

American consumption. Nevertheless, critical voices such as Barbara Ehrenreich, David Brooks, and Juliet Schor were not silenced during the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, Horowitz holds out great hope for what he terms the post-moralist critics who do not take an elitist perspective on economic growth. Yet, Horowitz is unsure how the national anxiety regarding affluence will play out in the post-9/11 world, but it seems safe to assume that President Bush will not have the final word.

Horowitz's study of affluence and its discontents raises some crucial questions that should make for stimulating debate in the history classroom. The prose is sometimes demanding for students, and the book will be used best at the graduate level or with advanced undergraduates. History instructors at all levels would do well to consult the Horowitz volume and incorporate the discourse of modern affluence into their classes, for these are essential questions with which students must grapple in the twenty-first century.

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Gary W. Reichard. *Politics as Usual: The Age of Truman and Eisenhower*. Second ed. The American History Series. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2004. Pp. xvii, 213. Paper, \$14.95; ISBN 0-88295-226-9.

With the end of the Cold War and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, much has changed since Gary Reichard's *Politics as Usual* appeared in 1988. Accordingly, the new second edition incorporates recent scholarship informed by the opening of Soviet archives, and it gives greater attention to events in the Middle East. Despite the changes, Reichard's theme remains consistent: The period between 1945 and 1960 was "the last sustained period when 'politics as usual' prevailed in the United States." What other writers have seen as the age of the "vital center" or of the "liberal consensus," Reichard, a historian and administrator at California State University, Long Beach, sees as a period of "a seemingly purposeful equilibrium."

Politics as Usual consists of four chapters, a brief conclusion, and a bibliographic essay. Each of the four substantive chapters covers a single term in the presidencies of Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower. In converting the American economy from wartime to peacetime, Truman faced almost insurmountable problems that he handled with no particular skill. Truman hit bottom with the Democratic debacle in the congressional elections of 1946, but defeat allowed Truman to stage a comeback. The new Republican Congress became a useful foil for the feisty president. Partisan differences on domestic issues were obvious, and despite contemporary rhetoric to the contrary, Reichard believes there was no consensus about American diplomacy. Truman, he argues, won support for such initiatives as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization by "manipulating" the anti-Communist anxieties of

conservative Republicans who would not normally have supported an internationalist foreign policy. Indeed, Reichard is especially effective in recapturing the partisan bitterness of Truman's second term, a rancor galvanized by the Communist takeover in China and intensified by the war in Korea.

Reichard acknowledges Truman's mistakes, among them his inability to contain a post-war Red Scare and his unsuccessful attempt to seize the steel industry during the Korean War. But Reichard treats Truman charitably, and Truman had his successes. Besides the Marshall Plan and NATO, he skillfully forced Joseph Stalin to lift the Berlin Blockade and he put civil rights on the national agenda.

Reichard, whose previous writings include *The Reaffirmation of Republicanism: Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Eighty-third Congress* (1975), accords similar treatment to Eisenhower, generally following revisionist interpretations that depict Ike as an unassuming but effective chief executive. Here the narrative does not quite support its conclusions. Reichard suggests Eisenhower's indifference toward civil rights emboldened Arkansas governor Orval Faubus to attempt to block the desegregation of Little Rock's Central High School. American involvement in coups in Iran and Guatemala encouraged anti-American sentiment in the Middle East and in Latin America. Eisenhower resisted the temptation to intervene in Vietnam during the siege of Dien Bien Phu, but he committed the United States to the survival of a shaky South Vietnamese regime. Reichard does not belabor the point, but Ike failed spectacularly as a party leader. While conservative Republicans lost ground consistently throughout the 1950s, he was not able to remake the GOP into the party of the "Modern Republicanism" he claimed to favor. The allure of Eisenhower revisionism must remain a mystery to at least a few historians.

Otherwise, with its measured tone and accessible prose, *Politics as Usual* is an excellent introduction to the period and its historiography. It is perhaps best suited to graduate students and advanced undergraduates, but instructors might mine the bibliography for more specialized studies and the text for lecture notes and fodder for class discussions. What, for example, does it say about the gulf between the public and the experts when, as Reichard notes, Truman never recovered politically from his firing of the insubordinate Douglas MacArthur, a decision that historians have almost uniformly applauded? More fundamentally, students might well consider whether the post-war era really was dominated by politics as usual or whether the advent of the Cold War created an entirely new political climate.