

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."

Floyd College

T. Ralph Peters, Jr.

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



Kochendoerfer and her associates in the face of problems that seemed insurmountable. This common touch might prove interesting to students who otherwise seem bored or overwhelmed by the biographies of generals, the recollection of battles, and the proliferation of statistics concerning the war.

The value of this work is in its simple narrative. Some critics may find the many discussions of her traveling and social life to be tedious. These remembrances, however, weave themselves in and out of the larger context of military operations underway in the European Theater of Operations. Indeed, one needs to keep in mind that the *raison d'être* of the ARC was social. Thus, in her own way, Kochendoerfer made a positive contribution by providing a positive environment to ease the fear, stress, and uncertainty of war for countless American and allied servicemen.

United States Military Academy

Lee T. Wyatt III

**Paul Boyer.** *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age.* Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985, 1994. Pp. xxii, 442. Paper, \$16.95. ISBN 0-8078-4480-2.

The reissue of Boyer's study of America's initial encounter with the atomic bomb provides teachers with an excellent source for helping today's students understand the profound impact of the bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, on American society. More than that, Boyer provides insights into the cycles of "political activism and cultural attention" alternating with periods of "political apathy and cultural neglect" that characterize America's uneasy relationship with nuclear weapons.

The initial euphoria over the bomb's role in ending the Pacific war was quickly followed by a grim appreciation of the future in a world with nuclear weapons. Calls for international control by many of the scientists who had developed the bomb, and even hopes that the bomb demanded a new form of world government, quickly dissipated with the tension of the emerging cold war. Government leaders, who gave the threat of communist aggression a higher priority than fear of the bomb, began to work to minimize the fear of the public over the danger of the weapon. Focusing on the peaceful use of nuclear power as a diversion, some public leaders scoffed at those scientists who sought to warn the public of the long-range effect of radiation. Thus appeared the first instance of government officials comparing the threat of radiation to exposure to the sun's rays. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) chairman David Lilienthal summarized this position with the calming statement, "We have to learn to live with radiation."

The surprise test of a Soviet A-bomb in September 1949 raised the stakes: In January 1950 President Harry Truman ordered the AEC to develop the Hydrogen Bomb. The Korean war that began in June 1950 validated for many the threat of communist expansionist designs and overwhelmed the voices of those who sought international control of nuclear weapons. As Boyer notes, "The dread destroyer of 1945 had become the shield of the Republic by 1950."

Continued escalation of cold war tensions allowed U.S. government officials to incorporate public fears into a cold war strategy to survive nuclear war—the Civil Defense Program. Since the value of a nuclear weapon as a deterrent depended upon its credibility—the will of a nation to use the weapon when the time came—the Civil Defense Program sought not only to reassure Americans of survival but also to convince the Soviets that the U.S. Government was prepared to accept a nuclear exchange.

Growing public concern over nuclear testing in the atmosphere led to another cycle of public concern and cultural attention. In a brief final chapter, Boyer traces the cycle of activism and apathy from the H-bomb to Star Wars. In a new Preface for this edition, he acknowledges the decline in the threat of a nuclear exchange with the disintegration of the Soviet Union but warns that "nuclear weapons continue to shape power and calculations in an uncertain and troubled world."

Boyer, the Merle Curti Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has conducted research that is both broad and deep. Employing sources from the journals of scientific groups and religious organizations to cultural sources such as films, novels, and poetry, Boyer provides substantial