What was the Cold War? A simple definition might be that it was a 20th century international confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States, which involved Europe, and then Asia, Africa, and Latin America, eventually dividing the world into two camps. The key players in this global conflict were generally identified as a number of high-ranking policymakers, including Harry S. Truman, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong.

We know this story; however, the full story is not so simple. It is time to change our ways of thinking about the Cold War. Dr. Masuda Hajimu inquires into this peculiar nature of the Cold War, not only examining centers of policymaking, but also looking at the aftereffects of Cold War politics. These included suppression of counterrevolutionaries in China, the White Terror in Taiwan, the Red Purge in Japan and McCarthyism in the United States. Masuda argues that such purges were not merely end results of the Cold War, but rather forces that necessitated the imagined reality of the Cold War in attempts at restoring purity and tranquility at home. Revealing social functions and popular participation, Masuda highlights the roles of ordinary people in making and maintaining the “reality” of the Cold War, raising the question about what really was the Cold War?

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