the book reveals that the Cold War’s “Iron Curtain” across Central Europe was far from sealed. Hundreds of thousands of people crossed it. Although most of them were moving to the West, many also moved (back) to the East, and others went back and forth. All were subjects of interest for the Western services. The larger point is not new either, but again Allen gives us much interesting new detail about the human toll involved. Third, we get an up-close view at times of how the Western services competed with one another for access to migrants whose background and knowledge could yield valuable information on the military or industrial state of affairs in the Soviet Union and the GDR. In particular, we see how West German officials, though often willing to throw in their lot with the services of one or another of the occupying powers, also chafed at the freedom of action these allied services enjoyed in the FRG.

Fourth and finally, Allen suggests that the espionage continued after the end of the Cold War and German unification. Some of the same agencies (German and foreign) have remained active in the gathering of information from new arrivals in the FRG; many of their objectives probably have remained the same (i.e., gaining information on countries and organizations that may wish the West harm); and in the process the FRG’s national sovereignty and the individual rights of migrants are in all likelihood nearly as exposed today as they were during the Cold War. The book concludes with an appendix discussing the archival situation in the relevant countries, which will be useful for scholars seeking to build on this important pioneering work. The book tells us a great deal about the interrogation practice of Western intelligence services in Cold War Germany, but as Allen emphasizes, much remains to be discovered and discussed.


Reviewed by Susan A. Brewer, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

“Cancel my rumba lessons,” shouts George Sanders playing an English journalist as he and the hero, a U.S. reporter played by Joel McCrea, dash off to capture a Nazi agent headed for the United States in the 1940 thriller Foreign Correspondent. During World War II, the message that it was time to put aside civilian pursuits and team up against the Axis was delivered repeatedly by Hollywood in collaboration with the U.S. government and Allied governments. In One World, Big Screen: Hollywood, the Allies, and World War II, M. Todd Bennett argues that this “transnational cultural exchange” (p. 8) produced a misleading image of Allied unity intended to boost morale and pave the way for postwar cooperation. Wartime films projected the illusion of a global family of brothers, lovers, and paternalistic protectors who embraced U.S. priorities.

The motion picture industry was a natural ally in the projection of internationalism. With the help of many immigrants, Hollywood produced films for profit at
home and overseas. In 1941, isolationist members of the U.S. Senate charged the industry with delivering war-mongering propaganda, but they damaged their own case with anti-Semitic criticism of Hollywood’s Jewish executives. When the United States went to war, government propaganda agencies, including the Office of War Information (OWI), built on already established networks with Allied officials to promote cooperation. Bennett’s title comes from the best seller One World (1943), written by the 1940 Republican presidential candidate Wendell Willkie, about his 31,000-mile global tour made in 1942 with the approval of President Franklin Roosevelt.

Bennett focuses on Hollywood’s promotion of family ties among the Big Four—the United States, Britain, China, and the Soviet Union. He finds mixed results. Most successful was the projection of a close Anglo-American relationship. In a thoughtful assessment of U.S.-Soviet relations, Bennett finds that films played a role in the brief improvement of bilateral ties. The portrayal of China was shaped by Orientalism and paternalism. Much of Hollywood’s promotion of internationalism was directed at changing U.S. attitudes. Wilson (1944), billed as “The Movie to Prevent World War III,” pitted President Woodrow Wilson as a farsighted internationalist against Henry Cabot Lodge, presented as an anti-League of Nations isolationist. In addition to the high-minded Wilson, films such as Casablanca (1942) and Sahara (1943), both starring Humphrey Bogart, depicted the United States as assuming leadership of multiple allies.

And who gets the girl? Bennett turns this classic plot question into an intriguing tool of analysis as he explores how romantic conquest illustrated the Hollywood version of “One World.” Although a few films featured romance between an American woman and a British man, Bennett finds that the American male overseas typically won the girl, or, in the case of Casablanca, nobly gave her away to a deserving ally. In Song of Russia (1944), Robert Taylor stars as a U.S. composer loved by Susan Peters. She plays a Soviet pianist who shows the visiting American that in her country a woman knows how to fire a machine gun and drive a tractor. Bennett explains how the OWI’s efforts to promote equality in the movies were undermined by the anti-miscegenation rule in the Production Code, which required that the title role in China Girl (1942) be played by a white actress, Gene Tierney, in yellow face. Tierney’s character loves an American cameraman (George Montgomery) and persuades him to join the fight against the Japanese invaders. As Bennett demonstrates, Hollywood showed romance as overcoming national barriers and strengthening the Allied cause.

Bennett explains how gendered depictions of Allied countries pointed to tensions in the alliance. In the Oscar-winning Mrs. Miniver (1942), England is represented by the title character, a brave, beautiful mother in danger. Bennett contrasts the feminization of Britain in films with Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s talk about courting America. According to Bennett, Churchill’s reference to the United States as a “young lady” in 1945 must have seemed “anachronistic” (p. 162), as though Churchill failed to recognize that the masculine role in the Anglo-American relationship had passed to the cousins across the Atlantic. Hollywood showed the conversion of Soviet women
to love, marriage, and beauty products in *Mission to Moscow* (1943); however, the characterization of the USSR, led by “Uncle Joe,” resisted feminization. Films about China, which recalled the Rape of Nanking and the plight of orphans, encouraged the perception that the Chinese needed protection. The OWI pressed for a manly presentation of the Chinese and was disappointed when *Flying Tigers* (1942) showed only U.S. soldiers fighting for China.

As Bennett’s investigation reveals, Hollywood’s cooperation with Allied officials sometimes failed to produce the best results. In response to changes suggested by the Chinese consul T. K. Chang and approved by the OWI, MGM adjusted its script for *Dragon Seed* (1944), which starred Walter Huston and Katherine Hepburn in yellow face. “Unimaginably bad” (p. 247) was the verdict of critic James Agee. Bennett shows how the soft power of film provoked unintended reactions. In Britain, a member of Parliament denounced U.S. movies for corrupting British youth. Soviet filmgoers responded to the luxury products displayed in *Mission to Moscow* with amusement and depression. Back in Hollywood, conservatives condemned the influence of “Communists, radicals, and crackpots” (p. 210) in the film industry.

Hollywood’s wartime collaboration with Allied officials created an illusion that served a purpose, Bennett concludes. His study details the multiple influences and conflicting agendas that contributed to the making of films as cultural diplomacy. Bennett offers a balanced evaluation of the effectiveness of film as propaganda as well as the limitations of Allied collaboration. The realization of “One World,” of course, was not to be. As Bennett neatly foreshadows throughout the book, Hollywood continued to play a major role in the Cold War against enemies foreign and domestic while still projecting the American way.


Reviewed by Thomas Rath, University College London

Latin America’s Cold War was notoriously hot. Stephen G. Rabe entitled his survey of the period *The Killing Zone*. Historians and political scientists have often portrayed Mexico as the exception to the rule of polarization, upheaval, and violence so visible elsewhere. In a timely and thoroughly researched book, Renata Keller challenges this idea by tracing the Cuban revolution’s many effects on Mexico’s domestic politics and international relations in the 1960s and 1970s.

Chapters proceed chronologically and describe a neat narrative arc. A first chapter sets the scene and describes how Mexico’s social revolution of 1910–1920 gradually morphed into a new regime. Integrating a host of new secondary research, Keller argues that, by the 1950s, the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI) exercised control that was “firm yet flexible” (p. 49). Chapters 2 and 3 describe how the Cuban