

post-war “national refugees” (the expellees from the east) mirrors the Italian situation. Another entanglement with German history is the massive labour migration of Italians to Germany in the 1950s and 1960s (the so-called guest workers [*Gas-tarbeiter*]). Ballinger hints at the economic boom in Italy at the same time, implicitly arguing that Italy could have been more open to immigration (p. 207). I am just puzzled why this massive outflow of labour migrants – mainly from the poorer south – occurred at the same time.

Ethiopia is another essential actor throughout the book but could be dealt with more comprehensively. As an internationally recognized nation-state and member of the League of Nations and during the Paris Peace Conference, Ethiopia often appeared to be an antagonist against the Italians. Ballinger shows, however, the limited power Ethiopia could wield there. Ethiopian plans to persecute Italian perpetrators of war crimes eventually failed (p. 123). Moreover, only after the Ethiopian protest over UNRRA’s support for Italy did Ethiopia receive some limited assistance from the organization.

These suggestions for comparisons do not present criticism of Ballinger’s book but rather attest to its quality and importance beyond the Italian context. It is an essential contribution for years to come and rests on a solid empirical foundation. Ballinger’s book will be of interest not only to historians of the Italian post-war era but to historians of refugees, international organizations, and decolonization in many places.

Alexander E. Davis / Vineet Thakur / Peter Vale: *The Imperial Discipline: Race and the Founding of International Relations*, London: Pluto Press, 2020, 197 pp.

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A conversion of IR, history, and area studies is occurring at least among some. In the discipline of IR, this is a part of a broader response to the criticism of the nature of the disciplinary knowledge as being Eurocentric, colonial, masculine, and racist (summarized in pp. 7–10). More IR scholars are turning to history to explore a new framework and/or to scrutinize the genealogies of the discipline to understand how it was shaped and search for its alternative paths. Historians and scholars of area studies need to be engaged in this development in IR because how we understand the world order influences how we see interconnected “histories” and “areas” and because IR’s disciplinary histories should reflect accumulated and new scholarship in history and area studies.

The Imperial Discipline: Race and the Founding of International Relations is a recent contribution to such critical historical works in IR.

While various genealogies of the discipline of IR have already been identified, this book, written by Alexander E. Davis, Vineet Thakur, and Peter Vale, sees the organization, the Round Table (since 1909), as the significant institutional and intellec-

tual founding of the discipline of IR in a large part of the British Empire. It argues, “the ‘science’ of studying international politics, the method of doing it, and the implacable belief that knowledge created, not just explained, reality came from initiatives undertaken by the group of people” of this organization, and “these initiatives were key to the founding of IR” (pp. 3–4). The Round Table movement, founded in 1909 in South Africa for exploring the new British imperial cohesion, published its first journal in 1910, established its headquarters in London, and expanded its branches to several British colonies. Many of its members later became members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA, London) and its “branches” in these colonies in the 1920s and 1930s. Chapter 1 elaborates the founding ideas of this “science” and the belief of the central character of this project, Lionel Curtis, in the context of South Africa. The following five chapters examine how they developed (or were resisted or rejected) in Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and India. This concise analysis across the five colonies is based on extensive archival and other primary sources and was possible because of the respective expertise of the three authors and their collaboration. It is an ideal, yet not an easy task.

The book makes a few (among many) significant points. First, it reinforces the point that IR had an imperial origin and intent, which became invisible in current IR. The book’s method of decolonizing the discipline is to reveal this hidden origin, and it argues: “IR began partly as an imperial ‘science’, which emerged out of the racial anxieties of South Africa and the settler colonies and was exported around the

world” (p. 11). Through the Round Table (and its succeeding institutions), Curtis wanted to create the science (knowledge and methods) and the world order to manage international affairs and secure peace, centred on the British Empire but assuming close cooperation with the USA.

Second, while the book builds on the existing critical works by scholars, such as Schmidt, Hobson, and Vitalis, its emphasis is on “the centrality of the empire’s frontiers to the emergence of IR” (p. 5). Hence, it argues that this imperial science was shaped not at the imperial metropolises of the UK and the USA but out of racial tensions at the colonial frontlines. Four chapters highlight the different main concerns for white settlers in Australia, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand, which defined the respective developments. Despite the significant difference in these developments, the basic nature of this imperial science was defined by racial hierarchy: it was to control and manage, not emancipate, non-whites, and only whites could think the *international*, while “race” and “empire” disappeared in “the formal study of the International”.

Third, the chapter on India reveals an alternative path for this otherwise imperial and white discipline. India occupied the central place for the new British imperial cohesion for Curtis and the Round Table. Not surprisingly, however, Curtis’s vision of the white British world order did not work in India and faced two fundamental questions: Could a non-white population think and discuss the international, and if so, what international did they envisage? The issue manifested in the fierce contest among the different voices and institutions wanting to represent “India” at in-

ternational conferences in the late 1930s and early 1940s. This revealed complex power dynamics involving politics, ideology, and religion in India, compounded by the interventions from London and North America in the last days of British imperial rule while shaping the disciplinary foundations of IR in India and Pakistan.

The book nonetheless raises two intertwined big questions: Was Curtis really central in this story, and is his centrality right for the purposes of this book? It suggests that Curtis's method of gathering and analysing empirical data and using this analysis for improving world affairs and for securing peace permeated the efforts of establishing the science of international relations in these British colonies. Was this method, however, original to Curtis, or did he reflect a general trend of social science thinking of the time? A similar idea was evident in the founding intents of the *Journal of Race Relations*, the Williamstown Institute, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the "Inquiry" at the YMCA in New York, and the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR).

The assumed centrality of Curtis is further problematic. No doubt, he was a strong character and was seen as a "prophet", but other scholars stress the limits, not influence, of him and his vision, especially in the context of South Africa.[1] Moreover, quite a few leading figures at the organizations, even those close to him and who Curtis hoped would promote his vision beyond the British Empire, strongly disagreed with his views. This was evident with members of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and national council members in the USA and Australia of the IPR.[2]

Attributing the emergence of an epistemic community of experts of imperial and international relations in the British Empire largely to Curtis's thoughts and actions may also miss other critical factors. It undermines alternative intellectual and institutional forces at the colonial frontlines, especially those within the national councils of the IPR in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The chapters on India, and to an extent the one on Canada, demonstrate that such contention, rather than the Curtis's vision, was crucial in shaping the nature of the IR strands. Lastly, a more rigorous definition of "IR scholars" may have been useful, as the term presupposes the established discipline of IR throughout the period of its examination.

These questions nonetheless suggest that the book deepens critical reassessments of the disciplinary knowledge of IR and inspires new debates. The book takes us beyond Anglo-American imperial metropolises but still remains within a part of the British Empire, and I join these three authors' call for further diverse histories for decolonizing our understanding of the world order and world affairs. Historians and scholars of area studies have much work to do with these IR scholars.

Notes:

- 1 J. Cotton, Chatham House and Africa c1920–1960: The Limitations of the Curtis Vision, in: *South African Historical Journal* 68 (2016) 2, pp. 147–162.
- 2 T. Akami, *Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States, Japan and the Institute of Pacific Relations in War and Peace, 1919–45*, London 2002, pp. 42–44, 124–128, 130–133, 141, 187.