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Kevin M. Kruse, Stephen Tuck. *Fog of War: The Second World War and the Civil Rights Movement.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 256 p. $99.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-538241-9; $21.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-19-538240-2.

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K. M. Kruse u.a. (Hrsg.): Fog of War

The Second World War has traditionally been described as a "watershed" and the stepping stone for the African American civil rights movement. Most historians have followed this interpretation of the war as a catalyst that made profound change possible rather uncritically. They regard it as the ultimate impetus that invigorated African Americans to embark on a Double V campaign to defeat fascism abroad and racism at home. With their edited collection under review here, Kevin M. Kruse and Stephen Tuck launch an important reassessment of this predominant interpretation of the Second World War as a "transformational moment in the long struggle for black equality" (p. 3) that is long-overdue. They pick up where historian Harvard Sitkoff left off in an article first published in 1984, in which he strongly dismissed the "militancy-watershed" interpretation he himself had propagated earlier. Harvard Sitkoff, "American Blacks in World War II: Rethinking the Militancy-Watershed Hypothesis", in: James Titus (ed.), The Home Front and War in the Twentieth Century. Washington DC 1984, 147; see: Ibid., "African American Militancy in the World War II South", in: Neil R. McMillen (ed), Remaking Dixie: The Impact of World War II on the American South. Jackson, Miss. 1997. It is unfortunate, however, that neither the introduction nor the articles problematize the term "militancy." Who or what sets the standards for such a description and under which circumstances? Are the methods the defining factor or the people who use them, like the often celebrated Popular Front in the 1930s (p. 6)? The editors leave these issues vague.

Kruse and Tuck do not intend to streamline the story, but they endeavor to complicate the existing narrative of the Second World War. Their collection compiles eleven essays from established as well as new scholars who shed fresh light on the successes and obstacles blacks encountered during and shortly after the war.

The book covers a wide array of topics from the heightened demand for citizenship rights from the federal government due to wartime needs of mobilization (James T. Sparrow) to the activism of nongovernmental organizations at the UN San Francisco Conference (Elizabeth Borgwardt) and the difficult road to racial integration of the armed forces after the Second World War which, according the article's author Kimberley L. Phillips, was followed by shifts in the civil rights movement. The articles rightly propose an international, but also local perspective as necessary to understand the multiple and often contradictory impacts the war had. They underline the complexities of the civil rights movement during the Second World War and often demand a look beyond the war which is certainly essential in assessing its long-term impact. Not all findings will be new especially to experts in the field, as many articles stem from books published earlier, but this collection of essays still challenges older notions and raises many new questions. It is particularly stimulating to see to what extent the authors' conceptual approaches differ.

Penny von Eschen makes the case for the anticolonial demands and international cooperation in the black freedom struggle, while Patricia Sullivan takes a closer look at the growth of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and its strategy of legal insurgency in the South. J. Mills Thornton III demands a more local approach to Jim Crow and thereby exposes clear limits to the thesis of change through war. Taking Alabama as an example, he shows that segregation in the South was not "universal and uniform," but "existed in rural Alabama only as a result of the private actions of individual property owners" (p. 52). Progress on a national or even state level did often not permeate to the local level. White supremacists with local authority and economic power continued to rule blacks. Thomas Sugrue also demands a more local approach to the study of race relations. But instead of focusing on the South, he underlines the importance of taking the study of white supremacy above the Mason-Dixon-Line, as segregation

and discrimination were not indigenous to the South. Sugrue explores the African American civil rights struggle in the North not as an appendage to the Southern civil rights fight, but as a movement in its own right.

Looking at the importance of popular culture in the struggle for civil rights, co-editor Stephen Tuck argues convincingly that "the black image was not a sideshow to the main story of wartime protest. It was integral to the main story…." (p. 103) A small group of African American activists tried to actively influence the image of blacks in movies in order to reshape the "black image in the white mind" and African American soldiers proved of special importance to that cause. Despite its limits, "The Negro Soldier", a movie commissioned by the War Department and produced under black advisement, represented a major step in the right direction, as, for the first time, blacks were not represented in a stereotypical fashion. However, black activists could not replicate this improvement of the black image on the civilian level. Their influence on Hollywood studios remained limited. Although the mission oftentimes failed, African American activists learned their lessons with respect to strategy and style for future battles. However, what Tuck fails to mention is that the attempt to control and change the image of blacks was not limited to the cultural field, but extended to press reports as well as history writing and public memory.

The book also includes important studies on white reactions to African American activism. Whereas Julian E. Zelizer details the conservative grip in Congress that made progress in race relations through filibusters and Dixiecrat control in committees extremely difficult, Jason Morgan Ward explores how Southern white supremacists construed their own Double V Campaign. It was an attempt to uphold Jim Crow and counter African American allegations of a mirror image of Nazism in the South. Jane Dailey further complicates the picture by introducing sexuality. She demonstrates that the widespread fear of interracial sex and intermarriage ultimately caused Southern moderates' departure from their support for and cooperation with black activists. While collaborating with African Americans in the 1930s, Southern moderates clung to the misconception that blacks did not want social equality. During the war, however, African Americans grew more forthright in their demands for full equality and began to speak openly about interracial relations and even sex. Many whites in the South as well as in the North dreaded that the war would bring about the "miscegenation of the races." This fear ultimately made consensus and cooperation between most moderate whites and African Americans impossible. Unable to support social equality, regional interracial organizations grew obsolete and their white leaders "moved from the front of the revolution in race relations to the rear just as the real battle was heating up." (p. 165) Instead the NAACP grew rapidly and replaced local organizations, as it pushed relentlessly for social equality.

Overall, the collection of essays expands our understanding of the fight for black equality before, during, and after the war. The book, however, would have benefitted from at least two additions, although aware of the fact that there is only a limited number of studies an edited collection can include. As African American women always played an essential part in civil rights activism, a study of black women during the Second World War and beyond might have shown that they often not only challenged assumptions about race but also about gender. A look at interracial cooperation or competition between blacks and other minorities in the United States would have added another interesting layer to the volume.

Overall, the articles paint a complex often fragmented picture of the black experience and prove that there exists no easy account of African Americans in the Second World War. Its "impact and legacy," the editors maintain in the introduction, were decidedly "ambiguous." (p. 6) The war invigorated, but also stifled the African American struggle for civil rights and equality. The collection raises key questions and will certainly act as a starting point for further (re)examinations of the struggle for black civil rights in a local, national, and global context.

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