

exhibitions, however, culminating with the Festival of Empire, “the grandest imperial celebration ever held in the Crystal Palace” (131), underlined the imperial far more explicitly, and accompanied that more imperial focus with forms of human display absent in the original Crystal Palace. Ashley Jackson and David Tomkins, drawing on the Bodleian Library’s John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera (also the key source for their *Illustrating Empire: A Visual History of British Imperialism* [2011]), catalog key imperial themes in print ephemera (ranging from leaflets and postcards to advertisements and matchbooks): “veneration of prominent figures” (151); bolt labels “attached to the ends of cotton bolts exported from British mills” (153); depictions of “indigenes as servants, labourers, and producers” (155); “consumer branding” on labels and advertisements (158); and ephemeral materials that “affirm the existence of a distinctly British world” (160). Berny Sèbe seeks to fill in the details of imperial literary production by looking at actual print runs of books, including “imperial geographies” (170), like atlases and descriptive accounts, and books embodying an “imperial ethos” (176), from imperial histories to Rudyard Kipling tales. In closing, Sèbe also attends to the ways in which imperial products were circulated in the empire itself, with publisher Macmillan’s supplying of texts for Indian schools.

The closing three chapters evaluate early twentieth-century forms of imperial display. MacKenzie examines the last major durbar in comparison to its predecessors in 1877 and 1903. He concludes: “that of 1911 was genuinely climactic since it most clearly expressed the fantasies of empire” (198), and significantly more spectacular (and expensive) than its predecessors. Nalini Ghuman, against a historiographical tradition of neglect for Elgar’s music for imperial occasions (and an undercurrent of scholarship that insists the music was never completed or performed), argues that Elgar’s music provided a critical unifying thread to the disparate musical and other displays at the British Empire Exhibition, highlighting “Elgar’s central role, in collaboration with Noyes, in generating that unity, in drawing the disparate narratives of imperial expansion together” (239). Ghuman concludes that Elgar’s “musical language and performing forces, participates triumphantly in the attempt of the whole British Empire Exhibition to return to a prewar sense of the spectacle of empire” (251). Finally, in another essay on that British Empire Exhibition, Sarah Longair examines the ways in which elites in Zanzibar constructed a historical narrative for the island in the Zanzibar Court and its accompanying handbook, then redeployed the materials for texts and a museum in Zanzibar itself after the exhibition closed.

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LIZZIE OLIVER. *Prisoners of the Sumatra Railway: Narratives of History and Memory*. War, Culture, and Society Series. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. Pp. 169. \$114 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2018.162

The experiences of those who were prisoners of war in the Far East during the Second World War are no longer “forgotten” in the way they once were. In 2013, Richard Flanagan’s prize-winning novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* and the film adaptation of Eric Lomax’s memoir *The Railway Man* highlighted the arduous physical demands of building of the Thailand-Burma railway, as well as the prisoners’ traumatic memories, camaraderie, and sheer ingenuity. In the emerging field of prisoner of war studies, too, innovative research by Meg Parkes on rudimentary medical treatment in prisoner of war camps in the Far East and by Clare Makepeace on veteran communities has uncovered even more about the physical and emotional

worlds of captivity. In short, prisoners of war are no longer simply the preserve of military historians: their experiences expose deeper currents in British social and economic history and even global history.

In this small and stylishly written book, Lizzie Oliver highlights a further aspect of the history of prisoners of war in the Far East that both illuminates and adds nuance to histories of the Second World War and postwar Britain. Her book draws our attention to the “other railway” that British prisoners of war helped to build, one that has attracted few British history scholars: the Sumatra Railway. This railway, built from 1944 to aid the Japanese war effort and facilitate access to the island’s natural resources, was built by just over one thousand British and Commonwealth and almost four thousand Dutch prisoners of war. While the British prisoners were the numerically smaller group, Oliver sketches both their contribution to the construction of the railway and, in more detail, their distinctive artistic, written, mnemonic, and commemorative responses to captivity both during and after the war. The book is underpinned by a thorough knowledge of many of the men themselves, purposefully beginning with a nominal roll, which reminds the reader that individual stories sit at the heart of this astonishing case study.

Oliver’s monograph begins with a short introduction, followed by a short but detailed contextual chapter on the Sumatra Railway. It offers a detailed topography and overview of the camps and notes that although some prisoners were captured in Sumatra itself following their flight from Singapore, others were forcibly transported to the island aboard so-called Hell Ships. These ships included the *Van Waerwijk* and the *Junyo Maru*, both of which were subsequently sunk by British submarines in 1944, with the loss of six thousand lives. Britain’s longer-term social and political connections with Southeast Asia are perhaps underexplored in this chapter, but it nevertheless provides a useful overview to a context often overlooked by historians of the Second World War and of prisoners of war in the Far East. The remainder of the book focuses on four key elements of the cultural life of prisoners of war in Sumatra: life-writing, linguistic codes and communities, the role of prisoner bodies, and finally the aftermath and “postmemory” of the prisoners. These chapters are driven by close reading of particular texts produced by the prisoners, making particular use of the Imperial War Museum’s Sumatra and wider prisoner of war collections. Oliver outlines a typology of prisoner life-writing, including “mini memoirs” and poetry scrawled on the limited supply of paper. But Oliver uncovers more unusual forms of life-writing, too, including the fascinating practice of list-making in prisoner of war camps, where recalling recipes or reciting life goals held an emotional significance (with recipes even becoming “pin ups” on hut walls). In all these cases, Oliver offers a deep analysis of the process of writing itself and the challenges that befell writers during and after captivity. Though the book concentrates on the small case study of prisoners in Sumatra, it nevertheless draws repeated parallels with other forms of writing in captivity and looks to related scholarship, such as work on slave narratives. In chapter 4, Oliver also builds on exciting recent research into the medical history of the Far East prisoners’ captivity, looking in particular depth at the literal and symbolic significance of the prisoner body. Oliver notes how skin was a site of particular pain for prisoners in Sumatra, but also how it became a “parchment” in later years for family members to “read” and consider the impact of captivity on the body. In this way, Oliver and others show that we must never see life-writing as simply a liberating, wholly voluntary exercise, produced in a period of quiet contemplation.

The most original contributions of this short book come in the third and final chapters. In chapter 3, Oliver explores prisoner language in more depth and advances a new theory of “prisoner of war discourse”: the idea that prisoners communicated not only in their own language, but that the transnational setting of the prison camps led them to speak in a *mélange* of various languages, expressions, and communicative codes. This “discourse” was unique to particular prisoner of war communities. The word *kongsies*, for example, was used to indicate the small support group of comrades who would look out for each other. This term permeates both wartime and postwar writing, with veterans’ groups providing each other with similar support in the long years after 1945.

But it is in the final chapter of *Prisoners of the Sumatra Railway* that Oliver poses perhaps the most thought-provoking questions for British studies scholars. This chapter traces the aftermath of captivity and how family members and subsequent generations were themselves deeply imbued with this history, with Oliver making use of Marianne Hirsch's concept of "postmemory." The book itself might even be seen as part of that postmemory: it is bookended by a powerful autobiographical narrative, as Oliver uses the preface and epilogue to explore her own relationship with prisoners of war in the Far East. Oliver also acknowledges the research support offered by the children of Far East prisoners of war, a thriving online community whose members have conducted meticulous historical and genealogical research on the Sumatra Railway and other settings. As David Reynolds has noted, the British memory of the Second World War continues to mutate, and Oliver's book uncovers—and even represents—the evolving place of military captivity within this memory. This fascinating case study will interest both memory studies scholars and historians researching Britain's relationship with its wartime past, as well as those exploring prisoner of war history and the social history of warfare.

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RACHEL PISTOL. *Internment during the Second World War: A Comparative Study of Great Britain and the USA*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. Pp. 240. \$114 (cloth).  
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Rachel Pistol's carefully researched, concise, and clearly written comparative study of Britain's internment of German and Italian "aliens" and America's internment of Japanese and Japanese-American citizens in World War II offers a good introduction to the subject, though it offers few conceptual or theoretical breakthroughs. In her opening pages, Pistol rightly points to the contemporary relevance of her topic, highlighting recent transatlantic movements to scapegoat migrants, refugees, and other cultural or ethnic outsiders. As journalists have observed, the Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage's "Breaking Point" poster rehearses world-war-era propaganda against foreigners, while advisors to Donald Trump have even cited the legal precedent of Japanese internment to justify the idea of a "Muslim registry." Engagement with the polemicist Michelle Malkin's startling 2004 book *In Defense of Internment* (uncited) and the recent presidential pardon of Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who once referred to his illegal "tent city" in Arizona as a "concentration camp," only strengthen Pistol's claim that Far Right forces are making the subject of internment suddenly pressing.

Having established the modern political stakes of the subject, Pistol moves on to a contextual history in chapter 1 by outlining anti-alien sentiment on both sides of the Atlantic. The mass influx of Jewish refugees in the late nineteenth century precipitated the 1905 Aliens Act in Britain, while Chinese exclusion acts in America, along with the 1913 Land Law preventing Japanese immigrants from owning property and the 1917 Immigration Act excluding additional categories of Asian migrants, indicated the degree to which American law institutionalized racism and anti-alien sentiment. These are important early chapters for understanding the mass wartime internment of aliens, but the material in this chapter is framed too narrowly by legal concerns and does not consider broader shifts in politics and culture. The rise of mass democracy and American and British nationalism along with the development of "total war" are surely important to the history of internment and the categories of belonging and exclusion that it enforced. It is also surprising, in a chapter focused so heavily on race, that