

Harry James Cargas, *Voices from the Holocaust*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1993. Pp. xix, 164. Cloth, \$24.00; paper, \$14.95.

A renowned Holocaust scholar shares the fruit of years of painstaking research dealing with "the second Original Sin." Each chapter is presented in the form of excerpts from the transcripts of tape-recorded and video-taped oral history interviews. Cargas's work provides an excellent example of what can be done with oral history research techniques, particularly as a means of providing a check on more traditional history scholarship by either corroborating it or by calling it into question.

Although not all the interviewees were actual survivors of the Holocaust, and some were not Jewish, they were all participants in the events surrounding the beginning and the end of the organized Nazi brutality. For example, Whitney Harris was one of the principal members of the American prosecution team at the Nuremberg trials, and Jan Karski, an escaped Polish Catholic diplomat who fled from both the Germans and the Soviets, tried to alert the West about the Holocaust as early as 1942. Marion Pritchard, a Christian Dutch woman, was active in helping many Jews flee Holland and escape the Nazi horror.

Two interviews in particular stand out. In his interview, Simon Wiesenthal, the famed Nazi hunter and a survivor of the concentration camps, "tries to balance the evil he saw with justice and attempts to do so without a trace of hatred." Wiesenthal argues that the Holocaust did not begin with Adolph Hitler, but was the culmination of 2,000 years of religious and racial intolerance. In an extremely brief interview excerpt, Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel reinforces the expression of regret common to other interviews that anti-Semitism has continued to persist in so much of Europe, but particularly Eastern Europe.

There are several themes in this work. The theme of death and rebirth is common to the interviews. Virtually all the interviewees agree that their Holocaust experiences taught them a great lesson in humility. The thesis of this work is that there is a theodicy, a theology of evil, that exists in the world and that the living must be on guard against it.

This work is recommended for use as a high school and college level readings book. It would be a useful tool in doing the background research in preparing to do oral history interviews with Holocaust survivors in communities scattered throughout the world.

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Larry Madaras & James M. SoRelle, eds. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in American History*. Guilford, CT: The Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc., 1993. Fifth edition. Vol. I: The Colonial Period to Reconstruction. Pp. xv, 378. ISBN 1-56134-121-5. Paper, \$13.95; Vol. II: Reconstruction to the Present. Pp. xvii, 398. ISBN 1-56134-122-3. Paper, 13.95.

Taking Sides is an issues reader designed for survey courses in United States History. This fifth edition presents thirty-three topical questions, with the customary division at Reconstruction, which is repeated in both volumes. Two readings drawn from secondary articles or books are presented in each chapter. Each issue begins with an Introduction which places the topic in an historical perspective by providing a brief background of events and ends with a Postscript which summarizes the arguments presented and offers a bibliographic essay of books that support each position.

The selection of issues is an interesting blend of familiar, broad topics and unique, more specialized ones. Topical questions such as "Was It Necessary to Drop the Atomic Bomb to End World War II?" are joined by more thematic ones such as "Was Race a Central Factor in the Colonists' Attitudes Toward Native Americans?" Perennial historical questions such as "Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement?" share space with new approaches to basic topics like "Was the Confederacy Defeated Because of its 'Loss of Will'?" The editors hail this edition as a continuation of efforts "to move beyond

the traditionally ethnocentric and male-oriented focus of American history." Fourteen issues are new or modified since the fourth edition, and six of these expressly relate to women's, African American, or Native American history. The articles and authors are a similar mix of time-honored and new. Two of the entries date from the 1940s, and over half are by widely recognized historians. But other entries are as recent as 1991 and include names this reviewer had not encountered.

Such diversity of scope and familiarity unfortunately results in an uneven quality of chapters, especially in terms of their historical significance. Some broad topics are reduced to smaller issues with mixed results. "Did World War II Liberate American Women?" proves to be an interesting overview of women's changing status into the 1960s, but "Did the Westward Movement Transform the Traditional Roles of Women in the Late Nineteenth Century?" offers only a small bit of the history of women or of the West. Some teachers may wonder at devoting two chapters to whether Lincoln and Eisenhower were "great" presidents. Many will question the chapter on whether the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s was an extremist movement, since that chapter covers no other aspect of the 20s and fails to continue the KKK beyond that decade. The laudable effort to expand cultural diversity is also questionable in execution. Three chapters deal with small aspects of slavery, each of which only suggests its overall nature and impact, while Hispanics and Asians are untreated save for one article on the Mexican War.

The editors' contributions represent a well-conceived effort to place these issues in broader perspectives, but implementation is flawed by space constraints. Each introduction and postscript is no more than two pages; the latter is sometimes only one page. Some topics require more background to be fully understood. In some cases, the editors make the background too broad in chronology and leave little space for the central questions the readings will raise. This was especially noticeable in the otherwise fine chapter on the Great Society. At their best, the postscripts summarize the main arguments and relate them to other readings. But in some cases, the summary function is minimal, and the postscript is little more than a bibliography. Introductions to each volume present a dated model of twentieth century historiography as Progressive, Consensus, and New Left, but offer convenient groupings of issues into a few broad themes.

Beyond matters of selection and scholarship loom questions of the suitability of anthologies such as this to their intended audience, lower division students for whom this text may be their only college-level U.S. history reading. Can such students understand or appreciate articles written primarily for other scholars? The James Lemon-James Henretta debate over the *mentalite* of colonial farmers and Walter LaFeber's summary of U.S. diplomacy in the Caribbean as a "dependency theory" are cases in point. Do issues make readers make the best use of the limited time and reading matter available? That question may depend on whether the instructor feels the U.S. survey should impart a broad "cultural literacy" on the American past, or whether that can be assumed and built upon to develop critical thinking skills. This reviewer's experience in such courses suggests that is a big assumption and that the former may be the wiser approach. The editors have tried to address the problems by abridging most entries to no more than ten pages and occasionally explaining unfamiliar names or terms in brackets. But the latter is done much too sparingly, and many students are likely to need considerable explanation before fully comprehending the meaning of some entries.

Offsetting this caveat on the use of this text in survey classes is its potential for upper division students. The very sophistication of some articles that seems daunting to the general education freshman offers history majors valuable insights into contemporary historical thinking. Recent trends in social and cultural history are well represented, and the postscripts are good guides to outside reading. The periodic revision of this work makes it a convenient "refresher" on recent developments in historical scholarship. In sum, this is not a text for all survey students, but it could be a worthwhile addition to the bookshelves of history majors and faculty.