

The massive North Vietnamese attack against South Vietnam in April 1972 was the largest offensive of the war up to that point. Nicknamed the “Easter Offensive,” it was the first time that Communist military strategists used large numbers of Soviet-built tanks and heavy artillery to augment multidivisional infantry thrusts. The goal of the offensive was to defeat the South Vietnamese armed forces and win the war or, failing that, to force the United States to overthrow President Nguyen Van Thieu and create a coalition government.

To achieve North Vietnam’s objectives, Senior General Vo Nguyen Giap designed a three-pronged assault against South Vietnamese defenses. In the north, tank columns surged across the demilitarized zone and the Laotian border, trying to capture the old imperial capital of Hue. In the vast forests and mountains of the middle section of South Vietnam, called the Central Highlands, infantry and armor moved to capture the city of Kontum. From there, they intended to move eastward to the coast and cut South Vietnam in two. Further south, Communist infantry and tank units poured out of their sanctuaries in neighboring Cambodia and drove toward Saigon.

In all three areas, the North Vietnamese initially made significant gains. In the north, Communist troops captured the capital of Quang Tri Province and drove to within twenty miles of Hue. In the Central Highlands, North Vietnamese units effectively destroyed the 22nd Division of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) at the small village of Tan Canh and then moved up to the gates of Kontum. In the south, they surrounded the ARVN 5th Division at the city of An Loc and were preparing to overrun it. Yet even though South Vietnamese forces had crumbled under the first onslaught, they eventually stiffened. They stood their ground at key points in what became some of the defining battles of the war. President Richard Nixon’s policy of “Vietnamization”—withdrawing U.S. ground combat forces while concurrently training units of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) to assume the lead role—now faced its sternest test.

To conduct that training, U.S. military officers were assigned as advisers to RVNAF units to tutor their counterparts, but the rapid drawdown of U.S. military forces in South Vietnam had pared their ranks as well. Now only regimental-size units
and above had U.S. advisors. During the Easter Offensive, these advisors provided a direct link to U.S. airpower and logistics, and their steadying presence proved crucial in stopping the invasion.

In the historiography of the Vietnam War, the resultant battles to recapture Quang Tri City and defend An Loc have been heavily documented. Both have become iconic symbols of South Vietnamese resistance. Less well known is the battle for Kontum. Former U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Thomas McKenna, who fought at Kontum while serving as an adviser to the ARVN 44th Regiment, 23rd Division, has corrected that oversight. In a superb recounting of the battle, which in many ways was as critical as Quang Tri and An Loc, McKenna documents the tough fighting to defeat the unrelenting North Vietnamese effort to take the embattled city.

McKenna rightly points out that the Central Highlands theater, often overlooked because of its remoteness from Saigon and other major cities, was just as important as the two others. After destroying the ARVN 22nd Division, North Vietnamese commanders planned to annihilate the 23rd Division and drive to the coast. By cutting South Vietnam in two, Hanoi would achieve a position of military superiority that it would then use to construct a favorable political outcome to the war. First, though, its forces had to capture the city of Kontum. As Communist units closed in on the city, they suffered under a constant deluge of American tactical airstrikes and the judicious application of B-52 bombers. The progress of the North Vietnamese columns slowed, allowing the South Vietnamese time to concentrate the entire 23rd Division in defense of the city.

To buttress his own memories of the battle, McKenna spent considerable time in the archives, digging out old unit logs and contemporaneous interviews with other participants. In addition, he spoke with numerous Americans who were also involved in the battle. Ultimately, his exertions paid off. He expertly weaves in these other perspectives, and in doing so he recounts with precision the tactical and strategic decisions made by senior U.S. and ARVN officers, in particular the enigmatic but charismatic John Paul Vann. He further outlines in considerable detail not only the enormous logistical effort undertaken by the U.S. Air Force to keep the embattled garrison supplied with “beans and bullets,” but also the overwhelming amount of airpower employed against the North Vietnamese attackers.

McKenna also analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the ARVN. In particular, he justifiably criticizes the dreadful commanders in the 22nd Division whose decisions led directly to the disaster at Tan Canh. But he also credits the strong leadership of the ARVN commanders in the 23rd Division as a key factor in the stalwart defense mounted against constant attacks.

Nor does he flinch in describing the defects and strong suits of his adversaries. Amazed by the continual efforts by the North Vietnamese to take the city despite sustaining horrific casualties, McKenna also details the poor coordination of their armor and infantry. This serious tactical flaw, along with their heavily interdicted supply lines, probably doomed the Communist attempt.

Just as important, McKenna provides previously unknown facts about the crucial
role played by the first combat deployment of the new helicopter-borne anti-tank missiles, known as TOW (Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided) missiles. This experimental unit—call sign “Hawk’s Claw”—deployed directly from the United States to Kontum to help stem the armor onslaught. The unit immediately proved highly successful, so decimating the North Vietnamese armor that by the end of the battle few enemy tanks had survived.

Besides enhancing our understanding of this crucial battle for South Vietnam’s survival, McKenna’s book also provides an important look at the outstanding efforts of the hardy U.S. advisers, the last Americans to fight side-by-side with South Vietnamese forces. We can only hope that, emboldened by McKenna’s outstanding achievement, more of the advisers from those terrible days of the 1972 Easter Offensive will tell their stories.

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Reviewed by Matthew Evangelista, Cornell University

Although the phenomenon of terrorism dates back millennia and the Cold War witnessed many examples, Thomas McDonnell’s valuable book, originally published in 2009, focuses mainly on the period after the attacks of 11 September 2001. The author, a professor of law at Pace University, offers a sophisticated analysis of the legal and pragmatic implications of the reactions of the George W. Bush administration to 9/11.

The core of the book consists of several chapters analyzing the legality of many of the practices associated with what the Bush administration called the Global War on Terrorism (following a critique of that designation in chapter two): indefinite detention, trials before military commissions, torture, and targeted killing of suspected terrorists; a preventive war in Iraq; and the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan for being a “haven state” for al Qaeda terrorists. Part I includes chapters devoted to “torture light,” “torture heavy,” and the specific scenario of the “ticking time bomb.” McDonnell exhibits a solid command of the legal literature and the history that has emerged from declassified documents and the investigative journalism of Ron Suskind, Jane Mayer, Dana Priest, and others. Chapter six addresses the question of indefinite detention without trial by exploring the status of the detainees and the relevant international law. Among the controversial issues he confronts are to what extent the laws of war—international humanitarian law (IHL)—apply to the people the U.S. government has detained. Some were picked up on the battlefields of Afghanistan, but others were arrested in places like Pakistan and John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, and some were kidnapped in Bosnia or Italy. In the categories of the Geneva Conventions, the author probes whether the “global war on terrorism” is an armed conflict of an international or non-international character or whether it fails to rise to the level of
an armed conflict at all because of its insufficient duration or intensity. These are difficult issues, and the author handles them with great sophistication and subtlety.

Part III of the book, titled “Stopping Terrorists on the Ground,” contains a chapter on targeted killing (including by drones) and a chapter on “collateral damage.” The latter chapter focuses on the relatively meager law governing aerial bombardment and other attacks in which civilians are put at risk. McDonnell makes an observation about the 1999 Rome Statute (the basis for the International Criminal Court) that is not much noted elsewhere in the literature. In 1977 the guidelines on distinction (between civilian and military targets) and proportionality adopted in the First Additional Protocol to the 1949 Geneva Conventions had prohibited “launching any attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated” (p. 142; emphasis in original). McDonnell points out that the Rome Statute, in defining war crimes, used much the same language but substituted “clearly excessive” for “excessive” and “overall military advantage” for “concrete and direct military advantage.” He argues that the Additional Protocol “provides relatively little protection for civilians. The Rome Statute of the ICC provides even less” (p. 142). However, the point might be moot because the United States is not a party to either instrument.

Two of the most original analyses in the book are versions of pieces the author has published in law journals. The first is an argument that the U.S. use of the death penalty is counterproductive to its anti-terrorism efforts because of the potential to create martyrs. The second is a critique of the practice of ethnic and racial profiling on legal and pragmatic grounds.

Among the more thought-provoking themes in the book is McDonnell’s comparison of the relative importance of IHL governing warfare and human rights law. Many legal specialists would claim that IHL constitutes lex specialis for situations of armed conflict and thereby overrides the greater protections afforded to civilians during peacetime (most notably the fundamental right to life). McDonnell avers that trends in human rights law, particularly the creation of the European Court of Human Rights, have led to a greater legal sensitivity to civilian harm during conflicts, particularly ones characterized as counterterror operations. He describes a number of cases in which the Court has ruled against Turkey and Russia for causing excessive harm to the civilian population in their conflicts against Turkish and Chechen separatists.

The paperback edition of 2011 reviewed here includes a new preface updating the analysis to take into account how the administration of Barack Obama has pursued its counterterrorism policies. In an assessment that will ring true for many readers, McDonnell revises his earlier prediction that Obama—a lawyer who taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago—would adhere to law more fully than his predecessors did. McDonnell contends that “the Obama administration has definitely moved towards stricter compliance with international law in the struggle against terrorism, but at the same time it has clung to many of the previous administration’s
counter-terrorism policies, including indefinite detention, the preference of military commissions rather than civilian courts to try alleged terrorists, and the use of military rather than law enforcement as the major counter-terrorism practice” (p. xix). Whatever administration is in office, the issues explored in this insightful study will, for better or worse, remain timely.


Reviewed by Russell Crandall, Davidson College

In 1993 the Colombian cocaine kingpin Pablo Escobar was killed by police while attempting to flee from a rooftop in his hometown of Medellín. Some two decades later, Escobar’s inimitable image as a drug producer extraordinaire still dominates our understanding (and, at times, Hollywood’s depiction) of the U.S.-led war on drugs in Latin America and across the globe. In more recent years, the nihilistic and savage Mexican narcotics “capos” and Afghani guerrillas-cum-heroin producers have added additional flavor to our understanding of these illicit actors who provide the drugs so readily consumed in the United States.

Yet, as Daniel Weimer deftly shows in his exhaustive and timely tome, Seeing Drugs, Washington’s “source country” antidrug campaign started in Southeast Asia and Mexico in the early 1970s, well before more recent but often controversial U.S.-led campaigns in Escobar’s Colombia in the 1980s. Weimer takes the reader back to the presidential administrations of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford when, he posits, Washington’s belief in source control efforts was rationalized by a “drugs-as-disease” metaphor that conveniently placed the responsibility for American’s drug scourge overseas. In turn, this characterization rationalized aggressive antidrug efforts in Third World producer and transit states, most notably Thailand, Burma, and Mexico.

Weimer painstakingly shows how Washington’s “supply side” drug war in Thailand, Burma, and Mexico took place against the backdrop of the ignominious U.S. withdrawal from a prolonged, arduous counterinsurgency and modernization campaign in Vietnam. Weimer believes the growing discrediting of “blind anti-communism” ensured that the drug war would emerge as a more palatable justification for interventionism. That is, the “logic of source control” (p. 217) meant that U.S. officials were bound to identify a new monster to slay, and nothing served as a more convenient foe than the murky illicit drug trade.

Weimer writes about how the prescriptions of modernization (i.e., economic development) and counterinsurgency central to the antidrug campaigns attempted to produce good governance, economic development, and internal security. More than simply stemming drug production and trafficking, the antidrug campaigns—which
now also sought to change, via aid and security projects, the way source country populations lived—were one more way that the powerful “Orientalist” United States could control exotic foreign lands.

In Weimer’s depiction, the intentional and self-serving discourse of “drugs as a disease” helped bolster the notion that source control was an essential component of any effective counternarcotics campaign. That is, source control could fix all sorts of societal problems not only by keeping the drugs out of the United States but by cleaning up illicit activity and promoting development in the producer countries. For Weimer, this metaphor is not simply hyperbole but a shrewd marketing plot that justified—and continues to justify—U.S. training, aid, and, at times, boots on the ground.

Weimer believes U.S. politicians came to embrace and promote the idea that the drug scourge needed to be confronted abroad. The growing outcry over the “heroin epidemic” among U.S. troops in Vietnam and the affliction they might bring stateside played into this political pressure to “do something” about drugs. Not surprisingly, and fitting neatly into Weimer’s thesis, President Nixon told the American public that “this deadly poison is a foreign import” (p. 74).

In Thailand, the manner in which the U.S.-funded antidrug operations were implemented was directly linked to the two decades of counterinsurgency cooperation between Washington and Bangkok. This meant, for example, that the Royal Thai government would not only attempt to reduce the northern hills tribes’ opium trade but would also build thousands of miles of roads in order to bolster economic development and state authority. The Thai authorities also promoted crop substitution programs in order to turn opium farmers into budding capitalist entrepreneurs.

By the mid-1970s Mexico had replaced Southeast Asia as the main producer of heroin destined for the U.S. market. Weimer shows how U.S. and Mexican officials responded with a “technical solution” (p. 172)—the aerial spraying of illicit crops with herbicides—which they believed would allow for easy containment. At the time, this was seen as a relatively humane and effective way to disrupt the drug trade because it went after the crop itself. Weimer notes that most of the U.S. pilots contracted to conduct the initial eradication spraying flights were Vietnam War veterans. Like Thailand’s crop substitution efforts, Mexico’s herbicide program became a model for other producing states such as Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia. Weimer concludes that, like so much in the global drug war, the defoliation efforts in Mexico ultimately made things worse, not better.

Weimer’s argument is that the cases of Thailand, Burma, and Mexico in the 1970s are but one more instance of a powerful force and its allies imposing its reality on a weaker foe. What Weimer might have more fully developed is the argument that the counterinsurgency and economic development practitioners of that time, as well as today, would likely fully agree with him. What might have warranted more investigation is whether this imposed reality ever represented a legitimate effort by states to address insecurity within their borders. In recent years, to take one example, the Colombian government, again backed by billions in aid dollars from Washington, has
used tried-and-true counterinsurgency and modernization policies to reduce the country’s alarming levels of impunity and violence, including rampant narcotics production and trafficking. This effort has been far from perfect, and the counter-narcotics elements are likely the least successful, but through these efforts millions of Colombians are now living in a country that is far more tranquil than just a decade ago.

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*Reviewed by Roger Zane George, U.S. National War College (Washington DC)*

The topic of politicization has been a perennial concern among intelligence professionals, but not usually one that compels any serious study or policy changes to prevent it. Joshua Rovner’s *Fixing the Facts* suggests this is because few cases ever reach the point of becoming major national issues, and policymakers do not see it in their interest to prevent politicization. The book examines six major instances over a span of nearly sixty years—beginning with Vietnam, then turning to the U.S.-Soviet missile balance of the 1970s, and ending with the well-known Iraq weapons of mass destruction (WMD) controversy. In making his argument, Rovner presumably selected these cases for the availability of sufficient documentation, including declassified intelligence estimates. He does make excellent use of available documents, eyewitness accounts, and subsequent scholarship, but whether his documentation of only six examples over nearly six decades can validate his theory of “oversell” is another question.

Rovner’s theory is provocative because it clashes with the views of other scholars and practitioners. In his view, others explain politicization as primarily the result of the personal proximity of intelligence advisers to policymakers, or intelligence organizations’ proximity to or dependence on politicians. Taking issue with this view, Rovner contends that domestic politics is what drives policymakers to “oversell” policies and thereby find themselves forced to misuse and sometimes compel the intelligence community to alter its judgments. In this sense, he places the blame for politicization more squarely on policymakers than on intelligence professionals.

Students of the Cold War will be familiar with his examination of the Vietnam estimates (1964–1967) that clashed with the Johnson administration’s views on the war’s conduct or success. Rovner contrasts the Johnson administration’s reactions to intelligence assessments done in 1964, which challenged the logic of the prevailing “domino theory,” with the later military “order of battle” estimates. In the former case the administration largely ignored intelligence inputs, whereas in the latter the White House and military commanders aggressively moved to change estimates to be more in line with the military and public relations strategies. Rovner concludes that President Lyndon Johnson in 1967 had a credibility problem that had not existed earlier.
Because of congressional and public criticism that had grown since 1964, Johnson could not tolerate an intelligence community openly challenging the success of his military strategy.

Likewise, the Nixon and Ford administrations’ views of the 1970s Soviet missile estimates and the 1976 “Team A/Team B” critique of strategic force estimates by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) spurred them to attempt to change CIA and Intelligence Community (IC) views on the Soviet threat to justify, in the case of the Nixon administration, the pursuit of antiballistic missile defenses and, in the case of the Ford administration, to appease critics of Henry Kissinger’s arms control and détente policies.

However, readers will be most intrigued by Rovner’s comparison of the U.S. and British governments’ attitudes toward and use of intelligence in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War. This examination raises some interesting questions about two very different intelligence-policy arrangements that ended up fixing intelligence for almost the same purpose—namely, selling the Iraq War to skeptical publics. Readers will be intrigued to learn that the British system intertwines intelligence and policy officials in the development of their joint intelligence assessments, whereas the United States purports to keep intelligence at arm’s length from policymakers in order not to encourage “intelligence to please”—or politicization. Rovner’s findings suggest that the structural protections in the United States had little impact on politicization of intelligence because the administration of George W. Bush was determined to spin intelligence to support its war decision.

This reviewer was impressed with Rovner’s scholarship and argumentation and largely agrees with the general notion that politicization is more likely when high politics and national security is at stake. However, Rovner only briefly notes the possibility that policymakers are right to challenge intelligence judgments because so much is at stake and there is always the possibility that the analysts are wrong. More importantly, Rovner’s examination of the Iraq WMD estimate is somewhat one-dimensional. He records every hint of “pressure” on the analysts’ judgment-making. Yet, he barely notes the ample evidence of poorly crafted assessments, flawed assumptions, and fabricated reporting that misled analysts without the assistance of agenda-driven political appointees. Many senior intelligence officials have acknowledged that the IC came to its incorrect judgments all by itself. The Bush administration and the intelligence community were largely in harmony on Iraq’s possession of WMD, and the Iraq WMD commission reported that it could not document any politicization of this estimate.

Perhaps if intelligence analysts had concluded that Saddam Hussein was unlikely to have WMD, the Bush administration might have tried to pressure the CIA to alter its judgment, but whether that effort would have been successful is uncertain. The CIA, to its credit, refused to yield to the administration’s belief in a strong linkage between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, which the Bush officials put forth as a further justification for war. Rovner might have contrasted this example with the WMD story to learn more about what makes politicization successful or not.

Even if the “oversell” theory is a bit oversold by the author, his book is the first systematic study of an enduring problem. More research needs to be done on the
policy-intelligence relationship, which is much more than the problem of politicization and encompasses a range of challenges and pathologies. For example, the charges of failing to warn the Obama administration about the unrest in North Africa or the specific attacks in Benghazi have also shaken this relationship. Policymakers’ reliance on intelligence goes far beyond the domestic utility it can provide for an administration’s policy agendas. Smart national security strategies depend on candid, timely, and insightful intelligence that cannot be produced if mistrust is the basis of the intelligence-policy relationship.

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Reviewed by Michael Sherry, Northwestern University

This book will not be to every reader’s taste. In the British style, it is heavily detailed, abounding with mobilization plans and organizational entities, even as its subtitle so bluntly spells out its argument that a reader might be tempted to go no further. Might a snappy article have served better to make the argument?

Joseph Maiolo indeed argues that “the arms race drove the world to war,” and he shows in exacting detail how. Fearful or ambitious governments reacted to one another’s advances in weaponry and mobilization by upping the ante in hopes of deterring potential enemies—either from war-making or from arming further—or gaining advantage over them should war break out. For all, World War I was the template of what might be done and the example of what could go wrong. One of Maiolo’s themes is how such ideologically diverse parties—the Soviet Union, fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and the capitalist democracies like France, Britain, and the United States—reacted so similarly to the World War I experience, as they contributed to the nearly threefold increase in “worldwide arms spending” (p. 141) from 1933 to 1936. In turn, the arms race drove diverse states toward similarly authoritarian systems of state planning and coercion. As “the race sent everyone down the same totalitarian track” (p. 4), all leaders “agreed that war was no longer a contest between rival armies, but a life-and-death struggle between whole peoples and economies” (p. 61). Some leaders eagerly seized the moment—Adolf Hitler obviously, though the result for him was more chaotic and less productive than sometimes recognized by rivals who fearfully saw in Germany “a model of Teutonic efficiency, worthy of emulation” (p. 332). British, French, and U.S. leaders entered the moment reluctantly, uneasy about eroding democracy and accelerating the arms race, though for the most part more successfully. Even the French did better than most people recognize, Maiolo suggests, and Franklin Roosevelt did best of all, while “the United States fascinated the total-war systematizers” (p. 105) elsewhere. Maiolo’s astute assessment of Franklin Roosevelt points to one of the book’s strengths: he writes convincingly about histories far beyond his British home base. The subject may be old-fashioned—after the Cold
War ended, the arms races of the twentieth century fell out of favor as scholarly subjects—but his treatment yields an impressive international history, one buttressed by extensive research, by deft use of older and current scholarship, and by evenhanded judgment (Maiolo takes no cheap shots at the flawed leaders he examines or the rival scholars he challenges).

Like the arms race itself, the book seems like a closed world, walled off from other currents and from recent scholarly trends. Maiolo maintains a laser-like focus on states and the calculations made by their leaders and planners about the arms race. He presents little about ideological, cultural, and political developments beyond those calculations. “War never was just the rational application of violence for some definable political goal; it was also the harnessing of the irrational passions, such as fear and hate, of the masses” (p. 323), Maiolo recognizes, but he rarely dips into those “irrational passions” (held, one might add, not only by “the masses”) or explores how they, as much as strategic calculations, drove the world to war. As a result, readers understand the calculations driving the arms race but not the fuel for it. The result, too, is a sense of the inevitability of World War II that burdens most scholarship about its initiation. As Maiolo writes regarding Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, his “diplomacy was doomed to fail, for the great competition was neither in his nor anyone else’s power to stop” (p. 239), just as “the vicious system of military competition locked everyone into place” (p. 271). Yet Maiolo earlier insists that “the tidal-like effects of arms racing did not force anyone to choose war” (p. 5), and he later hints that Hitler, above all others, could have stopped it (see p. 272). Did “the great competition” really make World War II unstoppable, or should we blame the vaulting ambitions, immense resources, and “irrational passions” of the parties involved, above all of Nazi Germany?

But that criticizes Maiolo for failing to do what he was not attempting: a comprehensive history of the coming of World War II. What he has produced is a convincing, expansive treatment of the interwar arms race as it led to World War II and shadowed the world after that war. Even the reader impatient with the organizational detail and political maneuvering he recounts will find that the book gains in pace and power as it approaches and enters World War II, despite the occasional anachronism (e.g., an Italian general’s “shock-and-awe doctrine,” p. 216). Readers will find deft challenges to conventional wisdom about French weakness, Nazi efficiency, “blitzkrieg” warfare (Germany alone hardly imagined it and was deeply misled by its initial success), British “appeasement,” and much else. Maiolo’s extensive attention to Mussolini and Italy also works, restoring them to the key but largely forgotten place in international diplomacy they occupied at the time. Even familiar statistics leap out in the context Maiolo employs. “Incredibly,” in his apt adverb, “in 1941 and 1942 Soviet industry out-produced that of Germany in rifles, machines guns, artillery, tanks and aviation by huge margins” (p. 369). “The two-front total war, which [Iosif] Stalin had believed Hitler would never risk, was, as Stalin knew, beyond Germany’s capacity to win” (p. 369).

Despite the advent of nuclear weapons, Maiolo concludes, “the same processes and much of the same language and logic of the pre-1941 arms race fed into the Cold
War” (p. 403), when the arms race “fatally crippled the Soviet economy and blighted America’s national infrastructure, stunted its social progress, and militarized its culture” (p. 404). For scholars and students who routinely separate the pre-World War II and postwar worlds, Maiolo offers a powerful reminder of the continuity between them.


Reviewed by Jeremi Suri, University of Texas at Austin

The year 1975 marked the low point for U.S. morale in the Cold War. Still reeling from Watergate and the forced resignation of President Richard Nixon, Americans helplessly watched as North Vietnam overran South Vietnam, despite a decade of U.S. efforts (and more than 58,000 deaths) to prevent this very outcome. The U.S. economy had slowed, violent crime had risen considerably, cities were decaying, and New York City—long the epicenter of national economic power—faced bankruptcy.

Everything seemed to be going against the United States. The leaders of the Soviet Union believed that. So did most U.S. allies. In the United Nations (UN), the emerging countries of the Third World showed a strong determination to pile on. The 1970s were a decade when the international organization, largely created by the United States after the Second World War, became an aggressive forum for anti-American condemnations.

Gil Troy’s thoughtful and deeply researched book is about this painful period. He focuses on the role of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, one of the most extraordinary public personalities in late twentieth-century America, to chronicle the time and analyze how the United States emerged from it a half-decade later. Troy’s argument is simple and important: As ambassador to the UN, Moynihan was the first prominent U.S. official to stand up against the excesses of anti-American criticism and call for a renewal of national strength and idealism. Moynihan, a Democrat, famously described the forces arrayed against the United States in a March 1975 article for *Commentary*, “The United States in Opposition.” His call for renewed displays of U.S. power and commitment anticipated, according to Troy, the lines of argument adopted by Ronald Reagan and other Republicans, many of whom were former Democrats. Troy writes that “Moynihan was declaring ideological war—or at least mounting an ideological counterattack” (p. 59).

The critical moment (“Moynihan’s moment”) came on 10 November 1975, according to Troy, when the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 3379 declaring, “Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination.” The resolution was a Soviet-orchestrated and Third World–embraced attack on Israel, the United States, and the Jews living in these and other societies. Moynihan refused to accept the UN’s hypocrisy in allowing dozens of new countries, with dubious claims to historical legitimacy,
to condemn the only Jewish state. Troy approvingly quotes Moynihan’s thunderous reproach of the UN and its anti-American double standards. The United States, the ambassador proclaimed, “will never acquiesce in this infamous act.” “The lie is that Zionism is a form of racism. The overwhelmingly clear truth is that it is not” (p. 4).

Moynihan’s words had an electrifying effect among U.S. political observers who were tired of seeing the United States vilified. Moynihan spoke with passion about the virtues of American society, its loyalty to basic principles, and its commitment to friends. He showed that the United States had not lost the capacity to stand up against its critics. Most of all, Moynihan articulated a new purpose for U.S. foreign policy. Instead of fighting Communism in the jungles of Southeast Asia, the United States would consolidate the bulwarks of democracy, capitalism, and Western-style civilization in the Middle East and other regions. Moynihan did not call for distant and extended military interventions. He demanded renewed support for existing allies who could defend themselves with increased U.S. aid.

Moynihan’s words built on the Nixon Doctrine, but they extended the moral depth of the U.S. commitment to Israel well beyond where Nixon and Henry Kissinger were prepared to go. Troy is very good at documenting the rivalry between Moynihan and Kissinger and in showing how Moynihan mobilized public opinion to nudge a reluctant President Gerald Ford to support more forceful language. Reagan and other critics of détente within both parties were easier to persuade.

Troy’s book takes the reader back to Moynihan’s checkered career as a self-made Harvard University scholar, an assistant secretary of labor, a controversial author of a study on the “Negro Family,” a counselor to President Nixon for urban affairs, and an ambassador to India. In all of these roles Moynihan impressed people with his erudition, charmed people with his eloquence, and captured the imagination of audiences with his wit and energy. He was a thinker’s thinker, a talker’s talker, and a drinker’s drinker. His attraction crossed party lines, as he won over diverse politicians who wanted someone smart, collegial, and innovative.

Moynihan’s personal qualities had impressed Nixon and Ford, and they inspired New York voters, who catapulted Moynihan to the U.S. Senate, where he served as the chamber’s bon vivant from 1977 to 2001. Moynihan was a Democratic apostle of American exceptionalism, according to Troy, who helped spark the Republican-led revival of U.S. power.

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Troy’s book captures the uniqueness of Moynihan and his enduring legacy. The book also goes too far. Moynihan is treated as a genius, a prophet, and a saint. He can almost do no wrong. Troy describes Moynihan’s eclectic résumé as a strength, which it surely was, but he neglects the clear evidence that Moynihan was often more dilettante than expert or leader. Moynihan always raised intelligent arguments about important things, but how often did he follow through with effective actions? Moynihan spoke out against anti-Americanism, but where is the evidence that he helped to shape effective policy responses? The same could be said about so many other issues, including nuclear strategy, intelligence reform, trade, welfare, and budgets. Although Moynihan’s frequent pearls of wisdom were enlightening, they actually changed little. He left

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the real work of crafting policy, negotiating differences, implementing programs, and building consensus to Tip O'Neill, Howard Baker, Kissinger, and, of course, Reagan. Words are not the same as policy. Eloquence does not substitute for efficacy. Troy’s book is a love letter to a charismatic autodidact who managed to move people across party lines. Moynihan was a patriotic American with a powerful legacy. He was not, however, the person who turned the ship of state after the demoralization of 1975. That story involves other personalities, most of whom were far less memorable but much more important for policy, than the silver-tongued senator from New York.

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Reviewed by Stephen J. Whitfield, Brandeis University

In achieving his first Broadway success, Arthur Miller drew on an actual incident of lethal profiteering during World War II. But in 1948, when Miller’s play *All My Sons* was adapted to the screen, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) cried foul: “The whole plot is slanted and twisted into an indictment of money-making” (p. 197). The mob-infested brutality that disfigured the lives of longshoremen so appalled Budd Schulberg that he wrote the Oscar-winning screenplay for *On the Waterfront* (1954). That he and director Elia Kazan had already offered cooperative testimony to the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) did not, however, cut any slack with the FBI, which complained that the film’s “vicious indictment of working conditions among the longshoremen in New York . . . shows racketeers operating among the workers, extorting money from them for jobs and charging unreasonable prices for goods” (p. 205). Few postwar films were as admired as William Wyler’s *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), a poignant critique of the postwar difficulties that returning veterans faced. But the FBI, quoting a rival of Wyler’s, dissented, charging that “this picture portrayed the ‘upper class’ in a bad light” (p. 198).

*J. Edgar Hoover Goes to the Movies* is replete with such reductive responses to the most authentically American of the popular arts, as the FBI sought to determine the boundaries of the politically permissive. Usually disguising the agents’ amateurish opinions by ascribing them to “informants,” such cramped interpretations reveal the obtuseness of the Bureau in conflating sensible, liberal criticism with Communist propaganda. One striking virtue of John Sbardellati’s book is the ingenuity with which he has mined FBI records to expose how its agents in Los Angeles monitored the most influential of the nation’s mass arts. One consequence of the Bureau’s public campaign (in conjunction with HUAC) to discredit Communist directors and screenwriters was
to torpedo whatever enthusiasm Hollywood might have had for producing films that addressed actual social problems.

What bedeviled the counter-subversive enterprise was the elusiveness of the messages that threatened audiences with dangerous doses of Red rhetoric. TheHUAC hearings of 1947 were the only instance, the author reports, of a quest to uncover cinematic content that only the Communist Party could have dared to inject into the body politic. The hearings failed to expose the scope of the alleged radical effort to turn motion pictures into propaganda, and the testimony of cooperative witness Ayn Rand proved to be an embarrassment, never to be repeated. Even so, Rand’s Screen Guide for Americans (1947) became the text on which the FBI relied. The Bureau’s cineastes were therefore able to pick out the narrative elements that might reveal the collectivist mentality, which Rand posited in Manichaean opposition to individualism. If bankers and industrialists were presented as villainous, for instance, Communists and New Dealers were putting capitalism itself in their crosshairs. Hence, businessmen and other figures of authority ought to be immune from criticism. Not even Bud Abbott and Lou Costello were spared: a scene in which an army general is feted, juxtaposed with an enlisted man doing kitchen duty, made “the audience unnecessarily class conscious” (p. 102).

Yet, oddly enough, as Sbardellati shows, the countersubversives were forthright in their scorn for some successful capitalists: the studio chiefs who were deemed insufficiently vigilant in their anti-Communism. They were targeted for crudely pursuing only profit, a devotion Rand otherwise celebrated, instead of advocating Americanism. Nor did the FBI entirely trust its allies. Rand’s atheism left her out of the campaign to make piety synonymous with patriotism, just as her individualism generated friction with Hoover’s own idealization of the family. For progressives like playwright Lillian Hellman, theHUAC investigations constituted the shame of “scoundrel time,” but according to the FBI, an assiduous assembler of Facts, those hearings belonged to amateur hour.

J. Edgar Hoover Goes to the Movies stops its account at the end of the 1950s, which is when Hollywood and the CIA begins, but the approaches taken in these two volumes could scarcely diverge more dramatically. Sbardellati’s book is rooted in a huge variety of archival sources, in addition to the ever-expanding shelves of secondary works on the cultural Cold War. His book is a model of exhaustive research in primary material that most previous scholars have missed. Sbardelatti concludes that social criticism did not entirely disappear from the screen in the 1950s but that the blacklist the studios imposed fulfilled the mandate of the FBI to terminate the vestiges of Hollywood’s submission to Moscow. By contrast, Oliver Boyd-Barrett, David Herrera, and Jim Baumann make their own interpretations of movies when judging how another governmental unit, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was depicted. (Because the CIA illegally engaged in domestic surveillance, most notoriously in the 1960s, there was even some overlap with the FBI’s role in surveillance.) Starting with a sample of over 240 films, Hollywood and the CIA discovers a pattern that would have horrified the patriots who earlier promoted the Red Scare. The “Company” was often portrayed as a cesspool of immorality, blind to democratic norms as well as decent in-
stincts. Callow assassins, cynical bureaucrats, and wanna-be Machiavellian manipulators populate these movies, emitting more than a touch of evil.

Had the authors of *Hollywood and the CIA* emulated Richard Gid Powers’s *G-Men: Hoover’s FBI in American Popular Culture* (1983), a scintillating study of how the FBI was portrayed in popular culture, their book would have been far less exasperating to read. Instead they have tied themselves, like Ulysses resisting the calls of the sirens, to the mast of a peculiar methodology. Drawing primarily from the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) and using the keywords “CIA” and “Central Intelligence Agency,” the authors then designed a coding instrument to troll for both quantitative and qualitative data. The purpose was to answer four questions: (1) How significant was the CIA (including its former personnel) to the movies that were sampled, and what sort of impact did these characters exert in the situations presented? (2) What sort of political or ideological function did these films serve within their historical context? (3) Was the treatment of the agency favorable or not, perhaps in relation to other intelligence services? (4) Were individual agents portrayed favorably or not, especially given the “tone” of the treatments of other intelligence agents? Most of the text of *Hollywood and the CIA* consists of a decade-by-decade coverage of the answers.

The 1990s offers a typical summation: “42.1 percent of the time the agency was coded as operating with the public’s interest in mind. While low, this marked a 3.4 percent increase from the 1980s.” Moreover “the agency’s apparent willingness to act against the public’s interest saw a 25.3 percent decline from the previous decade, making it the lowest category of the entire period at 26.3 percent” (p. 104). How such information can possibly be of interest or of any use to other scholars is unclear, especially when the authors’ method makes no distinctions between, say, realistic efforts at scrutiny (e.g., *Rendition* and *Fair Game*) and comedies (e.g., *Bananas* and *Repo Man*, which the authors classify as “slightly deranged sci-fi,” p. 81). James Bond, whose occasional CIA sidekick, Felix Leiter, is not allowed to compete with the outlandish heroics of 007, gets thrown into the same mix as the cinematic adaptations of John Le Carré. The agents who work for U.S. intelligence are often so implausible (from Halle Berry to Emmanuelle Béart) that the casting decisions alone ought to undermine any faith in the geopolitical significance that such films might reveal.

Not very helpfully, the authors add that in the 1990s, “perceptions of increased character support of CIA objectives coupled by the increase of characters as neutral or villainous tentatively supports the notion of an agency in a state of transformation, competent but more often ambivalent or even malign in intent” (p. 105). The density of such prose inspires the suspicion that the authors, all three of whom teach communications, are not aiming to “communicate” with or enlighten any particular readership but may simply be writing for one another. The foreword by Toby Miller also does them a disservice. Citing his own works more often than Michel Foucault’s, Miller provides an injudicious radical screed that equates Christianity with “superstition,” capitalism with “selfishness,” and patriotism with “hatred” (p. xi). The perspective of *Hollywood and the CIA* is decidedly leftist, but the political angle of the authors cannot account for the emphatically critical tone of so many of the post-1960s films they describe. Even when Langley is racing against the clock to save lives, sometimes
in vain (as when the city of Baltimore is extinguished in *The Sum of All Fears*), there is enough skullduggery on the part of the agency (or of former CIA clandestine operators) to blur the lines between good and evil. Moreover, the authors’ criticism of U.S. foreign policy is based on evidence, even if taken from press accounts and other published sources, that generally validates charges of CIA perfidy, misjudgment, mendacity, and incompetence.

Indeed the most valuable feature of this book is not the mechanistic coding of the decade-by-decade images of CIA agents (who often go rogue in these movies) but the links the authors make to reported clandestine activities. The CIA and the presidents it has served have at times defied the designs of sensible statecraft and demeaned other countries’ sovereignty, something the United States so insistently invokes for itself. Buried in the authors’ summaries of the preposterous plots is a biting indictment of how dangerously and ineptly the CIA has operated abroad. The resemblances between films and history that the authors present, almost in passing, suggest a disturbing enough pattern. Had the authors deepened those connections, *Hollywood and the CIA* would have been a more gripping and important book in tracing the way the United States has played what Rudyard Kipling called the “Great Game” of espionage.

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*Reviewed by Erez Manela, Harvard University*

The last decade has seen an outpouring of groundbreaking studies on the themes of modernization and development in the history of U.S. foreign relations. One can date the beginning of this wave to two publications that came out in the year 2000. The first was Nick Cullather’s influential essay “Development? It’s History,” published in *Diplomatic History* (Vol. 24, No. 4). The other was Michael E. Latham’s first seminal work on the history of modernization in U.S. foreign policy, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and “Nation Building” in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline Press, 2000).

Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population (2007), on the history of the movement to control global population growth, showed how transnational networks of non-state actors worked to reshape government policies around the globe. Nick Cullather’s The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia (2011) showed how agricultural science, theories of development, and Cold War pressures combined to revolutionize global food production.

Now Latham has returned to the field he helped launch more than a decade ago, this time to provide an authoritative, indeed magisterial, synthesis of what we have learned to date. He offers a wide-ranging narrative of how the theory of modernization evolved in the United States and how the pursuit of development abroad profoundly shaped U.S. foreign relations for much of the last century. His illuminating analysis combines temporal, geographic, and thematic breadth with an in-depth examination of carefully chosen case studies.

Latham lays out the ideological origins of modernization and development in Progressive and New Deal thinking and, no less importantly, in the rise of the social sciences in U.S. academia, from the foundational theories of Franz Boas and Talcott Parsons to the iconic exposition of modernization theory in the work of W. W. Rostow. Latham then analyzes several case studies. One chapter, focusing on India, Egypt, and Ghana, considers how U.S. efforts to guide the development of emerging states failed to sway postcolonial leaders, who zealously guarded their independence and found in the Soviet Union a more inspiring and relevant model for growth. Another chapter focuses on a set of cases—Iran, Guatemala, and Vietnam—in which development was overshadowed in U.S. policy by perceived military and strategic imperatives that justified U.S. support for oppressive regimes. Another chapter—based heavily on Connelly and Cullather’s recent work—deals with efforts to control global population and food supplies in the context of apocalyptic fears of global famine and environmental calamities.

Latham’s account is compelling, and his judgments are balanced. U.S. advocates of modernization, he tells us, sincerely sought to transcend racism and imperialism even as they replicated some of their sensibilities and offered policy prescriptions that were deeply flawed in both theory and practice. In addition, Latham is not content to present the developing world as a mere arena for U.S. action but rather emphasizes the agency of postcolonial leaders in accepting or (more often) resisting U.S. cajolments and pressures. Finally, among the book’s most original and illuminating sections is the discussion in the final chapters of the decline of modernization theory as part of the “crisis of liberalism” in the 1970s and the rise in the 1980s of an alternative, “neo-liberal” prescription for development that sidelined governments and emphasized the role of free markets and, especially, of the unimpeded flow of capital across borders. The book ends with explorations of the role of development in the post–Cold War world, whether as part of humanitarian interventions (Somalia, Haiti, East Timor) or, after September 2001, of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

If there are a few blind spots in the book, they reflect the larger literature on which it is based. First, Latham does not consider a possibility that arises from his own narrative, namely that in most of the cases he covers modernization theory was never
really implemented in any consistent fashion, either because postcolonial leaders rejected it (as they did in India, Egypt, and Ghana) or because Washington had other priorities (as in Guatemala, Vietnam, and Iran). If so, then the common critiques leveled at the theory—that it was rigid, paternalistic, insensitive to the diversity of cultural, economic, and political contexts—may well be correct but beside the point. Did Rostow’s “non-communist manifesto” ever actually serve as a blueprint for a U.S. development program that was consistently applied on the ground? If so, such cases are not readily apparent in this book.

Economists have long pointed to Taiwan and South Korea as examples in which state-managed, non-Communist development programs led to economic prosperity and, eventually, democratic transitions. Latham, however, mentions those two cases only as refutations of the neoliberal rejection of state-led development, and he rightly notes that their characterization as examples of market-led development have little basis in history. But this implies that it was precisely in those cases that a Rostow-type program, if perhaps a more authoritarian version of it than Rostow foresaw, came closest to actual implementation. Would a fuller consideration of these cases have required Latham to reconsider some of his arguments? Or are these simply exceptions that prove the rule? It remains to future historians to work this out.

Such quibbles, however, do not detract from Latham’s achievement. This book will serve as an excellent introduction to the topic for students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and will also repay careful reading by more advanced scholars. But the topic is far from exhausted. We still need a more fully global history of modernization and development, not least a more sustained consideration of the role of the Soviet Union, both for its own foreign aid and nation-building programs and also, most especially, for its role as a model of state-led economic development. At least until the 1970s, that model was arguably far more influential than Washington’s in the developing world, Rostow’s best efforts notwithstanding.


Reviewed by Bruce Kuklick, University of Pennsylvania

This book is extensively researched in Anglophone sources and offers a more nuanced account of the Berlin emergency of 1948 and 1949 than has previously been available. Daniel Harrington argues that the Soviet Union did not plan out the blockade of the western parts of Berlin. Similarly, the U.S. and British airlift was an ad-hoc effort that turned into a heroic and successful defense of Western rights only in hindsight.

The view that President Harry Truman was a decisive and courageous leader and that the USSR was to blame for all the troubles in postwar Germany is part of a conventional set of beliefs, and few historians now accept them. Yet Harrington skillfully
uses these clichés to illuminate the stutter-step and crab-like way the breakdown of cooperation among the great powers occurred after World War Two. At the heart of Harrington’s analysis is the view, correct I think, that neither side in the Cold War could figure out how to make a unified Germany work. Each side feared that such a Germany could not remain neutral. To resolve this issue, Germany got divided. The blockade and airlift were the first major steps in publicly defining this partition. They were also the first steps in acknowledging a great anomaly: Western-controlled sectors of the former capital were inside the segment of Germany controlled by the USSR. These sectors developed into West Berlin, a Western metropolis within East Germany and thus contained by the Soviet bloc.

Soviet leaders perhaps underplayed their hand in the Berlin of 1948. A little more pressure might have extracted concessions or forced out the Westerners. Soviet officials probably did not realize that Great Britain and the United States undertook the airlift as a stopgap measure. Both powers felt that their enclave could not last indefinitely. At the same time the boldness, and even adventurism, of the U.S. military authority in Germany, General Lucius Clay, proved warranted in the short-term faceoff with the USSR in central Europe. The airlift was able to get supplies into the city until Iosif Stalin finally called off the blockade, and West Berlin came into existence—on the one hand, a bone in the throat of the Soviet Union and a beacon of freedom behind the Iron Curtain; on the other hand, an Achilles’ heel for the West.

Harrington writes slogging prose, and some of the details of his exposition will try the patience of even the most attentive reader. He is, however, dramatically at his best in depicting the day-to-day features of the airlift—how the routes and pace of delivery were determined, where the materials were unloaded, what arrangements were made for crews. All of this is filled with excitement and interest.

The book also devotes some attention to the response of the Berliners in the western areas of the city. Here Harrington, I believe, is less persuasive. He argues that the airlift gave these Germans the chance to display their aversion to the Nazis and to embrace democratic values openly. I am more skeptical about the mood of the German population during this period.

Another facet of the book bears scrutiny. Harrington presumes that the triumph of the airlift was a great victory for the West—and primarily the United States—in the Cold War. But this is not clear. The British and the Americans were not convinced that hanging on in western Berlin, within eastern Germany, was profitable or necessary. Many officials reasoned that a portion of a city behind the lines would be more trouble than it was worth, a burden and a distraction, ultimately a source of weakness and not strength. These statesmen considered questions of prestige to be of modest importance, something that adroit diplomacy could handle. If the West had given up the city in 1948, the loss of prestige would have been much less than in, say, 1963. The Cold War might have been less dangerous if Germany had been cleanly divided in the late 1940s. The world would have avoided the confrontations over Berlin that roiled the 1950s and early 1960s. Perhaps politicians could even have circumvented the Cuban missile crisis, which may have flowed from the Soviet’s preoccupation with
the embarrassment of West Berlin, an embarrassment the Soviet authorities had to deal with every day. These are matters of speculation, and the very precariousness of West Berlin may have prompted a caution beneficial to both sides. Nonetheless, Harrington’s celebration of the Western accomplishment involved in the airlift and in the creation of West Berlin is not warranted in his text.


Reviewed by Ai Hisano, University of Delaware

Kitchens are not only places for cooking. In the Cold War era, the American kitchen signified the “modern” lifestyle for many European consumers. Because the global political economy was deeply tied to technological advancement, the kitchen served as a significant arena in which politicians sought to “domesticate” nuclear technology in familiar terms. Cold War Kitchen illuminates how different social actors and institutions constructed the modern kitchen in twentieth-century Europe. The essays particularly focus on technological and political aspects of kitchens by situating the 1959 Richard Nixon–Nikita Khrushchev “kitchen debate” as a framing subject.

Over the last decade, historians of the Cold War have increasingly explored government-private networks, the role of culture as a diplomatic weapon, and cultural conflicts in various countries besides the United States and the Soviet Union. Cold War Kitchen brings a new perspective to the field by exploring the relations between Cold War politics and multifaceted dimensions of kitchens, including design, use, and trajectory. The contributors to the book employ an array of primary sources such as newspapers, government documents, and official reports on international expositions in both American and European archives. The book deserves scholarly attention from a wide range of academic communities: scholars specializing not only in the Cold War but also in the history of technology, material culture, and gender studies.

The contributors delineate the kitchen both as a technological system and ideological construct. As the editors insist in the introductory chapter, the modern kitchen was a “complex, technological artifact” (p. 2), imbued with political, cultural, economic, and ecological discourses. The book’s fourteen chapters explore the making and using of kitchens in East and West Germany, Finland, Great Britain, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. This wide geographical scope complicates the bipolar narrative of ideological conflicts between the two superpowers.

The first part of the book focuses on historiographic issues of the 1959 kitchen debate and analyzes the Nixon-Khrushchev encounter. Greg Castillo argues that the kitchen debate in Moscow was the culmination of a series of campaigns that had been launched over a decade earlier in various European countries. In late 1940s West Germany, for instance, after the introduction of the Marshall Plan, the U.S. government
began to introduce the American kitchen as “a major metaphor of technological prowess and of consumer society’s abundance” in women’s magazines, radio programs, and international fairs (p. 17). Susan E. Reid’s chapter shows Russian women’s ambivalent, even negative, reactions to the American kitchen by examining the visitors’ books from the 1959 exhibition.

Part II contextualizes the European tradition of modernizing housing projects from the 1890s to the 1970s, asserting that the American kitchen had much less impact on Europe’s building practices than scholars have argued. These chapters provide a counternarrative to the American triumphalist representation of the kitchen at the exhibitions in Moscow and other European cities. Part III, drawing on the history of technology scholarship, explores European users’ appropriation and rejection of the American kitchen. The fourth and last part assesses the overarching themes and discussions of the other articles. Building on the work of other contributors, Ruth Oldenziel insists on the intricacy of Americanization. Europeans did not just passively import the “American way of life.” Rather, Americanization was a contested process in which European social actors appropriated the American kitchen.

*Cold War Kitchen* builds upon what Ruth Schwartz Cowan calls the “consumption junction,” which illuminated the role of consumers as well as producers in developing new technologies. *Cold War Kitchen* adds to Cowan’s thesis the concept of the “mediation junction,” where different social actors—such as government agencies, businesses, modernist designers, and user groups—participated in making the modern kitchen while negotiating with one another. The contributors argue that these actors from political circles, the market, and civil society domesticated, appropriated, and subverted new technology, including electricity and kitchen equipment. This is neither the first nor the only study to emphasize mediation processes in technological change. Nonetheless, by focusing on a Cold War context, the book adds considerably to our understanding of the role of the state and of other actors in making the modern living environment in postwar Europe.

*Cold War Kitchen* convincingly documents the materialization of modernity. At the same time, the book raises questions that are not well answered. In some instances, the social and economic status of consumers/users is not clear. Detailed analysis of user profiles, especially in relation to other social actors, would reveal more complicated power relations in making the kitchen a technological artifact and an ideological space, demarcated by gender and class. Analyzing class relations would help to understand better the mediation junction in constructing the modern kitchen.

Moreover, the concept of “class” differed significantly in Europe and the United States, and these differences must have influenced the design and the social and ideological construction of kitchens. At the 1959 exhibition in Moscow, Nixon and other American officials introduced the American home on display as a typical “working-class” home, suggesting that any American could own such a house regardless of her or his economic status. How was the American notion of “class” rhetorically and conceptually transferred to European contexts (or was it transferred at all)? In what ways did different mediators imagine and construct the “configured users of kitchens” (p. 13)?
Further analysis of how the notion of class was localized or even erased would sharpen the discussion of not only the material elements of kitchens but also ideas about purchasing, owning, and using the kitchen.


Reviewed by Michael Schaller, University of Arizona

This thought-provoking collection of essays, expertly edited by James Matray, who also provides an excellent introduction, examines how President Harry S. Truman and his key advisers responded to a series of challenges in East Asia from 1945 to 1953. All the authors acknowledge that Truman had little detailed knowledge of the region or its complexities and tended to react to rather than guide events. Many of the contributors use recently declassified documents, especially from Chinese and Russian sources. The result is a nuanced and measured examination of the forces that shaped the early Cold War in East Asia.

Marc Gallicchio argues that domestic politics, especially Truman’s determination to show his loyalty to New Deal reforms, prompted the new president to spurn advice that he offer assurances to Emperor Hirohito to speed a Japanese surrender. This had the unintended consequence of making reliance on the nuclear bomb even more critical as a way of compelling Japan to quit fighting, quite apart from anti-Soviet impulses.

Although the president devoted limited attention to occupied Japan, both Roger Dingman and Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu assert that his actions had positive if sometimes unintended consequences. For example, firing General Douglas MacArthur during the Korean War reassured many Japanese who remained wary of rearmament that it was possible for civilians to assert control over the military even in the midst of war. This provided cover to Japanese conservatives willing to accept limited rearmament as a price to be paid for the restoration of sovereignty. Truman’s desire for Republican support in reaching a peace settlement with Japan, Dingman stresses, led him and Secretary of State Dean Acheson to place John Foster Dulles in charge of the treaty negotiations. The result assured bipartisan support at home, Japanese cooperation, and an alliance structure that benefitted the United States and Japan for half a century.

An underlying theme of several essays is how the decision by the Truman administration to defend South Korea in June 1950, and the subsequent decision to cross the 38th parallel, altered East Asian politics for a generation. Historian William Stueck is especially clear in explaining how and why the Soviet Union, the United States, and the two Koreas all bore responsibility for the division of the peninsula and the eventual outbreak of war. Qing Simei cites a variety of Chinese memoir and docu-
mentary materials to argue that Mao Zedong and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) were actually reluctant to send forces into Korea but found their hand forced by Washington’s decision to cross the 38th parallel. Mao, she insists, was less a revolutionary adventurer than a defender of national security against a reckless United States. Other contributors offer a more positive view of U.S. policies in Korea. Xiaoqing Li, for example, writes in praise of Truman’s decision to send the 7th Fleet into the Taiwan Straits. The deployment assured that the long-term confrontation between Taiwan and the PRC would be a cold, rather than hot, war. Steven Casey similarly praises Truman’s wartime leadership as prudent and responsible for establishing a long-term balance of power.

The collection also includes several short but interesting essays on the quality of intelligence during the Korea War, as well as a fascinating illustrated account by Charles S. Young of the impact of tattooing on prisoners of war and the ways it complicated repatriation.

The arguments presented in these essays have been offered by several of the authors in book-length studies. However, these briefer treatments make their points effectively and provocatively. Collectively, they provide a window onto both Washington’s decision-making and the complexities of post–World War II East Asia.


*Reviewed by Anne Deighton, Oxford University*

Michael Turner’s extremely thorough and scholarly book has an unusually optimistic argument about British foreign policy. He challenges the many scholars who argue that British foreign policy was in constant decline after the Second World War and that Britain for many years failed to come to terms with this erosion of national power and status in international politics. He claims, for example, that Britain’s setback at Suez was only temporary. It is both refreshing and challenging to read this insightful account (despite its lack of a bibliography), although this reader was not entirely convinced by the overall argument. Turner concentrates on five big issues and builds his argument around this analysis. The issues are the Korean War; what he calls tension in Europe; extra-European problems; the changing nature of the Cold War; and the Suez and Hungarian crises of 1956. He writes narrative history with great confidence and with considerable attention to detail, drawing on a wide range of secondary sources, with occasional references to primary material.

However, an alternative argument still seems plausible. The die was already cast by 1951, when Turner’s narrative begins, and not after this. By 1951, the international system was not as fluid as Turner supposes. To be sure, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was still at the formative stage—and the military elements had not yet been worked out, giving scope for the creation of the intergovernmental
Western European Union and the subsequent entry of West Germany in 1955 into NATO—but the key shift in the U.S. commitment to Western Europe had nevertheless been made in 1949–1950. Likewise, the Franco-German Schuman Plan of 1950 was the moment at which French policy toward West Germany changed in the most unexpected way with a commitment to supranational integration through the dry-sounding European Coal and Steel Community, and this was done without the United Kingdom. This breakthrough is what allowed the Rome Treaty to emerge by 1957. So the paradigm shift in West European politics took place in 1950, which was also the year that the contours and fears in Britain about the European Community became engraved on decision-makers’ minds. In this reading, the British slipped further from the center of decision-making throughout the 1950s.

The most gripping section of the book is Turner’s assessment of Suez and the concurrent Soviet invasion of Hungary. He deploys a vast range of secondary sources and gives his readers sharp analytical summaries and reflections on these and on some of the memoir accounts. (His university students should be eternally grateful for this.) The trouble is that his dispassionate historical skills oblige him to trim his core thesis. As he says, the resort to military action over Suez

was a sign of the reduced condition of Britain as a world power. Force was used partly through fear—fear of losing more influence and prestige. . . . Something had to be done. There was a determination to resist and to walk the walk as well as talk the talk. . . . To betray weakness was to become more vulnerable (pp. 290–291).

So, although Turner argues that the impact of Suez has been overrated and although the UK did not vanish from the top table of international politics, the situation in fact could never be the same after Suez. The United States became far more watchful about the Middle East, as crises in Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq in the late 1950s showed. France’s decisions to work more closely with West Germany were reinforced by the fallout from Suez, and then Charles de Gaulle piloted France’s Middle East policy away from its earlier emphasis on Israel to a greater focus on the Arab world. Turkey, a staunch ally and NATO member, which had looked to the UK for leadership, turned to the United States after 1956. Even the United Nations was reduced in stature by the actions of its members in the Security Council. U.S. officials now also put considerable pressure on the UK to get into the European Community, and, as a result, Harold Macmillan shifted his position on the matter in 1961. With a heavy heart, Macmillan made the first British application to join the European Community, only to have the application vetoed by de Gaulle. Despite this setback, Britain was now “reversing onto a European motorway” dominated by de Gaulle.

Reviewed by Aiyaz Husain, Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State

NOTE: This review reflects only the views of the author and should not be construed as the view of any U.S. government agency.

In *The Shock of the Global*, Niall Ferguson and his past and current Harvard University colleagues have produced a wide-ranging anthology documenting the trends, contradictions, and curiosities of globalization in the 1970s. The chapters in this volume, which were originally submitted at a conference on “The Global 1970s” at Harvard’s Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, cross disciplinary divides as they frame the types of questions that scholars must confront if they want to understand transnational processes and the official and non-state actors that drive them.

Ferguson’s introductory essay sketches out the contours of an era characterized by what the political scientist James Rosenau terms “turbulence”—across not only international politics but also economic patterns and production, cultural life, and intellectual trends. The complex forces highlighted by Ferguson transcend the bounds of diplomacy and strategy, setting the wide aperture of the volume and its assorted chapters. Scholars of the Cold War will accordingly find some of the selections more valuable than others.

In examining the situation of the United States, Charles Maier considers whether the 1970s constituted not a “crisis” per se but a “malaise,” a condition that he attributes mainly to economic factors. For Maier, a concrete “rejection of the neo-Keynesian and neocorporatist prescriptions” that had governed the U.S. economy gave rise to market mechanisms as the basis for actions hitherto driven by consensus across the largest producers and self-regulation (p. 36). Although Maier roots the problems in “post-Fordian” production methods and shifts in the industrial base, his analysis extends to the cultural sphere and the difficult evolution of teenage angst in the 1960s as identity formation and maturity caught up with hippies suddenly coming of age.

One of the useful early chapters is Daniel Sargent’s discussion of globalization’s impact on U.S. foreign policy. Sargent describes how “interdependence” extended the reach and impact of U.S. power as the United States extricated itself from a prolonged and painful military involvement in Vietnam. But interdependence also exposed U.S. policies to a wider range of international circumstances, as the oil shocks precipitated by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) after the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 made clear. Although Sargent clearly delineates the broader contours of the phenomenon, he does not really show how the growth of interdependence reflected underlying patterns in state-society relations.

Jeremi Suri characterizes U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s managed approach to the dislocations transforming the international system as “a foreign policy of
globalization that rested on the reassertion of state power” in the service of U.S. policy ends (p. 175). According to Suri, Kissinger pursued this policy through three principal mechanisms: the reinvigoration of a Euro-Atlantic community through the sharing of nuclear weapons and economic policy coordination; the “polycentrism” of international decision-making diffused to capitals beyond Washington and Moscow; and a shared set of principles for international cooperation that formed the basis of détente and the growth of U.S. relations with the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

Odd Arne Westad’s contextualization of the PRC’s reforms in the late 1970s (after the death of Mao Zedong) in terms of the processes of globalization will prove valuable for scholars breaking with bipolar histories of the Cold War who want to amplify China’s role in the history of that conflict. Specific reforms such as pricing mechanisms and even crude systems of credit employed by individual factories in the PRC, Westad notes, were as much a reflection of the liberalization that emerged from the chaos of the Cultural Revolution as they were part of a wider rejection of Soviet central planning schemes and development models that led not only to China’s rapprochement with the United States but hastened the end of the Cold War. The inclusion of Westad’s exemplary chapter and others that link domestic and international factors is one of the volume’s principal strengths.

Ayesha Jalal’s wide-ranging contribution surveys what she aptly terms “Islam’s second globalization” throughout the Muslim world from the Persian Gulf to the Indian subcontinent (p. 326). In so doing, she asserts that the rise of radical Islamist governments in Iran, Pakistan, and other countries during and after the 1970s was not a preordained outcome. Rather, it was, she claims, a byproduct of the crisis of capitalism evident after the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 and the subsequent oil shocks, as well as the legacy of U.S. Cold War policies such as the tilt toward Pakistan.

Some of the later selections range far from standard diplomatic historical topics, addressing the growth of the international human rights regime, smallpox eradication efforts, environmentalism, women’s rights, and even the role of rock music in reflecting cultural trends. Scholars of the Cold War will likely find parts one, three, and five the most useful for understanding the twists and turns of the East-West conflict in the 1970s. Ferguson and his coeditors have built a solid foundation for the future historiography of international events and trends of the 1970s.


Reviewed by Lavinia Stan, St. Francis Xavier University (Canada)

The conference series “Beyond Camps and Forced Labor,” held at the Imperial War Museum in London in January 2009, brought together European and North American scholars interested in the fate of the survivors of the Second World War. This
book, the second volume to result from those conferences, consists of three main sections dealing with postwar justice, national narratives and private memories, and image and memorial. Edited by four leading European scholars and practitioners, this collection of sixteen essays provides new insights into the way the Western and Eastern European countries have dealt with the multifaceted legacy of the Second World War. The book's 21 contributors include historians, political scientists, and sociologists working in universities in England, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, and the United States. Six of the chapter authors are doctoral or postdoctoral students, one works outside academia, and the others are senior researchers.

The volume is a welcome addition to the literature because of its attention to the long under-researched and neglected group of survivors of concentration camps and Nazi wartime policies. The research presented here on the experience of survivors after the war suggests that persecution, fear, pain, and injustice continued long after the military conflict formally ended in 1945 and the Allies triumphantly declared victory. One of the volume's primary contributions is its nuanced definition of the survivors, who represented a great variety of fates, personal choices, and experiences. Among them were the emaciated skeletons measured with contempt by Patrick Gordon Walker during his visit to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, the clean and healthy survivors of the same camp whom Walker praised, some prisoners who ruthlessly betrayed family members and friends in order to avoid the ultimate punishment, and others who believed they did not deserve a second chance to live because so many others had died. The volume acknowledges the many shades of survival, the different ways the various categories of survivors were seen as deserving recognition and praise, the wide diversity of positions survivors adopted toward their fate, and the difficulties they continued to face. Together with their liberators and former captors, the volume argues, survivors “became drawn into the morass of Cold War politics and morality” (p. 4) during their transition to new lives after the concentration camp.

_Landsapes after Battle_ picks up where the first volume left off, detailing “the survivors’ navigation through bureaucratic and political obstacles in search of recognition, compensation and justice after the end of the war, and their place in post-war public memory and commemoration” (p. 6). The first section of the book details postwar justice by discussing the British, U.S., and Soviet trials of German atrocities and war crimes, the compensation and property restitution programs offered to Jewish and Roma survivors who had suffered as a result of various Nazi policies, and the implementation of the Ghetto Pension Act of 2002, which benefited survivors who had worked in Eastern European ghettos. As these chapters make clear, retributive and reparatory policies excluded numerous categories of victims from compensation and restitution and many important groups of victimizers from court trials because of factors that had to do with postwar politics more than with the need to address the legacies of the Second World War.

The second and third sections investigate the role of survivors in the postwar public discourse, memory, commemoration, and rewriting of history. The contributors examine “how forced labor, extermination, camps and survival have since been remembered, narrated and represented” (p. 9). The five chapters of the second section
touch on a variety of topics related to national narratives and private memories. The authors explore why the flood of published narratives of Nazi persecution and genocide produced in 1945–1950 failed to penetrate mainstream scholarship and culture; the way the testimonies of Polish survivors brought to Sweden by the Red Cross helped to convict camp staff in several postwar trials; the complexity of “collective memory” as exemplified by the Bedzin case in Upper Silesia, which experienced one of the earliest mass atrocities of the war; the ways the Italian Jewish press dealt with the memory of the Shoah; and the relationship the “children of the Resistance” had with postwar politics.

The final section of the book includes six chapters about image and memorial. The authors discuss how Soviet cinema initiated the Holocaust film; the legacy of Auschwitz as reflected in texts, photographs, and drawings; the paintings of Alicia Melamed Adam, a child survivor of Drohobycz, as instances of a private form of remembering the atrocious past; the remembrance in Northern and Central European countries of Soviet prisoners of war; East German representations of *Weimarer Klassik* and *Gedenkstatte Buchenwald*; and the role of bystanders to concentration camps in negotiating national memorials and local memories.

Although the chapters are unequal in their theoretical strength, methodological accuracy, attention to detail, and clarity of writing, they all bring to light different aspects of the experiences endured by various categories of survivors during and after the Second World War. By providing a wealth of new material and by interpreting in novel ways well-known testimonials, the volume maps important aspects of the fate of survivors and advances our understanding of this neglected topic. The nature of the topics examined and the theoretical frameworks employed by the contributors make this a useful volume for graduate students and academics working on the Second World War, the Holocaust and its legacy, the politics of memory, and transitional justice.


Reviewed by Robert P. Grathwol, R & D Associates

Andrei Cherny presents a well-crafted, thoroughly researched, and artfully written book that delivers much more than its title, “The Candy Bombers,” conveys. His subtitle, “America’s Finest Hour,” is truer to the book’s fundamental point: “[this is] the story of when Americans learned—for the first time—how to act at the summit of world power . . . but it is by no means a simple story or a straight line” (p. 6).

Cherny fills 300-plus pages before arriving at the candy bombers. Using recently declassified materials, archived oral histories plus those he conducted, and a wide range of other archival sources, he covers the end of the war against Nazi Germany and the uncomfortable political structures put in place by the victors to govern Ger-
many and Berlin. He sketches the political infighting in the United States that accompanied both parties’ presidential election campaigns of 1948. He traces the debates around foreign policy strategies such as the Marshall Plan, identifying the movers and shakers who conceived and wielded these policies. He profiles Lucius Clay, James Forrestal, and Henry Wallace, all of whom shared a Wilsonian vision but each with very different emphases. He outlines the successive subversion of pluralistic governments in Eastern Europe by Communist operatives supported by the Soviet Union, culminating in the apparent assassination of Jan Masaryk in Prague in March 1948. Berlin itself makes an appearance as Cherny recounts the heyday of the Nazi party, the city’s destruction by U.S. bombers, and the widespread rape and looting perpetrated by the troops of the conquering Soviet army.

All of this precedes the encounter of the young U.S. pilot, Gail (Hal) Halvorsen—a participant in the airlift only by chance—who in July 1948 gives up his between-flight rest to walk around Tempelhof Airfield, where he encounters a gaggle of Berlin’s children watching the planes come and go. After an exchange stilted by the language barrier, Halvorsen spontaneously takes two pieces of gum from his pocket, breaks them in two, and gives them to children in the crowd.

Four children got pieces of gum; the rest passed around the wrapper, tearing off a sliver and sniffing it dreamily. “The expressions on their faces were incredulous, full of awe—as if they were entering a wonderland.” Halvorsen watched their eyes grow big “like it was Christmas Day” (p. 299).

Seeing the reaction, Halvorsen spontaneously promised to drop candy for them from his plane the next day. Although his crew was initially reluctant, Halvorsen’s insistence convinced them, and this simple act of human kindness began to grow beyond all imagining.

When the airlift began in late June 1948, it could not keep up with even the most rudimentary needs of Berlin’s population. Faced with the likelihood of slow starvation, many Berliners were quite willing to trade freedom for bread. Between the summer of 1948 and the onset of winter, however, word of the candy bombers spread and gained support from other airlift pilots and eventually from Halvorsen’s superiors. Major General William Tunner, who systematized the airlift to a level of precision that gave it at least a chance of success, gave Halvorsen not just permission to continue but public exposure. “Tunner—like Truman and Clay, but unlike LeMay, Bradley, Marshall, Vandenberg, and the rest—understood instinctively that the airlift’s psychological dimension was as important as any other aspect” (p. 341). The campaign captured the imagination of the U.S. public, and contributions and support expanded, including from candy manufacturers.

The psychological climate in Berlin began to change. The kindness shown by the candy bombers contrasted sharply with the brutality of the Soviet conquest of Berlin and with Communist repression in the eastern sectors of the city. Berliners in the Western sectors began “to see they had a chance . . . that, in the airlift, they were joined together with the allies in a common endeavor.” U.S. public opinion researchers had repeatedly questioned Germans about the choice between “economic security” and “freedom.” In June 1948, the month when the blockade began, sentiment had
been 61 to 34 percent in favor of economic security. By August, “the candy dropped to their children for no motive other than human kindness” had had an effect on Berliners. When the early August deadline arrived for the Soviet offer of nearly unlimited provisions for anyone who surrendered a Western ration card for a Soviet one, only 22,000 Berliners had responded—less than 1 percent of the city’s population (pp. 344–345).

The final 250 pages cover the end of the U.S. presidential election campaign, which resulted in Truman’s surprising victory, and the bleak winter of 1948–1949, when weather and Soviet aerial harassment of the airlift’s flights left success still in doubt. The volume of food and fuel still barely kept pace with need, but the amount of candy delivered increased to volumes unimagined when the drops began. In the end, Tunner’s skill in managing the airlift succeeded in matching supply with need. That, coupled with the will of the Berliners to resist Soviet enticements to abandon freedom for food, broke the blockade by May 1949.

The opening pages of Cherny’s book contain two tales without explanation. The first presents an account of two middle-aged Frenchwomen in Normandy in about 1951. A young U.S. lieutenant had billeted in their house during the liberation of Paris. He had left them “coffee, soap, food, butter when all Paris hungered for them, and so, seven years later, they took a bus from Paris to put flowers on U.S. graves, not because they remembered history and the Liberation, but because they remembered coffee, food and human kindness” (p. ix).

The second tells of the crowds that gathered around the world in shock and sympathy over the terror attack in New York in September 2001. In Berlin a woman, “old and stooped,” sobbed quietly. When asked why, she replied, “I love Americans. . . . You see, I was a girl during the Airlift” (pp. xiii–xiv).

Cherny’s well-documented, engrossingly written and readable account makes a convincing case that kindness matters, even in international politics.


Reviewed by Roman Solchanyk, Independent Scholar

Anyone who has visited both Lviv, the unofficial capital of the western part of Ukraine, and Kyiv, the country’s official capital, will have noticed something essentially “un-Soviet” or even “anti-Soviet” about the city that over time has been called Lemberg, Lwów, Lviv, and Lvov. This is the underlying theme of William Jay Risch’s book, which looks at the Lion City and its people after World War II through the prism of its Central European historical legacy—specifically, its integral ties to Vienna and Warsaw and how those ties affected Lviv’s confrontation with and accommodation to the “Soviet way of life” (sovetskii obraz zhizni).

With the exception of a brief period of occupation by Tsarist armies during the
First World War, Lviv was never part of anything Russian before September 1939, and this basic fact was central to the role that Lviv and indeed the whole of western Ukraine played in the development of Soviet Ukraine and the Soviet Union overall after World War II.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, titled “Lviv and the Soviet West,” begins with a brief general introduction that places Lviv in the context of wider political developments in the Soviet Union after the war—from Stalinism to Nikita Khrushchev’s Thaw to Mikhail Gorbachev to collapse. Two important realities came to the fore not long after Lviv became Soviet. First, the city had lost almost all of its Polish and Jewish inhabitants—the former through population exchanges with Poland and Soviet deportations and the second because of the Holocaust. At the same time, Lviv witnessed an influx of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking Ukrainians from the outside. Second, the keepers of ideological orthodoxy in Kyiv and Moscow quickly realized that even though the partisans of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) had been defeated by the early 1950s, Lviv and western Ukraine as a whole stubbornly refused to shed their “backwardness”; which is to say that they refused to discard the Western beliefs and values they had inherited from their historical experience under Habsburg and Polish rule in exchange for the supposed “progressive” essence of the “Soviet way of life.”

One of the most interesting sections in this part of the narrative is Risch’s analysis of Lviv’s new demographic reality and the relationships among its major components: the newcomers from outside western Ukraine, the western Ukrainian villagers moving into the city, and the depleted strata of original Lviv residents, especially the indigenous intelligentsia, who had survived the war and German and Soviet occupation and repressions. Elsewhere in this part of the book Risch skillfully examines Lviv’s role as a “Soviet abroad” that, because of its “exposure” to Poland and Czechoslovakia (including access to media from these “fraternal socialist countries”) underpinned its continued “backwardness.”

The second part of the book, titled “Lviv and the Ukrainian Nation,” is a must read for any student or academic of Soviet and post-Soviet studies who fancies himself or herself an expert in the field. Risch discusses the politics of language and literature and the politics of history and historiography and how they played out in Lviv in the 1950s–1970s. These issues were relevant not only in Lviv but also in Kyiv, in Moscow, in Leningrad, and elsewhere in the Soviet Union. But the difference, of course, was Lviv’s “backwardness”—that is, its Western and European connection, which added an entirely different dimension to the ideological struggle that was ultimately a struggle over national identity.

Risch also displays his skills as a cultural historian and historian of pop culture. He looks at how young people, primarily university students, dealt with the realities of the new “Soviet way of life” in the 1950s and 1960s given the fact that they were only one step removed from the “backwardness” of their parents and grandparents. Another chapter deals with the Soviet counterculture of jazz and rock-and-roll aficionados and “hippies,” all in the context of Lviv and its role as a “Soviet abroad.”

The book is based not only on extensive research in the Communist Party, state,
and personal archives of the relevant institutions and individuals but also on first-hand interviews with a wide array of residents of Lviv. These interviews impart a unique quality to the narrative. That said, no text is perfect, and there are some things here that are unconvincing. Risch is inclined to make sweeping statements and then to walk them back bit by bit. Also, Ukraine did not declare “state sovereignty” on 24 August 1991 (p. 252): it declared its “independence” (from the Soviet Union and symbolically from Russia), something the Russian republic has not yet managed to do. (Both Ukraine and Russia had declared “sovereignty” in 1990.) Words matter. I also wanted to know more about Lviv during perestroika and its contribution to the Soviet Union’s collapse. But these are sideline observations that do not detract from the overall quality of the research and analysis.

Whenever Western journalists based in Moscow in the 1970s and most of the 1980s would on rare occasions venture into places like Vilnius, Riga, or Tallinn and marvel at the cobblestone streets, odd-looking lampposts, and cafes that actually served coffee, they would express their amazement at the strange feeling that they had somehow left the Soviet Union. Lviv was not unlike these Baltic capitals and, as Risch notes, for many of the same historical reasons. But hardly anyone from the outside visited. That has now changed. About five years ago both The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times advised prospective tourists what to see, what to do, and where to dine in Lviv, which can be taken to mean that the city has “arrived.”

Risch’s book demonstrates that Lviv has also arrived in the world of U.S. scholarship.


Reviewed by Erik Kulavig, University of Southern Denmark

Did Iosif Stalin’s system undergo any fundamental revision after his death? If so, how far were Nikita Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders prepared to go in reaching accommodation with the West? One could also ask: was the Soviet system reformable at all? Liberals thought it was and still think so—if only Mikhail Gorbachev had stayed in power—whereas conservatives, in Jeremy Smith’s words, “maintained that, since communism was fundamentally evil, it was beyond reform” (p. 1). According to Smith, we should be thankful that the first attitude prevailed because it made negotiation possible with Soviet Union and thus “saw the superpowers through some of the biggest international crises of the Cold War.” There might be some truth in this argument, but how can one ignore that the hardline interpretation of the Soviet System—as the Empire of Evil—caused so much more than “peaceful coexistence”; namely, the end of the Cold War.

Throughout the anthology Khrushchev in the Kremlin the two heroes of the revi-
sionist school, Khrushchev and Mikhail Gorbachev, are compared. The fact that they both failed is strong evidence that the Soviet system could indeed not be reformed. But compared to the Stalinist system, Khrushchev did make a difference. State terror ceased to be the dominant tool of governance, and that certainly made life more tolerable in the Soviet Union. One should not forget, however, that what held the Soviet system together was not so much Khrushchev’s “welfare state” as the deeply rooted fear from the Stalin years. When Stalin’s heir showed that he could not keep his promises and that the socialist system could not deliver, social forces went into action, and Khrushchev had no other choice than to employ Stalinist means of control. The well-documented shootings of striking workers in Novocherkassk in 1962 are the best-known example.

This volume is the second of two books on the Khrushchev era funded by the British Arts and Humanities Research Council from 2005 to 2008. The research was mostly carried out by researchers who were either employed at or affiliated with the University of Birmingham’s Center for Russian and East European Studies. In most of the essays newly found archival material is analyzed, and together the authors cover a variety of policy areas: policy toward national minorities; economic decentralization; policy toward the West in technology exchange and toward Eastern Europe in political and economic reform; agriculture; railways; and construction.

Ian D. Thatcher makes a good point in arguing that the leading biographers of Khrushchev have been more eager to repeat the harsh critiques of him by the officials who ousted him than to examine what he actually intended. Thatcher has great sympathy for his protagonist, but he is going too far in suggesting that Khrushchev’s practical sense was so great that had he not been removed in 1964 he would have reached the conclusion that the command economy was the root of evil.

Nikolai Mitrokhin documents how Khrushchev from 1931 onward created a clan of supporters within various circles of power. This explains much about how he was able to gain ultimate power and to survive at the top when influential comrades attempted to get rid of him in 1957. Unfortunately for Khrushchev, his clan members over the years became a burden to his reform plans, and when he eventually signaled that he wanted to get rid of them, they turned against him.

Robert Hornsby examines political dissent and finds that more people were jailed during the reign of Khrushchev than during the years under Leonid Brezhnev. Political dissent peaked after the Hungarian uprising in 1956 but was stopped by a resolute and brutal clampdown by the political leadership. If this had not been done, Hornsby claims, the unrest might have spread to other countries in Eastern Europe and to the Soviet Union itself, and what happened in 1989 might have happened in 1956. Certainly a hypothesis of some magnitude.

Jeremy Smith surveys the history of nationalism in the Soviet Union and demonstrates how Khrushchev’s “liberalism” was exploited by nationalist Communists. Nataliya Kibita writes well and with great insight about Khrushchev’s well-intended but hopeless attempt to decentralize economic decision-making in a planned and politically directed economy. Ukraine’s economic agents were told to act in the interest
of the Soviet Union and secondarily in the interest of Ukraine. They agreed but acted in the opposite way. The reform was finally dropped, but the Ukrainians had gained a level of self-confidence that never disappeared.

Valery Vasiliev provides a lengthy, detailed account of how Khrushchev’s economic reform was a total failure—economically, socially, and politically—in Soviet Ukraine. He argues that the aim of the reform was to mobilize hidden resources in order to overtake the capitalist countries in production and eventually in living standards.

Sari Autio-Sarasmo is mainly interested in networks created in the process of technology transfer between the West and the Soviet Union. She claims that archival documents pertaining this matter “are changing the standard picture of the Cold War” (p. 96). But unfortunately she fails to support this bold assertion with either evidence or argument. Katalin Miklossy argues well for the fact that Khrushchev unintentionally initiated the process of gradual opening, diversification, and eventual disintegration of the Eastern bloc.

Oleg Khlevniuk’s essay is the most interesting one in the collection. He lifts the lid on a cauldron of cheating, data-inflation, corruption, deceit, and terror that was the essence of the Soviet, utopian economic model from the very beginning. Stalin tried—mostly in vain—to rely on fear to offset these problems. Khrushchev dropped fear and appealed to the self-interest of the citizens, but this made the cauldron bubble even more.

John Westwood argues that the the Soviet railways ran more efficiently than British Rail, and R. W. Davies and Melanie Ilic conclude the book with an essay on the construction of living space in the 1930s and 1950s. They write: “Khrushchev’s approach to housing strongly differed from Stalin’s” (p. 228). This can hardly be a surprise to anyone.

The book does not change the existing overall views of politics in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin in 1953, and I am still not convinced that the Soviet system could have been changed profoundly. Doing so would have meant the introduction of private ownership and markets, and not even Khrushchev—with all his untold qualities—was ready to go that far. The anthology is a bit like yesterday’s newspaper: not much that is news, but some interesting articles.


Reviewed by Theodore P. Gerber, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Now that Russian authorities are actively cracking down on opposition forces, David Satter’s analysis of Russians’ views of the Soviet past is timely. Russian society remains deeply ambivalent about the Soviet experience. Activists’ efforts to get their compatriots and government to acknowledge the extent of Soviet crimes against humanity, to
commemorate the millions of victims, and to advocate for human rights have been met with public indifference and official hostility. A thoughtful, rigorous, and nuanced study could shed much-needed light on how Russia’s amnesia about the unsavory aspects of its recent past is related to current political developments. Unfortunately, It Was a Long Time Ago adds little new information or perspective to existing discussions of the vital issues it addresses, and even those who agree that Russia should do more to come to terms with Soviet history will find it disappointing.

The book lacks coherent structure and organization: it takes on too much while neglecting clearly relevant material. Some chapters attempt detailed accounts of the Soviet government’s depredations, starting with the Red Terror but emphasizing the atrocities committed under Iosif Stalin. Rather than provide a thematic or chronological analysis, Satter alternates focus on specific episodes or individuals, such as Feliks Dzerzhinsky (first head of the Cheka secret police), the 1940 Katyn forest massacre of some 22,500 captured Polish officers and civilians, the White Sea Canal slave labor project, and the conditions in specific prison camps. Despite occasional poignant details, these discussions mainly rehash familiar material.

Elsewhere Satter deals with the contemporary situation: the Russian government’s refusal to admit and condemn Soviet crimes, the reluctance of the Russian population to face up to the Stalinist terror, and the struggle of memory activists to push for a more thorough accounting of the Soviet past and for commemorations of the victims. Here, too, readers who have a passing familiarity with Russian politics today will find nothing novel. Scholars will be frustrated by Satter’s reliance on anecdote and example rather than systematic research (e.g., surveys of public opinion and rigorous content analyses of history textbooks or official statements) to make his claims.

Finally, Satter aims to explain why Russia today shows little interest in acknowledging the brutal nature of the Communist regime and argues that its failure to do so undermines its progress in the area of human rights. He echoes standard claims that Russians do not value the individual, are prone to nationalistic self-delusions, and abjectly revere a domineering state. His evidence tends to be the writings of conservative past and present intellectuals, hardly adequate proof that these orientations are as widespread as he asserts. More helpful would have been a critical analysis of these well-worn stereotypes about the “Russian mentality” or a sustained and nuanced examination of the psychological, political, and economic conditions that might give rise to such attitudes among some portion of the population.

Satter makes use of standard journalistic tricks, such as real-time accounts of his meetings with activists or politicians and his trips to mass burial sites and former prison camps. Descriptions of the patterns of sunlight in the forests where he hikes in search of mass graves may help make the subject more vivid to non-specialists, but serious researchers will likely find them distracting. Moreover, several of Satter’s anecdotes strike false notes. He opens with the grisly tale of a young man who ended up in the bowels of a sanitation truck after a night of drinking and some mischief and was crushed to death despite numerous pleas for help to a rescue service dispatcher via cell phone. Satter believes the story illustrates a putative indifference to human life in the Russian mindset, but in fact it reveals little more than the dispatcher’s incompetence.
The concluding chapter describes Andrei Poleshchuk’s quest to understand the fate and choices of his father, a Soviet state security double agent who was exposed by Aldrich Ames and later executed. Satter accepts at face value the statements of the spy’s Central Intelligence Agency handlers, who unsurprisingly—and not disinterestedly—portray him as a heroic opponent of the Soviet regime. Leaving aside the absence of any evidence about Poleshchuk’s motives, this story does not really reveal any unique Soviet depravity if we bear in mind that all governments in the world deal harshly with those who spy against them.

Curiously, Satter overlooks several important developments of recent years. On 30 October 2009, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev released a video blog bluntly denouncing the killing of millions of innocent people at Stalin’s behest and rebuking those who would justify this horror in the name of goals of the state. In July 2010 Sergei Karaganov, an influential political commentator with ties to the Kremlin, published an article calling for a fuller recognition of the scope of Stalin’s murderous acts and describing Russia as “strewn with Katyns.” His allusion to Katyn followed several ceremonies commemorating the massacre with joint participation by Russian and Polish officials, both before and after the shocking death of Polish President Lech Kaczyński and his entourage in a plane crash on 10 April 2010. Perhaps Satter chose not to discuss these events because they suggest the Russian government’s position toward acknowledging Soviet-era crimes is more complicated than he maintains.

Satter also ignores important scholarship relevant to the Russian case. Recent studies of Stalin’s crimes, the Gulag, and Russians’ recollections of the Soviet period by Norman Naimark, Timothy Snyder, Anne Applebaum, Adam Hochschild, Alexei Miller, and Thomas Sherlock receive no mention. Nor does the growing interdisciplinary literature on “historical memory,” which demonstrates that Russia is hardly the only country struggling with how to confront shameful elements of its recent past and that connections between views of history and political developments in the present are complex, controversial, and difficult to untangle. Bold, hyperbolic claims that “the failure to acknowledge and atone for the mass crimes of Communism has contributed to a situation in which the average Russian is as powerless before the apparatus of the state as was a citizen of the Soviet Union” (p. 300) may make for good sound bites, but they do not provide insight.

Radio Free Europe’s “Crusade for Freedom” is the first book-length chronicle of the domestic campaigns initiated by the Free Europe Committee (FEC, renamed the Na-
tional Committee for a Free Europe, or NCFE, in 1954) to garner support for Radio Free Europe (RFE), one of the major U.S. international broadcasting stations during the Cold War. Richard H. Cummings acknowledges childhood exposure to Crusade for Freedom (CFF) advertisements designed to inspire Americans to underwrite RFE’s broadcasts of “[u]p to 20 hours of truth a day . . . to five key satellite countries—Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary” (p. 119). In the 1980s and early 1990s, Cummings was director of security at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) in Munich. With this volume and his earlier book, Cold War Radio: The Dangerous History of American Broadcasting in Europe, 1950–1989 (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2009), Cummings joins a small group of former international broadcasting employees and advisers from the United States and East-Central Europe who have compiled historical narratives using RFE and RFE/RL corporate and research department archives, personal papers, and formerly classified government documents that have been made available to researchers in recent years.

Cummings does not analyze the CFF historically or theoretically, but he has created a map for a small but growing number of researchers investigating RFE who work independently of any previous relationship to U.S. international broadcasting. The book is a gift to scholars of communications history and media studies in particular. Cummings chronicles the involvement of Madison Avenue advertising agencies and The Advertising Council, along with the campaign strategies they considered and deployed. From Cummings’s text, we can extract the social networks, media tactics, and persuasive rhetoric of CFF campaigns that permeated every level of society, presaging the grassroots organizing and media engagement techniques of today’s fundraising and political campaigns.

Armed only with a thinly established bibliography and incomplete organizational and financial records of both the NCFE and the CFF, Cummings faced a formidable task. Documents related to The Advertising Council’s involvement in annual fundraising campaigns, records of regional and local organizing committees, the personal papers of officials, and correspondence among campaign participants are scattered in collections across the United States. For instance, after extensive travel and research, Cummings was unable to assemble a complete set of CFF newsletters issued from 1950 through 1962. Even so, Radio Free Europe’s Crusade for Freedom tracks the organizational and leadership evolution of the NCFE and the CFF and offers comparative data on annual fundraising goals and results, operating budgets, and covert subsidies from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Most importantly, the book offers a chapter-by-chapter, campaign-by-campaign catalog of the techniques, actors, and events that mobilized support for RFE. The NCFE borrowed U.S. iconography to powerful effect, locating its headquarters in the Empire State Building, tapping the Liberty Bell and tolling a massive facsimile Freedom Bell across America, and asking Americans to become Crusaders for Freedom by wearing campaign buttons, signing “Freedom Scrolls,” and composing personal “Freedom Grams” to citizens in East-Central Europe. A national Council of Citizens along with state and local Crusade for Freedom committees mobilized business executives, clergy, the press, and members of labor, civic, women’s, and children’s organizations.
For example, African Americans were enlisted via the National Urban League, the National Council of Negro Women, local African-American churches, and celebrities such as Jackie Robinson. U.S. students in elementary through secondary schools competed in essay contests, and Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls, and paperboys went door-to-door. Hollywood celebrities such as Ronald Reagan and Henry Fonda, newscasters such as Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite, and war heroes and politicians of every stripe made personal appeals for “Truth Dollars” (p. 120) in print, on the airwaves, and at “Freedom Fires,” parades, and other media events staged in communities from Fargo to Denver to Dallas. A U.S. citizen in the 1950s could not visit a local bank; read a popular magazine like *Time*, *Life*, or *Reader’s Digest*; listen to radio programs like *Our Miss Brooks*; sit in a classroom or a movie theater; commute to work by car, bus or train; or glance skyward on Lincoln’s birthday or Labor Day without encountering a CFF appeal. Even at Christmastime, radio listeners found themselves **Carolming through the Iron Curtain** with Bing Crosby.

Communications history scholars also may be unfamiliar with innovations deployed on behalf of the CFF. In 1951 alone, CBS broadcast the country’s first live coast-to-coast fundraising telethon using AT&T’s new microwave relay system at a time when only 25 percent of households owned a television. Engineers at General Mills Corporation designed balloons to carry CFF materials to U.S. communities; and Bing Crosby promoted a “Youth Crusade Day” on his radio program via direct broadcasts to U.S. schoolchildren.

The book is also a starting point for mapping social networks; for example, the relationships among CFF stakeholders and also their influence on campaign activities. In the 1950s, for example, NCFE officer and former World War II propaganda adviser C. D. Jackson was publisher of *Fortune* and a trustee of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. *Fortune* published Crusade-friendly features, and the symphony toured Europe as part of an NCFE initiative. Henry Ford II served as chairman of the American Heritage Foundation (AHF); Ford Motor Company was one of the largest contributors to the Crusade; and the AHF eventually assumed responsibility for annual campaign operations.

Cummings also documents the CFF’s continual public insistence that RFE was a citizen-funded independent organization. His text is sprinkled with excerpts from official statements, media content, and correspondence among NCFE representatives, the State Department, the CIA, business executives, and members of the media regarding what Cummings and other former RFE associates refer to as a “benign fraud” (p. 3) on the American people. Opinion leaders such as newspaper columnist Drew Pearson, who had answered CFF telethon phones in 1951, and syndicated columnist and radio commentator Fulton Lewis, Jr., complained in the 1950s about RFE’s association with the CIA and the NCDE’s lack of transparency. By the time the CIA’s covert funding was exposed in 1967 by *Ramparts* magazine and publicized in earnest by the mainstream press, CFF campaigns for “truth dollars” had ceased.

Cummings’s text suffers from the absence of a keen editorial eye and must be read carefully to weed out a smattering of errors that might have been corrected by a more attentive publisher. That does not diminish the book’s high value as a tool for re-
search on both the NCFE in particular and on 1950s communications history in general. My copy is annotated from “Introduction” to “Chapter Notes.”


Reviewed by Ivana Gášková, University of East Piedmont (Italy)

This collection of secret letters exchanged between the renowned Czechoslovak dissident (and later Czechoslovak and Czech president) Václav Havel and the historian and archivist Vilém Prečan was published several weeks before Havel died in mid-December 2011. Havel and Prečan met for the first time in 1976 before the State Security organs forced Prečan to leave Czechoslovakia for exile in West Germany because of his part in documenting the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. From 1983, when Havel was set free after four years of imprisonment, until the Velvet Revolution of 1989, the pair kept up frequent correspondence.

Even though the two men met just once before 1990, they became very close friends, informing each other about personal matters and their thoughts and feelings about both global and domestic events as well as more concrete information and plans. The editor of the collection, historian Vojtech Čelko, used Prečan’s personal archive, in which all the letters written by Havel and copies of letters written by Prečan are preserved.

With the help of West German diplomat Wolfgang Scheur, and later also Canadian diplomat Peter Bakewell, both based in Prague, the correspondence between Prečan and Havel could flow in both directions through the Iron Curtain. From 1983 to 1989, the two men exchanged more than 240 letters via diplomatic channels. In addition, they mailed several postcards by regular post and exchanged phone calls that were monitored by the Czechoslovak secret police.

The book also includes a few documents and additional correspondence between Havel and Josef Škvorecký (whose “68 Publishers” based in Toronto put out Havel’s book Letters for Olga—Dopisy Olze as well as books by exiled Czechoslovak dissidents such as Pavel Tigríd and Jiří Pelikán). Seven chapters contain, in total, 244 letters between Havel and Prečan in addition to a preface, supplementary documentation, explanatory notes, an epilogue, and photographs.

The final chapter, titled “Together for Charter 77, Independent Culture, and Free Czechoslovakia,” written by Jiří Suk, presents an insightful analysis of the situation in Czechoslovakia throughout the 1980s. As Suk stresses, from the Prečan–Havel correspondence we can learn a great deal about the vital connections between the exiled opposition and dissidents within Czechoslovakia after the signing of Charta 77.

As a founder and director of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, which was set up in 1986 at Schwarzenberg Castle in Scheinfeld, West Germany (owned by Karel Schwarzenberg, who became Czech foreign minister in 2007), Prečan moni-
tored Czechoslovak dissident activities; notified Western media, including Radio Free Europe and Voice of America, about dissident events (particularly concerning the Charta 77 movement); and archived and promoted the work of Czechoslovak dissident writers. Last but not least, he established an information channel by enabling the distribution of letters to and from Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak Documentation Centre’s publishing house disseminated prohibited authors’ texts and scripts that were smuggled behind the Iron Curtain. The Documentation Centre became a crucial hub for the exile and dissident communities both abroad and in Czechoslovakia. Prečan served as a valuable conduit for Havel to convey his messages abroad.

The Havel-Prečan correspondence covers a broad set of issues including everyday problems and tasks in Czechoslovakia, discussions about activities and persons related to Charta 77, other community initiatives and political exile actions, mutual coordination, and even disputes about Czechoslovak history. However, the majority of letters concerned the “current Czechoslovak agenda,” including pending activities, the problems of dissent and exile, legal strategies and negotiations, and assistance for individuals and groups inside Czechoslovakia. Exile groups raised funds to support opposition activities both abroad and in Czechoslovakia, including by sending photocopying/mimeograph machines, printers, typing paper, and other materials required by the dissidents.

The book alternates between examining history and discussing dissident and exile personalities. Many of the former dissidents and exiles remain politically or socially active. One such person is the eminent sociologist Jiřina Šiklová, who with her colleagues participated in the resistance as a courier of banned literature, a role for which she was imprisoned.

The letters provide detailed, interesting evidence of what made Havel a leading figure in the freedom and democracy movement. They allow us to follow his work, including his initiatives and coordinated activities and his manner of gaining support from both moderates and radicals within the movement. Thanks to Prečan’s and Havel’s frequent and spirited contact, complete with uncensored updates about exile and in-state events, Havel emerges as a worthy leader of the dissident movement.

The book demonstrates how Havel’s writings (essays and plays) originated and formed over time and how his manuscripts were smuggled abroad. The correspondence also sheds light on a series of major early essays, O lidskou identitu (On Human Identity), many of which were reproduced in samizdat.

In addition, the book illustrates the opposition cultural environment in Czechoslovakia. Havel’s concept of “parallel polis” is evident in his letters, where we see both cooperation and conflicts within the dissident community—a group of people who at times had trouble finding common ground and coordinating positions. However, overall, the book presents a positive message about the exiles as well as those who stayed in their homeland and participated in the democratic movement.

Although the editor has tried to make the book as intelligible as possible through annotations, readers who have considerable familiarity with the subject and history will comprehend much more than those with little background. Both Havel and
Prečan refer to people and events that may be obscure to the ordinary reader (and indeed in some cases even to experts). Nevertheless, this nearly 1,000-page compilation presents superb insights into an unusual friendship between two remarkable people who had to follow different paths but ended up in the same place—a democratic homeland.