
Reviewed by James A. Russell, Naval Postgraduate School

The United States is today presented with a series of disturbing and incongruous images as it attempts to apply force in pursuit of its objectives in various theaters around the world. Why, for example, did the United States and its 1.2 million soldiers, supported by more than $500 billion in defense expenditures (nearly half of all defense spending in the world), have such difficulty controlling the 13-mile road connecting Baghdad’s airport to the city center? Why do those rumored to be harboring Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants in the northwest frontier provinces of Pakistan not turn him over to the United States and avail themselves of the $25-million reward? Why was the stunningly successful phase of “conventional” military operations in Iraq in March and early April 2003 not followed by a similarly successful counterinsurgency campaign?

These and other incongruities are the subject of frequent commentary, consuming voluminous quantities of airtime and congressional debate, not to mention more than $100 billion in taxpayers’ money in 2006 alone to fund continuing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. But the truth is that much of the commentary in the mass media is ill-informed and provides viewers with entertainment as opposed to cogent analysis.

Searching for sound content on the national security issues of the day has become an increasingly difficult proposition for educators, policy professionals, and interested scholars. Stephen Biddle’s new book, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*, not only provides sound content but does so in addressing a topical issue of paramount importance. Readers seeking content in the form of a theoretical framework, interesting case studies backed by statistical analysis, and well-formulated implications for policy will not be disappointed by Biddle’s rigor.

As explained by the subtitle, Biddle, now a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, takes on the issue of why some states succeed and others fail in battle. He places the issue of conventional combat in a theoretical framework that can be supported through modeling and statistical analysis for specialists interested in those techniques. Although Biddle’s work provides the operations research modeler with an interesting methodology, his book can also be read and easily appreciated by a wider audience of national security professionals.

Biddle’s argument will not necessarily be well-received in the Pentagon, which is
trumpeting concepts such as “transformation” and “network-centric warfare” that supposedly represent fundamentally new ways of conducting warfare in the twenty-first century. Precision-guided munitions operating at greater standoff ranges all tied together by secure communications offer the promise of enhanced lethality on the battlefield with a greater economy of force, according to transformation advocates. The Defense Department is now awash with “transformation roadmaps” and is implementing something called “capabilities-based” defense planning that aims to consign Robert McNamara’s programming, planning, and budgeting system (PPBS) to the dustbin of history. The promise of transformation was on display in Operation Iraqi Freedom, in which an array of sensors and long-range precision-guided munitions supported by an imaginative targeting scheme called “effects-based operations” (or “shock and awe") undermined the will of the Iraqi army to continue its otherwise futile resistance.

Biddle’s work pours cold water on the idea that the new technologies underlying the Pentagon’s “transformation” represent a true “revolution” in military affairs. Biddle believes that an important and enduring change occurred in the nature of conventional military warfare in the latter stages of World War I, when the stalemated armies finally broke out of the static trench warfare that had led to the slaughter of countless soldiers over the previous three years. Popular wisdom holds that the introduction of the tank broke this stalemate.

Biddle notes, however, that the supposed technological breakthrough represented by the tank actually had comparatively little impact. More important was the way that both armies—the Germans notably in the second battle of the Somme in March–April 1918 and the French and British in the offensives that followed—changed their fighting techniques by making greater use of cover and concealment, fire and maneuver, and combined-arms integration. The integration of combat capabilities at the close of the war saw the emergence of what Biddle describes as the “modern system” of force employment that broke the World War I stalemate. Biddle argues that the emergence of this modern system constitutes the defining revolution in military affairs in the twentieth century. States that can master the modern system and apply it on the battlefield are likely to be far more successful than those that cannot.

Biddle debunks the notion that emerging technologies have fundamentally altered the basic importance of the modern system of force employment. He instead argues that the technologies of the information age have merely reinforced the essential efficacy of the modern system for both offensive and defensive operations. He presents two other interesting case studies in the book: the unsuccessful British attempt in Operation Goodwood to break the stalemate at Normandy in July 1944; and Operation Desert Storm in 1991. The British army’s failure to adopt the modern system resulted in defeat against the Germans, whereas the U.S. military’s successful execution of the system led to stunning battlefield success against the Iraqis in 1991.

The implications of Biddle’s theory, supported by his case studies and statistical analysis, are important for the choices facing the United States in dividing up its $500 billion defense budget. As Biddle cogently notes, his “central themes . . . are that the need for continuity is much stronger than generally recognized; that wholesale change
is not warranted by ongoing changes in technology; and that future warfare is best understood as a continuation of trends and relationships that have been evident for at least one hundred years, rather than a radical departure from historical precedent” (p. 197). Biddle’s recommendations call for an emphasis on training and readiness and the retention of direct-fire capabilities that are still relevant in close-combat encounters while taking advantage of the prospects offered by lighter forces with enhanced lethality.

Those looking for analysis of the dismal military situation in Iraq will be disappointed, but Biddle’s task was not to take on this issue. This book fills a space that is now sorely lacking for those interested in the issue of defense transformation and the future of warfare—a space often filled more by polemics than by sound scholarship. Hence, Biddle’s work stands out. He notes in the closing chapter that he is working on another book that will explain the apparent inability of the United States to apply its military power successfully against the insurgency in Iraq. We can only hope that his next book will apply the same degree of intellectual rigor to this critical problem, thereby giving policymakers and academic specialists a lot more than just hype and sound bites.


**Reviewed by Anne Deighton, Oxford University and Geneva Centre for Security Policy**

From April 1955, when Anthony Eden became British prime minister, to January 1957, when he was forced to step down ignominiously, Eden kept up a personal and rather one-sided correspondence with U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower. Eden knew that his illustrious British predecessor, Winston Churchill, had corresponded with two U.S. presidents, Franklin Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower, while in office. Eden wished to have the same high-level and personal line of communication to the White House. The letters between Eden and Eisenhower have been brought together in their entirety by Peter Boyle, who has already published the Churchill-Eisenhower correspondence—see Peter G. Boyle, ed., *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953–1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990). This latest collection of letters tell us a good deal about the two protagonists and about the relationship at the top between the United States and Britain, especially during the worst tensions engendered by the 1956 Suez crisis.

Eden initiated the correspondence and was the author of most of the letters. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the relative influence of their countries, Eden also emerges as the *plaideur*. Financial and foreign intelligence questions constitute the bulk of this correspondence, apart from a regular update on the two leaders’ birthdays and various health problems. As Boyle points out in his introduction, many of the letters have already been used by historians, and all are now available in the respective national ar-
chives. Both men clearly were writing for the record as well as to keep channels of communication open between London and Washington. The foreign intelligence issues, which were withheld from the public until recently, make for some fascinating reading, not least the letters about the early days of the U-2 reconnaissance flights over the Soviet Union and how their purpose was to be concealed, as well as about the “hairbrained” Genetrix balloon project (p. 192).

Boyle argues that the early correspondence reveals two clear-headed statesmen who were able to communicate easily and honestly with each other. But when the Suez question came to dominate Britain’s foreign policy agenda, Eden’s faulty judgment undermined him. Eden’s letters show that he was driven by a set of dramatic historical parallels that he used in an increasingly hysterical manner. His historical analogies start (in a letter on 5 August 1956) by comparing Gamal Abdel Nasser to Benito Mussolini, rather than Adolf Hitler, and by arguing that it was imperative to remove Nasser from office. In late August 1956, Eden stressed that the bear (the Soviet Union) was using Nasser for Soviet aims, and a few weeks later he told Eisenhower that the West had failed against Hitler in the 1930s and now confronted a Soviet Union that was trying Hitlerian tactics. Eden insisted that if Nasser succeeded, the West could be faced by revolutionary governments in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq that would be “Egyptian satellites if not Russian ones.” All of Western Europe, he argued, could be “held to ransom by Egypt acting at Russia’s behest . . . an ignoble end to our history” (6 September 1956). Eisenhower unsuccessfully suggested to Eden that “we let some of the drama go out of the situation and concentrate on the task of deflating” Nasser (8 September).

What is more troubling about Eden’s letters is the way he misled Eisenhower by omission and with sophistry. Anyone who knows the story of the three-way Suez collusion cannot help but recoil at Eden’s deceit, which extended far beyond a diplomat’s economy with the truth, despite his hints about the need to use force early. As the truth about the Suez invasion began to emerge by the end of October 1956, Eisenhower moved from avuncular suggestions to genuine concern and then to angry requests for information. Eden, even as the invasion was collapsing, reverted to pleading that “history alone can judge whether we have made the right decision, but I do want to assure you that we have made it from a genuine sense of responsibility, not only to our country, but to all the world” (5 November 1956), a phrase that was echoed in the corridors of power of Westminster years later as the consequences of the Iraq invasion of 2003 unfolded.

Boyle has supplemented the letters with a full and lucidly written introduction that surveys the personalities involved and the issues they discussed during this short period. Most of the letters are annotated to give clarity, and with Boyle’s own introduction and conclusion they read as a coherent account. The letters alone would not have warranted a whole book (they amount to less than 100 pages), but the contextual and bibliographical material gives the reader an excellent, synthetic overview of both the international politics and the historiography of the period and the two leaders.

Reviewed by Paul F. Diehl, University of Illinois

Most theoretical frameworks in international relations assign a secondary role to international organizations (IOs). Scholars adopting a principal-agent approach are wont to treat IOs as the mere servants of their principals—the nation-states. At the extreme, neorealist theory sees a subset of states—the major powers—as the masters who dangle the strings of IOs (or in the case of IO failure, do not allow IOs to be effective). These approaches accord little if any autonomy to IOs and take no account of how the IOs might change over time. Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore challenge traditional theory by attempting to provide a framework for analyzing IOs as semi-independent actors. In particular, they argue that IOs have significant autonomy and derive their power from a number of sources beyond the limited leeway and resources delegated to them by member-states. From the standpoint of international relations theory, their argument is significant and will help guide the study of IOs, which have assumed greater prominence in global politics over the past two decades. Equally important, their analysis explains the failures of IOs in a number of areas and suggests ways of improving their performance.

Barnett and Finnemore begin their argument with the fundamental assumption that IOs act as bureaucracies. In social science analysis, this is hardly a stunning innovation. Organizational theory has been the staple of many different disciplines (sociology, political science, business administration, etc.) for many years. Furthermore, studies of the American federal bureaucracy have established a strong body of theory to understand the autonomy, inertia, and other properties of government organizations. But anyone who might be tempted to dismiss the Barnett-Finnemore book as something of little importance would be making a mistake. The treatment of IOs as bureaucracies is relatively new in the literature. Some early studies, such as Robert W. Cox and Harold K. Jacobson, The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), looked at international organization decision-making but only to describe and classify the different kinds of decisions taken and the roles played by different actors. The earlier studies shed little if any light on broader theoretical issues and how international organizations performed as actors on the global stage along with states. Barnett and Finnemore have a much broader purpose and do an excellent job of clearly defining the different sources of authority, change, and pathologies for IOs. This chapter does not necessarily offer specific propositions but rather presents general arguments about IO authority and behavior. The result is more theoretical framework than theory.

Chapters 3–5 present case studies of the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees, and UN peacekeeping (with special attention to Rwanda), respectively. Barnett and Finnemore trace the history of the organizations or efforts for each. Generally, they provide thick description that is supposed to offer illustrations of the claims made in the theoretical chapter. The his-
torical approach allows the reader to track changes in the IOs, but sometimes other points about IO autonomy or power are lost or are not adequately clarified in the discussion. What is the value of these chapters? They are not meant to provide tests of specific hypotheses. Rather, the cases are best treated as extended examples of points made in the opening chapters. The case studies also have value for scholars interested in the individual organizations or issue areas covered. For example, the chapter on peacekeeping contains a compelling and counterintuitive argument that places much of the blame for the Rwanda tragedy on the UN Secretariat rather than leading UN members, who are the usual scapegoats. The book concludes with a discussion of legitimacy as it relates to the trend toward more numerous and developed bureaucracies at the international level.

Overall, this book does not necessarily have the theoretical import of David Mitrany’s *A Working Peace System* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966), but the subfield of international organization studies has historically been deficient in broad theoretical work. *Rules for the World* is an important contribution to the subfield. The primary contributions of the book are found in the second chapter, and it should be required reading for any graduate course on international organizations. Adopting the authors’ framework will lead scholars to ask different questions and make interpretations outside conventional approaches. The book may contain little new about bureaucracies, but the application of our knowledge about them to IOs is innovative and must be taken seriously. In the long run, this book is likely to have staying power as a heuristic for future research rather than as a fully articulated and empirically confirmed theory.


*Reviewed by David M. Barrett, Villanova University*

Near the beginning of *Congress and the Cold War*, Robert David Johnson aptly quotes the late scholar and Senator Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), who once observed that “the neglect of congressional history is something of a scandal in the American scholarship” (p. xxii). Moynihan was right. Occasionally, significant scholarly histories of events on Capitol Hill appear, but this happens far less often than the publication of important books on the U.S. presidency or the Supreme Court.

The relative paucity of scholarly work on Congress is attributable to many factors, among which is the sheer complexity of the institution. As I tell my students, “There are two bodies of Congress, not one, and each body does its most significant work in a multitude of committees and subcommittees.” Moreover, any historian of Congress must deal with the challenge of describing a body with 535 members.

Another reason for the relative lack of attention to Congress, surely, is that the president has usually played a dominant role in U.S. foreign policymaking since
World War II. The salience of the president’s role, the fact that a single individual holds the presidency, and the manifold difficulties of researching and writing effectively about Congress all lead to the result that Moynihan described.

Despite these challenges, Johnson has produced an important study of Congress in the realm of foreign policy from the early Cold War period through the era of Ronald Reagan. His topic is huge, given the vast number of issues that arose during the long Cold War. Johnson’s book cannot and does not deal with all of these issues, and his treatment of the late Cold War period lacks the depth of his coverage of the 1940s through the early 1980s. Nonetheless, Congress and the Cold War is a notably detailed and accomplished history of much that unfolded on Capitol Hill with great significance for U.S. policies abroad. The book is based on Johnson’s scrutiny of primary sources from literally dozens of archives holding the papers of mostly deceased leaders and other members of both houses of Congress.

Archival research is hardly an uncommon activity on the part of historians (though it is done infrequently by political scientists), but it is fair to say that archives holding the papers of late members of Congress do not receive as many research visitors as they should. Johnson’s extensive research into such holdings scattered around the country will earn him the thanks of anyone interested in the history of the U.S. government.

The narrative of Congress and the Cold War is organized around the successive importance of blocs of legislators, including “internationalist Republicans” who more or less assisted the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, “revisionists” who challenged their policies, “conservatives” who fought against various presidents’ foreign aid policies, and “dissident liberals” who prodded the U.S. government to cut off aid to governments that were in some ways pro-American but oppressed their own citizenry. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, “new internationalists” fought with occasional success in limiting U.S. support to dictatorships abroad and in challenging presidential power at home. Many of their successes, however, were overturned in the Reagan era.

Johnson tells many stories from his half-century timeframe that remind us of the human dimension of Congress. He tells us, for example, about Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., a Republican from Massachusetts who was one of the early internationalists. Lodge was no profound thinker, but Johnson writes that Lodge worked hard in favor of an “‘unpartisan’ approach to world affairs, in which the opposition party would function as ‘the voice of conscience,’ undertaking a ‘calm and deliberate reappraisal of the facts’ while offering ‘constructive suggestions’” (p. 17). U.S. foreign aid and diplomatic policies during the early Cold War were shaped as much by the efforts of Lodge and certain congressional colleagues as they were by Harry S. Truman, Dean Acheson, and others in the executive branch.

One of Johnson’s best portraits is of Stuart Symington, who served for decades as a Democrat representing Missouri in the Senate. Symington had once served in the Truman administration, but moved on to make his mark as a legislator from 1953 through 1976. A chapter titled “The Transformation of Stuart Symington” traces his evolution from a pro-military advocate during the Eisenhower era (to the annoyance
of the president, who wanted to limit defense spending) to a fairly conventional supporter of most of the foreign policies of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson to a thorn in the side of Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

Vietnam and Laos had much to do with the transformation. Symington’s enthusiasm for U.S. ventures in Southeast Asia was waning even before Johnson left office. By then, Symington had become “a wild card in the upper chamber’s debates” (p. 146). During the Nixon era, proposals to build an antiballistic missile (ABM) system further pushed Symington into the role of foreign policy dissenter. Symington’s transformation went so far that it nearly cost him his reelection in 1970.

Any book covering almost half a century is bound to spark at least a few disagreements about interpretations. I agree with most of Johnson’s analysis and indeed learned much from the book. But I suspect that most specialists on foreign intelligence would contest Johnson’s dismissive characterization of the Senate’s Church Committee (named for Senator Frank Church, a Democrat from Idaho) as a “too cautious” failure (p. 225). The Church Committee actually had major effects on the Central Intelligence Agency in the mid-1970s and afterward. To this day, debates are fierce over whether those effects—including the creation of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence—have been positive or negative. Also, Johnson explains in the prologue that his book does not deal with Congress and “the activities of the Israeli lobby” because the Arab-Israeli conflict “largely fell outside of the Cold War framework” (p. xxv). This is perhaps a defensible choice, but it left me nonetheless wishing for a chapter on that very topic.

Although many writers claim to have produced comprehensive histories of U.S. foreign policy in the six decades after World War II, they mostly have described how presidents, secretaries of state, national security advisers, and other executive branch officials have shaped foreign policy. Part of the value of Congress and the Cold War is that, in treating Congress so seriously, it moves scholars closer to being able to construct a genuinely balanced history of the U.S. government’s relations with its allies, rivals, and enemies during a tense era.


Reviewed by Thomas A. Dine, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco

America’s Jews today are thriving, filled with energy and consumed by educational pursuits, activism, and achievement in academia, the arts, sciences, media, business, finance, and politics. Generosity and solidarity within the Jewish community remain high, despite low birth rates, assimilation, and intermarriage. This high level of ferment and momentum began after World War II, gained speed in the late 1950s, and truly took off in the 1960s—an era rich in intellectualism, individual expression, and
controversy. The life of American Jews during that turbulent decade is the focus of Michael Staub’s valuable anthology, *The Jewish 1960s: An American Sourcebook.*

Staub presents a vast array of documents in his annotated chapters relating to events in the United States, Israel, and Indochina. These contemporary essays, speeches, journalistic accounts, and debates by Jewish scholars, commentators, rabbis, civil rights and antiwar activists, student radicals, feminists, countercultural leaders, and neoconservative critics are rich in political and social relevance and are always of a high intellectual quality. Indeed, for this reviewer, to reread and think through the viewpoints presented is to do more than relive a time forty years ago—it is to bring them alive again and to acknowledge their relevance to the human comedy midway through the first decade of the 21st century.

The questions posited then are the same questions posited now. What does it mean to be a Jew? What is Judaism? What is a community amid sprawling suburbia? Are Jewish Americans’ achievements Jewish or American? In the early 1960s, the ribald comedian Lenny Bruce offered a much-recounted definition of Jewishness. Bruce’s offering had both a certain ethnic clarity and an eye-popping hilarity for those of us who thought and talked this way. “Dig, I’m Jewish,” Bruce aggressively asserted to his audiences. Then came his unique litany of definition: “Count Basie’s Jewish. Ray Charles is Jewish. Eddie Cantor’s *goyish.* B’nai B’rith is *goyish*; Hadassah Jewish. Kool-Aid is *goyish.* All Drake’s Cakes are *goyish.* Pumpernickel is Jewish and, as you know, white bread is *very goyish.* Instant potatoes—*goyish.* Black cherry soda’s very Jewish. Macaroons are very Jewish. Fruit salad is Jewish. Lime jello is *goyish.* Lime soda is very *goyish.* Trailer parks are so *goyish* that Jews won’t go near them.” And on and on, Bruce spoke in open code. Both Jews and non-Jews rolled with glee at the designations; it was belly laughter wrapped around pop culture.

As Staub points out, Philip Roth paid homage to Bruce’s peculiar distinction between Jewish and gentile in his 1969 bestseller, *Portnoy’s Complaint.* Roth’s Jewish antihero, Alexander Portnoy, complained to his own parents: “The very first distinction I learned from you, I’m sure, was not night and day, or hot and cold, but *goyische* and Jewish.” Staub uses this dichotomy to highlight his decade of focus: The 1950s were *goyish,* whereas the 1960s were Jewish!

In the late 1950s and first half of the 1960s, Jews played a prominent, indeed profound and dangerous role in the U.S. civil rights struggle, most noticeably in the Deep South. Straub’s collection of essays brings up the same question I was asked over and over again when I spoke out in my college fraternity and classrooms and in public gatherings to end segregation: “Why do you care?” Two good strong responses to this query were: One, because the entrenched post-Reconstruction system of top-to-bottom segregation was evil; and two, because my cohorts and I were motivated to do so by a sense of our own Jewishness. I still vividly remember how rabbinical students at Hebrew Union College (HUC) in Cincinnati would teach religious classes on the weekend to high schoolers publicly supporting the young clergyman Martin Luther King, Jr. in his bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955—and how the president of HUC, the esteemed biblical archeologist and former U.S. intelligence officer
Nelson Glueck, urged *shah* (quiet). This was a defining event for me, coming as it did in my teenage years and was a reality check on the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954.

Michael Walzer’s vivid account of lunch-counter protests in Greensboro, North Carolina is an enduring portrait of black college students at the cutting edge of the civil rights movement in 1959–1960. Betty Alschuler and Rabbi Albert Vorspan recount their experiences on the bus rides and the prominent role northern Jews played in the historic Freedom Rides. It was not just Reform Jews, however, who advocated change in racial relations. The Rabbinical Assembly (Conservative) broke up its annual meeting in the Catskills when black and white demonstrators in Birmingham were attacked, and nineteen rabbis volunteered to go south, including Rabbi Richard Rubenstein, whose account of his experiences remains a classic statement from the era: “I was genuinely surprised to learn how much our visit really mattered to the Negroes engaged in the struggles. When we entered their churches, we were greeted as ‘our rabbi’. . . . The metaphor of Moses and the children of Israel was repeated over and over again” (p. 26).

By mid-decade, the black-Jewish coalition had unraveled. Blacks became far more assertive about themselves and their common cause; they wanted to rise or fall on their own. Also, as Jews climbed up America’s socioeconomic ladder, blacks did not. Staub calls this aspect of black-Jewish history “the loss of a shared predicament” (p. 87). With this disconnect at the national level, local political arrangements became quite raw, as evidenced by what took place when the Princeton Plan for school desegregation was implemented in the Jackson Heights neighborhood of New York City. Confrontation ensued, with eruptions of anti-Semitism from black America. Fear and hate clouded the atmosphere. But two civil rights veterans, Rabbi Vorspan and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, vociferously and brilliantly exhorted Jews not to pull back into their shells like turtles on the defense but to stay involved in the civil rights movement. Reminding Jews of their recent experiences as second-class citizens, Heschel warned: “What begins as inequality of some inevitably ends as inequality of all” (p. 105). In a penetrating and learned debate among the literary critic Leslie A. Fiedler, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, and the writer Paul Jacobs on deteriorating black-Jewish relations in 1966, Hertzberg articulated the liberals’ theme: “The Jews are the most vulnerable of the haves, and the Negroes the most unfortunate of the have-nots” (p. 113).

Black identity, however, became louder and clearer as the decade progressed. More and more Jews got out of the way of expressions of black power, and the Jewish community refocused on itself. Soviet Jewry became the next cause, the next struggle of American Jews, stimulated by renewed concerns that the USSR planned to escalate its repressive efforts against its large Jewish population, including a ban on the baking of matzoh bread for Passover. A debate emerged in the USSR in the 1960s over whether to construct a monument at Babi Yar, a ravine in Kyiv where a Nazi *Einsatzgruppe* slaughtered tens of thousands of the city’s Jews in 1941. The poet Evgenii Yevtushenko had written a poem about the massacre, yet the Kyiv City Council wanted to erect a sports arena over the site of the massacre. Fears also arose at around
this time that the Soviet authorities would blame the Jews, the time-honored scapegoats for societal troubles, for economic hardships.

A grassroots movement sprang up in the United States to save Jewish culture—and lives—in the USSR. The nascent movement began taking hold in the mid-1960s, led by the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ) under the slogan “I am my brother’s keeper!” Erich Goldhagen wrote at the time: “The voice of Russian Jews has been muted. They can speak only through their brethren abroad” (p. 131). Elie Wiesel recounts the heroic act by Jews in the Black Sea town of Kutasi, Georgia. To prevent the local synagogue from being closed by the Soviet government, the members of the congregation lay down en masse in front of the structure. Even so, the authorities continued shutting down synagogues and religious gathering places all around the USSR. In response, mostly Jewish protesters took to America’s streets and public lands from the late 1960s on, using first-hand information supplied by Soviet Jews over the telephone. At all times, the dark incubus hanging over the heads of the “Free Soviet Jews” effort was the six million dead of the Holocaust and daily threats to Israelis from belligerent Arab leaders.

Jewish identity flashed in neon light following Israel’s quick and resounding defeat of six surrounding Arab armies in the unforgettable Six-Day Mideast War of June 1967. Shaken by the worst-case scenario touted by Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser and other Arab leaders, American Jews reacted fervently and generously to help fortify Israel from overt aggression. Moshe Dayan, the leader of the Israeli Defense Forces and architect of the three-front battle strategy, replaced contemporary heroes on the American Jewish pantheon (Franklin Roosevelt, Adlai Stevenson, Eleanor Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and, thanks to his performance in the 1965 World Series, Sandy Koufax) and indeed became a folk hero for Jews around the world. The successful military victory, Staub writes, “was a magnificent (if vicarious) means finally to crush the old stereotype of the scrawny and neurotic Jewish man unable to defend himself against a bully (an image soon ironically popularized in the early comedic films by Woody Allen)” (p. 165). Anxiety, adulation, chauvinism, and pride commingled for many American Jews after June 1967. The cry from the heart, “Am Yisrael” (the people of Israel), spread widely.

Headiness was, however, short-lived. The Arabs refused to make peace (the three no’s of Khartoum), and Israel would not let go of the Golan Heights, West Bank, or Gaza lands. Although many young Jews rediscovered their heritage, the difficulty, as Staub and his co-authors sternly put it, was reconciling an anti-imperial or left-wing outlook with a Zionist perspective. A majority supported the latter perspective. The American Jewish community and Israel’s political leaders in the months and years ahead forged a close and loyal partnership. But alienation won out over triumphalism. The internal debates about what was to happen to the controlled lands were always expressed in the context of Jewish survival. These issues were dissected and debated loudly and at length, converging pragmatism and ethics and religion at the Shabbat dinner table in the United States, Europe, and Israel.

Survival took on an added saliency as anti–Vietnam War fervor on university campuses took hold across the United States, gradually reaching the upper echelons of
the U.S. Senate. Staub asks what the Jewish stake was in Vietnam. With the Tet offensive of 1968, the American public's support of U.S. involvement in Indochina broke apart. A deeply divided society resulted, culminating a decade later in an inglorious ending for the U.S. military. Nowhere was the chasm greater than in the American Jewish community, where hawks and doves argued over whether Jews in particular had a special stake in this far-off place.

Doves argued that U.S. interests were not at stake, that the Vietnamese were engaged in a civil war in which an unpopular, dishonest, and unstable government in Saigon was being supported by Washington; that the Soviet Union and China were now openly hostile toward each other; that China and Vietnam were historic adversaries; that the air war against North Vietnam was resulting in many innocent civilian deaths; and that American soldiers were committing atrocities in a combat zone in the South where it was impossible to distinguish between bystanders and foes. Jewish hawks responded that worldwide perception of American power and prestige were on the line; that the president of the United States as commander-in-chief deserved full backing in his Cold War foreign policy; that Communist regimes sought the eradication of Jews, and that opposition would jeopardize the administration's support for Israel in the future.

In 1966, two rabbinic titans—Arthur J. Lelyveld and Michael Wyschogrod—clashed on the question of whether Judaism dictated a call for peace in Vietnam. Lelyveld, a prominent writer and Reform rabbi in Cleveland who had been active in the civil rights movement, argued in the affirmative: “We are participant, in destiny and in responsibility with all men” around the world (p. 146). Wyschogrod, a philosophy professor in New York, answered in the negative saying that Judaism did not automatically translate into a call for either peace or war. Sounding more like a United Nations diplomat arguing Article 51 and the right to self-defense, Wyschogrod declared that Judaism “considers it necessary to wage war against evil when there is no other way to contain it” (p. 149). A year later, he wrote a defense of the war for a journal of Orthodox Jewish thought.

Jewish writers of fiction moved from the periphery to the center of American letters in the years after World War II and were taken seriously by New York publishers and critics in the 1960s. Their success prompted the question: Were Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, J. D. Salinger, Philip Roth, Norman Fruchter, Grace Paley, Herman Wouk, Norman Mailer, Arthur Miller Jewish or American writers? Or, as Staub asks: “What makes an American writer a Jewish writer?”—Jewish parentage, consistent community affiliation, ethnic themes and subjects, the application of “appropriate” Jewish values, so-called Jewish traits (p. 189)? Can one be both Jewish and American?

Roth won the National Book Award in 1960 for his collection of vivid short stories about American Jews, Goodbye, Columbus. Accountability for portraits of American Jewish life became the issue. In a learned and erudite conference on this subject held in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in 1963 (the transcript of which is partially reprinted by Staub), Roth, Fiedler, and others sharply criticized one another—and others—for their views. Roth, who revised his remarks and later published them in an essay, asked:
Is adultery a Jewish trait? The answer is, “Who said it was?” Anna Karenina commits adultery with Vronsky, with consequences more disastrous than those that Epstein brings about. Who thinks to ask, “Is it a Russian trait?” It is a decidedly human possibility. . . . Adultery has been one of the ways by which people of all faiths have sought pleasure, or freedom, or vengeance, or power, or love, or humiliation (p. 198, emphasis in original).

Roth argues strongly against “balanced” portraits and against being afraid of what others will think of Jews: “[T]he lives of Jews no longer take place in a world that is just landsmen and enemies. The cry of ‘Watch out for the goyim!’ at times seems more the expression of an unconscious wish than of a warning. . . . Jews are people who are not what anti-Semites say they are” (p. 206). He concludes, “[T]he stories the novelists tell are more provocative and pertinent than the sermons of some of the rabbis; perhaps it is because there are regions of feeling and consciousness in them which cannot be reached by the oratory of self-congratulation and self-pity” (p. 208).

When Fiedler’s turn came, he discussed the “Judaization of American culture,” noting that “the success of American writers represents the success of an assimilationist dream which is not accidental but essential to the act of becoming a Jewish American writer” (p. 211).

All of this is recorded in Staub’s brilliant chapter, “How Jewish Is It?” But the highlight comes when he reprints the testimony of the poet Allen Ginsburg at the Chicago conspiracy trial in late 1969. “It is almost impossible to recapture for a contemporary audience,” Staub writes, “the theatrical (and often surreal) quality of these legal proceedings. . . . For the record, the defense attorneys are William Kunstler and Leonard Weinglass; the prosecuting attorney is Thomas Foran.” The judge is Julius T. Hoffman. “With the exception of Foran, everyone is Jewish” (p. 191).

The last major section of the book concerns Jewish radicalism and counterculture activities in the 1960s. More pages in the anthology are devoted to this subject than to any other. But these 138 pages are the least captivating and meaningful. The attacks by the anti-status quo activists on the secular and religious Jewish “establishment,” thoughts expressed as “new ideas,” the repetition of anger and alienation, are all jejune. No matter how hard Staub tries, these mounds of documents amount only to something passé—a small group arguing with and talking to itself.

Only the section on Jewish women and feminism is gripping, perhaps because a Jewish women’s movement was a major achievement in the 1960s and 1970s, triggered by Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique, published in 1963. Friedan’s nationwide bestseller was based on the drama of her title, the male-female conflict, and the dramatic analogy between Nazi concentration camps and suburban American homes. The drive for gender equality within the community is still on the proverbial table. In her 1972 essay, Paula Adler argued that the Jewish community had historically denigrated the lives of Jewish women, regarding females as “peripheral Jews.” Somewhat defensively, she wrote that “Jewish feminists have not rejected Judaism; we are struggling with it in our desire to find a way to fulfill ourselves as Jews and women” (p. 333). Staub is right in arguing that “the widespread revitalization of Judaism that
did take place after the 1960s was due in no small part to the success of—not the resistance to—a Jewish women’s movement’ (p. 318, emphasis in original).

The Jewish decade of the 1960s was dazzling. Jews spoke and fought for positions loudly, passionately, and with great purpose and articulation. The writer Cynthia Ozick contends that Jews owed their successes to their determined concentration on Jewish concerns. “If we blow into the narrow end of the shofar, we will be heard far,” she wrote in 1970. “But if we choose to be Mankind rather than Jewish and blow into the wider part, we will not be heard at all, for us America will have been in vain.” Whatever the merit of Ozicks’ view, The Jewish Decade shows that Jewish identity is multifarious—as Jews, as Americans, as humankind. This tripartite focus did not forestall the enormous, widespread professional and personal successes—on the contrary, it enriched them. By the 1970s, the American Jewish community was much stronger than in the late 1950s and 1960s—and so was the United States.


Reviewed by Matthew Church, University of Louisville

*Scotland and the Cold War*, the product of a 2003 conference titled “Scotland’s Cold War: An Introduction,” is intended both to present and to inspire scholarship on the Scottish experience in the Cold War. Many first-rate studies have surveyed the regional effects of Cold War politics on various parts of the world, but Brian Jamison believes that Scotland offers an untapped source for scholarship. Consisting of eight essays, the book covers a wide range of topics ranging from the role of Scottish churches during the Cold War to the experience of Scottish regiments in Cold War-era military postings. The authors portray the Cold War as having affected every aspect of Scottish political, economic, and social life. The editor notes several areas of focus in the book: the Scottish experience with Polaris nuclear submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), the environmental effects of military installations, and the economic impact of the Cold War on Scotland. These topics are mentioned at the beginning of the book but are not thoroughly addressed until the chapter on disarmament movements. The collection provides some excellent information but suffers from a lack of continuity.

The essays cover a range of topics, though with differing amounts of attention. Chapters on the Scottish Communist Party (SCP) during the Cold War and the disarmament movement in Scotland account for more than a fourth of the book. The disarmament movement receives particular emphasis. In an essay on Scottish disarmament movements, Jamison charts the development of Scottish attitudes toward Cold War politics and military deployments by comparing Scottish responses to Polaris and Trident SLBMs. The section on Scottish Communists provides additional insight into the Scottish psyche during the Cold War, displays the shifting allegiance of local
Communists to the Soviet Union, and is linked to the anti-nuclear movement. The chapters on the SCP and the disarmament movement are the most useful, whereas the six other chapters seem out of place and of much less significance. For instance, the nine-page chapter on the Scottish churches during the Cold War contributes little if anything to the book. Everything in this compilation builds to the chapter on nuclear disarmament.

Willie Thompson’s essay on the SCP provides an excellent portrayal of the ebb and flow of the party. Despite coming under pressure from the 1940s on, the SCP was able to maintain a level of support within the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and circulated petitions in support of abolishing nuclear weapons in the 1950s. The inception of Nikita Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization campaign in the Soviet Union in February 1956 and the Soviet invasion of Hungary eight months later profoundly affected the SCP. The leaders of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) applauded the Soviet Union’s decision to crush the Hungarian revolt, a stance that prompted a mass exodus from the party. One-quarter of CPGB membership was lost, and Scottish miners demanded the resignation of Communists from the TUC leadership (p. 54).

Despite these setbacks, the SCP regained support through its role in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), a movement that revived the party. The resurgence of the SCP through support of CND adds to the centrality of the disarmament movement in this book.

Jamison, in his chapter on Scottish responses to the Polaris and Trident missile programs, shows that in the late 1950s and early 1960s CND and allied groups acted in opposition to nuclear testing and nuclear warfare. The Scottish branch of CND (SCND) arose and gained favor because of the presence of the U.S. Polaris system in Scottish lochs and the demands put forth by SCND for the removal of the submarines. The highpoint of the opposition was a demonstration on 4 March 1961 opposing the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons. Although opposition to Polaris later petered out, the initial fervent response was a far cry from the reaction to the Trident system in the 1990s. By the 1990s, the lack of public interest, the long record of Polari’s safe operation, and the economic benefits of nuclear weapons prevented the SCND from staging large demonstrations. Anti-nuclear activists were unable to organize protests against Trident on the scale they had done against Polaris. Jamison concludes that the large amount of opposition to Polaris derived from the fact that it was the first nuclear weapons system based in Scotland. By the time of Trident, Scotland had grown accustomed to the nuclear submarines and the security and jobs their bases provided.

Jamison acknowledges, however, that the anti-Trident movement did succeed in forcing the Ministry of Defence to operate Trident under stringent conditions and in preventing the issue from slipping into the political twilight (p. 149). He deftly traces the shift in Scottish attitudes throughout the Cold War.

Though choppy at times, Jamison’s book offers some excellent contributions to Cold War scholarship. By comparing reactions to Polaris and Trident, Jamison himself traces the development of Scottish Cold War attitudes and provides a timetable for the shaping of Scottish attitudes toward nuclear weapons. Additionally, the various events of the SCND and the portrayal of the SCP generate possible new areas of scholarship.
These chapters will facilitate a larger comparison of domestic disarmament movements and Communist parties in West European countries. The six essays other than the ones on the disarmament movement and the SCP contribute little. The book would have been better served by focusing solely on the evolution of Scottish attitudes toward nuclear weaponry. As a Cold War social-political history and analysis, Scotland and the Cold War leaves much to be desired. Several of the individual chapters are flawed and do not constitute a solid whole. But the chapters on the disarmament movement and the SCP make great contributions to the literature on resistance to nuclear weapons and offer an excellent portrayal of Scottish experiences in the Cold War.


Reviewed by Tony Smith, Tufts University

From the early 1960s until today, the United States has had an embargo (or one might better say an unbroken series of “embargoes,” given the variation in the policy) on trade and investment in Cuba. By the 1980s, the politically organized sector of the Cuban community living in the United States made the intensification of this boycott a matter of faith. Neither of the two main political parties has dared to propose a significant change in this approach, although both parties, as the book under review substantiates, have cheated. The story of the embargo (or embargoes) is the subject of the book.

At the most basic level the book succeeds admirably. In clear expository prose that eschews social science jargon, the two authors lay out the history and the vicissitudes of embargo policy. Their first chapter covers in just twenty pages the story of four administrations—from Dwight Eisenhower through Jimmy Carter. We are treated here to potted history, though for a good reason.

For beginning with the years under Ronald Reagan, the plot thickens. No longer was the U.S. government acting on its own. With the creation of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) at the suggestion of the Reagan campaign team in 1980, the large Cuban-American community began to gain a salient role in domestic politics and was increasingly able, especially through CANF, to act independently of the Republican Party that created it. To be sure, the ties between the national Republican apparatus and the Cuban-American community in Florida remain strong to this day, but the ability of the community to evolve in its own manner is a compelling element of this saga.

In addition to seeing the presidency and the community in action, Patrick Haney and Walt Vanderbush are also sensitive to the role of Congress, which they see as having become stronger after the Cold War, during the administration of George H. W. Bush. The “imperial presidency” was in decline after the Cold War, and the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue was picking up the pieces. Yet at the same time that the execu-
tive weakened in power, so did the ability of the Cuban-American community to speak with a monolithic voice.

This short, readable book is to be recommended to those who want a cogent and informed review of Cuban-American activism as it evolved over time along with a sense of the variation in the structure of power in Washington, DC. The authors keep four balls in the air at the same time: the presidency, the Congress, the Cuban-American community of Florida, and the policies these three constituencies tussled over.

On other fronts, however, this reviewer wishes that the authors had done more to elucidate four issues from a comparative perspective. First, I wish they had looked more extensively at electoral politics. Take, for example, the level of Florida politics or national politics in general. True, in a few places the authors do recognize that Florida state politics is worthy of discussion, but the scattered paragraphs on this matter contain not a word about a subject of special importance: the way the party and electoral voting systems in the United States give to what is, after all, a small minority a large voice if they choose to use it. The same is true of campaign contributions, which again the authors mention but without the comparative analysis that could have set this community into clearer perspective. If, for example, I were working in a political campaign in Florida I would not be sure from this study just how to handle the Cuban-American community in terms of its financial or voting strength. Nor would I understand how appeals to the community might be formulated.

Second, much of the same general criticism can be made of the authors’ treatment of ethnic lobbying. Although they mention African- and Jewish-Americans in comparison to the Cuban-American community, their remarks on these other communities are too superficial to carry any weight and are marred by mistakes. The Jewish community was, in fact, encouraged to speak with a single voice during the first Eisenhower administration, just as Polish and other East European communities in the United States were organized by the second administration of Woodrow Wilson. From the time of the first Eisenhower administration, the White House has always had liaisons to the ethnic communities not simply to respond to their demands but to shape them as well. The assertion that the Cuban-Americans were unique in being sponsored by a national political party (p. 50) is thus in error. This mistake in itself may seem minor except that it attests to a regrettable lack of comparative focus. The authors in their introduction warn us that the book will not be comparative, and the shortcomings of this decision are evident throughout.

A comparative approach would have been valuable in showing how the Cuban-American community’s stance against Fidel Castro’s regime is similar to or different from the embargoes supported by a variety of other ethnic groups. African-Americans championed sanctions against apartheid-era South Africa, Jewish-Americans have backed the boycott against Iran; Irish Americans have adopted “principles” to control many municipal pension fund investments in Northern Ireland—and all these actions have been opposed by the U.S. business community. Although Haney and Vanderbush give a hint of this phenomenon when they discuss how corporate interests have mobilized against the Cuban lobby, their coverage of it is much too cursory to serve as a comparative study.
What is lacking finally is a sense of the passion of ethnic politics. One may regret (as this reviewer does and as the authors of this book apparently do too) that ethnic communities becomes so committed to their causes that they let common sense fly to the winds in the pursuit of their powerfully felt emotional allegiances. To let this matter pass without comment—even in the case of Jorge Mas Canosa, who managed to arouse powerful feelings in the Cuban-American community that this book only vaguely mentions—is to leave (if I can put it in a Cuban way) the beans out of the rice. And what is one to make of a book on this subject that cites not a single source in Spanish?! Por favor!

I regret that so many people get caught up in their case studies that they cannot step back and see how their work relates to a greater whole. Perhaps that is inherent in the American social sciences, which divide and subdivide matters, leaving the Big Picture to tomorrow. Haney and Vanderbush have done a workmanlike job, but this reviewer is left with the sense that if they had taken a broader perspective they could have lifted their study to a higher level.

✣✣✣


Of late, the question of the historical engagement of African-Americans with the international community has received significant attention from scholars such as Brenda Gayle Plummer, Mary Dudziak, and Penny von Eschen. Although these scholars differ in critical respects, they—and now Jonathan Rosenberg—tend to suggest that an intimate connection existed between the Cold War and the reluctant retreat from racial segregation in the United States. U.S. policymakers, they argue, realized that they could not credibly charge the former Soviet Union with human rights violations when African-Americans and other racial minorities were treated so atrociously in the United States.

These scholars—and now Rosenberg—perhaps unwittingly have inaugurated an innovative way of writing history by linking the domestic and the global. Others would be well-advised to follow their lead.

Despite the growing literature on this topic, Rosenberg makes his own unique contribution. He extends the scope of the subject back to World War I and forward to Vietnam. In many ways his book is an intellectual history in that he spends a considerable amount of time examining the stated positions of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)—and W. E. B. DuBois—on the key foreign policy questions of the moment. He emphasizes DuBois’s concept of African-Americans as part of a “transnational solidarity of the oppressed” (p. 29), hinting at the potential danger for the United States of housing within its borders millions of
disgruntled citizens with an uncertain allegiance to Washington and a growing identification with foreign nationals. “Those committed to domestic race reform,” Rosenberg writes, “aimed to internationalize America’s race question” (p. 52) and thus indirectly diminish the U.S. government’s sovereignty over its internal affairs. In retrospect it seems clear that the agonized retreat from Jim Crow, as Rosenberg’s deft and engaging study suggests, was an essential component of the effort to shore up U.S. national security, rather than a benevolent gesture by enlightened U.S. officials, as it is so often portrayed today.

Rosenberg notes that “Du Bois made no effort to hide his positive preachments on Russia’s foreign and domestic policies, and to his varied audiences he conveyed the idea that America had a great deal to learn from the Soviet Union” (p. 175). Rosenberg could have added that this was true of almost all of the “best and the brightest” among African-Americans, including Paul Robeson, Shirley Graham DuBois, and a host of other intellectuals of this elevated stature. At a time when African-Americans were treated as third-class citizens, they had an obvious incentive to succumb to the blandishments of the real and imagined antagonists of Washington. For those familiar with the horrors of the African slave trade, of slavery itself, and of Jim Crow, it was hard to accept the charmingly naïve idea that the United States was a paragon of human rights, not to mention a harmonious “melting pot” or an inspiring “city on a hill.”

Thus, Rosenberg’s book is worthwhile and thought-provoking, yet like any good book it raises further questions that scholars would be well-advised to pursue. For example, is there still a linkage between domestic race reform and international affairs in the post-9/11 world? As tensions rise between Beijing and Washington, and as the bitter aftermath of Hurricane Katrina continues to unveil unresolved and intertwined questions of race and class, might African-Americans once again look abroad to find support for their domestic concerns?

That Rosenberg’s book inspires such knotty questions is a reflection of its value. The book merits close study by a wide audience.

✣✣✣


Reviewed by Jason Krupar, University of Cincinnati

Jennet Conant offers an entertaining account of the lives of those fenced off at Los Alamos, New Mexico in the first half of the 1940s. She is the granddaughter of James B. Conant, a prominent chemist who became president of Harvard University and a science adviser to the government during World War II, Jennet Conant uses the experiences and memoirs of several underutilized sources to explore the culture, social activities, and personalities of Los Alamos’s wartime population. She portrays the community as a combination of a quasi-military installation and a summer science camp
whose inhabitants lived in a pressure cooker cut off from the rest of the world by fences and rules. A key individual who linked this nuclear Shangri-la to reality and served as a focal point for Conant’s book is Dorothy Scarritt McKibbin.

McKibbin served as the literal gatekeeper for Los Alamos. All personnel, supplies, equipment, and communications had to be approved by her office at 109 East Palace, just off the plaza in Santa Fe. If the physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer acted as the father figure and driving force for the scientists and technicians who were sequestered on the mesa, then McKibbin behaved as the surrogate mother of the community. She helped the wives of the scientists adjust to their new lives and coordinated activities that allowed personnel to escape the mounting stresses of the laboratories. Her house served as an unofficial wedding chapel for several nuptials among staff members. Later, in the 1950s, McKibbin helped Oppenheimer defend himself during his security clearance scandal. McKibbin remained a stalwart defender of Oppenheimer even after he lost his security case.

Although McKibbin is central to the book, she is not the only woman whose contributions Conant explores. The book discusses the roles of Oppenheimer’s two other wartime secretaries, Priscilla Greene Duffield and Anne Wilson, who were able to provide further insight into Oppenheimer’s personality and character. Conant also includes Kitty Oppenheimer in her story. A contradiction of frailness and cruelty, Kitty jealously guarded her husband from other women. Despite her flaws and insecurities, Kitty eventually came to rely on McKibbin for solace and strength. Conant weaves the accounts of these principal characters together with the remembrances of the wives of scientists and technicians living behind the fences. The result is a layered portrayal of Los Alamos that incorporates the standard storylines but also presents perspectives underappreciated in the past.

Conant takes on too much with this book. Although she introduces previously ignored individuals who were critical in the successful management of Los Alamos, she allows the overworked tale of Oppenheimer’s rise and fall to dominate her study, even as she tries to bring attention to McKibbin and other women who found themselves atop the mesa. The reader is left with the feeling that Conant struggled over whether her analysis should focus on the Oppenheimer saga, the influential women in his life during the project, or the experiences of women at Los Alamos in general.

Several histories provide better examinations of Oppenheimer’s security scandal, including recent books by Priscilla Johnson Macmillan and by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin. Likewise, Ruth Howes and Caroline Herzenberg, in Their Day in the Sun (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1999), offer a more thoughtful analysis of the roles women played in the Manhattan Project. The stories and insight Conant presents from McKibbin’s experiences, while entertaining, are not entirely new. Nancy Cook Steeper recently published a biography of McKibbin, Dorothy Scarritt McKibbin: Gatekeeper to Los Alamos (Los Alamos, NM: Los Alamos Historical Society, 2003). Other recent publications have looked in depth at the socioeconomic and cultural development undertaken at America’s nuclear city on a hill. Conant’s text, though by no means a mere fluff piece, leaves one unsatisfied and wondering about the central focus of the book. In addition, the absence of textual citations might frus-
trate historians and researchers. Although Conant provides a short note explaining the sources she used, the lack of standard footnotes raises the question of accuracy.

Despite these shortcomings, *109 East Palace* is an entertaining and informative book and will prove useful as an introduction for novices to the history of the Manhattan Project. The book also contributes to the ongoing efforts to bring new perspectives on the bomb and on those who built it.


Reviewed by Loch K. Johnson, University of Georgia

On 7 October 1985, four Palestinian gunmen hijacked the small cruise ship *Achille Lauro* as it steamed from Genoa, Italy, en route to Port Said, Egypt, and Ashdod, Israel. The hijacking marked the first time that a passenger ship had been seized by armed men since 1961. The Palestinian terrorists easily took the captain and crew of the *Achille Lauro* by surprise.

The hijackers, ranging in age from 17 to 23, had been recruited by Mohammed “Abu” Abbas, head of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), one of the eight groups that originally formed the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) under the chairmanship of Yasser Arafat. Abbas ordered the seizure of hostages on the *Achille Lauro* in order to barter them for the release of fifty PLF prisoners held in Israeli jails. As the plot unfolded, however, the situation got out of hand. The leader of the hijackers, Youssef Majed Molqi, threatened to kill the hostages if Israel failed to release the PLF captives. Attempting to use the Syrian government as an intermediary, Molqi warned that if the Israelis refused to comply, “we will start executing at 3:00 p.m. sharp.” Syria refused to pass along the threat.

Evidently keen on proving his determination, Molqi shuffled through the passports of passengers on the ship and selected those with Jewish surnames as candidates for execution. Soon after 3:00 o’clock, the hijackers removed Leon Klinghoffer, a Jewish appliance manufacturer from New Jersey confined to a wheelchair, from the huddled group of hostages in the lounge and pushed him along the deck to the ship’s stern. There Molqi shot him twice and, at gunpoint, ordered members of the ship’s crew to throw the body and the wheelchair into the sea. “I chose Klinghoffer, an invalid,” Molqi later boasted, “so that they would know that we had no pity for anyone, just as the Americans, arming Israel, do not take into consideration that Israel kills women and children of our people” (p. 19).

Thus began the *Achille Lauro* crisis, which had lasting repercussions for the governments of Italy (the ship was legally in Italian territory), the United States, Egypt, and Israel and for the PLO, not to mention the tragic effects of the murder on Klinghoffer’s family and friends. Michael Bohn, a commander in the U.S. Navy who served on the National Security Council (NSC) staff during the Reagan Administra-
tion, found himself in the middle of the crisis. As the director of the White House Situation Room at the time of the hijacking, he was the first to receive word of the event from U.S. and Israeli intelligence sources. As President Ronald Reagan’s chief communications officer for national security affairs, he continued to monitor events throughout the crisis. Subsequently, upon retirement from the Navy, Bohn interviewed many of the key actors in the events. He tells the story clearly and in detail, carefully steering a course between the biases that inevitably accompany relations between Palestinians and Jews.

Upon hearing the news about the hijacking and the murder of Klinghoffer, a Navy captain on the NSC staff proposed an aggressive response, and the president approved it over the objection of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. The Reagan administration tried to apprehend the hijackers. After much frustration in dealing with terrorist organizations in Lebanon for the release of American hostages held there, as well as with a hijacking of a Trans World Airlines passenger plane, administration officials hoped that they might finally be able to do something about this latest terrorist attack against Americans. Bohn quotes National Security Adviser Vice Admiral John M. Poindexter, who later approved the (unrelated) secret machinations that became the Iran-Contra scandal of 1987, as saying early in the crisis: “We were bound and determined to do something to counteract terrorism. This time we had the chance” (p. 61).

While Poindexter and his aide, Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver L. North (who was later another Iran-Contra conspirator), planned a military response for Reagan’s approval, events moved forward on the Achille Lauro. Mohammed Abbas, the PFL leader, feigned innocence about the hijackers and joined Arafat in seeking a resolution to the crisis. Perhaps unknown to Arafat, the negotiations were a ploy by Abbas to remove the PFL’s four operatives from the ship. An agreement was reached to have the Egyptians fly the hijackers to Italy, where they would be tried by an Italian court, which presumably would be more sympathetic than an American court to the Palestinian cause. Reagan approved the NSC staff plan to intercept the Egyptian plane with U.S. jet fighters and force it to land in Sicily, near a U.S. military base. This bold scheme worked but led to heated diplomatic conflicts between the U.S. government and the Italian and Egyptian governments. Eventually, the trial in Italy produced light sentences for the hijackers, who were often described during the proceedings as “freedom fighters.” Abbas received no punishment at all.

Not long after the Klinghoffer murder, Alex Odeh, a prominent Palestinian-American in Los Angeles, criticized the hijackers on a local radio program but also said that Arafat was a “man of peace” and spoke favorably about Arafat’s role in the Achille Lauro negotiations. The radio station broadcast only the part of the interview that commended Arafat. Twelve hours later, Odeh died from wounds inflicted by a bomb that exploded at his office. Bohn believes that the bomb was planted by someone in the Jewish Defense League, but the case was never solved.

When discussing the Odeh killing, Bohn argues that Klinghoffer’s death received much greater attention in the United States because Odeh was on the wrong side of
the Jewish-Palestinian divide. Contrasting U.S. reactions to the two murders, Bohn
makes the larger point that Americans must develop a greater appreciation for the Pal-
estinian as well as the Israeli point of view on events in the Middle East. In this sense,
he intends the tale of the Achillo Lauro—well-told here—to be an informative back-
drop for understanding the contemporary anti-Americanism that fuels al-Qaeda and
insurgents of all stripes in Iraq.

✣✣✣

Salim Yaqub, Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle

Reviewed by Andrew L. Johns, Brigham Young University

Since 1945, the Middle East has been an area in which the United States has struggled
to reconcile its geopolitical goals with an appreciation of regional concerns. During
the Cold War, the major goals of U.S. policy in the Middle East—the containment
of Soviet influence, the protection of Western access to oil, and the security of Israel—
led to unprecedented U.S. involvement in the region. Yet American relations with the
Middle East did not proceed on the basis of any strategic vision. U.S. policy toward
the Arab world often amounted to little more than reactive responses to crises. This
disjointed approach led to inconsistencies in dealing with the Middle East and con-
tributed to the diplomatic challenges faced by successive administrations. Scholars
who attempt to put these events into perspective usually do so from an exclusively
Washington-centric view of the world, which tends to misrepresent the agency of the
regional powers that frequently drive events in this tumultuous part of the world.
Happily, Salim Yaqub’s book does not fall into that category.

In Containing Arab Nationalism, Yaqub comprehensively examines the Eisen-
hower Doctrine, which originated as a congressional resolution in 1957 declaring the
U.S. intention to offer increased economic and military aid to Middle Eastern coun-
tries and to protect the territorial integrity and political independence of those coun-
tries from international Communism, using U.S. troops if necessary. From the Ameri-
can perspective, the primary strategic goal of the policy was to prevent Soviet control
of the region’s oil. This consideration had assumed even greater importance in the
wake of the Suez Crisis of 1956 and the resulting loss of British influence in the Mid-
dle East. Yaqub draws on a wide range of recently declassified Egyptian, British, and
American archival sources to support his contention that the Eisenhower Doctrine
also had the unspoken mission of containing and isolating the radical Arab national-
ism of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. The Eisenhower Doctrine was in-
tended to counteract the core principles of the pan-Arab philosophy Nasser espoused,
including the concept of “positive neutralism” that U.S. policymakers feared could
lead to a Soviet takeover in the region” (p. 31–34). By launching a political counterof-
fensive, U.S. officials hoped to persuade Arab countries to stand by the United States
in the Cold War. Yaqub also convincingly demonstrates that the Eisenhower administra-
tion was as determined to curb Arab nationalism as it was to contain Communism
in the region.

The U.S. strategy to achieve these goals, however, may have been sophisticated
and internally coherent, but, according to Yaqub, it “rested on a basic misreading of
the Nasserist movement” (p. 8). Yaqub argues that the Eisenhower Doctrine was a po-
litical miscalculation not only because it overestimated American power in the wake of
the Suez Crisis but also because it underestimated the power and appeal of pan-Arab
nationalism and the independence of local leaders seeking to advance their own agen-
das. President Dwight Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles fared
much better when, after finally recognizing that a policy aimed at isolating Nasser
would not produce the intended result, took steps toward a modest rapprochement.

The book also examines the problems associated with U.S. efforts to counter
Nasser’s pan-Arab movement by relying on conservative Arab regimes in Iraq, Jordan,
and Saudi Arabia. Although King Hussein of Jordan—a young, pro-Western ruler—
survived a coup attempt by pro-Nasser forces, the substantial public support for
Nasserism made the king unwilling to support the Eisenhower Doctrine openly. One
of the strengths of the book is the recognition of the importance of domestic political
considerations for even authoritarian leaders in the Middle East. In addition, Yaqub
explores the series of crises that roiled the Middle East in 1957 and 1958, situating
them within the framework of the struggle between the Eisenhower administration
and Nasser for dominance in the Arab world. This discussion underscores what Tony
Smith called the “pericentric” aspect of the Cold War, particularly the important do-
monic and regional concerns of Arab actors and their ability to exploit those concerns
to their advantage in the broader conflict.

The relationship between culture and diplomacy factors into Yaqub’s analysis as
well, and he presents a compelling case for a fresh interpretation of the U.S.-Arab dy-
namic. He dissents from two well-known models: the “clash of civilizations” thesis
proposed by Samuel Huntington and others who contend that the Muslim world is
inherently hostile to the modern values of the West; and the “orientalist” thesis of
Douglas Little and Edward Said, who claim that Western racism toward Arabs has
prevented closer ties between the West and the Arab world. Yaqub argues, instead,
that despite cultural differences, both sides in the 1950s were torn between competing
yet shared sets of common values. The first set, associated with vanquishing evil, in-
cluded honor, sacrifice, solidarity, simplicity, and absolutism. The second set—pa-
tience, pragmatism, compromise, subtlety, and moral relativism—was more moderate
and suited to conciliation and deal-making. Yaqub avers that the diplomacy that re-
sulted from the Eisenhower Doctrine reflected these two sets of values but exhibited
an inverse relationship, as both sides urged compromise in the area in which the other
demanded commitment. It was a clash of interests and priorities, not civilizations,
that characterized this period (p. 19–22).

In a similar vein, Yaqub argues that the political dispute between the United
States and the Nasserist movement occurred within a shared moral framework—a pat-
tern that in his view continues to characterize U.S.-Arab controversies today. The
book thus offers lessons for contemporary U.S. policymakers seeking to remake the Middle East in the image of the West. In the post-Cold War world, Yaqub argues, the United States showed a “striking disregard for the views and aspirations of the overwhelming majority of Arabs” and thus stoked a “level of antipathy [among Arabs] toward the United States starkly disproportionate to any provocation,” exceeding conditions of fifty years ago. Yet Yaqub sees continuity between the Eisenhower Doctrine and contemporary U.S. relations with the Arab world. For all of the mutual antagonism that exists, Arabs and Americans “continue to combat one another within a common moral framework” (p. 271–272). Yaqub is at once skeptical and hopeful about the future of U.S. involvement in the region because of those shared values.

"Containing Arab Nationalism" is a thoughtful, persuasively argued study that makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the Eisenhower administration’s foreign policy, the pericentric nature of the Cold War, and the nexus of culture and diplomacy. The book’s only flaw is that it gives no more than passing attention to Soviet responses to the Eisenhower Doctrine and Moscow’s efforts to increase its influence in the region. This is a minor quibble, and understandable in light of the complexities of U.S.-Arab relations with which Yaqub is concerned. That reservation aside, the book should be considered mandatory reading for anyone seeking to understand the interaction of U.S. Cold War imperatives with the realities of Middle Eastern politics.


*Reviewed by Vaughn P. Shannon, University of Northern Iowa*

With *American Orientalism*, a diplomatic history of U.S. relations with the Middle East, Douglas Little enters the debate over “why do they hate us?” (p. 2), suggesting that a “peculiar blend of ignorance and arrogance” prevented the United States from “truly understanding the region and its peoples” (pp. 2–3). The alleged U.S. impulse to remake the world in America’s image, combined with ambivalence about the peoples to be remade has fed a history of policy blunders, creating a multitude of enemies and problems.

Little provides literary flair, both in his references to fiction and in his own writing style. The book is arranged in eight thematic chapters rather than a straight chronology. Each chapter, on issues such as oil, Israel, nationalism, Soviet containment, and the peace process, can stand on its own. Such a format has virtues and drawbacks. Readers can get a condensed and well-researched essay on several subjects. Other topics, such as the Suez crisis, are scattered across several chapters, preventing a more cogent and coherent analysis of such events.

What Little delivers in breadth of coverage, he squanders somewhat in method and conclusions. Too often he makes unsubstantiated claims about the collective U.S. imagination and way of thinking. In a book supposedly focusing on official and pub-
lic attitudes, he makes scarcely any use of polls or interviews to ascertain past and present trends and relies instead on conjecture. For example, he asserts that “many Americans saw religious significance in the Jews reclaiming their ancient home in Palestine, and most would confess at some time that Israel was one of their favorite nations” (p. 79). This speculative statement is not backed by the evidence presented. How does Little know that “many Americans saw religious significance” in these events? How does he know that “most” Americans consider Israel one of their favorite countries? Such flimsy propositions, meant to hold together his thesis, detract from the abundance of researched insights into U.S. policy toward the Middle East. The textual analysis is selective and dubious because of its source choices (and omissions), its rules of evidence and inference, and the presumption that what shows up in a movie (e.g., Aladdin) or popular magazine (e.g., National Geographic) is affecting foreign policy decisions. Little approvingly quotes people who were marginal to decision-making, even when their comments are contradicted by the main decision-makers. Whereas the early chapters portray U.S. policy and attitudes as myopic and culturally biased, subsequent chapters take a decidedly materialist or political bent, raising the question of what the causal mechanism is in U.S. actions.

As a tale of unintended consequences, however, American Orientalism succeeds in showing how decision-makers often took actions without foreseeing the repercussions. What seemed like a good idea in a Cold War context may not have been good for other U.S. goals and interests. Islamic fundamentalism and anti-American terrorism, for example, certainly have some relation to U.S. support for corrupt autocrats in Iran, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Support for Israel has helped to fuel regional animosity toward the United States.

Yet the lessons and attributions of blame are not so clear, and Little is thin on suggestions of how things might have gone differently. The book spends little time analyzing indigenous regional forces and trends that gave rise to nationalist, Arabist, or Islamist movements, implying a larger U.S. role than may be the case. Did Islamism and anti-U.S. extremism gain ascendance because of, or despite, what the United States did? Should Carter and others not have encouraged reform in Iran? Or did they not do enough? Would anything have made a difference? Little deplores U.S. policymakers’ inattention to the region, but he himself too often makes the same mistake of omission.

The evidence regarding U.S. myopia and misperceptions of the region is also of mixed quality. Egypt’s rejection of overtures from the U.S. Middle East Command showed that what the United States saw through Cold War lenses Arabs saw through the lens of Western imperialism. Optimism about the ability of modernization to bring stability to the region (ch. 6) was driven in part by a preoccupation with Communism while being tone-deaf to the prospect of Islamic fundamentalism as well as to the genuine cries for freedom from the Arab and Muslim street. Such vignettes indicate differing perceptions and perhaps myopic misperceptions, though it is less clear whether “orientalist” stereotypes or merely different priorities and perspectives are responsible. There is also evidence that at least some U.S. officials had complex, varied views of the region and of U.S. policy. Clark Clifford won the debate on recognizing
Israel, but George Marshall was warning about the regional implications if the United States recognized Israel (pp. 84–86). The Suez crisis highlighted Dwight Eisenhower’s efforts to avoid resorting to military intervention while pressuring Gamal Abdel Nasser to forfeit the canal, lest the United States be seen as tied to British and French colonialist policies (p. 177). Eisenhower’s handling of Suez shows remarkable sensitivity to how U.S. actions would be perceived, while addressing core U.S. interests of denying Soviet gains in the region. Whether ignorance, arrogance, and stereotypes, rather than domestic and international imperatives, were the main factors shaping U.S. policy in the region is far from clear. Whether history has decisively validated one or the other of these competing claims is also unclear.

_American Orientalism_ is a solid collection of essays dealing with multiple facets of U.S. relations with the Middle East and offers a bold and simple thesis about American attitudes toward the region. Unfortunately, the book cannot sustain the simplicity of the thesis or truly represent the complexity of the region. Little is at his best when analyzing the sundry motivations of U.S. policy, but he fails in his simplistic conclusions about the existence of an American attitude of orientalism and its alleged hold over U.S. policy, which he almost invariably depicts in a negative light and blames for most of the problems the United States confronts there today. When discussing Harry Truman’s decision to recognize Israel, Little notes that “as always, no single issue determined the outcome” (p. 87). That is why his reduction of American diplomacy to orientalist images is so disappointing. Reality is not that simple.


_Reviewed by Roger Owen, Harvard University_

British policy in the Middle East has been the subject of numerous academic studies, but none until now has focused specifically on policy toward Gamal Abdel Nasser’s Egypt from the 1950s through the Six-Day War of June 1967. Robert McNamara (not to be confused with the former U.S. defense secretary), who received his doctorate in history from the University of Ireland, Cork, has been able to draw on recently declassified documents relating to the Syrian crisis of 1957, the Yemeni crisis of 1964, and the run-up to the June 1967 war, as well as to British-Egyptian relations more generally.

McNamara makes a number of confident claims about the continuing significance of the Anglo-Egyptian relationship for a decade or so after the Suez affair of 1956. During that time, Britain remained the most important external power in the Middle East with significant military and colonial positions to defend, and Nasser remained Britain’s most persistent opponent. McNamara uses this point to provide a convincing rationale for Britain’s extraordinarily troubled history with Egypt: diplomatic relations severed by Egypt twice, in 1956 and 1965; the perception among a
majority of British politicians that Nasser was behind every anti-British action in the Middle East; and the inability of the five British prime ministers to “establish any reasonable modus vivendi” with the Egyptian president “for any length of time” (p. 1).

Nevertheless, it still comes as something of a shock to be told that on four occasions after 1956 the British government actively considered military action to bring Nasser down. Two of these occasions, McNamara writes, arose during the prime ministership of Harold Macmillan, whose antipathy to Nasser was in no way diminished by the way Macmillan himself, as chancellor of the exchequer, had pulled the plug on the British attack on Suez by warning of the huge dangers posed by America’s readiness to use economic sanctions to secure a British withdrawal.

Unfortunately the evidence needed to back up such claims remains murky in the extreme. The declassified documents provide no more than hints and whispers. Nor, as it turns out, was there anything really substantial about the plans themselves. For example, on the first occasion, what Macmillan seems to have been toying with was a convoluted plot in which the Iraqis were to be encouraged to invade Syria in 1957, drawing in the Egyptians and thereby creating a possible pretext for an attack on Egypt itself. But as McNamara observes, “whatever ambitious plans Macmillan might have desired were unlikely ever to be carried out” (p. 105).

Another equally murky situation occurred in 1964 under Macmillan’s successor, Alec Douglas-Home, when Nasser was believed to be using the presence of Egyptian troops along the Yemeni border with Britain’s Aden protectorate to train and equip the anti-British resistance, possibly in response to covert British efforts to supply arms to Nasser’s local opponents, the Yemeni royalists. For a short period of time, members of the Douglas-Home cabinet were willing to contemplate the use of military force against the Egyptians, including an air attack on an Egyptian-manned fort. But lack of U.S. support combined with diminishing confidence in the bellicose role being played by Britain’s high commissioner in Aden, Sir Kennedy Trevaskis (not “Travakis” as rendered in the book), led the prime minister to try to find a way to calm things down.

Such alarms and excursions aside, McNamara provides a useful account of the ups and downs of the Anglo-Egyptian relationship, including the long, drawn-out negotiations regarding compensation for British-owned property seized in 1956, the brief détente in the early 1960s when Nasser’s stewardship of the Egyptian/Syrian union was seen as a vital contribution to keeping Middle Eastern Communism at bay, and the return of acute tension as a result of the confrontation in southern Yemen as well as the fact that Britain and Egypt were generally on opposite sides during the often painful process of African decolonization. The story then comes to an abrupt end in 1967, when the Israelis did what the British could no longer manage—that is, cut Nasser down to size—and when Britain proceeded with its humiliating retreat from Aden, which was followed by the event that finally put paid to Britain’s pursuit of an east-of-Suez role in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere: the great devaluation crisis of November 1967.

McNamara is also good in his understanding of the confusion that surrounded much of British official thinking toward Egypt and Nasser’s role in the Middle East
from 1956 to 1967, a confusion usually absent with respect to the policy pursued toward Jordan and Iraq during this same period. Unfortunately McNamara’s understanding of the Egyptian side of the story is not anywhere near as good, partly because of the absence of much of the Egyptian official record, and partly because he seems to have read little written in recent years about Nasser and his regime. He is thus left captive to old, orientalist notions concerning Egyptian “fanaticism” (p. 23) or the “portentous style” that is the “hallmark of Arabic” (p. 27), while making a number of simple mistakes about Egypt—referring, for example, to the “nationalisation” of the Suez Canal in 1956 (p. 28) rather than of the Canal company that ran it. Lastly, the book contains hardly anything about British policy toward Egypt’s three important neighbors, Libya, Sudan, and Israel.


Reviewed by Lily Ramcharan, Guyana Institute of Public Policy

Stephen G. Rabe, a professor of history at the University of Texas at Dallas and a leading authority on the history of the Cold War in Latin America and the Caribbean, has written a deeply engaging, lucid, and superb book on how the Cold War affected the colony of British Guiana (now independent Guyana) from the 1950s to the 1990s, with particular emphasis on U.S. intervention in the colony in the 1960s. This book fills a gap in the history of the Cold War’s impact on the developing world and helps to explain to the people of Guyana the complex web of events that continue to haunt the life of the country to this day. Rabe deserves commendation on both counts.

Following an introduction, the book traces the history of British Guiana from 1831 to 1853. Rabe writes with feeling about the miserable fate of enslaved Africans and indentured Indians. The enslaved Afro-Guyanese population opened up the country through hard work only to find themselves later competing for wages with later arrivals and indentured Indians, who eventually outnumbered them and surpassed them in wealth, even if the Africans predominated in the civil and police services during the first part of the twentieth century. Rabe notes that this situation would have required the greatest care and wisdom on the part of emerging leaders such as Forbes Burnham and Cheddi Jagan. Rabe depicts Jagan as a sincere nationalist who failed to appreciate that his country was in the heart of the U.S. sphere of influence during the height of the Cold War. The portrait of Burnham is that of a brilliant, opportunistic, and racist demagogue.

Chapter one deals with events in British Guiana from 1953 to 1960. The British, keen to rid themselves of the colonies, gave British Guiana an internally self-governing constitution and held the first election with universal suffrage in 1953. The Peoples’ Progressive Party (PPP), led by Jagan, with Burnham in a prominent leadership position, won a landslide victory and formed a government that was in office for 133 days
before the two men were removed from power for allegedly pro-Communist leanings.

Rabe carefully sifts through the British archival materials to show that the British governor in Guiana did not share the view that the PPP was an international Communist threat. But the Conservative government headed by Winston Churchill was determined to unseat the left-leaning PPP. Jagan, as Rabe points out, acknowledged that he and his colleagues, including Burnham, were bombastic in some of their utterances. The U.S. government was not involved in the overthrow of the PPP but was informed prior to the landing of British troops and actively supported the British move through U.S. foreign missions. The Americans and the British subsequently colluded to engineer a split in the PPP between Jagan and Burnham, something that cost Guyana dearly for many years after.

Chapter two deals with events in British Guiana from 1961 to 1962. By then, the Suez affair had transpired, weakening the British, and Fidel Castro had taken power in Cuba, stirring U.S. fears of a string of Communist dominoes in Latin America. Jagan and his wife, Janet Jagan, a leading figure in the PPP, had hailed the Cuban revolution—something that did not endear them to the Americans. The Eisenhower administration wanted to prevent another Communist beachhead in Latin America and began actively intervening with the British, and on the ground in British Guiana, to stop Jagan from winning the elections scheduled to be held in 1961. Nonetheless, Jagan’s party won handsomely, and the U.S. government turned its attention to ensuring that Jagan would not lead the country into independence.

The drive for independence is the story of chapter three, 1963–1964. Drawing on archival materials from the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and Israel, Rabe provides a detailed account of how the U.S. government, including President John Kennedy the State Department the National Security Council, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in combination with American labor unions, waged an aggressive campaign against Jagan and the PPP to prevent them from leading British Guiana to independence. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations pressured the British government to change the Guianan constitution to introduce a system of proportional representation under which the PPP would not obtain an overall majority in the elections. Even when the PPP emerged in the elections of 1964 as the party with the largest number of seats, it was not given the customary opportunity to form a government. In fact, under U.S. pressure, the British government engaged in a conspiracy to keep Jagan out of power.

The CIA, for its part, funneled money through American trade unionists, who instigated strikes and riots on the ground by buying off local union leaders. This included, though Rabe does not mention it expressly, Richard Ishmael, the head of the British Guiana Trade Union Council, who went on the payroll of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (for more on this, see Lily Ramcharan, “Cold War in British Guiana 1953–1966: The Trade Union Dimension,” The Round Table, No. 378, January 2005, pp. 113–128). Many people died or were wounded, and at one stage 13,000 persons were internally displaced. The United States actively supported Forbes Burnham, who by then led the Peoples’ National Congress (PNC), and the anti-Communist businessman Peter D’Aiguar, who led the
United Force (UF). U.S. agents provided money, organizational support, propaganda materials, polling, and intelligence data, and they even steered gangs of thugs in their attacks on PPP supporters.

Burnham was thus installed in power in December 1964 in a coalition with D’Aiguar. The coalition government functioned reasonably well. In 1968, however, Burnham rigged the elections and got rid of his coalition partner. He proceeded to steal economic assets, develop a personality cult around himself, rig elections, and generally wreck the country. Burnham’s party ruled from 1964 to 1992. He died in 1985 and was succeeded that year by Desmond Hoyte, a leading member of the PNC. Under PNC rule, the country suffered terribly, but the United States was less interested in democracy than in preventing the spread of Communism in Latin America. Burnham eventually turned against the United States, declaring his party a Marxist-Leninist party and developing relations with the Soviet Union and other Eastern-bloc countries, but U.S. officials still preferred him to be in power instead of Jagan, whom they considered to be a genuine Marxist believer compared to Burnham, whom they considered a racist opportunist.

Chapter 5 deals with the period 1965–1969 and the conclusion with the life of Guyana afterward. Rabe shows that the United States provided continuing support to Burnham from 1965 to 1969, even though U.S. officials became aware of his dictatorial rule, his election-rigging in 1968, and even more blatant election-rigging later on. Only in 1992, after the Cold War had ended, and with the efforts of people such as former President Jimmy Carter, were free elections held, resulting in the election of Jagan as president, some 28 years after the Anglo-U.S. conspiracy that had barred him from leading the country to independence.

Rabe’s book is the most complete account to date of what actually took place in British Guiana in the 1950s and 1960s. His research is meticulous; his factual presentation is flawless (save for a few names here and there), his judgment is on the mark; and his evaluations are fair and well drawn. He alludes to evidence, still held under wraps, that President Kennedy signed a direct order calling for the overthrow of Jagan. One can only hope that the evidence Rabe has so carefully and powerfully marshaled will put pressure on the U.S. State Department and the CIA to release still-classified records in this important story of the Cold War.


Chizuru Saeki, University of North Alabama

In the United States during World War II, Japan was depicted as the hated enemy. American mass media frequently condemned Japanese as savages and maniacs. After the war, as U.S. troops occupied Japan and the Cold War heated up, America’s racial hostility toward Japanese ebbed, and the image of Japan was dramatically transformed
from a deadly enemy into a staunch ally as the United States decided to make Japan its bulwark against Communism in Asia.

How was the U.S. public able to accept an alliance with Japan when not so long ago “the Japs” had been thoroughly vilified as simian-like creatures with Coke-bottle glasses? Naoko Shibusawa demonstrates that the ideologies of gender and maturity helped to mitigate the racial hostility. Feminizing the hated enemy and depicting the Japanese as immature youth enabled the Americans to humanize the Japanese and regard the former enemy as dependents who needed U.S. guidance and benevolence. MacArthur’s occupation forces, journalists, filmmakers, and private philanthropic groups all helped to create new images of Japan. By showing educational films and pictures of Japanese babies, the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) in Japan emphasized America’s pedagogical role to reeducate Japanese who had been warped by the militarists. At the same time, the series of instructional courses arranged by SCAP as part of each American soldier’s orientation program helped to foster Americans’ love of the former enemy’s culture, including flower arrangements, tea ceremonies, and kimonos.

At the same time, SCAP’s materials and the U.S. mass media promoted a traditional view of women and children as as weak and helpless in postwar Japan. U.S. journalists published many photographs of smiling U.S. troops with Japanese children during the occupation. Americans liked seeing the kindness and mercy of their soldiers, believing that they were the mentors and protectors of a Japan that was as vulnerable and helpless as a woman or child. American perceptions of Japan turned brighter.

According to Shibusawa, as U.S. soldiers became obsessed with Japanese paintings and collected Japanese handicrafts that had survived the war, the nineteenth-century image of Madam Butterfly reemerged and even triggered a second Japonisme boom in the United States. Shibusawa calls Japan “a beautiful woman pockmarked with ugly scars” (p. 20). Feminizing Japan’s image was done not only by U.S. troops but also by the Japanese government. At the beginning of the occupation, Japanese officials recruited lower-class Japanese women whom Shibusawa calls “baby-san” to erode the hostility of U.S. servicemen toward Japan “by satiating the conqueror’s sexual appetites” (p. 39). Shibusawa describes how American racism toward the Japanese diminished as soldiers brought Japanese wives back to the United States and as Hollywood movies began to romanticize these transnational love stories. But Shibusawa neglects to explain how Japanese racism toward Americans was influenced by interracial marriage and gender discourse. An analysis of this topic would have allowed her to compare how Japanese perceptions of Americans changed as the occupation progressed. Americans were initially reviled in Japan as a hated and cruel enemy but over time came to be seen as a reliable and benevolent friend.

Shibusawa examines the U.S. decision to retain Emperor Hirohito on his throne in order to maintain unity among the Japanese and prevent guerilla warfare against the occupying U.S. forces. To ensure that the American public would accept the retention of Hirohito, Douglas MacArthur (the commander of SCAP) and his subordinates invented a story that Hirohito was willing to sacrifice his own life if the Supreme
Commander could guarantee the safety of the Japanese people. SCAP portrayed Hirohito as an innocent victim manipulated by evil Japanese military advisers led by Hideki Tōjō. When Hirohito started a nationwide tour after renouncing his divinity in January 1946, SCAP successfully advertised him as cute and scholarly, the people’s lovely “A-So” emperor. (Hirohito often repeated the comment “Is that so” in his conversation with civilians.) Shibusawa calls him “MacArthur’s Charlie” (p. 110). The image of the emperor as an ordinary middle-class father was repeatedly presented in major American magazines such as Life, which portrayed Hirohito as a devoted husband who refused to take a second consort when his wife bore three daughters before giving birth to a son.

Shibusawa analyzes the role of Elizabeth Gray Vining, who tutored Akihito, the son of Hirohito and crown prince. Referring to the role of Anna Leonowens in Siam, Reader’s Digest described how Hirohito’s son was studying under an American schoolmistress and learning the mores of American democracy. Vining’s Window for the Crown Prince (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1952) also promoted a positive image of the imperial family. She described Hirohito not only as a proper father who was personally overseeing his son’s education but also as a gentle man who had hired a foreign woman as a tutor for the crown prince. Although this is an interesting story for the general reader, experts on modern Japan might expect to read more about how the Japanese people came to accept a “human” emperor to whom they had dedicated their lives during the war. Although Shibusawa does not mention it, crown prince Akihito’s marriage to Shoda Michiko, the daughter of a wealthy civilian, in April 1959 was crucial in transforming the divine image of the Japanese imperial family. Hirohito’s wife, the empress Nagako, repeatedly lamented Akihito’s marriage as a disgrace to the imperial family.

Shibusawa argues that the transformation of Japan’s image from enemy to junior ally and faithful pupil was closely tied to the efforts of some liberal-minded Americans to forge close bilateral ties. She discusses the Johnstone Scholarship, which was set up by the family of a dead American soldier. The family used his life insurance money to fund education for Japanese students. By analyzing cases in which ex-Kamikaze soldiers were awarded the scholarship to study in American colleges, Shibusawa argues that American Cold War liberals managed to reduce racial hostilities in U.S.-Japanese relations. The story of the Japanese scholarship students was a demonstration of American generosity that triumphed over racial intolerance. As Robert Nishiyama and other Japanese students arrived on American college campuses, the American image of the Japanese gradually changed from the sneaky, bad “Jap” to the handsome, young, hard-working student who embraced his country’s defeat and was moving toward the American way.

America’s parental role toward young Japan was also stressed in Norman Cousins’s “moral parent program” that allowed individual Americans to become financial supporters of Hiroshima orphans. This program offered an easy way for the American public to allay any feelings of guilt over the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima or the earlier firebombing of Tokyo. Much the same was true of the “Hiroshima Maiden project,” which provided free plastic surgery to young female victims of Hiro-
shima whose chances for marriage had been ruined by looking up at the sky at the wrong moment on that morning in August 1945. These programs helped the United States to earn considerable good-will and advertised American benevolence and a spirit of humanitarianism to the wider world—despite the U.S. State Department’s initial concern that the programs might be regarded as an official apology for America’s wartime use of nuclear weapons.

Shibusawa argues that the Hiroshima maiden project and moral parent program represented America’s reconciliation with Japan in the “agreeable shape of children, young women and to some atonement and partial compensation for dropping the atomic bombs” (p. 253). This may be too optimistic in light of Japan’s longstanding nuclear paranoia, particularly after the Lucky Dragon incident of 1954 (when a Japanese fishing vessel and nearby atolls were contaminated by radiation from a U.S. thermonuclear bomb test) and the student demonstrations against renewal of the Japan-U.S. security treaty in 1960. Shibusawa should have included more information about Dwight Eisenhower’s effort to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy to show how that campaign fit in with the Hiroshima maiden project. Shibusawa does a wonderful job describing how the Japanese image in the United States was transformed by Americans outside the government, including journalists, philanthropic donors, and other liberal-minded individuals. Nonetheless, she missed the opportunity to explain the U.S. government’s continuous effort to promote American democracy and mutual friendship in U.S.-Japan relations, as reflected in the “Campaign of Truth” under Harry Truman and the People-to-People Program under Eisenhower.

Despite these omissions, Shibusawa provides a sophisticated historical study that combines theory, archival research, and beautiful writing with a light touch. The book is delightful to read, highly imaginative, and intriguing. Shibusawa’s riveting stories and cogent analysis make America’s Geisha Ally a major contribution to the study of U.S.-Japanese relations during the Cold War.

✣✣✣


Reviewed by Geoffrey Best, Oxford University

Winston Churchill’s six-volume history-cum-memoir of the Second World War is the most widely read account of that conflict, but it is a flawed account. Raymond Callahan is one of a growing number of historians who have set out to correct the Churchillian version of history. Callahan’s efforts appear to have been made independently of the corrections laid out in the recent book by David Reynolds, In Command of History (New York: Random House, 2005), but in any case Callahan’s findings are complementary to those of Reynolds. Churchill’s volumes gave much prominence to his relations with military commanders and are a useful though incomplete source about British civil-military relations during the war. More than a decade-and-a-half
ago, the military side of that relationship was helpfully sketched in John Keegan’s 1991 collection of essays, *Churchill’s Generals* (New York: Grove Press, 1991). But that book left out a crucial perspective: namely, that of Churchill himself. This lacuna is filled in by Callahan, a reflective and judicious senior historian who is interested equally in Churchill and his generals and who knows enough about the war to view with humane detachment the significance of their relationships for the men fighting under their orders. The result is a heavyweight contribution to the history of the war as a whole, together with some lively engagement in its accompanying controversies.

For Churchill’s critics and enemies (the worst of whom, it must be remembered, were in his own party), his most dangerous characteristic was held to be his “lack of judgment.” Callahan acknowledges that Churchill’s judgment could indeed go remarkably wrong at times, for example in his hankering to launch an amphibious operation that would recover Singapore. Like other strategic bees in Churchill’s bonnet, this proposal wasted the time of the British chiefs of staff. But Churchill sometimes was more farsighted and astute than they were, and in any event Callahan, like any good historian, never tires of demonstrating that Churchill was operating in a complicated context that would have driven less powerful minds to distraction. Many non-military considerations had to be taken into account. Simplified and partisan military histories and biographies tend to miss these things. As the prime minister of a freely functioning parliamentary democracy, Churchill had to consider public opinion and to watch his back. Callahan deftly shows how these concerns dominated Churchill’s mind through the disasters of 1942 and how the prime minister’s range of choices for field command of the Normandy invasion was narrowed down to General Bernard Montgomery because of the latter’s unique (and carefully cultivated) popularity with the British public.

What mattered above all was that Britain was fighting the war in a coalition. The United States and the Soviet Union headed Churchill’s list for consideration, but he also had to deal with the Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and South Africans, as well as the Free French and the Poles, each with their own independent divisions and with well-developed capacities for toughness. Most of these allies were represented in the coalition of armies painfully fighting their way up Italy from September 1943 under the overall command of Churchill’s favorite general, Harold Rupert Leofric George Alexander, Callahan argues that although “Alex” was none too bright, his qualities of politeness, calm, and discretion may have been just what the human and political contexts required—just as similar non-military qualities were what Dwight Eisenhower brought to the overall command up north. Alex had to cope with Mark Clark, Eisenhower with Montgomery. Churchill’s admiration of Alexander and trust in him may not, after all, have been misplaced.

Part of the context of Churchill’s decision-making, which Callahan illuminates better than anyone has done before, was the British army’s endemic snobbery and dismissiveness regarding the Indian army and the extent to which the two armies’ ignorance about one another contributed to the unsuitability of some appointments and the mishandling of some situations in the desert war. Callahan points out that Churchill himself—like other Britons endowed with the Sandhurst/Camberley
mentality—failed to appreciate India’s huge military contribution, first in the Mediterranean theater and then in defense of India and the recapture of Burma. Churchill’s cursory discussion of this topic in his Second World War was included only because of his aides’ insistence. Callahan shows how Claude Auchinleck, who was back in India after Montgomery replaced him in mid-1942, was so successful in reviving the Indian army that in 1943–1945 the Indian troops were able, with some British and African assistance and under the command of a skillful British general, to inflict on the Japanese army its largest ever defeat and to liberate Burma all the way to Rangoon. The general who commanded the Indians was William Slim, “the outstanding British Army commander of World War II and Britain’s best field commander since Wellington” (p. 234). Callahan sensibly posits that in one sense Churchill’s lack of interest in the Auchinleck-Slim reforms was a blessing. The prime minister’s anti-Indian prejudices were such that he might have reacted violently if he had ever realized that the Indian officer corps was increasingly made up of, of all people, Indians.

The fifty pages of notes are just as rewarding as the main text, and more fun. They not only provide evidence of the depth and extent of Callahan’s reading and research (which has included the papers of Michael Roberts, Francis Tuker, “Pete” Rees, “Uncle Bill” Slim, and Ronald Lewin as well as those of Churchill himself) but also contain a number of meaty miniature essays, some biographical, like those on the ever-controversial Orde Wingate and Archibald Wavell, and others that are intriguingly focused on events with some mystery in them—for example, Alan Cunningham’s state of health during Operation Crusader in November 1941, the outcome of Churchill’s private dinner with Montgomery on 19 May 1944, and the extent of Louis Mountbatten’s role in Oliver Leese’s attempt to relieve Slim of his command in the spring of 1945.

✣✣✣


Reviewed by David Crawford, The Wall Street Journal

This huge book, comprising 64 essays of roughly 25 pages each, will be essential reading for students of postwar Germany’s opposition movement and for anyone interested in the history of terrorism. The contributors to the book, under the editorship of Wolfgang Kraushaar, discuss the key factors that gave birth to and sustained the Red Army Faction (RAF) and other terrorist groups both in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and abroad.

The two-volume set is structured in eleven sections covering the sociological dimensions of terrorism, the ideology of urban guerrillas, the RAF’s founders and successors, other terrorist groups in Germany, the factors influencing these groups, international parallels, the West German government’s reactions, terrorism and the media, phantoms of terrorism, hypotheses, and final thoughts. The essays are supplemented
with a 50-page introduction that will help readers find the essays of greatest interest for a particular line of study. Unfortunately, the biographical information about the contributors to both volumes is buried at the back of volume two. Readers will be frustrated by the lack of an index to help track scattered references in the two volumes and 1,415 pages of text.

Readers may recognize many of the 47 contributors—49 if you include interviews. One of the two interviews features Horst Herold, the legendary former head of the West German police investigative agency, Bundeskriminalamt (BKA). Some authors played important roles in shaping public perceptions of the RAF in the 1970s and 1980s, including Jürgen Seifert, the former chairman of the human rights organization Humanistische Union (who writes about one of the RAF founders, Ulrike Meinhof), and Uwe Wesel, a law professor at Berlin’s Free University (who discusses the RAF trials). Many of the essays are condensed versions of similar works the authors have published elsewhere.

In an interview about the book, Kraushaar said his intention was to stake out the topology of discussion about the RAF. It is a difficult assignment because competing concepts of political correctness from the left and right of German society clash over what must be said and what should never be mentioned about the RAF. I experienced this pressure myself in 1983. In a West German newspaper story, I quoted a peace demonstrator who said “We are not terrorists.” Afterward some leftists snubbed me because they believed I had indirectly contributed to the criminalization of the peace movement. “Terrorism is the establishment’s word,” one leftist said. “We don’t use it.”

Like much of the discussion about the RAF, this book almost died before it was begun. Kraushaar had spent more than a year preparing a planned exhibit on “Art and the History of the RAF,” but divergent views arose among the exhibit organizers, and Kraushaar pulled out of the project. The book concept was inspired by the exhibit preparations, Kraushaar said.

The RAF and the accompanying security clampdown affected many young adults living in postwar Germany, including in a small way, me. During the “German Autumn” of 1977, two West Berlin policemen searched my pockets for weapons or propaganda because they suspected that I might be heading to a demonstration—I was actually going to a library. Later, as a journalist writing extensively about East Germany and intelligence, I developed an interest in the RAF as a puzzle that needed to be solved.

Kraushaar allows readers to wait before delving into the mysteries. Section one, consisting of four essays, offers definitions of terrorism and traces the development of terrorism from the French Revolution to al Qaeda. The authors present the key theories shaping the terrorism debate. The result in this section is a predictable discussion of the sociological dimensions of terrorism. The ideas are not new, and the footnotes cite familiar literature and news stories.

Section two provides eight views of the urban guerrilla, focusing on anti-authoritarian movements and the tenets of anti-imperialism. Individual essays interpret the views of Mao Zedong, Rudi Dutschke, and Walter Benjamin. Another essay discusses the impact of Che Guevara’s focus theory and the discussion inspired by Regis Debray.
We get closer to our topic in an essay discussing the differences between RAF founder Ulrike Meinhof and RAF lawyer Horst Mahler. A final essay in this section examines the literary influence of French intellectuals—Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon on the urban guerilla movement. This section is important because it examines many of the ideas used by the RAF to justify its own existence.

The third section, “The RAF Founders and Their Successors,” is solid, but I was disappointed by the eight contributors’ lack of ambition to break new ground. Individual essays examine the first attack attributed to the early RAF founders, followed by a look at the organization’s main protagonists—Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof, the lawyer Horst Mahler, and Gudrun Ensslin—as well as the life and death of Georg von Rauch and Thomas Weisbecker. The role of Horst Mahler is particularly important in demonstrating how a single active leader can assure the continuation of the group dynamic within a terrorist group. The section is rounded out by two essays discussing the second and third RAF generations.

At the end of this section, several basic questions remain unanswered. Why did the RAF change from generation two to generation three? How did the RAF third generation learn and master the art of leaving so little useful evidence at the scene of its crimes? Why did the RAF third generation abandon contacts with its support network of sympathizers? And in the midst of the Cold War, who benefited from the RAF third-generation tactic of sharply expanding its list of potential targets?

The fourth section discusses the development of lesser-known militant groups in the FRG: the Tupamaros of West Berlin, the 2nd of June Movement, the Revolutionary Cells, and the Black Panther Support Committee. This section provides an interesting look at the shared subculture that gave birth to the RAF.

The fifth section discusses the factors leading to the development of these groups and the RAF. Few readers will be surprised by the radicalizing pull of the Vietnam War or the influence of anti-Zionism in fusing German terrorists with Palestinian groups. Essays on the influence of the radical women’s movement, the avant-garde, and extremist Protestantism show how terrorism can spring from many roots. Olaf Gaethje’s essay on the information system used by RAF inmates to communicate among themselves, with their followers, and with other terrorist groups demonstrates the ingenuity of the imprisoned terrorists in maintaining influence over their comrades.

Martin Jander’s “Differences in the Anti-imperialist Struggle” is a disappointing examination of the contacts between the RAF and the East German Ministry for State Security (MfS or Stasi). Jander discusses efforts by the Stasi to provide refuge to RAF members who abandoned terrorism, but he fails to mention that Stasi units also took a special interest in studying and possibly imitating RAF attacks in West Germany. For example, in a March 1982 talk (a transcript of which was preserved in the former Stasi archives) an MfS officer describes the activities of Stasi Special Forces during times of relative peace: These units, he said, should “support forces battling imperialist powers,” and he called for the systematic monitoring of terrorist groups in the FRG in order to use their methods and tactics to mask the Stasi’s own operations (Cited from “Die Aufgaben tschekistischer Einsatzgruppen im Operationsgebiet,” AGM/S DB1
A/1069/82, MfS-HA XXII Nr. 521/17, pp. 15–16). I showed this document to Kraushaar, who said it was a “possible blueprint” for how the Stasi might use the RAF to camouflage its own attacks. No one yet has definitively proven that the Stasi actually committed murder or other crimes while using the RAF as cover. But the statement in this document—and equally incriminating statements contained in hundreds of pages of other Stasi commando force (AGM/S) documents—raise important questions for future study.

The sixth section, which begins Volume 2, includes seven essays examining parallel organizations outside West Germany. The section provides detailed looks at the Tupamaros in Uruguay, the Vietcong in Vietnam, the Weathermen in the United States, the Red Brigades in Italy, the Japanese Red Army, and the People’s Front for the Liberation of Palestine. When viewed in this comparative perspective, the RAF seems to be more than a German phenomenon. Rather, it was part of an international terrorist network built on the technology and tactics of the 1970s and 1980s.

Section 7 consists of eight essays on the criminal justice system and the RAF. Some lessons from the RAF experience have been learned, others ignored. Lawyers representing today’s generation of alleged terrorists face suspicions aroused in part by the RAF experience. Although events since September 2001 are not the focus of this section, readers will notice parallels between the perceived mistreatment of RAF inmates and a similar discussion about the alleged abuse of inmates at the U.S. military base in Guantánamo, Cuba. Then as now, terrorist groups use martyrdom propaganda to recruit new members.

The eighth section includes five essays discussing the interface between the RAF and the media. Andreas Elter points to communication, along with the need to shock, as important aspects of terrorism—a consideration often ignored in counterterrorism strategy since September 2001. Kraushaar weighs in again with an essay on the RAF’s unremitting hatred of the conservative publisher Axel Springer. Andreas Musolf provides an important analysis of how the anti-terrorist rhetoric used by government officials created a self-fulfilling prophecy that elevated the status of terrorist groups who would otherwise lack support—again a good reminder for today’s policymakers.

Four essays in Section 9, “The Phantom of Terrorism,” examine topics of continued relevance. In “RAF Myths,” Kraushaar discusses the challenge of terrorism and populist threats. In “Nostalgia for the State of Siege,” Herfried Muenkler looks at the fascination surrounding the severance of ties with friends and family and the decision to live “underground.” The essay by Stefan Spiller, “The Sympathizer as an Enemy of the State,” recounts the condemnation and praise generated by an anonymous obituary written in reaction to the murder of West Germany’s attorney general, Siegfried Bubach. Rolf Sachsse’s “Prada Meinhof—A Discussion of the RAF as a Brand Name” rounds out the section.

Section 10, “Hypotheses,” contains six essays, including one that intriguingly discusses why terrorist groups flourished in the former Axis powers, Germany, Italy, and Japan. Two subsequent essays the RAF’s fantasies of greatness and sense of martyrdom, showing how terrorism is built on extreme perceptions of reality. Heinz Bude
places part of the blame for RAF terrorism on the failure of the FRG to inspire its youth with a positive, patriotic passion. Christian Schneider sees the development of the RAF as part of a violent reaction to the National Socialist violence in Germany’s past. According to this perverse logic, the will to exact punishment for the mass murder in Germany’s past conferred legitimacy on the RAF’s acts of violence.

The eleventh and final section, includes interviews with the former BKA chief Horst Herold and with an acquaintance of several early RAF members. These discussions provide insight into the RAF from the standpoint of both the police and the suspects. Herold was a controversial police investigator, who introduced computer profiling as a counterterrorism weapon. He resigned his post amid criticism that he had gone too far in sifting through the personal data of millions of citizens in his search for a handful of terrorists.

Today, nearly a decade after the RAF announced its disbanding in 1998, the organization’s story is still incomplete. Detectives at Germany’s police investigation agency have not yet closed their investigation of nine murders committed in the 1980s and early 1990s, which have been attributed to the so-called third generation of the RAF. This is all the more remarkable because in 1993 an alleged member of the group, Birgit Hogefeld, was arrested and a second alleged member, Wolfgang Grams, was killed.

It would be unfair to expect that a group of scholars could solve a murder mystery that has thwarted Germany’s best police investigators for more than a decade. Indeed, most scholars, including Kraushaar, would be loath even to try, given the lack of clarity about key facts. Kraushaar says he attempts to avoid speculation and maintains strict academic standards. It will be up to a new round of authors, or a new edition of this book, to answer the next round of questions.


Reviewed by James E. Cronin, Boston College

The Suez crisis was by almost any measure a modest affair in and of itself. It was brief; it involved few troops or casualties; and it left little or no imprint “on the ground” in Egypt. But the effects of this misguided venture were profound and far-reaching. For the first time since the Anglo-American alliance was created in 1940, the United States and Great Britain clashed openly and angrily. Suez was thus the moment when American domination of the “special relationship,” long obvious to those who managed the connection, was displayed for the world to see and for the British to understand in all its ramifications. Having brought about this display of British weakness—in its military, diplomatic, and economic dimensions—the Suez disaster sealed the fate of Prime Minister Anthony Eden and led to his retirement soon thereafter.

The crisis, almost a non-event, had still more serious consequences worldwide.
The U.S. failure to defend British and French neocolonial pretensions in the Middle East foretold the end of empire more broadly. The trend toward decolonization had begun much earlier, and it had been abetted by a genuine antipathy to empire on the part of the United States. But during the first decade of the Cold War, the United States became more tolerant of its European allies’ desire to hold on to—or, in the French case, to reassert control over—their colonial possessions. The U.S. attitude was in fact schizophrenic, as anti-imperialism regularly jostled with indulgence toward European imperialism, producing contradictory outcomes in various settings. But Suez made clear that imperialism had no future and that American power would not routinely be deployed on behalf of a system that was destined to fail. Not surprisingly, the effective end of the French and British empires came in the decade after Suez. That meant, almost by definition, the consolidation of nationalist-led governments in much of the developing world. Gamal Abdel Nasser, the local victor in Suez, was in his pan-Arab nationalism a highly appropriate symbol of the new order of post-colonial regimes that would be independent of and often hostile to the West.

Bertjan Verbeek’s book on the decision-making process that led to the Suez crisis is both a useful contribution to the literature on how governments make decisions and a timely reminder of the continuing importance and interest of the affair. Verbeek’s starting point is “the puzzle” surrounding the British government’s disastrous decision to proceed without American support. Experts repeatedly warned Eden’s government that the Eisenhower administration was opposed to British plans to impose a settlement on Egypt and to confront Nasser after the nationalization of the Suez Canal on 26 July 1956. Eden and his closest aides chose to ignore this looming fact, and as negotiations dragged on throughout the fall they decided instead to accept a convoluted scheme concocted by the French general Maurice Challe. The idea was to arrange an Israeli attack on Egypt that would serve as the pretext for a joint Anglo-French military intervention. The aim was to reassert control over the Canal and, it was hoped, to inflict such a defeat on Nasser that he would be weakened and perhaps even toppled. The foolishness of the plan only underscores the question of why the British government went ahead when its most important ally was so clearly unwilling to back it.

To explain this puzzle, Verbeek deploys a fairly complicated method to examine “crisis decision-making” among small groups. Central to this approach is the concept of “groupthink” propounded by Irving Janis and others. When combined with decision-makers’ prior “belief systems”—which involve both a “cognitive map” and an “operational code”—groupthink inhibits the flow of information and the formation and consideration of alternative policies during a crisis. Whether groupthink occurs is dependent mainly on the impact of domestic political institutions and the organizational framework for taking decisions within the government.

In the case of Suez, Eden and his advisers shared a vision of British interests and influence that exaggerated both. Verbeek is at his best in discussing their outlook. They operated in a political system that conferred powerful advantages on political parties and their core members and leaders, thereby predisposing the leaders to adopt a “tough” stance. Eden’s government also worked in a bureaucratic environment that was both hierarchical and informal and that excessively concentrated power at or near
the top. The effect was to encourage groupthink and to insulate the highest leaders from information and arguments that could have produced a better decision. Verbeek claims to have discerned this dysfunctional pattern at work in a series of six key decisions taken before and during the crisis.

This method is not unreasonable, but it strikes this reviewer as an unnecessarily complicated way of saying something fairly simple. Eden and his allies came to political maturity secure in their faith in the British empire with its virtues and institutions. When Britain’s power to maintain the empire began to ebb, they reconciled themselves to the fact by believing that they could induce the United States to use its vast strength in ways that would prop up the British position. This was a delusion, of course, but it was surely understandable and possibly inevitable, and it was equally inevitable that a time would come when the new realities of power would be manifest in a painful fashion to those who had lost it. To that extent, the Suez puzzle is not really that puzzling at all. Still, puzzling it through again is interesting, and Verbeek admirably helps us to do that.


Reviewed by Diane Burke Fessler, Senior Editor, Primer Publishers

*Our Mothers’ War* is an insightfully researched account of what women from all walks of life were doing, writing about, and feeling during World War II. The journalist Emily Yellin found wartime letters and journals written by her mother, who at the time was working with the Red Cross in Saipan, and these inspired Yellin to produce a book about American women’s vast array of responsibilities during the war. *Our Mothers’ War* contains first-person histories through interviews, letters, and journals that highlight the roles women were called on to perform—working in defense plants, joining the military, serving as nurses in war zones all over the world, and sending their men to war. Although this reviewer was familiar with many women’s roles overseas and in the United States, the depth of research and the wide-ranging experiences discussed in Yellin’s book were enlightening.

Readers will find tales of female spies, pilots, movie stars, baseball players, politicians, prostitutes, journalists, and fictional characters created just for the war effort in this all-inclusive record of American women’s lives during the war. Among other sources, Yellin draws on first-hand accounts from the wives of scientists who created the nuclear bomb at Los Alamos. She discusses the experiences of Japanese-American women locked up as prisoners in their own country and the frustration and pride of African-American women who joined the segregated Army.

Rosie the Riveter was the name coined for women who were building ships and airplanes and producing ammunition needed for the war. Yellin shows how economics
and patriotism were the motivation behind many women’s first entry into the workforce. Recruiting housewives was a delicate prospect, reports Yellin, who notes that women hoping to work often had to contend with doubting husbands. Eventually almost 50 percent of all adult women were employed in the United States, not only in wartime industrial jobs but also in traditionally male jobs in agriculture, sales, and clerical work.

When World War II ended and the men returned to find jobs, women were asked or in some cases forced to move aside. In wartime, Yellin states, “women taking war jobs raised many issues that persisted through to the next century: equal pay, child care, equal job advancement opportunities, juggling home and work obligations” (p. 65). The book contains numerous examples of how these women had tasted a kind of freedom not known before, and “now the genie was out of the bottle” (p. 70).

Military life changed dramatically when women were admitted into the Army and Navy. Staunch opposition to non-nurse women in the military gave way, but not without strict limits on women’s options and status. Yeltsin contends that “the sort of acrobatics of compromise those paradoxical opportunities demanded required a special strength of character and state of grace, which seemed to be at the essence of every early military woman” (p. 112). The Army Nurse Corps and Navy Nurse Corps had been formed at the beginning of the twentieth century, but they suddenly found their roles greatly expanded and changed. During World War II the first flight nurses were assigned to take part in the rescue and healing of wounded American servicemen in all theaters of war. Nurses and Red Cross volunteers, more than any other groups of women, often came closer to the rigors of battle, even going to Great Britain before the United States entered the war. In the Philippines, which was attacked a day after Pearl Harbor, Army and Navy nurses were captured by the Japanese. During the three years they were imprisoned, the nurses continued to perform their duties by caring for other prisoners, both civilian and military, who were sick and dying from disease and starvation. Emaciated and weak, they all were rescued in February 1945.

Many individuals in Our Mothers’ War are credited with important roles and influence, but one name is woven throughout the book for stepping forward on many topics. Eleanor Roosevelt was able to use her status as the wife of the president to assist women who had taken jobs in the war industries. She promoted day care and after-school care for children of working mothers and took stands opposing discrimination against women, especially black women, both in the workforce and the military. Her syndicated column, “My Day,” was begun in 1935 and continued until her death.

In summing up the book, Yellin states: “Through my mother, and all the women in this book, I came to see that the small things, the less dramatic changes in the world, were sometimes the most revolutionary. And often those were the kinds of changes women effected” (p. 381).

Reviewed by Marc Gallicchio, Villanova University

In *Racing the Enemy*, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa reconstructs the triangular relationship between Japan, the United States, and the Soviet Union in the final months of World War II. In doing so he provides historians with a valuable international history of one of the most controversial subjects in Cold War historiography. Drawing on Soviet archives, Hasegawa develops the most detailed and nuanced explanation of Soviet policymaking available in English. He also adds significantly to our understanding of the dynamics of Japanese decision-making during the final weeks of the war.

After a preliminary chapter that fills in the background of the triangular relationship, Hasegawa begins his narrative in April 1945. On 1 April, the United States invaded Okinawa. Four days later, Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov announced that the Soviet Union would not renew its Neutrality Pact with Japan. The next week, on 12 April, the ailing Franklin D. Roosevelt suddenly died, making Harry S. Truman president. From that point on, according to Hasegawa, the Soviet Union raced against time to participate in the final stages of the war. At stake was the Soviet Union’s claim to the Kurile Islands, Southern Sakhalin, and the former Tsarist concessions in Manchuria, all of which were pledged to the Soviet Union as part of the secret Yalta Far Eastern Protocol. But Josif Stalin also hoped to occupy Hokkaido, Japan’s northernmost main island. The United States, for its part, commenced its own race to find a way to end the war before the Soviet Union could expand too far into northeast Asia.

Facing encirclement from within a shrinking empire, Japanese military leaders prepared for a climactic battle, hoping they could inflict such heavy losses on the invading Americans that they could force the United States to negotiate an end to the fighting on terms acceptable to Japan. At the same time, with the Japanese military’s assent, Emperor Hirohito, Prime Minister Suzuki Kantaro, and Foreign Minister Togo Shigenori sought Soviet mediation as a way out of the impending defeat. According to Hasegawa, Stalin deftly lulled Japanese officials into expecting Soviet help in reaching a negotiated settlement of the Asia-Pacific war. In the meantime, the Soviet dictator single-mindedly prepared for Soviet entry into the war.

The general outlines of this story are well known to historians. Hasegawa’s contributions are in showing how the intensely secretive Stalin coordinated his diplomatic strategy with military preparations in the Far East. Hasegawa illuminates how the internal debate over preserving Japan’s national polity (*kokutai*) stymied the surrender process. He also reveals how several second-tier bureaucrats in Tokyo intervened in the final surrender negotiations to push Japan toward peace.

Hasegawa is less persuasive in his treatment of U.S. political maneuvering during the final months of the war. He contends that the Americans were racing against time to end the war before the Soviet Union entered. But he fails to explain why Truman did not seek an early surrender by offering the Japanese a chance to keep the emperor.
Unlike many Cold War revisionists, Hasegawa doubts that such a pledge would have induced Japan to surrender. Nevertheless, he states that Truman was unwilling to modify unconditional surrender because he wanted to avenge the humiliation inflicted at Pearl Harbor.

Hasegawa shows that Truman referred to Pearl Harbor on several occasions, but otherwise the book does little to develop this point. As a consequence, the reader is left wondering why revenge for Pearl Harbor was supposedly more important to Truman than to Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and Admiral William D. Leahy, the president’s representative on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, all of whom recommended modifying unconditional surrender. Secretary of State James Byrnes also opposed modification of unconditional surrender. Hasegawa’s explanation of Byrnes’s “diabolical” thinking is even more perplexing (p. 158). At one point Hasegawa states that “in order to drop the bomb, the United States had to issue the [Potsdam Proclamation]” (p. 158). But it is not clear why this was necessary, especially considering that the Interim Committee had advised against a warning.

Hasegawa defies easy categorization as revisionist or traditionalist. Instead, in keeping with his multinational approach, he seeks to dispel what he considers to be enduring national myths about the war’s end. Although Soviet historians have portrayed Soviet intervention in the Far East as the final stage of the Great Patriotic War and the liberation of Asia from Japanese rule, Hasegawa casts Stalin’s final actions in the war as the fulfillment of an imperialist foreign policy executed with “Machiavellian ruthlessness, deviousness, and cunning” (p. 300). Similarly, Hasegawa dismisses Japan’s claims to victimhood by concluding that Japanese policymakers were more responsible for prolonging the war than the United States and Soviet Union were.

Readers of this journal will probably have little trouble accepting Hasegawa’s debunking of Japanese and Soviet postwar myths. But his treatment of the American myths will almost certainly provoke greater discussion. Using counterfactual analysis and a close reading of the events surrounding Japan’s decision to surrender, Hasegawa contends that Soviet entry into the war rather than the dropping of the two nuclear bombs is what proved decisive in compelling Japan’s surrender. According to Hasegawa, Japan’s diplomatic and military strategies depended on Soviet neutrality. Soviet entry into the war shattered those plans and left the Japanese without any recourse but surrender.

This is a useful argument to the extent that it reminds us how desperate the Japanese were for Soviet assistance in ending the war and, by implication, how firmly the Japanese military retained its grip on power. But in light of the evidence Hasegawa provides about the warped nature of Japanese decision-making in those final days, it is difficult to see how anyone can say with confidence what the Japanese government would have done if the Allies had relied only on the Soviet Union’s entry to bring an end to the war. After all, the Japanese army expected the Soviet Union to join the war at some point, most likely by April 1946. According to the historian Edward Drea, Japanese plans called for the army to conduct a fighting retreat in Manchuria while using combined forces to repulse an American invasion of the home islands. The Red Army’s brilliantly executed invasion of Manchuria caught the Japanese by surprise, but
it did not render infeasible Japan’s plans for a desperate last-ditch battle in the home islands, nor did it extinguish the desire of Japanese officers in Manchuria to keep fighting until the bitter end.

The decision to seek an armistice in Manchuria came from Tokyo. Would it have come if the nuclear bombs had not been dropped? No one can say for certain. It seems safer to conclude that the nuclear bombs and the impact of the Soviet invasion were too closely intertwined for historians to disentangle them as neatly as Hasegawa implies. Any attempt to isolate a single decisive factor in inducing Japan’s surrender invites only ahistorical speculation.

Hasegawa’s discounting of the importance of the nuclear bombs and his emphasis on the decisiveness of Soviet entry might spark yet another in a series of unproductive debates over the end of the war. But it is to be hoped that historians will pay more attention to Hasegawa’s welcome insights into Japanese and Soviet actions afforded by his international perspective.


Reviewed by John B. Haseman, Colonel U.S. Army (ret.)

*Thailand’s Secret War* is the most detailed work yet published on the intricate political and strategic issues intertwined with Thailand’s participation in World War II. Bruce Reynolds used as his primary sources a wealth of recently declassified American and British intelligence and diplomatic files. These records provide striking details on the Allies’ strategic and political goals concerning Thailand and show the direct influence of Thailand’s underground movement on American and British postwar policies. Most importantly, Reynolds’s research sheds new light on the incredibly tangled web of national policies, military strategy, war-making priorities, and huge personal egos of the key players in the region.

Thailand, the United States, the United Kingdom, and China had different strategic objectives for postwar Southeast Asia. Thai politicians were pursuing personal and national goals that were often in conflict, but the Thais were united in striving for the continued sovereignty of the only country in the region not colonized by Western powers. U.S. and British intelligence agencies had competing priorities and objectives, which resulted in a patchwork of cooperation and competition as their respective organizations and national leaders debated policy. Reynolds has skillfully untangled the skein of tangled threads by following a chronological path that begins just as World War II spread to Thailand in 1941 and ends with the surrender of Japan and the immediate postwar outcome in Thailand.

Reynolds’s exhaustive scrutiny of newly declassified documents and records, in-
terviews, and analysis allows the reader to see verbatim the reports of British and American field intelligence officers, policymakers, and military commanders. He also used communications between Thai field intelligence assets and their British and American sponsors to depict the determination of the Thais, mostly young military and civilian students who were studying abroad when the war started, to make a difference in their country’s future. Those reports make clear that Thailand’s underground anti-Japanese structure—which was late in coalescing and never entered combat against the Japanese—was a critical component in the formulation of postwar allied policies. Both the Thai underground leadership in Bangkok and U.S. policymakers in Washington, DC saw the resistance movement as the key element of support for a sovereign postwar Thailand, whereas British leaders consistently downplayed the intelligence and political importance of the Thai underground.

The personal reports and opinions expressed by American, British, and Thai diplomats and intelligence personnel in Bangkok, Washington, and London enrich the book, which follows in detail the training and dispatch of Thai trainees destined for long and frustrating waits before being able to infiltrate back into Thailand. At the national level, the policies and objectives of China, the United Kingdom, and the United States can be traced in now-declassified memoranda, diplomatic demarches, and informal instructions and reports that passed back and forth between national capitals, military headquarters in Asia, field intelligence outposts, and royal palaces in Bangkok.

Previous authors who wrote about this topic without the benefit of declassified records outlined the basic issues of Thailand in World War II. Thailand’s wartime leaders, pressured by Japan to allow its forces to use Thailand as the stepping stone to an invasion of Malaya and Singapore, declared war on the Allies. Luang Pridi Phanomyong, the regent for the absent and underage king of Thailand, began to create an underground movement against Japan. Marshal Phibun, the military ruler of Thailand at the time, played both sides of the issue. M. R. Seni Pramoj, the Thai minister in Washington, contacted the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) to start putting together the first contingent of underground agents from Thai students in the United States. A similar operation began in the United Kingdom under the Special Operations Executive (SOE).

The huge benefit of Reynolds’s book is the well-written synopses of a wealth of documentation to reveal the details behind the drama. He follows the machinations, plans, and strategic objectives of the individuals, intelligence agencies, military commanders, and national leaders in China, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Thailand in their own words. In doing so, Reynolds offers clear and detailed descriptions of actions, plans, and policies as they unfolded. The rivalry between Pridi, Seni Pramoj, and the dapper Colonel Khap—the senior member of the intelligence trainees—illuminates the personalities and their postwar personal ambitions.

Field reports make clear the frustration among the Thai trainees and their British and American sponsors at innumerable delays in launching their mission into Thailand. The OSS and SOE maneuvered to establish an intelligence network that could
obtain information about strategic Japanese operations, using widely separate bases in China, India, and Ceylon. At the same time, they had to play Chinese warlords and generals off against one another as well as the British and American administrations.

Reynolds thus offers a portrayal of diametrically opposed national objectives. The United States accepted the Thai underground movement’s role, ignored Thailand’s declaration of war, and supported a completely sovereign postwar Thailand. The United Kingdom, angered by Thailand’s complicity in the Japanese invasion of Malaya and Singapore and its acceptance of British colonial territories offered by Japan, was determined to exact revenge in the form of postwar economic and political controls. China wanted influence over Thailand through its large ethnic Chinese business community. The Thai resistance movement turned out to be the key ingredient in assuring Thailand’s postwar sovereignty. Reynolds’s immensely valuable research and use of first-hand sources provides a superb and absorbing account of how and why the Seri Thai movement achieved its goal.


Reviewed by John Springhall, University of Ulster

This outstandingly readable book is a self-assured and persuasive account of the fate of British South and Southeast Asia during the Second World War. Recent works like Ong Chit Chung’s Operation Matador: Britain’s War Plans against the Japanese (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1997), on Britain’s attempt to foil the Japanese invasion of Malaya and Singapore, Colin Smith’s Singapore Burning: Heroism and Surrender in World War II (London: Viking, 2005), Jon Latimer’s Burma: The Forgotten War (London: John Murray, 2005), and Julian Thompson’s The Imperial War Museum Book of the War in Burma (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 2005) have taken on aspects of the war in British Asia. Forgotten Armies tackles a much broader canvas.

The historians Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper of Cambridge University have eschewed the desiccated style of conventional political or military histories. Their book is a fascinating and panoramic account of how individual lives and social relations changed from the heyday of the colonial patchwork in British Asia to the rise and fall of Japan’s Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Using a wide range of official source material, from the Oriental and India Office Collection in the British Library to the National Archives of Singapore, the authors also mine the diaries, letters, memoirs, and novels written by the men and women on the ground in India, Malaya, and Burma. The latter group of sources often provide a telling anecdote or relevant phrase “to make sense of the divergent fortunes of different communities and of the infinite textures of personal experience” (p. 329). Above all, the authors have achieved the difficult task of writing a history in short, pithy sentences that combines
the personal stories of those swept along by unexpected and catastrophic events (e.g.,
the successful Japanese invasion of most of colonial Southeast Asia in 1941–1942)
without losing sight of the broader strategic aims of the British, American, and Japa-
nese high commands.

Who are the forgotten armies of the book’s title? They certainly include Britain’s
14th Army led by General Sir William Slim that eventually triumphed in Burma; the
Indian National Army of Subhas Chandra Bose that fought alongside the Japanese to
liberate India; the Burma Independence Army (later the pro-Allied Anti-Fascist Peo-
ple’s Freedom League) of nationalist Aung San, the father of today’s courageous Bur-
mese democracy activist, Aung San Suu Kyi; the largely Chinese Communist Malayan
Peoples’ Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) led by Chin Peng; and even the huge forces
thrown by the Japanese against India in 1942. Accordingly, this book spans a huge ter-
ritory from India to Malaya, the heart of the British Empire in the East, focusing pri-
marily on the connected crescent of land between Calcutta and Singapore that was the
pivot of the fighting. As the authors remind us, by the summer of 1941, when both
Britain and the Soviet Union were distracted by the war against Germany, the Japa-
nese had to break out of what they called “the ABCD encirclement.” The initials re-
ferred to America, Britain, China, and the Dutch East Indies. In building an even bigger
empire in Asia, Japan’s military leaders planned to finish off the Nationalist
Chinese and seize the oil of the Dutch East Indies, along with the mineral resources
and rubber of French Indo-China and British Malaya.

Yet this “collapsing house of cards” was to lead to much more than a war between
the British, Americans, and Japanese. It would also see a series of bloody civil wars
among the Indians, Burmese, and Malayans, the consequences of which reverberated
into the postwar world. In Burma alone, the Allies had somehow to mobilize the resis-
tance of the various hill tribes in the north, most of whom were hostile to the majority
Burmese who in turn disliked their Indian and Chinese populations. All of them,
however, were increasingly united against the brutal Japanese occupation. The collabor-
ationist Burmese politician Ba Maw was, the authors tell us, “inordinately im-
pressed by his own good looks and charm” (p. 499). The most elusive figure in occu-
pied Malaya was the Communist leader Lai Teck, a mysterious Vietnamese who, “like
the treacherous villain in a Chinese opera” (p. 54), appears to have been an agent of
the British Special Branch. In a divided Malaya, with its combined Chinese and In-
dian populations threatening to overtake indigenous Malays, Chin Peng’s Communist
MPAJA guerilla fighters probably killed more Nationalist Chinese in the Guomin-
dang Overseas Chinese Anti-Japanese Army than they did Japanese soldiers.

Some interesting findings emerge from the mass of documentary evidence, al-
though the book has no concluding chapter as such. For example, the authors suggest
that the cautious attitude of the United States in 1940–1941 was a serious constraint
on British strategic planning in Southeast Asia. The authors take due note of the poli-
tics of racial separation enforced by the arrogant British—“British Malaya was built
on a viciously insidious form of apartheid” (p. 62)—and in Burma gave some offense
to the Americans, even though their own army was rigidly segregated along racial
lines. The roles of trade, business, and commercial sex receive greater attention here
than in most military histories. For example, the book includes sections on brothels in Singapore and Calcutta. Equal space is also devoted to the fate of non-white peoples during the war—not only the inmates of Singapore’s Changi Prison but also the terrible 1942 famine in Bengal and uncounted Asian deaths on the Thailand-Burma railway.

Moreover, the India National Army, the MPAJA, and the Burma Independence Army are all seen as progenitors of future decolonization in South and Southeast Asia. “Myriad units of the forgotten armies reforged themselves into the armies of militant small nationalisms... [as the British temporarily regained and finally relinquished their long-lived dream of an eastern empire” (p. 464). Ultimately, after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the British military temporarily ruled a large slice of Asia recovered from the Japanese, ranging from the borders of Bengal and Assam to Singapore and even to south China, the Dutch East Indies, and French Indo-China. One hopes that these two enterprising and ambitious historians will next embark on a new history of Earl Mountbatten’s multifarious and vexatious South East Asia Command from 1944 to 1946.


Reviewed by Darren Hawkins, Brigham Young University

In this remarkable and inspiring book, Paul Gordon Lauren traces the history of the struggle for international human rights norms from ancient religious and philosophical thinkers to the recent creation of the International Criminal Court. Remarkably, the book offers a coherent analytical narrative covering hundreds of years of history yet consistently focusing on the common threads of human rights visionaries, reactionary forces, the human revulsion to violence, and technological change. The inspiring part comes from Lauren’s consideration of the historical landscape, pointing out how far humanity has come and suggesting that progress is the result of “visions,” or fervently held and actively pursued views on the inherent dignity and worth of individuals.

All of these claims are of course open to contestation, but the last is particularly likely to raise pointed responses from skeptics and “realists.” Critics would certainly ask the right question: Can we really say that international human rights norms are the result of activists who articulate beautiful visions of the human condition and agitate for improvement? Lauren does a fine job marshaling evidence on behalf of this proposition. He traces human rights ideas articulated not only by visionaries like Mahatma Gandhi but also by powerful individuals like Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, providing marvelous detail about their views. Readers prone to thinking that human rights rhetoric is a recent addition to state discourse will be surprised at the consistency with which it has surfaced historically. Lauren does stretch the argu-
ment a bit far, but not beyond the breaking point. Rare is the book that can find common ground between Karl Marx, Confucius, and King Hammurabi, yet Lauren succeeds in identifying common threads of concern for the disempowered.

As Lauren realizes, describing commonalities among visions of a just society are not sufficient to demonstrate the influence of those visions. As a result, Lauren also shows how disempowered individuals and states have latched on to that rhetoric to demand rights. His case is strongest when he discusses colonized peoples and their use of the rhetoric of powerful states to gain independence. Additionally, Lauren makes a convincing case that most advances in human rights norms have occurred in response to appalling episodes of violence that, once uncovered, shock the conscience of most observers.

Of course, skeptics will not be persuaded so easily. One problem is the book’s tendency to portray the struggle for human rights in black-and-white terms. Too often here, actors are presented as either pure humanitarian visionaries or unrepentant, violent reactionaries. Thus, Lauren’s framework does not fit well with complex, flesh-and-blood individuals like Woodrow Wilson, torn asunder by conflicting ideas and political realities. The book notes these contradictions, as when Wilson untiringly promoted democracy yet single-handedly quashed efforts to promote minority rights in the League of Nations charter. Yet the analytical frame does not accommodate these contradictions well. As a result, some puzzles arise along the way. For example, why would states like South Africa, which was manifestly repressive in the 1940s, nevertheless argue that human rights should be included in the United Nations Charter? It seems unlikely that South Africa was motivated by moralistic visions, and Lauren later notes how South Africa really did not seem to mean anything it said. How then should we understand the progress of human rights at the hands of such states?

Much of the time, no doubt, the motives of states and other actors are mixed. Even powerful humanitarian visions and human revulsion to violence are insufficient. States sometimes require baser motives to act on behalf of human rights, perhaps in protecting their nationals elsewhere, perhaps in shaming others or in avoiding shame themselves. Lauren does not ignore these elements and should be commended for sticking to his themes so well. Yet like many of the best books, this one offers opportunities for further research. Even if skeptics are not satisfied, they should feel sufficiently challenged to identify some of these mixed motives and demonstrate how they play out. In this regard, Lauren makes several references to the need for “political will.” Unfortunately, this term is a slippery concept that raises as many questions as it answers. The next step is to pin down that “will”: how and when does it come and go? Many scholars have been trying to answer this question, and if the success of a book lies in motivating others to learn more, Lauren’s book should be a winner.

The need for a second edition of the book is less clear, however. Those who already possess the first edition will find little different. Those who have not read the book before can fruitfully profit from either edition. Perhaps the most important benefits of a second edition are to remind us of the importance of this work and to introduce others to it. Otherwise, the new material here is minimal. Several pages give only a fairly cursory look at how international human rights norms have changed in
the past five years. Lauren shows that these norms change only gradually, a small step or two at a time. Even key events like the September 2001 terrorist attacks have few discernible short-run effects, though the long-term gradual accretion of human rights norms is substantial. In an area in which change is measured in decades and centuries, even the most striking steps forward, such as the arrest of former strongman Augusto Pinochet, are but small additions to the overall human rights effort and are often partly eroded by countervailing forces. To his credit, Lauren puts these events in appropriate historical perspective and refuses to overplay his hand.

In short, this is an accessible, well-written book that can profitably be read by a wide array of people interested in the history of the human rights struggle. Activists, scholars, policymakers, and the ever-elusive general reader should all find useful and even inspirational information within its pages. It is a landmark work likely to stay relevant for some time to come.

✣✣✣


Reviewed by Andrew Wiest, The University of Southern Mississippi

Howard B. Schaffer, the director of studies at the Institute of Diplomacy at Georgetown University and former U.S. ambassador to Bangladesh, combines solid research and a nuanced understanding of diplomatic history in his *Ellsworth Bunker: Global Troubleshooter, Vietnam Hawk*, which serves as his tribute to one of America’s most successful modern diplomats. Bunker began what he thought would be a short foray into diplomacy at the behest of his old Yale University rowing coach, Secretary of State Dean Acheson. Beginning as ambassador to Juan Peron’s Argentina, Bunker went on to serve as ambassador in Italy, India, and Vietnam. Additionally, Bunker often served as principal negotiator in world trouble spots, including Indonesia, the Dominican Republic, Yemen, and Panama. Thus Bunker’s unique career, working under six presidents in the oft ignored middle ranks of the diplomatic hierarchy, is a valuable lens through which to view the intricate workings of American diplomacy.

Schaffer provides a flattering look at Bunker’s life and work and often includes vignettes that give the often impersonal art of diplomacy a more human face. The resulting portrait is a fascinating case study of an old-style American diplomat at work. Apart from being a useful study of the practicalities involved in diplomacy and negotiations, *Global Troubleshooter, Vietnam Hawk* also provides solid new history concerning many of the central events of the latter half of the twentieth century, ranging from the ticklish negotiations between the Dutch and Indonesia regarding the future of West New Guinea to the shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East. At the risk of slighting some of Bunker’s accomplishments, it is appropriate here to focus on three of his most important diplomatic assignments.

It fell to Bunker, in his position as ambassador to the Organization of American
States, to negotiate a solution to the 1965 crisis in the Dominican Republic. He was the perfect choice and proved to be a calming influence amid the stormy and complex Latin American and U.S. efforts to bring peace to the island nation. Bunker served as the leader of a hemispheric negotiating team, often having to quell the fears of his Latin American counterparts, and was at his most forceful in weaving the web of negotiations and veiled threats that brought the crisis to an end. The mission was in some ways the high point of Bunker’s career. His diplomatic acumen, honed in years of careful negotiations, was critical to achieving a successful conclusion. Schaffer’s account of the affair is a model of careful and well-written diplomatic history and provides an important new source regarding the crisis itself.

For many, Bunker’s lengthy stint as ambassador to Vietnam, from 1967 to 1973, will be of greatest interest. During this critical and difficult period Bunker rarely took any initiative, and his importance to policymaking in Vietnam seems only tangential. In Schaffer’s words: “Unlike either of his two immediate predecessors as ambassador to Saigon, the Republican politician [Henry Cabot] Lodge and General Maxwell Taylor . . . Bunker did not have an important political or military constituency. He was an archetypal patriot with no policy axe to grind, and [Lyndon] Johnson could confidently expect that he would work loyally with the administration as it faced the uncertainties of the Vietnam War” (p. 166). Bunker did not try to shape events in Vietnam, as Lodge and Taylor had. Instead, he merely attempted to implement the will of first Johnson and then Richard Nixon.

Bunker was, as the subtitle of the book implies, a true supporter of U.S. efforts in Vietnam and saw it as his mission to win the sometimes recalcitrant South Vietnamese over to full support for American goals in the conflict. Specifically, Bunker spent a great deal of time trying to push the South Vietnamese toward truly democratic reform, an effort that met with only superficial success. His main effect on the unfolding history of the conflict came from the steady stream of confident appraisals of the situation in South Vietnam he sent to his superiors in Washington. He lauded the success of Vietnamization and offered rosy assessments of the failed South Vietnamese invasion of Laos in 1971. Although Schaffer’s treatment of Bunker’s Vietnam years is tempered by his admiration for the diplomat and his work, Schaffer is able to admit that Bunker blinded himself to many of the ills that beset the American war effort. In the revealing words of John Nash, a dissident political officer in Bunker’s embassy, “Bunker and other senior officers were unable to comprehend what was happening [in South Vietnam]. . . . It was as if a computer was screening out information that was not in accord with desired results” (p. 228).

Ellsworth Bunker: Global Troubleshooter, Vietnam Hawk closes with an account of Bunker’s later years in which he headed the troubled and lengthy negotiations over the Panama Canal. Once again, readers see Bunker at his best, using his calm demeanor to overcome seemingly insurmountable difficulties both in the negotiating process and in winning reluctant congressional and public support for the compromise agreement. Schaffer provides a careful analysis of the torturous negotiations and provides historians with an intimate look at what is an often ignored but important topic. The negotiations over the Panama Canal were a fitting conclusion to Bunker’s diplomatic ca-
reer, illuminating his strengths and weaknesses. Bunker was at his best serving as a negotiator-diplomat charged with implementing American policy and was less effective in a situation like Vietnam, where he was enlisted to provide advice about American policy in a time of flux. Schaffer’s treatment of Bunker is balanced and fair and sheds historical light on the dark corners of mid-level American diplomacy in the latter half of the twentieth century. *Ellsworth Bunker: Global Troubleshooter, Vietnam Hawk* is essential reading for historians or diplomats who wish to gain a fuller understanding of that troubled era.