chinh (though Truong Chinh would eventually break from the moderates). As Asselin explains, they generally favored adhering to the stipulations of the Geneva agreement and focusing on building socialism in North Vietnam. The militants, led by southerner Le Duan, General Nguyen Chi Thanh, Le Duc Tho, and Pham Hung, preferred a more aggressive strategy of using military means to liberate South Vietnam and reunify the country.

After the Geneva Convention, the DRV initially followed the moderate path of building socialism in the North and preparing for peaceful reunification of Vietnam, as had been stipulated in the Geneva Agreements. Hoping to avoid the resumption of war, the DRV also directed southern cadres to renounce military activities against the Ngo Dinh Diem government. Diem's refusal to hold national elections in 1956 undermined the moderate position and led to the ascension of militants to several key positions in the Politburo. Still, the moderate approach was not immediately abandoned.

Over the next few years, militants in the Politburo grew increasingly concerned about Diem's increasing strength in South Vietnam. At the same time, they were coming under pressure from southern Communists who felt as if they had been abandoned by the "North First" strategy favored by the moderates. In response to these conditions, in January 1959 the Fifteenth Plenum of the VWP Central Committee adopted Resolution 15, which called for more aggressive tactics against the Diem government. Resolution 15, Asselin argues, was "one of the pivotal policy statements in the course of events that propelled Hanoi into the Vietnam War" (p. 53). Nevertheless, it did not signal full-scale support for military revolution in the south, and its importance "has thus been overstated by historians" (p. 66).

In Asselin's estimation, 1963 was the crucial year in Hanoi's road to the Vietnam War. Because moderates and militants tended to align with the Soviet Union and China, respectively, the deepening Sino-Soviet split led to increased tensions in Hanoi. Moreover, events in 1962–1963, including the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Battle of Ap Bac, the growing radicalization of the Chinese Communist Party, and political unrest in Laos, led militants in the VWP to "revise its revolutionary strategy and escalate armed struggle in the South" (p. 155).

*Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War* is thoroughly researched. Asselin incorporates the most up-to-date scholarship in English and Vietnamese and uses archival materials from the United States, Vietnam, France, Canada, and Great Britain. He also makes an important contribution to the historiography of the Vietnam War and the larger international context of the Cold War. *Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War* challenges the commonly held view that the United States was responsible for the escalation of the conflict. Indeed, Asselin titles the penultimate chapter in his book—the one outlining Hanoi's decisions in 1963—"Choosing War." This may have been a not-so-subtle nod to Fredrik Logevall's book of the same name, which places responsibility for the war squarely on the shoulders of Lyndon Johnson and his advisors. The reality, of course, is that the United States and North Vietnam both made choices that led

to war—as did the South Vietnamese, the Chinese, the Soviets, and the French. What makes *Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War* indispensable is that it provides a detailed account of the crucial North Vietnamese decisions that have often been left out of the story.

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*From White to Yellow: The Japanese in European Racial Thought, 1300–1735.* By ROTEM KOWNER. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014. 678 pp. \$125.00 (cloth); \$39.95 (paper).

This is a path-breaking book, rich in insights and extraordinarily well researched. There is to be a second volume, covering the years from 1735 to 1905, while this one covers the years from 1300 to 1735. The purpose underlying the two volumes is to enrich the study of race in European thought by turning away from the focus on European encounters with Africans and Amerindians, which has tended to dominate the history of racial thought in Europe, and looking instead at encounters with Japanese. As Kowner points out, Europeans tended from early on to perceive Japanese as civilized, technologically advanced, and militarily powerful, and this contrasts with how they perceived many other peoples elsewhere, with the exception of China. “China did not differ greatly [from Japan] in this respect,” he admits, “but as islanders the Japanese could be more easily perceived as a single entity with clearly marked political and ethnic boundaries” (p. 22). This argument is intended to justify his exclusive focus on Japan but it seems an unconvincing distinction. After all, Japan was definitely not a single political entity for much of the early period, at least up to 1600, and European perceptions of a distinct Japanese ethnicity were slow to develop, as he shows. In fact, Kowner helpfully makes frequent comparative references to perceptions of Chinese.

The endpoint of this volume is the publication of Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae* (1735), which marked a turning point in European biological thought. Kowner divides the centuries up to that point into three discrete periods, the first of which he terms the phase of speculation, covering 1300–1543. During this period, it is possible that Europeans encountered Japanese at Malacca or other ports in Southeast Asia but the evidence is weak, so we are forced to turn to Marco Polo for a dawning awareness of Japan in the European mind. As is well known, Marco Polo's description of Cipangu, as he termed Japan, referred to the Japanese