

aber eine Abgrenzung versucht (S. 7–15), statt die vielfältigen Erkenntnisse der Forschung aus den vergangenen Jahren in ihrer Thesenbildung und Argumentation tatsächlich zu berücksichtigen. So hätte beispielsweise gerade der einschlägige Sammelband von Hille/Streim/Lu[3] viel stärker einbezogen werden müssen, da darin gerade die Beiträge von Almut Hille und Gregor Streim bereits einige Erkenntnisse Hudeys vorwegnehmen.

Diese Kritik mindert den Mehrwert der wichtigen Arbeit Katrin Hudeys in keiner Weise. Die Autorin hat sich einem komplexen Themenfeld methodisch reflektiert und konzeptuell überzeugend angenommen. Sie liefert mit ihrer Arbeit eine lohnenswerte Lektüre für alle, die sich als Laien, aber auch als Fachleute in Literaturwissenschaft, Geschichte oder auch Sinologie mit Literatur als transkulturellem Projekt befassen möchten. Mit einer umfangreichen Bibliographie von über 200 zeitgenössischen deutschsprachigen China-Titeln im Anhang der Arbeit bietet sie zudem noch einen wichtigen Anknüpfungspunkt für die weitere Forschung. Hudey zeigt mit ihrer Arbeit eindrucksvoll, dass der literarischen Vermittlung eine wichtige Bedeutung für die transkulturelle Wahrnehmungsgeschichte zukommt; wie sich die gewonnenen Erkenntnisse zur China-Literatur in den breiteren westlichen China-Diskurs der Zwischenkriegszeit einordnen lassen, wird hoffentlich Gegenstand künftiger Forschung sein. Katrin Hudeys wichtigem Beitrag ist eine breite Rezeption jedenfalls nur zu wünschen.

## Anmerkungen

- 1 Vgl. S. Martini, *Postimperiales Asien. Die Zukunft Indiens und Chinas in der anglophonen Weltöffentlichkeit 1919–1939*, Berlin 2017.
- 2 Unter dem Begriff der China-Literatur versteht Hudey „Texte nicht-chinesischer, deutschsprachiger Autor:innen, die China zentral thematisieren, zum Schauplatz der Handlung machen und/oder ein gewisses chinesisches (und meist auch internationales) Figurenpersonal aufweisen“ (S. 19).
- 3 A. Hille/G. Streim/P. Lu (Hrsg.), *Deutsch-chinesische Annäherungen: Kultureller Austausch und gegenseitige Wahrnehmung in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, Köln 2011.

**Thijs Brocades Zaalberg / Bart Luttikhuis (eds.): *Empire's Violent End. Comparing Dutch, British, and French Wars of Decolonization, 1945–1962*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022, 231 pp.**

Reviewed by  
William Blakemore Lyon, Zürich

This book is an anthology that brings together various chapters of comparative nature. It is the product of a larger project organized by three Dutch historical research institutes, beginning in 2017, entitled “Independence, Decolonization, Violence and War in Indonesia, 1945–1950”. The authors compare the Dutch war of decolonization in Indonesia (1945–1949) with similar decolonization wars across the British and French Empires in the approximately two decades following the Second World War. The book is highly collaborative, bringing together Dutch scholars

with a variety of international historians who worked together in many instances. The aim of the book is to bring a more central focus to the war for Indonesian Independence by fostering dialogue with global violent processes of decolonization, whether in Algeria, Vietnam, Kenya, Malaysia, or beyond. One oversight in the authorship, however, is that none of the authors come from institutions in the Global South, most importantly Indonesia, which is a central focus of the book. While understanding the complexity of organizing such a project, this seems like an oversight that could have been taken into account, especially given the book's subject matter and the ongoing debates about which scholars contribute to imperial history projects. The book focuses on extreme violence in the decolonial wars from 1945 to 1962, covering a broad range of themes, including the tactical conduct of colonial troops, insurgent and counterinsurgent violence, rape in the wars of independence, and the modern afterlives of these conflicts. The various themes are organized into eight chapters, with six written by two authors and two chapters written by a single author. The benefits of this primarily collaborative authorship are clear, as historians with different skill sets and linguistic abilities can come together to engage with more primary and secondary source material to enhance and expand their arguments. This is especially powerful in the attempt to bring the Indonesian Independence war more clearly into the larger debates surrounding the French or British wars of decolonization during the period. It is also a useful example of how a national research project can enhance its

output by actively creating a transnational and global research product.

The scope of perspectives in the chapters is also varied, with some focusing on colonial propaganda in the metropolises, while others examine micro-histories of women in the colonies, and still others examine the details of weapon systems and their implementation by colonial and insurgent forces in these wars. As a non-military historian, I was initially concerned that the book may have an excessive focus on the technical aspects of war. However, the end product was generally well-balanced between social, political, and military history. One element I might have liked to read more about is soldiering as work and how the everyday life of being a soldier could result in acts of extreme violence.[1] Glimpses of this emerged for example with Stef Scagliola's and Natalya Vince's (in collaboration with Khedidja Adel and Galuh Ambar) exploration of the complexities of Dutch soldier relations with women ranging from seemingly cordial, although structurally unbalanced, to violent rape undertaken by Dutch soldiers of "baboes".[2]

While the book chapters went into detail regarding the complexity of various actors involved in the colonies fighting for independence, I was curious whether the identity of the colonial actors may have also warranted some further exploration. Did non-national mercenaries such as those in the French Foreign Legion or the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, especially those who were German, bring unique experiences of violence from the Second World War to these wars of decolonization?[3] Such details could further add complexities to what are often national dialogues.

The strongest elements of the book are when it goes beyond the minutia of the military conflicts to make larger conclusions as to why the colonial powers in the wars of decolonization eventually resorted to the use of extreme violence and how we characterize that violence. As stated in the introduction of the book (p. 16), this is indeed the central goal of the work. Although some of the book's conclusions are not groundbreaking, the expansive use of case studies across empires increases the strength of such arguments.

Overall, "Empire's Violent End" is a valuable contribution to the scholarship on the history of violence and the wars of decolonization. It paves the way for further collaborative work, especially that which could link this type of anthology to more partnerships between scholars from the Global North and South.

#### Notes

- 1 M. Moyd, *Violent intermediaries: African soldiers, conquest, and everyday colonialism in German East Africa*, Athens 2014.
- 2 Female domestic cleaners or housekeepers in military encampments who were often forced into the role of concubines, see Zaalberg and Luttikhuis (eds.), *Empire's Violent End*, p. 101.
- 3 D. Porch, *The French Foreign Legion: A Complete History of the Legendary Fighting Force*, New York 2010.

**Ferial Haffajee (with Ivor Chipkin):  
Days of Zondo: The Fight for Freedom from Corruption, Johannesburg: Maverick, 2022, 363 pp.**

Reviewed by  
Ulf Engel, Leipzig

This volume takes stock of several years of intensive investigative journalism on how the South African state has been and continues to be undermined from within. It is also a solid, semi-academic documentation of the proceedings of the South African Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State, led by the then acting deputy chief of justice, Raymond Zondo (in short, the Zondo Commission).

Between August 2018 and June 2022, this commission investigated the appropriation of public funds and tenders by a criminal network linked to the ruling African National Congress (ANC). The three Indian Gupta brothers orchestrated "state capture" in collusion with South African president Jacob G. Zuma and his cronies – often referred to as the party's "radical economic transformation" (RET) faction.[1] The state capture targeted state-owned enterprises (SOEs), such as the electricity utility Eskom, the national air carrier South African Airways (SAA), the arms manufacturing and procurement Denel, the transport providers Transnet and Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa), and the service provider Bososa, among others.[2]