

Reviews

Using Non-Textual Sources: A Historian's Guide, by Catherine Armstrong. New York: Bloomsbury, 2016. 160 pages. \$100.00, cloth. \$29.95, paper. \$22.99, electronic.

Historians' predilection for printed, textual sources is no secret. Their accessibility, transparency, and relatively static nature seem to comfort researchers. But Catherine Armstrong urges historians to go beyond such staid paths and embrace non-textual sources in their work. She insists that scholars should incorporate non-textual sources, not to the exclusion of documentary evidence, but to complement each other. By marrying textual and non-textual sources, scholars gain fuller representations of the past and better access to less-literate historical agents. Writing directly to undergraduate students, Armstrong aims to program them in their formative years so they will use non-textual sources as a natural matter of course, and not simply as illustrations of their text-based findings. In her contribution to the Bloomsbury Research Skills for History series, she works to undo generations of timidity, arguing that many historians have lacked the confidence, training, or experience to include non-textual research in their scholarship.

The core of Armstrong's book catalogues the many types of non-textual sources that students should build into their research. She explores still images—painted and photographed portraits, advertisements, maps, and cartoons—imploring students to examine the purposes of their creation, along with the effects that their superficial content and iconography have had on contemporary and recent audiences. She taps into film studies techniques to steer students toward analyzing moving pictures and audio recordings, including feature films, television programs, radio broadcasts, and oral histories. Here, she leads students to consider the content, production, and reception of these sources, noting that their values can shift over time. Her final category, material objects and architecture, offers the most fruitful window for viewing non-literate worlds. Armstrong assures students that although these sources might seem foreign to them, their analyses engage their most experienced senses—touch, sight, and sometimes taste. Even pointing to the students' homes as laboratories for studying built environments, the material world is much more conventional than they may have expected (pp. 124-126).

Armstrong keeps student accessibility at the fore. Each chapter opens with a brief summary of its goals, and concludes with a recap of the learning objectives. More effectively, her topical chapters on images, visual and audio media, and material cultures end with case studies that walk students through the practical applications of the book's analytical tools. She uses Dorothea Lange's Depression-era photo of the "Migrant Mother" to illustrate the deliberate and implicit meanings of staged images (pp. 63-65). Drawing on perhaps more familiar grounds, Armstrong holds out churches as architectural artifacts that preserve rich religious and community histories, reveal semiotic imagery, and often remind of iconoclastic moments that might linger in their shadows (pp. 120-124).

This brief book bears only minor limitations. The author's commitment to incorporating theoretical foundations might be a bit optimistic for introductory-level students. Explanations of the hegemonic power of various gazes (pp. 4, 24) or the objectification of bodies (p. 44) might be a bit lofty for novice researchers. Armstrong still deserves credit, though, for introducing these theories with simple definitions, underscoring the interdisciplinary expectations of historians. Also, on at least two occasions, the author leads students down divergent paths that they might not find relatable or within their control. She addresses the types of assignments they might encounter, which seems out of place in a book written for students who typically do not choose their own assessments. More glaring is her self-aware warning against misguided heritage organizations, with which few students will engage in their studies (pp. 110-112).

These limitations, however, do not detract much from this effective book that has the well-rounded student in mind. As evidence of such, Armstrong closes her book with a postscript on the daunting professional realities that many history students will face on the job market (pp. 138-141). She rightly shines light on the long-range goal. Commitment to using non-textual sources will give graduates a leg up in an oversaturated marketplace for traditional history jobs, as well as non-history jobs that require persuasive uses of non-textual evidence. Thus, Armstrong's book would also fit well in professors' repertoires for historical methods courses and academic advising. After all, we are at the front lines connecting student development with their best professional outcomes.

Missouri Western State University

Dominic DeBrincat

The Princeton History of Modern Ireland, edited by Richard Bourke and Ian McBride. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016. 522 pages. \$45.00, cloth. \$27.99, electronic.

The stated aim of this volume is to bring together a new generation of scholars on Irish history, resulting in a collection of essays on Irish history that provide new insights and perspectives. Rather than viewing Ireland as somehow an exception to trends in European history, which focus on "the formation of discrete national units," this volume considers that Europe is best understood "as governed by the

inconstant fate of fluctuating empires” (p. 15). Because Ireland was controlled by England for so many centuries, it is easy to see it as occupying the role of victim, which is an overly simplistic way of viewing Irish history. Starting from this contention that Ireland is not the exception, it is easier to see Ireland as fitting in with the larger narrative of European history, as opposed to belonging only to its own isolated story. Irish history is not contained, but rather is a porous endeavor—one with implications transnationally, not only in European history, but in American history as well.

The Princeton History of Modern Ireland also challenges assumptions that Irish history consists only of the monolithic struggle between two firmly established identities, whether it is a Catholic/Protestant dichotomy or an English/Irish one. Instead, as Bourke argues in his introduction to the volume, Irish history “is a sequence of attempts at political construction that met with various forms of contingent resistance” (p. 3). It is not a struggle only between English and Irish, or between Catholic and Protestant, and continuing to regard it only in those terms prevents a nuanced understanding of the forces at play. By contributing to the complicating of identities, this volume reinforces that Irish history is not a battle between established, monolithic forces.

The volume is divided into two parts and moves first chronologically and then thematically through Irish history. The first part moves fairly logically, with chapters on the colonization of Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; from the restoration of the monarchy to the Act of Union; from the Act of Union to partition; a chapter each on the Republic and Northern Ireland since partition; and Ireland in the twenty-first century. The second part covers a vast array of topics: language, modernism, media and culture, Ireland and empire, women and gender, feminism, nationalisms, diaspora, intellectual history, cultural developments, religion, famine, economy, and historiography.

The contributors are primarily scholars in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and England, with a single scholar from the United States. The contributors include established scholars in the field, such as Jane Ohlmeyer, John Bew, Niall Ó Dochartaigh, and Diarmaid Ferriter; as well as newer scholars, such as Jill C. Bender and Ciara Boylan. While the contributing scholars offer important perspectives on Irish history, there is little in the book that is ultimately paradigm-shifting. It is largely focused on political and social history, with a single chapter on intellectual history. One weakness of the volume is that for all the many topics covered, there is only passing acknowledgement of the importance and role of sport in Irish society. Given the growing body of scholarship on the topic, particularly in relation to national identity, this is an oversight. Even so, it is an engaging and useful collection of essays on a wide variety of topics.

As an edited collection of essays, *The Princeton History of Modern Ireland* has many uses for a history teacher. It provides a brief overview of a variety of subjects pertaining to Irish history, which makes it useful for class preparation and for student use. Each of the chapters ends with a section recommending further readings, making it a good reference on the historiography of Ireland. Bourke’s introduction provides the requisite overview of Irish history since the Norman Conquest, laying out the narrative of Irish history in a succinct way. The volume

could fit into a graduate course on either Irish history or a history of the British Empire, either in part or through assigning selected chapters. It would also work well in an upper-level course on either of those subjects. Individual chapters could be assigned in a survey on European history or a Western Civilization course. The thematic chapters are particularly versatile, and could be used in undergraduate courses on women and gender, nationalism, political violence, empire, diaspora, or religion, or in graduate readings courses on the same subjects. The narrative chapters would be useful in either an undergraduate or high school class, given that Ireland is generally given light treatment in most European history textbooks.

Marquette University

Abigail Bernhardt

What is Global History? by Sebastian Conrad. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016. 312 pages. \$29.95, cloth. \$16.17, electronic.

Often mistakenly equated to world history, global history is masterfully parsed by Professor Sebastian Conrad in this slim, engaging volume. Unlike world history, Conrad notes, global history does not take as its point of departure “macro-perspectives”—narratives that encompass the entire world or compare large geographical regions and separate civilizations in an effort to find links between them. Concerned up to a point with such large units of analysis, global history represents a departure, for it is based on the concept of integration. Global history considers world events not as an amalgam of discrete, fragmented realities that transpire across a spectrum of local, regional, national, and international histories, but rather within a rubric of two dependent and interlocking conditions: “interconnectedness” and “causation.”

This methodological focus pushes global history beyond the confines of a world history framework and provides its practitioners with an essential paradigm. Global history engages with and derives its meaning from a multiplicity of evidence, ranging from “alternating notions of space” (the transcending of political or cultural units of analysis in favor of a broader integrative tissue of history, from nodal points in a socioeconomic network to “religious and ethnic diasporas”) and “relationality” (the interactions between civilizational contemporaries), to the spatial (a complementary set of interactions between individuals and societies that emphasizes exogenous change) and even synchronicity (historical happenstance as a significant driver of change, such as with the Arab Spring). Global historians seek to situate these “concrete historical issues and phenomena within broader, potentially global contexts” (pp. 65-67).

Yet “good” global history is more than the sum of these parts, and the mere evidence of connections, inevitably dependent on their context, is insufficient to complete the necessary calculus. Rather, good global history constitutes a meta-narrative that rolls the evidence of large-scale integration up under the rubric of “global” and demonstrates that its outcome—that is, the “history” part of the equation—is caused by it. Thus conceptualized, global history is cosmopolitan

and transcendental by its very nature: it is bound neither by the artificiality of nation-states and territories nor by the constraints of ideologies, cultures, or economies—and the identities that result.

This paradigm of global history inescapably circumscribes its usefulness as an academic discipline. For while global history has the potential to open up new vistas on the history of the Modern Era, during which humanity has undoubtedly witnessed intensifying global integration, the vast majority of human history has transpired against a backdrop almost devoid of the type of multifaceted interconnectedness described by Conrad—a fact which he concedes. He argues, however, that since “No historical epoch commands a monopoly on global perspectives,” it is not necessarily an insoluble encumbrance, and points to a potentially fruitful case study within the context of the ancient world: a comparison of “state-building practices in the Roman Empire and Han China” (pp. 113-114). Yet no evidence exists that these two entities had any direct contact with each other and, beyond spurious indirect links presupposed by virtue of trade along the Silk Road, which itself presumes some sort of economic intercourse between diasporic Romans and Han merchants in the unlikely absence of intermediaries, it seems doubtful that the depth and quality of integration necessitated by global history would have occurred.

While of limited use to ancient historians, *What is Global History?* nevertheless provides a very real opportunity for students and educators of modernity, particularly at the post-secondary level. On one hand, the analytical framework proposed by Conrad provides a welcome, comprehensive starting point to begin a real, tangible reconsideration of the place world history has in colleges and universities; for recent vogues such as transnational history fundamentally lack the necessary scope. While global history could not and should not displace it, world history would surely benefit from the clarity of historical processes afforded by global history’s emphasis on causation and interconnectedness. At the same time, assigned as a reading for sophomore and junior students embarking on their first, tentative forays into historical research, *What is Global History?* could encourage a more profound awareness of the impact of global context on students’ scholarly endeavors, which often tend to be somewhat narrowly construed. Furthermore, *What is Global History?* would make an ideal addition to an upper-level historiography course. Analyzed and discussed alongside such texts as Patrick Manning’s *Navigating World History*, notable in this instance for its chapter on Global Studies, Conrad’s study would help students (and instructors) distinguish between world history and global history, thereby allowing them to better conceptualize the place of their own work within the prevailing historiography.

West Virginia University

Joseph M. Snyder

Feast of Excess: A Cultural History of the New Sensibility, by George Cotkin. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 433 pages. \$35.00, cloth. \$19.49, electronic.

In *Feast of Excess*, George Cotkin, Emeritus Professor of History at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, explores what he describes as a “New Sensibility” that developed during the third quarter of the twentieth century in the United States. He directly connects the New Sensibility to avant-garde cultural production and particularly its emphasis on violence, sexual liberation, and madness. Moreover, he challenges the conception of these ideas as developing in the 1960s. Instead, he forcefully argues for continuity in these expressions of excess from 1952 to 1974. Furthermore, because of a strong command of his subject and delightful prose, this work is incredibly accessible and rife for use in the university classroom.

Cotkin’s primary historiographic intervention is to complicate the idea of “the Sixties.” He argues that using the concept of the Sixties as a moment of unprecedented revolutionary change in American society is limiting because it forces scholars to work only in that specific decade, and it overly stresses the connections between youth-based counter-culture and the United States’ cultural transformation (p. 14). According to Cotkin, this dominant emphasis on the Sixties neuters the significance of these shifts by emphasizing the agency of a minority group of politicized baby boomers. Instead, he offers the conception of the “New Sensibility,” whose roots can be followed into the 1950s and only reached maturity in the 1960s. According to Cotkin, the baby boomers did not single-handedly refashion American culture. Rather, they tapped into an established, but fringe, New Sensibility and brought it to the forefront. Furthermore, the New Sensibility was driven by artistic, not political, considerations. For instance, Cotkin makes the point that Susan Sontag, who coined the term New Sensibility, did not explore its political ramifications. Instead, he contends, “She just wanted to dance to the music” (p. 195). To this end, he offers a novel approach to the time period. He organizes his exploration of the New Sensibility year-by-year, starting in 1952 and ending in 1974, by biographing one artist, writer, musician, or performer that especially represents that moment in the New Sensibility’s development. As such, he offers windows into luminaries of music, performance, literature, and art from the period, and puts seemingly disparate creative voices into conversation with each other. For example, through the New Sensibility, he connects the avant-garde and extreme-minimalist compositions of John Cage in 1952 to the raucous, lascivious rock and roll of Jerry Lee Lewis in 1957. Cotkin effectively breaks down the walls between artistic genres and explores the broad cultural milieu of the United States in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Moreover, he carefully connects these moments of creativity to larger historical processes of the period. For example, he outlines major events of 1954—*Brown v. Board of Education*, McCarthy and his fall, the hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll, and the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu—and characterizes that year as a moment of extreme anxiety for Americans. He then concludes that Marlon Brando captured “these changes and anxieties brilliantly in two film roles of 1954” (p. 54). Cotkin, therefore, crafts a compelling and inclusive narrative of American history by combining detailed biographical vignette, able cultural critique, and historical analysis for the third quarter of the twentieth century.

In part because of this comprehensive narrative, *Feast of Excess* should prove quite useful in classrooms. Cotkin’s work shows students and educators the

multivariate processes of change in this period. Furthermore, it offers educators a frame with which to explore these changes with their students, and connect them to well-known events of the period. Educators can escape the tropes of the politically driven counter-cultural 1960s and culturally stale 1950s while still highlighting the period's dynamism. Equally important for developing student interest, his writing style makes this work an irresistible read. Cotkin describes Thomas Pynchon, one of his subjects for 1972, as having "waterfall prose" (p. 10). However, this description fits Cotkin himself; his style makes the narrative-driven portions quite compelling reads. Also, despite the emphasis on narrative mixed with cultural criticism, he also foregrounds his historical arguments. Thus, upper-division students of history should easily be able to engage with the act of reading the monograph, but they will not lose his arguments in the anecdotal vignettes. In addition, the structure of the book could lend itself to use in lower-division history classes. Each chapter is a self-contained argument about a particular year, and it could thus be broken up for use in the classroom. In sum, Cotkin's *Feast of Excess* offers scholars and students a compelling approach to the history of the United States during a period of dynamic cultural change.

California State University, Long Beach

Andrew H. Carroll

The Great Exception: The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics, by Jefferson Cowie. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016. 288 pages. \$27.95 cloth. \$15.37, electronic.

One could hardly imagine a timelier book than Jefferson Cowie's *The Great Exception*, as Americans prepare to vote in the 2016 presidential election in which candidates on all sides make claims to the legacies of the New Deal, its successes, and its failures. Exploring the unique instance that gave rise to the New Deal and a temporary governmental acceptance of political and economic equality, Cowie argues that the longstanding American traditions of racism, nativism, classism, anti-statism, and individualism proved insurmountable despite a momentary easing of these impulses. The New Deal was an artifact of a specific moment in time, which America cannot recapture or recreate. Cowie argues that if there is to be a new, twenty-first-century reform movement that seeks to challenge the entrenched powers of industry, it cannot and will not look like the New Deal.

Written in a clear, direct, and engaging style, Cowie does not attempt to obscure his arguments with excessive jargon or theoretical abstractions. If the title was not clear enough, his introduction is stunningly blunt, yet effective in establishing his arguments. The central argument states that the forty-year period from the Great Depression to the 1970s was an aberration in the trajectory of American history, in which the federal government mobilized a greater emphasis on and movement toward equality and betterment for working Americans. However, despite the hope that these changes would be permanent, the twin crises of depression and global war produced only temporary acceptance of an

expanded welfare state. The New Deal emerged during a distinct moment in American history and the Great Depression sufficiently restrained the impulses that had made such policies impossible to achieve in previous decades; however, as Cowie rightly argues, the collapse of the New Deal resulted from the reassertion of the temporarily subdued historic impulses toward individualism, anti-statism, racism, etc. In this way, the New Deal era was a “great exception.” Moreover, because it was an “exception,” it was always going to be temporary, as Cowie notes. Furthermore, Cowie’s arguments rest on an assumption of continuity of American political and social impulses from Reconstruction through the early twenty-first century.

Cowie’s arguments dance back and forth on the issue of continuity. At times, Cowie appears to want to argue that the Great Depression was sufficiently traumatic to sever fully the United States from earlier eras in which the antipathy toward government intervention in domestic political and economic affairs hindered reform movements. Yet he also notes the long and building history of a reform impulse in the United States over the previous fifty years that New Dealers stood upon to construct their new policies. For Cowie’s arguments about the New Deal order being a temporary deviation to work, he must straddle this continuity line and, in so doing, he raises questions for the reader as to the extent of discontinuity created by the Great Depression. However, such questions do not detract from the overall well-argued and thoughtful work Cowie has created.

Cowie’s book makes a significant contribution to twentieth-century American labor and political history. By placing the New Deal squarely within the historic moment of its construction and identifying how it represented a unique break from the path of American history before or since, Cowie helps elucidate why the New Deal coalition collapsed by the 1970s. He provides a new way of understanding the rise of conservatism in the last quarter of the twentieth century by suggesting it represents a course correction in the wake of the deviation created by the New Deal. In constructing his arguments, Cowie actively attempts to situate the collapse of the New Deal order in its very founding, arguing that while it temporarily achieved some successes, it could never overcome the inherent internal contradictions it carried forward from its inception.

Cowie’s writing style, as well as the arguments he puts forward, make *The Great Exception* an important addition to the history teacher’s library. This book should be in the reading lists for graduate students in American labor and political history, as well as twentieth-century U.S. history. Furthermore, its engaging style and direct approach make it highly accessible for upper-division courses, where instructors and students can work through the arguments reading a chapter at a time. It is also a must-read for those teaching modern American survey courses at the college and high school level, as it provides a way to frame the long twentieth century. The text raises a number of useful questions about how the New Deal fits within the big picture of American history, its meaning for twenty-first-century America, and whether it succeeded or failed—and, ultimately, why.

The Great Depression in Latin America, edited by Paulo Drinot and Alan Knight. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014. 362 pages. \$94.95, cloth. \$26.95, paper. \$14.55, electronic.

With *The Great Depression in Latin America*, Paulo Drinot and Alan Knight provide students and teachers of Latin American history with a valuable survey of a pivotal period. No such survey could substantively address every Latin American country without being prohibitively long, but this volume does an admirable job of representing the diversity of experience that was Latin American in the 1920s and 1930s. *The Great Depression in Latin America* includes chapter-length studies of Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, and Cuba, as well as a chapter on the Central American nations combined that focuses on El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Editors Drinot and Knight, respectively, provide introductory and concluding essays.

A strength of this volume is its engagement with the relevant historiography in a manner that is at once useful to teachers and accessible for students. Central to the historiographical contribution of this volume is its rejection of simple explanations that associated the Depression with a move toward populism in the political arena and a rejection of the export model in the economic. The contributors to *The Great Depression in Latin America* embrace the complexity of responses that occurred within and across countries.

The greatest strength of this work lies in the detailed analyses of the impact of the Depression on individual Latin American countries. This is particularly true when considering the viability of this text for classroom use. Though the individual chapters provide a wealth of detailed information, they do so in a manner that is manageable for students. Further, because they contextualize the Great Depression as an economic, political, social, and cultural phenomenon, this text can function as much more than simply a history of economic decline. *The Great Depression in Latin America* is also a history of political transition, labor agitation, migration, engagement with the international economy, and the changing role of government.

For instructors with much time and many countries to cover in a Latin American history course, this volume can be a real asset. Devoting a book-length assignment and the number of class meetings that would go with it exclusively to the Great Depression might, to many instructors, not seem a judicious use of time. Because this book is not just about the economics of the 1920s and 1930s, however, it offers an excellent basis for discussion of a number of themes central to the history of the region in the twentieth century. Roy Hora's chapter on Argentina, for example, allows an instructor, while talking about the economic impact of the Depression on one of Latin America's biggest economies, to also discuss class politics and middle-class identity; themes that lay important foundations for discussions of Argentine politics closer to mid-century. Similarly, Angela Vergara's chapter on Chile affords an opportunity to discuss governmental and individual responses to unemployment, a topic of much significance today as it was in the 1930s. While Jeffrey Gould's chapter on Central America raises issues of race and indigenous

mobilization, Doug Yarrington's chapter on Venezuela and Gillian McGillivray's chapter on Cuba discuss developments that shaped those nations through the rise of Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro, respectively. Thus, this text would function as an excellent segue between discussions of the Long Nineteenth Century and the start of the Cold War.

That said, this text does not seem appropriate for a Latin American or a World History survey course (or an equivalent Advanced Placement course in high school). This is less a function of style than depth, as the volume is written in a clear, approachable style that requires minimal background knowledge. The level of detail present in each of the country studies, however, seems more appropriate for an advanced undergraduate course in Latin American history. Further, the text affords opportunities for comparison across time and space seemingly best utilized with more advanced students. Here, one small detail might prove illustrative. Many of the contributors refer to the Great Depression as "the slump." While such a choice of words might seem curious to students in the United States, the phrasing opens the door for discussions comparing Latin America with other parts of the world or comparing popular with scholarly perceptions of the period. Use of the term affords teachers interested in embracing historical complexity with their students an opportunity to take an event overwhelmingly associated with negativity in the United States and show that its results elsewhere were, as Alan Knight characterized them, a roughly equal mix of good and bad (p. 312).

Curry College

Julia Sloan

Russia in World History, by Barbara Alpern Engel and Janet Martin. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 176 pages. \$74.00, cloth. \$19.95, paper. \$9.99, electronic.

This book is part of the New Oxford World History series, which is intended to provide comprehensive coverage of all countries and regions of the world from a non-Eurocentric perspective and with emphasis on connections across cultures and societies. The extent to which *Russia in World History* succeeds in these purposes depends upon the needs of the teacher and the course for which it might be considered.

The authors of this slim and highly readable volume are eminent scholars in the field of Russian history. Barbara Alpern Engel is a leading Russian women's historian, specializing in the late imperial period. Janet Martin is a well-known specialist in Russian medieval history. Their joint expertise combines to produce an excellent overview of the millennial sweep of Russian history, from Kievan Rus to Vladimir Putin. Students with no knowledge of Russian history will gain a solid introduction to the main developments over time. In addition, interest is sustained by the inclusion of personal details about individuals, from tsars to workers and serfs. Well-selected illustrations and maps also enrich each chapter. The book is highly recommended as a judiciously compressed history of Russia.

However, for teachers of world history courses, especially Advanced Placement courses that emphasize thematic connections, this work is less successful. While connections to broader contexts are brought out in passing (e.g., Peter the Great is seen against the backdrop of European expansion and power politics), thematic links are not fully sustained. For instance, the evolution of serfdom and the existence of slavery are examined largely in the regional context rather than being analyzed comparatively in the context of world historical labor systems. Given the title *Russia in World History*, this reader expected more emphasis on the cross-cultural comparative analysis that is found in many works by world historians. The title *Russia in the History of the World* would be more accurate, since the book is less a work of world history and more a synopsis (albeit a good one) of Russian history.

Nevertheless, at certain points, the authors make connections to the larger context through telling details that are often neglected by textbooks. For example, Engel points out that in nineteenth-century Russia, the “woman question” became an even more burning topic of public debate than it was in western Europe (p. 76). In another example, the authors highlight the global inspiration of Marxist-Leninist models by mentioning the formation of “soviets” among Cuban tobacco workers (p. 101).

Perhaps the most sustained theme in this work focuses upon Russia as a growing empire. While it is impossible to do justice to the ethnic diversity of the empire in such a short book, the authors are to be commended for paying attention to non-Russian peoples from the earliest times until the collapse of the Soviet Union. More attention to Ukraine would have been helpful, however, given its ongoing significance in post-Soviet politics. Beginning students will likely miss the brief reference to Russia’s annexation of Ukraine in the seventeenth century, reduced as it is to a single sentence about gaining the left bank of the Dnieper River and Kiev in the Thirteen Years’ War. And no specific mention of the recent and ongoing struggles between Russia and Ukraine are made in the brief (two-paragraph) treatment of Putin that closes the book. Of course, much has to be left out when introducing a thousand years of history in about 130 pages of text. As a history of Russia, this condensed work will be accessible and appealing to undergraduates who are seeking a more cohesive survey than can be pieced together from reading a Western civilizations or world history textbook.

Truman State University

Sally West

Formations of United States Colonialism, edited by Alyosha Goldstein. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014. 423 pages. \$99.95, cloth. \$27.95, paper. \$17.49, electronic.

In this collection, Alyosha Goldstein, Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of New Mexico, has brought together thirteen interesting essays that address elements of United States imperialism, inside and outside national

boundaries. The articles consider various tools of conquest: bureaucracy, cartography, culture, public parks, law, and language. Written by mostly non-historians, the authors use many techniques familiar to historians, including document analysis, intellectual history, cultural studies, policy critique, and advocacy. As a whole, the collection could be assigned in a graduate seminar on imperialism, especially if it was team-taught with an American Studies professor. Individually, most of the articles are useful to historians only if they happen to be researching the topic covered or as interesting intellectual reflections.

A few of the pieces might be used in the upper-level undergraduate or graduate classroom to introduce students to connections between settler colonialism and imperialism. As Goldstein explains in his introduction, when expansion west is viewed as a type of imperialism, we can consider “both the incongruities and fault lines of the U.S. nation-state and the determined construction of national singularity, coherence, and continuity” (p. 2). As he points out, some pro-imperialists of the turn of the twentieth century pointed to Native American reservations as precedence for U.S. domination of foreign people; governing the Philippines was not novel, they argued. Scholars outside of Native American history have not often explored imperialism this way. Furthering the discourse is Goldstein’s purpose and the main contribution of the collection.

The article that engages the intersection of westward expansion and imperialism most successfully is “Becoming Indo-Hispano: Reies López Tijerina and the New Mexican Land Grant Movement” by Lorena Oropeza, History Professor at the University of California, Davis. Tijerina was a Texas-born Pentecostal preacher and controversial Chicano rights activist who died in January of 2015. Oropeza successfully provides a partial biography and strong argument for Tijerina’s importance beyond the militant actions that landed him in prison. His writings and founding of Alianza Federal de Mercedes (the Federal Alliance of Land Grants) in the early 1960s galvanized discontent and individual lawsuits into a movement for land rights justice. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, existing property ownership was to be “inviolable,” but that provision had rarely been enforced. As Oropeza concludes, “understanding U.S. expansion as colonialism was Tijerina’s one good idea. But it was a really good one....[Tijerina] could not help but question the story that Americans liked to tell themselves during the Cold War: that in spreading its influence across the continent and then across the globe, the United States had spread freedom, both the free enterprise system and the freedom to vote.” To the contrary, however, “[In]either capitalism nor democracy had helped New Mexicans maintain their land base or escape the conditions of colonialism” (p. 203).

Other articles in the collection might be useful in the classroom. “The Kēpaniwai (Damming of the Water) Heritage Gardens: Alternative Futures beyond the Settler State” by Dean Itsuji Saranillio, New York University Professor in Social and Cultural Analysis, addresses the building of a Japanese Tea Garden at an important Maui cultural site and has potential to help students explore connections between settler colonialism and imperialism. Two articles about mapping (one on Chaco Canyon by Berenika Byszewski, University of New Mexico graduate student, and the other on Puerto Rico by Lanny Thompson, University of Puerto Rico, Rio

Piedras Professor in Sociology and Anthropology) could be used together to show how cartography can be used to claim space in any imperialism context. Augusto Espiritu, History Professor at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, provides an intellectual history article connecting the nationalist influences of Pedro Albizu Campos (1893-1965, head of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico), Claro Mayo Recto (1890-1960, member of the Nationalist Party of the Philippines), and Ramón Grau San Martín (1887-1969, founder of the Authentic Cuban Revolutionary Party). Historians Barbara Krauthamer and Vicente L. Rafael contribute pieces exploring religion and language in colonization. While this collection is of only limited use to historians, hopefully it will widen interest in expanding our concept of imperialism.

Cotter College

Angela Firkus

Mourning Lincoln, by Martha Hodes. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016. 396 pages. \$30.00, cloth. \$20.00, paper. \$14.72, electronic.

At 7:22 am on April 15, 1865, Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth president of the United States, took his last breath. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton was overheard famously saying, “Now he belongs to the ages” (p. 5). In his grief, Stanton surrendered the recently departed president to history to be interpreted by contemporary mourners and future generations alike. Americans across the United States and around the world grappled with the reality of the president’s death and contemplated what it meant for the future of the nation.

Inspired by her own grief and shock surrounding the assassination of John F. Kennedy and September 11, 2001, historian Martha Hodes investigates how nineteenth-century Americans reacted to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in *Mourning Lincoln* by exploring the “real-time sentiments” recorded in letters, diaries, and journals of everyday Americans reacting to the president’s death (p. 9).

Hodes resists the urge to homogenize the American reaction to Lincoln’s death; instead, she presents the diverse array of emotional reactions among a variety of people, including blacks and whites, men and women, northerners and southerners, easterners and westerners, Republicans and Copperheads, rich and poor. Not all Americans mourned for the president; in fact, many southerners celebrated the death of Lincoln, viewing his assassination as an act of divine retribution for the Union goading the South into four years of bloody war. For example, Rodney Dorman, a radical southern Democrat and one of Hodes primary case studies, celebrated the president’s assassin as a hero for his deeds, extolling him as “a great public benefactor” (p. 70).

Those who mourned Lincoln’s death did so in ways relatable to us today. Publicly, Americans donned black clothing, pinned insignia to their clothes, and draped black fabric across the front of their homes. Citizens looked to confirm the loss of their leader in newspapers, in the downtrodden faces on the street (even men were seen crying in public, a social taboo for the time), or in the face of the president himself, as many citizens viewed his body at the capital or in the funeral

procession to Springfield, Illinois. But the sketches Hodes extracted from diaries and journals represent the most interesting examples of contemporaries coping with their grief. In one instance, an individual scribbled a picture of Lincoln's face accompanied by the iconic words from Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, "with malice toward none, with charity to all" (p. 154).

Hodes' study goes beyond mourning Lincoln to disentangle the complex and ever-changing historical legacy surrounding him, his politics, and the meaning of his death. The meaning of Lincoln's death remains one of the most pertinent issues for blacks in America. After Emancipation, and even more so after Lincoln's death, African Americans reportedly celebrated Lincoln as their "best friend" and "Great Emancipator." Many questioned why God took him away at such a crucial moment; some concluded it was because he would not have been forceful enough to punish former Confederates or institute black rights, an idea stemming from the lenient peace terms at Appomattox. However, after the extreme clemency shown to former Confederates by Andrew Johnson, many black mourners reverted back to the belief that Lincoln had been their best chance for gaining permanent freedom and political rights.

Would Lincoln have effectively protected black rights and freedoms if he had lived? Maybe he would have alleviated 150 years of racial violence, maybe not. In actuality, the president's death ushered in "a war on black freedom and equality" (p. 274). During Reconstruction, former Confederates redeemed their former rights and offices and initiated a crusade that would effectively bar blacks from political participation. With their renewed power, former Confederates crafted their own narrative of the Civil War, one in which the war never ended and the South rose again, a narrative most commonly known as "The Lost Cause."

As Hodes recognizes, the war is not over. We see evidence of the continued struggle most notably in recent instances of racial violence, like the shooting of Michael Brown and the Charleston Church Massacre. Many Americans are unaware of the history informing these events. Herein lies the importance of Hodes' work for educators in American history. As educators, we need to ensure students understand how Lincoln and his policies impacted the nation and how his death significantly altered the trajectory of Reconstruction and American history. If Lincoln had lived, black rights may have been secured; instead, the struggle continues.

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Elle Harvell

Reframing Randolph: Labor, Black Freedom, and the Legacies of A. Philip Randolph, edited by Andrew E. Kersten and Clarence Lang. New York: New York University Press, 2015. 320 pages. \$52.00, cloth. \$38.99, electronic.

The history and legacy of A. Philip Randolph lack adequate acknowledgement and assessment because African Americans and the working class' connection

to the black freedom movement are marginalized in American mainstream consciousness. *Reframing Randolph* is a must-read that presents the seriously understudied intersections of black labor history, black urban history, and black freedom movement history. This anthology includes established narratives that link Randolph to iconography, New Negro radicalism, and public policy, while also introducing new dimensions to Randolph's scholarship that explicitly connect the histories of African American labor and freedom rights to histories of the black church, black folk culture, and the issue of gender.

Between the late 1910s and 1968, Randolph's impact as a labor/civil rights organizer is unmatched in the American experience. He did this as the lead organizer for several black freedom organizations that were critical to the development of the modern Civil Rights Movement, namely, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), National Negro Congress (NNC), March on Washington Movement (MOWM), and Negro American Labor Congress (NALC). Sources used to document his legacy include archival documents, official reports, oral testimonies, peer-reviewed articles and chapters, and U.S. Census documents.

Reframing Randolph opens with a conversation with Joe William Trotter, who explains that the development of Randolph's historiography is based on his growth as an organizer and on the political/economic tenor of the United States. Setting the foundation for Randolph's narrative, authors like Eric Arnesen argue that, although in 1925, Randolph was on the path to display "his stage and speaking skills in the service of a cause—civil rights," his development as a grassroots leader was far from complete (p. 71). Because of this, early labor scholars harshly criticized Randolph as a labor organizer, and his seeming disconnect from the black working class. That changed in 1937, the year that the BSCP became the first autonomous black union within the AFL and the Pullman Company. This, and subsequent victories in desegregating industries with federal contracts (1941-1945) and desegregating the U.S. Armed Forces (1948), along with the NNC and MOWM, shifted Randolph's narrative to from active to heroic. This lasted up to the Black Power period (1966), with Randolph's last great act as president of the NALC that provided key organization leadership for the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Randolph, however, seriously underestimated the tenacity of white supremacy. That and his failure to fully understand the deliberate movement of African Americans away from liberal coalition politics are best told in Jerald Podair's chapter on the 1968 Ocean Hill-Brownsville controversy. Twelve years later (ca. 1980), the U.S. political economy had adjusted to become more conservative and Randolph and the labor movement's historical connection to the black freedom movement has been marginalized to its present status as unfamiliar history.

Attempting to recover this history, *Reframing Randolph* does a great job in contextualizing the importance of Randolph's African American, labor, and socialist networks. This is where the book shines. Histories on how religion, music, and gender impacted Randolph, labor, and the long Civil Rights Movement add nuance to the stories traditionally told from the analytical frameworks of race relations, proletarianization, and biography. According to Cynthia Taylor,

after a period during which Randolph drifted from the black church and African American folk culture, he turned back, during the New Negro period (1925-ca. 1935), to the source of his family's indigenous traditions and started incorporating the social gospel into his leadership skillset. The chapters written by Erik Gellman and William Jones describe how this was effective in the successes of the NNC and NALC, which Randolph led; movements that relied on class, gender, and race coalition politics, and that also speak to difficulties in organizing liberal coalition movements.

Finally, a critical element for Randolph's legacy is the issue of women's roles. This area of study is a must-read for labor and race scholars, because, although Randolph was ahead of his time on gender issues, he was still a man who benefited from patriarchy in a similar way to how white men benefited from white privilege. This can be seen in the very "manly" men Randolph used, such as black musicians to organize the effort for fair employment, which is addressed by Robert Hawkins. This story is complimented by Melinda Chateauvert's chapter, which successfully argues that black women were not just present in every movement Randolph led, but just as it was true in the black working class, women were critical to strategic and day-to-day local operations that often veered from Randolph's broader strategy for black freedom—grassroots activism is a phenomenon addressed by David Lucander. As each contributor to *Reframing Randolph* agreed, this does not take away from Randolph's legacy. It complexifies it and makes it an unmatched experience on behalf of the worker and African American freedom that is even more relevant to the twenty-first century.

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Herbert G. Ruffin II

Capitalism: A Short History, by Jürgen Kocka. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016. 208 pages. \$26.95, cloth. \$15.49, electronic.

This book was hard to close after a single reading, as nearly every page became dog-eared, highlighted, and flagged. In *Capitalism: A Short History*, Jürgen Kocka attempts to undertake the seemingly impossible—to provide a short history of capitalism. After all, forms of capitalism have extended around the globe and across centuries. Kocka grounds the nebulous idea of capitalism into a more holistic approach; specifically offering “a working definition of capitalism that emphasizes decentralization, commodification, and accumulation as basic characteristics” and assumes that rights (“usually property rights”) offer some autonomy, that markets are necessary and prevalent, but also result in commodification, and that “capital is central” (p. 21). The flexible definition is more inclusive of various types of capitalist markets that have emerged over time, even in ‘noncapitalist’ environments. Kocka describes it is an “ideal type” model that needs to be flexed or bent in order to shape past histories into current understandings (p. 23), but that it at least offers a basis from which to investigate.

Once this definition of capitalism and its caveats are settled in the first chapter, Kocka takes readers through a history of the world and various types of markets that emerged: merchant capitalism, agrarian capitalism, plantation economy, finance capitalism, managerial capitalism, and so forth. The issue for Kocka is that there is no universal form of capitalism, so he illustrates various market-based economies through history, selecting “influential leading regions...for each respective phase and variant” (p. 23). Although the focus is largely on Europe, he pulls examples from China, Japan, the Middle East, and the United States. Kocka also includes early Islamic markets, and argues that Islam and capitalism have a long, intertwined history. He does not shy away from discussing the violence that helped give rise to some types of markets, such as slavery, political corruption, and uneven capital accumulation, nor does he dismiss the prosperity and higher standards of living that emerge, including luxury goods, imported foodstuffs, cultural exchange, and better transit networks. A variety of ideological positions are praised and critiqued with equal hand, from Marx to Friedman, which illustrates not just the market manifestation of capitalism, but its various ideological underpinnings as well.

Kocka argues that capitalism has been a powerful force through human history, and has brought with it negative and positive changes. As Kocka notes, “[c]hange, growth, and expansion are inscribed” in capitalism, which lends itself to a system that leads to incredible growth, innovation and a higher standard of living for many, but that the system also leads to inequality, exploitation, and violence. Ultimately, Kocka argues that “[c]apitalism lives off its social, cultural, and political embedding, as much as it simultaneously threatens and corrodes these moorings. It can be influenced by political means and those of civil society *when and if* these are strong and decisive enough. Seen from this perspective, one could say that, every era, every region, and every civilization gets the capitalism it deserves” (p. 169).

Kocka’s intervention on the modes of capitalist markets and what constitutes one over time offers food for thought for new and old entrants to the field of economics and history, as well as others seeking to better understand how capitalism came to be. There is an increasing pushback against the sole teaching of neoclassical economics in higher education, with more calls for development economics, the historical moments of various economic approaches, or other qualitative approaches. Kocka’s work is accessible and explains basic concepts of capitalism and how they changed over time with snippets of approaches from around the world. Because of its brevity, *Capitalism: A Short History* is also an excellent resource to introduce students to the notion of writing with a lens. Kocka takes time to explain concepts clearly and concisely and the work takes a chronological approach for the most part, so it is easy for students to follow along, even though capitalist concepts manifest into different forms. As he covers so much space and time, he quickly makes points and moves on, which could prove to be a valuable source for in-class debates, or topics for research projects.

Thieves' Road: The Black Hills Betrayal and Custer's Path to Little Bighorn, by Terry Mort. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2015. 340 pages. \$25.00, cloth. \$11.99, electronic.

The sheer volume of literature about anything related to the life and career of George Armstrong Custer can leave the reader wondering what else could possibly be added to this topic. Author Terry Mort, however, finds his own niche by exploring an often-overlooked topic. Most authors tend to focus on the much-celebrated 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn, Custer's 1868 attack on a Cheyenne village at the Washita River, and his service in the Civil War. Mort instead turns his attention to Custer's 1874 expedition to the Black Hills, which may appear less glamorous since it resulted in none of the famous battles that characterized Custer's military career. The expedition, however, was extremely important historically, since it started a gold rush, which in turn set in motion the breaking of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty and the last round of warfare between the Lakota and the United States. Even though only five of the sixteen chapters of the book address the actual expedition, the remaining eleven do a masterful job of putting the expedition in the context of larger historical issues.

In the first chapter, Mort analyzes how the national debt incurred during the Civil War contributed to a new system of taxation and created a pressure to discover new sources of gold to help repay the debt faster. In the second chapter, Mort demonstrates how this hunger for gold set the United States on a collision course with the Lakota tribes, since a gold rush in Montana in the 1860s led to thousands of settlers pouring onto Lakota land. This resulted in several years of warfare in the second half of the 1860s as the Lakota tried to block the road to the gold fields while the army tried to keep it open. The conflict proved costly and frustrating for the American government, and brought about the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.

Mort, at this point, breaks the chronological narration to explore the cultural context of the Lakota as well as the U.S. Army (chapter three), the incredible level of corruption typical of the interaction between business and political interests during the Gilded Age (chapter four), and the way in which this culture of corruption affected the administration of Indian reservations as well as what led to Grant's famous peace policy (chapter five). After laying the groundwork in this manner, over several more chapters, Mort narrows his focus to events more directly related to the Black Hills expedition: Custer's career following the end of the Civil War, the expansion of the Northern Pacific Railroad, Custer's first clash with the Lakota during the 1873 Yellowstone Expedition, and its impact on the future of the railroad.

In a particularly interesting chapter, Mort places the 1873 crash of the American economy within the context of world history, drawing a connection between the collapse of the Russian wheat market and Custer's mission in 1874. After flawlessly explaining highly complex economic issues in a way that even the casual reader could understand, the author moves on to the heart of the book—the five chapters detailing the Black Hills expedition from its buildup to the end. In the last chapter and the Epilogue, Mort considers the expedition's aftermath,

including the Battle of the Little Bighorn, the eventual defeat of the Lakota, and the government effort to gain control over the Black Hills. In doing this, the author is careful to offer a nuanced interpretation that refuses to cast either the American government or the Lakota as heroes and villains. While he doesn't absolve the American government from blame, he is equally insistent that the Lakota were not blameless, passive victims.

Overall, *Thieves' Road* (the title comes from a telling description by the Lakota of Custer's path to the Black Hills) is a brilliant book using its seemingly minor subject to explain many different topics that are key to an understanding of the history of the West in the 1860s and 1870s. Mort's analysis of the clashes between the attitudes of Western settlers and Eastern humanitarians is on point. His telling of the career of banker Jay Cooke and his promotion of the Northern Pacific Railroad is essential background to understand Lakota-government relations. His thorough research provides the reader with a mine of excellent quotes from principal actors and newspapers of the times.

This does not mean that the book is entirely free from imprecisions. For example, the author mistakenly asserts that Fetterman's 1866 defeat was the worst in the history of conflict between the American Army and Native tribes prior to Little Bighorn. However, the Army's defeats at the hands of Eastern tribes in the 1790s resulted in much higher casualties. Also, occasionally, the author makes remarks without offering much supporting evidence. A case in point would be his emphasis on the Lakota ritual torture of prisoners—something that is less than fully agreed upon by all sources. These, however, are minor issues in a volume that is very well researched and equally well written.

California State University, Long Beach

Daniele Bolelli

Emperor Wu Zhao and Her Pantheon of Devis, Divinities, and Dynastic Mothers, by N. Harry Rothschild. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. 310 pages. \$40.00, cloth. \$31.19, electronic.

Portraying an inexhaustibly determined and immensely cunning woman, N. Harry Rothschild illustrates Empress Wu Zhou's unprecedented ascension to political power in Tang China during the seventh century (C.E.). Rothschild identifies the ways in which Empress Wu's entourage of rhetoricians and propagandists continuously reshaped her image throughout her highly distinguished political career by associating her with an extensive list of goddesses of antiquity, dynastic and exemplar mothers, Daoist divinities, and Buddhist Devis. For example, Rothschild argues that in her role as grand dowager, Empress Wu harnessed the "female power" of the ancient goddess Nüwa to establish previous instances of feminine authority (p. 271). In chapter six, he additionally details the manner in which she systematically connected herself to the renowned Mother Wen in order to promote her Confucian motherly virtues and her "burgeoning participation in government as empress and grand dowager" (p. 123). Whatever the situation

necessitated, Rothschild asserts, Empress Wu was able to influence the mass, sometimes hostile, perception of her by aligning herself with well-known and often beloved female personas and deities.

Given the inexcusable fact that not one of the seventh grade World History California Content Standards mentions the name of a single female historical character, and furthermore that the framework fails to specifically highlight the role of women or gender in any of its sub standards, the inclusion of monographs like this seems absolutely essential to comprehensive historical instruction. The difficult prose found within this fascinating work prohibits almost any secondary school student from digesting the material in its entirety. However, with a little ingenuity, its underlying core arguments could very effectively be introduced into the curriculum.

Incorporating Rothschild's work in seventh grade may appear to be a challenge to those familiar with the standards, but 7.3.1 explicitly addresses the expansion of Buddhism in Tang China, in which Empress Wu Zhou undoubtedly played a contributing role. Teachers could use this opportunity to devise a mini-unit based around Empress Wu that not only outlines her individual accomplishments, but could also feature some of the numerous other Chinese women and deities described in Rothschild's writing. In this manner, students could gain a more complete understanding of ancient China's societal expectations and the roles women played within the social structure.

Another approach to implementing Rothschild's research could be by focusing on the widespread consequences of her reign as Chinese women were "rendered with increasing distinction, differentiation, individuality, and sexuality" in the post-Wu era (p. 231). This would enable students to understand that the expected requirements of women in a society are rarely stagnant and their status is often a reflection of the current cultural norms. Empress Wu Zhou also presents an opportune historical moment to investigate the crossroads of human interaction. During the half century she served as an integral political figure in the Tang government, Empress Wu embraced contrasting worldly perspectives that included Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. Utilizing Rothschild's work would allow students to contemplate the ways in which competing ideologies overlapped throughout world history and how they influenced one another.

One final suggestion for the adoption of Rothschild's portrayal of Empress Wu in the curriculum is to underscore the ways in which she modified Chinese history to enhance her own image. Political leaders throughout history have propagandized the past to promote their own agendas while cementing their positions of power; Empress Wu was no exception. She provides an excellent instance to examine why this is one reason to study world history in the first place and enable students to evaluate her enduring legacy.

Rothschild meticulously researched arguments are founded on a tremendous catalog of both primary and secondary sources. This book should be added to any world history teacher's resource list if only for the sheer volume of translated primary source material that could easily be transformed into investigative student activities or document-based questions. Overall, Rothschild presents a very balanced portrayal of Empress Wu Zhou; one that tends to downplay some of the

well-discussed, and sometimes-documented, darker parts of her life. He decides to focus less on her actions and more on the way in which she molded her image to achieve her lofty political ambitions.

Long Beach Unified School District

Kevin Smith

Ministers at War: Winston Churchill and His War Cabinet, by Jonathan Schneer. New York: Basic Books, 2015. 308 pages. \$29.99, cloth. \$15.99, electronic.

Schneer explores the inner workings and decisions in Churchill's War Cabinet during the Second World War, the greatest crisis in modern British history. The book is well organized and helps fill a lacuna in World War II scholarship. One of the few books that explores the topic is Rene Kraus, *The Men Around Churchill*, but it was published more than seventy years ago and is gossipy and unscholarly. *Ministers at War* assumes some knowledge of twentieth-century British history, and is probably best suited to intermediate- or advanced-level undergraduate or graduate-level courses in modern Europe or British history.

There are no major new interpretations about Churchill, Neville Chamberlain (who he replaced after the disastrous Norwegian campaign in early 1940), radical socialist Stafford Cripps, or any other key figures in the drama. Instead, Schneer focuses on turning “the historical kaleidoscope to reveal familiar pieces in unfamiliar patterns” and to allow readers to “discover...novel aspects of a story they thought they knew well already” (p. xix), a task he succeeds at.

Schneer demonstrates a strong grasp of the British political landscape in the 1930s and 1940s, and it is the book’s biggest strength. He argues that Churchill’s leadership was critical to Britain’s success in the conflict and that without his leadership from 1940-1945, Britain may well have been unable to keep fighting until the United States—which ultimately decided the fate of the war in both the European and Pacific Theatres—joined the Allies after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He asserts that although there was a growing divide in the cabinet between the Conservatives (such as Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary; and Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production and later Minister of Supply) and the Labourites (led by Clement Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister; Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour and head of the Transport and General Workers’ Union, the country’s largest union; and Herbert Morrison, Home Secretary) mostly over personality differences and domestic issues such as employment, housing, and nationalization of major industries, Churchill managed “to inspire...and manipulate...his...team” of talented leaders and preserve it until the Allies finally vanquished the Germans in May 1945 (p. xviii). Schneer argues correctly that the Labour Party chose to stay in the coalition because it feared Churchill would call a general election—owing to the Depression, there had not been one since 1935—and that as war-time chief, he would ride a tide of nationalist sentiment to victory. One of the puzzling events of this era was Labour’s victory over Churchill in the General

Election while the war in Asia still raged. Schneer explains: “Britons increasingly thought as the war” continued, “that the government...[should] guarantee health insurance, old-age insurance, family allowances, free education, decent housing and full employment. But...Churchill had little sympathy with this outlook... [and] sought only half-heartedly to satisfy it” (p. xix).

Schneer writes well and provides ample documentation. He uses a wide range of unpublished papers from British archives, such as the Churchill Papers at Cambridge University and Lord Halifax’s Papers at The National Archives. *Ministers at War* is filled with interesting observations and anecdotes. For instance, Schneer shows that although Churchill asked King George VI in 1942 or 1943 to select Eden to succeed him, the Foreign Secretary had increasing doubts about Churchill’s fitness to lead—the premier’s powers were “deteriorating,” and his cabinet meetings were disorganized and too long. Schneer notes that Churchill, for his part, changed his mind about Eden’s suitability as premier, telling his private secretary in the last month of the war, “I don’t believe Anthony can do it.” A few passages seem only indirectly related to the focus of the book. For instance, in the last chapter, “Coda,” Schneer summarizes the post-war careers of the cabinet members.

Schneer waffles on a few points. For instance, he lauds Churchill’s political acumen for reconstructing the government in 1942, one of the darkest years of the war, and reassigning Stafford Cripps, the Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Churchill’s biggest rival, to lead the House of Commons where he expected him to fail. Schneer then questions whether Churchill deliberately followed this strategy and whether he in fact viewed Cripps as his “rival,” although Schneer gives many examples of the mistrust that existed between the conservative Churchill and socialist Cripps.

More material on America’s role in the crisis would be helpful. Schneer writes that Churchill, who was half-American, enjoyed a special relationship with President Franklin Roosevelt, but this topic is not very well developed. Readers seeking more information on this crucial angle of the drama may wish to consult Max Hastings’ *Winston’s War: 1940-1945* (2010); Roy Jenkins’ *Churchill: A Biography* (2001); and William Manchester and Paul Reid’s, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill, Defender of the Realm, 1940-1965* (2012).