
REZENSIONEN | REVIEWS

D'ici et d'ailleurs. Histoires globales de la France contemporaine, sous la direction de Quentin Deluermoz, Paris: La Découverte, 2021, 337 pp.

Reviewed by
Matthias Middell, Leipzig

In the French social sciences, the concept of globalisation met with considerable scepticism, which could not be easily overcome even with the introduction of the translated term mondialisation. It was not without reason that this reservation was based on the argument that “globalisation” was primarily used to refer to the experiences of the Anglo-Saxon world with transregional interdependence and that the diversity of variants of such entanglements, especially those emanating from France and its far-reaching empire, were lost from view.

French historians, for their part, attempted to establish a link between the resurgence of global history and the traditions of the Annales school, but found themselves increasingly confronted with a challenge to the hegemony that this historiography had built up in the second half of the twentieth century on the shoulders of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre. This, too, was not an

ideal prerequisite for a productive examination of the innovations that were taking place in the field of global history.

However: time passes, new generations replace older ones, the international mix of the scholarly community was particularly intense in institutions such as the CNRS and the Grandes Écoles in France (especially the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales but also far beyond this institution pioneering the transnational organization of academic work in the social sciences), not the least because national science policy has shown great ambition to realign the country's international role in the field of science. At the same time, the global landscape has changed: the global is no longer sought in the singular, but rather the diversity of constellations in which transregional interdependencies develop has found increasing attention as well as counter-tendencies of disconnecting were analyzed with a new emphasis on the dialectics of the global. It has become clearer than was assumed in the 1990s that various actors have undertaken and continue to undertake competing and simultaneously cooperating globalisation projects, each of which only covers a part of the planet, even if they use a universalistic language.

This volume impressively summarises the research efforts of a group of historians working at French, English, and US insti-

tutions who have been cooperating in a co-ordinated manner since around 2013/14 and who are seeking their own original approach to the subject of global history. The seven chapters (supplemented by pre- and postfaces from the prominent pens of Mary Lewis and Christophe Charle as well as an introduction by the editor, which displays and contextualizes the history of this research team spread over as many institutions as countries) are both research overviews and innovative presentations of a selected dimension of France's global history. They are dedicated to the early-modern history of France with a strong emphasis on the colonial dimension (Markovits, Singaravelou, Todd) and establish the category of "franco-mondialisation" as a specific variant of globalisation which needs to be spelled out in the following, remeasure the central axis of the revolutionary era that was so important for France and for the Atlantic world (Covo, Deluermoz, Diaz), question the role of the French textile industry for global capitalism and consumer history alike (Jarrige, Todd), discuss an eventual French exceptionalism with regard to the role of the state and its transnational character (Delalande, Sawyer), present new findings of research on mobility and migration in their impact on transregional labour markets (Bruno, Ducange, Jarrige), consider the republic and republicanism after 1870 as a transnational phenomenon that was simultaneously shaped by colonialism (Ducange, Larcher, Sawyer) and round off the picture with a detailed consideration of "French" high and mass culture, which is considered in its cross-border co-production (Letourneux, Passini). As the references to the authors in the co-produced chapters already

make clear, this is not a simple anthology, but much more, in fact the fruit of years of collaboration between cultural, economic, and political historians who are characterised by their interest in the transnationality of France, which reaches deep into Africa, Asia, and America. The volume is a well-composed example of a cooperation that brings together the expertise of many experienced scholars and replaces the traditional monograph, which in the past was the undisputed model of history writing. Numerous global histories of France have been published in recent years, and the authors of this volume naturally draw on these as well as on the many individual and specialised studies that have been published in the meantime by historians working on France. The field has received an enormous boost from the expansion of Global France research in the English-speaking world. Despite all these multiple gains in knowledge, the present volume is special because it strives for a unified perspective, which is first described in the introduction with the section "France is not a Hexagone" (pp. 27–42), which distances itself from many traditional narratives on French history, and which is then constructed around the category of "franco-mondialisation" (pp. 49–90). This addresses the fact that modern globalisation differs significantly depending on the perspective from which it is experienced and observed. This category, which decisively counters the confusion between globalisation and Americanisation, invites us to ask whether there are other variants besides the French one and how these different variants relate to each other.

This volume is a clear signal that French historians and historians world-wide

working on French history have positioned themselves competently to discuss such questions in dialogue with other historiographies. In this respect, the volume under review is a milestone in French historiography as well as in international global history and deserves a correspondingly broad reception.

James Mark / Paul Betts (eds.): *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022, 384 pp.

Reviewed by
Max Trecker, Pittsburgh

When did decolonization start? Often the answer given is: Decolonization started in earnest in 1947 when India – the former crown jewel of the British Empire – became independent. The Second World War had exhausted colonial powers like Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France and limited their capacity to subdue colonial unrest. Furthermore, the direct control over a colonial empire had become increasingly costly. Sometimes scholars push the chronology even further and concentrate on the late 1950s and early 1960s when many sub-Saharan countries achieved independence and decolonization became unstoppable and irreversible. In a narrow sense these descriptions are correct. Up to the late 1950s, it remained unclear, if the European empires in Africa and Asia would be completely decolonized

or if there would be some kind of colonial retrenchment, where the colonial centers would focus on keeping the most profitable or otherwise useful colonies under (in)direct control while “dismissing” the rest into independence.

Independence was not granted by generous empires, but had to be fought for, although not always militarily. Therefore, decolonization was preceded by a struggle for independence that in nearly all cases started before the decolonization of India or the beginning of the Second World War. These different independence movements have gathered attention by researchers in the past, even if a lot remains to be researched. What hasn’t been done often is to think post-war decolonization and pre-war independence struggles and organization of independence movements together. What has been done even less is to put Eastern Europe in these two storylines and between two book covers. This is exactly what James Mark and Paul Betts are trying to do with their edited volume.

The book is not an edited volume in an orthodox sense. It is structured in nine chapters in addition to an introduction without any further substructure that puts the nine chapters in groups under a common theme that applies to several chapters simultaneously. The editors present their book as a collectively researched and written monograph and not as an edited volume. This is an interesting concept that seems to have not been followed through completely, as each chapter has specific authors listed in the table of contents with James Mark named as sole author or co-author for four of the chapters plus the introduction. The nine chapters focus on specific topics with no particular chronological or regional fo-