

reducing overall economic inequality” (p. 253). In other words, women-specific protection aimed to curb extreme exploitation of *all* workers in the Global South, even if it was rooted in the modernization paradigm, which conceived of development in the Global South as modelled on the historical progress the West had undergone earlier (p. 251).

The third theme, which underlies most of the articles, is the increasing commodification of labour, which leads to the “outsourcing” of caregiving work in the Global North. With the state withdrawing from the sphere of social reproduction, working mothers increasingly rely on support from cheap, female migrant labour. The lack of citizenship has become a source of further and often extreme exploitation since not only do these women have no access to labour protection, but as illegal migrants they are dependent on the good will – or more often on the whim – of employees. This extreme commodification of labour is addressed particularly in the last chapter of the book, which raises the highly controversial issue of commercial gestational surrogacy. As Mahua Sarkar argues: “By turning women’s capacity to bear children, i.e. a very special form of labour, into a particular kind of commodity, [...] commercial surrogacy brings the most fundamental and hitherto un-commodifiable aspect of reproductive labour, childbearing, within the ambit of paid work” (p. 353). Instead of presenting an ethical discussion, the author suggests reorienting the discussion on the commodification of reproductive labour, and reconceptualizing surrogate mothers as workers whose rights need to be regulated and protected. If the history of the ILO is also a history of inclusion, as I argue above, one might find this a challenging new paradigm – or a frightening dystopia, depending on what kind of new world we conceive of.

This book, then, does indeed present us with a history far richer than the mere institutional history of the ILO. Indeed, we get a real global history, where the individual chapters are in a constant dialogue with each other and at the same time also reflect on the global story that is being told. *Women’s ILO* deserves to be fundamental reading not only for people interested in gender(ed) history, but also for everybody who is engaged with or seeking engagement with the “global labour history” paradigm.

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SHERWOOD, MARIKA. *Kwame Nkrumah and the Dawn of the Cold War. The West African National Secretariat, 1945–48*. Pluto Press, London 2019. 192 pp. Ill. £50.00. (E-book: £12.99.)

Marika Sherwood’s book, *Kwame Nkrumah and the Dawn of the Cold War* offers a meticulous exploration of the inner workings of the West African National Secretariat (WANS) during the 1940s. The author centers the political activism of Kwame Nkrumah in the organization and his negotiations with other prominent Pan-Africanists across three continents in a much more expansive and dynamic frame than previous studies. Nkrumah was the protagonist of the post-war African independence movement in Ghana and across the continent.

Sherwood firmly grounds her findings of WANS's development and demise within the complex geopolitics of European colonial rule and American and Soviet activities. The study draws on a remarkable set of primary source material from Ghana and other West African nations as well as newly released European (primarily British files) and American archives – despite the fact that pertinent archival material has not yet been released by the British government. Sherwood's aptitude for a precise reading of the sources and existing literature demonstrates her vast knowledge of the multiple and overlapping worlds of the post-war era and the central characters that defined them.

The book comprises eight main chapters, a short conclusion forming a ninth chapter, and an appendix summarizing publications by WANS and its members. Although the book's chapters are well-organized, readers unfamiliar with the numerous organizations and their acronyms would have benefitted from a separate section indicating those details. In addition, a section noting the archival sources, newspapers consulted, and a bibliography at the end of the book would have been equally beneficial to readers. At times, the copious subheadings throughout the book disrupt the author's narrative flow.

Chapter One begins with an exploration of the substantial military and economic contributions that British West African colonies and their subject peoples made during World War II. Sherwood examines the evolution of British, French and American interests in the African continent during and after the war, elucidating the ways in which partnerships, not yet fully realized, would later come to fruition. Indeed, Sherwood demonstrates the ways in which the United Kingdom sought to hold on to its colonies as they became even more vital to the economic prosperity of the country after the war. The USSR's interest and understanding of developments on the African continent, prior to the war, though minimal, grew in the post-war era with the invitation for Africans to attend courses focused on communist support of anti-colonial endeavors. Amidst those development, West Africans who had already begun to organize themselves into trade union organizations, voiced their desires for the creation of a West African Trade Union Federation in 1945, and played a role in the formation of the World Federation of Trade Unions (pp. 8–9). West African trade unionists were among the burgeoning group of Africans calling for independence from colonial rule and European imperialism.

Chapter Two examines the African Diasporic context of the emergent campaigns for independence. In particular, Sherwood analyzes the ways in which the political activism of African students, particularly Kwame Nkrumah and his contemporaries in the United States and the United Kingdom, coalesced into new platforms for advancing calls for African independence. African American organizations like the Council on African Affairs, the NAACP, and the black press developed new relationships and interests in the anticolonial efforts of Africans. African student organizations on the continent, the metropole, and the United States mobilized around a range of issues, calling for the dismantling of colonial rule. Those organizations also contested the biases embedded in the Atlantic Charter and creation of the United Nations.

The 1945 Pan African Congress that was held in 1945 in Manchester, UK, cemented the pan-African ideas and connections between Kwame Nkrumah, the West Indian Pan-Africanist George Padmore, and several future leaders of independent African states (pp. 33–36). Among the resolutions passed was the principle that the Atlantic Charter be put into practice and calls be made for independence or, at the very least, self-government for all European colonies in Africa and the West Indies.

The formation, aims, and activities of the West African National Secretariat, the subject of Chapters Three, Four, and Five, occurred as a result of the moderate tone of the Pan-African

Congress's resolutions and the absence of any substantive action after it concluded. WANS was a far more radical organization and it sought to develop a spirit of unity and solidarity among West Africans as it clamored for immediate and absolute independence. The chapters examine the ways in which francophone and anglophone activists in West Africa, Britain, and the United States worked together around a range of issues. WANS formulated resolutions that threatened colonial powers, contested the international order, and mounted the formal appeal for dismantling colonial rule. One of the main tools that WANS utilized to publicize its aims and disseminate information was the creation of its newsletter, *The New African*, in 1946, and other publications like the *WASU magazine*. Nigerian-owned African newspapers like the *West African Pilot* became important mouthpieces for WASU's efforts. A congress scheduled for October 1948, in Lagos, sought to formulate a plan for independence, the creation of a democratic federation of West African territories, the creation of West African territorial councils, and the establishment of a permanent secretariat in West Africa.

Chapter Five demonstrates complex networks, alliances, and travels of key members of WANS, particularly Kwame Nkrumah, and the challenges the organization began to face in terms of funding its journal and organizing the planned meeting for October 1948. The beginnings of a surveillance culture by British intelligence units (particularly, MI5) of WANS and of key members such as Nkrumah illustrate the importance of its activities and the threat it posed to colonial rule. WANS was instrumental in protesting a range of issues internal to the colonies, including the anti-colonial "riots" that engulfed Accra in February 1948.

Chapters Six and Seven underscore just how radical and dangerous Nkrumah was in the eyes of colonial officials in West Africa and the metropole. Sherwood demonstrates increasing levels of surveillance of Nkrumah and WANS by the collective intelligence efforts of Britain, France, Belgium, and the United States. The chapter covers well-known developments in Gold Coast politics and the increasing role that Nkrumah played in the politics of the country amidst growing calls for independence. The assertion by colonial officials of a communist threat to their imperial designs led them to create new ways of policing and surveilling Nkrumah and the activities of other African organizations. The United States would eventually undermine its nominal support for African independence in order to advance its commercial efforts to acquire/access African economic resources and develop military bases. It did so by uniting and partnering with European colonial officials, governments, and intelligence units against the perceived threat of communist infiltration in African colonies. European and American branding of Nkrumah and his allies in the Gold Coast and West Africa as communists rendered African nationalism and its advocates illegitimate (p. 125).

Chapter Eight underscores the dramatic transformation in the activities of the allies to sideline and reconstitute the USSR as the enemy in the post-war era. Between 1945 and 1948, an anti-communist wave developed, particularly in Britain and the United States, and both nations sought to contain, if not stamp out the spread of communism in colonial Africa and elsewhere. The exchange of information between colonial governments, foreign offices, and the United States through various measures coalesced into a multinational effort at curtailing the perceived "communist" inspired activities of Africans and their nationalist effort. In fact, no substantive evidence of communist infiltration in West Africa or an embrace of communism by West Africans surfaced.

The book's conclusion argues that the United States emerged as "Western Europe's 'puppet-master'" in the wake of those developments (p. 169). Colonial governments – particularly Britain – needed continued support from the United States given their indebtedness

to their American allies who bailed them out from the economic devastation of World War II. Both countries came to rely on each other, even as colonial governments realized the need to work together to sustain colonial rule. Yet, Britain, along with the United States, increasingly wished not to be viewed as anti-independence; thus, they united under the banner of anti-communism. For Sherwood, 1948 emerges as the watershed moment for the commencement of the Cold War in West Africa. It would have been useful for the author to offer some brief analysis of future developments with the close of the 1940s into the early 1950s.

Sherwood's tightly woven narrative offers a lucid analysis and balanced view of African agency, shedding important light onto how African political activism intersected with the jockeying for power and influence among Western European colonial powers and the United States in the late 1940s. Those countries sought to maximize their access to – and control of – the vast economic profits of the African continent's resources, with attempts to contain the growing campaign for African independence cloaked in an anti-communist threat. Students and scholars of the post-war era, decolonization, and the Cold War will find this small book to be invaluable in its assessments of the nascent efforts by African people for independence and the ways in which their activities intersected with and shaped the burgeoning dynamics of the ensuing Cold War.

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doi:10.1017/S0020859020000395

MCCURRY, STEPHANIE. *Women's War. Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) 2019. xii, 297 pp. Ill. \$26.95; £21.95; € 24.50.

Stephanie McCurry's *Women's War* is the latest entry in a growing body of scholarship on the American Civil War that explores the essential role that women played in the military conflict and its aftermath. Historians of irregular warfare and occupation have demonstrated that women were the supply line for Confederate and Unionist guerrillas, that women's resistance activities prompted Union and Confederate officials to target them as military enemies, and that the progress of the war eroded any imagined division between "battle front" and "home front" in the South. Historians of emancipation and the refugee experience during the Civil War have shown that black women led rebellions on individual plantations, liberated themselves through flight to Union military lines, and labored for the Union Army in ways that contributed to the success of its war effort and altered the discourse of citizenship in the United States. McCurry makes two particularly important contributions to the literature in this volume. Through a close examination of archival evidence, she recovers how Confederate women's resistance activities forced lasting changes to the laws of war. Through the methods of micro-history, as she leads readers through the diary of a Confederate woman attempting to reconstruct her life in the post-war South, she presents a challenge to historians who claim that the Civil War and Reconstruction did not mark a