

are not familiar with these facts they will not fully appreciate or comprehend many of the generalizations in this book. Consequently, it is probably not a good book to put in the hands of students in public school, but it will be useful to both undergraduate and graduate students with a professor to aid them in analyzing and comprehending it.

Finally, this is a very important book for political scientists interested in political leadership and an important and useful one for political historians. It may change, in many significant ways, historical interpretations about presidential leadership.

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John Robert Greene. *The Presidency of Gerald R. Ford.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995. Pp. xv, 256. Cloth, \$29.95; ISBN 0-7006-0636-6. Paper, \$15.95; ISBN 0-7006-0639-4.

Burton I. Kaufman. *The Presidency of James Earl Carter, Jr.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995. Pp. ix, 245. Cloth, \$29.95; ISBN 0-7006-0572-X. Paper, \$14.95; ISBN 0-7006-0573-8.

Gerald R. Ford and Jimmy Carter seem fated to be linked together, both in the popular mind and in historical interpretation. Most Americans would probably describe them as decent men who tried their best in difficult times, with modest if any success and few if any lasting accomplishments. In fact, most people might have difficulty differentiating between the two presidents. Oh, the occasional person would mention Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon, and surely Carter's role in brokering a framework for peace in the Middle East would not go entirely unnoticed. Certain details would also stick in the public mind: Ford's occasional gaffes and errant golf balls, Carter's sweater and reputed encounter with a crazed rabbit—and the gray, stricken faces of both men as they ultimately conceded the political defeat that denied them the chance to finish what they had begun.

In a way, these two men shared a single "presidential period" that was squeezed between the intensity and turmoil of the Nixon years and the polarizing impact of the Reagan years. Their seven years in the White House will inevitably be overshadowed by what came before and after; most interpreters will not be able to avoid the temptation to treat them, together, as a mere interlude between two more interesting eras. Unfortunately, in their case the whole will probably be seen as smaller than the sum of the two parts.

From the perspective of these two authors, the conventional view of Ford and Carter is actually pretty close to the truth: They did not succeed, and they left little to show for their work. They *should* be linked together, for both leaders shared an inability to make the political process—virtually unchanged between 1974 and 1980—function successfully. They also shared certain intractable problems—"stagflation," the ups and down of detente with the Russians, energy shortages, the Middle East, and more. Both men, though certainly well-meaning, seemed captive to events, surrounded by ineffectual administrations (to say nothing of a fickle public), unable to develop or articulate clear plans for their administrations, and ultimately unsuited for the presidency—though for somewhat different reasons.

In Ford's case, according to Greene, the problem was that he did not have "an executive mindset" and too often let political expediency rule his decision-making. In addition, the shift of power from the White House to Capitol Hill blunted Ford's ability to govern and to lead. Greene's strengths include his economic and political analysis, but in my opinion he pushes a bit too hard his argument that Congress was "the beneficiary of [a] Power Earthquake." His writing shows tinges of 1960s rhetoric in places, and I believe he gives too much emphasis to the 1975 investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency. Nevertheless, Greene's volume on Ford shows an impressive grasp of its subject and excels at dealing with conflicting or absent historical evidence.

In Carter's case, according to Kaufman, the problem was, ironically, actually the opposite: The President continued to view himself as a political outsider, stubbornly followed his own mind (or sense of what was right), failed to galvanize his own administration, and unwisely held his course in the face

of what most other people would regard as political realities. Carter "never adequately defined a mission for his government, a purpose for the country, and a way to get there." Brick by brick, Kaufman builds the structure that would ultimately be named "Jimmy's Failure." Whereas Greene evinces respect for Ford, but not much more, Kaufman reveals the disappointment in Carter of someone who really did want him to succeed, and thinks he could have succeeded. (Along the way, incidentally, Kaufman makes the interesting observation that Carter was actually closer to being a Progressive than a Populist.)

Greene and Kaufman each had the task, then, of describing a presidency that lacks the natural drama of Roosevelt's New Deal or the lasting legacy of Truman's stewardship. Both authors have overcome this difficulty well: Their books are effectively organized, clearly-written, well-edited, grounded in the historical record (the archival record in particular), and carefully reasoned. Both volumes smoothly place the presidency under discussion into a broad context that is itself capably summarized. Both books are occasionally critical of their subjects without being harsh, although Greene does succumb to second-guessing Ford from time to time. In short, these two volumes in the University of Kansas series were a pleasure to read as reasonably straightforward accounts of the two presidencies between 1974 and 1981.

Both of these books would make fine resources for the classroom, either as supplementary readings in an advanced course in recent American history or the presidency as an institution. Reading them would benefit an instructor who wishes to have capable overviews of the modern presidency as well as of the events of the 1970s. Both have annotated bibliographies that students and instructors alike will find useful.

Kaufman makes the point about Carter's foreign policy that although most Americans "did not fault Carter on any specific issue . . . their overall assessment was negative," and that he was "a prisoner of events he could not control." These themes run through both of these studies, in fact, leaving the reader with the nagging suspicion that *no* president during the late 1970s could have succeeded—in overcoming the public's disillusion and distrust, in countering a newly energized and ornery Congress, and in finessing a series of domestic and foreign shocks that exposed some of America's most severe limitations. Perhaps Ford and Carter were destined to be failures as well as soulmates in the presidential interlude between Nixon and Reagan.

I realize this line of thinking brings me perilously close to wondering if a Reagan Administration or something like it was required to put the country back on track again in its attitude toward the presidency itself, and to prove that the country was indeed governable. Fortunately, the book review editor did not send me the next volume in this series!

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Michael L. Conniff and Thomas J. Davis. *Africans in The Americas*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994. Pp. xi, 356. Paper, \$23.00.

Africans in The Americas is a useful addition to the growing revisionist literature on the diasporic experience of Africans. The object of the authors is clear and concise, ". . . to convey to the college student and the informed reader the intellectual challenge and excitement of the recent research that has greatly sharpened our understanding of the myriad of ways that the African-American experience has shaped today's world." True to this purpose, the text is the outcome of a collaborative project involving seventeen historians working at the advanced edges of their field.

The text is divided into four parts, with a total of fifteen chapters. Each chapter is written in lucid, concise, and insightful narrative. Part I, "Africa, Europe and the Americas," contains a survey on the dawn of human existence until the fifteenth century, focusing on the great African kingdoms of the Nile valley and the Sudan region. Other chapters in the section examine the economic relationship between Africa and Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and also the Africans' early experiences in the Americas as slaves in an emergent economic system. Part II, "The Slave Trade and Slavery in the Americas" presents detailed accounts of conditions of slavery, accommodation, and resistance in Colonial America, Latin America, Brazil, and the Caribbean. Part III, titled "Ending the Slave Trade and Slavery,"