

Robert Schmuhl. *Statecraft and Stagecraft: American Political Life in the Age of Personality.* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990. Pp. 113. Paper, \$11.50.

Robert Schmuhl. *Demanding Democracy,* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994. Pp. 149. Cloth, \$22.95; paper, \$10.95.

Robert Schmuhl is a specialist in American Studies who teaches at Notre Dame. He is fascinated by contemporary American politics, the subject of these two books. Both books are well-written, interesting, and thought-provoking. They are recommended as parallel reading for junior or senior-level courses in Twentieth Century America, America Since 1945, and similar courses, and for interdisciplinary social science courses, e.g., courses on contemporary American society. They are also good reading for history teachers and good sources for lecture material.

These books focus on the role of the media in present-day politics, especially presidential politics. The media's role affects mightily our elections, especially presidential elections, as well as the behavior of presidents. The media's role is also powerful in its interaction with citizens, especially voters. Following is a summary of Schmuhl's views on these matters.

The powerful role of the media in presidential campaigns, especially with our current focus on people rather than party, is illustrated by a wealth of material regarding the campaigns of Presidents Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton, as well as the failed campaign in 1988 of Governor Dukakis. Crucial in all of these campaigns is the concept of image. President Carter's favorable but unclear image in the 1976 campaign never was clarified for the voters and was a negative factor in his attempt at re-election. President Reagan incessantly worked at creating a favorable image in the 1980 campaign and continued to work at it in his first term, and his clear and favorable image helped greatly in his re-election over a potentially formidable opponent. President Bush's inability to understand the image problem, either in 1988 or 1992, was offset by skillful "mud-slinging" in the former campaign and contributed to defeat in the latter. Governor Dukakis also never realized the effect his image was having on the voter, while Governor Clinton understood the image matter well and also knew it wasn't as crucial in the 1992 race as was the economic issue.

After a president is elected, the media are an ever-present matter in the administrations of successful presidents, who must find the proper balance between statecraft and stagecraft. President Carter practiced statecraft with little sense of stagecraft, while President Reagan worked harder on the stagecraft. President Bush practiced statecraft in the foreign policy realm (which he liked), paid little attention to the need for statecraft in the domestic realm (which he didn't like), and practiced stagecraft very little in either. In *Demanding Democracy* (written before the 1994 mid-term election) President Clinton is admonished to balance the two crafts, and his second two years, in this reviewer's opinion, demonstrate the wisdom of Schmuhl's admonition.

How do the voters interact with the media? Here, the two books vary. In *Statecraft and Stagecraft* the voter tends to be viewed in terms of passivity, lack of knowledge, and mutability. In *Demanding Democracy*, Schmuhl's view of the voter stresses the opposite qualities, for the voter had changed. Driven by fear (economic fear and fear of personal safety), frustration at "the system," intrigued by the wily Ross Perot, and angry at the issue-less and "dirty" campaign of 1988, the 1992 citizen was both more interested in the election and more issue-oriented. Thus, both Mr. Perot's and Senator Gore's books made the best-seller list, voters watched the four debates (three presidential and one vice-presidential), and voter turnout was up. Voters filtered media material in a rational way, leading some Americans to call for a new "instant democracy"

through technology, an idea that Schmuhl wisely criticizes in favor of the informed-debate, representative democracy advocated by the Founders.

The above rough summary of the books fails to do justice to Professor Schmuhl's many ideas and readable style. The weaknesses of the books grow from their virtue of a contemporary focus. Thus, the analysis would have been improved by deeper, less contemporary, background in American political science and American history. In American political science the classic analyses by V. O. Key, whose views resemble Schmuhl's in *Demanding Democracy*, would have added depth. In American history, more examples from earlier presidential campaigns and administrations would have done the same, utilizing, say, Presidents Lincoln, the two Roosevelts, and Wilson's wonderful balance of statecraft and stagecraft. There are also some factual caveats. For example, many American elections are decided by pluralities, not just majorities, and it is unclear which seven of the federal constitutional amendments since 1791 Schmuhl refers to "broaden voting rights or give more electoral involvement." Certainly, Amendments 15, 17, 19, 23, 24, and 26 (six amendments) do these things explicitly, Amendments 12, 14, 20, and 27 do so indirectly, and Amendment 14 very much so. However, neither of the lines of criticism in this paragraph detracts from this reviewer's recommendation of these interesting and useful books.

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Richard Crockatt. *The Fifty Years War: The United States and the Soviet Union in World Politics, 1941-1991*. London & New York: Routledge, 1995. Pp. xviii, 417. Cloth, \$29.95; ISBN 0-415-10471-8.

The appearance of Richard Crockatt's *The Fifty Years War* is an event in historical scholarship, for it is the first attempt to date that I am aware of to chronicle the \$10 trillion arms race and all that was attendant with it during the Cold War era (1941-1991). I believe that this scholarly study will go a long way towards dispelling the long-held pervasive myth of the impossibility of writing an accurate history of this incredible era in international politics. Having been born at the outset of the Cold War, I never imagined, nor did anyone else (including Cold War experts such as Zbigniew Brzezinski and others) that it would end without a nuclear confrontation at some point and, even more incredibly, that it would end the way it did. It should be remembered that during the half century of Cold War tensions and confrontations, the NATO alliance never fired a shot in an offensive action, a testimony to the effectiveness of this European mutual-security system that was put in place shortly after the end of World War II to thwart Soviet expansion in Europe and elsewhere. Not even a Metternich could make such a boast!

Crockatt's scholarly study is essentially an attempt to chronicle the history of Cold War relations between the United States and the Soviet Union that were brought on by the traumatic geopolitical upheavals of World War II. By his own admission, it has been a near-impossible task, given the billions of documents extant on both sides of the struggle, coupled with the restrictive "national security considerations" that have severely limited the access that historians have to these documents. Despite the official ending of the Cold War in late 1991, all but a handful of these documents remain classified. It needs no elucidation that access to the Soviet archives is even more limited, despite the good intentions of the current leaders of both countries. A careful perusing of Crockatt's extensive bibliography and notes will indicate the heavy reliance on secondary sources that he readily admits.