

originating from nations unrelated to the colonial scramble for Africa. In its modern multipolar approach, the collection not only pays tribute to the intellectual heritage of Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhaba, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, whose influence is felt throughout the volume, but also boldly attempts to decode Africa's colonial past through the lens of Germany, Poland, and Russia, previously unlikely actors in postcolonial discourse. While this premise might seem synthetic to some die-hard purists, it is not without scholastic merits. Accordingly, in moving postcolonial discourse not only into new pastures but also into the twenty-first century, by employing a bricolage of modern interpretative techniques, this collective exercise succeeds in demonstrating that in the postcolonial world there is always room left for yet *Another*, even if less expected, *Other*.

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Geschichte als Politikum: Lettland und die Aufarbeitung nach der Diktatur. By Katja Wezel. The Baltic Sea Region: Northern Dimensions-European Perspectives no.15. Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts Verlag, 2016. 324 pp. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Tables. €49.00, paper.
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For at least the last two decades, the politics of memory in Latvia has been formulated and performed by various actors who mainly define their political position based on the results of World War II in Latvia. Long before the term “politics of history” had been invented in relation to the attempts of Vladimir Putin’s government to revise the image of Soviet Russia in the history of twentieth century eastern Europe, in the Baltics, and Latvia especially, politics of collective remembrance had been used as an effective tool to mobilize various ethnic groups for political purposes. The Second World War in the Baltics is not yet over, on the contrary, it is still continuing in political discourses, although the countries have changed dramatically—parliamentary elections, NGOs, annual festivals and commemoration events, and books and conferences have become the site of the battle for political affiliation and voters’ sympathies. Although various Latvian specialists in memory politics have done much to explain the peculiar results of WWII to the population of Latvia, there is still a major challenge remaining for Latvian politics of inclusion: how does one find a place for the experience of the war and its results that opposes the predominant narrative of the war and occupation still circulating among the various minorities in Latvia? How can those who have fought on the side of the Red Army and who are ethnic Latvians also be included in this narrative? How can creating new, mnemonic gaps and clashes over historic events that are often the predominant content of political propaganda that receives tremendous media support from abroad be avoided? How can we avoid fake history in the culture of “politainment,” where fake news and interpretations become an attractive basis for collective identities for minorities?

All these difficult questions have been addressed in a new academic study by Katja Wezel, who is well known for her interest in Latvian memory politics. Her book is the result of long-term research into the collective traumas of various ethnic groups in Latvian society. After introducing the reader to the peculiarities and conflicts of Latvian history in the twentieth century, Wezel proceeds to the important issue of the national movement in the late 1980s, which in Latvian is still called awakening (*atmoda*), but which in Wezel’s version is described as a movement for Latvian autonomy. This is certainly the point where officials in contemporary Latvia would

strongly object. In anticipation of the 100-year state jubilee (2018), the presentation of Latvian history as a perpetual march of the people's will throughout the centuries to found the Latvian state (as witnessed, for example, in the recent introduction to the Latvian Constitution of 2013), has enshrined a new period of nationalistic romanticism. That is why the style and tone of the research—a theoretical approach of constructionism (also called modernism) dealing with nationalism and national collective memories—should be praised as an antidote to the growing self-centered historiography of national essentialism among Latvian historians.

The important issue raised by the study is the presence, or rather the absence, of the political will to create a common, inclusive space for contemporary Latvians of various ethnic origins. The study presents the chronology of attempts to define the place and meaning of minorities after a long and traumatic second Soviet occupation, which lasted for almost 50 years. Wezel has created a truly wide landscape of various case studies that show the spectrum and diversity of exclusive discourses of political parties and civil society. At the same time, various trends to self-isolation and ethnically-centered mythology and collective prejudices from the side of so-called Russian-speaking minorities have been critically revisited. A wide spectrum of sources in both Latvian and Russian have been included in the study, thus adding to the diversity of public positions and collective imagery of the Other. In some ways, the study resembles the analytical chronicles of interpreting the past in a society that is learning to accept the Other after the breakdown of the Soviet ethnic politics, which, as we remember Rogers Brubaker stating, helped to create anxieties among both ethnic minorities and majorities in the republics of the former USSR. Ethnicity and its cultural products are still viewed as the basis of Latvian identity and state policy towards minorities, as Wezel has clearly identified, still linked to the notion of a nervous, uncertain, and frustrated majority shaped in its collective attitudes by the experience of the 1940s. In this atmosphere, the critical distance from one's own traumas is hard to maintain, while issues such as the participation of Latvians in the Holocaust (1941–44), although accepted and analyzed by Latvian academic elites, has not gained a foothold in popular collective memory. The study is certainly most enjoyable reading for those who value uneasy questions from the past.

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Latvia—A Work in Progress? 100 Years of State- and Nation-Building. Ed. David J. Smith. Stuttgart: ibidem Verlag, 2017. xvi, 320 pp. Notes. Index. Tables. \$48.00, paper.

What is Citizenship for? Citizenship and Naturalization in Latvia. By Susanne Tönsmann. The Baltic Sea Region: Northern Dimensions—European Perspectives, no. 16. Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2017. 217 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Tables. €44.00, paper.

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Any author of a book on a small country has to confront the problem of a limited number of interested readers, but tiny Latvia offers a compelling drama for anyone interested in the history of Europe. The Latvian case study illustrates the process of nation-formation and the dilemma of national survival, the panorama of revolution and war, and the diplomatic efforts to find security in a geopolitical environment that includes powerful neighbors such as Germany and Russia. Furthermore, Latvian