The Price of Aid:
The Economic Cold War in India –
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The Development Century:
A Global History –
by Stephen J. Macekura and Erez Manela (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018

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In the epilogue of *The Development Century: A Global History*, Jeremy Adelman reflects on the ubiquity of development projects in recent history and notes that "what is remarkable is that so many people and institutions remained committed to their ideas of development" (p. 327). This resilience, he argues, stems from the fact that development emerged in response to global integration and "as long as global integration … frames interdependent relationships between societies," we can expect the lure of development to endure (p.336). Development plays an equally important role in *The Price of Aid: The Economic Cold War in India*, but for very different reasons. In David Engerman's account, development is presented as a phenomenon linked to a very specific moment in history. International development assistance, he argues, became an aspect of postwar international relations only when ideas about economic development took on new meanings at the intersection between decolonization and the outbreak of the Cold War. In this context, the Indian government became absorbed by 'development politics' – "the competition for external aid and its entanglement with domestic politics" (p.3). Within two decades, however, the international context had changed and India was left, economically and politically destabilized, to pay the "price of aid".

Engerman portrays this tragedy of the economic Cold War in India in three parts. The first part serves as background and describes how the United States and the Soviet Union 'discovered' India after independence, sparking debates about the potential of extending economic aid to newly independent nations. Simultaneously, Indian politicians were discussing economic policy and national development, debates which Engerman traces back to debates among Indian nationalists that preceded independence.

The second part, titled "The Heyday of the Economic Cold War, 1955-1966", forms the core of Engerman's argument and describes how "development politics" structured domestic debates as well as relations between India and the two superpowers. Cold War competition spurred the United States and the Soviet Union to outdo each other in the field of development, a dynamic that Indian officials exploited, by playing the two superpowers off against one another, to obtain more generous assistance. The competition did not, however, preclude India from accepting assistance from both the East and the West at the same time. Over time, a division of labor of sorts developed between the two blocs, whereby Indian officials seeking to develop the public sector and heavy industry turned to the Soviet Union while officials involved in promoting agriculture and freer markets sought aid from the United States.

These different visions of development coexisted within the Indian government and led to increasingly sharp political divisions as officials used the Cold War to further their own domestic agendas. The final part of the book explores how, in the late 1960s, these divisions deepened as both superpowers withdrew from development projects and India entered the 1970s facing both political instability and economic stagnation. The global project of development,

Engerman concludes, was intended to enhance state power, but the "practice of development assistance threatened the stability of nation-states" (7).
The Price of Aid successfully sheds light on the paradoxical relationship between development aid and state sovereignty because Engerman focuses on networks of actors working within and between governments rather than the state itself. Rather than taking the state for granted as the prima facie actor in international relations, Engerman disentangles and examines the internal workings of states and the transnational networks enabling cooperation between them. This perspective makes it clear that development was not a phenomenon exported by the USA but a language spoken on both sides of the Cold War divide as well as in the places where Cold War bipolarity was explicitly rejected: ideas about development were constructed through interactions between Indian, Soviet and American government officials. This insight emerges from extensive archival research in all three countries which allows Engerman to alternate between the international dimension of Cold War competition and biography-like portraits of individual government officials, without any loss of clarity or attention to detail.
While this impressive feat is to some extent made possible by the Cold War lens through which *The Price of Aid* views the history of development in India, this reader cannot help but wonder what other actors and insights might have emerged from a perspective less colored by the Cold War narrative. For instance, the time frame of the book follows the chronology of the Cold War, but a more organic chronology could have shed light on continuities and connections with development efforts that both preceded and succeeded the heyday of Cold War developmentalism.
The editors of *The Development Century*, Stephen Macekura and Erez Manela, call for precisely such a shift in perspectives. The fifteen contributions that follow take up this challenge and demonstrate how the history of development is both entangled with and independent from the Cold War. As such, they agree with Engerman's assertion that development was not invented and exported by the United States. The volume's chapters cover different scales – from the national and international to the local and transnational – and show that, for actors around the world, "development was not seen as something to be *done* to them" (p.282) but was, rather, perceived as an integral part of their own political agendas. Hence, the volume also captures the malleability of the development concept and how it has been incorporated into radically divergent ideologies and political projects including, for instance, both imperialism and anti-imperial nationalism.
In terms of chronology, Amanda Kay McVety's chapter tracing the origins of international development assistance back to Enlightenment philosophy, Julia Irwin's study of US engagement with development practices in the interwar years and Christy Thornton's chapter on the Mexican interwar origins of development, make a convincing case for histories of development stretching further back than President Truman's 1949 "Point Four" speech. Development, as Macekura and Manela remind us, "has long been the rage in the global arena" (p.2).

Similarly, interventions by Paul Adler and Timothy Nunan, describing the emergence of a transnational network of activists engaging critically with development projects over the last three decades of the twentieth century, and a century of international development projects and humanitarianism in Afghanistan, respectively, show that development remained important long after the 1970s, the point at which Engerman's study and many other development histories end. Both contributions suggest ways to study the emergence of activist networks and NGOs as both proponents and the fiercest critics of development. Integrating these actors into development histories will not only contribute to our understanding of what Jeremy Adelman calls the resilience of development, but also poses interesting questions about the history of nation-states, territoriality and globalization.

Moreover, several of the contributions in *The Development Century* expand our understanding of development by inserting its history of development into research on a wide array of topics beyond that of the Cold War. For instance, Thomas Robertson's study of World War II-era inventions that cleared the way for development projects in tropical areas weaves together development with the history of technology and, most interestingly, environmental history. Erez Manela's excellent chapter, moreover, frames development within the history of disease control and the emergence of international institutions as development actors. Perhaps the best example of this is Priya Lal's chapter which, looking at Tanzania and Zambia in the years following independence, argues for the need to examine postcolonial national development projects "according to their own internal logic" (p.175). Doing so reveals a distinctly Southeastern African, hybrid approach to national development resulting from a fusion of African socialism and the ideas attached to the development aid that Zambia and Tanzania accepted from abroad. Lal also introduces the concept of "developmental labor" which includes both the sort of work in the welfare sector that is traditionally associated with national development projects – health care and education, for example – but also reproductive labor which has often been overlooked in the scholarship. Since this latter category was dominated by women, and all developmental workers were simultaneously both the subjects and the objects of development, gender was a key dimension of postcolonial development politics. Lal's efforts to "write gender into the mainstream narrative of development history" (p.178) not only enhances her own analysis but also points to one of the many dimensions of the history of development that remain unexplored.

If David Engerman's *The Price of Aid* is an interesting read on account of its ability to synthesize transnational interactions and complex political and international debates into a clear narrative of 'development politics,' *The Development Century* is compelling because, in many ways, it does the precise opposite. Collectively, the sixteen chapters "reveal development not as a universal concept" but rather, in the words of the editors, "as a contingent, messy, and often-contested process of explaining the past and imagining the future" (p.10).

One challenge for future historians of development will be to integrate the diversity of perspectives and actors found in *The Development Century* with the attention to detail that characterizes *The Price of Aid*. In the meantime these books, especially when read together, provide both a good introduction to the global history of development and ample inspiration for future contributions to the field.