

was the cold war necessary? the revisionist challenge to consensus history

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Nearly ten years ago, seventy-five distinguished students of American history participated in a poll measuring the performance of thirty-one presidents from George Washington to Dwight Eisenhower. Each participant in the poll helped to place the presidents into five general categories: "Great," "Near Great," "Average," "Below Average," and "Failure." One of the surprise rankings was the "Near Great" mark accorded to Harry Truman, ninth on the list. Only the five "Great" presidents—Lincoln, Washington, Franklin Roosevelt, Wilson and Jefferson—and three "Near Great" executives—Jackson, Theodore Roosevelt and Polk—preceded Truman. John Adams and Grover Cleveland, who immediately followed Truman, completed the "Near Great" group.

What qualities and achievements elevated Truman above many other presidents? He was, according to these historians, a strong executive who acted masterfully and farsightedly in foreign affairs. Summarizing the poll for his fellow historians, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr. noted that Truman "discharged impressively the awesome obligations devolving on the United States as the leader of the free world in the cold war with Soviet Imperialism." The Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin airlift, the Point Four program and the intervention in Korea "all constituted landmarks in an assumption of global responsibilities undreamed of only a few years before." Yet, less than a decade after the poll, this estimate is being dramatically challenged by historians of the cold war.¹

A recent book sharply critical of cold war policies as well as Truman's role is Rexford G. Tugwell's *Off Course: From Truman to Nixon*. Because of Tugwell's credentials—he was a member of Roosevelt's "Brain Trust" and he is the winner of two major prizes for the writing of history—his latest book demands serious attention. Using Roosevelt's record and his probable postwar plans as a measure, Tugwell weighs the presidents who came after F.D.R. and, except for Kennedy who had too

little time, he finds them wanting; Eisenhower and Johnson but especially Truman allowed the nation to go "off course." "It had taken only two years after Roosevelt's death, and with Truman's mismanagement," Tugwell writes, "to turn two great victorious allied powers into aggressive enemies."² Far from praising the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan as masterful or farsighted, Tugwell condemns them as the start of the costly and ineffective policy of containment. Although Tugwell admits that Truman cannot be blamed alone for the vast misfortunes of containment, he holds him responsible for the early phases of the cold war, when the U.S.S.R. and China became America's enemies. That, Tugwell feels, "may be the most serious criticism that can be made of any American President except Buchanan, who allowed the Civil War to develop." Truman "was the President who kept on his desk that inscribed motto saying 'the buck stops here.' He cannot be exonerated; nor, to do him justice, would he want to be."³

Truman falls unfortunately short as Tugwell contrasts him with Roosevelt. Roosevelt understood the Russian wartime trauma, Tugwell insists, and he shared the Soviet fear of German recovery. Thus he allowed the Russians to fight the last battle for Berlin and he suggested the four-power occupation in order to keep Germany in disciplined subjection for as long as necessary. Other questions having to do with Eastern Europe remained to be settled, but Roosevelt felt he could handle them even though he foresaw a difficult time with the Russians, weary from war and suspicious of their capitalist allies. It was F.D.R.'s great attribute, says Tugwell, that he was an experimenter, not much worried if things went wrong temporarily. Roosevelt felt that something else could be tried until a tolerable situation was achieved. But when Roosevelt suddenly died Truman was "hopelessly unready." He had neither Roosevelt's sympathetic knowledge of Russian fears nor the ability to handle situations in flux. Indeed, nothing was tentative to the new president. "Truman not only considered any decision final, but belligerently regarded this as a virtue. It was his executive method. The way he put it was that he slept well after it was done and woke up to something else."⁴ For Roosevelt, on the other hand, nothing was ever quite done; adjustments always had to be made. If Truman did not explicitly abandon Roosevelt's conception, Tugwell asserts that he did nothing to effectuate it. Almost from the outset of his presidency, Truman showed that implacable hostility toward the U.S.S.R. that "became the central principle of American policy in direct contravention of the Roosevelt strategy he professed to be following."⁵

Tugwell believes that Truman made five egregious mistakes, all of which reversed Roosevelt's policy and led to the cold war.⁶ The first mistake was the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Tugwell suspects that issues other than Japanese defeat entered into the calculations to use the bomb. Perhaps the bomb was approved

more easily because the Japanese were not white. Or perhaps it was used to prevent the Russians from participating in the Japanese defeat. Whatever the reasons, "they cannot have rested on saving American lives as Truman would persist in saying to the end of his life."

Disarmament was the second mistake. In the effort to control nuclear weapons, the opportunity to reach agreement was wasted as the Americans, who could have afforded to be generous, were instead irreversibly offensive. So the time passed when the threat of nuclear war might have been contained. "Opportunity for a mistake of this colossal size is not given to many men," Tugwell comments. "It was given to Truman, and it must be said that he made the most of it."

Containment is the third mistake since, Tugwell suggests, such policies as NATO only provided the Soviet Union with reason to build a vast new military, to hold tight to Eastern Europe and to penetrate into other areas in the Mediterranean and Asia. It might be, Tugwell concludes, that from the Russian view containment can be seen as a favorable policy.

Korea, the fourth mistake, was strategically unsound. Probably the Russians were not challenging the United States in this area which was only on the periphery of the American sphere of influence. But American intervention occurred under such a misapprehension, an error that ended as an occupation which had to be maintained for years.

Finally, Tugwell feels that assisting the French in Indo-China was Truman's fifth mistake. In Asia the pursuit of containment began by helping the French to re-establish their colonial power as the Japanese withdrew from Indo-China. In terms of what Roosevelt hoped to accomplish, Tugwell feels that this was about as complete a reversal as could possibly be imagined.

Could Truman's mistakes have been avoided? Yes, says Tugwell, if it is assumed that Russia and China could have been induced to remain allies for peace as they had been for war. Even if Roosevelt had been unable to deal sensitively with the Russians, Tugwell is certain that "Truman did not—and all his life was proud that he had not conceded anything."⁷ Furthermore, the policy of confrontation with Russia, once begun, proved difficult for Truman's successors to abandon. Its costs by 1970 were a hundred thousand American lives and over a hundred billion dollars, a price hardly worthwhile, Tugwell insists, if it is suspected that Roosevelt, or other statesmen, might have made it unnecessary. "Seldom had people paid a higher price in dissension at home and lost opportunity abroad for decisions made in pursuit of futile aims."⁸

There exists a marked contrast between Tugwell's critical position in 1971 and those orthodox histories of the cold war written in the late 1940's and the 1950's. The Soviet-American tensions of those years seemed to support the official version of the cold war—that Russia was aggressive and that American firmness was therefore necessary. The breakdown of

the Yalta agreements which had promised postwar cooperation, Russia's unwillingness to grant free elections in Eastern Europe, the menace to Greece, the coup in Czechoslovakia and the Berlin crisis lent credence to the idea that communist ideology and ruthlessness were responsible for the break between East and West after 1945.

While the orthodox version of the cold war stemmed partly from events abroad, it came as well from the liberal reaction to right-wing domestic politics. The fall of nationalist China and the Alger Hiss case added weight to Senator Joseph McCarthy's charges of subversion in the Roosevelt-Truman administrations. The right-wing accusation was that America was losing the cold war either because the Russians had duped American leaders or because traitors had betrayed the United States. Liberal historians felt, however, that the right-wing wrongly assumed that American actions were decisive in shaping the postwar world when from the beginning the initiative in the cold war had been in Moscow. The war itself, and particularly the need for Russian assistance, had left the U.S.S.R. in its dominant position in Eastern Europe. Nothing Roosevelt did at Yalta, or Truman at Potsdam, could have altered Russia's determined course. Containment was, therefore, not only a logical response to Soviet aggression, it was also a most successful post-war decision.

Another factor contributing to the orthodox interpretation of the cold war was the conservative view of the American past that came to dominate historical writing during the 1950's. Historians of that generation found consensus and continuity in the American story and, along with other intellectuals, they celebrated the accomplishments of democratic capitalism and of a liberalism that seemed to have triumphed dramatically during the New Deal. As one historian has noted: "In their work, as well as in their public activities, some [liberals] even came to identify the protection of freedom with the advancement of the state's interests."⁹

Illustrative of the historians of the Fifties, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. has reminisced recently about his mood when in 1949 he wrote *The Vital Center*.¹⁰ ". . . in the early stages of the Marshall Plan," he says, "I was still filled with the excitement engendered by that brilliant, generous and now, alas, forgotten undertaking. Moreover, the astonishing re-election of President Truman in November 1948 re-inforced one's belief in the prospects of liberal democracy; we regarded this as a triumphant vindication, against all odds and predictions, of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal." Schlesinger also recalls that at the same time the onset of the cold war forced the American liberal community to confront the phenomenon of communism with more precision and responsibility than it had done. He wonders, too, whether the members of the younger generation who read *The Vital Center* will be surprised at the concern devoted to the problem of communism. If so, he says, they must make the effort to put

themselves back into the historical situation of the 1940's. "Perhaps," Schlesinger suggests, "it would help if, every time they see the word 'communism' in this book, they would read 'Stalinism.'" Stalin was running a cruel and terrifying dictatorship and "communism in the 1970s is a very different thing from communism in the 1940s." Schlesinger is well aware that in the 1950's obsessive anti-communism seized portions of the American government, and blinded many American leaders to the significance of the break-up of the world communist movement which led the United States into "the frightful catastrophe of the Viet Nam War." But he still believes that it is essential to distinguish between rational and obsessive anti-communism. "I note in the new generation a tendency to regard anti-communism as *per se* an evil," Schlesinger writes. "I can only say that I have not the slightest regret for the campaign my contemporaries waged against Stalinism . . ."

The orthodox interpretation of the 1950's still appears in the main in such widely read textbooks as those of John Lukacs and John Spanier, and since 1965 Charles Burton Marshall, Dexter Perkins and David Rees have continued to express the conventional view of the cold war.¹¹ But other historians have rejected various aspects of the official doctrine. Following the example of the "realist" school of history established in George F. Kennan's *American Diplomacy* (1951), these historians question the fears and assumptions that guided United States policy.¹² They are critical of the legalistic-moralistic American tradition which prevented American leaders from understanding balance-of-power politics. In particular, they feel that American policy-makers did not understand that Stalin was more of a realist, determined to follow a spheres-of-influence policy, than he was an expansionist. Furthermore, containment lacked clear objectives which led the United States to overextend itself in a new policy of globalism after the Korean War. Nevertheless, these historians accept the basic premise of American policy after 1945, that containment was a proper response to communist aggression. They are critical, not radical historians.

In disagreement with the realist and orthodox historians are a number of revisionists who have indicted the United States for precipitating the cold war. They follow the lead of Denna Fleming who attributed Soviet suspicion and misbehavior to western aggressiveness in his book *The Cold War and Its Origins, 1917-1950* (1961). These revisionists emphasize that the justification for containment, the Soviet menace, did not exist at war's end and that weakness dictated Russian cooperation with the West. Of course, western leaders, implacably hostile toward communism, could not see the reality of Stalin's position, that as an ally Russia had the right to ask for friendly buffer states on her eastern border. Rather than accommodate the Russians, then, the United States used its overwhelming power to protest Russian hegemony in Eastern Europe and thereby placed Stalin in a defensive position which left him

no choice but to accept the cold war. Furthermore for revisionists, who see a definite relationship between American domestic needs and her foreign policy, American imperialism is largely responsible for the cold war. The Soviet-American confrontation followed American efforts to expand into various areas of the world, especially Eastern Europe, in order to meet domestic economic demands.

This reduction of the cold war to economic causes has produced a more radical interpretation of American history. For some revisionists their criticism of American foreign policy is part of their reevaluation of domestic liberal institutions. They find both anti-communist action abroad and reform efforts at home to be the natural result of an industrial society attempting to rationalize its own corporate capitalism. One important expression is that of William Appleman Williams in *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959). Williams argues that the United States since 1898 has deliberately continued the "open door" policy of extending American influence around the world. Since capitalism must have ever-expanding foreign markets to survive, this has even meant the expansion of the "open door" principle into areas under Soviet control. The cold war, then, is only the latest phase in the whole course of twentieth-century American diplomacy.

At first, Williams' radicalism alienated the academic establishment, but his influence on other revisionists has become undeniably significant. David Horowitz in *The Free World Colossus: A Critique of American Foreign Policy in the Cold War* (1965), in basic agreement with Williams, characterizes American policy as counterrevolutionary because it was committed to the defense of a global status quo. He judges that the main purpose of containment was to crush any radical movement from threatening the will of the United States. In Gabriel Kolko's *The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1943-1945* (1968), policies that once appeared enlightened—the Marshall Plan for European recovery and the Point Four program for aid to underdeveloped countries—seem almost imperialistic. He feels that the cold war arose because Russia refused to let Eastern Europe become a part of the American colonial system. The disquieting theme that the origins of the cold war lie in atomic blackmail elevates Gar Alperovitz's *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (1965) to an influential place among revisionist histories.¹³ Although his critique of liberal institutions is less radical than others, his careful scholarship adds strength to his conclusion that Truman got tough with Russia because the atomic bomb strengthened his hand. Truman even delayed his trip to Potsdam until the atomic bomb was developed, Alperovitz believes, in order to use the power of the new weapon to influence the Soviet Union.¹⁴

The nature of such criticism has understandably brought forth a sharp reaction. One historian, William W. McDonald, has complained that revisionists are guilty of reversing the roles of heroes and villains in the

cold war. The revisionists "suffer from what one might describe as ideological myopia: American diplomats can do no right; Russian leaders can do no wrong." He also feels that the theme of America's "Open Door 'imperial expansion'" is highly debatable and that the revisionists have not shown that postwar coexistence could have been anything but antagonistic. Irwin Unger has called the revisionists bad-tempered, angry dissenters from America's current foreign and domestic policies. Charles S. Maier feels that the Marxian basis of the third-world perspective has serious analytical deficiencies. The cold war represents to revisionists "a continuation of an international civil war in which Russian and later peasant revolutionary forces have successfully championed the cause of the oppressed in all countries, while the United States has become the leader of the world's elites." This, he asserts, overestimates the fragility of the capitalist order and overvalues the American contribution to counterrevolution as well as the will to impose it. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. announced that the time had come to blow the whistle before the outburst of revisionism regarding the origins of the cold war went much further. But he could not "blow the whistle," says Christopher Lasch. Schlesinger backed away somewhat from his position, admitting that although the revisionist interpretations did not really stick, revisionism was a necessary part of the historical process. ". . . it is good to know," chides Lasch, "that revisionists may now presumably continue their work (inconsequential as it may eventually prove to be) without fear of being whistled to a stop by the referee."¹⁵

Revisionists have, indeed, continued their work because the forces behind the reappraisal of American foreign policy and the origins of the cold war are so great. Much of the impact on revisionists comes from the Vietnam war, which is for these historians the logical and unfortunate outcome of American cold war policy. As Charles S. Maier suggests, Vietnam has so eroded national self-conceptions that many assumptions behind traditional cold war history have been cast into doubt.¹⁶ Also important as an influence on revisionists is their conviction that there is a moral issue in Vietnam. One historian has written: "The United States Government has tried hard to cover its moral nakedness in Vietnam. But the signs of failure grow day by day."¹⁷

What history is and what role the historian should play have an important bearing on the revisionist critique of the cold war. Revisionists are convinced that the writing of history should not be used, as they feel it has since World War II, to buttress American policy; that has led to a distortion of research. Revisionists look instead, notes Walter LaFeber, for a vision of the past that will help them remake the present and the future. They hope, too, that history will offer a reinforcement of current moral values. "A faith in history is perhaps the most important and far-reaching of the revisionist views," LaFeber writes.¹⁸

A striking example of the revisionist concern for the proper use of

history is Howard Zinn's *The Politics of History* (1970), which calls for "a higher proportion of socially relevant, value-motivated, action-inducing historical work." ". . . in a world where children are still not safe from starvation or bombs," Zinn asks, "should not the historian thrust himself and his writing into history, on behalf of goals in which he deeply believes? Are we historians not humans first, and scholars because of that?"¹⁹

Zinn deplores the dominant mood in historical writing in the United States which avoids direct confrontation of contemporary problems. Out of the enormous energy devoted to the past, only a tiny amount is directed to the solution of vital problems. Look at the pages of the historical reviews, Zinn admonishes, or at the tens of thousands of historical scholars who gather annually to hear hundreds of papers on scattered topics yet, "there has been no move to select a problem—poverty, race prejudice, the war in Vietnam, alternative methods of social change—for concentrated attention by some one conference."²⁰ Historians must challenge the rules which sustain the wasting of knowledge. No longer, Zinn maintains, can historians hide behind "disinterested scholarship" and "objectivity" and "publish while others perish." Historians, Zinn says, need to become critics rather than apologists and perpetrators of their culture.²¹

Zinn offers five ways in which history can be useful for those who "would rather have their writing guided by human aspiration than by professional habit."²² History is not inevitably useful, Zinn admits, "But history can untie our minds, our bodies, our disposition to move—to engage life rather than contemplating it as an outsider." It can make us aware of the silent voices of the past and the present; it "can reveal how ideas are stuffed into us by the powers of our time. . . ." And, Zinn adds, history "can inspire us by recalling those few moments in the past when men did behave like human beings, to prove it is *possible*."²³ The guidelines for revisionist history which Zinn offers support LaFeber's contention that history is the way out for intellectuals who want change yet think it improbable in the near future.²⁴ The issue between revisionist and other historians of the cold war is not the thoroughness of research. "Our values should determine the *questions* we ask in scholarly inquiry," Zinn states, "but not the answers."²⁵

The age and educational experience of a number of leading revisionists also figure in their approach to history. Coming to intellectual maturity during the cold war, young historians broke with the consensus of the 1950's as they became aware of poverty, racism, civil rights and Vietnam. One such group published essays in vigorous criticism of the historical consensus in *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History*, edited by Barton J. Bernstein. At the time of the book's publication in 1967, the average age of the eleven contributors was only thirty-three. The authors sought explicitly "to make the past speak to

the present, to ask questions that have a deep-rooted moral and political relevance." ". . . we have, by necessity," Bernstein wrote, "moved beyond objective history to the realm of values. In this venture we are following the practice, though not necessarily the prescription, of earlier generations of historians, and responding in a modest way to the call issued a few years ago to move 'beyond consensus.'" ²⁶

Some of the young revisionists of the 1960's reflect the influence of the so-called "Wisconsin School" of history. For instance, Gar Alperovitz, Lloyd C. Gardner, David Horowitz, Gabriel Kolko, Walter LaFeber and Robert F. Smith²⁷ received at least some of their training at the University of Wisconsin, where William Appleman Williams taught history. LaFeber suggests that part of the revisionist-orthodox split is along Eastern-Midwestern lines, and both he and Bernstein believe revisionists have been influenced by Midwestern populism and progressivism. Like Charles Beard, historian of an earlier generation, young revisionists trained or reared in the Midwest, stress the impact of domestic economics on foreign policy, applaud the influence of public opinion on policy-making, condemn the concentration of power in a strong presidency and emphasize the relevance of history to the present.²⁸

That the impact of the revisionist position is upon us is evidenced by many of the books displayed at the recent American Historical Association convention. Revisionism is in paperback as well as in anthology form, and it is sure to infiltrate history courses even at the introductory level. An excellent example of a collection is that edited by James V. Compton, *America and the Origins of the Cold War* (1972), which presents the views of both orthodox and revisionist historians. *Trends and Tragedies in American Foreign Policy* (1971), edited by Michael Parenti, examines "some long-muted dissenting notions and heretical views about the intent, purposes, and unhappy consequences of American foreign policy and the interests that shape that policy." Loren Baritz, general editor of Wiley's "Problems in American History," has added to that series Walter LaFeber, ed., *The Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (1971). Irwin Unger has a broad scope in his collection, *Beyond Liberalism: The New Left Views American History* (1971). A unique anthology is that edited by Thomas G. Paterson, *Cold War Critics: Alternatives to American Foreign Policy in the Truman Years* (1971). This is the first book to explore the beliefs and ideas of those who challenged American foreign policy during the early years of the cold war. A book that focuses on individual policymakers during the cold war is Lloyd C. Gardner, *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941-1949* (1970). Two new works which approach the origins of the cold war by reassessing Truman's rhetoric and policy decisions are Richard M. Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism: Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics, and Internal Security, 1946-1948* (1971), and Athan Theoharis, *Harry S. Truman and the*

Origins of McCarthyism (1971). Two other books, soon to be published in 1972, which promise to add to the revisionist critique are Jerald A. Combs, ed., *Nationalist, Realist, and Radical: Three Views of American Diplomacy*, and Joyce Kolko and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954*. These are but some of the current books which indicate the growing popularity of the revisionist assessment of the cold war.

The forces behind revisionism—the Vietnam war, the youth of critics, the new faith in history as a tool for change—have challenged the orthodox consensus, producing a great historiographical debate that will continue. New historians, trained in the late 1960's and 1970's, a period of rampant social unrest, are likely to accept revisionism, as LaFaber believes, not as an aberration but as logical and as fact. Christopher Lasch is sure, too, that increasingly William Appleman Williams, so influential on the radicals of the 1960's as well as on other revisionists, will become uncomfortable among those historians who demand that America rapidly rid itself of racism, poverty, imperialistic wars and ecological problems which threaten posterity. Whatever the specific course of argument, in the foreseeable future historians will have to come to grips with revisionism which has shattered so many of the assumptions of traditional cold war history.

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footnotes

1. Arthur M. Schlesinger, "Our Presidents: A Rating by 75 Historians," *New York Times Magazine*, July 29, 1962, 12. Truman is also included among the top presidents in the second edition of *America's Ten Greatest Presidents*. Richard S. Kirkendall has written an essay which adds Truman to the original list, thereby justifying the new title, *America's Eleven Greatest Presidents* (1971). Anticipating criticism, the editor, Morton Borden, writes: "To be sure, the inclusion of Harry Truman will be deplored by some—particularly the new breed of younger leftist scholars—but they would probably disagree with most of the selections." See p. viii.

2. Rexford G. Tugwell, *Off Course: From Truman to Nixon* (1971), 203.

3. *Ibid.*, 205. The poll of presidents, in agreement with Tugwell's judgment, ranked Buchanan 29th, last in the "Below Average" category, barely ahead of the two "Failures," Grant and Harding.

4. *Ibid.*, 201. Tugwell also says of Truman: "Someone must have told him, or he must have read—he was an assiduous student of American history and often expressed admiration for James K. Polk—that strong Presidents acted decisively. They were responsible; they make up their minds; they must not appear to have doubts. It was better to make mistakes than to hesitate and give the impression of uncertainty." See p. 222. The poll of presidents ranked Polk eighth and Truman ninth and for the same general accomplishments: forceful use of the executive office, especially in foreign affairs. Tugwell would no doubt disagree with this measure of presidential greatness.

5. *Ibid.*, 218.

6. "How It Went Wrong," Part V of *Off Course*, deals with each mistake. See pp. 181-222.

7. *Ibid.*, 214. Commenting on another recent account of Truman's presidency, Tugwell adds: "So, in fact, was Acheson. His *Present at the Creation* was one long rooster-crow over the results of his hard-line policy."

8. *Ibid.*, 205.

9. Barton J. Bernstein, ed., *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History* (1969), viii.

10. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "The Vital Center' Reconsidered," *Encounter*, XXXV (September, 1970), 89-93.

11. John Lukacs, *A History of the Cold War* (1961); John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II* (1967); Charles Burton Marshall, *The Cold War: A Concise History*

(1965); Dexter Perkins, *The Diplomacy of a New Age* (1967); David Rees, *The Age of Containment: The Cold War, 1945-1965* (1967).

12. A few examples are: Norman A. Graebner, *Cold War Diplomacy* (1962); Louis J. Halle, *The Cold War As History* (1967); William H. McNeill, *America, Britain, and Russia* (1953); and Paul Seabury, *The Rise and Decline of the Cold War* (1967).

13. Other revisionists of note are Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1966* (1967); Ronald Steel, *Pax Americana: The Cold War Empire* (1967); and Carl Oglesby and Richard Shaull, *Containment and Change* (1967).

14. Martin J. Sherwin of Cornell has challenged Alperovitz in a paper, "U.S. Atomic Energy Policy and Diplomacy," delivered at a session of the American Historical Association on December 29, 1971. Sherwin stated that the dropping of the bomb did not alter policy; instead, it reinforced an atomic diplomacy developed by F.D.R. that was hostile to the Soviet Union. While Truman had some choices open to him, the legacy of Roosevelt did not leave him a free agent. The thrust of Sherwin's remarks accentuates the American responsibility for the cold war by enlarging Roosevelt's role. Thus, Sherwin revises the revisionists without discrediting them entirely.

15. William W. McDonald, "The Revisionist Cold War Historians," *The Midwest Quarterly*, XI (October, 1969), 47-48; Charles S. Maier, "Revisionism and the Interpretation of Cold War Origins," in James V. Compton, ed., *America and the Origins of the Cold War* (1972), 166-167; Christopher Lasch, "The Cold War, Revisited and Re-Visioned," *New York Times Magazine*, January 14, 1968, 26-27.

16. Maier, "Revisionism," 157.

17. Howard Zinn, *The Politics of History* (1970), 222. Chapter 13, "Vietnam the Moral Equation," contains a good discussion on this issue.

18. Walter LaFeber, "War: Cold," in James V. Compton, ed., *America and the Origins of the Cold War* (1972), 184, 175.

19. Zinn, *The Politics of History*, 1-2.

20. *Ibid.*, 23. The most recent annual meeting of the American Historical Association, held in December of 1971, supports Zinn's contention. A few of the 129 sessions did touch on relevant topics, however. For example, the revisionists were much in evidence at the session, "What is to be Done? An Agenda for Peace Research in History." Wilbur Jacobs of the University of California, Santa Barbara, called for a "radical, non-objective, new peace history." "It is almost our patriotic duty," he said, "to understand the forces threatening mankind." Charles Barker of Johns Hopkins insisted that "peace history is value-inspired history."

21. *Ibid.*, 5, 13.

22. *Ibid.*, 36. The five rules are discussed in chapter three, "What is Radical History?" They are: (1) "We can intensify, expand, and sharpen our perception of how bad things are for the victims of the world." (2) "We can expose the pretensions of governments to either neutrality or beneficence." (3) "We can expose the ideology that pervades our culture—using 'ideology' in Mannheim's sense: rationale for the going order." (4) "We can recapture those few moments in the past which show the possibility of a better way of life than that which has dominated the earth thus far." (5) "We can show how good social movements can go wrong, how leaders can betray their followers, how rebels can become bureaucrats, how ideals can become frozen and reified."

23. *Ibid.*, 54-55.

24. LaFeber, "War: Cold," 181.

25. Zinn, *The Politics of History*, 7.

26. Bernstein, *Towards a New Past*, xiii.

27. At the time of the present writing (1972), the oldest of these men is forty-two while the youngest is thirty-three.

28. It must be admitted, however, that other revisionists have an Eastern background. As Warren Cohen of Michigan State noted during the session on peace research at the recent American Historical Association meeting in New York: "I was born in this city and I didn't need William Appleman Williams or Gabriel Kolko to know the importance of economic interests."