

The rise of Fascism provoked great changes in Soviet foreign policy and the policies of the American Communist Party, from the formation of the anti-fascist Popular Front in 1935 with emphasis on "collective security" to an isolationist stance following the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939. These policy reversals, along with the Spanish Civil War and the Moscow purge trials in 1936, divided liberals and certainly negated any idea of a monolithic liberal response even among left-liberals. Norman Thomas and Alfred Bingham did not support the Popular Front, while the *New Republic*, Max Lerner, and Roger Baldwin were supporters. *The Nation* supported "collective security," while the *New Republic* opposed it. The Nazi-Soviet Pact and Soviet invasions of Poland, Finland, and the Baltic States greatly increased liberal dissatisfaction with the Soviet Union. Anti-communist liberals felt vindicated in their position, fellow travelers divided, and Russian sympathizers responded in varying degrees of criticism.

Warren correctly attributes liberal rationalization of anti-democratic Soviet behavior to their automatic endowment of a left-of-center government with a progressive character that allowed the ends to justify the means. Less convincing is his assertion that the "liberal mind" is "congenitally unaware of the depths of human evil" and therefore predisposed to disbelieve the worst about the Soviet Union. This greater ignorance of human history by liberals was not proven by the author.

Warren has written a valuable study of a turbulent decade. It is an excellent work for a graduate class or advanced undergraduate class on the 1930s. However, the Byzantine nature of left politics and the turgid prose would make the volume unsuitable for high school or college-level American history survey courses. A serious gap exists in the failure to look at the position of the Communist Party, liberals, and the Soviet Union regarding the American race problem. Nevertheless, for those concerned with the historiography of ideology in the Great Depression, it is a necessity.

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Nadine Cohodas. *Strom Thurmond and the Politics of Southern Change*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1993. Pp. 574. Paper, \$18.95. ISBN 0-86554-446-8.

Strom Thurmond has come more than full circle in his political career. From recalcitrant Democratic segregationist (prior to filibustering a civil rights bill, he spent three days in a sauna to dehydrate himself so he would not have to urinate) to Republican proponent of the Martin Luther King holiday; from fringe presidential candidate in 1948 to newly-empowered Senate leader today; the 92 year-old Thurmond has never been too far from the shifting cross-currents in the material and ideological winds that signal social change.

Thurmond's political career path, however, began, and until relatively recently continued, on a course that veered very little from a consistent conservatism, particularly that brand of conservatism that insisted upon maintaining continuities with the South's racial heritage. This career is highlighted in Nadine Cohodas's well-researched, engagingly written, and important new biography, *Strom Thurmond and the Politics of Southern Change*. Combining rigorous use of primary sources with the journalist's pen, Cohodas presents a picture of Thurmond as "the most energetic, vocal and consistent defender" of the white southern cause, though not its chief strategist or most astute tactician. But Thurmond also played a critical role in two transformative developments in the South and the nation, she argues: the revolution in race relations, seen most directly in black political strength; and the realignment of the two major parties in the South. In fighting tenaciously against the first transformation, he emerged as the "premier Southern Republican," perhaps presaging the recent strength of the party at all levels in the South.

Race—as Ulrich B. Philips argued in 1918, W. J. Cash suggested in 1941, and Dan Carter, Dwight Billings, and Michael Goldfield have more recently observed—provided the central theme of southern life in the political arena. Thurmond often acted on the basis of this theme throughout his public career, from

superintendent of education in Edgefield County, to judge, lawyer, and politician, through his lengthy career in the Senate. The groundwork for the obsession with race was of course not original with Thurmond. Cohodas notes that he was only following a southern culture and social structure based on white reaction to the black enfranchisement of Reconstruction, a siege mentality that had been deeply embedded in southern politics decades before Thurmond entered public life. He was able to exploit, as many other southern politicians did, the central role that race played in obscuring other philosophical and material differences among white southerners. Though a political bulwark to racial equality, Thurmond also was practical enough in his elected positions to adjust to the new strength of blacks in South Carolina politics. Nevertheless, Cohodas believes that Thurmond may have gone even further than other contemporary "segs" such as Lister Hill, John Sparkman, or even Theodore Bilbo. These politicians, she argues, were more amenable to federal involvement in programs that benefitted their state than was Thurmond. Thurmond was a "cheerleader" for southern resistance and more of a true believer in states' rights—defined of course as the right of states to maintain racial segregation—than were many of his contemporaries.

Deeply imbued with the "Lost Cause" myth from childhood—one of the Confederate soldiers who had walked back to his home from Appomattox was his grandfather—Thurmond for most of his political life saw civil rights legislation as "deliberate punishment for his homeland." Perhaps what Orlando Patterson has told us about the parasitic relationship between definitions of freedom and the existence of slavery—that the idea of "freedom" developed first only in slave societies *among* slaveholders—is borne out by most of Thurmond's political career. Non-slaveholders and their descendants inversely link their own freedom with the continued disfranchisement of others, Patterson argues. Political equality for blacks was perceived as a pernicious threat to the existing liberty of southern whites. For most of his career, Thurmond's beliefs and actions were consistent with Patterson's observations.

But how may we explain the "old" vs. the "new" Thurmond? The old Thurmond led the southern walkout over the issue of civil rights at the 1948 Democratic convention, headed a party based exclusively on the maintenance of segregation, and filibustered civil rights legislation. The new Thurmond is the senator who actively courted the black vote, and was almost the lone southern wolf in supporting the national Martin Luther King holiday. According to Cohodas, the two Thurmonds are less apart than they may appear at first glance: they are both consummate politicians who cater to their constituencies. When blacks became a political force, Thurmond adjusted his racial posturing accordingly.

But if this is true, what should we conclude about the ideological roots of Thurmond's early career, based on a strong regional resonance to states' rights and segregation? Was he motivated from genuinely held beliefs, from political calculations, or both? Or did he simply shift to practical considerations following the inevitable national movement toward racial equality?

The tension between these inconsistencies is hinted at by Cohodas. She presents evidence for both the practical and the ideological interpretations. As late as 1990, Thurmond retained a reverence for the past rules of white southern society as if they had been "ordained by a law of nature," Cohodas maintains, and did not realize his own role in perpetuating racial disparities. A true believer in the sanctity of the social status quo, he sincerely opposed change. Faced with the reality of a biracial electorate, however, Cohodas suggests that Thurmond became the practical politician: "Once he had seen servants. Now he saw constituents."

Yet, there is some suggestion that Thurmond underwent a genuine philosophical transformation himself. In 1983, Thurmond contacted blacks all over the world in an effort to convince them that accommodationist leaders such as George Washington Carver or Booker T. Washington should be celebrated in a federal holiday. To his genuine surprise, blacks unanimously preferred Martin Luther King. He later told an aide that he now realized how important King was to blacks themselves, and told Senate colleagues that he respected this view. This incident seems to represent a genuine shift in philosophy, or at least an acknowledgment of the importance of the ideology that black Americans themselves embrace.

Aside from providing us a detailed view of Thurmond's participation in the major political events in South Carolina and the nation—the 1948 presidential campaign; *Brown vs. Board of Education*; the debates over the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Acts of 1965; Thurmond's conversion from Democrat to Republican after Goldwater "redefined the party's ideology in a way that comforted white segregationists;" and many others—Cohodas's work also reveals interesting information about Thurmond's personal life. We are told about his strong health regimen and his marriages to younger women, for example.

In Thurmond's public life, which always came first, he vehemently resisted change, yet ultimately adapted to it when resistance became futile. "You've got to meet the challenges as they come," Thurmond told Cohodas in 1990. "If you can't change with the times when it's proper to change, you'd be lost in the shuffle." Thurmond never smoothed the path toward that change, but he seldom got lost in the shuffle.

This book should prove useful in advanced undergraduate U.S. history and political science courses for several reasons. First, its accessibility would take otherwise disinterested students through the politics of the twentieth-century civil rights movement. Secondly, broader issues critical to the study of history and political science, such as Old South vs. New South, federal vs. state power, and judicial activism vs. restraint, make up the social backdrop against which Thurmond's public career was played out. Finally, Cohodas's readable style conveys what biographer Stephen B. Oates calls "the warmth of a life being lived."

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Violet A. Kochendoerfer. *One Woman's World War II*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994. Pp. 211. Cloth \$25.00. ISBN 0-8131-1866-2.

Kochendoerfer's work is an intriguing account of her wartime experiences and observations between 1943 and 1947, first as a member of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and then as key staff officer in the American Red Cross (ARC). After joining the ARC, Kochendoerfer became snared in the swirl of events from the preparation for D-Day in England to following the advance of allied forces eastward on the continent and finally witnessing the ultimate defeat and occupation of Germany. Furthermore, as the mission of the Red Cross expanded during the war from one of merely medical support to that of providing recreational services, Kochendoerfer obtained a position as an ARC director working closely with military officials to ensure soldiers had top-notch club facilities and outlets for morale and welfare activities. Kochendoerfer, or Vi, as colleagues and friends called her, makes somewhat of an effort to refute the gossip that is often associated with the conduct of ARC workers by placing such claims in the context of the war and contemporary social behavior. However, her strongest argument is describing the pace at which the ARC followed the advance of combat forces, an accomplishment that speaks to the commitment and courage of the women who volunteered for such duty.

Kochendoerfer's book is important for several reasons. First, there have been few publications that provide an American woman's "on the ground" perspective of the last years of the conflict. In this regard, the work underscores her rare opportunity to play even a minor role in this turbulent era. On occasion she finds herself in the presence of commanding personages such as Generals Dwight Eisenhower, Jim Gavin, and Lucius Clay. Yet, she also introduces us to lower ranking officers and enlisted persons with whom she worked and played. This glimpse of the victorious American military community from general officer to private is often contrasted by a real sense of the cost of the war on the personal level. Kochendoerfer used her energy, talents, and resources to respond to the unfolding tragedy of the Holocaust and large number of displaced persons as allied forces occupied Germany. The description of her efforts to help restore humanity in such a chaotic situation is one of the highlights of the book. Second, the work is spun from her journals and letters written home and safeguarded by her family. This record provides a remarkable first-person, primary source testimony and reveals the imagination and persistence of