
*Reviewed by Eliot A. Cohen, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University*

In 1976 I had two encounters with Michael Howard: the first when, as a student from Harvard University clutching a letter of introduction from my adviser, I asked him for some advice about my senior honors thesis. The advice was good, I recall, but I was too dazzled by the ambience of All Souls College, Oxford, to focus on what he said, although I do remember, as so many students of his do, his graciousness and patience with a callow student. My second encounter was more lasting because it was with his newly published *War in European History*, now reissued and updated.

Howard has provided a new foreword (supplementing but not replacing the first), an epilogue, and, for students almost as valuable as the text, an updated reading list at the back. The core text remains largely untouched, as it should be. The one paragraph omitted from the foreword of the new edition is a tribute to his predecessor as Chichele Professor of the History of War at the University of Oxford, Cyril Falls. *War in European History* was intended as a sequel to Falls’s *The Art of War from the Age of Napoleon to the Present Day*, published in 1961. “Professor Falls’s study is an inimitable gem of learning and exposition which leaves very little more to be said on the subjects that he covered,” Howard wrote, and much the same can be said of *War in European History*. In fewer than 150 pages—a dazzling compression of lucidly rendered scholarship—Howard sums up European history in chapters on “the wars of the knights,” “the wars of the mercenaries,” “the wars of the professionals,” “the wars of the revolution,” “the wars of the nations,” and “the wars of the technologists.”

Howard moved the study of war from “the art of war” genre, an older, perhaps too much despised technical kind of military history, into a broader study of conflict in its social, economic, and above all political contexts. That today most scholars would not know Cyril Falls’s name, much less respect his work, says something about how successful this change in the mode of military history has been. On the other hand, Howard remains, deservedly, a revered figure, partly by virtue of personality, partly by force of his astonishing scholarship, and partly because of the strength of the core ideas in this text.

*War in European History* traces the evolving nature of war in Europe, based in part, as the chapter titles indicate, on who waged those wars. It is a tale of one country, perhaps, getting a lead on the others—the French with their *levee en masse*, the Ger-
mans with their general staff—but with their rivals soon catching up. In explaining how this happened, Howard pays tribute to a pioneering German historian of the early twentieth century, Hans Delbrück, whose *History of the Art of War in the Framework of Political History* inspired him here.

Conflicts outside Europe, including Europe’s fantastic expansion overseas, receive far less attention from Howard: the tale here is of how different ruling groups mustered and used armed force against their European counterparts. For that reason, students of the history of war, even those primarily interested in Europe, need other introductory texts. How did this modest protrusion from the Eurasian land mass dominate the globe—and why did that domination collapse within a few short decades? That is perhaps the greatest of political-military questions, but it is not Howard’s question and so receives little attention.

Howard’s epilogue shows how much the world has changed since the mid-1970s. Although he concluded his original work with a page or two on nuclear weapons and the problems they posted for European militaries, the operating assumption seems to have been that the history of war remained relevant. The Cold War was, after all, the dominating fact in the mid-1970s, and although much of it was waged over the heads of Europeans, they were part of it. In the new sequel, Howard turns to Europe’s retreat from empire—indeed, from war at all. He describes, in terms not altogether unkind, the Europeans’ desire to be quit of the domain of war and their belief that they have indeed done so—barring the folly of only a few vain or foolish statesmen. Those who know his writings on policy will find nothing surprising here: Howard deplores the U.S. invasion of Iraq and finds the term “War on Terror” profoundly misleading.

His final sentences, however, command attention, in the wake not only of recent terrorist attacks in the United States and Europe but also of the conflicts over Bosnia, Kosovo, and Georgia: “Leon Trotsky once said ‘You may not be interested in war, but war is very interested in you’; a lesson that Europeans who believe that they have now put war behind them need to ponder. They may no longer breed their own wars and export them to the rest of the world, but they cannot seal their borders against wider conflicts in a global system of which they are indissolubly a part.” The irony, perhaps, is that many more Americans than Europeans will read—and heed—that paragraph.


Raw Review by Aryeh Neier, Open Society Institute

There is no historical precedent for the emergence in our time of secular global citizen movements linked by shared beliefs and committed to putting those beliefs into practice. Three such movements became significant factors in shaping public policy in
much of the world starting in the late 1960s and 1970s: the women’s movement, the environmental movement, and the human rights movement. Each of these causes has brought about major shifts in public policy.

Arguably, the last of these, the international human rights movement, has had the greatest impact. It had a part in the collapse of the Soviet empire in the late 1980s and the consequent end of the Cold War. Earlier in that decade, the human rights movement played a role in the shifts from military dictatorship toward democracy in much of Latin America and in such countries of East Asia as the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan. A few years later, the movement contributed to the end of apartheid in South Africa and, thereafter, to the emergence of more-or-less democratic governments in numerous other countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Although the human rights movement in authoritarian China has been harshly suppressed, the Chinese authorities evidently fear its reemergence. Chinese leaders have defied international opinion in periodically cracking down on those who speak out about rights. The human rights movement influences relations between states, having inaugurated an era in which a substantial number of heads of state and heads of government have been put on trial before national and international courts for rights violations. The movement is also shaping the conduct of armed conflict by focusing international public attention on violations of the laws of war. Thousands of human rights organizations operate in all parts of the world except in countries like North Korea that make this impossible. Many millions of persons worldwide identify with the international human rights movement.

Lynn Hunt, a professor of modern European history at the University of California, Los Angeles, is a leading historian of human rights. In her opening essay in this collection, she points out that “something happened to the conception of rights between 1689 and 1776 to 1789 to transform them from the rights of a particular people, such as ‘freeborn English men’ into universal natural rights, the French droits de l’homme” (p. 7). Hunt attributes this development to an Enlightenment transformation in attitudes toward individual lives. Such practices as torture or slavery acquired a significance that they lacked previously. Cultural innovations such as the novel and theatrical performances, according to Hunt, helped to establish the concept of individual autonomy and contributed to the acceptance of natural law as the foundation for rights.

Another contributor to this collection, David Zaret, a professor of sociology at Indiana University, also sees the emergence of human rights as a phenomenon linked to the rise in importance of the individual and what he terms “the moral precedence of the individual over society” (p. 50). According to Zaret, the transformation in thinking that elevated the importance of the individual took place more than a century earlier than the period on which Hunt focuses. It was the Levellers in England in the 1640s, he argues, who bequeathed to us the concept of inalienable rights. In protesting tyrannical acts by the Long Parliament, the Levellers went beyond claims that their own privileges had been violated. They embraced principles of democratic citizenship for all, including the right to express grievances and to petition for redress.
Zaret notes that one of the Levellers’ demands was for the Long Parliament to “hear all voices and judgments, which they can never do but by giving freedom to the press” (p. 61).

Whether contemporary Western ideas about rights developed in the middle of the seventeenth century, as David Zaret argues, or emerged in the latter part of the eighteenth century, as Lynn Hunt contends, they have yet to establish themselves firmly in much of the rest of the world. Several of the essays in the collection address this issue. Florence Bernault, a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, points out that in Africa, for example, nationalist rebels against colonial rule in the period beginning in the 1950s “focused primarily on ‘peoples’ rights,’ not on individual rights . . . . This agenda successfully legitimized the rise of authoritarian regimes claiming to protect the consolidation of their fragile nations and denying rights to any political opposition that could weaken national unity” (p. 131). In Africa today, the rights revolution is still hindered by this obstacle. Those leading the struggle have far to go in challenging the thinking that subordinated individual rights to nationalist interests.

*Human Rights and Revolutions* is an immensely valuable collection. It makes clear that although the international human rights movement has achieved a great deal, many of its fundamental premises continue to be debated. The authors of these essays have contributed a range of scholarly perspectives that substantially enrich that debate.


Reviewed by Johanna Bockman, George Mason University

*The Great American Mission* examines the rise, fall, and rise again of a specifically American form of development: modernization. David Ekbladh uses a wealth of archival and printed sources, including materials from a large number of U.S. presidential libraries and from the papers of leading members of the U.S. development policy world. The book makes an important contribution to Cold War studies by following the ideas of the U.S. presidents and policymakers who were generally supportive of development for more than a century. Ekbladh also shows the continual interplay between domestic policy, foreign policy, and international development discussions. He demonstrates that exploring “how one segment of the international community—in this case the United States—interacts, refracts, and is itself influenced by international trends is a profitable means to interrogate the history of a larger global issue like development” (p. 6). This is not just an interstate story, however. Ekbladh also discusses non-state actors—missionaries, universities, businesses, and other non-governmental organizations—that influence the work of states, thus lending a transnational element to the story.
Ekbladh traces the shift from “reconstruction” in the period after the American Civil War through the U.S. occupation of the Philippines in the late nineteenth century and the “modernization” of entire societies in the 1930s. The United States, Ekbladh writes, took on “a new global mission” to develop societies outside its borders (p. 41). The Great Depression and the challenge of the Soviet Union caused many Americans to question laissez-faire economic development. In response, liberals created a new “liberal development” (pp. 41–42). According to Ekbladh, this new approach to development assumed a central role for the state, planning, technical experts, technology, social science, and rationality, and “sought a profound transformation of society” (p. 115). Both before and after World War II, advocates of the approach continually returned to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) as a model for liberal development. The Cold War solidified this 1930s model, which, according to Ekbladh, remained the dominant American approach to development until the 1970s.

Ekbladh then turns to several case studies of the failed application of the TVA-inspired development model in Asia, specifically in China, South Korea, and Vietnam. These failures in the 1960s and 1970s helped to fuel a wide turn against state-led modernization. Even after the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a decline in international development assistance and the rejection of state-led modernization, American modernization thought, according to Ekbladh, remained within institutions like the World Bank and reemerged after the terrorist attacks of September 2001. In the face of the perceived threat to liberalism posed by al Qaeda, both Democrats and Republicans have again embraced state-led modernization.

Ekbladh convincingly shows the centrality to the U.S. development community of the TVA as a global model. Americans brought up the TVA again and again across decades and across continents as a liberal solution to Third World woes. A discussion of the TVA itself might have strengthened the book. We meet the most important figures involved in the TVA, but we do not learn when the TVA started, its exact programs and activities, the way these activities changed over time, and the nature of the activities labeled “grassroots” and democratic by TVA organizers. Ekbladh uses the TVA more as a symbolic model than as a concrete program. As a result, the reader may infer—without basis—that the TVA’s democratic claims were mostly propaganda, which people around the world apparently accepted without much question.

The focus on high-level American supporters of modernization brings a wealth of information but at some cost. Readers of Cold War history have come to expect dialogues, especially now that several historians have studied how development was discussed not only in the United States but also in conversation with those in other countries, as David Engerman has shown with India and Gregg Brazinsky has demonstrated with South Korea. Ekbladh periodically refers to Soviet notions of development and conservative critiques of modernization but does not discuss these systematically. He criticizes “liberal development,” but “liberal” remains an unclear category, more of a symbol than a concrete reality. He counterposes pre-1930s and 1980s non-state market liberalism with American liberal development, which, with its commitment to the state, shares some features of the Soviet approach (p. 259). However, in
the 1930s, market liberals like Ludwig von Mises and Ayn Rand embraced scientific rationality, another key feature of American liberal development. At the same time, Moscow-oriented Communists rejected liberalism. The amorphous “liberal” concept prevents the exploration of alternatives to state-led, elitist, technocratic modernization, such as democratic socialism or anarchism, which condemned Stalinism and called for radical democracy.

Ekbladh follows the literature on how colonial and Cold War states have mobilized technical and social scientific expertise for new forms of hegemony and exploitation. James C. Scott, in his Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), envisions an all-powerful state that invades social life in order to transform it fundamentally. Scholars such as James Ferguson, Tania Murray Li, and Timothy Mitchell have questioned the view that the state is a unified actor and instead study liberal governance and the many alliances of power moving through state and non-state institutions. Ekbladh himself moves in this direction by analyzing the non-governmental actors involved in state-led modernization projects. Yet, he presents these non-governmental actors and their wide array of projects—education, grassroots democracy, community development, and rural credit cooperatives—as an integral part of unified state hegemony. In contrast, projects implemented by the U.S. government abroad could simultaneously strengthen American hegemony, alter local institutions, and create new institutions that take on lives of their own distinct from the plans of modernizing elites. Powerful alliances crossing through the state often work in contradictory ways, and state-established institutions can be mobilized even by those marginalized by state elites. Without a unified state, declaring a project a “failure” becomes more complicated; for whom is it a failure?

Ekbladh provides new insights into the intentions and projects of U.S. development officials. One could productively take his criticism of the state inside the historical toolbox itself and acknowledge Cold War elites’ notions of a unified state as intention but not reality.

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Reviewed by Jack F. Matlock, Jr.

Martin and Annelise Anderson were both on President Ronald Reagan’s White House staff, Martin as an economic adviser and Annelise as a staff member in the Office of Management and Budget. They, along with Kiron K. Skinner, edited a selection of Reagan’s writings in a previous volume titled Reagan in His Own Hand: The Writings of Ronald Reagan That Reveal His Revolutionary Vision for America (New York: The
Free Press, 2001). In Reagan's Secret War they have continued the practice of quoting extensively from Reagan's private papers (the diary he kept, handwritten letters, and speech drafts) as well as from the records of his meetings with advisers and with Mikhail Gorbachev and other foreign leaders.

I, too, was a member of Reagan's staff, responsible for European and Soviet affairs on the National Security Council, from May 1983 until December 1986. During that time and subsequently, when I was ambassador to the Soviet Union, I had frequent meetings with the president to discuss his strategy in dealing with the Soviet Union and am familiar with many of the documents quoted in the volume. This book conveys an accurate picture not only of Reagan's views regarding nuclear weapons and the Soviet Union, but also of the way he reacted to Soviet proposals and to the Soviet leaders with whom he dealt.

That picture differs substantially from the one widely held by the public when Reagan was in office, an image that has persisted in narratives concocted by partisans peddling a suspect agenda. The false narrative holds that Reagan, unlike his predecessors and immediate successor, set out to destroy Communism and to bring down the Soviet Union. The other presidents, it is claimed, aimed only to stabilize relations with the USSR. Proponents of this false narrative conclude, following their own logic, that the United States, as the sole remaining superpower, can change hostile regimes and remake the world in its image by using the same methods Reagan is alleged to have used in his bid to destroy Communism and defeat the Soviet Union: military force and economic coercion.

In fact, although Reagan was a severe critic of Communism as a system and at times predicted its demise—just as Nikita Khrushchev had predicted the demise of capitalism—he aimed his policy not at “regime change” in the Soviet Union, but at negotiation to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons, to curb Soviet military support for insurgencies, and to strengthen protection of human rights. His method was negotiation from strength, but he viewed strength as a prerequisite to successful negotiation, not as an instrument of destruction. His goal was to change Soviet behavior, which he believed was in the true interest of the Soviet Union itself if it wanted to cope with its growing internal problems. In Mikhail Gorbachev he found, after a couple of years of sparring, a partner who came to share the goals he had set.

Even before Reagan became president, he had developed a passionate hatred of nuclear weapons, but was persuaded not to stress this during the campaign lest he offend some of his most fervent supporters. Once president, he set out, often against the advice of both military and civilian advisers, to find a way to achieve substantial reductions in the number of nuclear weapons and to set the world on a path to their total elimination, a goal most others considered utopian, even when Mikhail Gorbachev started proposing it. Reagan’s insistence on continuing research and testing to determine whether an effective missile defense system would be feasible (the Strategic Defense Initiative—SDI) sprang from his conviction that countries would not give up nuclear weapons unless a system was available to defend against their use by a rogue regime.

The widespread use of a false narrative to explain Reagan’s policies toward the So-
vitok Union makes it imperative that we develop a better understanding of Reagan's actual strategy in dealing with the Soviet Union. This book not only puts one figuratively in the room with Reagan and his advisers as they discuss policy but also, using excerpts from his personal diary, which was not shared at that time with his staff, gives the reader direct insight into Reagan's mindset. A clear picture emerges of how decisions were made on matters that interested Reagan (not every issue did) and demonstrates that he was anything but a tool of his staff or of his right-wing supporters.

The impression one gets of Soviet policy in the Andersons' book is a reflection of how that policy was perceived in the Reagan White House. We can now see, with the information available from Soviet archives and the testimony of Soviet officials at the time, that Reagan's perception was not always accurate. Even so, this book demolishes the false narrative portraying Reagan as the destroyer of Communism and the Soviet Union. The book also makes clear that by concentrating on developing trust rather than giving exclusive attention to the details of arms control Reagan and Gorbachev succeeded in ending the arms race after their predecessors, who also had that aim, failed.

_Reagan's Secret War_ will be an essential source for scholars researching the diplomacy that brought the Cold War to an end. They may find additional detail in still unpublished documents at the Reagan Presidential Library, but they are unlikely to find anything that contradicts the central message the authors convey. The Andersons have served historians of the Cold War well with their judicious selection and informed commentary.

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Reviewed by William Burr, National Security Archive, George Washington University

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, when crises over Berlin and Cuba threatened U.S.-Soviet military confrontations and the possibility of nuclear war, the U.S. government sought, in the name of deterrence, to improve its capabilities to wage war with the Soviet Union. Nuclear-armed B-52 bombers went on airborne alert, the Pentagon requested hundreds of Minuteman rapid-reaction intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and U.S. policymakers approved war plans based on enormously destructive nuclear strikes against the Soviet bloc. The title of this brief but fascinating and thoughtful memoir by former defense official John H. Rubel conveys the danger that he saw at the time, with some of the threat coming from the home front. His account of the early Minuteman ICBM program and the first Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) plan for nuclear war with the Soviet bloc shows how the preferences of military commanders for preemptive nuclear options helped create a risk for accidental nuclear war that Rubel tried to reduce.

From a position as a senior scientist at Hughes Aircraft in California, Rubel went...
to work as a high-level official in the Office of the Director, Defense Research and Engineering (DDRE), serving under both Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy. At DDRE, Rubel oversaw the fledgling Minuteman program, which, to his dismay, had a launch system requiring that 50 missiles be fired at once, something that could be done “without the least prior notice.” The two-person crew in the launch-control center could even manipulate a clock-operated switch and fire the missiles. Worse yet, flaws in the electrical system made an accidental launch possible. The Strategic Air Command’s desire for “go/no-go” arrangements that would allow Minuteman to be launched quickly helps to explain why the U.S. Air Force sought technologies conducive to rapid action. Rubel later saw this as a potential “Doomsday Machine,” but Air Force leaders resisted any changes in Minuteman launch procedures until senior Defense Department officials forced solutions. Rubel was confronting the risk of accidental nuclear war that, analysts like Bruce Blair later argued, inhered in the highly sophisticated warning systems and rapid-reaction missile deployments that characterized U.S. and Russian nuclear postures.

Rubel's extraordinary account of the first SIOP briefing to senior civilian defense officials—he was among them—will be familiar to readers of Fred Kaplan's 1983 book Wizards of Armageddon (Rubel was one of Kaplan's sources) and the work of David Alan Rosenberg. The SIOP, which could be enacted preemptively, involved strikes against Soviet-bloc territory with thousands of nuclear weapons that would produce hundreds of millions of fatalities. The strikes would target China and other Communist countries even if they were not in the war, prompting Marine Corps Commandant General David Shoup to make a memorable comment: “Any plan that murdered three hundred million Chinese when it might not even be their war is not a good plan. That is not the American way” (p. 29).

The absurd features of SIOP-62 sparked demands by senior Kennedy administration officials for changes that would give the president more plausible options than all-or-nothing. This was more difficult than Rubel suggests; many years passed before a U.S. president had less than “all-out” options, although it was not long before an option existed to exclude China and other countries from the attack plans. Nevertheless, by forcing a restructuring of the Minuteman launch mechanism to permit a “controlled response,” Rubel and like-minded Pentagon officials may have reduced the threat of accidental SIOP execution.

Citing Eisenhower’s farewell address warning of the threat posed by a “scientific-technological elite,” Rubel shows that elements of the elite could undo the damage caused by peers who more willingly acquiesced in military preferences. Nevertheless, vestiges of the first SIOP inhere in the hundreds of high-alert Minuteman ICBMs deployed in the Northern Plains. Moreover, nuclear proliferation multiplies the risk of weak command-and-control systems typified by the early Minuteman and “possibilities of miscalculation, accidental or deliberate preemption . . . , or the escalation of a larval regional conflict into global catastrophe” (p. xi).

Today’s dangers, Rubel argues, make wise action by elites essential to reduce the risk of a doomsday scenario. He does not mention the proposals for abolition of nuclear weapons put forth by old Cold Warriors like George Shultz and Henry Kissinger.
that were surfacing when he was preparing this book in 2007, proposals later endorsed by presidential candidate (and now President) Barack Obama. Supporters of abolition and critics of nuclear policy can point to this book as supporting evidence, especially the arguments about proliferation dangers. Nevertheless, as the author reminds us, there are no guarantees that anything can be learned from history.

Rubel’s account of an extraordinary period in U.S. nuclear history has good potential for use in courses on the nuclear age and the Cold War. The book could have used a little more editorial work before publication; for example, the lack of transitional sentences or paragraphs for the discussion of World War II bombing strategy and casualties on page 2 interrupts the narrative flow at an important point.


Reviewed by James G. Ryan, Texas A&M University at Galveston

This book is a competent local study of a national phenomenon: the Justice Department’s attempt to destroy the American Communist Party (CPUSA) in the 1950s. The principal weapon, the Smith Act of 1940, prohibited membership in any organization deemed to advocate the violent overthrow of the U.S. government. Prosecutors relied on the law when indicting the party’s entire national board in 1948. Eleven of the board’s twelve members were convicted the following year, convictions upheld in 1951 by the Supreme Court in its decision *Eugene Dennis et al. v United States*. A rush ensued to prosecute other CPUSA leaders throughout the land.

Brian Birdnow rightly emphasizes that historians have largely neglected such regional crusades, and his introduction terms the St. Louis proceedings “prototypical” (p. 2) because, in many ways, they were. He narrates the trial process clearly and effectively. A notable conceptual strength of the book is its treatment of “political justice.” Birdnow rightly employs the term, which the legal historian Michal R. Belknap and others have used when highlighting the limits of dissent in Cold War America. Birdnow displays no hesitation in stressing that “from 1946 to 1955, the United States government clearly used the Smith Act to harass and paralyze the domestic Communist movement” (p. 165). The book’s mere existence represents no small achievement—the back cover reveals that Birdnow was stuck on the historical profession’s notorious adjunct faculty treadmill during its entire writing.

Despite Birdnow’s laudable pluck, he displays questionable judgment when he argues that “no discernible Cold War hysteria existed in St. Louis” (p. 150) during the eighteen-week trial. He emphasizes that the judge generally excused the defendants “from naming the names of other alleged Communists” (p. 153). Other evidence, however, suggests a quite different interpretation. Local newspapers, both conservative and liberal, agreed that authorities originally set bail so high that the working-class de-
fendants could not “hope to provide” it (p. 85). The jury convicted all five of the accused after only two hours and fifteen minutes of deliberations. Four of the defendants “received maximum five-year sentences” (p. 155), yet Birdnow acknowledges that similar cases elsewhere usually resulted in milder penalties.

For some reason Birdnow devotes only four pages to explaining why, on 29 April 1958, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the judgments and sentences and ordered that all five defendants receive new trials. In the more relaxed atmosphere in the late 1950s, the prosecutors declined to pursue the cases further. Clearly a major change had occurred; and it deserves systematic analysis. Another problem is that readers never really get to know the St. Louis Five, either as a group or as individuals. Most likely, few neighbors or friends remain alive and available to provide interviews that would have helped with characterization. Yet the book’s endnotes list a solitary Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) report on defendant William Sentner (among Sentner’s personal papers). Quite possibly, complete FBI files on all the principals might at least have offered detailed physical descriptions and daily routines.

Unfortunately, Birdnow’s editors have done him few favors. At one point, he quotes Belknap on the “kind of grinding monotony” that characterized all the Smith Act trials (p. 148). Yet, despite an apparent awareness of the need to bring readers along through lively writing, Birdnow reiterates at least ten times in thirteen pages (pp. 137–149) the claim that the St. Louis proceedings mirrored the national experience. Similar repetition characterizes much of the book.

The book closes with a somewhat distracting chapter detailing how American history is rife with examples of reading “certain individuals or groups out of ‘polite society,’ and taking steps to neutralize, marginalize or hinder them and their growth” (p. 166). Birdnow drags his audience through a decade-by-decade survey of alleged political persecution. From the American Revolution’s Loyalists through the student radicals of the 1960s, few victims go undiscussed. Yet his message is not that such repression is a blot on America’s democracy, but that it constitutes a defining—and implicitly acceptable—normal feature of it.

Historical custom is one of the weakest defenses of injustice. Most impartial readers of this study will likely conclude that the second-string Smith Act trials used bad law against an organization that was already a political corpse—an impression Birdnow clearly does not intend to convey.


Reviewed by Stephen J. Whitfield, Brandeis University

The British journalist Alistair Cooke noted the ordeal of “a generation on trial” when Whittaker Chambers testified against Alger Hiss in the mid-twentieth century, and
even now, more than 60 years later, Canadian forests continue to be chopped down to provide books on the case that exposed Soviet espionage (and some denial of its danger) during the most anxious phase of the Cold War. Although Chambers died in 1961, his legacy has lingered in conservative and neoconservative precincts because of the apocalyptic warnings he issued on behalf of an embattled Western civilization. Posthumously awarded a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1984, Chambers called himself “a man of the Right” (p. 241) rather than a conservative. The correspondence between him and William F. Buckley, published as *Odyssey of a Friend: Whittaker Chambers’ Letters to William F. Buckley, 1954–1961* (New York: Putnam, 1970), reveals considerable ambivalence about the admiration that the *National Review* bestowed on this former agent of Soviet military espionage. Buckley became, after all, an unabashed McCarthyite, which Chambers never was. Is there perhaps another way to slot Chambers, whose play-for-keeps morbidity made him seem a character Fyodor Dostoevsky might have invented, into an American political tradition known for its pragmatism and its resistance to ideological intensity?

Why not Lionel Trilling, for instance? He and Chambers began their careers as writers for the same magazine, *The Morningside*, published by undergraduates at Columbia College. Though never a Communist, Trilling could not entirely escape the allure of Marxist literary criticism, with its proclivity for connecting works of the imagination to their historical setting. His *The Middle of the Journey* (1947), an inert novel that is the “keystone” of Michael Kimmage’s study of parallel political lives, comes alive only when Gifford Maxim, inspired largely by Trilling’s remembrance of Chambers, joins the action (or rather the inaction). After surfacing to testify against Hiss, Chambers charged that the liberal imagination weakened the West in its desperate struggle against the dynamic totalitarianism of the East. But Trilling, in his *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), published the same year in which Hiss went to prison, probed for weak spots of sentimentality and vacuity in order to strengthen the tradition that political families like the Roosevelts and then the Kennedys personified. Chambers cultivated a wary friendship with Richard Nixon, whereas Trilling voted Democratic. Though both Chambers, the onetime senior editor of *Time*, and Trilling, the prototypical contributor to the *Partisan Review*, came to share a revulsion against Stalinism, is that common stance so striking that it provides the intellectual sparks for an entire book?

The regrettable answer is: no. The similarities of Kimmage’s two figures are not so prepossessing as to add any fresh perspectives to the work that either left behind, and the contrasts are not deep enough to be likely to revise any reader’s sense of divergent paths to anti-Communism. The careers of Chambers and Trilling are simply not commensurate. *The Conservative Turn* reveals, for example, how low an opinion the Columbia University professor had of the *Time* editor’s famous efforts at *haute vulgarisation* (such as an elucidation of Arnold J. Toynbee’s *A Study of History*). Trilling considered such writing platitudinous. Nor could he bring himself even to admire Chambers’s huge, haunted, exquisitely wrought autobiography. Kimmage turns up no evidence that Trilling had any influence on Chambers, either in political positions or in literary taste. This asymmetry is reminiscent of Trilling’s own fierce repudiation of
the critical effort to contrast Henry James and Theodore Dreiser, whose differences (according to *The Liberal Imagination*) were not merely of social attitudes but of sensibility, sophistication, and especially artistry and a fundamental capacity to write fiction. Trilling’s interest in politics was modest, subdued, and dispassionate. Even during the crisis of the Second World War, he claimed to be doing something “useful” (p. 166) by writing a short book on E. M. Forster! After the publication of *Witness*, the exhausted Chambers seems to have wanted nothing more from the demands of History than to exercise his right to be a farmer. For much of the Cold War, Trilling and Chambers were therefore *hors de combat*, a situation that complicates the challenge facing *The Conservative Turn* in its contribution to political and intellectual history. Not even the personal lives of the two men were intertwined. Trilling and Chambers “were out of touch with each other” by the 1940s “and would remain so until Chambers died” two decades later, Kimmage notes (p. 111).

Kimmage apparently was aware of the difficulties inherent in the task he set for himself. To get the two writers into closer alignment, the book tends to exaggerate the radicalism to which Trilling purportedly succumbed in the 1920s and early 1930s. It is neither accurate nor fair to describe Trilling as a “communist” (p. 76). The tricky issue of the different levels of literary achievement is also fudged or even ignored in Kimmage’s book. Because Trilling wrote so little about politics, Kimmage’s depiction of him as an influential source of liberal anti-Communism, or even a key figure in making its adherents more conscious of the limitations of their own tradition, is misleading. Condemning “the corruption of idealism” in 1953 as “more dangerous” (p. 186) than even the threat of nuclear war or the persistence of racial injustice, Trilling exerted far less impact on his fellow liberals than did his Columbia colleague Richard Hofstadter, whose own cogent historical critique of populism and progressivism was dwarfed by the neo-Augustinianism of a founder of the Americans for Democratic Action, Reinhold Niebuhr (the subject of a Chambers cover story in *Time*). The anti-Communism of philosopher Sidney Hook, whom Kimmage calls “Trilling’s political mentor” (p. 116), was also decisive in reshaping a liberalism that might appreciate the novel threat that a totalitarian movement poses to democratic norms. No wonder, then, that no developed argument, no emphatic theme, emerges from *The Conservative Turn*. The book’s value derives from the close reading that each author inspires. But except in infinity, parallel lines do not meet.


Reviewed by Jeffrey T. Richelson, National Security Archive

James Jesus Angleton’s two decades (1954–1974) as head of counterintelligence for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) have figured prominently in works on U.S. intelligence. He has been the focus of a novel (Aaron Latham’s *Orchids for
Mother) and played a major role in another (Robert Littell’s The Company). Matt Damon’s character Edward Wilson in the film The Good Shepherd was based substantially on Angleton. In addition to appearances, sometimes major ones, in dozens of non-fiction books, Angleton, with the publication of Michael Holzman’s book, is now the subject of two biographies.

The interest in Angleton is a product of the general fascination both with the counterintelligence world and with his views and actions, particularly his fear of Soviet deception and his hunt for a mole in the CIA. Holzman covers that and much else about Angleton’s life. Before Angleton became involved in counterintelligence, his major interest was poetry, editing a poetry journal while at Yale and corresponding with the likes of Ezra Pound and e.e. cummings. The book explores Angleton’s literary activities and argues that his early involvement in the New Criticism school—which stressed “close reading” and the search for multiple meanings—influenced his approach to counterintelligence work.

In the next four chapters, Holzman explores Angleton’s years in the Office of Strategic Services (and its X-2 counterintelligence branch), his work in the intelligence and covert action fields in Italy after the war, and his relationship with the Gehlen organization and with the senior British Secret Intelligence Service officer Kim Philby, who turned out to be a Soviet mole. Angleton’s close friendship with Philby and his failure to suspect him undoubtedly fueled Angleton’s suspicion of moles and Soviet deception plots.

The next six chapters cover Angleton’s liaison relationship with Israel’s intelligence services, his involvement in the Kennedy administration’s covert operations against Fidel Castro, and his search for a mole in the CIA and the ensuing war within the agency over the truthfulness of Anatolii Golitsyn and Yuri Nosenko. Two of the chapters focus on his involvement in programs that took the CIA beyond its charter—the HT/LINGUAL mail-opening program and Operation CHAOS; the futile hunt for a foreign connection to the anti-Vietnam War movement—although Angleton’s appearance in the chapter on the latter program is fleeting and somewhat overwhelmed by the context (including the author’s discussion of the Huston Plan). In a chapter titled “Endgame,” Holzman recounts Angleton’s forced departure from the CIA, his testimony before the Church Committee, and, lightly, his final years.

On the surface Holzman covers all the bases in terms of research. His book reflects that he has interviewed some relevant individuals, examined documents in presidential and other archives, obtained documents under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and consulted CIA internal histories as well as Congressional hearings and issues of the State Department’s Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series.

But, as indicated by his notes, the overwhelming source of material in his book comes from his having mined the contents of a large number of books and articles, almost all of which (i.e., all but ten) had been published by 1999. He cites only a small number of FOIA documents, and the material from archives largely concerns personal matters rather than counterintelligence work. Apparently, Holzman did not use the CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) database at the National Archives in College Park,
Maryland, and did not file any FOIA requests with the CIA. Nor did he search the CIA’s Electronic Reading Room or the “Family Jewels” release or past issues of *Studies in Intelligence*.

Holzman does make use of a recent CD-ROM of Church Committee transcripts, which includes Angleton’s claim that Wilfrid Mann, a British representative to the U.S.-British nuclear group in Washington, “had been found by the CIA’s counterintelligence staff to have been involved with [Guy] Burgess and [Donald] Maclean” (p. 167).

But little in the book can be considered new or particularly insightful. A reader will learn far more from older accounts of the mole hunt and the Golitsyn-Nosenko controversy in books by Tom Mangold, David Wise, and others.

Holzman’s use of dated sources occasionally leads him astray. Relying on William Corson’s 1977 *The Armies of Ignorance* and Stephen Ambrose’s *Ike’s Spies* (1981), Holzman claims that in 1956 the CIA inserted groups designated Red Sox/Red Cap into the capitals of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Romania to help “throw off the evil yoke of Communism” (p. 159). But Ambrose’s source is Corson, and recently released documents, including those in the *FRUS* volume *The Intelligence Community*, show that Corson was wrong. Red Cap was actually a defector-inducement program (as it is identified in Holzman’s index), and Red Sox involved attempts to infiltrate individuals into the Soviet Union. Recently declassified CIA histories of CIA operations in Hungary in the mid-1950s further undercut Corson’s claims.

In addition, strewn throughout the book are warning signs that Holzman’s assessments of Angleton’s activities are heavily slanted by political bias. Holzman is evidently among those who believe that the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and the CIA are essentially the same as the East German State Security Ministry—those who cannot distinguish between the type of unfortunate compromises of constitutional liberties that occur when U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies overstep their charters and the operation of a full-scale, round-the-clock police state.

Because the only previous biography of James Jesus Angleton (Tom Mangold’s *Cold Warrior*) was published in 1991, there was certainly room for a new examination of his life and activities. There still is.


Reviewed by Pierre Asselin, Hawaii Pacific University

This collection of essays “designed for college students” (p. viii) is a tribute to George C. Herring, author of the influential *America’s Longest War*, originally published in 1979 and now in its fourth edition. Contrary to the claim of one of the editors, not all the essays are original; many are recycled in whole or in part from the contributors’
previous works. Nonetheless, this collection has ample merit. The contributors, most of whom are former students of Herring, examine various dimensions of the U.S. war in Vietnam. Marilyn Young attributes the war’s enduring resonance to the fact that “the central issues it raised about the United States in the world over four decades ago remain the central issues today” (p. 9). References to recent trends in U.S. foreign policy and especially to the ongoing involvement in Iraq abound in her essay and throughout the book. (An imaginary speech for President Lyndon Johnson written by Howard Zinn in 1967 is reproduced by Zinn with comments on President George W. Bush.) Herring echoes Young’s sentiments in his own contribution, claiming that Americans refuse to forget the Vietnam War because it was long, difficult, and divisive and ultimately “caused us as a nation to confront a set of beliefs about ourselves that forms a basic part of the American character” (p. 343).

The book includes two very good historiographical essays: one by David Anderson addressing the standard perspectives on the war that is sure to be of great help to students; the other by Robert Brigham exploring the treatment by Western and Vietnamese scholars of the relationship between Confucianism and Marxism in Vietnam. Walter LaFeber provides a sound synthesis of Washington’s approach to Vietnam from 1945 to 1975, highlighting the centrality of Cold War and economic concerns in shaping that approach. Gary Hess assesses the stance of America’s Cold War allies on the war and their motives for answering or, in most cases, rejecting the Johnson administration’s call for joining the anti-Communist effort in Indochina. Ironically, Hess asserts, “a war intended to strengthen America’s stature” ended up damaging relations with allies and “concluded with its leaders facing the challenge of rebuilding confidence in its leadership” (p. 71).

Several essays focus on U.S. policymaking and other domestic issues. Robert Buzzanco elaborates on high-level military dissent, a topic he discussed in his acclaimed Masters of War: Military Dissent and Politics in the Vietnam Era (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). He states that U.S. military leaders foresaw the lack of prospects for military success in Indochina as early as the 1950s and repeatedly warned policymakers of the perils of military intervention there. Successive presidential administrations ignored those warnings, however, because they had “larger concerns about global politics and economics,” including the “reconstruction of capitalism and Japanese economic health in Asia” (p. 194).

Terry Anderson focuses on the antiwar movement, as does Joseph Fry, who argues in an illuminating essay that student dissenters remained a small minority even on college campuses throughout the war, but the media coverage of their activities helped to inspire the country to question the legitimacy of the U.S. intervention in Indochina. Clarence Wyatt deals specifically with the news media and contends that journalists who covered the war and openly criticized U.S. policy in Asia were motivated “not by political or ideological bias, but, rather, by the need to satisfy the imperatives of the American news industry” (p. 274).

In a well-researched essay Kyle Longley explains that Congress, despite having limited powers and relatively few members opposed to the war, at least initially, played a leading role in hastening the end of U.S. involvement in Indochina. His contention
that Congress was also instrumental in avoiding a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union and China over Vietnam is questionable, however. Yvonne Honeycutt Baldwin and John Ernst examine the experience of U.S. combat infantrymen in Vietnam.

Four essays are concerned with Vietnamese parties. Luu Doan Huynh of the Institute for International Relations in Hanoi offers a candid and extremely insightful evaluation of North Vietnamese policies during the war in which he expounds on some of the mistakes of Communist decision-makers. The North's war effort, he writes, did not go as planned in large part because of “poor training, poor research,” and “ideological blindness” (p. 97). Sandra Taylor assesses the role of women in the Vietnamese revolutionary effort, especially in the National Liberation Front, or “Viet Cong.” Robert Frankum presents South Vietnamese president Ngo Dinh Diem as a capable leader whose demise resulted from the errors of his brother and principal adviser, Nhu, and the machinations of Americans exasperated by Diem's independence. Such revisionist scholarship on Diem and his presidency has become increasingly common and supports Mark Moyar’s contentions in *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954–1965* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Robert Topmiller aptly analyzes the Buddhist-lead “peace movement” in South Vietnam in 1963–1966 but perhaps exaggerates its impact. His claims that Buddhists caused the collapse of Diem's regime and that the 1964 clashes between Buddhists and Catholics constituted “religious warfare” (p. 147) are particularly dubious. Other circumstances contributed to Diem's overthrow, as Frankum shows.

Ultimately, *The War that Never Ends* achieves its purpose. The book acquaints readers with myriad important, oft-times neglected aspects of the Vietnam War and highlights the reasons for that conflict's lasting relevance.


Reviewed by Edwin Moïse, Clemson University

Most of the essays in this wide-ranging compilation mix surveys of the existing literature with presentations of the authors' own findings.

Sophie Quinn-Judge's “Through a Glass Darkly: Reading the History of the Vietnamese Communist Party, 1945–1975,” is an extremely interesting look at factional divisions within the Vietnamese Communist movement. She shows, for example, that there was more opposition to Ho Chi Minh than most readers will have realized.

to make Diem premier and traces in considerable detail the maneuverings of Diem and his brothers to elevate Diem to that position.

David Hunt’s “Taking Notice of the Everyday” looks at the social history of the National Liberation Front (NLF) in Dinh Tuong Province. The Rand Corporation’s interviews of prisoners and defectors from the NLF constitute a rich source of information for this chapter. The NLF, Hunt shows, was not made up of simple peasants whose horizons were limited to their native villages. Many of them had experienced life in towns and even cities. They wanted social mobility, and the choices they made, either to join the revolution or to abandon it, were often shaped by desires to better their lives in a complex and unstable environment.

Heonik Kwon’s “Co So Cach Mang and the Social Network of War” looks at formal and informal networks in one community in the Danang area. The formal organizations of each side discouraged any collaboration with the other, but realities on the ground were more complex: “[I]n the streets of a violent bipolar conflict under crossfire, only those who collaborated well across the drawn boundary of political loyalty survived, both physically and morally” (p. 207). Women assigned by the revolutionary authorities to establish maternal relationships with lonely young South Vietnamese soldiers, to gather information from them and encourage them to desert, were effective in both tasks. But they censored the intelligence they passed on to their superiors, omitting information that might cause the deaths of the young soldiers.

Seth Jacobs’s “‘No Place to Fight a War’: Laos and the Evolution of U.S. Policy toward Vietnam, 1954–1963,” asks why President John Kennedy, after almost committing U.S. forces to combat in Laos in early 1961, abruptly shifted course and negotiated an agreement for neutralization. Jacobs argues that the crucial factor was U.S. policymakers’ contempt, which he convincingly documents, for the Royal Lao Army. Kennedy chose not to fight in a country in which he did not believe he would have useful local allies. This is important but seems logically insufficient. Contempt for the Laotian forces could as easily have become a reason for sending U.S. forces, so that they could do what the Laotians could not.

Lien-Hang T. Nguyen’s “Cold War Contradictions: Toward an International History of the Second Indochina War, 1969–1973,” discusses the interactions of the contending parties in Vietnam and their outside backers. The chapter contains some interesting material but also reflects carelessness. The sources cited do not always support the statements made in the text, and this reviewer doubts that Lyndon Johnson’s administration “firmly set into place . . . the de-Americanization of the ground war by ensuring troop withdrawals after the Tet Offensive” (p. 242 n. 31).

Michael J. Allen’s “‘Help Us Tell the Truth about Vietnam’: POW/MIA Politics and the End of the American War” presents an interesting picture of how the issue of U.S. prisoners of war was exploited not just by President Richard Nixon but also by antiwar elements in the United States and by the Vietnamese Communists. Allen is less convincing in arguing that the issue was actually used more effectively against Nixon than by him, and that the existing literature treats Nixon as the only person who exploited the issue.

David W. P. Elliott’s “Official History, Revisionist History, and Wild History” is
a useful but disjointed examination of the various viewpoints from which the war has been approached, with particular reference to the legitimacy of the Republic of Vietnam.

Two essays based on their authors’ controversial past books are not very successful. Fredrik Logevall’s “‘There Ain’t No Daylight’: Lyndon Johnson and the Politics of Escalation” recapitulates the ideas in his book *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), in which he argued that the practical and political pressures on Lyndon Johnson to escalate the war in Vietnam were not nearly as great as has commonly been said. Logevall strengthens his case somewhat by dealing, a bit more clearly than he did in the book, with the issue of American anti-Communism when arguing that Johnson would not have paid a high political price had he withdrawn from Vietnam. But the improvement is modest; the issue of Communism is still given short shrift.

Gareth Porter’s “Explaining the Vietnam War: Dominant and Contending Paradigms” is based on his *Perils of Dominance: Imbalance of Power and the Road to War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). In the book, Porter argued that U.S. policymakers up to about mid-1965 were less worried about Communist strength and more confident of U.S. superiority than most authors suggest. Porter also claimed that Presidents Dwight Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson were all much less inclined to use force in Vietnam than other authors believe. His essay in this book presents the same basic picture but is less convincing. The most persuasive parts of the book are slighted, perhaps because they did not inspire criticisms to which Porter feels a need to respond. He spends much time refuting ideas, supposedly dominant in the existing literature, that this reviewer cannot recognize.

Mark Atwood Lawrence’s “Explaining the Early Decisions: The United States and the French War, 1945–1954,” is a balanced and reasonable survey of the literature but contains little that is spectacular or new.

The scholarly apparatus is good: extensive endnotes, lists of “suggested readings” for most essays, and a good subject index. The scholar and the advanced student will find much here that is worthwhile.


Reviewed by Bernd Schaefer, Cold War International History Project

This is a truly interesting book about a bellwether of West German history and political culture and intra-German relations during the first twenty years after the birth of two antagonistic German states. For many years after the Federal Ministry for All-German Issues (Bundesministerium für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen/BMG) was set up in
1949, it acted more as an agency for psychological warfare than as part of the federal government bureaucracy. Only after a domestic political sea change in 1966 turned the BMG’s initial purpose on its head did the ministry evolve into an institution with certain clout in formulating government policy on intra-German relations. Yet the advent of the Social Democratic Party (SPD)–led government under Willy Brandt in October 1969 ended the BMG’s years in the limelight. Until German unification in 1990 the ministry was relegated to a bureaucratic sideshow. Under Federal Chancellors Brandt, Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl, intra-German policy and foreign policy were firmly under control of the Chancellery and Foreign Ministry.

Stefan Creuzberger from the University of Potsdam has conducted impeccable and impressive research in various German federal and party archives, as well as in the U.S. National Archives in College Park, Maryland, where he pored over U.S. State Department files and records of the U.S. High Commission in Germany for the years up to 1953. Unfortunately the book features a name index only. Because Creuzberger has many fascinating topics and stories to tell, another index for subjects and places would have been of great help. He has done a very thorough, sometimes exhaustive, job of recounting the comprehensive story of the BMG, its bureaucracy, its primary actors, and its wide scope of activities.

Despite occasional meanderings, the narrative flows easily in a balanced and mostly descriptive manner. It thus avoids becoming too judgmental even when findings on BMG-sponsored anti-Communist psychological warfare raise some eyebrows. The German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Soviet Union were even less scrupulous in their methods, and the BMG did at least eschew any reliance on certain tactics used by their Communist counterparts, such as kidnapping and murder. Yet the GDR did not call the BMG the “Ministry for Sabotage” for nothing. In the 1950s some BMG officials and their West German proxies and agents developed audacious actions and schemes to fight the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED, the East German Communist party) inside the GDR, as well as Communists and their alleged “neutralist” allies in the Federal Republic of Germany. Like the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the West German foreign intelligence service (BND), both of which actively assisted the BMG, the BMG followed the trajectory of American “liberation policy,” “roll-back,” and finally adaptation vis-à-vis the Communist regime in East Germany. The failed uprising in the GDR in 1953, the Soviet crackdown on the Hungarian revolution in 1956, and ultimately the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 gradually placed dampers on BMG aspirations to undermine Communist rule in the East. In 1963 Franz Thedieck, the state secretary of the BMG since its inception, left rather disillusioned. He had been the key figure in the ministry for thirteen years, the eminence grise, ranking only behind the BND chief Reinhard Gehlen as one of the hottest warriors in the Federal Republic of Germany’s Cold War. Under Thedieck, the BMG was always eager to extend its portfolio and acted truly in “all-German” fashion, whether authorized or not. The ministry’s open and clandestine activities were directed not only against Communists in the GDR and West Germany but also at the Saar Territory controlled by the French until 1955, the 1959 Commu-
nivist World Youth Festival in Vienna, and even Southern Tyrol, where some Germanic insurgents fought the “Italian occupation.”

From 1949 to 1963 under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, politicians from the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) led the ministry. Jakob Kaiser and Ernst Lemmer, the two former chairmen of the CDU in the Eastern Zone who were deposed and exiled in 1948 by the Soviet Military Administration, headed the BMG from 1949 to 1957 and from 1957 to 1962 respectively. After Lemmer stepped down, a promising young CDU politician named Rainer Barzel held the office for nine months until the end of Adenauer’s reign. After that, Free Democratic Party politician Erich Mende took over, followed by three weeks of CDU politician Johann Baptist Gradl in the waning days of Chancellor Ludwig Erhard. With the onset of the “Grand Coalition” between the Christian Democrats and the SPD in 1966 the BMG fell to the SDP heavyweight Herbert Wehner.

The three years of anti-anti-Communist Wehner at the helm of the BMG paradoxically were the most influential years in the ministry’s institutional history. The former orthodox Communist turned Social Democratic strategist and kingmaker ranked only behind Willy Brandt as the most important SPD politician in the Grand Coalition under CDU Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger from 1966 to 1969. Wehner enjoyed good relationships with the chancellor and some other CDU politicians. He used his considerable clout to turn the BMG on its head, transforming it into an engine for a “new Ostpolitik” to establish official contacts with the GDR. Next to Brandt’s Foreign Ministry with its planning chief Egon Bahr, the BMG during the Grand Coalition period became the prime actor aiming at ultimate normalization of relations with the GDR and Eastern Europe. From anti-Communist extremes until the early 1960s, the ministry veered toward political correctness vis-à-vis the GDR. Yet with Brandt’s ascent to the chancellorship in the fall of 1969, Wehner also moved up to become the powerful leader of the SPD caucus in the parliament. Intra-German policy became the prerogative of Willy Brandt and his companion Egon Bahr in the chancellery, with Herbert Wehner continuing to interject when he saw fit.

As for the BMG, West German governments did not need it any more for operating intra-German affairs. The East German government refused to deal with it because the GDR did not recognize the existence of “intra-German affairs” (from the GDR’s perspective, dealings with West Germany were “foreign affairs”). In late 1969 the BMG was renamed the Ministry for Intra-German Relations (Bundesministerium für innere Deutsche Beziehungen, BMB), but it was deprived of any role in conceptual and operational policy. Until 1990 it existed to sponsor publications, events, and travel to the intra-German border and to the Berlin Wall. After the wall disappeared, the BMB fossil was happily dissolved. Stefan Creuzberger deserves credit for ensuring that the ministry will not fade into history without its colorful beginnings put on record.

Reviewed by Hiroaki Kuromiya, Indiana University

I. V. Stalin was one of the most important politicians of the twentieth century. An enormous literature in many languages has discussed him and his policies. Over the past two decades or so, the opening of some of the formerly closed Soviet archives has generated a further proliferation of publications about this famous dictator. Stefan Creuzberger’s *Stalin: Machtpolitiker und Ideologe* is a welcome addition to the existing literature. Creuzberger deems Stalin of utmost relevance nowadays, for without Stalin today’s world cannot be imagined. In current-day Russia, in particular, where Stalin is one of the most popular historical figures, his relevance is all the greater.

Apparently, Creuzberger conducted no archival research in the former Soviet Union for this book. Instead, as he states in the preface, his goal is a synthetic work to familiarize the reading public and students of history with the specialist literature and the present state of knowledge about Stalin. In some respects he succeeds, in others he does not.

As the title suggests, this is not a straightforward biography. Rather, the book focuses on Stalin the politician. However, it does not cover Stalin the politician in a comprehensive way. Creuzberger consciously departs from standard practice and divides his discussion into two parts: domestic and international politics. The latter, which is the more interesting to this reader, focuses on two large subjects that Creuzberger considers the most important to Stalin: Germany and China.

On the first subject, Creuzberger lucidly summarizes the state of knowledge in the field. He rejects Robert C. Tucker’s thesis that Stalin’s foreign policy was a return to the old Tsarist policy of the Russian Empire and convincingly shows that Stalin was an ideologically motivated politician with a keen sense of pragmatism. Stalin consistently pursued the export of socialist revolution abroad, but he did not do so when it would pose a risk to the Soviet homeland. In practical terms Stalin sought the extension of Soviet control overseas but was cautious and mostly averse to “adventurism” in the realm of foreign policy. Yet sometimes he succumbed to unrealistic adventures that ended in spectacular failures, such as the 1923 German Revolution and the 1927 Communist uprisings in China. At other times his caution proved disastrous, as in the case of Germany’s devastating attack against the Soviet Union in June 1941. On the postwar German question, Creuzberger believes that Stalin had no master plan and instead pursued the priorities of the Soviet Union—external security from the capitalist camp through the control of Eastern Europe as a “cordon sanitaire” (p. 241). According to Creuzberger, Stalin did not initially favor the division of Germany; he wanted a united Germany that would be friendly toward the Soviet Union. (Creuzberger does not discuss Stalin’s earlier, wartime plan for the dismemberment of Germany.) By 1948 Stalin had largely abandoned this goal. Still, in his mind, the founding of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) did not exclude the future unification of Germany on terms favorable for the Soviet Union. The 1952 “Stalin
Note” adhered to this perspective. Yet by that time the note was not much more than a propaganda maneuver. Contrary to the claims of Wilfried Loth, Creuzberger shows that the GDR was not Stalin’s “unloved child” (p. 245).

Creuzberger’s discussion of China is potentially of much interest because the existing literature on Stalin tends to give Asia short shrift. Unfortunately, Creuzberger is much less sure-footed here than on the German question. He tends to support Maoist interpretations of Stalin’s China policy, claiming, for example, that already in the 1930s Stalin and Mao Zedong were conscious of their “rivalry.” There is little evidence that either Stalin or Mao actually perceived the other as a rival. By the 1930s Stalin was the undisputed leader of the world Communist movement, whereas Mao was utterly unknown outside China and was dependent on the USSR for the survival of his Communist movement. In fact, Stalin in the mid-1930s was the one who helped Mao become leader of the Chinese Communist Party. It is true that Stalin grossly underestimated the Chinese Communist movement, as he himself acknowledged after Mao’s triumph in China in 1949. Yet it is also true that even after 1949 Mao was dependent on Stalin, if only reluctantly. Creuzberger uncritically supports the Chinese interpretations that emerged well after Stalin was dead.

Although the division into domestic and foreign policies may have merit, it does not always work well. For instance, Creuzberger convincingly shows how in the early 1920s Stalin not only was people’s commissar of nationalities but was also “Commis-sar of Foreign Affairs for Special Tasks.” His nationality policies had important implications for the foreign policy of the new socialist country (pp. 188–189, 194, 199). Sometimes Creuzberger’s division seems forced. For instance, the Great Terror is an excellent subject that links Stalin’s domestic and foreign policies. Yet Creuzberger treats it merely as a domestic issue.

Some interesting issues are not discussed in the book. Although Creuzberger cites V. A. Sakharov’s book on the so-called Lenin testament, he does not discuss the most important issue covered by Sakharov, namely, the authenticity of the testament.

Despite these caveats, Creuzberger’s book is readable and in most respects reliable. It can be read with profit.


Reviewed by Amy E. Randall, Santa Clara University

After the Bolshevik Revolution, medical professionals and public health officials de-cried what they saw as a sexual “crisis” in early Soviet Russia. Rampant prostitution, an increase in venereal disease and masturbation, and widespread casual sex, they claimed, were only some of the sexual ills and deprivities that threatened public health and undermined efforts to build a new socialist society. To combat this alleged crisis, sexual enlightenment became an official part of the Soviet state’s new health agenda.
In *The Dictatorship of Sex: Lifestyle Advice for the Soviet Masses*, Frances Bernstein examines Soviet sexual education in the 1920s. She points out that the approach to sexuality during those years differed significantly from the prohibitions and legal strictures that dominated the prerevolutionary era and the 1930s, which criminalized and punished sexual behavior deemed problematic (e.g., homosexuality and abortion). Instead of prohibition, the sexual enlightenment program relied on exhortation. Through an elaborate arsenal of sex educational materials—including health newspapers and journals, popular pamphlets, traveling health exhibits, and posters—Soviet physicians and public health officials aimed to advance “healthy” and “normal” sexuality. Bernstein rightly points out that this approach to sexuality, though not legally prohibitive, was nonetheless restrictive. Sexual enlighteners advanced a rigid vision of medicalized sexuality “firmly harnessed to heterosexual reproductive monogamy” (p. 8). They did not promote individual sexual pleasure as a key component of “normal” sexuality. Instead Soviet sexual enlighteners defined “normalcy” in mostly negative terms—as the absence of a series of deviant and dangerous behaviors, and education focused on those forms of expression that were to be avoided” (p. 7). Ultimately, Bernstein argues, medical professionals and public health officials promoted a heterosexual “sexless-sex model.” Ideal Soviet citizens would get married, but not too early, and engage in sexual activity, but not too frequently, primarily for the purpose of procreation.

In one of her most fascinating chapters, Bernstein examines how sexual enlighteners emphasized not only the dangers of prostitution and venereal disease (the usual sexual suspects), but also the supposed hazards of “underage” sex, masturbation, and early marriage. These practices were viewed as negative not because of their alleged violation of morality, a claim often made in the West. Instead, Soviet doctors and public health officials argued for the deleterious effects of these practices on the individual body and the crusade for socialism. As Bernstein notes, seeing these behaviors as perilous rested on two assumptions: the glandular basis of sex and the limited supply of bodily energy, including hormone supply. Sexual activity before the body reached full maturity, it was argued, would overburden the sex glands and deplete the “growing body of the hormones necessary to ensure normal physical and mental development” (p. 134). Early sexual activity would therefore damage one’s personal health and weaken “societal commitment” to socialist construction. Supposedly, masturbation was not a solitary affair but a group activity, it was considered incorrectly collectivist. Sexual enlighteners saw early marriage as harmful because, as with “underage” sex, it involved “premature” sexual activity that could produce unhealthy side effects, such as impotence and infertility. In addition, early marriage could lead to early pregnancy or its termination, both of which were perceived as threatening to a young woman’s body.
Although scholarly literature often depicts the Soviet 1920s as sexually liberated and the 1930s as sexually repressive, Bernstein offers a different view. She acknowledges that the recriminalization of prostitution, sodomy, and abortion in the 1930s reintroduced significant restrictions. But, according to Bernstein, the “sexless-sex model” promoted in the 1920s laid the groundwork for the Stalinist repression of sexuality in the 1930s. Moreover, during both the 1920s and the 1930s, Soviet officials deployed “normalizing” discourses of sexuality to intervene in the lives of citizens and discipline the Soviet populace. Bernstein's work also calls into question the idea of the Stalinist 1930s as a radical retreat from women’s equality. Throughout the book and in particular in her excellent chapter on public health posters, she demonstrates that rigid ideas about gender difference and sexual roles informed understandings of sexual health and “normal” sexuality in the 1920s. As Bernstein observes: “Sex education illustrations communicate the limits that were placed on woman’s requirements for healthy citizenship, and consequently on her participation in civil society” (p. 128). In the 1920s, then, women’s liberation was hindered by the medical belief in the inescapable biological sexual difference between men and women and the attendant “advocacy of gender-specific roles and responsibilities” (p. 6). Bernstein’s insightful gendered analysis would have benefited from greater discussion about how her work challenges or complements existing studies of gender in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Dictatorship of Sex is a well-researched, invaluable book for scholars and students interested in gender, sexuality, medical professionals, and public health in the Soviet 1920s.


Reviewed by Sener Akturk, Harvard University

This book by Frank Grüner was originally a doctoral dissertation, “The End of the Dream of Jewish Soviet Men? Jews and the Soviet State, 1941 to 1953,” completed at Heidelberg University. Focusing on the period from Nazi Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 to the anti-Semitic “Doctor’s Plot” in 1953, the book traces what it argues were the most important years in the transformation of Jewish identity in the Soviet Union.

The book consists of three parts that discuss the impact of key events on Soviet Jewish identity. The first, titled “Between Annihilation, Persecution, and Self-Assertion,” examines the period from 1941 to 1948, focusing on the Second World War and the activities of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAC). The second part examines anti-Semitism and the Holocaust during and after the war, with chapters on the formation of a Jewish national identity, the attempts to establish a Jewish homeland in the Soviet Union and the founding of Israel, and the role of Jewish religion. The third and final part of the book examines the relationship of Jews and the Stalinist regime,
showing how the regime initially saw Jews as the ultimate Soviet patriots but later came to revile them as “rootless cosmopolitans,” a transition reflected in the title of the book. In tracing the evolution of a Jewish national consciousness in the Soviet Union, Grüner relies on a content analysis of a rich array of memoirs, letters, public speeches, and other primary sources produced by Soviet Jews who lived in this period, ranging from prominent figures such as Ilya Ehrenburg to ordinary citizens of Jewish background.

One of the major themes of the book is “assimilation,” highlighting the resistance of some Jews to Soviet attempts at assimilating them, in contrast to the views of others like Ehrenburg who welcomed assimilation (pp. 285ff). The book opens with a letter from Aleksandr Markovich Lifich to the JAC, thought to be written sometime between 1942 and 1948 (p. 1), and it ends with the statement that by 1953 Jews were left with two options: emigration or accepting an assimilated, “non-Jewish” existence as a Soviet citizen (p. 511). This sets apart the story of the Jews from many other ethnic groups in the Soviet Union. Assimilation was anathema in official Soviet ideology and in most cases was not sought after in practice, as is evident from many Soviet policies ranging from assigning territories to ethnic groups, supporting their languages, and applying positive discrimination on the basis of ethnicity. Why were Jews eventually targeted for assimilation when most others were not? The material presented in this book suggests that the failure to provide territorial autonomy for Jews within the USSR and their eventual association, in the eyes of Soviet authorities, with a foreign nationalism (Zionism) and state (Israel), as was the case with some other Soviet nationalities (Germans, Koreans, etc.) help to explain this outcome.

The book also demonstrates, however, that assimilation and discrimination, which were so pervasive by 1953, did not characterize the Soviet state’s policies during most of the 1940s. Crimea was contemplated as a potential homeland and autonomous territory for the Jews, both in the 1920s and again in 1944 (pp. 307–316), but when that plan failed to materialize, attention shifted back to the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (JAO) established in Birobidzhan in the Russian Far East in 1934 (pp. 314–316), an entity that still exists today. However, the JAO never attracted more than an insignificant fraction of Soviet Jews, making Israel, the newly found Jewish state in Palestine, the most successful and attractive project of Jewish state-building for the Jews in the USSR (p. 316). The rise of a Jewish nationalist identity in the Soviet Union is therefore in need of explanation, which this book attempts to provide.

The Nazi-Soviet Pact, which Grüner refers to as the Hitler-Stalin Pact, “the alliance with the ‘fascist arch-enemy’ that obviously had a greater impact than the repressions at the time of the Great Terror,” led to an observable “distancing of the Jews from the [Soviet] regime” (p. 161). Following the agony of 22 months of Soviet friendship with Nazi Germany (1939–1941), the war seemed almost a relief and witnessed a “normalization” of relations between the people and the state, especially in the case of the Jews. The war also had a positive, integrative effect on the ethnically, religiously, and socially diverse Soviet citizenry (p. 161). Grüner puts significant emphasis on the work of the JAC during and after the war (1941–1948) in the formation of a Jewish national identity (pp. 55–128). The JAC facilitated international contacts
between Soviet and non-Soviet Jews, stoking the feeling of a *Schicksalgemeinschaft* (a community of fate), a fate laden with successive waves of persecution and suffering. (I find it ironic that the post-1990 reunified German nation was also defined as a *Schicksalgemeinschaft* by the German Constitutional Court in its rejection of non-German immigrants’ right to vote in local elections in the early 1990s.)

The Second World War and the Holocaust were crucial in the formation of a distinct Jewish identity. The founding of Israel in 1948 was paralleled by a decisive political rupture between the Soviet state and the Jews. Golda Meir’s visit to Moscow as the new Israeli ambassador in 1948 was accompanied by “spontaneous bursts of enthusiasm of tens of thousands of Jews, who gathered in the Soviet capital, in order to hail the representative of Israel” (p. 128). After 1948, Soviet leaders began to conceptualize Soviet Jews as “theirs,” akin to a “fifth column” of Israel. Part II of the book in particular is an attempt to apply theories of nationalism to the case of Soviet Jews in explaining the rise of Jewish national consciousness. It is noteworthy that “Israeli people,” an expression not used before World War II, began to be used by Soviet Jews in describing themselves (p. 250).

Another leitmotif of the book is more general and goes beyond Soviet Jewish identity. Jews, who were perhaps the best representatives of the “new Soviet man” in the 1920s, were cast away as “rootless cosmopolitans” by the 1950s. This trajectory may have been symptomatic of a deeper problem with the project of creating the “new Soviet man,” especially the ambiguity of the ethnonational content of the project.

I recommend this book for graduate seminars on ethnonational questions in the USSR and for anybody interested in Jewish history and politics in the twentieth century.

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Reviewed by Simon Ertz, Stanford University

In this ambitious and multifaceted book, Hiroaki Kuromiya endeavors to reconstruct the experiences of “ordinary” victims of the Great Terror in the Soviet Union of the late 1930s. Through a close reading of their case files, he seeks to retrieve what he calls the “true voices” of several dozen randomly selected individuals who were arrested, interrogated, and (with few exceptions) executed by the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) in the “mass operations” from summer 1937 to autumn 1938 in Kyiv. Even though various scholars, including Kuromiya, have much expanded our knowledge of the background, chronology, and mechanics of the Great Terror in recent years, no one has previously offered as meticulous an examination of individual interrogation records. Whenever the longhand interrogation protocols have been preserved, Kuromiya has analyzed them because they often exhibit revealing differences from the typed versions. He has carefully attended not only to the content and the dy-
namics of the interrogations but also to lacunae, internal contradictions, and margina-
lia in the files. He has ingeniously traced additional background information about his
subjects, and he has aptly contextualized their fates within the broader social and po-
litical context of the 1930s.

Although Kuromiya’s skills in analyzing and interpreting these sources are truly
impressive, several blind spots remain. The most obvious concerns concrete interroga-
tion procedures, particularly the use of threats, deceit, and physical and psychological
torture as described in scores of memoirs of repression victims. Because almost all of
Kuromiya’s subjects had not even a chance to record their experiences and because
their files remain silent on this issue, Kuromiya in most cases can only suspect the use
of such practices whenever the interrogated started to confess—gradually, partially,
and often in formulaic language—to deeds they in all likelihood had never com-
mited.

Despite such limitations, Kuromiya succeeds in providing remarkably diverse
and detailed insights into the core of the machinery of the Great Terror. Thirteen
chapters, each of which sketches out the cases of several individuals targeted for a par-
ticular reason, illustrate the broad spectrum of factors that could trigger persecution.
The reader encounters persons who had occasionally grumbled about the multiple
hardships of everyday life, who had too conspicuously held on to religious practices,
who had failed to break away from doomed relatives and loved ones, who had been in-
duced to cooperate with the NKVD but had failed to offer satisfactory intelligence, or
who simply bore the wrong surname (as happened to one Leonid Pavlovich Trotsky).
One theme running through many stories is alleged links to foreign powers, which
supports Oleg Khlevniuk’s and Kuromiya’s earlier arguments about the significance of
the foreign policy factor for explaining the timing and the nature of the mass terror of
1937–1938. The grounds for such suspicions were diverse: Polish or Korean ethnicity,
any interaction with foreign consulates or their personnel, family members living
abroad, or simply the marginality of one’s existence, which, in the eyes of the regime,
increased one’s vulnerability to recruitment attempts by foreign secret services.

Had the Soviet authorities any serious reasons for such apprehensions? Kuro-
miya’s cases vividly illustrate that discontent and grievances were not uncommon in
the 1930s in Kyiv and beyond. How could it have been otherwise given the recent
horrors of collectivization and the subsequent famines, the persistent shortages and
frustrations that characterized everyday life, the Soviet system’s perennial encroach-
ment on the lifeworlds of ordinary people, lingering memories, idealized or not, of
better times under the Tsar, and the suspicion that, across the Western border, life
might be more bearable under regimes that appeared to be fundamental alternatives to
Bolshevism? And yet, not in a single case that Kuromiya examined did the NKVD as-
semble plausible evidence, much less proof that any of its victims had engaged in ac-
tivities that would have come anywhere close to a serious opposition, let alone threat,
to the regime.

Precisely because of the width of this gap between what the interrogators were
supposed to find and what the interrogated could and were prepared to admit, exca-
vating the latter’s “true,” undistorted “voices” from the police files is an extremely
difícult endeavor, as Kuromiya himself frequently acknowledges. Hence, often his efforts instead result in uncovering the recalcitrance with which the vast majority of victims, even under extreme duress, fought the interrogators’ attempts to entangle them in a web of insidious and often fantastic accusations. Indeed, among Kuromiya’s most striking findings is the frequency with which interrogators failed to bring their victims to confess to their alleged crimes. If self-incriminations were nonetheless extracted, they were typically flimsy and undercut by the accompanying documentation. As a result, when NKVD officials typed up the handwritten protocols and prepared them for the (sham) trial, they would often ascribe to their victims statements they had never made and conceal the victims’ continued professions of innocence.

These findings directly point to the fundamental dilemma of Soviet terror. If the terror meted out by the Bolsheviks and brought to its culmination by Iosif Stalin is to be understood as an attempt to install and solidify a total, revolutionary order by means of the removal of any competing concepts of order (whether of prerevolutionary or foreign provenience), then the inconsistencies, contradictions, and implausible assertions pervading the police files attest to at least a partial failure. At the critical moment when unruly and inimical “elements” were not simply numbers in operational documents or propagandistic categories and stereotypes but were to be unmistakably identified from among living human beings, the executive organs of the party-state ran into obstacles that even violence could not overcome. To be sure, to execute an individual, one does not need a truthful and logically consistent verdict—unchecked power and the resolve to use it are fully sufficient. Moreover, public announcements about the identification and punishment of “enemies” in the Soviet Union were stylized and hence much more coherent than the secret police files. Yet it is telling that even though the NKVD could and did routinely practice torture as well as the manipulation and falsification of documents, it still left behind a record that, rather than corroborating the regime’s assumptions about the abundance of enemies, is full of contradictions. Thus, the Great Terror, far from producing the desired absolute, ultimate order, sowed disorder, upheaval, and confusion not only in the lives of millions but even in internal documents.

All these achievements aside, the present book is also an attempt to restore a small part of the memory of the otherwise anonymous masses of “ordinary” terror victims. Here, too, it succeeds as much as the sources allow. Kuromiya’s subtle and careful reconstruction of the fates of his subjects, supplemented by excerpts from their interrogation protocols and several moving “mug shots,” allow the perceptive reader to develop a sense for what it meant for these people to see their lives shattered in the face of outlandish and unfailingly fatal accusations.

One might surmise that the very fact that Kuromiya was permitted access to the NKVD files in Kyiv leaves room for hope that at least in Ukraine the crimes committed by the Soviet party-state will not soon be forgotten, even though the Ukrainian government is no longer seeking international recognition of the famine of the early 1930s as an act of genocide. Yet the same cannot be said about today’s Russia. Finally, never should one forget the selectiveness of commemoration, as illustrated by Omer Bartov’s almost simultaneously published book Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish
Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), which documents how in Western Ukraine, traces not only of the Shoah, but also of any previous Jewish presence are being rapidly expunged, sometimes to be replaced by nationalistic imagery.


Reviewed by Richard Davy, St Anthony's College, Oxford University

Few international agreements have encountered as much interpretative turbulence as the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the product of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). After nearly three years of negotiations, this long, complex document was signed by leaders of 35 states: the United States, the Soviet Union, Canada, and all of Europe except Albania. At first it was wrongly vilified by many Western commentators for allegedly endorsing Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe. Moscow proclaimed the same interpretation. Then, when courageous people in the Soviet sphere began citing the document's pledges on human rights, the Final Act was enthusiastically taken up by its former critics in the West. Later it was credited with having contributed to ending the Cold War.

Fortunately the subject has lately been attracting a great deal of scholarly interest. As the archives have opened up (some fully, others less so), conferences, books, and memoirs have proliferated, stripping away accretions of political interpretation to reveal a more complex but no less fascinating reality.

The book under review is the product of a conference that brought many leading scholars and former participants to Zurich in September 2005 under the auspices of the Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch). The result is a valuable examination of the many facets of the CSCE and the interaction of the conflicting interests that went into the making of the Final Act. The book concentrates on the years 1972–1975 but starts with a sober warning about the dangers of hindsight. We can now see that the Final Act had precisely the opposite effect of that predicted by its Western critics and hoped for by the Soviet Union. Far from cementing the status quo, it helped to erode Soviet power in Eastern Europe. But, as Andreas Wenger and Vojtech Mastny rightly argue, Helsinki did not cause the collapse of the Soviet empire. Rather, it set in motion developments that eventually “supplied a normative framework conducive to the peaceful demise of Communism” (p. 3).

A surprising finding of recent research is how much diversity and conflict existed behind the monolithic facade of the Warsaw Pact. Romania, Poland, and East Germany, in particular, were all pressing their own demands, to which Moscow was
Douglas Selvage and Federica Caciagli offer valuable analysis in this area, and Marie-Pierre Rey examines differences in Moscow reflecting both institutional interests and pressure from a rising generation of Soviet diplomats who saw detente as having “major potential for instigating an evolution in their regime” (p. 73). She reaches the interesting though disputable conclusion that signature of the Final Act constituted “the victory of reformers over conservatives” (p. 78).

But there was no East-West symmetry in the negotiations. Within the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union ultimately called the shots. On the Western side the United States took a back seat through most of the negotiations, and Henry Kissinger was actively hostile until the final phase, more so in private than he admits in his memoirs. Jeremi Suri offers a partial defense of Kissinger and charts his reluctant conversion from opposition to belated support, and Michael Morgan takes a broader view of the North American role by including Canada. Although the North Atlantic Treaty Organization initially agreed on parameters for the conference, the CSCE was hampered not only by Washington but also by undemocratic members who were not interested in human rights. Leadership of the Western caucus therefore passed to the nine members of the (then) European Community, which, as Daniel Möckli shows, used the new machinery of European Political Cooperation (EPC) to become not only “the actor group with the single biggest impact on the outcome of the negotiations” (p. 145) but also “a key driving force behind the expanding notion of security that resulted in the recognition of human rights as a principle of international relations” (p. 145).

Forging a common EC position required intense negotiations to reconcile, among other differences, West German caution (well analyzed by Petri Hakkarainen), Dutch intransigence (Floribert Baudet), British skepticism, and French exceptionalism while at the same time earning valuable support from neutrals and the non-aligned (Christian Nuenlist). The West German Social Democrat–led government also had to contend with fierce opposition at home from the Christian Democrats, who lined up with China to depict the CSCE as a Soviet attempt to “Finlandize” Western Europe (Bernd Schaefer), only to become enthusiastic proponents of Ostpolitik as soon as they regained power. Out of all these complexities and thousands of meetings—“multilateral diplomacy run amok,” as Kissinger misguidedly called it—the Final Act eventually emerged as a significant success for EPC, endorsing the West European view of détente as a means of pursuing change rather than freezing the status quo.

Some authors overemphasize the role of the country they have studied, a bias that is difficult to avoid when relying on national archives in which officials play up their own successes. Baudet, for instance, almost ignores EPC. A few errors also arise. Morgan writes that signatories pledged themselves to allow the “freer flow of people, ideas and information” (p. 33). Rey places “free circulation of ideas and people” in the Final Act (p. 78). Caciagli writes similarly (p. 118). In fact, although “ideas” were in early Western drafts, they did not make it even as far as the multilateral agenda. “Free” also became “freer” at an early stage. Caciagli asserts, wrongly, that the right to peaceful change of frontiers is not “explicit” in the Final Act (p. 118), and at one point (p. 119)
she offers her own translation instead of referring to the official English text. Möckli asserts that the Final Act recognized “the political status quo in Europe” (p. 146). I have argued at length elsewhere that such statements are at best misleading. Nevertheless, this book is an illuminating contribution to the still unfolding story of the CSCE, essential reading for anyone studying that extraordinary exercise in Cold War diplomacy.