

of the direct democracy and the desirability of the Equal Rights Amendment. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Americans are once again wrestling with questions of the viability of industrial capitalism and the role of government in American life. This text will help students put those questions into a valuable historical context.

Schreiner University

Jeannette W. Cockroft

Michael D. Gordin. *Five Days in August: How World War II Became a Nuclear War.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007. Pp. 226. Cloth, \$24.95; ISBN-13: 978-0-691-12818-4.

This short book presents a reconsideration of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan in the last weeks of World War II. Given the considerable scholarship on the subject, it is difficult to find much new to say. Yet Michael Gordin, an assistant professor of history at Princeton University, does. As he notes, diplomatic, military, and scientific historians have explored the dropping of the atomic bomb in different ways and asked different questions. Historians of science focused on the creation of the weapon itself, while military historians examined its military utility and place in the United States' strategic bombing campaign. Like General Curtiss LeMay at the time, they often see the atomic bomb as simply an extension of the already destructive fire bombing of Japan. Diplomatic historians concentrated on the political reasons for the bomb's use, and many of them, particularly Gar Alperovitz, have probed the Truman administration's motivations for dropping the bomb, and suggested that the primary reason for its use was to demonstrate American military might on the eve of the Cold War.

Gordin unites these disparate approaches and corrects errors of both omission and commission in previous works. As he notes, the bombing of Hiroshima focused attention on the atomic bomb, but fire bombing raids against Japan continued. The last of these was an 800-bomber raid that arrived over Japan about the time Emperor Hirohito broadcast Japan's surrender on August 14. Contrary to what many scholars argue, Truman delegated the authority to drop the atomic bombs to field commanders, making the bombing of Nagasaki on August 9 a military rather than a political decision. Few military or political leaders expected the second bomb to end the war. They expected to drop several more and had a third bomb ready on August 15. Henry Stimson, one of the few politicians at the time who recognized the revolutionary nature of the bomb, actually expected it to shock the enemy into surrender. Even after Japan's surrender, American leaders feared a militarist coup by senior Japanese officers who would renew the war. Gordin reminds the reader that the surrender was not an instantaneous process, but a month-long sequence of events fraught with suspicion and potential violence.

The book concludes with a short survey of the literature and a discussion of post-war thought on nuclear weapons, describing how people came to see the atomic bomb as special, even revolutionary. Gordin discusses how the bomb altered military planning and metamorphosized into an agent of peace.

This book is essential reading for anyone interested in the atomic bomb. Its excellent footnotes and survey of the literature make the book particularly useful for students and also a good place for people new to the topic to begin their research. For the same reasons, it would make a good supplementary textbook for a course on World War II. Gordin's presentation and reconsideration of thought on the atomic bomb would fuel an excellent class discussion.

University of Memphis

Stephen K. Stein

Alan Trachtenberg. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age.* 25th Anniversary Edition. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982, 2007. Pp. 296. Paper, \$16.00; ISBN 0-8090-5828-6.

Any era in American history can be viewed as pivotal, but the time period that *The Incorporation of America* covers was truly a time of change that reached the country's core. The one thing that has changed about this book, which covers Gilded Age culture and society, is that it is more relevant today and has evolved into a classic. In the new "Preface" to this 25th Anniversary Edition, Alan Trachtenberg writes that "My focus was not only on change but also on conflict and contradiction." But the author also explains that the book "describes the origins of our own times."

Trachtenberg's use of the word "incorporation" goes far beyond industry, business, or economics, focusing more on the change in American culture and society. Profound change in industry, urban centers, immigration, and culture, centered on "new hierarchies of control," that emerged in American society during the late nineteenth century. Trachtenberg demonstrates how incorporation changed American culture and, hence, American society. He is clear that what he means by culture is our modern definition of society or how we live, not the Gilded Age understanding of high art of the elite. But Trachtenberg also shows that during the late nineteenth century the incorporation of conformity was based on the idea of high art and culture—the Gilded Age definition of culture—and subsequently, the masses of working-class Americans were not welcome. As the American Industrial Revolution dawned, society became fragmented, and, as Trachtenberg demonstrates, society challenged the concept of culture. This might seem contradictory to "hierarchies of control," but Trachtenberg explains in the final chapter that the White City of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair showed "the alliance and incorporation of business, politics, industry, and culture" at the end of the Gilded Age. White City was a perfect metaphor for the end of one era and the beginning of a new one.