

and, in that process, they appropriated the notions of the rise of the West and the decline of the East, and the orientalist notions of the spiritual East versus the materialist West. Thus, they argued for the awakening of Asia, as if Asians were sleeping. Yet, despite these epistemological concessions, they managed to turn the discourse of civilization, which had been a tool of imperialism, into a tool of decolonization and anti-colonial solidarity. Meanwhile, al-Afghani, Tagore, and Liang Qichao all managed to bring something extra to the conversation on global problems and challenges, things that cannot be traced back to European intellectual world.

There is a major theme in this book that contemporary scholars of global history might like Pankaj Mishra to cover in a sequel to this fine book, namely the question of empires in the long nineteenth century. Mishra is perhaps responding to the nostalgia about and scholarly praise for the virtues and achievements of European empires, especially the British empire. Yet there is also a new global history literature on empires in world history that he could have engaged more forcefully. As seen in Fred Cooper and Jane Burbank's recent *Empires in world history* (Princeton, 2010) there have always been empires in world history, and, in this context, it is important to underline what was unique about the short-lived yet transformative Western imperial hegemony in a globalizing world from the 1870s to the 1920s. Stories of Al-Afghani, Tagore, and Liang Qichao partly answer this question as they became extremely preoccupied with the intellectual foundations of the new European imperial hegemony with its hierarchies of races, religions, and civilizations. During their intellectual decolonization efforts, however, al-Afghani or Lian Qichao still maintained an alternative imperial vision. One could write more about the relationship between al-Afghani and the Ottoman empire, in whose capital he spent much time living as a guest of Sultan Abdulhamid II. For the anti-colonial and pan-Islamic intellectuals of South Asia and Central Asia, the Ottoman Caliphate in Istanbul and the Ottoman empire itself emerges as a symbol of Muslim dignity and modernity at the same time. Why was it that, for both al-Afghani and Liang Qichao, the end of the Ottoman and Qing empires were neither inevitable nor desirable?

Pankaj Mishra reminds us that we need to reflect on the very weak foundations of modern world order: many key decisions were taken around the time of the First World War and after the Second World War to tackle the crisis of empire and respond to the power of anti-colonial demands, but without

much reflection or conversation. This book provides good background reading for a better and necessarily global conversation on the nature of modern international order. The transformation of the world economy in recent decades also helps us overcome one of the major obstacles to a true dialogue on the shared global issues of humanity, namely the obsolete language of essential civilizational differences, posing a spiritual East against a material West. Despite all the theoretical intervention on this topic since Edward Said's *Orientalism*, and despite the common-sense denial of this logic by anyone who visits Tokyo, Shanghai, Mumbai, or Istanbul, the belief in civilizational distinction is alive, especially in literature on social sciences and journalism. Such language is especially dominant in the new discussions on the 'Muslim question', from the War on Terror to the policy challenges of the Arab Spring. Pankaj Mishra does a great service in dispelling this continuing obsession with the Muslim peril by showing the global synchronicity and modern origins of Pan-Islamic ideas with comparable intellectual developments in non-Muslim colonized societies. As a truly global intellectual, he makes a powerful intervention with a brilliant move to connect the fear of the Muslim question with questions concerning China and India, and demonstrates that we need a new non-Eurocentric intellectual and international history if we want to have a reasonable conversation about our current global challenges.

### Shattering empires: the clash and collapse of the Ottoman and Russian empires, 1908–1918

By Michael Reynolds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xiv+303. 25 b/w illustrations, 5 maps. Hardback £61.00, ISBN 978-0-521-19553-9; paperback £20.99, ISBN 978-0-521-14916-7.

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In two years, the world will mark the centenary of the beginning of the First World War, the war to end all wars, which is the subject of Michael Reynolds' lucid and dispassionate work *Shattering empires*. The author is clearly fluent in a number of fields. The first is the better-known and much-published

history of Russia that concerns both Romanov and Bolshevik engagement with the southern tier of empire, and especially the borderlands of the Caucasus. Reynolds is equally comfortable in describing the Ottoman, Young Turk, and Unionist (Committee of Union and Progress) aspirations in the Caucasus in the last, desperate days of the First World War. Finally, the work evinces a rare authority on comparative imperial politics in contested borderlands and margins of empires, especially on questions of ethno-nationalism, self-determination, and the role of Islam, or pan-Islamism. Reynolds' ability to make the bewildering array of conflicting agendas in eastern Anatolia intelligible is particularly laudable.

The book opens with a discussion of the geopolitical context of the late nineteenth century in the Middle East – what used to be called the Eastern Question. Reynolds prefers to concentrate on the 'national question', that is, what impact great power politics had on the ethnic populations of eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus in particular. He begins with the Berlin Treaty of 1878, following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, when 'the national idea emerged as a principle around which the powers organized their competition' (p. 14). Article 61 of the Treaty privileged the Armenian ethnicity as a 'minority' requiring protection against the depredations of equally miserable Assyrians, Kurds, and Circassians, as well as some 700,000 Muslims expelled from the Balkans by that same war. This is a powerful explanation of much of what then unfolded, although I think that its roots lie much earlier in the century, under Mahmud II (1807–39), and in the Greek question.

Telling the story from the Ottoman point of view, until very recently largely undifferentiated, and laden with polemic around the debates over the Armenian genocide, *Shattering empires* brings all the threads of frontier politics, tribalism, emerging nationalisms, and waning imperial realpolitik into an engaging and readable narrative. While there is much new literature on the Ottomans and the First World War, most of what is available in English does not focus on this particular tale.

One of the underlying aims of the book is to address the oft-repeated but rarely substantiated claims about the strength of Ottoman pan-Islamic or pan-Turkic policies as regards the world Muslim audience in general and/or the tribal peoples of the south Caucasus in particular. Though not dismissing the power of Ottoman Muslim or Turkish rhetoric, Reynolds is quick to point out that the obsession of

the Unionists after 1908 had much more to do with security and the preservation of what remained of Ottoman territories. Religion had no place in their modern world. Particular Pan-Islamic moments, such as the declaration of a jihad in 1914, instigated by the Germans in this instance, or Enver Pasha's formation of the volunteer Caucasus Army of Islam in 1917, had little impact on the overall direction of events. Similarly, pan-Turkism faced the multifaceted nationalist question of tribal rivals in the south Caucasus, eastern Anatolia, and Iran. Then, as now, fears of pan-Islamism in Europe and North America frequently blended the possible with the highly implausible, very often with tragic consequences.

What Reynolds is particularly able to shed light on is what he describes as the importance of Bolshevism and the Russian Revolution, which turned the Ottoman's greatest enemy into 'the best hope for Muslim sovereignty in Anatolia' (p. 255). Chapters 6–8 focus on the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and subsequent Ottoman–Russian engagements in the cities of Baku, Batumi, Kars, and Ardahan. In an epilogue, Reynolds describes the final outcome under Atatürk, who signed a treaty in 1921 that left Kars and Ardahan to Turkey, while Batumi went to the Bolsheviks, hence establishing the firm boundaries of the new secular Turkish state from which the Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks had largely been eliminated and the Kurds (and Azeris, for that matter) denied their national ambitions.

This is a tragic tale. Less than a decade ago, apart from international efforts to confirm the Armenian genocide, the tale of woe and destruction of other ethnic populations remained untold in English. Reynolds does not shy away from assessing the human costs of this transition from empire to nation-states (some twenty-five) created out of former Ottoman territories, describing in depth Talât Pasha's intention to homogenize Anatolia – necessary to stabilize surviving territories above all costs, but consistent with practices of population transfer then prevalent among theorists of the modern state. Reynolds concludes: 'In short, in order to save the state, the Unionist had to destroy the empire' (p. 153). Ryan Gingeras' *Sorrowful shores: violence, ethnicity, and the end of the Ottoman empire, 1912–1923* (Oxford, 2009), draws the same conclusion from events in western Anatolia, where the Greeks were not so much decimated as transferred, a process completed by the large population exchange of Turkish-speaking Greeks with Greek-speaking Turks following the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923. Some 15% of the

population of the last Ottoman territories perished in the war, far more from starvation and disease, greater than the losses of any of the nations of Europe.

Under international pressure, the debate about whether or not to recognize the Armenian genocide, reaching *its* centenary in 2015, has been much broadened of late, as a generation of Armenians and Turks outside Turkey talk to one another. A recent publication, *A question of genocide: Armenians and Turks at the end of the Ottoman empire* (Oxford, 2011), edited by Ron Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman Naimark, definitive in many ways, is the result of workshops underway since 2000. Even in Turkey, where such debates are fraught with personal political consequences, the topic is on the table, as one more hurdle to clear in order to become part of the extended European community. Many in Turkey wonder about the virtue of joining the European Union, as they know perfectly well that the real issue has much more to do with the fact that the population is almost entirely Muslim, simultaneously both a testimony to the triumph of nation-state modernity and ethnic relocation and also a badge of exclusion from Europe.

There is considerable food for thought in this carefully crafted book, which is accessible to classroom and general reader alike. Reynolds' even-handed conclusion about the catastrophes endured by so many suggests that all the peoples of the Middle East need to be included as part of the First World War centenary ahead of us.

### **Empire and globalisation: networks of people, goods and capital in the British world, c. 1850–1914**

*By Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xxi + 291. 13 tables. Hardback £53.00, ISBN 978-0-521-89889-8; paperback £19.99, ISBN 978-0-521-72758-7.*

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At a time when contemporary society is revelling in the novelty of electronic social networks, which have the power to drive anything from pop culture to the Arab Spring, a study such as Gary Magee and

Andrew Thompson's *Empire and globalisation* serves to provide both substance and historical context to the much-hyped preoccupation with networks and the spread of information that they facilitate. As the authors remark, 'networking is seen as a phenomenon that was and is widely practised in the contemporary and pre-modern eras, but somehow not in the modern period. By contrast, our position is to emphasise continuity. For us, the forging of networks represents a type of social and economic behaviour that is timeless ...' (p. 59).

Their book focuses on the movement and integration of people, goods, and capital in the Anglophone world in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, in particular the British Dominions, the United States, and, to a lesser extent, Argentina. It takes as its premise that these movements formed an essential component of the first wave of modern globalization and seeks to historicize the phenomenon, as well as to test its theoretical assumptions against the historical record – an endeavour that it achieves admirably by highlighting both the multidimensionality and the unevenness of these processes.

The book is well written and lucidly structured. Its introduction provides an expansive historiographical discussion on empire, followed by a second chapter that examines theoretical frameworks for the study of networks in the British World. It then proceeds to investigate the nature and role of these networks in three subsequent chapters that deal with migration, trade and consumption, and capital investment respectively. In so doing, it provides a compelling reflection of the migrant experience, which takes account of ethnic, regional, and religious identities as the harbingers of an array of immigrant networks and support structures. Its explanations of the peculiar and imperfect flows of information in shaping decision-making; identity as a driver of both consumer culture and investment patterns; and the role of networks in nineteenth-century City finance are particularly impressive. Its portrayal of imperial economics is subtle and nuanced, in contrast to earlier Marxist depictions of the empire as a blunt tool, and it overturns arguments that the Dominions served as useful dumping grounds for British manufacturers by analysing the dynamics of colonial markets. By interweaving people, goods, and capital across the English-speaking world, the book provides a refreshing alternative to the old centre-periphery debates about the relationship between the colonies and the metropole (pp. 23, 118, 167). The authors succeed in moving away from class analysis by giving a fresh