
Reviewed by Ira Chernus, *University of Colorado at Boulder*

“The making of words is indeed an act, not a business distinct from the hard, behavioral part of politics,” Daniel Rodgers has written. “Political talk is political action of a particular, often powerful, sort.” This might well be the motto of Denise Bostdorff, a fine representative of a group of scholars who deserve much more attention than they often receive: scholars of rhetoric who have turned their skills to illuminating the verbal dimension of the Cold War.

As Bostdorff points out in her introduction, policymakers respond to reality as they see it, and the way they see it depends largely on the way they describe it and hear it described by others. Hence, there is no way to separate the verbal from all the other dimensions that make up the full picture of Cold War history.

*Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine* offers a detailed study of one crucial moment in that history, 12 March 1947, when a less-than-healthy President Harry S. Truman stood before Congress and pronounced what Bostdorff calls his credo: “I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.”

Truman used these words to build support for his plan to give several hundred million dollars to the governments of Greece and Turkey, helping them to stave off opponents who the administration believed were Communists. The third point of Truman’s credo, “I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid,” masked the true aim: giving massive military aid.

Bostdorff sets the stage for this policy in her first chapter, tracing the gradual emergence of Cold War tensions from 1945 to 1947. Historians will not find much new here, though no doubt some will find points to disagree with. But all should appreciate her skillful demonstration that speeches and other public words played a central role (in interaction with other factors) in raising Cold War tensions. The words of others could be all the more influential, Bostdorff notes, because Truman remained so ambivalent and thus relatively silent.

Bostdorff then reconstructs the bureaucratic processes that gave rise to the speech, showing it as the culmination of “a concerted crisis campaign” (p. 13) orchestrated by the newly influential public relations units within the State Department.

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Francis Russell, director of the department’s Office of Public Affairs, deserves much credit for developing the central passages in the Truman Doctrine speech.

As Bostdorff reconstructs key meetings among Truman, his advisers, and members of Congress, she challenges some widely held views. Dean Acheson played a less decisive role than has been assumed, she argues. Because Senator Arthur Vandenberg’s famous advice to Truman to “scare hell out of the country” appears in only one source—Eric F. Goldman, *The Crucial Decade—and After: America 1945–1960* (New York: Vintage, 1961)—no one will ever know whether he actually said it.

The center of the book is a lengthy reading of the text itself, showing how a scholar of rhetoric can tease out subtleties of wording and phrasing that others might easily miss. Most illuminating is the analysis of a cluster of metaphors, all combining to reinforce the image of the “free world” as a container that had to be protected against change. Containment was largely a verbal process of promising “security from the fears of chaos, disease, and violation” (p. 130).

But, as it turned out, such words merely compounded the sense of insecurity. “The Truman Doctrine speech must be judged unwise,” Bostdorff rightly concludes, because it “heightened Americans’ fears” (pp. 151–152). The speech also laid the groundwork for the Marshall Plan, she argues, and the combination of the two stoked Soviet leaders’ fears and thus their assertiveness, which in turn ratcheted up U.S. fears. Europe was divided into two huge spheres of influence, and the two great powers settled into a long era of mutually insecure Cold War. At home, Truman’s speech furthered the anxiety-ridden climate of anti-Communism that culminated in McCarthyism.

More broadly, the speech’s stark bipolar language helped to lock the U.S. government and public into the simplistic dualistic framework through which they would see the world for decades. Its “depiction of threatening scenes, its promotion of insecurity, and its insistence that the United States must act immediately would recur on a regular basis in the foreign policy rhetoric of the Cold War presidents who followed Truman” (p. 147). Even beyond the Cold War, “In the rhetoric of the war on terror, the reverberations of the Truman Doctrine speech continue to be felt” (p. 152), Bostdorff claims in the last sentence of the book.

The language of crisis and fear has been so central in U.S. political life for so long, and remains so deeply ingrained, that the United States can best be called not a national security state but a national insecurity state.

When did that state of insecurity begin? On this point Bostdorff’s work is open to question. She begins her sketch of the historical context only after the end of World War II, but almost all of Truman’s aides who created the doctrine that bears his name had served the man he replaced: Franklin D. Roosevelt. Although Bostdorff notes that the equation of fascism and Communism helped to generate the crisis atmosphere of 1947, she might have dug back further and found nearly all the rhetorical features so central to the Truman Doctrine and the national insecurity state already present in Roosevelt’s campaign to aid Britain at the beginning of the 1940s.

The real achievement of the Truman administration was to persuade the public...
that aiding the victims of totalitarianism was not a one-time affair; that the chief ideological enemy could rise up and inspire fear in many guises; and that the United States would always have to be prepared to find and defeat new foes. It is worth noting, however, that Roosevelt had said much the same thing several years earlier. Thus the Truman Doctrine was not the rhetorical starting point for the state of national insecurity. What it did represent, however, was a major step deeper into that state.


Reviewed by Raymond L. Garthoff, Brookings Institution (retired)

Several years ago, in the Spring 2004 issue of the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, I made a plea for more attention to the roles of intelligence activities and assessments in historiography of the Cold War. Gordon Barrass, who served as chief of the Assessments Staff of the Cabinet Office in London and was a member of Great Britain’s Joint Intelligence Committee in the latter Cold War years, has now provided a substantial contribution toward that end—a contribution foreshadowed in the subtitle of his book. In seeking to deal in some 400 pages with the Cold War as a whole, he has necessarily had to be selective in his coverage but has sought to address large questions: “Why did [the Cold War] start? Why did it last as long as it did? And why did it end the way it did?” (p. 3). He seeks to deal with these questions throughout and then turns, in a brief concluding chapter, to what he sees as five myths about the Cold War.

Barrass has based his account on a wide selection of published sources, including some using recently available archival materials, with substantial use also of roughly 100 interviews he conducted with former Soviet officials and Western specialists on Soviet affairs and the Cold War. This approach has advantages but also hazards. On the whole, his approach has permitted him to provide a more lively and informative study, although regrettably the book contains errors that were originally made in works cited by the author or that are the fault of the author alone.

Barrass draws attention to intelligence assessments and the role of intelligence—and military strategic considerations—particularly in dealing with Western, but also Soviet, policies in Europe in the last decade of what he calls the Great Cold War. Barrass’s book is, in some respects, more realistic than many accounts, although curiously he sometimes slights the diplomatic dimension. He has on the whole a good feel for the interaction of the two sides. Barrass is well aware of the importance of adversaries’ perceptions and misperceptions, while also noting that sometimes adversaries are in conflict because of accurate perceptions of the objectives of the other side—as in the cases of both Iosif Stalin and Harry Truman (an instance he correctly cites).

The first myth about the Cold War that Barrass says “needs to be slain” is that “the Soviet Union was not ever a real threat to the West” (p. 401). He contends that,
on the contrary, the USSR was a “serious threat”—and that unless such a threat was recognized, Western policymakers could not devise and carry out a necessary strategy, such as containment in the case of the Great Cold War. I would not disagree with the argument that the rationale for a strategy must be sufficiently convincing to gain necessary public support for that strategy and that the rationale must be, as Dean Acheson said, “clearer than the truth.” But that is different from an intelligence assessment that the Soviet Union posed a serious threat. I would also not disagree with the judgment that the Soviet Union’s policies posed a serious geopolitical threat that needed to be countered and contained, but Barrass should have been more precise. If the question is whether the Soviet Union ever posed a direct threat of launching a war against the West, the evidence makes clear that there was never such a threat. There were, to be sure, serious dangers that a large-scale war might break out through accidental or unauthorized actions. Some people also believed that Soviet-controlled global Communism, via its industrial buildup, political discipline, and even ideological appeal, posed “a serious threat,” but I am sure that is not what Barrass meant to reaffirm. He does not explain what threat he regards as having been serious, but not seen as such.

Barrass’s second “troubling” myth is the belief that “détente could have worked in the sixties and seventies” (p. 402). He argues that “the archives are rich in material showing that at that stage the Soviet Union was still hoping to prevail over the United States.” But the United States also was hoping to prevail, and the leaders on both sides knew perfectly well that détente did not mean an end to an adversarial relationship, but only a lessening of tensions in the confrontation to serve mutual security interests. Détente did work in the 1960s and 1970s, even though it eventually collapsed. Barrass clinches his puncturing of this “myth” by saying that “Détente only became feasible under [Mikhail] Gorbachev.” Arguably, détente did result from Reagan’s revised policy approach in his second term. But détente did not result from Gorbachev’s new thinking. On the contrary, Gorbachev opposed merely cushioning the confrontation and successfully pressed for the ambitious goal of an end to the adversarial relationship.

Barrass’s third “distorting” myth is the notion that “the United States prevailed because it was strong, its people were united and its allies supportive” (pp. 5, 403). The proposition he is criticizing here is indeed too simple to be an adequate explanation for the outcome of the Cold War, but in an oversimplified way it seems valid rather than a myth. Barrass notes the many vicissitudes of the contest and the difficulties that U.S. leaders had in pursuing certain policies in the face of weak U.S. public or allied support. Thus, although the proposition he purports to debunk is inadequate as an explanation for the outcome of the Cold War, it is far from a myth.

The fourth myth is stated as “the Soviet collapse had nothing to do with outside pressure” (p. 5). I assume what he means is that outside pressure had nothing to do with the Soviet collapse. Barrass states as his own counterview: “The lesson for the West, I feel, is that the Soviet Union did not come to an end as a result of sharp and
powerful pressures from outside, but as a result of external ones building up over many years that created real incentives for change” (p. 404). With the change of a single word—“external” to “internal”—I would agree with this view. Some outside influences, especially increased interaction with the West under détente and also Soviet reactions in the arms race, contributed to the outcome, but the main causes were the manifest failures of the authoritarian centralized Soviet economic and political system (and its ideological inspiration)—which Barrass curiously does not even mention.

His fifth and last myth really is a myth: “that [Ronald] Reagan played a far greater part than Gorbachev did in ending the Cold War” (p. 404). Only a Gorbachev could have used the power of General Secretary of the Communist Party to dismantle the Soviet political and economic system and make unilateral and concessionary steps to end the Cold War.

Barrass includes a number of useful observations on Soviet and U.S. intelligence assessments of the adversary (including the reciprocal demonizing of the adversary and the need for empathy, although without using that word). Barrass also notes the value of arms control negotiations and summit meetings (which were, although he does not explicitly say so, more important than formal intelligence assessments in forming leaders’ understandings of the adversary).

One forward-looking conclusion that Barrass reaches is dubious. He comments: “Ensuring that nuclear deterrence continues to work will be one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century” (p. 374). Preventing nuclear war will surely remain a supreme objective and challenge. But as Barrass’s book makes clear, nuclear deterrence, despite its contribution in the Cold War, also created some dangerous risks. More importantly, in the absence of an overriding bipolar confrontation, the world nowadays faces other, arguably more important, challenges in seeking to prevent nuclear war, including the need to curb nuclear proliferation, ensure control of nuclear arsenals and materials, continue nuclear arms reductions and even possible nuclear disarmament, and use diplomatic channels to prevent or resolve international conflicts and defuse threats from international terrorism and the dangers of failed states. There are, of course, also formidable global economic, ecological, climate, resource and population challenges.

Barrass makes very few even indirect references to his experience in the Cabinet Office in the 1980s. In only one instance, and not one that he relates to that experience, does he exhibit a biased judgment. He remarks, apropos of the tragic Soviet shooting down of a trespassing South Korean airliner in 1983, “By brilliantly exploiting the downing of KAL 007 the Reagan Administration did much to discredit the peace movement. . . . This made it possible for more West European politicians to support the deployment of Euro missiles—the very issue in the battle of wills with Moscow” (p. 297). Yes, but this “brilliant exploitation,” including many extreme statements by President Reagan and his administration blaming the Soviet Union for deliberate “murder,” an “atrocit,” a “massacre,” “an inexcusable art of brutality,” and a “crime against humanity,” came after U.S. intelligence had established that the Soviet decision was made not by Soviet leaders in Moscow but by regional Soviet command-
ers in the Far East and that the Soviet air defense force had not established that the intruder was a civilian airliner as had been charged. The U.S. reaction prompted Yurii Andropov to describe the whole KAL affair as “a sophisticated provocation organized by the U.S. special [i.e., intelligence] services” and as “extreme adventurism in policy.” The Soviet Union may have been inexcusable in its handling of the intrusion and its subsequent stonewalling, but the U.S. reaction was hardly a “brilliant exploitation” of the tragedy, nor a way to disabuse Moscow of its paranoia about U.S. covert military reconnaissance operations. I cite this example because it is so inconsistent with Barrass’s repeated calls for dispassionate assessment.

In other cases involving Barrass’s evaluation of the effects of an event, he does not give sufficient weight to significant secondary effects. For example, in discussing the impact of the collapse of a planned summit between Dwight Eisenhower and Nikita Khrushchev in Paris in May 1960 after the Soviet shoot-down of an American U-2 reconnaissance airplane over central Russia, Barrass brushes aside the collapse of the meeting because “it did not matter, as Eisenhower had nothing of substance to offer on Germany anyway” (p. 126). Nor, Barrass might have added, did Khrushchev. But that was not the only issue to be discussed. The failure of the summit even to occur, much less to discuss pending issues, not only forestalled what would have been only the second four-power postwar summit but also had other adverse consequences. Among other things, it meant the cancellation of the impending unprecedented visit of a U.S. president to Moscow and the freezing of Soviet-American relations until the advent of a new U.S. administration.

Barrass’s book is generally well grounded in available information and interpretation of events. But unfortunately it is marred by numerous errors, although only a small number affect significant issues. Most are owing to errors by others assumed by Barrass to be well-informed. Some, however, display an occasional lapse in Barrass’s use of the sources. He states that by 1952 the United States had 800 nuclear weapons (fine; 832 in mid-1952), “more than twice the number that, one year earlier, the Soviet General Staff had assumed were needed to destroy the Soviet Union” (p. 72). But the Soviet General Staff had made no such estimate. Barrass cites a reliable study as his source—David Holloway’s Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939–1956 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 240. But Holloway in fact reports no such thing. He does state that an article in the Soviet General Staff journal Military Thought in October 1951 had “implied” that more than 330 nuclear bombs would be needed to destroy the Soviet Union’s capability to wage war. However, the source Holloway cites is an article in Military Thought in October 1949 by a Colonel Fedorov, who provides not a Soviet General Staff judgment on the number of nuclear weapons needed to destroy the Soviet Union, but a discussion of U.S. strategic bombing during World War II in which he claims that “the American press” estimated that the total U.S. strategic bombing of Germany with conventional bombs was about equal in effectiveness to 330 nuclear bombs yet had not destroyed Germany’s economic potential. Holloway is in error in stating, in the body of his text, that the article appeared in October 1951, but he correctly states that the reference to 330 nuclear
bombs pertains to the U.S. wartime bombing equivalent, and he correctly cites in his footnote (p. 420) that the article was published in *Military Thought* in October 1949, not October 1951.

A few sentences later, Barrass states (with no source reference) that by late 1952 Stalin had “amassed about seventy atomic bombs.” Although no official Soviet or Russian source has disclosed the precise size of the Soviet nuclear stockpile in 1952, information now available suggests that the stockpile consisted of roughly twenty bombs at the time (Holloway estimates less than 50 even by mid-1953). Seventy represents not what the Soviet Union had by late 1952 but what U.S. intelligence at the time estimated. (In November 1952, the Central Intelligence Agency overestimated that the Soviet stockpile would reach about 100, in a range of 50–200, by mid-1953. Barrass’s estimate of roughly 70 by late 1952 is thus consistent with that estimate.)

These are minor flaws, as are a dozen or so errors of fact—for example:

- Robert McNamara was not “recently retired” when he made his September 1967 speech on the mad momentum of the arms race (p. 162);
- No copies of the Clifford-Elsey report were ever distributed (p. 47);
- Khrushchev later adopted the views of Georgii Malenkov on mutual nuclear deterrence, not those of Vyacheslav Molotov—doubtless a serious editorial error (p. 92);
- Soviet Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin did not say in 1967 that the Soviet Union would not agree to ban antiballistic missile (ABM) systems—he objected on principle to focusing on limiting defensive and not offensive arms (p. 163);
- The Soviet Union did not move ahead in planning the invasion of Afghanistan after the Herat mutiny killed Soviet advisers in the spring of 1979—in fact the Soviet Politburo definitely decided then not to send in troops; the decision to plan for an invasion was not made until after Hafizullah Amin executed Nur Taraki in September 1979 (p. 226);
- The United States did build on ABM complex after 1972 but soon deactivated it (p. 177);
- The Interim Agreement on Strategic Offensive Arms in 1972 was not a treaty (pp. 177–178);
- The Soviet Union had made clear in the strategic arms negotiations that the follow-on Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) would be larger than the existing “light” ICBM and had rejected U.S. efforts to define “light” missiles as no larger than the USSR’s existing smaller ICBM (p. 178);
- Khrushchev in 1962 got the idea of a trade-off of U.S. missiles in Turkey for Soviet missiles in Cuba not from Walter Lippmann but from Robert Kennedy—earlier and more authoritatively (p. 142);
- The U-2 that was shot down over Cuba on 27 October 1962 would not have shown the Kennedy administration that Soviet tactical nuclear weapons were deployed within range of the U.S. base at Guantánamo Bay; even
if the cruise missiles in that region had been detected, they were at that time erroneously believed in Washington to be a reserve of non-nuclear coastal defense missiles (p. 142), and the antiship Soviet coastal defense missiles were in fact correctly known not to be nuclear-capable—contrary to what Barrass states (p. 139);

• Satellite photoreconnaissance did make clear that the Soviet ICBM deployment was much slower and smaller than previously estimated, but not (as Barrass claims) “after the Berlin crisis ended” (pp. 390–391) but in the period June–September 1961, when the crisis was still heating up; and

• Marshal Dmitrii Yazov in 1962 was not in command of the tactical nuclear missiles in Cuba facing Guantánamo Bay—then- Colonel Yazov was in command of one of the four ground forces regiments in Cuba, not commanding any missiles within range of the U.S. base (p. 365).

Finally, President John F. Kennedy did not find Oleg Penkovsky’s information about the firing time for Soviet medium-range missiles “most valuable” in the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, and this information is not what “save[d Kennedy] from being pushed into launching air attacks against the sites” (p. 391). Penkovsky’s detailed documentary material on the SS-4 missile system was a valuable adjunct to the aerial photography, but Kennedy saw the composite intelligence analysis of the SS-4 missile system, not anything that represented or was identified as Penkovsky’s information. Moreover, although this information was valuable, the key factor in the crisis was the photographic evidence of the state of site activation achieved, not the time required for firing. Kennedy held back from a decision to launch an air strike even as the intelligence community concluded that the sites were rapidly approaching operational readiness and then being activated. He decided on more fundamental grounds not to launch an air strike, including the military chiefs’ conclusion that they could not guarantee that a strike would destroy all the missiles and launchers—regardless of the time required to fire them.

On the whole, Barrass succeeds in taking account of Soviet as well as Western concerns about the intentions and capabilities of the adversary. In some instances, however, he fails to do so. For example, in one situation to which Barrass rightly gives considerable attention—the deployment of the Soviet SS-20 intermediate-range nuclear missiles facing Europe and the later deployment by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe facing the Soviet Union—he examines the strategic and political considerations on both sides but fails to mention the most important aspect of the Soviet assessment. He notes that the Pershing IIs did not have the range to strike the critical political and military command-and-control centers in the Moscow area. Even assuming that this is true, as NATO contended, Soviet leaders claimed that these missiles did pose a serious threat to Moscow, and all the available evidence indicates that they really believed this to be true. Moreover, they saw this not only as posing a serious military threat to Soviet assured deterrence, but also as reflecting ominous Western intentions.
In the concluding section of the book, Barrass offers ten pages of comments on the role of intelligence. He offers numerous sound observations, particularly on Soviet intelligence, but they are only loosely related to his account. On only one point do I disagree with his observation: a judgment that the Soviet foreign intelligence service provided better intelligence reporting than the Soviet Foreign Ministry, a judgment not supported by his own account or by a more fully researched comparison. He rightly criticizes Soviet intelligence analysis and assessments in general, but he does not explicitly evaluate the Western counterpart.

*The Great Cold War* does not answer all questions about its vast subject, but it helps to answer some and to raise others, and that makes it a useful contribution to Cold War studies.

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Reviewed by Erez Manela, Harvard University

The field of Cold War history has been undergoing a salutary expansion recently, as more scholars have explored themes, regions, and topics that until recently had been relegated to the margins of the literature. One aspect of this expansion has been the increasing attention paid to countries and regions in the global South, with the most prominent recent example of this trend being Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Another facet, related to the first, is the growth of international development and modernization programs as a topic of study well summarized recently in a special issue of *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (June 2009), especially in the opening essay by David C. Engerman and Corinna R. Unger, “Introduction: Toward a Global History of Modernization” (pp. 3–21). This shift has meant that we have slowly but surely been evolving from a view of Cold War history as one that unfolded primarily along an East-West axis—with the United States and the Soviet Union at either end and Europe firmly at its center—toward a multifaceted perspective that accords increasing importance to North-South interactions.

Kristin Ahlberg’s new book makes a useful contribution to this literature. Her topic is the history of the U.S. international food aid program, which first emerged under Dwight D. Eisenhower and reached its peak during the administration of Lyndon Johnson. The book makes two main points. First, it outlines how international food aid, codified in 1954 in U.S. Public Law 480, evolved from a program driven primarily by domestic pressures to dispose of surplus agricultural production to one that became, by the mid-1960s, a conscious and important component of U.S. foreign policy. The second point concerns the complexity of the motivations of U.S. officials, particularly of Johnson himself. As Ahlberg convincingly shows, Johnson’s
support for the Food for Peace program was shaped by a humanitarian desire to globalize the Great Society and fight hunger worldwide and, at the same time, by a hard-nosed if usually unsuccessful effort to use food aid to influence the policies of recipient countries.

Ahlberg proceeds methodically, opening with three chapters that trace the development of U.S. food aid from its origins in the 1950s as a program to unload surplus grains through the maturation of the program in the 1960s under John F. Kennedy (who renamed the program Food for Peace) and especially under Johnson, as it became a full-fledged component of U.S. foreign policy. Having established this general framework, she then proceeds to explore the diverse contexts and uses of the program in three case study chapters, looking at the role of the Food for Peace program in U.S. relations with India, Israel, and South Vietnam from 1964 to 1968. Motivations and results, she finds, varied considerably across these cases. In India, Johnson sought to use the program to alleviate hunger but also kept food aid on a “short tether” in a largely futile attempt to influence Indian foreign policy in America’s favor. Israel presents another picture entirely. U.S. food aid to Israel had no humanitarian justification and served instead as a form of indirect military assistance, freeing Israeli funds for arms purchases. South Vietnam was different yet again, with food aid serving as an important part of the failed U.S. effort to win the “hearts and minds” of the Vietnamese people.

In focusing on international development and U.S. policy in the Third World, Transplanting the Great Society sits at the cutting edge of current trends in Cold War history. In other ways, however, the book hews to a more traditional path. The scope of its interest is essentially limited to tracing the formation of U.S. policy, and its research, though prodigious, is largely confined to U.S. official documents. Thus, readers can learn quite a bit about the details of the legislative and political maneuvers that shaped food aid policy, but relatively little about how that policy was implemented on the ground or precisely what difference it made in the lives of the people it was intended to help. This perspective detracts relatively little from the book’s central thesis, though the limitations of the Washington-centered approach become apparent when, for example, Ahlberg contends that Johnson’s “short tether” policy on food aid to India helped promote the “green revolution” in Indian agriculture. This is a plausible argument but not one that can be convincingly made without venturing beyond U.S. sources.

With this book, Ahlberg has illuminated a neglected aspect of U.S. foreign policy under Johnson and made an important contribution to the history of international development in the 1960s. One suspects, however, that this book will spur at least some readers to wonder what the history of international food aid might look like if one ventured beyond the confines of Pennsylvania Avenue and more thoroughly examined the roles of actors other than Washington officials, whether they be other governments, international bodies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (which Ahlberg briefly mentions), non-governmental activists and organizations, or the impoverished individuals who were on the receiving end of U.S. aid. The challenges of
attempting such a fully international history of food aid are substantial, but the payoff may be equally so. Cold War historians should commend Ahlberg on her achievement. Then, one hopes, they will pick up where she leaves off.


Reviewed by James V. Koch, Old Dominion University.

James MacGregor Burns is a distinguished and well-published student of the American presidency and leadership. The more than twenty books he has authored have been careful, largely non-polemical, and well received. He received both a Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award in 1971 for his *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970).

In *Running Alone*, Burns returns to these familiar topics. However, this effort more avowedly reflects Burns’s distinctive political sentiments, experiences, and subjective judgments. Although the title suggests that all nine of the U.S. presidents who occupied that office from 1961 through 2007 are analyzed and given consideration, the coverage in fact is highly uneven, with 35 percent of the 199 pages of text devoted solely to John Kennedy and only 1 percent to Gerald Ford. Despite the sparse accomplishments of the tragically abbreviated Kennedy presidency, Burns’s attention to Kennedy leaves no doubt that he is enamored with the man, that political era, and the milieu. It is never difficult to ascertain where Burns’s heart lies.

This is much less a book about transformational leadership versus transactional leadership (a subject on which Burns’s contributions have been seminal) and much more a treatise about the plight and proposed future of today’s Democratic Party. Leadership is about the effective exercise of power, but the well-known 1959 essay by John R. P. French and Bertram Raven on the sources of power and similar scholarly literature are not the centerpiece here. Instead, the focus is on each president’s decision-making and whether he “ran alone” (p. 4); that is, whether he ran as a real or perceived outsider independent of the political and economic establishments.

Burns forthrightly asserts that running alone and governing alone are recipes for presidential failure. Rather, the secret to success is to imitate Franklin Roosevelt—use the established party apparatus, advocate a partisan platform that can be easily contrasted to that of the opposition, and appeal to masses of potential voters who otherwise might choose to stay home on Election Day.

In Burns’s view, every president from Kennedy to George W. Bush too often has run alone or governed alone and therefore has underperformed or failed. If Burns sees an exception, it appears to be Ronald Reagan, whose rhetoric often suggested running alone, but who nevertheless heavily used Republican Party structures and personnel,
developed an easily understood set of programs, and captured the hearts of masses of voters who in the past either had not voted or had voted Democratic.

Burns sees Bill Clinton’s “triangulation,” the program of the moderate Democratic Leadership Council (closely associated with Clinton), and presidential policies that attempt to occupy the “vital center” (p. 46) as recipes for long-term failure. One might get elected advocating a centrist platform, but ultimately, according to Burns, one cannot effectively govern in this fashion for the simple reason that such an approach eventually turns off legislative leaders and the ruling party’s vital constituencies (such as organized labor in the case of the Democrats).

Burns’s political leanings are easy to divine. Essentially he shares The New York Times editorial board’s view of the world. He labels Ronald Reagan “radically conservative” (p. 107) even though Reagan captured 45 states in 1980 and 49 states in 1984. Perhaps Burns’s perception of the U.S. political spectrum is a bit dated and requires some adjustment. George McGovern’s electoral debacle seems to have receded from his view.

Burns’s rejection of centrist approaches to presidential effectiveness reminds one of Thomas Frank’s What’s the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2004), which argued that Kansas voters did not really understand what was best for them when they voted Republican. One can make that case, but one can also put forth attractive alternative explanations relating to the nature of Democratic candidates, the images associated with the major issues they chose to identify, and the greater effectiveness of Republican Party fund-raising and voter-turnout activities.

Burns energetically calls for greater political polarization and evokes sports competition metaphors to describe the political arena he believes would best serve an American president and ultimately the American people. This hypothesis is problematic. Nationally, an increasing proportion of state legislators and U.S. congressmen and senators represent constituencies in which legitimate electoral competition is largely absent. This has been accompanied by increased partisanship, one aspect of which is the reluctance of many elected officials to give significant consideration to issues that they do not believe have an impact on their voters. Many observers believe this has led to racial polarization and many of the economic policies that Burns decries. Political polarization, then, yields mixed benefits.

In the end, successful presidents such as Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan thrived because they were able to assemble broad, popular coalitions that were centrist in their day. Presidents who fail to do so (Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush come to mind) typically fail.

This is not a book that will win James MacGregor Burns, now in his 90s, another Pulitzer Prize. Even so, he has points to make, and, for those who wish a stylized but highly readable, anecdote-filled critique of the decision-making of selected U.S. presidents, it is an attractive, stimulating read.

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Reviewed by Alessandro Brogi, University of Arkansas

The profound ideological nature of the Cold War made words, spoken and written, formidable weapons aimed at the hearts and minds of friends and foes alike. *Advertising America* is a welcome contribution to the already extensive scholarship on U.S. cultural approaches to the Cold War.

Simona Tobia makes abundantly clear that her purpose is not to explain U.S. cultural influence in Italy or Italian culture as a whole but to analyze the objectives of the United States Information Service (USIS) and their evolution through the 1950s. Even within this limited scope, the book provides insights on issues of cultural diplomacy and Americanization. In light of previous accounts, Tobia specifies that the process of Americanization remains vague if USIS activities are not analyzed in depth. This premise implies that U.S. influence was preponderant, but *Advertising America* also shows the limits of the Americanization process in Italy.

The U.S. State Department ranked target countries of its propaganda according to risk assessments and vulnerability to Communism. Among West European countries, Italy was at the top of the “Danger Zone” list, both because of its need to establish a vital democracy after the fascist decades and because it was home to the largest Communist party in the West. This warranted special attention and massive propaganda efforts, which, for example, resulted in the highest quota of Voice of America (VOA) radio broadcasts among U.S. allies.

Tobia provides thorough background on U.S. information diplomacy, describing in detail the various mutations of the State Department’s psychological and propaganda operations after World War II and highlighting the intersecting roles of media personalities and career diplomats. Paralleling the evolution of the Fulbright exchange program, which through the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 focused on anti-Communist propaganda, the State Department’s “information” services (or International Information Administration) were increasingly dominated by diplomats bent on waging a cultural Cold War.

At first, U.S. propagandists were convinced that “popular and mass culture could play a crucial role in mobilizing the people’s choices” (p. 62). Therefore, they targeted the mass audience, relying on VOA broadcasts, the publication of magazines such as *Nuovo mondo*, the establishment of American libraries, and, the distribution of documentaries (mostly under the aegis of the Marshall Plan) and motion pictures. In 1951, at the peak of the Truman administration’s interest in psychological warfare, the budget for informational programs was raised from approximately $40 million to $130 million. VOA programs, however, were gradually cut to fifteen minutes per day and were abolished as of 1957. Also, USIS bulletins ceased to be distributed in 1953, when the agency decided to establish direct contacts with the Italian press. State Department officials also realized that the costly VOA did not reach the expected number of listeners and did not have the expected impact on the masses, who enjoyed the
entertaining features of U.S. broadcasts often without absorbing the political messages. From the mid-1950s, VOA's desk officers worked within the USIS with the new aim of “colonizing” the popular Italian radio broadcasts (RAI), which began to host USIS-produced material. Public opinion polls and tuning difficulties for short- and medium-wave broadcasts were not the only reasons for this change. USIS officials had come to understand the importance of an indirect approach to cultural diplomacy, using indigenous sources and hiding the American hand as much as possible. Tobia points out that “a sort of Italianization of propaganda activities in the country started in 1953” (p. 241).

The need for indirection prompted another fundamental change. By 1952–1953, USIS shifted its main focus from the “common reader” to the Italian “opinion molders.” These were intellectuals and media personalities who helped transmit the American message to the Italian public. Tobia notes that this approach to the elites was in part made possible by the Eisenhower administration's restructuring of information programs under a more autonomous U.S. Information Agency (USIA), one free from McCarthyite attacks yet determined to wage all sorts of propaganda attacks on the Cold War enemy. Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce also worked to transform “Italian cultural leaders into cultural ‘brokers’” (p. 18). Although Tobia does not dispute previous accounts showing the deleterious effects of the archconservative ambassador on Italian politics, her book persuasively highlights Luce’s role as a cultural diplomat who helped alter the U.S. propaganda approach to Italy. Luce, a former playwright and congresswoman, was instrumental in establishing contacts with many of Italy's cultural “molders” at the popular as well as the intellectual levels. She was also determined to give more clout to the U.S. psychological warfare apparatus. Key to this essential change was Luce’s and other USIS propagandists’ understanding of the public role of intellectuals in Europe. The main USIS-sponsored publication enlisting intellectuals and politicians from both sides of the Atlantic was *Mondo occidentale*. Its tone, much like that of previous propaganda addressed to the masses, was Manichean but optimistic—exposing Soviet lies, cautiously avoiding attacks on Western Communist parties, and advertising the positive aspects of U.S. policies and the American way of life.

Cultural “molding” occurred through academia as well. In the mid-1950s, the introduction of USIS-funded American studies programs in Italian universities (taught mostly by Italian faculty) gave tremendous weight to the cultural transmission in Italy, reaching large audiences of college-educated youth, the future opinion molders. For the State Department, financing these programs was more expensive than sending U.S. professors as grantees to teach in Italy. But, on balance, the effect of having natives teach an Italian audience outweighed the costs. Assessing the long-term effects of both the academic and the Fulbright exchange programs, Tobia concludes that they constituted the “most lasting contribution to American public diplomacy in the country” exerting great “influence on Italian intellectual and cultural life” (p. 254).

Another remarkable aspect of these programs was their degree of tolerance of dissenting views. The scholars’ exchange and the leader grant programs were heavily
influenced by New Dealers and liberal intellectuals. Working within the USIA and State Department, those liberals found a connection with Italy’s center-left intellectuals and with their new publishing ventures. Attracting the Italian “Non-Communist Left” (as it became known in the State Department) became crucial for isolating the culturally influential Communists. Tobia cites the notable example of the novelist and journalist Alberto Moravia, who, although known for his anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist views, visited the United States in 1955 under the auspices of the leader grant program. Although Moravia’s reports written for the Corriere della sera offered a scathing critique of the American way of life, his mere presence and ambivalent fascination with his host country were considered a success for the program.

Accepting dissenting views on America also implied the limits of U.S. influence in Italy. Analyzing the audiovisual media, Tobia demonstrates that VOA programs, even after they were reformatted for the Italian networks, were not unequivocal instruments of U.S. propaganda, insofar as RAI screened and kept control of the American productions. The Italian audience was not only limited but selective as well, seeking diverse sources of information, including broadcasts from the BBC and even from the Soviet bloc. Reaching the elite was successful only because “Italian intellectuals were interested in voluntarily embracing a foreign culture of their own free will” (p. 283)—a statement that requires a more sustained analysis based on Italian sources. The establishment of American studies programs thus responded to an already existing interest among Italian academics, and the USIS targeted intellectuals who already had a proclivity to absorb American culture and the social sciences that were crucial in fighting Communist influence. What mattered most to USIS officials was the multiplying effect that those cultural molders would have, making the United States better known to the Italian public and getting beyond stereotypes. Tobia is correct to conclude that Italy “did not become a miniature version of America” (p. 284). That was never the U.S. intention in the first place. But U.S. propagandists did intend to use all possible instruments of “soft power,” which, Tobia reminds us (paraphrasing the concept’s main proponent, Joseph S. Nye), consists of the “ability to induce others to want what the propagandist want.” Persuasion is valuable also because “attraction is much cheaper than coercion” (p. 281). Attraction, furthermore, allows the “receiving” country to maintain considerable autonomy and to select what appears to be of mutual interest to the “propagandist” country. For a country such as the United States seeking to emphasize its pluralism, this was the best possible way to control its allies.

Tobia’s book, for all its merits, suffers from notable shortcomings. Mainly, she adheres too literally to the archival sources. Quotations of USIS reports are extensive and often redundant. The main text frequently adopts the stale bureaucratic language of diplomatic dispatches, and then compounds the staleness with frequent use of the passive voice. The often-repeated listings of USIS objectives and the excessive reiteration of certain points in the main text make the reading tedious. A compressed, restructured manuscript might have left room for the needed contextualization of USIS policies within the general U.S. propaganda objectives and cultural activities abroad.

For example, the reader is left to wonder why USIS considered Moravia’s visit a
cultural and diplomatic victory. His analyses of U.S. culture openly contradicted the “Manichean simplifications that information agencies used to depict the USA-USSR relationship and to build their image” (p. 265). The answer remains implicit in this last statement, but the book lacks a full explanation of the State Department’s decision to co-opt the Italian non-Communist Left. Tobia correctly notes that the department’s main purpose in establishing a working relationship with Italy’s opinion molders was to give the friendly ones the necessary boost they needed to communicate their ideas to the public and to convince those who were “not wholeheartedly our friends” but still nurtured a “great curiosity for all things American” (p. 232). Those purposes, however, remain elusive so long as Tobia neglects to engage the postwar debate held by the intellectual exponents of the American “vital center” and does not refer to the Central Intelligence Agency–sponsored activities of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF). Although Tobia’s study focuses on State Department activities, the USIA unquestionably absorbed some of the “vital center” ideas on the non-Communist Left. Inviting “dangerous opinions,” as the vital center’s foremost proponent, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. (never mentioned in Tobia’s book) proclaimed, was a “politically enlightened and sophisticated” strategy. Acknowledging the importance of civil liberties, Schlesinger was ready to admit conflict and contradiction as the truly creative aspects of a free society. Freedom itself could not be harmonious and consensual. A non-consensual approach added strength to U.S. cultural diplomacy at a time when most left-of-center European intellectuals accused the United States of materialism, standardization, conformity, and political intolerance under McCarthyism. Neither the effects of McCarthyism—as seen by the Italians—nor the response by U.S. cultural diplomats are adequately explained in Tobia’s account. Indeed, for a book purporting to explain “advertising” efforts, not enough sustained attention is paid to the Italian response at the mass or intellectual levels. For example, the records of the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, archived at the University of Arkansas, would have provided further evidence of U.S. efforts to establish an American academic curriculum in Italy and the Italian academics’ reception or solicitation of those programs.

Equally glaring is the absence of some notable secondary sources. Giles Scott-Smith’s works on the CCF and on the State Department’s Foreign Leader Program, published in 2002 and 2008, respectively, are cited in the bibliography but are not fully engaged in the main text. Even though Scott-Smith’s book on the Foreign Leader Program, Networks of Empire: The US State Department’s Foreign Leader Program in the Netherlands, France, and Britain 1950–1970 (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), came out at about the same time as Advertising America and focuses on other Western European countries, Tobia could have at least offered a brief comparative analysis of other U.S. allied states to show why Italy was such a high priority and how the Italian Communist party was such a strong contender not only at the mass but also at the intellectual level. On the broad context of Dwight Eisenhower’s cultural diplomacy and the president’s reorganization of the State Department’s information services, Kenneth Osgood’s Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad...
(Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2006) cannot be ignored. The omission of crucial works is compounded by the book’s inclusion of redundant background information on pre-USIS policies. The introductory material, covering almost half the book and based largely on secondary sources—above all Luigi Bruti Liberati’s Words, Words, Words: La guerra fredda dell’USIS in Italia, 1945–1956 (Milan: Cuem, 2004)—could have been considerably abbreviated. Clear definitions of “propaganda” and “psychological warfare” are not offered until the third chapter of the book. Also, although one of the book’s main stated purposes is to emphasize the impact of Clare Boothe Luce on USIS policies in Italy, her record receives limited coverage and only in the final chapter. Because of such matters of style, organization, poor contextualization, and incomplete scholarship, much of Advertising America reads like a dissertation.

Still, Tobia’s book is valuable for its thorough use of recently declassified archival records and is especially relevant because of its attention to the U.S. shift from mass propaganda to an indirect approach using Italy’s intellectual and media personalities.


Reviewed by Gary Bruce, University of Waterloo (Canada)

Mary Fulbrook is not fond of totalitarianism. In a 2006 review article in German History, she went so far as to call for its “terminal burial.” In this book, she puts forth an alternative concept that, in her view, captures the “perfectly normal lives” of many East Germans and the “vast tracts that lay behind [and] beyond” (p. xi) the oppressive features of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Fittingly, the title of the German edition of her book is Das ganz normale Leben (Perfectly Normal Life). Fulbrook urges scholars to reconceptualize the GDR not as a menacing dictatorship but as both a modern industrial society facing typical issues of the modern state (including health care, demographic changes, and housing) and a dictatorship that had a certain amount of popular buy-in. Because of the participation of East Germans in all levels and branches of the state (albeit with many more participating at the lower levels than at the higher echelons) and a certain commonality of goals between state and society, Fulbrook coins the term “participatory dictatorship” to describe the GDR.

Part one of Fulbrook’s three-part work deals with what might be deemed “private life.” She outlines leisure pursuits of East Germans, engagement of youth and women with the regime, and areas of public policy that affected private life but where state and society shared common aims such as housing and health. Fulbrook explores how East Germans took steps to “make their life” (p. 57) in the GDR and aims to illustrate how a good deal of an East German’s life was led beyond the realm of state institutions (p. 66). Part two analyzes the persistence of class (based on political power rather than
capital) in a supposed classless society and argues that a certain degree of “carrying” of the regime by the intelligentsia, the working class, and ruling elites took place at all levels including the often-overlooked grassroots regime representatives such as mayors, whom Fulbrook dubs “genuinely representative” of the people (p. 192). Part three outlines the involvement of ordinary people in the regime, in particular their role in the repression apparatus and their penchant for submitting complaints to the regime in the form of Eingaben (petitions), all of which underlies her notion of the GDR as a “participatory dictatorship.”

Although there is merit in examining the motives of those who involve themselves in dictatorship, this work suffers from the major conceptual hurdle that it is impossible to reconcile a concept such as “participatory dictatorship” (or similar iterations by other historians; e.g., “consensual dictatorship” and “welfare dictatorship”) with a state that witnessed millions of people take to the streets to demand its end, not once but twice, and with a state that built a wall because one in six of its alleged “participants” were fleeing to West Germany. If the term applies primarily to the post-Berlin Wall era (and that in itself is rather dissatisfying), then it is worth recalling that that era lasted less than one generation before ending in the resounding removal of the regime amid some of the largest street demonstrations in European history. What is striking during the period is not the participation in the regime but the participation against it. Given what transpired in 1989 and 1990, it is also difficult to accept Fulbrook’s argument that by the 1970s “significant numbers of people” were committed to “many of [the regime’s] ideals” (p. 291). Because the wall, the world’s largest secret police force per capita, and two revolutionary uprisings are irreconcilable with the concept Fulbrook puts forward, she is forced to offer such tepid conclusions as, “Over time, people came not exactly to accept but rather (most of the time) to bracket out the Wall or ‘the system’ as a whole from daily consciousness, and were able to have (at least a sense of) some input into (at least some of) the domestic matters that affected their more immediate existence” (p. 258).

The concept of “participatory dictatorship” is much more apt for the Nazi dictatorship than for the East German. Works by Robert Gellately and Gerhard Paul make clear the popular element of denunciation in the Third Reich, eloquently captured in Paul’s phrase “the democratization of terror.” Peter Fritzsche’s Life and Death in the Third Reich (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2008) illustrates the ability of the Nazis to involve large sections of society in their abhorrent racial schemes. In the prewar period, Germans took part in rallies, community camps, and Strength through Joy programs (often accompanied with a visit to an ideologically loaded Nazi site such as Landsberg); they applied for Ahnenpässe to prove Aryan ancestry; and they contributed in droves to the Nazi charitable winter relief campaigns (Winterhilfswerk). This mobilization stands in stark contrast to the lackluster participation Fulbrook describes. Indeed, Hitler’s Beneficiaries, the translated title of Hitlers Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2005), Götz Aly’s work on the improvement of Germans’ material situation under the Nazis, could more precisely (albeit less elegantly) be rendered as Hitler’s People’s State—almost identical to

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Fulbrook's title. Surely, Nazi Germany was more of a “people's state” than the GDR was. This illustrates an underlying deficiency of Fulbrook's thesis: “Participatory dictatorship” is presented as an alternative to “totalitarianism,” but the terms are not mutually exclusive.

To support her argument, Fulbrook highlights the *Eingaben* (petition) system that permitted East Germans to lodge complaints with the authorities. Millions of East Germans took advantage of this outlet to request state action on a range of issues, with housing leading the way. Because of the inherent risk, East Germans did not petition for political change. Even without this caveat, relying on *Eingaben* as evidence of “participation” in the dictatorship is problematic. Rather than representing the “voice” of Albert Hirschman’s concept, the *Eingaben* system was a method of disenfranchising the population, as absolutist rulers of a previous era had done. The Socialist Unity Party (SED) did not encourage dialogue and “participation” but repressed it with a petition system that prevented like-minded individuals from organizing their discontent, as Jonathan R. Zatlin has made clear in his *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Moreover, Fulbrook does not adequately portray the regime’s response to petitions. It is true that the regime *did* resolve many petitions in the interest of the petitioner, but many others were lost, misplaced, or responded to with party platitudes. In some cases, the petitioner was browbeaten into “admitting” that his complaint was ill thought out. *Eingaben* could also take the form of personal vendettas against disloyal spouses or work colleagues who had been promoted—a form of “participation” more akin to the denunciatory participation of the Third Reich—and on occasion *Eingaben* were referred to the Stasi. The *Eingaben* offer proof that an East German was not a *citoyen* of French Revolutionary fame but an *Untertan* (subject), a term frequently used by Joachim Gauck, a Rostock pastor and first federal commissioner for the Stasi files, in describing East Germans during the GDR.

When discussing the Stasi, Fulbrook overstates her case to prove the “participatory” nature of East Germany: “An astonishing number appear to have been willing to act as unofficial informers for the Stasi” (p. 4). We are never told what constitutes an “astonishing number,” but Fulbrook suggests, based on Stasi figures, that somewhere in the neighborhood of 90 percent of informants were “willing” informants (p. 243). Although she acknowledges that this figure likely includes many East Germans who would have feared to refuse once a Stasi approach had been made, she does not fully address the fact that 50 percent of informants were SED members. Although the practice was officially frowned upon, Stasi officers tended, out of sloth, to recruit from party ranks. Moreover, “willingness” must be contextualized. The Stasi meticulously planned an informant approach, often with full knowledge of an informant’s frailties or life travails. Some East Germans became informants out of political conviction, but the claim of “an astonishing number” of willing informants misses the overwhelming recruitment from within the SED and the Stasi’s general ability to orchestrate “willingness.”

Fulbrook also suggests that informant “willingness” is evidenced by the relative
ease with which informants could end their association: “A common method of avoiding entering an agreement to inform was simply to break the demanded code of secrecy by telling someone else of the approach . . . on hearing which the Stasi would immediately drop the potential informant. Another was simply to refuse” (pp. 244–245). In reality, nothing was simple about it. Fulbrook is far too cavalier about the paralyzing fear that many experienced in attempting to break a Stasi association, fear fueled in part by the Stasi’s veiled threats if they were to do so. As Gauck has made clear, only a person of rare internal fortitude (those who could truly say “ein starker Ich”) refused the Stasi. Also, because in 1989 nearly 6 percent (some 10,000 informants) of the Stasi informant complement were under eighteen years of age, refusal would have required for many a maturity beyond their years.

Although Fulbrook acknowledges negative aspects of the regime, her emphasis on the “perfectly normal lives” of East Germans blurs the reality of the East German dictatorship: one of the largest exoduses in history, a secret police that controlled the life opportunities of millions of citizens, an unheard-of militarization of society (half a million people in the military and nearly as many Soviet troops on East German soil), soaring suicide rates and alcoholism, a quarter million political prisoners, and nearly a thousand deaths at the German-German border. Fulbrook may be struck by the East Germans who tell her they led “perfectly normal lives”—but clearly that depends on whom you ask. As the Historikerstreit instructs, historians must be cautious about an emphasis on “ordinary” daily life that could overshadow the political nature of the regime, in this case a one-party Communist dictatorship that employed terror and violence to impose its political ideals and used its repressive apparatus to contain (and ideally convert) those who, as Rosa Luxemburg said, “thought differently.”

Not so long ago Fulbrook herself emphasized control of life in East Germany rather than its ordinariness. In her chapter in the widely used textbook she co-edited with John Breuilly, German History since 1800 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), she writes: “In East Germany, the ruling communist party, the SED, sought to dominate society through state-run organizations. There was no area of work, social life, or leisure which was not in some way controlled by one of the official institutions of party and state” (p. 416) Readers may be rightly confused by her about-face in The People’s State: “It is extraordinary just how much of East Germans’ lives were lived outside of formal political institutions and official organizations” (p. 66).

Several decades ago in The Captive Mind, Czesław Miłosz gave voice to many in the people’s democracies: “Since I find myself in circumstances over which I have no control, and since I have but one life and that is fleeting, I should strive to do my best. I am like a crustacean attached to a crag on the bottom of the sea. Over me storms rage and huge ships sail; but my entire effort is concentrated upon clinging to the rock, for otherwise I will be carried off by the waters and perish.” We should not confuse accommodation and outward adaptation (to borrow Vaclav Havel’s phrase) with participation, nor crustaceans with citizens.

Reviewed by Roger E. Kanet, University of Miami

Sixty years after the founding of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and almost two decades after its demise, the Berlin-based visual artist and art historian Christian Saehrendt has written an interesting and excellently documented study of the place of the visual arts in the GDR’s foreign cultural policy. His treatment of the subject goes far beyond merely tracing the role of the visual arts in East Germany’s foreign cultural policy. He provides, in addition, a brief historical overview of the place of culture in the foreign policies of all twentieth-century German states since World War I and a clear and readable introduction to the evolution of Soviet-derived cultural policy and the development of the visual arts in the GDR. Moreover, the reader who is not able to navigate through the German text will find that a 23-page English-language summary effectively covers the central discussion of GDR cultural policy—although it excludes the three introductory background chapters on Weimar Germany, the Third Reich, and the Federal Republic.

Saehrendt begins by sketching a brief history of the use of culture as a tool in the foreign policy of German states in the twentieth century—the Weimar Republic, Nazi Germany, and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). He points to the importance of competition with the GDR in the development of postwar FRG cultural policy and to the great advantage experienced by the FRG in this competition because its artists were not curtailed by the strictures of official state control of the form and content of their art.

This point about the FRG-GDR competition becomes something of an integrating theme in the remainder of this excellent little study as Saehrendt notes at various points the inherent contradiction in East Germany’s foreign cultural policy. Because all of the GDR’s cultural contacts occurred on the basis of official bilateral exchanges, success in displaying the work of GDR artists abroad and in generating interest in the development of the visual arts in East Germany created a major dilemma for the authorities in East Berlin. Success abroad in showing the works of East German artists necessitated exhibitions of the works of foreign artists in the GDR itself and, thus, the political threat of exposing East German society to Western influences. This concern grew in importance in the final decades of the GDR after the country’s success in gaining global political recognition at the beginning of the 1970s.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the possibilities of and successes in exhibiting East German artists abroad—except in other socialist states and to small groups of the political left throughout Western Europe—were limited. Until the severe strictures of Stalinist “socialist realism” were gradually loosened and, more importantly, the GDR gained broad diplomatic standing in the 1970s, the possibilities of using the visual arts as part of an integrated program to support foreign policy initiatives were very limited. Even
in the 1970s and 1980s, however, the overall impact was questionable. For example, in the FRG, which was always the primary focus of the GDR’s cultural policy, the political impact of refugees from the East, including artists, likely outweighed any positive impact generated by GDR-sponsored exhibitions.

*Kunst als Botschafter einer künstlicher Nation* concludes with a thoughtful discussion of the role of the visual arts in the attempt after reunification to create a new national identity and the legacy of GDR painting two decades after the dissolution of the East German state. The major collections of GDR visual arts available today result from the private collections of wealthy West German and U.S. collectors established before the opening of the Berlin Wall in 1989, as well as in the work of Neo Rausch and the New Leipzig School of painters whose work draws on variations of the socialist realism of East German painting.

Christian Saehrendt has packed into his book an immense amount of information about the visual arts, cultural policy, propaganda (although he does not use this term), and related issues of central importance to the East German leaders in their four-decade attempt to create a legitimate but separate identity for their socialist state. The reader, and future researchers, could have benefited greatly from an index. Although the table of contents is detailed, it cannot make up for the absence of an index. Nonetheless, readers interested in a brief introduction to the visual arts and the politics of the arts in the former GDR will find in Saehrendt’s study a useful and enlightening discussion whose extensive documentation will lead to other relevant sources.


Reviewed by Gerhard Wettig, Institut für Zeitgeschichte (Berlin section) and Federal Institute for East European and International Studies in Cologne (retired)

This is an excellent study. Chad Bryant colorfully portrays Czech political and social developments both before 1939 and afterward when the Nazis had taken control of smaller Bohemia and Moravia after the predominantly German territories had already been turned over to Germany by the Munich Agreement of 1938. In much detail but without losing sight of larger issues, Bryant describes the successive stages of Nazi policies (which were frequently based on internal differences of opinion and rival ambitions) and the reactions by the various parts of the population (including both indigenous and immigrated Germans, who were far from agreeing with one another). Although radical Nazi leaders practiced cruel repression and committed appalling atrocities as putatively the best way to assure submission, other administrators tried to allow for some measure of decent life, provided that no opposition to dictatorship surfaced and production for Germany’s military needs continued unabated. As the war dragged on and, especially after 1941, the effort to avoid defeat became imperative, and the Nazi authorities came to see maintenance of the arms industry as their first
priority. To this end, the Czechs were given satisfactory food rations, and disturbing action was put off. This was one major reason why underground groups did not create serious problems for the German occupiers. Armed resistance failed to emerge, and in the midst of a world full of war, death, and destruction, the Czech lands were almost an island of peace.

The Nazis operated here against a backdrop of pervasive ethnic heterogeneity and a century of national strife. The Czechs had increased their number at German expense under the Austrian Habsburg empire. After World War I, the German-inhabited Sudetenland was prevented from joining Germany and, like the regions with a Czech majority, was included in Czechoslovakia, which the Czechs saw as their nation-state in which they could discriminate against the German part of the population. After the Nazis annexed the Sudetenland in September-October 1938 and took control of the remaining regions a few months later, the Czechs were still increasing in numbers. The Nazis saw the Slavs as an inferior race and felt that for the sake of winning Lebensraum (living space) the country had to be populated by Germans. So long as the Nazis’ efforts were directed at winning the war, they put off expelling the Czechs, but they started Germanizing Czechs to whom they ascribed racially “valuable blood.” German moderation did not extend to the Jews, however. The Jews were seen as a sub-human race, to be exterminated at any cost.

Edvard Beneš’s exile government in London managed to exchange messages both with officials in Emil Hácha’s puppet administration and with underground circles. Most importantly, the exile government was able to influence opinion at home with violently anti-German radio broadcasts. The Czechs’ failure to contribute to the Allied war effort by means of an armed resistance created a problem for Beneš, who, encouraged by demands from the underground, had concluded that Czechoslovakia must be relieved of its foreign nationalities, notably the ethnic Germans. Seeking to increase hatred against them at home and to initiate armed resistance, the British air force dropped paratroopers to assassinate Nazi officials. Most of these missions failed, but one succeeded in killing Czechoslovakia’s German “protector,” Reinhard Heydrich. The subsequent German reprisals were merciless, involving the killing of hundreds of innocent people, notably in the village of Lidice, where the men were massacred and the women and children taken to concentration camps. Anti-German sentiment increased, but the hoped-for armed resistance failed to emerge. Beneš won Josif Stalin’s support, however, both for himself and for his expulsion plan when he visited Moscow in November 1943. The Red Army’s advance into the vicinity of Prague in early May 1945 encouraged an uprising there against the Nazi regime. Beneš and his followers publicly stigmatized the ethnic Germans as outlaws and denounced them as national traitors who had to be expelled. A wave of hatred swept across the country, leading to indiscriminate persecution and massacres. When Allied leaders met in Potsdam in the summer of 1945 to discuss postwar problems, the mass expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia was already under way.

Bryant persuasively argues that anti-German hatred provided the underlying principle for Czech national cohesion in an ethnically mixed environment and for the collective determination to create an ethnically uniform nation-state. But by neglect-
ing Beneš’s agreement with Stalin, Bryant understates the impact of the exile government in comparison to that of spontaneous Czech sentiment. As can be seen from the minutes secretly taken by Beneš’s aide Jaromír Smutný (translated into English by Vojtech Mastny in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Vol. 20, 1972, pp. 376–396), Beneš pledged both the sociopolitical transformation of his country and its unconditional submission in any matters of foreign policy and military buildup. As a reward, he received the assurance he had sought that the USSR (the hoped-for liberator of Czechoslovakia) would support the expulsion of all Germans (a condition the British and Americans had been unwilling to accept). To be sure, Beneš hoped that the pre-1939 multiparty system would continue. By accepting the “reforms” suggested to him by his interlocutors, however, he allowed in the “democratic” pattern elsewhere imposed by the Red Army as a starting point for progressive Sovietization. Because Beneš was willing to bind his country to the USSR, Stalin accepted his exile government. (The Polish exile leaders in London who failed to submit to Stalin’s plans were persistently denied Soviet recognition.) The Czechoslovak Communists, who until Beneš met with Stalin had opposed the mass expulsion of Germans, immediately sided with Beneš and fully supported his scheme of forcibly removing the German population.

The book contains a few minor errors. The Sixth German Army in Stalingrad did not withdraw in early 1943 but surrendered, and Paris was liberated in July 1944 not February 1945 (by which point U.S. troops were advancing into Germany). With regard to the Nazis’ exercise of control and the people’s reactions in the Czech lands, Bryant’s portrayal of events is precise to the slightest detail. His colorful explanations conform to the highest academic standards while also making fascinating reading for non-specialists.


Reviewed by Wolfgang Mueller, Austrian Academy of Sciences

The second volume of the German-Russian Historical Commission’s irregularly published *Mitteilungen* contains topical essays, reports on current projects, and relevant documents (e.g., the Archival Law of the Russian Federation of 2004). The first part of the volume consists of the papers of a workshop organized by the commission in 2002 concerning the years 1942–1945. Jost Düllfer describes the “German War in the East 1942: Plans and Reality” as an increasingly chaotic conjunction of unsuccessful blitzkrieg, the “war of extermination” against the Jewish and Slav populations, and unrealistic plans for the German settlement after victory. As for the percentage of Wehrmacht soldiers personally involved in war crimes, Christian Hartmann argues that more than 80 percent of the soldiers fought at the front, whereas most crimes
were committed away from the fighting. Nonetheless, he concedes that the Wehrmacht not only bore direct responsibility for crimes committed at the front but was institutionally responsible for war crimes in areas under military administration, against prisoners of war, or committed by other units with the support of the Wehrmacht. How was Adolf Hitler able to gain the complicity of his overwhelmingly conservative generals? Johannes Hürter answers the question by pointing out that, on the one hand, the German generals would not risk a confrontation with the Führer. On the other hand, anti-Semitism, anti-Bolshevism, the idea of German supremacy, and the conviction that the end justifies all means were already deeply rooted in their minds. The cliché that the German military administration in the USSR behaved “better” than the German civil administration also has to be revised, as Dieter Pohl shows. Altogether in the German-occupied territories of the USSR, approximately 24 million people were forced into slave labor. Mark Spoerer questions Christian Gerlach’s thesis that the maltreatment and the majority of deaths of these people were—except in the case of the Jewish population—a consequence of “extreme economization” rather than of exterminatorial ideology.

As the German tanks racing toward Baku’s oil fields ran out of gas because of poor decisions by the German high command (as discussed by Rolf-Dieter Müller), Josif Stalin was able to evacuate 2,500 major arms factories in 1941 that had been located near the front, a process recounted by Mikhail Myagkov. Vladimir Khaustov highlights a parallel in the two sides’ secret services: In times of military reverses, both sides increased the number and thus reduced the training and hence the efficiency of their agents. In a summary, Michael Salewski argues that the “Wende at Moscow” (despite reaching the Soviet capital, the German blitzkrieg that aimed at an early surrender failed in 1941) was not recognized as such by most people at the time.

The second part of the volume contains reports on current and finished research projects, including “The Comintern and German-Soviet Relations,” a collection of documents edited by Bernhard Bayerlein; “The German Communist Party and Moscow 1928–33,” a monograph by Bert Hoppe; and a documentary on the years 1939–1941. The already published volumes of documents on the “German October” of 1923 and the “Thälmann scandal” of 1928, including Stalin’s correspondence on the subject, reveal the direct Soviet involvement in the abortive Communist putsch in Germany as well as in the internal affairs of the German party. See Hermann Weber and Bernhard H. Bayerlein, eds., Der Thälmann-Skandal: Geheime Korrespondenzen mit Stalin (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2003); and B. Bayerlein, L. Babičenko, F. Firsov, and A. Vatlin, eds., Deutscher Oktober 1923: Ein Revolutionsplan und sein Scheitern (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2003). The documents provide readers with insights into the background of Stalin's political thinking. A project on “Soviet and German Prisoners of War and Internees,” discussed by Klaus-Dieter Müller and Günther Heydemann, will make accessible the archival records of hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war and internees.

Although fundamental studies of Soviet policy toward Germany after 1945 based on Soviet documents were published in the 1990s—see, for instance, Norman M. Naimark, The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–
1949 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); and Gerhard Wettig, *Bereitschaft zu Einheit in Freiheit? Die sowjetische Deutschland-Politik 1945–1955* (Munich: Olzog, 1999)—new work continues to appear. A series on the policy of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany, 1945–1949, consists of a catalog of archival holdings, a handbook, and seven other topical volumes of documents; for example, on reconstruction, politics, economics, and security. The full set of volumes, co-edited by German and Russian scholars, has already been published in Russian, and some have appeared in German. The documents in these volumes underline the high level of attention the USSR paid to what was, from their perspective, the “democratic” reeducation of the German population by the Soviet Army. Given the Western Allies’ diametrically opposed understanding of “democracy,” the outbreak of the Cold War seems to have been as unavoidable as the partition of Germany that followed. A milestone, published with the commission’s support, is the 3-volume collection put out by Jochen Laufer and Georgii Kynin, *The USSR and the German Question 1941–1948*, which contains almost 500 edited documents from the former Soviet Foreign Ministry’s archive. It was published in German as *Die UdSSR und die deutsche Frage 1941–1948: Dokumente aus dem Archiv für Außenpolitik der Russischen Föderation* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 2004) and in Russian as *SSSR i Germanskii vopros 1941–1949: Dokumenty iz Arkhiva vneshei politiki Rossiskoi Federatsii* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1996–2004). Many documents dating back to the war years reveal that Soviet wartime planners considered the dismemberment of Germany a serious option and that gaining full freedom of action in their zone after the war was crucial to them.

The last focus of research is on the second Berlin crisis. A monograph on the security aspects of the crisis was published in 2008 by Matthias Uhl, who in 2003 published East German documents on the topic in *Ulbricht, Chruschtschow und die Mauer: Eine Dokumentation* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2003). Uhl believes the key to the crisis lies in the Soviet quest for security. Between the Berlin and the Cuban crises, enormous efforts were made to upgrade Soviet weaponry. The Soviet defense budget jumped from 9 billion rubles in 1959 to 14 billion in 1962, eventually constituting almost 22 percent of the USSR’s budget. Gerhard Wettig, whose monograph on the Berlin crisis was published a few years ago—*Chruschtschows Berlin-Krise 1958 bis 1963: Drohpolitik und Mauerbau* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2006)—emphasizes that Khrushchev, who did not want war, expected the West to give in for the same reason. See also, on Khrushchev’s foreign policy, Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: Norton, 2006). According to Wettig, the Soviet leader bears full responsibility for the disaster. Even when he finally agreed to Ulbricht’s demands, as Hope Harrison has argued in her *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet–East German Relations, 1953–1961* (Princeton, NJ: University Press, 2003), he remained in control of policy. Because Khrushchev did not like the wall for ideological reasons, he had Ulbricht present it to the other party chiefs. Indeed, Khrushchev foresaw the wall’s removal once the Western Allies left Berlin. Only then, he believed, could free competition between the systems occur and demonstrate the superiority of Communism over capitalism.
Notwithstanding the extensive treatment of World War II, the volume’s essays provide readers interested in the Cold War with useful abstracts of recent and forthcoming publications on the history of Soviet policy vis-à-vis Germany.


Reviewed by Gareth Dale, Brunel University (UK)

When our thoughts turn to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), its demise may well be what comes to mind. Yet the events of 1989 followed more than four decades of relative stability. Why did the GDR survive for so long? Andrew Port explores this question, drawing on his research regarding events in Saalfeld, a district of 60,000 inhabitants, from 1945 to 1971.

One possible explanation, that the GDR’s stability attested to the passivity and obedience of its citizens, is summarily dismissed. Saalfeld experienced mass revolts in 1951, 1953, and 1989. At other times its inhabitants openly criticized the policies of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) and repeatedly resisted the demands placed on them by the authorities. Port documents farmers refusing to cooperate with collectivization, SED members avoiding meetings, workers shirking, and young people exiting the country or refusing to join the army.

A weightier factor was the fear of state repression, and Port incorporates this into his explanation: for example, traumatic memories of Soviet tanks on the streets in 1953 made Saalfelders less willing to engage in public protest thereafter. However, this factor is not sufficient: The fact that two vigorous challenges to the SED regime “took place at the peak of Stalinist terror suggests that neither repression nor the fear of repression could alone stifle popular protest” (p. 111).

Port’s analysis of the East German state is balanced. He reports numerous baneful episodes—for example, the local authority that drew up lists of dozens of “asocial elements” for expulsion from the district. Yet he rejects the notion that the GDR was constructed on the basis of arbitrary power and an omnipotent security service. The Stasi displayed “a surprising concern for legality” and “often exhibited remarkable caution before taking punitive action” (p. 106). For instance, Stasi officers refused to arrest a railway worker “who had purportedly told political jokes about the regime: Because they could not find conclusive proof, officials explained, they could not prosecute him for conspiratorial activities.” The GDR under Ulbricht “was not a ‘nation of spies,’ and the Stasi’s popular image as a ‘ubiquitous and highly efficient intelligence-gathering agency’ deserves revision, at least for this earlier period” (p. 107).

Port makes short work of the notion that the SED and East German state possessed boundless power. “Proponents of totalitarian theory” have failed to grasp “the wide-ranging ability of those living under Soviet-style regimes to defy the dictates of those in power.” As a result, SED policy did not always translate into reality—Port
cites the party’s inability “to prevent wages from rising faster than productivity, to enforce shop-floor discipline in the factories and collective [farms], to mobilize sociopolitical participation, even on the part of low-level functionaries and rank-and-file party members” (p. 282). The publication of archive-based research, as this study exemplifies, tends to expose the weaknesses of totalitarianism theory even as the political climate keeps the mindset alive.

As regards Port’s own explanation of stability, it is “reminiscent of the work done by those who have looked at autocratic regimes of the nonsocialist variety” (p. 284), such as James C. Scott. The keywords are clientelism, competition, cleavages, and compromise. Following Andrew Walder, Port emphasizes the deployment of privileges to divide the workforce and to reinforce individual action at the expense of collective action. Favoritism and material disparities promoted envy and mutual resentment, undermining solidarity and strengthening dependency on officialdom. These mechanisms could function because East Germany was—despite Sigrid Meuschel’s thesis—a class-divided society in which some enjoyed preferential access to scarce goods and services and received markedly higher incomes than others did.

Clientelism belonged to a package of techniques that contributed to “ongoing social disintegration.” (Port prefers this term to “atomization,” which understates the cooperation and camaraderie that did exist within many workplace collectives and personal consumption networks.) Whereas similar effects are enacted in market-capitalist societies through the labor market, in Soviet-style societies the state compensated by imposing “industrial competitions” and associated practices to foment shop-floor tensions and undermine working-class solidarity. In addition, Port discusses structural cleavages, including those between men and women, and between indigenous Saalfelders and newcomers. Perceptions of relative deprivation, he observes, can feed revolt but when refracted through such divisions can hinder collective action.

In addition to techniques of repression, competition, and clientelism, officials would also negotiate and compromise, attempting to accommodate those under their charge. Union functionaries, for example, although primarily engaged in administering welfare provision and enforcing official policies aimed at ensuring high productivity levels, would sometimes represent workers’ interests against management (p. 162). More generally, the “authorities actually encouraged workers to voice their opinions and articulate their grievances, as long as they were not overtly political attacks against the regime” (p. 140).

I have only two criticisms of Port’s study, and both concern events in 1989, which is outside the work’s time span proper. In autumn 1989, he insists, “large numbers of East Germans” did not “engage in a demonstrable show of force against the party and state” (p. 94). Although “show of force” is not precisely defined, the events of 3–5 October in Dresden, 9 October in Leipzig, and 15 January 1990 in Berlin, inter alia, unquestionably qualify. Secondly, Port contends that those who initiated the crucial events that led to the breaching of the Berlin Wall were not workers or farmers but intellectuals. “Ordinary East Germans would later join in the protest movement, but they were not the ones who jumpstarted it” (p. 286). In fact, the role of would-be emigrants in converting the Leipzig “peace prayers” into public demon-
strations was indispensable, and they were, overwhelmingly, “ordinary” citizens, not intellectuals.

Port’s book is a local study; it does not, like Stephen Kotkin’s *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), showcase a novel interpretation of the Soviet system, but it is thoroughly researched and well argued. Port’s theses are supported by plentiful evidence on a range of issues, including housing and goods distribution, industrial relations, and the organization of agriculture. I recommend Port’s full book, but those lacking time will profit from focusing on the “rumble and grumble” essays on which its strongest sections are based (“When Workers Rumbled: The Wismut Upheaval” and “The “Grumble Gesellschaft”: Industrial Defiance and Worker Protest in Early East Germany”).


Reviewed by Petr Luňák, Charles University (Prague)

Most analyses of the Sovietization of Central Europe have devoted little attention to the fact that Czechoslovakia and the Soviet occupation zone in Germany possessed Europe’s largest deposits of uranium ore. Zbynek Zeman and Rainer Karsch fill the void in a fascinating account of how the “uranium factor” affected the way the two countries were incorporated into the emerging Soviet bloc and how the ruthless excavation of uranium there affected their societies and economies.

As Zeman and Karlsch explain, uranium played almost no role in the last stages of the Second World War when victorious armies occupied large swaths of Central Europe. Not even Winston Churchill’s insistence that the U.S. Army move beyond the lines agreed at Yalta was motivated by any wish to control Europe’s largest deposits of uranium ore, of which the Western leaders were entirely ignorant. For a few months in 1945, U.S. forces occupied but then vacated territory that for years afterward provided almost all the fissile material needed to produce Soviet nuclear warheads, including the first bomb tested in August 1949. An intriguing question arises whether history might have taken a different course if the wartime Allies had known about the uranium deposits. The U.S. decision to bomb the Nazi nuclear processing facility in Auer near Oranienburg shortly before the end of the war was taken precisely in order to prevent it from falling into Soviet hands.

Soviet leaders quickly realized the importance of the region for the USSR’s nuclear competition with the West after Soviet forces had ferreted out the minerals in the immediate aftermath of the war. The uranium riches thus served to tighten Soviet control in the region and made Czechoslovakia’s escape from Iosif Stalin’s iron grip all but impossible. In the early 1950s, Soviet-bloc war plans routinely assumed that the goal of a putative Western attack would be to gain control of the uranium deposits.
The uranium factor in the Sovietization of Czechoslovakia was not only largely ignored by scholars but also conveniently forgotten by non-Communist politicians who emigrated after the Communist takeover in 1948. The story of the 1945 Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty giving the Soviet Union a monopoly over Czechoslovak uranium was a sort of guilty secret because all the leading political elites, regardless of political affiliation, readily participated in offering the precious ore to Stalin on a silver platter even before the rest of the country fell into his lap. Pushed by the pro-Soviet prime minister Zdeněk Fierlinger, President Edvard Beneš, after briefly hesitating, acquiesced in a treaty that gave Moscow exclusive access to the country’s uranium. In exchange Prague received a promise of Soviet support for Czechoslovak territorial claims vis-à-vis Poland and Austria and a vague commitment to develop the Czechoslovak mining industry in western Slovakia. Negotiated in utmost secrecy by Fierlinger, the draft was submitted to the government for approval in November 1945. The text elicited little discussion other than some consideration of the economic aspects of the deal.

Possibly having second thoughts, Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, who had envisaged Czechoslovakia as a bridge between the East and West, clumsily attempted to rectify the fait accompli. A few months after the treaty was signed, he assured the audience at the London conference of the United Nations that the ore excavated in Czechoslovakia would never be used for war purposes. To the bewilderment of the Fierlinger government, Masaryk subsequently proposed international inspections of the mines, which were in fact heavily guarded by Soviet troops. The unanimous reaction of the government, including non-Communist ministers, was sincere indignation. In a panicked reaction to this rebuttal, Masaryk quickly abandoned his solitary position.

After the Communist takeover, the uranium industry became a microcosm of the Soviet system with its forced labor, disregard for human welfare and freedom, and depredation of the environment. However, significant differences existed in the way East Germany and Czechoslovakia ran their uranium industries. The Czechoslovak industry at its peak in the 1950s relied more or less on prison work in the Soviet style, whereas East Germany managed to develop a comparatively efficient industry providing huge opportunities for voluntary workers. Only in 1961 were Czechoslovak political prisoners released from the uranium mines. Nonetheless, even those Germans who were financially well rewarded for their work in the uranium industry were intentionally kept in the dark about the health risks of exposure to radioactive material.

The book by Zeman and Karlsch is impressively researched and convincingly argued. However, another round of copyediting would have significantly improved the overall result. Typographical and stylistic inconsistencies (e.g., Jáchymov/Joachimsthal), often within the same paragraph, as well as misspellings of foreign names and terms (e.g., “Osubka-Morawski” for Osóbka-Morawski, “aide’s memoir” for aide-mémoire), are irritating distractions.

Reviewed by Simon Duke, European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht

Wilfried Loth’s impressive edited volume comes at an important juncture in the history of European integration and has the commendable aim of contributing to a “clarification of the European horizon.” The seven chapters are divided along logical themes that reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the research groups who contributed to a number of seminars and roundtables spread over two years, culminating in the Rome colloquium in 2007. The contributions are from nineteen prominent historians or political scientists drawn from seven countries. Most of the contributors are senior academics who grew up as European integration was moving ahead. The book therefore offers the collective benefits of many years of research.

The volume is divided into seven parts: the balance of historiography by Jost Düffler and N. Piers Ludlow; a chapter on the development of economic integration by Eric Bussière, Michel Dumoulin, and Sylvain Schirmann; a chapter on European institutions and political integration by Marie-Thérèse Bitsch and Wilfried Loth; four contributions on the construction of a European public sphere by Hartmut Kaelble, Luisa Passerini, Marie-Françoise Lévy, Marie-Noéle Sicard, and Robert Frank; a chapter on the problems of social Europe by Antonio Varsori and Josefnia Cuesta Bustillo; two contributions on Europe as international actor by Gérard Bossuat and Anne Deighton; and the experience of enlargements by Johnny Laursen, Anne Faber, and Antoine Marès. In each case the purpose was to consider a common theme from a multinational perspective.

*Experiencing Europe* can be read in several ways. One could dip into it according to the titles suggested above, but specialists in each of the headings might find little that is new. The full richness of the book emerges when read as a complete work. Indeed, only when it is read in this manner does the idea of the European experience emerge. The authors, to their collective credit, resist writing histories of the specific subthemes (although some resist the temptation less strongly than others). Instead, they seek to identify constants as well as transition points that led from the emergence of economic Europe to ideas (albeit premature) of a more political Europe; the turning point of 1961 and the British application for membership; the evolution of European Community institutions, notably the 1966 Luxembourg compromise and the first direct elections to the European parliament; the enlargements in the 1970s and 1980s as well as the more recent waves; and the emergence of European political cooperation in the 1970s and of the Common Foreign and Security Policy two decades later.

Some of the less obvious developments (at least to this reviewer) were fascinating, such as Luisa Passerini’s unfortunately brief analysis of the reformulation of the public/private divide through the media and, in particular, the visual arts. Similarly, Robert Frank’s discussion of the superimposition of a European culture on national cultures is superb. Other chapters, such as Antonio Varasi’s on European social policy,
forcefully remind us of the long and complicated heritage of some of the contemporary debates surrounding the French and Anglo-Saxon social models.

Several contributors, including Jost Düffer, Gérard Bossaut, and Anne Deighton, make the point that although the volume aims to catch the richness and complexity of the European experience, the story is not solely a European story. The significant role of third parties, such as the Soviet Union, the United States, the Council of Europe, and the European Free Trade Area, in shaping the experience is one of the recurring themes of the volume.

Like any edited volume, the book has a few weaknesses as well as strengths. Most of the contributors are historians, although some are more closely associated with international politics or political science. The differing approaches are evident, and the editors might have done well to integrate the contrasting viewpoints in a more systematic manner. Such eclecticism could be considered a strength rather than a weakness, but because of the interdisciplinary nature of the original undertaking, the editors may have lost a chance to weave different academic approaches (and even perhaps younger, less experienced European “voices”) into the volume. Readers might also have been interested to hear more from the newer European Union (EU) member-states whose historical perspectives may differ significantly from the older voices represented in this volume. This is a minor gripe, however, because any editorial decisions in a project of this magnitude are bound to involve compromises.

The acid test for the volume is whether it helps the reader understand the “European experience.” If the experience is defined as the processes, circumstances, and actors that have shaped the current construction of Europe, the answer is in the affirmative. But readers who expect a comprehensive history are likely to be disappointed. Commendably, the contributors chose to look at what is driving (and, conversely, blocking) European construction, and this meant being selective and resisting any “grand lessons of history” approaches. The experience, as Robert Frank observes in the concluding chapter of the volume, is to be found in the dynamism and complexity of the construction; in the diversity of the approaches and ideas; in the resilience of national and local culture despite the emergence of a European public space; in the enlargement of the EU; and in the institutional evolution of the structures supporting European integration. Such complexity is hardly surprising from a union that has always, and correctly, refused to define its *finalité* and that remains, for the most part, Jacques Delor’s “unidentified political object.”

*Experiencing Europe* arose out of the celebrations of 50 years of being “together,” as the uninspiring multicolored logo of the day informed us. The volume is commendably open about the many setbacks and the lack of togetherness, addressing the failure of the European Defense Community, the rejection of the United Kingdom’s first application for membership, the collapse of the monetary “snake,” the democratic deficit, the worryingly low turnout for European parliamentary elections, and the successive “no’s” in referenda on treaties from Maastricht onward. The EU finds itself at another crossroads now that, after much struggle, the Lisbon Treaty has been ratified. But this latest struggle has left many questions about the way the EU conducts its business, whether any further enlargement of the union should occur, the extent to
which Europeans identify with the EU, and the role the EU aspires to achieve on the international stage. Experiencing Europe could not have appeared at a better time to help us reflect on just these issues. As T. S. Eliot observed in Burnt Norton, “Time present and time past, / Are both perhaps present in time future, / And time future contained in time past.” This book deserves a wide readership among those looking backward, as well as forward.


Reviewed by Kristian C. Gustafson, Brunel University (UK)

Few Latin American historical topics have been as much discussed as the fall of the socialist regime of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973. Much has been published about the role of the United States in the end of Allende’s government and about U.S. support for the subsequent dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. A large amount of this literature has sought to demonize the U.S. government, especially President Richard Nixon and his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, despite a considerable body of evidence that paints a more complex picture. Lubna Z. Qureshi’s *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende* falls into this ideologically motivated bracket.

Qureshi’s book offers no new revelations about the U.S. role in Chile and takes no line not already pursued in other works on the topic within the last five years by distinguished authors such as Christopher Hitchens, Peter Kornbluh, and Jonathan Haslam. This is surprising because the book, published in 2009, began as a PhD dissertation completed in 2006. Qureshi had access to these works; yet she all but disregards them. What is more surprising for research of this vintage is that it makes almost no use of the large Spanish-language literature about Allende’s government and the subsequent military coup. Where are the works of Joaquin Fernandois and Joan Garcés and much other original research recently published by the Santiago think tank Centro de Estudios Publicos? Apparently unknown or unread. Qureshi lists the Chilean Foreign Relations Ministry Archive in her bibliography, but I could find only two citations from this archive, both of English-language documents (see ch. 4 n. 127). It seems a gross oversight for a book about affairs in Chile to make only token use of Spanish-language sources.

More surprising still is Qureshi’s failure to deal with the arguments presented in Jonathan Haslam’s *The Nixon Administration and the Death of Allende’s Chile* (London: Verso, 2005) and my own work, *Hostile Intent: U.S. Covert Operations in Chile* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2007). Both of these works are cited and dismissed in her introduction. With regard to Haslam, Qureshi writes, “[In his view] Allende was a man of poor political judgment who lacked any competence in economic matters. To make matters worse, Allende had a sentimental attachment to Moscow and its worldwide agenda. . . . In this book, I will challenge these affirmations” (p. xii). Yet at no
point in the subsequent text does she actually engage and refute the evidence presented in those works with which she so pointedly disagrees. Haslam’s work is at least cited sparsely throughout Nixon, Kissinger and Allende (my own not at all), but the particular arguments Haslam and I make are not dealt with. The introduction is the last time in the text that one reads Haslam’s or my name or finds comments on any of our arguments. Qureshi fails to capitalize on openings presented by some newly available declassified documents to criticize my own work or that of Haslam (with whom I do not agree on many counts), apparently choosing instead to ignore these documents. If this is how she chooses to deal with the carefully weighted evidence and arguments of other academics, what reliability can we ascribe to the construction of her own assertions?

Qureshi’s arguments throughout are highly American-centric, which is curious because U.S. exceptionalism seems to be the basis of her critique of the Nixon-Kissinger team’s treatment of Chile. A strength of Haslam and of Spanish-language work such as the book by former Allende adviser Joan Garces, El estado y los problemas tácticos en el gobierno de Allende (The State and the Tactical Problems of Allende’s Government), is that they sympathetically highlight how Allende’s own weak leadership of his combative coalition led to increased polarization in Chilean politics. Qureshi dismisses Chilean political strife with a few sentences about the nationalization of the copper industry in 1970 (p. 86)—the only political issue on which all parties unanimously agreed and upon which they had agreed for many years prior to Allende’s government, even as they fought tooth and nail on every other issue.

According to Qureshi, Chile was and would have remained at political and economic peace had the United States not come along. She says nothing about the disastrous decline in Chilean food production stemming from Allende’s ill-planned and ill-executed agrarian reform. In her depiction, the American “blockade” was to blame. Hyperinflation in Chile is likewise dismissed—with not a word about the massive economic mismanagement so ably covered by Haslam—because “the credit blockade deserves much of the blame” (p. 104). On this same page Qureshi also incorrectly asserts that the United States invoked the Hickenlooper Amendment against Chile, something that never actually occurred. Such basic facts should have been easily ascertained.

Qureshi likewise rejects recent arguments (many coming out of Chile) that position Chile as a Cold War playground in which Cuban and Soviet interference was as real as that of the “North Americans” (Qureshi chooses to use the transliteration of the Latin American term for a U.S. citizen, which Canadians and Mexicans might find slightly damning by association). She uses a weak secondary source to assert, incorrectly, that the United States had “a minimum of 100 special personnel” criminally operating against Allende’s government (p. 33), but she dismisses the well-established presence of 150 Cuban agents as “modest” (p. 112). America’s “exorbitant contribution to the Chilean military” (of which she cites only $5 million, a very low figure) was, she argues, clearly made to suborn the military toward dictatorial overthrow (p. 96). The later Soviet offer of $300 million in military credits? “One might make the case that [it was] for Allende’s self-defense” (p. 114). Qureshi is at pains to argue
that the United States had no justification to fear Allende's “peaceful transition to socialism” (p. 48), but she seems to see no problem with the extra-constitutional Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria militia (of which Allende was clearly wit-
ting), built with Cuban guns imported in diplomatic bags (pp. 96, 130), or with the numerous Latin American Communist insurgent groups sheltering in Chile with Allende's knowledge (p. 111). Qureshi's moral scale easily slides to suit the occasion. 

What we do not have here is an original, balanced account of the important histor-
ic events of the Cold War as they played out in Chile. Qureshi's short book (only 161 pages) is instead a blinkered and tendentious assault on Nixon and Kissinger. Readers who want a nuanced history of the era that fully engages with the very real ac-
tions of the Cubans, the Soviet Union, the many contending branches of the U.S. government, or, perish the thought, Chileans themselves will have to look elsewhere.

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Reviewed by Bálint Szalontai, Mongolia International University

This book has much in common with William H. Gleysteen's *Massive Entanglement, Marginal Influence: Carter and Korea in Crisis* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), not only in its subject but also in its political approach. Describing South Korea's political metamorphosis from Park Chung Hee's Yushin system to Chun Doo Hwan's military junta, both books concentrate on how the United States reacted to these tumultuous events. The motives of the South Korean actors are inves-
tigated only in passing; little is said about why Kim Jae Kyu assassinated the president or why Chun arrested General Chung Sung Hwa in December 1979.

Similarly, Young shares Gleysteen's aversion to Jimmy Carter's policy toward Ko-
rea. Both authors seem to regard Carter's decision to withdraw U.S. ground forces from South Korea primarily as a manifestation of the president's alleged naive ideal-
ism, though it might have been more productive to place the decision into the context of Sino-American relations. After all, President Richard Nixon, hardly a naive crus-
sader for human rights, also withdrew a U.S. division from South Korea in the first phase of Chinese-American rapprochement, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, another hard-
bitten realist and the chief architect of post-1978 Sino-U.S. reconciliation, supported Carter's troop withdrawal plan until the very end. Partly because of the authors' some-
what narrow perspective, they also fail to note that North Korea, the supposed beneficiary of the troop withdrawal policy, was far less emboldened by Carter's steps than one might assume. Hungarian archival documents reveal that North Korean leaders felt increasingly cornered by Carter's diplomatic maneuvers, such as his “cross-
recognition” plan and his efforts to achieve Sino-American and Sino-Japanese recon-
\ciliation.

Apart from these limitations, Young's book is an excellent source on U.S.–South
Korean relations. Whereas Gleysteen, a former U.S. ambassador to Seoul, focused his attention on the actions and inner debates of the U.S. State Department, Young, an assistant military attaché at the same embassy, provides the reader with rare insights into the perceptions, motives, and objectives of the top brass in U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) and the Defense Department and also describes the occasional disagreements between the State and Defense Departments. Thanks to his position and his fluency in Korean, Young maintained closer formal and informal contacts with South Korean military officers than did most of his superiors. Young's familiarity with the mindset of South Korean officers in general, and that of Chun Doo Hwan in particular, enables him to understand why Gleysteen's arguments and protests failed to impress, let alone deter, Chun.

Young, to his credit, acknowledges that the U.S. government “made several errors in dealing with the events of 1979–80” (p. 169). In his view, these errors include the insufficient attention paid to intelligence reports on tension within the South Korean army; an excessive and partly unwarranted preoccupation with the supposed North Korean threat; a failure to establish contacts with the military moderates; and an unwillingness to disassociate the United States openly from Chun's two successive coups. Young demonstrates that Korean democratization during these years was definitely lower on the Defense Department's priority list than issues of direct military significance. In this respect, Young concludes, the United States was indirectly responsible for the forceful reestablishment of authoritarian rule in South Korea. On the other hand, he goes to great lengths to refute allegations that the U.S. government foresaw, or even instigated, Park's assassination, Chun's takeover, and the massacre in Kwangju.

In light of the well-documented U.S. involvement in coups in Iran, Guatemala, and elsewhere, one might find it somewhat difficult to take such claims of innocence at face value. Nevertheless, Young's depiction of the techniques used by Park and Chun to control, manipulate, and outwit U.S. civilian and military representatives is convincing enough to show the real limits of U.S. political influence in South Korea. For instance, Seoul's dependence on U.S. military support by no means discouraged Park from placing U.S. diplomats under open, constant surveillance. As Young notes, “there almost always seemed to be someone who would appear each day to ask me where I was going, the purpose of my visit, how long I was staying, and such” (p. 12). Nor could Washington use the tried-and-true Soviet method of playing off one elite faction of a "satellite" regime against another. According to Young, the U.S. approach was to maintain contacts only with the group that appeared to hold the reins of power at the moment. Still, the real strength of the South Korean military leaders seems to have been the element of surprise. If they wanted to achieve their aims in defiance of U.S. opposition, they had to present a fait accompli. Long-term projects, such as Park's nuclear weapons program, proved more difficult to conceal than, say, Chun's preparations for the "12/12 Incident."

Young's book contains some much-needed information about certain important episodes of U.S.–North Korean relations. Among other things, he describes the heated debates between USFK, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Ambassador Richard
Sneider about how to deal with the so-called axe killing (or “tree-cutting”) incident in Panmunjom and reveals that General Morris Brady, by embarking on a “foolish and dangerous” reconnaissance flight in his command-and-control helicopter, came close to triggering a large-scale clash between U.S. and North Korean forces (p. 25). During post-1991 talks with North Korean officials, Young gained substantial insight into North Korean negotiating techniques, and he portrays his partners in a colorful and objective way.


Reviewed by David Easter, King's College, London.

In the early and mid-1960s Indonesia caused great concern to U.S. policymakers. The Indonesian president, Sukarno, was a radical anti-imperialist who aggressively challenged the vestiges of European colonialism in Southeast Asia, first by demanding that the Netherlands cede to him the territory of West Irian and then by embarking on a diplomatic-military offensive called *Konfrontasi* (Confrontation) against Britain and Malaysia. To support these campaigns, Sukarno established close ties with U.S. enemies the USSR and the People’s Republic of China. The domestic situation in Indonesia was equally alarming to the United States because the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), steadily increased its power and influence under the patronage of Sukarno.

Only after a series of confused and bloody events in Indonesia from 1965 to 1967 was the Communist threat eliminated to Washington’s satisfaction. In 1965 a coup was mounted in Jakarta by an obscure group that became known as the 30th of September Movement. The coup was swiftly suppressed by the army but not before the plotters had killed six leading Indonesian generals. The Indonesian army accused the PKI of masterminding the 30th September Movement and retaliated with a ferocious campaign of repression against the party. An estimated 300,000–500,000 people were killed, and the PKI was eliminated as a political force. The army leadership, headed by Suharto, then dislodged Sukarno and established a military dictatorship. Suharto’s government abandoned *Konfrontasi*, distanced itself from Moscow and Beijing, and established a friendly relationship with the United States.

For many years this violent, turbulent period in Indonesia was neglected in histories of the Cold War in Asia, overshadowed as it was by the U.S. war in Vietnam. Since the late 1990s, however, the release of U.S., Australian, and British documents has encouraged fresh interest in Indonesia’s part in the Cold War. Several books have examined Western policy toward Sukarno’s Indonesia, including John Subritzky, *Confronting Sukarno: British, American, Australian and New Zealand Diplomacy in the Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation, 1961–65* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 2000); Matthew Jones, *Conflict and Confrontation in South East Asia, 1961–1965:*

The main focus of Simpson's book is U.S. policy toward Indonesia from the late 1950s to 1968. U.S. policy alternated between trying to establish a modus vivendi with Sukarno and trying to weaken or remove him. The United States initially supported democracy in Indonesia but then secretly backed regional rebellions in 1957–1958. Under John F. Kennedy, the United States helped Sukarno to recover West Irian from the Dutch and offered extensive economic aid. Under Lyndon Johnson, the United States opposed Konfrontasi, froze aid, and supported Sukarno's removal from power by the army. Simpson reveals that behind these apparently incoherent switches in policy the United States had consistent aims and generally favored the Indonesian military. He argues that the U.S. government sought to counter Soviet and Chinese influence, combat the rise of the PKI, and promote capitalist economic development. To achieve these goals, the United States cultivated the Indonesian army as an anti-Communist force in Indonesia and used covert means to strengthen it against the PKI. These clandestine efforts culminated in the military's seizure of power in 1966–1967. Simpson is unable to add much to Roosa's account of the origins and causes of the 30th of September Movement, but he does provide fresh information on how the United States aided the Indonesian army in its suppression of the PKI and overthrow of Sukarno. He also looks at the period after 1966, which has not been covered by other historians, and reveals that the United States linked support for the Indonesian military regime not only to anti-Communism but also to free-market economic reform.

The book's particular strength is the way it connects U.S. policy toward Indonesia with broader issues of the Cold War in the Third World. Simpson argues that in Indonesia and elsewhere Kennedy and Johnson were committed to military-led economic and political development, which he describes as “military modernization” (p. 3). The United States saw a military government as a means to develop Indonesia, help it reach modernity, and open it up to U.S. investment and trade. For American modernization theorists such as Walt Rostow, military modernization was a secure way to achieve development goals without giving the Communists, the scavengers of the modernization process, a chance to win power. U.S. backing for military modernization could also be seen in other areas of the Third World in the mid-to-late 1960s, notably Latin America. Because Washington increasingly favored military modernization, it stopped promoting democracy in the Third World and allowed local armed forces to crush political opponents, even on such an extreme scale as the mass killings in Indonesia.

The book could be improved in a couple of ways. Simpson looks at the attitudes of the Indonesian army, but he could say more about the army's role and the extent to which it and other Third World militaries endorsed or even initiated the project of
military modernization. The book’s bibliography also does not show which primary source archives were used, although detailed endnotes and a list of secondary works are included. Overall, this is a worthy addition to the literature and one that sheds interesting new light on U.S. policy toward Indonesia and the Third World in general during the Cold War.


Reviewed by Robert J. McMahon, *Ohio State University*

Over the past decade, a growing number of scholars have explored the international dimensions of the Vietnam War. In so doing, they have managed to nudge the center of gravity for Vietnam War scholarship away from its traditional fixation on the role of the United States. In this admirably compact and briskly written volume, Mark Atwood Lawrence builds on this trend, presenting the conflict as an episode in global history. He locates its roots both in the long history of Vietnam and in the historical conjuncture between decolonization and the Cold War while emphasizing the critical contributions of Vietnamese and other belligerents to the war’s key developments. The United States remains the central actor in Lawrence’s story, to be sure. Yet he shows throughout how the decisions of other actors—in Hanoi, Saigon, Beijing, Moscow, and other places—“shaped, constrained, and sometimes determined U.S. choices” (p. 3).

A Washington-centric lens yields too distorted a picture of the origins, course, and outcome of what the Vietnamese, ironically, call “the American War.” By the same token, decentering the United States carries its own risks. If the U.S. government had not decided to deploy hundreds of thousands of combat troops, a civil war within Vietnam would not have metamorphosed into a major international conflict. Consequently, Lawrence’s decision “to strike a balance by examining the American role within a broadly international context” (p. 4) makes eminent sense—and an intelligent balance informs and gives shape to the entire narrative.

Both sides of the East-West divide contributed to the internationalization of the Franco-Vietminh conflict, almost from its inception. Policymakers in Washington feared that a victory for Ho Chi Minh’s forces would constitute a major setback for the West in the Cold War. Hence, despite serious reservations, U.S. officials began to provide military aid to the French, their North Atlantic Treaty Organization partner, in early 1950. Their counterparts in Moscow and Beijing also identified important global interests at stake in Indochina, prompting their near-simultaneous recognition of Ho’s fledgling Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). DRV leaders, for their part, skillfully—and not for the last time—exploited these international tensions to advance their own interests.

Following the Geneva compromise of 1954, which Lawrence demonstrates owed
much to the insistence of Ho’s erstwhile Communist allies that he not hold out for a unified Vietnam, a restive calm prevailed throughout the divided country. During that period, the administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower launched an elaborate nation-building program south of the 17th parallel. Yet the superficial achievements of the program only partially hid fundamental structural weaknesses. “The result was an aura of middle-class prosperity in the cities,” Lawrence observes, “but also a dangerous dependence on the United States to maintain a standard of living wildly out of line with South Vietnam’s actual productive capacity” (p. 60). Nor did the South Vietnamese government ever achieve genuine legitimacy among its predominantly rural population. A southern-based insurgency against the U.S.-backed regime of Ngo Dinh Diem erupted in 1957, drawing the formal support of Hanoi two years later. By the time John F. Kennedy became president, an insurgent war was raging in South Vietnam that, in Lawrence’s apt characterization “was simultaneously a civil war among Southerners and a cross-border effort by Hanoi to reunify the country on its terms” (p. 65).

Lawrence devotes four of his eight chapters to the years bracketed by the initial U.S. military escalation, in 1961, and the conclusion of the ill-fated Paris Peace Accords, in 1973. Those chapters track many of the standard treatments of that crucial period, offering a succinct and well-developed explication of the military and diplomatic stalemate that had developed by the late 1960s. The Tet Offensive of early 1968, which many scholars identify as the war’s watershed, “merely changed the nature of the stalemate,” Lawrence avers. The offensive confirmed the skepticism of the U.S. public toward the war and led to the opening of fitful negotiations. But “neither side abandoned its key aims in South Vietnam,” and each “continued to search for the other’s breaking point” (p. 116). The administration of Richard M. Nixon, whose approach Lawrence excoriates in an overly brief chapter, tried and failed to break the stalemate only to settle for a deeply flawed peace settlement. Lawrence suggests that the Paris accords just “left the door open to a future communist victory” (p. 138).

A final chapter considers, in necessarily compressed fashion, the war’s concluding phase, developments in post-conflict Indochina, and the contested memories of the war in both Vietnam and the United States.

In all, this short book provides a sound, lively, and accessible synthesis of the vast Vietnam War literature. It would make an ideal supplemental text in a wide range of undergraduate courses.

Reviewed by Mark Atwood Lawrence, University of Texas at Austin

The Vietnam War has inspired a vast and extraordinarily contentious body of scholarship, and the flow of new work shows no sign of abating. In fact, the U.S. misadven-
ture in Iraq has intensified debate over the American experience in Vietnam four decades earlier, encouraging commentators to draw parallels between the two conflicts. Did George W. Bush, just like Vietnam-era leaders, send the United States into an impossible mess by failing to appreciate the limits of America’s ability to shape a foreign society? Or did Bush’s critics once again risk snatching defeat from the jaws of victory by forcing the withdrawal of U.S. forces before they could complete their mission? Seldom have disputes over the lessons of Vietnam reverberated with such passion.

Gary R. Hess’s superb examination of debates about the Vietnam War would have been welcome no matter what the political context in which it was published. Indeed, Vietnam: Explaining America’s Lost War is the finest effort by any scholar to date to take stock of the voluminous historiography of the war, expose the central points of contention, and weigh the persuasiveness of competing claims in light of available evidence. As such, the book unquestionably deserves the careful attention of scholars and students of the war. But Hess’s study has particular resonance amid the recent furor over the Iraq-Vietnam comparison. His book deserves—but, because it is essentially an academic book designed for classroom use, will likely not receive—the attention of anyone prone to strong opinions about the Vietnam War or its relevance to recent events.

In seven lucid, succinct chapters, Hess examines how historians of different interpretive stripes have answered seven major questions about the U.S. experience in Vietnam. Was U.S. intervention necessary to protect vital national security interests, or was it based on a “mistaken” understanding of Vietnam’s geopolitical significance? Should the Kennedy and Johnson administrations be criticized for missing opportunities for a peaceful settlement in the early to mid-1960s or for squandering a chance to win the war through bolder action to defend South Vietnam? Might the U.S. military, once engaged in combat, have achieved victory if civilian policymakers had allowed it to use more force more quickly? Or might the U.S. military have prevailed if it had focused more on a pacification strategy aimed at winning South Vietnamese “hearts and minds”? Did the American media torpedo the war effort by presenting an unjustifiably negative picture of the fighting? Was the Tet Offensive a major U.S. victory that could have led to an overall American triumph in the war if only U.S. leaders had pressed their advantages? And did Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger find a sustainable formula for preserving an independent, non-Communist South Vietnam, only to see their success undone by congressional refusal to back the Saigon regime once U.S. forces had been withdrawn?

In each case, Hess systematically summarizes the “orthodox” and “revisionist” lines of interpretation—terminology that will be familiar to any reader well-versed in the historiography of the war. Orthodox historians, Hess explains, are those who contend that U.S. leaders misunderstood the scale of the political problems they faced in South Vietnam and committed the United States to a war that was fundamentally unwinnable. Revisionists, by contrast, claim that the United States and its South Vietnamese ally could have won the war if leaders in Washington had shown greater determination and chosen the right methods with which to wage it.

Hess summarizes the views of both sides with remarkable rigor and clarity, but
his greatest achievement lies in his persuasive judgments about which camp ultimately makes the better case. To be sure, some conservative readers will likely object that Hess, a well-known orthodox historian of the war, cannot be counted on to evaluate the revisionist view fairly. But Hess, even while broadly endorsing the orthodox view, allows that the revisionists have made some valid points that require incorporation into a satisfying overall understanding of the war. “Some of their arguments deserve fuller consideration,” Hess asserts (p. 210). He accepts, for example, that U.S. leaders had good reason to fear Communist expansion in Vietnam after 1954 and that U.S. and South Vietnamese forces had far more battlefield success after 1968 than orthodox historians have generally acknowledged. None of this, though, leads Hess to go along with revisionist claims that the Vietnam War was a necessary expenditure of U.S. resources or that the United States had essentially won the war before the antiwar movement and Congress threw the victory away. Hess thereby points toward a sensible post-revisionist synthesis that essentially validates the orthodoxy while folding in the strongest revisionist contentions.

The main shortcoming of the book is Hess’s failure to take much account of the latest scholarship emerging from Vietnamese, Chinese, and Soviet archives, a rapidly expanding body of work that mostly bypasses the orthodox/revisionist debates about U.S. behavior in favor of a new set of questions focused on decision-making in the Communist bloc. The problem is not that Hess is interested in outdated questions. As the debate over the Iraq war suggests, the debate over the reasons for America’s “lost war” remains highly pertinent. Rather, the problem is that some of the newer scholarship facilitates judgments about the U.S. experience in Vietnam by clarifying the nature of America’s enemies and the causes of the U.S. failure.

Such criticism is, however, nothing more than a quibble. The historiography of the war has grown so large that one can hardly take an author to task for failing to master all of it. Moreover, Hess deserves credit for deftly critiquing some of the most recent controversial scholarship on the war, above all Mark Moyar’s revisionist polemic Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954–1965 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). One can only hope that scholars of other contentious historical subjects will follow Hess’s model and produce similarly fair, even-handed, and rigorous surveys of complex historical literatures.


Reviewed by Michael Kort, Boston University

In the preface to Retribution: The Battle for Japan, 1944–1945, British journalist and military historian Max Hastings writes that his purpose is not to provide yet another detailed recitation of the campaigns during the last year of World War II in the Far
East. Instead, he seeks to “portray [the] massive and terrible human experience” of the final phase of the struggle that brought about the defeat of Japan, focusing on “how and why things were done, what it was like to do them, and what manner of men and women did them” (p. xix). In this, and in a great deal more, Hastings succeeds admirably. *Retribution* ably chronicles the fighting during that pivotal year, consistently conveying—via memoirs and numerous author interviews—the experiences and perspectives of infantrymen, sailors, pilots, civilians, and prisoners-of-war on both sides while keeping the overall strategic picture clearly in view and providing insightful commentary on long-standing debates regarding the methods used by the United States and its allies to defeat Japan.

Hastings does not hesitate to pass judgment on Allied civilian leaders and military commanders, often subjecting the performances of the latter in particular to withering criticism. Nor does he overlook the offenses the Allies committed in Asia both before the war as colonial powers and during the war itself. At the same time he emphatically rejects moral equivalency in assessing the fundamental issue of what the two sides stood for and how they fought the war. Japan was a fascistic, militarist state and ruthless conqueror whose actions, beginning with its attack on China, caused tens of millions of deaths. This is why Hastings approves of the war crimes trials the Allies conducted once peace was restored, even though he acknowledges that the trials were flawed. He stresses that whatever faults the Allies had, their behavior at its worst pales in comparison to the brutality the Japanese routinely directed against their Western adversaries and, pointedly, against Asians whose countries they invaded and ruthlessly exploited for their own ends. Hastings likewise convincingly argues that, given Japan’s refusal to consider surrender terms even minimally acceptable to the Allies and Tokyo’s undeniable determination in the summer of 1945 to fight on to the bitter end, the methods used in defeating the Japanese, including the nuclear bomb, were justified. Hence the title “Retribution,” the severe fate that Japan—or, more accurately, its leaders—brought upon itself by its conduct during the war.

Hastings ranges widely to include aspects of the struggle that until now have received limited coverage from Western authors. This includes detailed coverage of the 46-month-long British struggle against the Japanese army in Burma, the lengthiest single campaign of World War II. Two chapters on Burma enable Hastings to chronicle the considerable scale of the British Empire’s effort against Japan and the achievements of General Bill Slim, the officer Hastings calls Britain’s ablest field commander of the war. Yet Hastings admits that not only was the effort of Slim’s “Forgotten Army” almost unacknowledged in Britain but that it contributed little to the core effort to defeat Japan. Hastings’s coverage of the China theater highlights the dreadful suffering the Chinese people endured at the hands of the Japanese, a fate compounded by the ineptitude of China’s Nationalist regime. He adds that the “terrible price” China paid “contributed almost nothing to the Allied victory” (p. 222). Hastings also effectively debunks the myth that Mao Zedong’s Communists were an alternative to the Nationalists with respect to enhancing the war effort against Japan. Hastings correctly notes that Mao during the war focused almost exclusively on preparing for the
postwar struggle to gain control of China. Mao worked to build his power base, financing his efforts with large-scale opium trading, and fought the Japanese only when he had to. China’s failure to be an effective ally in 1944–1945 increased the importance of the Soviet Union’s pledge to enter the war against Japan.

Even as Hastings uses a panoramic focus to include British, Chinese, and, at the end, Soviet participation in the war against Japan, the United States necessarily occupies center stage of his narrative. Hastings has his criticisms of the U.S. war effort, but not with regard to the issues that matter most. He rejects assertions that racism governed the ferocity with which U.S. soldiers fought the Japanese, responding that it was the Japanese who set the pattern for how the war would be fought and that “in an imperfect world, it seems unreasonable to expect that any combatant in a war will grant adversaries conspicuously better treatment than his own people receive at their hands” (p. 8). Yet Hastings never demonizes the Japanese soldiers; to the contrary, he more than once expresses empathy for men who were neglected and ultimately deserted by their own government. Above all Hastings vigorously defends the U.S. decision to use nuclear bombs to force a Japanese surrender. He correctly writes that the notion that Japan was prepared to surrender prior to Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been thoroughly discredited by modern scholarship. He makes the “simple point” that had Tokyo sought to end the war on terms approaching Allied demands, “the only credible means of doing so was an approach to Washington” (p. 462). Hastings justifiably cites as irrefutable evidence of Japan’s intentions the massive reinforcement of its garrisons on Kyushu, precisely where the United States was planning to land its invasion force, and the debate via cable between Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo and the Japanese ambassador to Moscow, Naotake Sato. Both of these developments were known to U.S. leaders by virtue of decryption of Japanese military and diplomatic signal traffic.

It is surprising that after thoroughly debunking the myth that Japan was ready to surrender before Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Hastings is willing to accept, albeit haphazardly and inconsistently, random bits and pieces of the equally discredited corollary that the objective of limiting Soviet postwar expansionism entered into the U.S. decision to use the nuclear bomb. That notwithstanding, Hastings concludes that the “principal and overwhelming reason for dropping the bomb was to compel the Japanese to end the war” (p. 463).

Hastings has written a book for the general reader as well as for scholars, and some of the latter may find his system of documentation frustratingly incomplete. But that is a minor defect in this excellent volume that contributes significantly to our understanding of the momentous and tragic 1944–1945 battle for Japan.

Reviewed by Nicholas Daniloff, Northeastern University and Harvard University

The threat of nuclear annihilation during the Cold War occasionally pushed journalists into becoming unorthodox couriers between the superpowers. The best known, albeit contrived, example was the role that the ABC News correspondent John Scali supposedly played at the height of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Many later assumed that Scali’s “back-channel” contacts with a Soviet foreign intelligence official in October 1962 were crucial in facilitating a settlement of the crisis. Archival evidence has debunked this notion, but the myth lives on.

Yet nearly a decade before the Scali episode, another journalist genuinely did assist communication between Communist China and the United States at a time when the two countries had no direct way of talking to each other because of the absence of diplomatic relations. The event occurred at the Geneva conference of 1954 aimed at ending the warfare in Indochina. As weeks dragged on, China became concerned that the United States might intervene militarily in Vietnam, possibly with nuclear weapons. The Chinese delegation wanted to signal Beijing’s readiness to accept partition.

The messenger in this case was Seymour Topping who carried the word as an Associated Press (AP) correspondent from an agitated Chinese official, Huang Hua. Topping writes, “In the hope of reaching an agreement that afternoon, Huang Hua wanted me to convey the Chinese terms for an agreement to the American delegation even if I would do it in the form of a dispatch to the Associated Press. He was employing this device out of desperation because [Secretary of State John Foster] Dulles had banned any bilateral contacts between the Chinese and American delegations in the absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries. . . . I wrote and filed my dispatch and at the same time gave a copy to the American delegation. I reported that the Chinese were prepared to sign an agreement, already approved in principle by Britain and France, based on the partition of Vietnam. I quoted Huang Hua as saying that a cease-fire agreement could be reached two days hence—when the deadline would expire for [French Premier Pierre] Mendès France to either end the war or resign.”

How Topping developed this trusting relationship with Huang Hua, the adversary, recalls how *The Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward became friendly with Mark Felt, a high official at the Federal Bureau of Investigation who later became known as the key source “Deep Throat” during the Watergate scandal. The story is remarkably the same: cub reporter meets low-level official; both men grow in their jobs, remain in contact, and find a critical link at a crucial moment in history.

In Topping’s case, his first acquaintance with Huang dated to 1946, eight years before the Geneva conference. At that time he was leaving the U.S. military in the Far East after World War II. He was determined to become a reporter and got a job with the International News Service covering the Communist side of the Chinese civil war. Traveling to the cave city of Yenan, Topping almost immediately met Huang and be-
came friendly with him. They would spend time together satisfying Huang’s curiosity about the United States, its history, and its possible intentions.

Topping’s work as a Cold War correspondent made for a fabulous career. His devotion to foreign affairs took him to China, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Germany (both West and East), the Soviet Union, Cuba, New York, and Washington. I knew “Top” personally when we both served in Moscow during the Cuban missile crisis. His book is a notable contribution to the history of the Cold War as seen by an astute observer.

One of the things I found intriguing about this highly experienced reporter was his bemusement that high U.S. political and military officials would occasionally seek out his views and then just as quickly disregard his words of caution.

A prime example occurred in Saigon in February 1965 at the start of the U.S. build-up in South Vietnam. Topping was invited by the chief U.S. spokesman Barry Zorthian to lunch with McGeorge Bundy, President Lyndon Johnson’s national security adviser and one of “the best and the brightest” Harvard intellectuals from the Kennedy administration. This was Bundy’s first trip to Vietnam, and he betrayed scant knowledge of the country. At one point, the conversation turned to a proposal to start an escalating bombing campaign to break the will of the North Vietnamese. Topping recalled that this approach ignored a thousand years of Vietnamese resistance against the Chinese and more recently against the French. He predicted that such a campaign would only stiffen the determination of the North Vietnamese to resist.

Topping turned to Bundy and remarked that if the United States pursued a massive build-up and bombing campaign, the Johnson administration would eventually be confronted “with the choice of withdrawal or accepting a protracted struggle similar to that of the British on the northwest frontier of India in the nineteenth century.” Bundy testily snapped, “We cannot do that.” He then flew back to Washington with a 13-page report urging a policy of “sustained reprisal against North Vietnam.”

Topping details similar experiences with General Douglas MacArthur, his intelligence chief Major General Charles Willoughby, and General William Westmoreland, who on a variety of occasions listened patiently to Topping’s observations but then disregarded them.

Was Topping’s disgust at being dismissed simply journalistic vanity? From my own experience I would venture that journalists not infrequently possess more understanding of a critical situation than do recently appointed high officials. These officials feel a duty to hear the views of a keen observer, but they essentially believe (as apparently did President George W. Bush) that information from their colleagues and intelligence systems is more actionable than the thoughts of a mere journalist, even a highly experienced one.

Topping has critical observations, too, for some fellow Times reporters. He found that legendary Washington observer James “Scotty” Reston served as a near shill for John F. Kennedy after the president’s difficult one-on-one encounter with Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna in 1961, downplaying the Soviet leader’s harsh language and reserving the real story of the meeting for his memoirs years later. Topping also comments on Pulitzer-prize winning Harrison Salisbury, who caused a furor with exclusive reports from North Vietnam about the questionable effect of U.S. bombing. Salis-
bury’s trip to Hanoi in December 1966 was a coup that he had been seeking for a long time. Apparently the North Vietnamese understood the public relations potential of a *Times* account of their determination to fight on for another twenty years if necessary.

Salisbury’s reports were denounced by critics as amounting to North Vietnamese propaganda because they were carelessly sourced. This was noticed immediately by editors in New York when the first dispatch arrived, and they took steps to clarify that Salisbury’s information from North Vietnamese sources was not independently verifiable. For subsequent stories a key editor was absent, and the flawed sourcing slipped through. The uproar caused Defense Department spokesman Arthur Sylvester to denounce the *Times* as “The New Hanoi Times.” Secretary of State Dean Rusk challenged the credibility of Salisbury’s reporting and called *Times* publisher Arthur Sulzberger to find out whether Salisbury was asking the right questions. The *Times* countered by suggesting that Rusk submit a list of his own questions. Rusk complied, but the questions came too late. Rarely do we get such a frank, inside look at sympathetic cooperation (not contention) between the “Good Gray Times” and a U.S. administration.

Topping joined the *Times* quite unexpectedly in 1959 when he was the AP’s bureau chief in West Berlin. Returning to New York to take part in an AP editors’ conference, he received an unexpected summons to visit the *Times* foreign editor, Emmanuel Freedman. Presented with an offer, he immediately joined the newspaper and junked the AP and its conference.

After a year’s work on the city desk in New York, he and his family were dispatched to Moscow. The assignment turned out to be “consuming but rewarding.” The period of 1961–1963 was the era of the Cuban missile crisis, which nearly brought the Soviet Union and the United States into direct conflict. Topping’s coverage was direct and honest but without the exclusives he produced on Asian matters. This was not surprising, because access to information in the USSR was tightly controlled. Even Russian-speaking Western journalists in those days were denied access to Soviet political insiders.

During this period, relations between Moscow and Beijing sharply deteriorated, and Topping documented each element of the split, starting with a curious editorial in *Pravda* on 12 June 1961 that berated “revisionists and sectarians.” Again, he was puzzled by the lack of effect his reports had on U.S. decision-makers. “One of the more inexplicable aspects of American policy in Asia during the 1960s,” he writes, “was the disinclination to take cognizance or advantage of the Sino-Soviet dispute. Despite my reporting from Moscow on the ideological split, American policy makers continued to base their strategy in Asia on the theory that there existed a Soviet bloc, embracing both the Soviet Union and China, with the Kremlin as the directing center.”

No review of Topping’s career would be complete without mention of his wife, Audrey Ronning, who bore the family five daughters (Karen, Lesley, Susan, Robin, and Joanna) as she traveled with him to each of his overseas assignments. Topping provides plenty of details about the trials of family life in the world of foreign correspondence. Audrey, who became a journalist and photographer in her own right, was the daughter of Chester Ronning, a leading Canadian diplomat, who grew up in a Lu-
theran missionary family in China, spoke Mandarin fluently, and became a leading expert on China. Ambassador Ronning opened many doors for Topping, including to Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, although this, in my judgment, in no way diminishes the reporter’s extraordinary performance. We can only be envious of his lifetime achievements.

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Reviewed by Eduard Mark, U.S. Department of the Air Force

Gabriel Gorodetsky has usefully edited the diaries and correspondence of Stafford Cripps from the period of his service as Great Britain’s ambassador to the Soviet Union, February 1940 to January 1942. Entries from the diaries and correspondence of Cripps’s friends and relatives and other officials supplement the material from Cripps’s own papers. Of especial interest in the supplementary material are a number of entries from the diary of the Soviet ambassador in London, Ivan Maiskii, which Gorodetsky is now preparing for publication. They suggest that Maiskii was a more interesting and objective observer than one would suppose from his familiar memoirs, which too obviously bear the impress of official censorship.

In his introduction Gorodetsky offers a thoughtful and generally persuasive interpretation of Cripps both as a man and as a diplomat. He observes that Cripps, who once played so large a part in British politics, sank into comparative oblivion after his premature death in 1952 and has only latterly been rescued by the interest of several scholars. Gorodetsky proposes a number of reasons for the descent of Cripps’s reputation, but perhaps none has been more influential than his “reputation as a gullible fellow-traveler of Stalinism” (p. 1). What emerges very clearly from the pages of this volume is that this characterization is wide of the mark. Cripps was in some ways far more clear-eyed in his appraisals of the Soviet Union than were many British and U.S. officials of his day who have enjoyed a greater reputation for realism than he. (The overrated Winston Churchill deserves pride of place on this list.) Cripps, to be sure, was a man of the left, albeit of an uncommon sort. He was a wealthy aristocrat of ancient lineage, patriotic, and devoutly religious. But his beliefs about the nature and direction of contemporary events nonetheless tended to resemble those fashionable among radicals and “progressives” of the day. Cripps held that the war was a byproduct of capitalism and imperialism, British imperialism not least: “Capitalism,” he wrote, inevitably drifts towards war: economic nationalism as the precursor of economic rivalries [is] the root cause of war.” In a conversation with Andrei Vyshinskii, Cripps readily agreed that the conflicts of World War II, unlike those of the previous one, were “of class and not of any political rivalries.” Cripps saw the appeasement of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain as an effort to divert Adolf Hitler to the east in order to preserve British imperialism (pp. 7–9). Cripps himself was a doughty propo-
nent of the Popular Front, which he saw as a means of checking Hitler and of promoting social change. For that the Labour Party expelled him from its ranks in 1939. He was somewhat ambivalent toward the war that began shortly thereafter. Although he was aware of its horrors, he permitted himself to believe that “when, in centuries to come, people look back at this period we have lived through, they will regard it a creative and formative period more than as a period of decay. In the proper perspective of history it is the flower of new growth that will stand out more strongly than the dead foliage of the old plans that have been killed” (p. 43). He was confident that a “revolutionary situation” would develop in Europe after the war (p. 70). Cripps was even prepared to admit in September 1940 that the USSR’s rapprochement with Germany was in a sense natural because “they are both making an attempt to get away from our effete civilization which the countries we represent are trying desperately hard to cling to and to revitalize” (p. 69). Needless to say, Cripps believed that capitalism was justly doomed to be replaced by a “new world” (p. 145).

In these ways, and others too, Cripps largely conformed to the view held of him by his critics. He had an understanding of the harshness of Iosif Stalin’s rule but saw extenuating grounds for actions “excessively cruel by our standards.” Stalin, the poor fellow, had to work with “the most difficult material possible, both because of the natural characteristics of the people, the far-flung continent over which he had to operate, and the urgent need for concentrating on building up military forces against Germany and Japan.” “Faced with a similar problem,” Cripps asked (apparently rhetorically), “are there any other methods?” (p. 65) He even liked the odious Vyshinskii (p. 67)!

But when it came to the practical realities of diplomacy, Cripps the leftist prophet of a “new world” became a different sort of man. As Gorodetsky notes, he was able “to keep his own predilections from clouding his view of reality” (p. 10). Gorodetsky writes that “Cripps reckoned that Stalin had abandoned the ideological premises in favor of stark Realpolitik, anchored in geopolitical vision and exercised through power politics” (p. 9), but the diary letters that Cripps kept to share with his wife reveal a somewhat different view. “Realpolitik” denotes a style of foreign policy characterized by an (at best) amoral and unsentimental appraisal of the international correlation of forces to achieve whatever ends the policymaker has in view. This approach does not dictate the ends themselves. Cripps understood this. Although he did not use the word “Realpolitik,” his Stalin of 1940 was certainly a practitioner of Realpolitik in maneuvering to avoid a German attack for which the Soviet Union was not yet prepared (p. 73). But Cripps was also clear in his mind about Stalin’s ultimate ends in the war. In November 1940 he wrote that Stalin and his aides “no doubt look forward to the collapse of both Germany and great [sic] Britain, and to the time when the Soviet Union will be able to impose its will on a Europe ripe for revolution” (p. 75). Cripps opposed the Anglo-Soviet occupation of Iran, writing at the beginning, “I foresee great difficulties later on if it is allowed to continue as we shall never get the Russians out again” (p. 159).

At this point one sees how profoundly wrong the view of Cripps as fellow traveler is and still more the argument that “Soviet control of central and eastern Europe in
the wake of the Second World War was a result of Cripps’s appeasement policy towards Russian in 1940–42” (p. 5). As Gorodetsky rightly argues, the policies that Cripps unsuccessfully advocated at the beginning of the war were the only ones that might have produced an outcome better than the one known to history. Dream as Cripps might of “a new world,” he was not in the least disposed to accept the Soviet Union as its demiurge. From the first weeks of the German invasion of the Soviet Union he urged comprehensive discussions with Moscow about postwar Europe. One need only read Anthony Eden’s report to the War Cabinet regarding his talks with Stalin in December 1941 to see that the Soviet ruler was not only willing but anxious for such negotiations. Neither the British nor the Americans were willing to oblige. Churchill could have done so only at a cost to his preferred strategy of peripheral attrition of the Axis—a strategy designed to minimize British casualties and to secure British interests in the Mediterranean. Roosevelt feared that negotiations on the postwar period might distract the alliance from military concerns and antagonize ethnic elements in the United States. He also seems to have believed that the United States would likely have much greater relative power at the end of the war than at the outset. Better, he thought, to win Soviet good will through unstinting gestures of reassurance. However, some of these were piecemeal concessions that merely convinced Stalin that the United States was not really serious about some of the very issues that would spark the Cold War.

Cripps, convinced as he was of Stalin’s ambition, repeatedly warned about the costs of postponing discussion of the postwar European settlement. As early as 29 July 1941 he wrote, “if we wait until [the Soviets] are clearly victorious it may be much more difficult to get them to see eye to eye with us on these particular problems [arising from Soviet territorial demands] and also upon the general questions which will arise as to the postwar structure of Europe in those areas where they are particularly interested” (p. 135). Whether the course that Cripps advocated would have produced a better outcome none can say. But it is certainly plausible that the United States would have found it easier to strike acceptable agreements with Stalin when his back was to the wall than it was later when he thought the USSR had won the war against Germany largely by itself. Cripps believed that the U.S. government’s reluctance to undertake even exploratory negotiations with Moscow stemmed from muddled policymaking and a lack of interest in postwar cooperation (p. 173). Also of great concern to Cripps was the unwillingness of his government to explore the few options for active military assistance to the USSR that existed in the first year of the war. None of these options would have been of much strategic value, but the psychological effects of even limited diversions would perhaps have been significant. Cripps warned Churchill in October 1942 not to underrate the possibility of the “most serious difficulties for us when, as a result of the defeat of Hitler, for which [the Soviets] may be largely responsible, we have to work out with them a basis for European peace” (p. 193). Anyone who has spent time in Russia and sensed the resentment still felt there over the wartime strategy of Britain and the United States will suspect that Cripps was alive to a truth to which Churchill was willfully blind (p. 195).

Readers unfamiliar with the period will find Stafford Cripps in Moscow, 1940–
1942 well supplied with explanatory essays, notes, and biographical information. In all of these I could find but one small and insignificant error: the name of the German ambassador to Moscow was Werner von der Schulenberg not “Werner von Schulenberg.”


*Reviewed by Joshua Rubenstein, Amnesty International USA and Harvard University*

In the initial pages of *Zhivago’s Children*, Vladislav Zubok recalls the unexpected outpouring of emotion that followed the death of Boris Pasternak in May 1960. Ever since Pasternak arranged for his novel *Doctor Zhivago* to be published in the West in 1957 without the authorization of the Soviet regime, he had been subjected to harsh public attacks from party officials and from fellow writers—an onslaught of demagoguery that climaxed after he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1958. The Union of Writers voted to expel him from its ranks, and the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev threatened to banish him from the Soviet Union. The regime tried to ignore Pasternak’s death from stomach cancer; only a brief announcement appeared in the newspapers. But 500 mourners turned out in Peredelkino to follow the casket from Pasternak’s dacha to the cemetery. Zubok is right to regard this funeral as “the first sizable demonstration of unofficial civic solidarity in Soviet Russia” (p. 19). The obvious presence of plainclothes KGB officers did not intimidate Pasternak’s friends and admirers. The symbolic significance of their defiance was underscored six years later when the two younger writers who helped carry the casket—Andrei Sinyavsky and Yulii Daniel—were arrested and then brought to trial in February 1966 for publishing their stories and essays in the West. Their case became the rallying cry for the start of the Soviet human rights movement.

There is an unexplained paradox at the heart of Zubok’s narrative. From the outset of the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks relied on writers and intellectuals to glorify the regime and at the same time compelled them to create their own “intellectual and aesthetic prison” (p. 5). Those who played along and refrained from outright criticism fashioned careers replete with dachas and sizable incomes. Those who were perceived as too independent or not sufficiently compliant were initially expelled from the country or had difficulty publishing their work or, during the Stalinist terror, simply disappeared alongside millions of others in the mid- to late 1930s.

But a few talented and honest writers survived and with the death of Iosif Stalin in 1953 helped to revive Russia’s cultural and intellectual traditions. The regime grappled with its own inconsistent policies. As the Soviet authorities relaxed censorship for creative artists and permitted Soviet citizens to enjoy more contemporary Western art and literature, they could not contain the urge for freedom of expression within the bounds of cultural life. Political questions kept intruding. In the late 1950s and early
1960s, at the height of Khrushchev’s years in power, readers in the USSR who pored over the newly permitted works of Marina Tsvetaeva, Isaac Babel, and Osip Mandelstam, among others, could not help but ask who was responsible for the deaths of these great writers. As Zubok makes clear in his wide-ranging and often eloquent account, every branch of culture was affected, from ordinary newspaper reporting to the theater, music, the visual arts, and of course literature.

This period was a thrilling and optimistic time, a Thaw—to use Ilya Ehrenburg’s provocative word—that in the end left Soviet society sick with a sense of lost opportunity. In the 1940s, as the Red Army was liberating the country from German occupiers, many Soviet citizens hoped that their country would be different—more relaxed and open to the West—after victory was achieved. The people, after all, had demonstrated their loyalty by rallying to defend the country. But Stalin decided to thwart the hopes of postwar youth by engaging in campaigns of “great-power chauvinism, Russian nationalism, and anti-Semitism” (p. 31).

The Khrushchev period offered more substantial reasons to believe that the pace and direction of change could go in only one, positive, direction. His decade in power witnessed dramatic cultural developments, including the publication of numerous works by Soviet writers who had perished under Stalin; the World Youth Festival in Moscow in 1957; the emergence of a younger, energetic group of writers and poets (Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Bella Akhmadulina, Andrei Voznesensky, and Vasilii Aksyonov, among others) who projected an air of independence and defiance as they read their works to crowds of thousands; the first exhibit of Picasso’s work since the revolution; and the publication of Ilya Ehrenburg’s memoirs and early works of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Each of these episodes generated enormous interest and carried incalculable political significance, as Zubok recounts in Zhivago’s Children.

But Khrushchev’s ouster in October 1964, followed by the renewal of censorship and then the arrest of Andrei Sinyavskii and Yulii Daniel, marked the end of the Thaw and the beginning of a long, difficult period of stagnation under Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov, and Konstantin Chernenko. Even though the Soviet human rights movement—the dissident movement—emerged in reaction to the arrest of Sinyavskii and Daniel, it could not attract a mass following, as Zubok makes clear. But at the same time, its ability to gather information about arrests, political trials, and conditions in the labor camps did a great deal to undermine the regime’s standing in the world and to provide room for figures like Solzhenitsyn and the physicist Andrei Sakharov to remain in Moscow (at least for a time), issue their works, and by their example and eloquent witness generate a following in the West.

It is here that I part company with Zubok’s narrative and conclusion to some extent. For decades to come, historians will debate how the human rights movement influenced the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev and his advisers. It is true that at the moment of Gorbachev’s accession to power in March 1985, the movement was at its lowest point, with few of its activists at liberty. The Jewish emigration movement, too, had stalled. But this should not obscure the influence of the human rights movement in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s—most notably, how many leading activists were able to capitalize on the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in August 1975.
Zubok does not do justice to this history. He would have been well served to take account of *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* by Daniel C. Thomas (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). The establishment of Helsinki Watch Groups in five Soviet republics in response to the signing of the Final Act was followed by a severe crackdown, as Zubok notes. But the Helsinki review process gave the dissidents and their Western supporters an ongoing avenue to document abuses and embarrass regimes throughout Eastern Europe. The Soviet human rights movement achieved much more than provoking the arrest of its leading figures. They, too, were the children of Zhivago.


Reviewed by Wilson Dizard, Jr., Public Diplomacy Council

Cold War researchers have increasingly recognized the importance of public opinion and cultural relations in the four-and-a-half decades of confrontation between the Western democracies and the Soviet Union after World War II. This study by Yale Richmond, a former U.S. diplomat, describes how the two sides organized their strategies and operations. For over twenty years Richmond was an active player in this area, from its deep-freeze phase in the 1950s to the later role of cultural diplomacy in helping to undermine Soviet authority in the late 1980s.

Richmond’s narrative provides a lively account of the policies and actions of U.S. Cold War strategy in what has since come to be known as public diplomacy. As a foreign service officer he was a close observer of the process from the early Cold War years to the events that marked the finale of the U.S.-Soviet confrontation at the beginning of the 1990s. In addition to serving as an embassy officer dealing directly with the subject in Moscow and Warsaw, Richmond held important policy posts in Washington, DC in the State Department and the U.S. Information Agency. After his retirement from the foreign service in 1980 he played an important consultative role in Washington’s strategy in implementing the Helsinki Accords, which opened information and cultural links to Soviet audiences. Overall, he gives a fascinating account of how these actions affected the final years of Soviet rule.

The United States was a latecomer to international propaganda operations in the twentieth century. After Pearl Harbor the U.S. government organized a worldwide effort to set up information and cultural programs in the USSR. These initiatives were systematically rebuffed by Moscow at the time. During the war, and for decades afterward, Washington relied primarily on Voice of America shortwave broadcasts to reach Soviet audiences, despite the heavy jamming of its signals. This pattern began to change slowly with the limited détente agreed to by Dwight Eisenhower and Nikita Khrushchev in the late 1950s. This initial breakthrough had long-term effects. In addition to authorizing a small program of cultural exchanges, it included a provision for
the exchange of exhibits between the two countries. The best-known result was a large U.S. exhibition in Moscow that demonstrated aspects of American life, from Pepsi-Cola to automatic dishwashers, hitherto unknown to most Soviet citizens. More than 2.5 million Soviet citizens flocked to Sokolniki Park in the summer of 1959 for their first unvarnished exposure to a faraway country that had been described by their leaders as a sinkhole of capitalist corruption and a menace to world peace. The exhibit was a breakthrough event, setting a precedent that would lead to a series of follow-on shows attracting tens of millions of viewers across the Soviet Union in the 1960s.

At the time of the Moscow exhibit, Richmond was serving his first tour in a Communist country as cultural attaché in Warsaw. The Polish public was strongly pro-American, thanks largely to close ties with Poles who had emigrated to the United States in earlier generations. In cautious negotiations with Polish authorities, Richmond and his colleagues were able to establish a small but effective program of information and cultural operations in Warsaw. These experiences were a good introduction to the much larger problems he faced in dealing with Soviet intransigence. After a tour in the State Department’s Soviet affairs section, he was assigned as cultural affairs officer in Moscow. What followed was a series of assignments in the diplomatic cat-and-mouse games that resulted in lowering the information and cultural barriers and thus facilitated the slow, uneven easing of East-West tensions after 1980.

The stage was set for this change by the Helsinki Final Act signed in August 1975 by the Soviet-bloc countries and the United States and its West European allies. The Soviet Union had been pressing for such an agreement for years, hoping to get implicit recognition of the territorial changes it had imposed on Eastern Europe after 1945. After three years of negotiations, Moscow agreed to limited cooperation with the West on a series of military, economic, and information/cultural issues. The informational issues emerged as the most sensitive part of the negotiations for the Soviet delegation, but Western officials made them the key to reaching agreement on the economic and political issues.

Although Richmond was not a member of the U.S. delegation to the Helsinki negotiations, he played a significant role in the implementation of the accords. He was a consultant to the commission set up in Washington to monitor and implement their provisions. Because of his familiarity with Soviet attitudes and practices, he had a valuable role in ensuring that cultural and information programs permitted by the Helsinki accords were implemented in the face of attempts by Soviet authorities to limit their impact. Richmond’s account of how this was done is useful and peppered with interesting personal details of what it was like to be involved in the day-to-day implementation of the accords. In this respect and others, Richmond has given us an authoritative report of how public diplomacy contributed to the outcome of the Cold War.

*Reviewed by James Critchlow, Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University*

This book is a valuable contribution to Cold War history, written from the unique perspective of the security officer who was responsible for protecting Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL) from Soviet-bloc countermeasures. These countermeasures spanned the gamut from assassination and attempted assassination through the planting of bombs and kidnapping and harassment of employees to less violent methods such as infiltration of the staffs by agents. Richard Cummings was director of security for the two radios for fifteen years beginning in 1980. During his tenure he was witness to numerous depredations, including a bomb at RFE/RL headquarters in Munich that caused much material damage and serious injury to employees. In addition to recounting his own experiences, Cummings goes back in time to document actions carried out against RFE and RL in the more than 30 years before his affiliation with them began.

Let me offer a disclosure: To the best of my knowledge, I have never met Cummings, but that did not keep the two of us from being linked in an unsavory way. In 1985 the prestigious Soviet journal *Zhurnalist* published a novel in six installments claiming that the 1981 bombing of the building in Munich was clandestinely instigated by the U.S. government as a cynical ploy to win sympathy and support for RFE/RL. At the time I was on the staff of the Board for International Broadcasting, the federal oversight agency for RFE/RL. In a couple of scenes, the novel has me clandestinely meeting with Cummings in the Cafe Annast in Munich over beers laced with vodka to pass along Washington’s instructions on how to organize the bombing. I still hope to meet Cummings some day.

The broader context, much of which is beyond the scope of Cummings’s book, is the place of RFE and RL in the politics of the Cold War. If the Soviet-bloc attitude toward the radios was one of unalloyed hostility (with some wavering by the East European regimes toward the end), the attitude toward them in the West was ambiguous. Despite broad popular support (especially for RFE, which had Polish and other ethnic constituencies in the United States) in the early “hot” period of the Cold War, some officials, legislators, and commentators questioned whether the radios were effective or should exist at all. Part of the problem was their funding through the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which became an open secret (and ended years before Cummings arrived on the scene). U.S. news media tended to dismiss the radios as “propaganda outlets.” At one point, United Press refused to sell them its wire service, evidently for fear of contaminating its independent reputation. Some newsmen expressed the feeling that even the overtly funded Voice of America (VOA) was an improper intrusion by government into the private media sphere.

The effectiveness of the radios, particularly RL, was in dispute. At one point a cable from the U.S. embassy in Moscow suggested closing down RL on the assumption...
that Soviet citizens could not hear it through the jamming. This appraisal changed when one intrepid embassy officer voyaged out of Moscow and reported successful reception at a number of locations. Further experiments showed that although short-range “ground-wave” jamming in the center of cities was almost totally effective, reception was better in outlying districts such as the dacha belts around Moscow, Leningrad, and other cities. Beginning in the 1970s, a computer simulation methodology to estimate the number of listeners devised by Ithiel de Sola Pool, a political scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Frederick Mosteller, a mathematician at Harvard University, suggested that the audience for Western radios was in the millions, though skeptics existed. Even if the effectiveness of the radios was conceded, some U.S. ambassadors objected to the broadcasts on the ground that they complicated diplomatic relations with the host governments.

Other political problems also arose. As Cummings notes in considerable detail, RFE’s reputation was tarnished in 1956 and for years thereafter when evidence emerged that some broadcasters of the Hungarian service had made inflammatory statements that may have indirectly caused insurgents to believe they would receive material aid from the West. Subsequent investigations by the U.S. and West German governments revealed that the controversial broadcasts were isolated instances made possible by careless management, not the result of a concerted policy, but the suspicion lingered that the CIA had instigated them. In later years RL came under a cloud with disclosures that some of its programs had been hijacked by Russian ultranationalists on the staff and were being used for the dissemination of material with xenophobic and even anti-Semitic overtones.

In the late 1960s, as U.S. enthusiasm for Cold War activities was declining and some of the CIA’s unsavory operations were coming to light, the agency’s role in funding the radios became increasingly a burden. The worst crisis arose when Senator J. William Fulbright, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and others attempted to close the radios, dismissing them as “relics of the Cold War.” Only a finding by the non-partisan Congressional Research Service that the radios’ programs were moderate and objective saved them from extinction. By 1973 the radios emerged from the crisis as the combined RFE/RL, with open congressional funding and a presidential directive to the CIA to have no further contact with them.

Public attitudes toward RFE and RL in the Communist-controlled target areas were difficult to gauge. Given the impracticality of polling Soviet-bloc audiences, the researchers wisely limited their efforts to trying to estimate the extent of listenership and wisely refrained from trying to measure opinion. Anecdotal evidence suggested that listener attitudes toward the radios and their programs ranged from enthusiastic devotion to downright hostility, with approbation usually inversely proportional to a person’s support for the indigenous political system. What seems clear is that millions of people submitted to considerable risk and inconvenience to hear the radios’ messages. The extent to which listening affected their views is open to question, but it is indisputable that they received a wealth of information not available from domestic sources.

In an introductory chapter, Cummings sketches the origins of RFE and RL, writ-
ing that George F. Kennan was the “prime mover” and highlighting the role of the CIA. (Kennan was later to feel that it was inappropriate for the U.S. government to fund the radios, but by that time broad public support, especially for RFE, had given them a life of their own.) The two “surrogate” radios, like the Russian and East European services of VOA, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and other Western “voices,” violated the information monopoly that had been a cardinal principle of the Communist system since the Russian Revolution. From the beginning of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and its allies responded as if under attack. In addition to intense electronic jamming, they undertook media campaigns and counterpropaganda. Entire books were devoted to “unmasking” these and other Western broadcasters under titles such as “The Power of Truth and the Impotence of Lies.” Any Soviet citizen caught listening was almost certain to endure harsh treatment. RFE and RL, with their internal orientation and overtly political messages, were particular targets of countermeasures.

Of the various assassinations and assassination attempts described by Cummings, the greatest notoriety was achieved by the murder of a Bulgarian freelancer, Georgi Markov, who was stabbed in broad daylight with a ricin-laced umbrella tip while walking on London’s Waterloo Bridge. At the time, Markov, a well-known Bulgarian writer who had managed to get to the West, was broadcasting a series of programs back to his native country titled “Personal Meetings with Todor Zhivkov,” the Bulgarian Communist leader. After the Soviet Union’s collapse, Cummings was able to reconstruct the background of the incident with the help of Oleg Kalugin, a former Soviet State Security (KGB) general who defected to the West. According to Kalugin, the initiative for the attack came from Bulgarian leaders, who sought Moscow’s approval and support. Kalugin described to Cummings a meeting he had attended with Yurii Andropov, then the head of the Soviet Communist Party, and KGB chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov, who decided to give the green light to the Bulgarians and to supply them with material and training to help carry out the assassination. Cummings seems to give credence to Kalugin’s testimony, which was clouded later when the former KGB general denied to British police that he had been involved in the affair. The Markov case focused attention on a previous incident in Paris in which another Bulgarian RFE contributor, Vladimir Kostov, had been implanted with poison, from an umbrella tip, but had survived. (When in 2006 a Russian émigré, Aleksandr Litvinenko, was poisoned to death in London with an isotope of polonium, the media were quick to recall these earlier incidents.)

The history of murderous attacks against the radios’ people went back much further. Cummings details the 1954 murder of Abdurrahman Fatalibei, chief editor of RL’s Azeri desk. Evidence indicated that the perpetrator was a known Soviet agent, who escaped to the East after leaving a note. The Fatalibei case came two months after the body of a Belarusian staffer had been mysteriously found in Munich’s Isar River, with no indication of suicide. (The Azeri and Belarusian desks were apparently singled out for lethal action at a time when many Western Sovietologists were writing off the political importance of the non-Russian nationalities.)

Other mysterious deaths were also objects of speculation. When within a few
years of each other in the 1980, three chief editors of RFE’s Romanian service died of cancer as relatively young men, rumors circulated that the Securitate in Bucharest had obtained from the Soviet Union chemicals that could induce malignancies. A high Romanian intelligence officer who defected in 1978, Ion Pacepa, said that he had heard about a weapon code-named “Radu” that could spread cancer by radiation. Pacepa’s testimony is not always reliable, but other circumstantial evidence also pointed to homicide. The three men, prior to their demise, had received death threats, and one had been the victim of an unsuccessful stabbing attempt. In 1992, in response to a query from RFE/RL, the post-Communist Romanian Information Service reported that “nothing else is known beyond what was established in the medical death certificates.” In 2006, the Romanian president eulogized the men in a speech to the Romanian parliament, but without referring to the manner of their deaths.

Other incidents had potentially fatal consequences. An indiscriminate assassination attempt in the 1950s, a plot to put the poison atropine in a salt cellar in the RFE canteen, failed when an agent of Czechoslovak intelligence did not carry it out. In 2004, the Czech Republic’s Interior Ministry confirmed the plot. Cummings recounts two kidnappings of people associated with RFE, one a Czech and the other a Hungarian. Both were spirited behind the Iron Curtain. The Czech managed to survive until the Velvet Revolution, but there are convincing indications that the Hungarian was executed. Not all employees who returned to their homelands did so involuntarily: Some chose to go back for political reasons, others from homesickness.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the radios’ security was the covert presence of Soviet-bloc agents in the radios’ staffs. Cummings devotes two of his eight chapters to this phenomenon, and they make for dramatic reading. Some of the agents were “plants,” intelligence officers who pretended to defect to the West for the purpose of infiltrating the radios. More typical were existing employees who were recruited by the Soviet bloc for one or more reasons: money, dissatisfaction and disillusionment with their lives abroad, a rediscovered patriotism for their native countries, and blackmail (often the threat of reprisals to loved ones in the homeland). In at least one case the person said, when apprehended, that her sole motivation was the thrill of the game. To judge only by those who became known, it seems likely that at any given time the radios were honeycombed with spies.

A case in point was Oleg Tumanov. As a 19-year-old sailor in the Soviet merchant fleet he jumped ship in 1965 and ended up in U.S. custody. The following year he was hired by RL as a “news writer trainee,” but by 1972 he had been recruited by the KGB. Over the next twenty years he rose to become acting editor-in-chief of the Russian service. In 1986 he suddenly disappeared, only to reemerge in Moscow as the centerpiece of a news conference held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, followed by television appearances and other media events. He was hired to work for the Novosti press agency but later expressed dissatisfaction with his fate. In 1993, after the collapse of the USSR, he published memoirs in which he complained that “émigrés who had been working against the Communist regime are now regarded not as enemies but as national heroes.”
Soviet-bloc agents at RFE and RL were used in various ways. The chief purpose seems to have been political intelligence: furtively copying memoranda and reporting inside information. Their handlers were particularly interested in the morale problems of individuals who might be recruited. The undercover agents also supplied data on the physical layout of the offices, which might have aided the 1981 bombers. Cummings reports that by 1974, eight years after Tumanov began working at RL, he had already “contributed twelve or thirteen volumes of information.”

The book includes useful end matter, including eleven documentary appendices, mostly copies of materials from the archives of former Communist countries, endnotes, a bibliography, and an index of names and places. A shortcoming of the book is a certain lack of organization that in places makes it difficult to follow the narrative. There are also misspellings: the president of RL was Howland H. Sargeant (not “Sargent”); his deputy, better known in history as the founder of the State Department Office of East European Affairs in the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, was Robert F. Kelley (not Kelly); a Polish government spokesman was Jerzy Urban (not “Jerzey”); an RFE Polish freelancer, who later established a reputation as a journalist in West Germany, was Wanda Bronska (not Bronksa). Despite such blemishes, the book is an excellent resource for future Cold War histories.


Reviewed by Neal M. Rosendorf, Independent Scholar

As readers of this journal know, over the previous decade-and-a-half a thriving subfield has developed in Cold War studies devoted to public diplomacy, cultural foreign relations, and propaganda as venues of superpower competition. The historian Daniel J. Leab makes a worthy contribution to the literature with Orwell Subverted: The CIA and the Filming of Animal Farm. Leab is not the first to write about the subject of how the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) financed and oversaw the production of an animated version of George Orwell’s bleak satire of the USSR under Iosif Stalin. Frances Stonor Saunders and Tony Shaw previously laid out the general narrative of the CIA’s sub rosa sponsorship of Animal Farm in, respectively, Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War (1999) and British Cinema and the Cold War: The State, Propaganda and Consensus (2001). But Leab goes considerably beyond his predecessors in treating his subject in a full book, rather than as an element in a larger analysis, and he is aided in his effort by the good luck of having been among the first to examine the recently opened papers of the film’s producer, Louis de Rochement.

In the years immediately after World War II, many U.S. policymakers recognized that the developing rivalry with the Soviet Union was not only about conventional geostrategy but also about ideology, information, and persuasion. From the perspec-
tive of the U.S. government, the Soviet Union was effectively deploying propaganda and the United States was not, giving Moscow the upper hand in the competition for hearts and minds and threatening “not merely to undermine the prestige of the U.S. and the effectiveness of its national policy but to weaken and divide world opinion to a point where effective opposition to Soviet designs is no longer attainable by political, economic or military means” (cited from point 2 of NSC-4, prepared in 1947). Out of this anxiety came NSC-4, which established an information and propaganda program designed to counteract Soviet activities and improve America’s international image.

The program had both open and covert elements. The CIA’s Office of Policy Coordination (OPC; merged in 1952 with the Office of Special Plans) was part of the latter approach. Under the direction of Frank Wisner, the OPC was intended to function as a “mighty Wurlitzer,” as the CIA officer famously put it, an inexorable instrument of persuasion and subversion. Much of the funding for the OPC’s activities came from hundreds of millions of dollars siphoned from the Marshall Plan, and a modest amount of that money was given to the producers of *Animal Farm*.

Leab crisply states that “[t]he CIA was attracted to George Orwell because of his political slant and antitotalitarian novels” (p. 1). Orwell’s novella *Animal Farm*, first published in 1945, was an especially promising candidate for the agency’s covert patronage, despite Orwell’s symbolic denunciation of the 1943 U.S.-Soviet-British Teheran conference as a sell-out to Stalin and despite his approving tone toward democratic, as opposed to dictatorial, socialism.

Leab walks us through the *Animal Farm* film project, from its genesis in 1950 through its release in 1954 and beyond. A key figure in his retelling is the American producer Louis de Rochemont, who signed on to supervise the animated feature. De Rochemont was in many ways an ideal choice for the CIA. He had considerable experience in the film industry, including as co-creator of the *March of Time* newsreel series and producer of several well-regarded feature films, such as the 1946 espionage thriller *13 Rue Madeleine*. However, more recently his Hollywood career had faltered. Moreover, he was an ardent anti-Communist who supported loyalty investigations in the film industry.

De Rochemont’s papers include memoranda from the CIA critiquing in detail the script drafts they were carefully vetting. The OPC and its successor office successfully pressed the makers of *Animal Farm* to change the ending from Orwell’s depiction of a raucous rapprochement between the farm’s dictatorial pigs and the humans they had displaced, in which the faces of pig and man become indistinguishable from each other, to an uprising by the farm’s other animals against the pigs, an alteration that comported with the Eisenhower administration’s policies of rollback and liberation. Additionally, the agency brooked none of the late author’s distinctions between gradations of socialism, nor between the morality and motives of figures such as Leon Trotsky and Stalin (represented in *Animal Farm*, both book and film, by the pigs Snowball and Napoleon). CIA officials also wanted it made clear that contra Orwell, who used men as uniformly unpleasant stand-ins for tsars and capitalists, there were good as well as bad farmers.
Despite the agency’s meddling, the resultant film, the first animated feature film made in Britain (in order to keep costs down) was actually rather good and received numerous positive critical notices. But *Animal Farm* did not do well at the box office in the United States, Britain, or elsewhere. In fact, the production’s longevity and relatively wide viewership (including by this reviewer, who fondly remembers Mrs. Krubner screening the film in a twelfth-grade history class in 1978) were attributable to the serendipity of secondary teachers in the United States and other countries later finding the film a useful pedagogical tool.

Like Hugh Wilford’s 2008 book *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America*, Leab’s *Orwell Subverted* examines the figures who willingly accepted CIA support, such as Louis de Rochemont, and those who had no firm idea that they were being co-opted, such as *Animal Farm*’s British animators and George Orwell’s widow, Sonia. However, unlike the men and women who associated, wittingly or not, with CIA-supported organizations like the National Student Association and the Congress for Cultural Freedom, the creative team behind the animated film were never exposed in the 1960s by muckraking journalists. The CIA’s backing of *Animal Farm* was one of the agency’s better-kept long-term secrets, in contrast to, say, the odious Operations Ajax, PBSuccess, and Mongoose.

What were the implications of that secret? Although Leab offers a good sense of the complexity of the early Cold War period, at various points he takes a disapproving tone toward the CIA’s hidden-hand scheme. He sums up his opprobrium in the book’s conclusion, flatly declaring that “hiding the sponsorship of an idea or of a product is wrong” (p. 140). But in fact, the opposite can be argued if one accepts that propaganda has a legitimate place in defending the national interest. Readers, listeners, and viewers are far more apt to tune out messages that are obviously the product of an official information program than those that to all appearances originate privately. The trick, at the risk of sounding amoral, is not getting caught and having the message’s legitimacy besmirched.

Stalin was odious, his system monstrous, and the Soviet challenge to the vital interests of the United States and its allies quite real, as Leab to his credit admits. If the dirtiest trick played against Stalinism was to covertly fund a movie or a cultural organization, the schemers would easily end each day in the sleep of the just. The real problem was that Frank Wisner and the other players of the Mighty Wurlitzer extended their “black” approach to include regime toppling and assassination attempts in places like Iran, Guatemala, and Cuba. If they viewed their various actions as a policy continuum, why should critics not do so, too?

Most fundamentally, we are left to ponder the efficacy of the hidden funding of *Animal Farm* and, by extension, all government cultural propaganda efforts, covert and overt alike, whether during the Cold War or in the current era of the “war on terror.” Although Leab does not discuss “soft power,” Joseph Nye’s conception of the power of persuasion and attraction is an implicit presence in *Orwell Subverted*. Wisner and his colleagues were right in having faith in the soft-power potential of Hollywood, a conviction they shared with Stalin, who declared, “If I could control the medium of
the American motion picture, I would need nothing else to convert the entire world to Communism."

But the key to Hollywood’s success in crafting audience-pleasing films that have burnished America’s image and transmitted American ideas and ideals is that the movie industry is a private enterprise geared to making a profit as well as art. To be sure, Hollywood has intermittently cooperated with the U.S. government, most notably during World Wars I and II, as well as to a lesser extent during the Cold War and beyond—and sometimes propaganda can be good art and good entertainment, as any viewer of Casablanca, made by Warner Brothers. under the watchful eye of the U.S. Office of War Information in 1942, can attest. But Hollywood’s bottom line has been pleasing audiences and collecting cash in the United States and overseas with the message a secondary (or even tertiary) concern.

Propaganda reverses the equation, to the detriment of achieving wide circulation and, often fundamentally, the film’s quality (the infamously dreadful 1952 anti-Communist cinemtic screed My Son John is the perfect example). Hollywood has a stomach for failure that government propagandists cannot and do not have: as Walter Mirisch, producer of such classics as The Great Escape, The Pink Panther, and In the Heat of the Night, noted in his recent memoir, I Thought We Were Making Movies, Not History: “I learned the lesson very early on that one really successful film can more than make up for the losses of many unsuccessful ones.” Just try operating on that principle with taxpayer money, even when the money is covertly diverted from other projects. If you cannot play the percentages, you are unlikely to produce the hits—as Mirisch observes, even Babe Ruth’s lifetime batting average was only .342.

Orwell Subverted is a valuable study of the intentions of U.S. covert propagandists during the early Cold War, the “psy warriors” who perceived the Soviet challenge in both hard and soft power terms and sought to respond in kind. Even though Leab repeatedly disapproves of their activities, he magnanimously grants them a prescience that exceeded Orwell’s pessimistic view of the Communist world’s long-term future. The blasphemous act of changing Orwell’s ending from cynical collusion to a popular uprising in some ways prefigures the revolutions in the Soviet bloc in 1989 and the dissolution of the USSR itself in 1991. Where both Orwell and the CIA’s psy warriors got it wrong was in not being able to imagine a Soviet system that could fundamentally lose faith in its own raison d’être and allow itself to be extinguished.


Reviewed by Kenneth D. Rose, California State University, Chico

Stages of Emergency offers a cautionary tale about what can happen when a topic with a great deal of potential falls victim to a dubious theoretical framework. The subject is civil defense exercises, in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The
framework that dooms the enterprise is “performance studies,” which is portrayed by Tracy Davis as history’s philosophers’ stone, the analytical tool that turns the most difficult materials into gold because everything, it seems, is either a rehearsal or a performance. Civil defense public policy agendas, for instance, are described by Davis as “priorities for rehearsal” (p. 22), and everyone who participates in a civil defense drill becomes an “actor” (“everyone had a role to play”; p. 23). Even Geiger counters and potassium iodine capsules are mere “props” (p. 322). If civil defense preparations constitute “rehearsal,” then what is the “performance?” Nuclear war. As Davis puts it, an extended stay in a fallout shelter “is not, in fact, a performance but a rehearsal for a performance; performance would transpire only if real bombs and fallout rained outside” (p. 90). That this suggestion trivializes what should be among the most serious of subjects is obvious, and one can only hope that there are few among us who would be willing to view civil defense preparations and nuclear war in the same manner as, say, a summer stock production of *Showboat*.

Davis delves deeply into her subject and has completed one of the few cross-national comparisons of civil defense exercises. She uncovers some intriguing national differences. For instance, Britain created a Civil Defense Corps, and a similar system evolved in Canada, but the United States for numerous reasons never created a national civil defense force (pp. 35–40). Davis also provides some wonderful anecdotes, such as the tale of Canada’s 1955 civil defense exercise dubbed Operation Lifesaver. The plan was for a large number of people from a Calgary neighborhood to evacuate to reception centers in the countryside. When a blizzard blew in, however, the exercise had to be postponed, and instead of taking in Calgarians fleeing a nuclear disaster, “civil defense workers took in 100 travelers stormbound on the Number 1 Highway” (p. 160). Davis should also be praised for the excellent photographs and illustrations featured in the book.

Sadly, the good in this book is overwhelmed by the bad. At 440 pages, the book is too long by half, and the pacing ranges from turgid to soporific. This is the consequence of overly long block quotes throughout and Davis’s tendency to use five or six examples to illustrate a point when a couple would do. *Stages of Emergency* contains twelve chapters that, like the number of pages, could have been cut in half. An entire chapter, for instance, is devoted to “Acting out Injury” when a much shorter treatment would have been preferable. There are also some jarring chronological shifts (chapter five ends with a 1994 report and chapter six begins with a 1949 report) as well as sections that only a bureaucrat could love (such as chapter eight’s detailed discussion of the differences between Plan C and Plan D-minus). An editor could have done much to make this book more readable, but no editorial oversight was apparently available at Duke University Press.

The main problem, however, is Davis’s reliance on a half-baked theory and the jargon that goes with it. Why practitioners of cultural studies continue to insist on employing a vocabulary that obfuscates rather than illuminates is one of the mysteries of our profession. With whom, exactly, are they trying to communicate? The only reasonable answer seems to be “each other.” No one else could possibly want to read this stuff. By now even the novelty of the cultural studies approach has faded, and words
that once titillated because of their obscurity have themselves become shopworn clichés. Davis continues to plug away, however, regaling the reader with methexis and mimesis. Semiotics and shibboleths range freely through this book, and too often Davis clothes her phrases in the opaque. Examples are numerous, but in one six-page stretch the reader encounters a reference to the “phenomenology of presentationalism” (p. 71) and the statement, “rehearsal thrives on selectivity as competencies are accrued” (p. 77).

In short, this book staggers, and finally collapses, under an oppressive theoretical apparatus. It did not have to be this way. Davis is obviously a tireless researcher and, when she eschews jargon, a competent writer. But a lack of writerly economy, and the fatal choices Davis makes to frame her arguments, mean that large portions of this book are not just difficult; they are unreadable.


Reviewed by Ralph B. Levering, Davidson College

The year 2007 was a memorable one for Cold War scholarship. Among the outstanding books on the Cold War published that year were Wilson D. Miscamble’s *From Roosevelt to Truman*, which at long last has replaced John Lewis Gaddis’s classic *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (1972) as the most important book on U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union in the 1940s; Vladimir M. Zubok’s *A Failed Empire*, the most valuable study yet to appear of Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War; and Jeremi Suri’s *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, an unusually balanced and insightful work on Kissinger’s contributions to international relations in the 1960s and 1970s. These three books belong on any list of the most illuminating studies of the Cold War.

Despite significant shortcomings, Melvyn D. Leffler’s *For the Soul of Mankind* belongs in this distinguished company. Like Leffler’s two other major books, *The Elusive Quest* (1979) and *A Predominance of Power* (1992), his new study is ambitiously conceptualized, prodigiously researched, and vigorously argued. Perhaps more to his credit because of how hard it is for scholars to change, the new book is much more clearly and engagingly written than his previous books. Indeed, the writing is often eloquent and pithy, two adjectives seldom used when describing scholarly discourse these days. The book also presents policymakers as full human beings, deserving praise as well as criticism, much more effectively than Leffler has ever done before.

An example of Leffler’s extraordinary writing is his summary of the “remarkable relationship” between Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan: “They had shared a sense of optimism, an appreciation of human agency, and a sense of destiny. They had brought warmth, humor, and candor to their interactions. They could listen to one another and learn from one another. They understood the principles that separated
them and appreciated the values that united them, most particularly their aversion to nuclear weapons and their yearning for peace” (p. 422).

The book’s scope is well described in the titles of its five long chapters. These are “The Origins of the Cold War, 1945–48: Stalin and Truman”; “The Chance for Peace, 1953–54: Malenkov and Eisenhower”; “Retreat from Armageddon, 1962–65: Khrushchev, Kennedy, and Johnson”; “The Erosion of Detente, 1975–80: Brezhnev and Carter”; and “The End of the Cold War, 1985–90: Gorbachev, Reagan, and Bush.” The basic argument is that U.S. and Soviet leaders, beginning with Joseph Stalin and Harry Truman and extending through Leonid Brezhnev and Jimmy Carter, were unable to bridge the ideological and other chasms that separated their two countries. In contrast, Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan, and George H. W. Bush were able to do so, spurred by Gorbachev’s leadership, thus ending the Cold War.

This summary does not begin to do justice to the subtlety and complexity of Leffler’s argument. Every chapter—especially the last four—deserves a careful reading both for the development of Leffler’s generally persuasive argument and for the numerous quotations from U.S. and Soviet-bloc officials. Many of these quotations, derived from extensive research in Western sources and in recently published Eastern-bloc materials, will be new even to specialists in Cold War history. Only the first chapter compares poorly with other outstanding works on the subject—notably Mischambe’s From Roosevelt to Truman.

Leffler is especially to be praised for giving weight to ideology as a cause of the Cold War in the mid-1940s and as a major reason for its continuation until the late 1980s. The book begins with an apt quotation from former president George H. W. Bush in 2004: “The Cold War was a struggle for the very soul of mankind. It was a struggle for a way of life” (p. 3). This view is similar to my favorite one-sentence definition of the Cold War, put forth by Frank Ninkovich in The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy since 1900 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 150: “The cold war was a historical struggle over which ideology or way of life would be able to form the basis of a global civilization.” Leffler acknowledges that “[a] decade ago, when I began work on this book, I would not have thought that I would come to view the Cold War in this manner” (p. 3). For many reasons, including Leffler’s altered perspective on ideology and the greatly improved writing, this book is superior to A Preponderance of Power. Unlike that work, this one could be seriously considered as a textbook on the Cold War for advanced undergraduates.

Four weaknesses stand out. First, Leffler argues that there were “lost opportunities” (p. 8) to end the Cold War well before the 1980s. Yet the careful analysis in the body of the book makes clear that the Cold War could not have ended until Soviet leaders abandoned their belief in Communism as the inevitable wave of the future or until U.S. leaders stopped resisting Communist advances. The first possibility occurred under Gorbachev and basically ended the Cold War.

Second, Leffler is too quick to play down the expansionist tendencies of Third World Communist movements and the validity, at least in anti-Communist leaders’ perceptions, of the domino theory. Leffler and other scholars of the Cold War need to give as much credence to the fervent desire of many Communist leaders (e.g., Ho Chi
Minh and Fidel Castro) to hasten the “inevitable” triumph of Communism as they do to the determination of anti-Communist U.S. leaders (e.g., John Foster Dulles and William Casey) to stop its further spread. In *Triumph Forsaken* (2006), Mark Moyar shows that belief in the domino theory was widespread among Southeast Asian leaders in the early 1960s. Leffler in several quotations, but not in his analysis, also shows that the domino theory was important in U.S. officials’ thinking on Vietnam in the 1950s and 1960s.

Third, the book needed careful editing to trim the length (467 pages of text) by 10 or 15 percent. It includes too much detail on the lives and careers of top leaders before they gained power, and many of the quotations are too long.

Fourth, the conclusion is the weakest part of the book. Leffler implicitly denies the challenge to Western interests of Soviet-backed insurgencies in the Third World in the 1970s (pp. 455–456) and gives Reagan too much credit for ending the Cold War. Although Leffler rightly sees Gorbachev as “the indispensable agent of change,” he insists that Reagan was “critically important” (p. 466). But one could argue that any of the presidents Leffler discusses, joined by Congress and the American people, would also have gladly accepted the ending of the Cold War “on American terms” (p. 464), which, as Leffler notes, is precisely what Gorbachev offered Reagan.


Reviewed by Rolf Steininger, University of Innsbruck

On 12 March 1951 the Israeli government sent a letter to the four occupying powers in Germany demanding restitution from Germany: $1 billion from West Germany, $500 million from Communist East Germany.

The Western powers immediately responded by recommending direct talks between Israel and the West German government. The Soviet answer did not come until a year later: On 24 March 1952, two weeks after Iosif Stalin had put forward in his famous note a proposal for a peace treaty of a united Germany, he made clear that no talks about restitution could occur before a peace treaty with Germany was signed. Because no peace treaty came about, no restitution was forthcoming from East Germany.

First contacts between Israel and West Germany were made in Paris on 19 April 1951. A year later, talks officially started in the Dutch town of Wassenaar because the Israelis refused to tread on German soil. Despite massive right-wing protests in Israel against the talks, a historic agreement was signed in Luxembourg on 10 September 1952 by West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett: West Germany agreed to pay $3.45 billion.

At that time Israel had been on the brink of starvation and desperately needed
the money from Bonn to survive. Austria seized the opportunity, by offering a 100-
million Schilling credit so long as Israel would recognize Austria’s infamous “victim
thesis.” Accordingly, Moshe Sharett declared in Paris in August 1952: “Israel will not
demand reparation from Austria. Israel accepts the supposition that Germany is re-
sponsible for acts committed against Austrian Jews since they took place only after the
Anschluss” in 1938. On this point, see Rolf Steininger, *Berichte aus Israel* (Munich:

Even though the money was regarded as “blood money” (*Blutgeld*), as Austria’s
representative to Israel put it, it was the lifeline for Israel and the beginning of a special
relationship between Israel and West Germany. The first phase of this relationship
lasted until 1965. Only then were formal diplomatic relations established. Hannfried
von Hindenburg deals with this first phase.

The facts are well known. Adenauer was under no substantial pressure from do-
mestic public opinion to compensate the Jews and Israel, but he felt a moral obliga-
tion to do so. Realpolitik came into play, as he confided to his foreign policy advisers:
“We will not get our feet on the ground in America, if we don’t enter into some kind
of relationship with the Jews that is perceptible to the world and particularly percepti-
ble to the Americans” (p. 47). The meeting between Shimon Peres of the Israeli De-
fense Ministry and West German Defense Minister Franz-Josef Strauss in late 1957
marked the beginning of top-secret military cooperation: over the next seven years Is-
rael received a large amount of weaponry from West Germany—up to several hun-
dred million Deutschmarks’ worth—for free. When the secret was uncovered in early
1965, everything changed: no more weapons but money instead—and diplomatic re-
lations.

Up to that point Bonn had denied Israel diplomatic ties out of fear that the Arab
countries would in return recognize Communist East Germany. West Germany’s rela-
tions with Israel were a part of Bonn’s reunification policy.

Von Hindenburg asks why Bonn’s policy toward diplomatic relations with Israel
changed so dramatically in early 1965. His answer: West German society had
changed, and domestic elites (“such as students, professors, trade unions, religious
groups, writers, the media and others”) had come up with a new concept “that ranked
the aim of reconciliation with Israel higher than the goal of a united Germany” (p. 3).
Von Hindenburg calls this new concept “societal intervention,” and it meant no more
“pragmatism and national interest” but only “moral obligation” as “awareness of his-
torical guilt grew significantly” (p. 3).

In two long chapters leading up to Chancellor Ludwig Erhard’s decision in
March 1965 to set up diplomatic relations with Israel, von Hindenburg tries to prove
his thesis. But doubts remain. My view is that West Germany had always felt a “moral
obligation.” By 1965 the time had come for Erhard’s decision, but the timing had
nothing to do with the fact that elites had given up the aim of a united Germany. To
the contrary: With the building of the wall in Berlin in 1961 and the non-reaction of
the Western powers, this aim grew even stronger. Willy Brandt and his adviser Egon
Bahr in 1963 had proclaimed “change through rapprochement” (*Wandel durch Annä-

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herung), and out of this and other ideas in the early 1960s grew Brandt’s Ostpolitik when he became chancellor in 1969.

There are already excellent books dealing with the relationship between West Germany and Israel during the years up to 1965. But those books are available only in German. Von Hindenburg’s book is a welcome addition in English.


Reviewed by Stephen F. Szabo, Transatlantic Academy, German Marshall Fund of the United States

One of the key questions of Cold War history concerns the extent to which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was simply a traditional alliance shaped by the strategic conditions of Cold War bipolarity and thus destined to end with the strategic conditions that produced it. Or was the alliance more than that, a pluralistic security community and a community of values? If NATO was no more than a military organization, the Cold War could be seen as a period of artificial closeness between the United States and Europe that was destined to end with the collapse of the threat of the Soviet Union and its ideology. (For variations on this theme see Owen Harries, “The Collapse of ‘The West’,” Foreign Affairs, September/October 1993, pp. 3–20; John J. Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War,” International Security, Vol. 15 (Summer 1990), pp. 5–56; and Jeffrey J. Anderson, G. John Ikenberry, and Thomas Risse, eds., The End of the West: Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.) However, if NATO was truly a community rather than an alliance, then its basis in culture and values should be able to outlive the strategic exigencies of the Cold War.

This edited volume sets out to explore the cultural foundations of the central Western relationship of the Cold War, that between West Germany and the United States. The book was both inspired and written during the depths of the deep split between the German and American governments over the Iraq war in 2003. As the editor, Alexander Stephan, notes at the beginning of the collection, “a slow burning subterranean disagreement blazed into widespread fury,” with the result that “Europeans and Americans are receiving the message, that from now on, they should get used to living in different worlds” (p. 1). The book examines the concept and nature of the Americanization and anti-Americanism as it played out in Germany (mostly West Germany) during and after the Cold War; it looks at the politics of culture, popular culture, film, global perspectives, and the outlook for the future. Although the contributors are mainly from the German and American academic communities, the views of two governmental practitioners are included in the concluding chapters.

Overall the essays are of high quality, nuanced, erudite, and generally accessible
to the non-specialist reader. They make the broad point that since 1945 the relationship between German and American culture has been one of interaction rather than a one-way “Americanization” of Germany. Even at Germany’s weakest moments in the immediate aftermath of the war, German identity and culture adapted or rejected elements of Americanization rather than simply serving as an uncritical receptor of all things American. Volker Berghahn makes the important point that, “there was adaptation, but only after critical scrutiny and negotiation of how far the ideas and products that came from across the Atlantic to Europe could be integrated with indigenous structures and mentalities” (p. 239). As Richard Pells points out in his essay, “intellectuals often overestimate the power of mass culture to manipulate the masses” (p. 199). In addition, the consumption of American goods should not be confused with the acceptance of American culture. As Pells points out, “sometimes a hamburger is just a hamburger” (p. 199). Germans reshaped and influenced elements of American culture as well. At the end of the period under consideration, Americanization had been subsumed and transformed by globalization, as global tastes made such staples of Americana as Hollywood less American and more shaped for global markets.

On the contentious topic of anti-Americanism, the authors offer a range of perspectives, from Russell Berman’s view that anti-Americanism has become an important factor in contemporary German political life; to Bernd Greiner’s differentiation of German views of a double America, one of the oppressed and racially exploited and the other of bosses and generals; to Michael Ermath’s discussion of the concept of “counter-Americanism” as a search for a third way between American capitalism and Soviet totalitarianism. Americanization was part of a deeper confrontation in the old debate between high and low culture and the impact of modernism in Germany that resulted in a broadening of what is understood as culture in Germany.

In terms of the nature of the Western alliance, the thrust of these well-organized and stimulating contributions is that a Western learning and cultural community did and does shape itself through interaction rather than the simple one-sided transfer of American values and processes. This community had something to do with the strategic conditions of the Cold War but precedes and goes far beyond that era. As Michael Ermath notes, “Unequivocally taking the side of America in the Cold War did not necessarily mean embracing Americanism and Americanization” (p. 38). European fears of a loss of culture and identity to the American hegemon are exaggerated as are American worries about rampant anti-Americanism in Europe. To echo Stephan, the volume’s editor, Americans and Europeans do live in different worlds, but they are worlds that remain closely intertwined and engaged with each other. As Karsten Voigt, the seasoned observer of and practitioner in the German-American relationship notes in the book’s conclusion, strategic differences such as those that led to this volume may heat up the atmosphere for a while, but both the sense and the reality of a broader community remain.

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In the two decades since 1990, newly opened archives, new memoirs, and revisionist research have begun to provide a more centripetal history of the not-so-Cold War for much of the planet. *In from the Cold* is an eclectic, multidisciplinary collection of essays ranging from theoretical considerations of Cold War history and scholarship to microstudies of California farm workers, birth control pills and gendered authoritarianism in Brazil, and culture wars in central Mexico—each essay a fragment of a collective effort to construct a “more multilayered and multivocal history of the Latin American Cold War” (p. vii). Divided into three parts, “New Approaches, Debates and Sources,” “Latin America between the Superpowers,” and “Everyday Contests over Culture and Representation in the Latin American Cold War,” the volume provides valuable guidance into new sources of documentation (especially declassified material from the United States, the Soviet Union, and Latin America), reconsiders “what was being fought over” in the Latin American Cold War by Latin Americans and the superpowers, and offers interpretations of the politico-cultural manifestations of the Cold War in the region.

*In from the Cold* combines revisionist looks at master narratives of the Cold War in Latin America and new “bottom up” tales of Latin America in the Cold War—efforts “to reconstruct the social histories and memories of the followers of both revolutionary and counterrevolutionary movements, as well as of men and women on the margins and in the interstices of both” (p. 29). In some ways, the book is reminiscent of Barton J. Bernstein’s edited volume *Towards a New Past*, published in 1968; The volume takes stock of existing historiography and criticizes liberal Cold War policymakers, labor leaders, and historians (e.g., Jessee Lemisch, who insisted on “history from the bottom-up,” and Christopher Lasch, who discussed the “cultural cold war”) for acquiescence in the American imperium in the name of anti-Communism. Just as the Bernstein volume reflected on American historiography and history from the 1780s to the 1960s, Gilbert Joseph and Daniela Spenser reframe and reconsider “what we know and what we should know” about Latin America and U.S.-Latin American relations during the Cold War. Thomas Blanton’s “Recovering the Memory of the Cold War” discusses important new historical sources, including Latin America’s truth commissions since the end of military rule and the impressive declassification project of the National Security Archive (which Blanton has directed), gathering materials from Guatemala to the Southern Cone and Paraguay’s Archive of Terror, among others. Blanton’s chapter is an excellent beginning for a volume focused on new historical detective work. The release of previously secret material (heavily censored in some cases) challenges researchers around the planet to weave together both a more global and a more local history of the period from 1945 to 1990. A brief discussion of the interaction between international human rights activism, Latin American
truth commissions, and the declassification of documents in the United States that bear on Cold War history prompt Blanton’s call for a new comparative social and political history of the Cold War era in the Western Hemisphere—and elsewhere. Blanton emphasizes the opportunities now available for such an international history project. At the same time, like Gilbert Joseph in the introductory chapter, Blanton reminds readers of Latin America’s crucial role in the Cold War story, a role often ignored by mainline diplomatic historians.

Part II treats the Caribbean (especially Cuba) and Argentina, with chapters by Daniela Spenser, Piero Gleijeses, and Ariel Armony. The three chapters flow together methodologically, substantively, and thematically. Spenser frames “the Caribbean crisis” with a new look at the Cuban missile crisis and its consequences for Soviet policy toward Latin America. Then, relying on newly available archives and secondary accounts from Soviet, Cuban, and East European archives, Spenser analyzes the vacillating and alternating Soviet support for, and opposition to, armed struggle in the Western Hemisphere, Moscow’s varying support for the region’s Communist parties, the difficulties that arose in the Soviet-Cuban alliance, and the extent to which Cuba was able to influence Soviet policy in Latin America. Gleijeses’s “The View from Havana” offers another invaluable contribution from a historian who has provided careful revisionist scholarship on U.S. policy in the Caribbean for decades. His contribution here is partly extracted from Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Gleijeses commences with the too often unstated obvious: “Cuba’s role in the world since 1959 is without precedent. No other Third World country has projected its military power beyond its immediate neighborhood. . . . For over four decades, Castro has defied and humiliated the United States” (p. 112). Gleijeses relies heavily on U.S. documentary material as well as Scandinavian, Cuban, and translated Soviet sources unavailable before the end of the Cold War. His chapter melds nicely with Spenser’s chapter, especially the details on differences between Leonid Brezhnev and Fidel Castro over Cuban intervention in Angola and the extent to which idealism—commitment to liberation movements and global anti-capitalism—figured centrally in Cuban foreign policy.

Armony’s concluding chapter in part III tells a somewhat lesser-known story on the transnationalization of state terrorism as part of Argentine foreign policy. Armony notes that Argentine support for counterinsurgency and “dirty war” in Central America (Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala) sometimes put it at odds with the United States, just as Fidel Castro sometimes found himself at odds with the Soviet Union. Argentine policy was part of a “transnational ideological network determined to destroy what was perceived as a multifaceted international enemy that threatened Western society” (pp. 134–135). That perception extended to Argentine collaboration in the 1980 Bolivian coup that ousted a populist president in order to impede the emergence of “another Cuba” in the Southern Cone. Armony relies on declassified U.S. State Department documents to study the expanding role of Argentine military intelligence operations internally and overseas. He also covers the influence of French doctrine and methods in the Argentine “dirty war,” relying on his own interviews with re-

Like Spenser and Gleijeses, Armony views the Cold War experiences in Latin America outside the conventional bipolar lens (United States–Soviet Union) and gives serious attention to how “the ‘peripheral’ countries developed plans of action and policies independently from the superpowers and, in this way, shaped the conflicts that characterized the post–World War II period” (p. 159). Also like Spenser and Gleijeses, Armony makes extensive use of declassified documents from a variety of sources, interviews with key actors, and the mushrooming secondary literature on the Cold War in Latin America.

Part III of the volume is less easily summarized, though Daniela Spenser makes a valiant, albeit not fully successful, effort to find common themes among the heterogeneous chapters. All of the chapters focus on local stories and microhistory in revisiting social movements and armed insurgencies during the Cold War, but the topics are hardly obvious nor fully tied together, even for cases from the same country. Methods, sources, and discursive style vary almost as much as the subject matter. Only some of the chapters, and then not consistently, lead us to Spenser’s conclusion that by bringing the study “in from the cold,” we become aware that “the exercise of [state] power not only flows from the policies and inventions of states but also works through language and symbolic systems in everyday practices” (p. 381).

Rather than replicate Spenser’s efforts to connect the diverse contributions, I provide readers a brief seriatum sketch of the diversity of part III.

Eric Zolov tells us that the 1961 attack on the Michoacan Instituto Mexicano-Norteamericano was perceived by many in the United States as a manifestation of Soviet-backed subversion, whereas the Mexican government interpreted the event as a resurgence of Cardenismo and Mexican nationalism (also anti-Americanism, p. 215). The Cardenista tradition and Lázaro Cárdenas’s own appearance next to Castro in Havana in the summer of 1959 precipitated the attacks on the cultural center. But the attacks were also linked to local politics and student movements. The Instituto survived and expanded its activities despite several subsequent violent protests and literature professor Martínez Ocaranza’s characterization of the Americans as *raza maldita* (cursed race).

Steven Bachelor relates the story of the interplay between Mexican labor politics, American multinational automobile companies, and Cold War anti-Communist rhetoric in Mexico. Like Zolov’s chapter, Bachelor’s account poses the dilemmas of transnational enterprise—and what now is called globalization—in the Cold War context. Well-documented and clear, Bachelor’s research connects local (in this case urban and industrial) conflicts to broader national and transnational phenomena—what one of the volume’s editors, Gilbert Joseph calls “sites of transnational encounter” (p. 17).

Stephen Pitti writes on “Chicano Cold Warriors.” Here I find little new on the history of the farm workers’ movement. Pitti and Spenser connect America’s cultural war against Communism to both the success and the challenges of the UFW, but I found only the loosest connection between this chapter and bringing Latin America in from the cold (war), whether in terms of newly declassified documents or new “bot-
tom-up” history—perhaps because so much written on the UFW since the 1960s, even by my students who formed part of César Chávez’s legions and helped create the Centro Cultural de la Raza in San Diego, has been microhistory.

Victoria Langland’s “Birth Control Pills and Molotov Cocktails” traces women’s participation in student movements and the armed underground in late 1960s Brazil. She finds that only “through a gendered understanding of the period . . . can [we] adequately comprehend the deepening of authoritarian rule and the intensification of military repression,” as well as the “racialized nature of the debates around birth control” (p. 321). Discovering that “Cold War battles had gendered and sexualized hues” (p. 44), whether in Brazil or the United States is old news, though the particulars of the Brazilian case are of interest.

Carlota McAllister tells us that the angry mothers of Chupol, Guatemala, battled army troops in July 1979 in a struggle that had more to do with perceptions of historical wrongs, racialized discrimination, and “modernization” gone wrong in Guatemala than with the Cold War per se. The intersection of guerrilla movements and counter-insurgency—the Cold War frame—was superimposed on five hundred years of internal colonialism. The outcome, however, was a “perfect” Cold War horror: massacres of villagers who “supported” the guerrillas. McAllister’s chapter is engaging and the story well told; its sources, methods, and research seem much more “traditional” (for historians and anthropologists) than the tenor of the volume’s introductory and concluding essays by the editors. The chapter is a useful reminder that local histories must be understood on their own terms, not only in national and international contexts—a reminder powerfully delivered by Paul Oquist’s study of *La Violencia* (at the beginning of the Cold War) in Colombia (*Violence, Conflict, and Politics in Colombia, 1980*), among many others.

_In from the Cold_ is a provocative collection of essays and an incitement to engage in Cold War history revisionism using newly available (and soon-to-become-available) sources, methods, and lenses—especially to counter the master narratives and bipolar Cold War frame with stories from the periphery. The Joseph-Spenser volume helps us to resituate Latin America’s role in the post–World War II international system and the effect of that system on local history.


Reviewed by Timothy J. Paris, Independent Scholar (Ph.D.)

In this engaging synthesis, Karl Meyer and Shareen Brysac aim to retell the history of the modern Middle East “through the medium of individuals, British at the outset and American more recently” (p. 18). Their study thus comprises a series of biographical vignettes of key figures who were, in the authors’ view, “instrumental in building nations, defining borders and selecting or helping to select local rulers” (p. 18). Yet, in
attempting to recount 120 years of Western involvement in the Middle East through a series of British and American personalities, Meyer and Brysac have produced an episodic and incomplete story and, inevitably, have invited challenges to their choices.

Few would argue against the inclusion of Lord Cromer, Mark Sykes, or even T. E. Lawrence (for his postwar work) as central figures in the story. But the connection drawn between Frederick Lugard, his wife Flora Shaw, and the Middle East is, at best, tenuous. Lugard, during and after his two tours in Nigeria, was a proponent of “indirect rule,” and Flora Shaw, colonial editor of The Times of London, placed herself in the vanguard of the New Imperialism. But to argue that indirect rule, as envisioned by Lugard and Shaw, became the “template for future imperial adventures in the Middle East” (p. 93) is misleading. Indirect rule in that region was far more a product of the exigencies of the time. The advent of Wilsonian self-determination, which resulted in the adoption of the Mandate concept, and a crushing British war debt ruled out any notion of direct British rule in the post–World War I Middle East.

Equally questionable is the inclusion of Harry St. John Bridger Philby among the pantheon of kingmakers. The claim that Philby “emerged as the Western kingmaker who left the deepest strategic imprint on the Middle East” (p. 230) will surely strike most scholars as hyperbolic. Philby, an insufferable contrarian, was sent packing in 1921 only a few months after his appointment in Iraq because of his opposition to the plan to install Faisal as the first king of Iraq. Posted next to Amman, he soon found himself at odds with Herbert Samuel, the high commissioner in Palestine, and with his superiors at the Colonial Office. Even the equable Abdullah tired of Philby’s contentious personality. Lawrence and Winston Churchill were primarily responsible for establishing and maintaining Abdullah’s rule in Transjordan. After leaving government service in 1924, Philby next became an advocate of Ibn Saud, whose primacy in Arabia was solidified far more by his own efforts than by those of any Western kingmaker, Philby included.

Much the same may be said of two other British figures from early modern Iraq, A. T. Wilson and Gertrude Bell. Few historians of modern Iraq would agree with the conclusion that Arnold Wilson was the “one man who can be called the architect of the present Iraqi state” (p. 144). In proposing direct colonial rule for Iraq, Wilson espoused a retrograde policy completely out of line with the prevailing temperament and with views in Whitehall. He, too, was sent home (in 1920). One may be more generous with the selection of Gertrude Bell, who converted to a Hashemite solution for Iraq after discussions with Lawrence and Faisal in Paris in early 1919. Bell’s career has been the subject of renewed interest—three biographies have been published in the last fifteen years—but the claim that the major work of her life was “the creation of the Hashemite dynasty of Iraq” (p. 192) is not sustained by the evidence. The plan to install Faisal as the first king of Iraq was conceived in London in 1920 shortly after the emir’s ouster from Syria by the French, and the Hashemite program was brought to fruition more as a result of the efforts of Lawrence and Churchill than by Bell.

The period of the Great War and its aftermath has been the subject of many general and specialist studies alike, and Meyer and Brysac, despite devoting nearly half their book to the period, add little to the existing corpus. They candidly acknowledge
that Lawrence has been the subject of some sixty biographies and no less than five bibliographies concerning his life and works. But even here, the authors’ judgment may be questioned. Characterization of Lawrence’s political plans for the Middle East as “vague” (p. 224) and “for the most part a vapor” (p. 201) is incorrect. Examination of Cabinet, Foreign Office, and Colonial Office documents in the British archives reveals that Lawrence, along with his Colonial Office colleague, Hubert Young, had very definite ideas about a political solution for the postwar Middle East. As early as the autumn of 1918, Lawrence emphatically set forth his vision for the region in three separate meetings before the Cabinet’s Eastern Committee.

The final chapters of Kingmakers are devoted to the story of three Americans who influenced Middle Eastern events. The essays on Kermit Roosevelt, Miles Copeland, and Paul Wolfowitz represent the best parts of Kingmakers. The authors ably recount the story of Roosevelt’s part in the 1953 toppling of Mohammad Mossadeq’s government in Iran. Syria and Egypt during the 1950s are the subjects of their essay on the slippery U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agent Miles Copeland, and it is difficult to disagree with their conclusion that the CIA’s involvement in Syria had the effect of propagating a culture of paranoia in the region concerning U.S. intelligence agencies. In their final essay, Meyer and Brysac conclude that Operation Iraqi Freedom represented a “failure of imagination” of which Paul Wolfowitz was “emblematic” (p. 384). It is far too early to pass judgment on Wolfowitz and his tenure in government, and the authors are perhaps correct in providing instead a perceptive analysis of the influences in Wolfowitz’s background that came to animate his policies.

Although Kingmakers provides entertaining and at times insightful snapshots of Anglo-American figures in the modern Middle Eastern drama, readers looking for a balanced and complete story will need to look elsewhere.


Reviewed by Galia Golan, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (emerita); Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya

This volume is the most authoritative study yet to appear on the Soviet Union’s attitude toward and involvement with the 1967 Six Day War. Based on Soviet and East European documents, the volume comprises a set of analyses by, for the most part, highly knowledgeable and astute researchers working under the exacting and skillful editorship of experts Yaacov Ro’i and Boris Morozov. The volume covers the topic from almost all angles: the perspective of Soviet leaders in the lead-up to, during, and in the aftermath of the war, but also Israel’s view of the Soviet role, the U.S. perspective, and the role of Eastern Europe (at least of Bulgaria). The volume also includes a previously neglected area, that of Soviet naval behavior during the war, and an interesting chapter comparing 1967 with the 1956 war. All of this is presented within the
excellent framework laid out in Ro’i’s opening chapter on Soviet policy and Morozov’s chapter on Soviet behavior, both of which draw on declassified Soviet documents in recently published volumes and in Russian archives. The Soviet Jewish reaction to the war, also based on newly available documentation, is covered in one of the chapters, and the book also features a brilliant chapter by Dmitri Adamsky on the 1969–1970 War of Attrition (which is a bit beyond the main topic of the book but is of great interest).

The major contribution of the volume is that it lays to rest many of the often preposterous theories regarding the Soviet Union’s interests and role in the 1967 war. Through the documents appended or cited, the authors demonstrate that Soviet leaders did not want the war and, relatively early during the prewar crisis, began consistently trying to restrain their Arab clients, mainly Egypt, from initiating an attack. Soviet leaders were skeptical of the Arabs’ ability to defeat Israel and were opposed to becoming directly involved to save the Arab countries, particularly because of concern over a clash with the United States. Leaders in Moscow viewed Gamal abdel Nasser’s decision to close the Straits of Tiran (a casus belli) as a mistake, one that Moscow learned about only shortly after the fact. Indeed, one issue not covered in the volume is the brief attempt by Leonid Brezhnev to organize a meeting between Egyptian, Syrian, and Israeli leaders, as proposed by the head of the Israeli Communist Party, Moshe Sneh, to head off hostilities, a point I discussed in “The Soviet Union and the Six-Day War in Light of Archival Materials,” Journal of Cold War Studies, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Winter 2005), pp. 3–19. Soviet Foreign Ministry documents not included in the Ro’i-Morozov volume refer to this episode and provide additional reports of restraining efforts by Moscow in talks with the Egyptians. See the items collected in V. V. Naumkin, ed., Blizhnevestochnyi konºik 1957–1967: Iz dokumentov Arkhiva vneshei politiki Rossiskoi Federatsii, 2 vols. (Moscow: Materik, 2003). The Ro’i-Morozov book also provides a much longer (though still not complete) and more accurate translation of Brezhnev’s speech to the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee following the war than that previously published by the Cold War International History Project. This latest version covers almost all the important points connected with the war, such as Moscow’s defensiveness regarding its moves for an immediate ceasefire, even one “in place,” and cooperation with the United States on this—a defensiveness that is probably in response to what Brezhnev mentions as criticism from the Chinese and “extremist” Arab elements. The speech also demonstrates Soviet concern over these same actors’ incitement to continuing or renewing hostilities. The documents show what was to become Nasser’s acceptance of Moscow’s demand for a more restrained policy on the eve of the postwar Khartoum summit—a restraint that caused the Syrians to boycott the meeting and the Palestine Liberation Organization to walk out. Nonetheless, as also evidenced by the documents, the Soviet authorities after the war resisted Nasser’s request for an alliance, even as they poured military aid into Egypt. This reluctance was not seen as contradicting Brezhnev’s support (repeated in this speech) for the “external function” of the Soviet military in support of its friends beyond the Warsaw Pact, though the nature of such support was apparently still open for interpretation. Brezhnev did make clear, as evidenced in this and other documents in the vol-

Reviewed by Vojtech Mastny, Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was such a complex and protracted exercise in multilateralism that it deserves a minute examination of its diverse components. At the same time, the recognition that CSCE was disparaged at the time as a sideshow yet now looms so important in retrospect also calls for bearing in mind the larger picture. Connecting the diverse causes and the different consequences is not easy.

The book under review brings together two kinds of essays. Some originated at a conference in Zurich that looked at the CSCE as progenitor of the European security system. Others were prepared under a Mannheim University project, directed by the two editors, to examine in detail the origins of West Germany’s Ostpolitik and its long-term consequences. All the essays focus on the CSCE’s preparatory stage more than on the developments that followed the 1975 Helsinki Final Act.

Oliver Bange in his own contribution highlights the indispensability of Ostpolitik in getting the CSCE under way by facilitating the “Eastern treaties” that defused the German question. His co-editor, Gottfried Niedhart, explains how West Germany helped to clinch the Helsinki agreement by devising the ingenious formula about “peaceful change” of “inviolable” borders that prefigured the way the border between the two Germanys would eventually be erased.

What remains debatable is the connection between the intent and the accomplishment. In the intervening period, West Germany played a rather modest role in the CSCE and Germany was eventually reunified in a manner different from what the founding fathers of Ostpolitik, or anyone else, had anticipated. Whether the Ostpolitik helped or hindered what actually happened is a controversial question, a question that
in Germany is still politically charged and is unlikely to be conclusively answered any-
time soon.

As long as the Cold War lasted, the common assumption was that the unification
of Germany could happen—if at all—only as the last, rather than the first, act in the
unification of Europe and could be accomplished only with Soviet consent through
détente. France, too, subscribed to this assumption, which is why the French govern-
ment was supportive of its West German allies’ Ostpolitik despite, as Marie-Pierre Rey
shows in her contribution, President Georges Pompidou’s occasional irritation at their
Alleingang.

Among those who came closest to grasping what the CSCE might lead to, British
diplomats were more perceptive than most. At an early stage, as told by Luca Ratti in
his chapter, they understood particularly the potential of the CSCE’s follow-up pro-
cess for undermining the cohesion of the Soviet bloc.

Most of the contributions do not address the hypothesis spelled out in the intro-
duction; namely, that the 1966–1975 period saw the “transformation of the Cold War
. . . towards détente” (p. 7). In fact, détente began to decline soon afterward, leading
to the “second Cold War” before it recovered in the Cold War’s unexpected dénoue-
ment.

Two essays addressing the CSCE’s unintended consequences are the most origi-
nal in the collection. The first is Juhana Aunesluoma’s piece about the CSCE’s much
neglected and not inherently exciting Basket II—the economic portion. Her conclu-
sion deserves to be quoted for both its insight and its presentation: “If perestroika was
in any way a child of détente and not of the second Cold War, then its parents most
certainly were the experience of boom and bust in East-West trade in the 1970s, the
deficiencies it showed in the planned economies, their fundamental incompatibility
with the emerging global economic order and how the road to prosperity and peace in
Europe went through reforms and not status quo policies” (p. 110).

Similarly original is Svetlana Savranskaya’s explanation of how Helsinki came to
defy Soviet expectations. Soviet and East European dissidents did their part by invok-
ing in their struggle the Final Act’s seemingly paper-thin provisions about human
rights, thus giving it political substance. However, once this happened, Soviet repres-
sion of dissent increased rather than diminished and became more effective than be-
fore. By the time détente superseded the “second Cold War,” the impetus for change
had come not from below but from above—from the reform-minded members of the
Soviet elite who had internalized the Helsinki principles.

The essays about the Soviet Union’s Warsaw Pact allies—Hungary, Romania, Po-
land, and Bulgaria—illustrate not so much the workings of the CSCE as the dynamics
of the Soviet alliance. Rather than shape in any important ways the course of the
CSCE, Moscow’s allies used it in a variety of ways to assert their interests—Romania
against the Soviet Union and the others, supportive of Moscow, by trying to make
themselves valuable to it and claim rewards. Some of the Communist diplomats ex-
celled in the game.

The CSCE is still a work in progress. It continues to exist in the form of the Or-
ganization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, even if it has not been function-
ing well. The experience of the CSCE has been studied for possible emulation outside Europe—in regions from Southeast Asia to Latin America—but found to be of limited applicability. Such perspectives will keep shaping our understanding of the CSCE’s historical significance. We should expect more books like this one before we grasp its magnitude.


Reviewed by Robert S. Norris, Natural Resources Defense Council

Conducting research about nuclear weapons is inherently difficult. The topic is sensitive and shrouded in secrecy with layers of classification. Doubly sensitive and secretive is what intelligence agencies historically thought about other countries’ nuclear programs and forces. With the end of the Cold War, archival material is becoming available and this important story is starting to be told by a few intrepid scholars. Jeffrey Richelson in his *Spying on the Bomb* (2006) explored U.S. efforts to track nuclear developments of foes and friends, from the suspected German program during World War II to those of Iran and North Korea today. Michael Goodman, a fellow pioneer in this research field and a lecturer in the department of war studies at King’s College, London, is more focused in his *Spying on the Nuclear Bear*, examining the joint U.S.-British effort to track the Soviet bomb from 1945 to 1958. The result is superb, as Goodman tells an enthralling and important story using the highest scholarly standards. He has been industrious in combing new archival material, using what appears to be all of the secondary literature on the topic, and tracking down participants or their heirs. Supporting a little over 200 pages of well-written narrative are 46 pages of endnotes and a 19-page bibliography.

Immediately after Hiroshima, the focus of Western governments shifted to the Soviet Union. The fledgling intelligence units on both sides of the Atlantic had a host of questions to answer. In the area of nuclear intelligence these questions were many. How long would it take Soviet scientists to develop and test a bomb, and how many could the Soviet Union produce? How was the Soviet program organized, who headed it, and which scientists were involved? How much uranium was available and of what grade? What were Soviet industrial, technical, and military capabilities? Finally, how would the Soviet military deliver a bomb to a target? Goodman describes the difficulties of finding reliable answers. Often, in the absence of anything firm, faulty assumptions crept in along with the untrustworthy technique of mirror-imaging. Not surprisingly, erroneous results were the outcome. This was clearly the case with the detonation of the first Soviet bomb in August 1949, two or three years earlier than predicted.

Goodman follows the turbulent relationship between the U.S. and British intelligence services. Each wanted as much information from the other as possible while at
times not revealing everything it knew. The 1946 U.S. Atomic Energy Act (or McMahon Act) prohibited the sharing of certain kinds of knowledge (though it was revised several times in the 1950s). The bureaucratic turf battles of the era have many parallels today. Excessive secrecy often prevented even fellow national intelligence officers from sharing what they knew. Eric Welsh, a colorful figure in Goodman’s story who was at the center of British nuclear intelligence, was once asked by a colleague at an already highly secret meeting which unit he directed. Welsh replied that it was too secret to mention.

A particularly strong chapter revisits the nuclear spy and defector cases, updates the latest thinking about their impact, and examines the strains they put on the relationship. It is instructive to see how the U.S. and British security services responded after the shocking revelations of the espionage activities of Klaus Fuchs, Donald Maclean, Kim Philby, John Cairncross, and Bruno Pontecorvo. Their postmortems were mostly efforts to disguise culpability, avoid blame, and claim the impact was minimal, leaving open the question of whether any lessons were learned—bureaucratic behavior that has resurfaced in recent intelligence failures.

Another chapter is devoted to the joint efforts to monitor nuclear testing through acoustic, seismic, and radiochemical means. Huge programs were created to track the Soviet tests, and for Britain in at least one instance this was a way to learn some tricks of the trade: Britain’s mastery of the hydrogen bomb was aided by analyzing the debris from U.S. and Soviet thermonuclear tests.

Some ingenious methods were developed to track Soviet nuclear developments. Goodman recounts the fascinating case of Krypton-85, an artificial isotope produced only in nuclear explosions and plutonium production and thus non-existent before 1945. If the radioactive gas could be accurately measured, the level of Soviet plutonium production could be calculated, and the measurement might also hint at where the plutonium was produced. Scientists discovered that the amount of plutonium produced directly correlated with the amount of Kr-85 produced. Thus, if the contribution by the Western powers (which was known) was subtracted from the total amount of Kr-85, the remainder would be an approximation of how much plutonium the Soviet Union had produced. This figure in turn could help determine the size of the Soviet stockpile. An underlying theme of many of the intelligence estimates of the early 1950s was that only after the Soviet Union had built a stockpile of sufficient size, with bomber or missile delivery vehicles, would Soviet leaders launch a war. The date when that would happen kept being pushed back, from 1954 to 1957 to 1959 and so on.

To facilitate more precise measurements of Soviet releases of Kr-85, the United States used its own plutonium production facility to set an experimental baseline. This was the notorious Green Run, a deliberate release of radiation at the Hanford Site in Washington state in December 1949 that replicated how the Soviet Union reprocessed its spent fuel. The highly radioactive spent fuel had decayed for only sixteen days (instead of the usual ninety or more days; hence the name “Green Run”). The release was monitored by U.S. Air Force aircraft. U.S. citizens downwind were not informed, and the episode was kept secret until the mid-1980s.
Soviet missile advances were an intelligence target as well throughout this period. The concerns took a new urgency after the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik* in October 1957. Even the man in the street could see that Soviet ballistic missiles would soon be able to carry nuclear warheads to targets anywhere on earth. This jolting revelation drove the United States and Britain together as the last of the McMahon Act restrictions eventually fell. By mid-1958 full technical exchanges of nuclear information, including intelligence and weapon design, were occurring, a situation that continues fifty years later.