

major critiques of Marxist aesthetic theory and practice there. (Similar polemic material centering about such figures as Lukacs or Gorki are generally referred to under the individual author's name.) In addition, there is a chronological section in the chapters on China, the Soviet Union, and the United States which gives statements by the Communist Parties, various writers' and artists' congresses, official organizations of writers and artists, and so forth. Several special appendices, notably the one concluding the section on African and Afro-American work, give some international Marxist commentary as well.

Finally, there is a valuable twenty-page section devoted to "Non-Marxist, Related" material—"Older Works, Forerunners, Contributions to the Sociology of Literature and Art."

The entire volume is admirably cross-indexed, carefully edited, and almost completely free from typographical or other technical errors. It would be an excellent bibliographical work under any circumstances, and one of which any academic institution might well be proud. Standing as the almost unassisted work of one man breaking ground in a new and difficult field, it is truly a remarkable achievement. Mr. Baxandall has earned both respect and gratitude from all Marxists and, indeed, from all serious critics of any contemporary art.

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*The Politics of War. The World and United States Policy 1943-1945*, by Gabriel Kolko. New York: Random House, 1968. \$12.95. Pp. 685.

*The Roots of American Foreign Policy. An Analysis of Power and Purpose*, by Gabriel Kolko. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969. \$5.95. Pp. 166.

The great number of historians turned out by American universities produce an ever-swelling stream of historical studies, which, by the nature of things, cannot help being highly repetitive. Contemporary history seems to be a favored subject, with particular attention given to World War II and its aftermath. These histories are written from one or another political point of view, but largely in support of the ruling ideological requirements of American society. Kolko's books are among the exceptions; they are written from a critical point of view and in support of social changes expected to alter the course of history.

The politics of war are not an American specialty, but refer to the world at large. However, these politics paid off far better for the United States than for other nations. Out of World War II, America emerged as the dominant world power. Kolko focuses on the last two years of the war, for it was during this period that America's postwar foreign policies became already apparent. In his view, the concerns of Washington turned on three basic but intertwined problems. There was, first, the possibility of the rise of, and therefore the need to prevent, a movement toward the left in both Europe and Asia. Secondly, there was the expected expansion of the Soviet Union in conjunction with the leftward trend, and the need to combat and to contain it. And, finally, there was the dissolution of the British Empire and the arising opportunities for American imperialism that had to be taken care of.

The wartime alliance began to dissolve long before the war was won. Anticipating new frictions over the spoils of war, the winning nations tried to gain and secure guarantees and advantages for the future. These policies issued quite naturally into the cold war as soon as hostilities had ended. Kolko relates this process in great detail, from the opening of the Second Front to the Potsdam Conference, and points to the general as well as to the specific interests that underlay America's military and diplomatic maneuvers. His chronicle differs from others mainly through its emphasis on the social-revolutionary element that entered the imperialist conflicts, such as the Resistance movements in Europe and the national-revolutionary movements in Asia.

World War II was even more devastating than World War I and thus potentially revolutionary. Both in Europe and Asia, according to Kolko, the Left emerged out of the shadow of political defeat and impotence to the very center of world politics. It endangered the power structure of European politics and economics and expanded Soviet power to the detriment of American policy objectives. Whatever this Left actually represented, and whatever the various goals it set for itself, for the United States, and apparently also for Kolko, the armed Resistance, the vast growth of the Communist Parties in Western Europe, and the expansion of Soviet power, were all parts of one and the same leftward movement which had to be suppressed, or at least contained, to safeguard American interests and those of world capitalism.

As commendable as Kolko's concern with the largely neglected Left may be, he sees in it far more than it actually comprised. In very large measure, it was itself part and parcel of the wartime alliance, and had thus no real inclinations to utilize the collapse of the traditional ruling classes for *independent* revolutionary ends. In any case, opportunities

in this direction were rather limited in view of the occupation armies, first foe and then allies, which prevented the realization of whatever revolutionary potentialities there were. However, what Kolko intends to show is that America is a counter-revolutionary power and as such responsible for both the cold war and the prevailing general crisis in world affairs.

According to Kolko, America's postwar policy, i.e., containment of the dual menace of the Left and the Soviet Union, was already forged during the later phases of the war, and this despite the fact that it was Soviet control over revolutionary movements that gave Western capitalism the critical breathing spell for its recovery. But the very existence of social systems different from her own compels the United States to wage war, hot or cold, so as to secure and increase her own control over world affairs. To that end, allies become enemies and enemies new allies to aid in the consolidation of America's newly-won world leadership. Kolko thinks, however, that it is all in vain, because the world has moved beyond the mastery of any one nation or alliance of states. Of all of the American long-term political and economic objectives formulated during World War II, only the replacement of Britain in certain areas by a lesser American influence has been realized.

That America will not stop trying for more has been made clear by her policies since 1945. Although a sequel to *The Politics of War* will no doubt attend to this matter, *The Roots of American Foreign Policy* meanwhile serves to bring the story up to date. This book thus deals largely with the war in Vietnam and the history leading up to it. It shows clearly that the war cannot be considered an "accident" or an "aberration" but must be recognized as the logical result of American expansionism in its relations to the so-called Third World. It is the old imperialist drive for raw materials, trade, and investments, which compels the United States to attempt to integrate the developing regions into her own expanding economy and to prevent national-revolutionary movements from escaping the neocolonial domination of Western capitalism. Peace and progress for both the world and the United States depends on the defeat of American imperialism, and it is for this reason, Kolko says, that a victory for the Vietnamese would benefit the American population as well.

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