conducted these highly classified missions “were officially ignored when they succeeded and were a political embarrassment when they were shot down” (p. 319). Time and again when reconnaissance flights were attacked, the U.S. government would not deviate from officially sanctioned cover stories, which usually depicted the missions as navigation training sorties or weather reconnaissance flights. Each shoot-down was followed by a period of “ritualized lying and posturing” (p. 38) between the U.S. State Department and Soviet Foreign Ministry, according to Burrows. The implicit assumption was that any survivors who fell into enemy hands “would be written off” (p. 39).

The human toll was considerable. Burrows lists no fewer than 163 Air Force personnel aircrew in sixteen aircraft as missing or killed on peacetime reconnaissance missions during the Cold War (pp. 353–356). The book is at its best when describing these incidents, most of them in considerable detail, by drawing on contemporary accounts, declassified documents, and interviews with participants. Unfortunately, though, other parts of the book are deficient. Chapter 2 is a rambling and unfocused attempt to set the Cold War scene, and Chapter 3 starts with a whimsically selective history of early aerial reconnaissance. The final chapter contains a somewhat uncomplimentary review of official post–Cold War attempts to provide a proper accounting of the shootdowns.

The book also contains some regrettable errors. For instance, Big Safari (p. 69) is the name of a streamlined procurement agency within the U.S. Air Force that modifies aircraft for reconnaissance; it is not the name of an operational mission. General LeMay did not conceive the U-2 (p. 100); indeed, he fought the concept. Bud Wheelon did not run the Oxcart (Blackbird) program at the CIA, and he was head of the science and technology directorate there from 1963 to 1966, not earlier (p. 274).

These mistakes, however, do not detract from a thorough and worthwhile addition to the growing literature on Cold War intelligence gathering.

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Reviewed by Harvey M. Sapolsky, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Lloyd V. Berkner is a Zelig-like character in the world of twentieth-century American science policy. He accompanied Admiral Richard Byrd on his famous expedition to the Antarctic. He worked at the Radiation Laboratory of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), helping to develop radar during the Second World War. He was a key assistant to Vannevar Bush in the effort to organize military research and development after the war. He proposed the convening of the International Geophysical Year that eventually led to the launching of Sputnik and its American counterparts. He advocated increased federal support for fundamental science and most particularly
radio astronomy and its expensive facilities. Berkner was deeply involved in Project Troy, the first of the famous “summer studies,” which sought to improve American psychological warfare capabilities vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and which led to the formation of, among other things, the MIT Center for International Studies. He also helped develop continental air defenses, including the Distant Early Warning (DEW) network of radars. And he was waiting for President John F. Kennedy’s arrival at a luncheon honoring Berkner’s work as a research administrator on that fateful day in Dallas in November 1963.

Despite Berkner’s involvement in the highest levels of science, he was strangely underqualified. He was trained only as a radio engineer and never completed an advance degree. He began his professional life as a bureaucrat in the Bureau of Standards, promoting the use of radiodirectional beacons as an improved navigational system for aviation. Through accommodation and good paper shuffling he parlayed that task, a pilot’s license, and a naval reserve commission into a career as a senior figure in science, rubbing shoulders along the way with Bush, Merle Antony Tuve, J. Robert Oppenheimer, John Killian, I. I. Rabi, Jerome Wiesner, and other legends of the scientific establishment. Of course, it did not hurt that Berkner was a consistent and strong advocate of government support for science and a policy role for scientists. The rewards he was given included membership in the National Academy of Science, the presidency of Associate Universities Incorporated (which ran Brookhaven National Laboratory, as well as other research facilities), the presidency of the International Council of Scientific Unions, the chairmanship of the Space Sciences Board, board membership at Texas Instruments, and the directorship of the Graduate Research Center of the Southwest in Dallas.

Allen A. Needel, the chair of the Division of Space History at the National Air and Space Museum, argues that Berkner was an important bridge between the scientific community and the government during the Cold War. Berkner retained his involvement with the military, rising to the rank of rear admiral in the reserves and aiding the Navy in overcoming some of its problems with academic science. He also actively helped the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and other parts of the intelligence community gain independent access to the advice and support of social as well as natural scientists. Project Troy in this sense was a largely unsuccessful attempt by academic friends of the State Department and the CIA to give the propaganda and psychological side of the Cold War a somewhat more equal footing with weapons development.

This allegiance to ideas popular in the academic community nearly got Berkner into serious trouble. The community’s interest in continental air defense, now long forgotten but quite intense in the early 1950s, led Berkner to become a visible champion of nuclear attack warning systems, arms control, and civil defense, and earned him some flak from the Air Force and especially from the Strategic Air Command (SAC), an agency that gave pride of place to nuclear offense. SAC harbored great suspicion about Berkner’s motives and openly hinted that he was too much under the influence of Oppenheimer and others seeking to limit U.S. striking power when he argued that defenses could be effective. Berkner was specifically mentioned in this
regard when SAC sponsored a national magazine article attacking the so-called ZORC cabal, the set of prominent physicists (Jerrold Zacharias, Oppenheimer, Rabi, and Charles Lauritsen) thought to be undermining the nuclear weapons buildup that SAC was promoting. The DEW Line was constructed, but soon fell victim to Sputnik and the subsequent ballistic-missile arms race.

Berkner found solace in his efforts to promote increased funding for basic research. Much of the promotional work was done to help build the facility base in astronomy and to create the new field of space science. Needell implies that Berkner pursued at least some of this advocacy at the behest of the intelligence community to offer cover for reconnaissance programs. In the end, however, the brush with SAC seems to have reduced Berkner’s value as a broker between science and the government.


Reviewed by Philip Jenkins, Pennsylvania State University

Ellen Schrecker has updated her useful reader on anti-Communism in the United States, mainly in the decade after 1945. The documents are well chosen, the commentary is usually helpful, and the book should appeal to students. As a textbook it is well conceived, and the material lends itself nicely to being spread out over class sessions through a typical semester. Particularly valuable are the detailed materials on causes célèbres like the Hiss-Chambers case, the Rosenberg affair, and the Smith Act trials, all of which give students a good feel for the problems involved in handling parti pris documents. Despite these strong points, the book is radically mistitled, in such a way that indicates a curious and partisan approach to this era of American history.

Schrecker offers a collection of some forty documents with a scope that goes far beyond what any normal historian would characterize as “McCarthyism,” namely the turbulent era of anti-Communist demagoguery that raged from 1950 to 1954. She includes texts on the appeal of the Communist Party, the Communist view of the world, and the growing official intolerance of Communist Party activities from the mid-1940s onward. Her view is very much that of the left-liberal critic of the anti-Communist movement, and she ends by quoting Justice William O. Douglas’s condemnation of the “witch-hunt.” As any responsible scholar would, she takes account of recent findings that probably caused her some pain on their initial discovery, especially the Venona records. Based on these decrypts of Soviet intelligence cables, she concedes it is “likely” that Alger Hiss was the Soviet agent Ales, and she has no alternative but to accept the federal case against Julius Rosenberg (though not the draconian sentence). Yet her book has a painfully split personality: although she knows

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