

readers think about how large trends of the past might affect future generations, and about our place within the larger universe over the short, medium, and very long term.

Of course, any book this ambitious and yet this brief is bound to have some drawbacks. Most obviously, even though it is not intended to be detailed, sometimes – especially in ‘big eras’ 7–9 – it is so brief and limited in its coverage as to be frustrating. In addition, a surprising omission was the lack of a ‘Further reading’ section for each of the chapters. This feature would be of great use to teachers and students alike, since it would allow them to explore further the latest scholarship on their own. Despite these issues, *World history* is an ideal tool for conceptualizing the history of the world in one brief reading. It should be especially effective as a training device for teachers striving to make meaning out of the many details of world history, and as beginning reading for students in the subject.

The end of empires: African Americans and India

By Gerald Horne. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2008. Pp. 274. 7 b/w illustrations. Hardback £37.00, ISBN: 978-1-59213-899-9; paperback £17.99, ISBN: 978-1-59213-900-2.

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Gerald Horne’s *End of empires* is an impressive work of connective history, immaculately researched and marked by sensitivity for the interweaving of the African American civil rights struggle with Indian anti-colonialism and it poses important questions about the development of twentieth-century nation-states. Horne points to a broad shift that occurred during the twentieth century, whereby lateral, cross-state networks of political solidarity in the early decades were replaced by more vertical, state-contained, hierarchies of political identification after the Second World War.

Horne’s research is extensive and deep, scouring some of the most dimly lit corners of American, British, and Indian archives for both the minutiae and the *gestalt* of political and social relations between

Indians and African Americans. Horne is interested in the ‘cognate’ and ‘conjoined’ political experiences of both groups from about the 1860s until the 1960s. This theme has received attention from scholars such as Nikhil Singh, Bill Mullen, Cathryn Watson, and Nico Slate. Horne’s book provides an important contribution to the discussion, tracing the dimensions of international advocacy networks that developed as a response to domestic oppression in the USA and in British India.

Horne unearths the names and experiences of individuals who peopled the Indian–African American encounter over the course of a century. As expected, the more well-known figures receive due attention: W. E. B. Du Bois, Lala Lajpat Rai, Marcus Garvey, Paul Robeson, George Padmore, Jawaharlal Nehru, and M. K. Gandhi. But it is the effort that Horne has put into recovering a score of lesser-known figures, including students, missionaries and revolutionaries, that makes the work all the more valuable. He provides excerpts from the correspondence between Rammanohar Lohia and Robert O. Jordan, for example. He traces the activities of mediating figures such as the English anti-colonial activist and Unitarian minister, J. T. Sunderland. We meet the star basketball player Wilmeth Sidat-Singh and his Indian stepfather, Samuel Sidat-Singh. We are introduced to Howard and Sue Bailey Thurman, two renowned spokespeople for Black America who travelled to India in the late 1930s on an unofficial diplomatic mission. Horne takes time with the details of social interaction, uncovering the interpersonal weave of Indian–African American ‘bilateral relations’.

One of the most valuable insights of Horne’s study is the assertion that framing connective histories in terms of ‘cross-cultural’ or ‘trans-cultural’ relations alone might prevent us from probing the deeper significance of these interactions. In fact, the changing contexts of international and domestic political struggle, as well as economic conditions, are salient frameworks for understanding relations between Indian and black activists. Horne correctly remarks that the first political cords of connection linking African Americans and Indians emerged in the mid nineteenth century, and had much to do with the global market for cotton production. The book follows a chronological arc, with another moment of encounter beginning with the spread of English-language Ahmadiyya Islamic texts, published in the Punjab and disseminated in the United States, in the late nineteenth century. These texts played a seminal role in the rise of African American

Islam. The study continues with the arrival of large numbers of Indian immigrants to California in the late nineteenth century. The radical Indian anti-colonial activists among their ranks looked admiringly on the model of the African American civil rights struggle, just as some black activists would later take Gandhian politics as their guide. The military and economic rise of Japan in the early twentieth century captured the imagination of Indians and African Americans alike. Soon, stimulated by the advocacy and writings of figures such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Lala Lajpat Rai, both based in New York City in the 1910s, high-level political alliances between Indians and African Americans began to emerge.

The narrative then moves to the years after the First World War, and the period of rising anti-Asian sentiment among the American mainstream. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this was also a high tide for African American interest in matters Indian. We enter the 1930s, and learn of the growing number of African American spokespeople and travellers to India on tours of solidarity. The Second World War, and Gandhi's ultimatum to the British in 1942, marks a crescendo in Horne's account. The book concludes with the arrival of independence in India and Pakistan in 1947, followed by the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954.

Some of the most novel, and perhaps most controversial, portions of the work come in the later sections, in which the internal wrangling within the NAACP during the 1950s is discussed. The side-lining of radical leftist and Marxist black intellectuals in the NAACP, especially W. E. B. Du Bois and George Padmore, was accompanied by the rise of Walter White's strategy of accommodating American foreign policy in exchange for the promise of concessions to African Americans by the federal government. Horne suggests that in the context of the Cold War, Indian and African American paths began to diverge. Indian state socialism under Jawaharlal Nehru was intent on asserting its independence from Britain, but also from the Western power bloc. On the other hand, high-ranking African American politicians focused on cultivating loyalty and anti-communism within the African American community to appease the Cold War American state. Horne argues that the interruption of close identification between Indians and African Americans was unavoidable under such political conditions.

Horne's work does a fine job of grappling with the starkly different social and political locations of

Indians and African Americans. However, a problem that hounds many histories of connection can be observed in his analysis too. When comparing and connecting two groups, there is a tendency to transform each into an ideal type. Can we really speak of 'Indian' anti-colonialism, given the patterns of social disenfranchisement that ran along lines of caste, class, community, language, and region, and especially given the devastating effects of partition in 1947? On the other side, when it comes to African American resistance movements, Horne tends to focus on high politics in his post-Second World War sections, especially on NAACP statesmen. One wonders whether including a fuller discussion of black nationalism and Black Power, and of grassroots organizations and their views of India or Pakistan, might have altered his narrative. The book perhaps jumps too quickly to categorize as 'isolated' those African American activists who stridently identified with the 'developing world' left, and who criticized the American state. And, from a bird's-eye perspective, Horne's narrative of progress on both the Indian and African American sides, culminating in 1947 and 1954 respectively, might be duly complicated in future works on this theme.

What does seem clear, judging from this expansive and finely textured book, is that the colour line that ran laterally across the world in the early twentieth century, and that appeared to connect majority white ruling classes over against the various coloured peoples whom they ruled around the world, seems to have been transformed into vertical, state-contained hierarchies of political identification after the Second World War. Horne ends with an important question: will Indians and African Americans ever find each other again in the ways they did during the interwar years? Indeed, in a postcolonial age, which has accepted that the 'end of empires' has in fact occurred, in which nation-states have achieved ultimate primacy, there seems little room for the kind of effective lateral allegiances that predominated under a different world order. But for those who remain politically disenfranchised in this new global order, it is hard to see how international civil society and advocacy networks can provide the kind of help they once did. Who are the losers when the end of formal empires leads to the rise of nation-states that become the sovereign claimants of political legitimacy? This question, embedded in Horne's analysis, provides much food for thought and for future research.