

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.

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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

support for his arguments. History teachers will find this a rich source to support lessons in post-war America.

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David Farber, ed. *The Sixties: From Memory to History*. Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994. Pp. 333. Cloth, \$47.50. ISBN: 0-8078-2153-5. Paper, \$17.95. ISBN: 0-8078-4462-4.

Having lived through many of the events of the 1960s, having tried to teach a few generations of undergraduates about those events, and having read innumerable historical accounts of the decade and its aftermath, I did not approach the present volume with the anticipation of discovering any unique insights. It is a delight to report that my initial skepticism was without basis as *The Sixties: From Memory to History*, edited by David Farber, is a thoughtful collection of essays, written primarily by a generation of younger historians whose personal "memory" of the era is more distant than those who have heretofore written about the tumultuous 1960s. Farber's introduction as well as his concluding essay set forth the broad framework in which most of the contributors have assumed their assignments on such topics as economic growth and liberalism, the war in Vietnam (policy makers and the news media), race and ethnic relations, youth culture and sexual values, the status of women, the nature and role of the federal government, contours of political debate ("politics of civility"), and the system of private enterprise. Helping define a common focus for their varied topics were the "fundamental questions about how much America changed in the 1960s and why it changed." The answers they sought, Farber states, centered on "two related concepts: cultural authority and political legitimacy."

Indeed, though it is impossible to generalize about an edited volume containing ten distinctive essays that range over topics of extraordinary complexity, the twin themes of cultural authority and political legitimacy do provide a certain interpretive and methodological consistency. With few exceptions, the writers raise in their analyses important and perceptive questions and issues. The connection between cultural authority (how and in what manner Americans and their institutions defined themselves and pursued their goals) and political legitimacy (the ways in which personal and institutional goals seek realization in the public arena) inform all the essays in different respects and lead to interesting comparisons. For instance, the sixties produced not only profound changes in racial and gender relations, sexual values, and political protest but in the institutional basis by which foreign policy, government, and private enterprise was pursued. What these essays help us to see—and Farber is particularly good at aiding us in this task—is the interrelationship between these experiences. The effect is to expand the context in which the often told stories about racial protest or the war in Southeast Asia are understood in relationship to complex cultural, economic, and social changes as well as traditional liberal and conservative politics. The "politics of resentment," which Richard Nixon's elections of 1968 and 1972 were constructed upon, signaled not only the end of the sixties era but attitudes that were deeply rooted in the political culture of that period as well.

College and secondary teachers can derive considerable value from *The Sixties* collection as a means of complicating and clarifying for many young people today what they think of that era—if they think about it at all. The awareness of *The Sixties'* authors that many of the issues and the problems we presently face can be understood only by perceiving the distinctive conditions that shaped the 1960s gives added importance to their writings. As David Farber notes in his introduction, "Our problems in the 1990s are different from theirs, sometimes because their solutions became a part of our problems." For that insight alone, this book deserves to be read and pondered by all.

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