

organisations and raised the issues of women, dalit, minorities and Adivasi rights. For example, one can find that the women's movement has strongly challenged the idea of an 'ideal woman' presented by the right-wing. Similarly, in many parts of the country Adivasis have been continuously been opposing the march of a neo-liberal development agenda and in the post-1990s compelled the state to enact some progressive laws like the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 and the Forest Rights Act 2006. Though the book accepts the existence of such activities, it fails to present a coherent description of the struggle of and challenge put forward by these groups to the neo-liberalism or the Hindu right-wing. Fourth, there is a need to understand the electoral emergence of the right-wing in the context of simultaneous emergence of the OBCs and dalits in Indian politics, which also challenged the dominance of the right-wing. Also, the right-wing not just works with the notion of Hindutva and 'security', but it has tried to reinvent itself through 'social engineering', by consciously giving space to OBCs leaders.

The uniqueness of this book, however, is that it presents the complex relationship between all these aspects in the emergence and revitalisation of the Hindu right-wing in India. The book underlines that the right-wing used the dissatisfaction from neo-liberal policies to create more support for itself. Towards this end, it used a majoritarian agenda and emotive issues, and after gaining power it used the rhetoric of national security for gaining more legitimacy.

**Kamal Nayan Choubey**

*Assistant Professor*

*Dayal Singh College, University of Delhi*

*kamalnayanachoubey@gmail.com*

**Ali Raza, Franziska Roy and Benjamin Zachariah (Eds), *The Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds, and World Views, 1917–1939*, New Delhi, SAGE Publications, 2015, xli + 274 pp., ₹723, ISBN-10: 8132119797/ ISBN-13: 978-8132119791.**

DOI: 10.1177/0049085716683123

*The Internationalist Moment* is an eponymous volume about a two-decade-long period of diverse and criss-crossing internationalisms, which the world experienced nearly a century ago as the First World War ended. This Moment offered two competing visions of the future of human societies in terms of order and justice. The first of these was the American domestic vision that Woodrow Wilson internationalised through his Fourteen Points, specifically, and the United States' (short-lived, in retrospect) involvement in the thick of world affairs, generally. The 'Wilsonian Moment', as Erez Manela has termed this variant of the Moment, represented a time of immense hope for those struggling against European colonialism around the world; struggling, however, to replace colonial rule with national rule and not necessarily to get rid of the modern state, which was the instrument of colonial exploitation. Struggling, thus, to gain national sovereignty

over the modern state. This variant of the Moment was anti-imperialist (as per its self-image) but not anti-statist.

The second was the vision emerging out of the recent Bolshevik Revolution in the Soviet Union. It was a work-in-progress at home and thus carried the disadvantage of inexperience: the American domestic vision gestated at home for nearly a century before it went international. This 'Leninist' or the 'Brest-Litovsk Moment' was 'far more sustained and far-reaching' (p. xvii) than its Wilsonian counterpart, for it resonated not just with the aims of those struggling against European imperialism but also, more crucially, with those who were waging radical and frequently unrealistic struggles to replace the world of states with any number of desirable and semi-desirable orders set at either the South Asian, Asian or the global level. This variant of the Internationalist Moment was simultaneously anti-statist and anti-imperialist. The volume catalogues and theorises a great variety of impulses unleashed within this second variant of the Moment, which were, while largely preoccupied with India, South Asia and Asia, also concerned with hopes and anxieties about humanity in general. This Moment ended in the late-1930s as statist-imperialist forces clamped down, and as the far-fetched impulses underlying several of these internationalist forces adjusted to pressures of international reality, most significant of which was the Second World War.

This volume of nine chapters (including an introduction) and eight authors, five of whom are, welcomingly, women, makes three key and very promising contributions. The first is about the Moment itself, during whose span mostly supra-state and non-state actors from the subjugated world linked up as movements to pursue a range of overlapping and non-statist goals. A large immediate goal was the demise of European imperialism and societal liberation in the colonies. But other goals ranging from religion and region-based solidarities to socialism, women's liberation, communism, creative universalism and internationalist nationalism (of the sort represented by Jawaharlal Nehru, for instance) were also pursued. In fact, the editors list at least 19 such intermeshed goals in the preface.

These movements institutionalised as they linked up, created platforms such as the League Against Imperialism and the Baku Congress of the Oppressed Peoples of the East to create alternative visions for different sections of humanity and, overall, provided a polyphonic, discursive resistance to the injustices of the age as well as the global order underlying them. Focusing on the interlinkages between South Asia-based or South Asia-connected movements, peoples and ideas, the volume foregrounds the immense international activism to liberate India not just for Indians but for Asia and the world as well. For India's liberation from imperialism and statist forces and its transformation was seen as the key to the rest's liberation and transformation.

Actors within these movements imagined possibilities, such as pan-Islamism leading to a World Federation or a revolutionary Asianism of workers and peasants, which appear unattainable in hindsight. But not so to the actors themselves, who doggedly pool in efforts, build solidarities and construct cross-cutting unities to create grounds for a widespread turnaround in the condition of large and diverse sections of humanity. This period is special in that it represents a springtime of immense internationalist energy and imagination. The dominant image from this

crucial period for world affairs is still that of European powers trying to come to terms with the mixed legacies of the First World War. This volume decentres European powers and brings into light the strong and diverse international connections being busily initiated and institutionalised to create new futures for South Asia and the world. Of course, it adds richly to the emerging literature that looks at the interwar period from non-European points of view. But by identifying its essentially internationalist character, and naming the period as it does, it introduces us to the fact that this period represented a jumbled assembly of idealist hopes that travelled farther and had an impact on people's lives far greater than we had until now imagined. The Moment was very real and very promising.

Second, it makes a strong pitch for taking 'intermediate' ideas seriously. Zachariah's chapter in the volume introduces and elaborates on this idea, which varyingly sets the tone for enquiries of nearly all the other chapters. Zachariah argues that intermediate ideas are generally non-elitist and not necessarily connected to actual events. They are not successful ideas in the sense that they do not necessarily translate into major practices. They are not ideologically crystallised or rarefied, are inconsistent, and contain contradictory strands, such as fascism and anti-colonial nationalism, within them. Intermediate ideas gain their identity because they circulate and travel across political, social, cultural and class boundaries. As their bearers—international subalterns like pilgrims and revolutionaries—move across social contexts, intermediate ideas keep transforming. The resulting fluidity and the absence of points of origin and culmination give ideas their intermediate identity. Zachariah provokes historians of ideas to look for intermediate ideas in unconventional sources such as secret intelligence agency notes on international travellers who return to a colonised home after a stint in an enemy country, politicised by an array of influences and eager to liberate the motherland and change the world at once.

The notion of intermediate ideas is a promising one, but it needs more honing. Those doing intermediate intellectual histories must be able to justify why an idea that is underdeveloped and apparently non-purposive must be taken seriously. To push the point and risk sounding ungenerous: what separates intermediate ideas from half-baked ones? Zachariah's apparent suggestions that intermediate ideas are worthy because their travel and circulation introduces us to their social milieu and impact, that there are social phenomena, and that because they are 'relatively accessible to relatively non-educated people' (pp. 20–21) is welcome. But is there not a more persuasive reason to take intermediate ideas seriously? It seems that intermediate ideas matter a great deal in moments of profound transition, such as the interwar years, when the present is marked by immense energy and imagination and the future appears open to a range of possibilities. Oddly, despite mentioning that the Moment's *zeitgeist* produced these ideas (p. 20), Zachariah does not build upon the notion.

Third, this volume treats the international in refreshing and desirable ways. The international has long been associated with interaction among states, empires and other materially powerful actors who make up the stuff of international high politics. The editors conceptualise the international not only in terms of *interaction* but also relevant *encounters* and sites of *engagements*. This move broadens the types of phenomena that underlie the international without diluting their

scope. Further, the contributors show that the international is a fairly pervasive and diffused phenomenon that is experienced by, and that influences, a great variety of actors and situations. Michele L. Louro (Ch. 2), Ali Raza (Ch. 4), Ana Jelnikar (Ch. 7) and Robert Anderson (Ch. 8) use life histories of transiting people—a statesperson in the making, a poet, a group of regional revolutionaries and an Indian scientist—to map changes within their outlook brought about by the international. They also show that the experiences of such people in transit can illuminate the international itself.

Nearly all contributors to this volume examine non-statist and non-high politics dimensions of the international. For instance, Maia Ramnath (Ch. 5) explores the question of how whom one loves affects one's commitment to anti-colonialism and thus to an internationalist project. Anderson examines episodes from the scientist Meghnad Saha's life to show how he used his international reputation to manoeuvre his career and secure his prospective national role whenever national politics appeared to take unfavourable turns for him. Other axes along which the international is mapped in this volume include pilgrimage, revolutionary activism, trade unionism and youth movements. The volume gives considerable emphasis to travelling as an international act. This opens the possibility of theorising international travel, especially when it is taken under extraordinary circumstances or for major objectives, by tracking the life of each travel and through it accessing those aspects of the international which remain obscure in accounts of international high politics. Finally, illustrating a point made by critical international relations scholars, our historians show the value of mining non-official archives, including creative readings of fiction and poetry, when one is interested in understanding how the international is experienced in deeply personal, felt ways. All this has a ring of liberation to it, for the international is not a preserve of high politics but, rather, an all-pervasive factor in human affairs. And the volume illustrates this richly with its historical accounts.

Although a work of intellectual history, the volume also speaks to contemporary concerns. There is much talk in international relations literature on the global power transition from the Euro-Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific region and the resulting flux that societies affected by it are experiencing. International confusion of this scale was last witnessed exactly a century ago. This volume can help us understand what lines of thinking and action those dispossessed by this transition, as well as those thrilled by the opportunities it presents, could take.

Two minor weaknesses of the volume include some instances of sloppy copyediting and sections in some chapters (for instance, Chapters 3, 4, 7 and 8) that tend to labour a bit. But these do not take away from its immense value to international intellectual historians and students of international relations, especially those concerned with modern India, South Asia and Asia.

**Atul Mishra**

*Assistant Professor*

*Centre for International Politics*

*School of International Studies*

*Central University of Gujarat*

*atulmishra@cug.ac.in*