

212 Left History 15.1

throughout the text itself, the chronology is more haphazard. Photographs taken decades apart are discussed in brisk succession with what at times seems to be minimal regard for changing historical contexts. The South is also treated as a monolithic whole; potential regional variations are treated as lightly as chronological shifts. Furthermore, the book, which some readers may find dense and jargon laden in places, was clearly written with a handful of narrow specialists in mind. Nonetheless, Abel's accomplishment is formidable, and all students of the American past owe her a tremendous debt for her careful work in creating this paradoxically striking "archive of the ordinary."

Jennifer Jensen Wallach  
University of North Texas

**Shane J. Maddock, *Nuclear Apartheid: The Quest for American Atomic Supremacy from World War II to the Present* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).**

*Nuclear Apartheid* is an intriguing account of the way the United States has sought to preserve its own atomic capability while denying weapons to other nations. In a crisp and thoughtful first chapter that frames the entire account, historian Shane J. Maddock suggests that American policy revolved around the notion that "some states could be trusted with nuclear weapons and some could not." (1) That assumption led to an atomic hierarchy that reflected the global political system. The United States stood at the top, with allies and other major powers coming next, and nations in the post-colonial world at the very bottom. Such a configuration created a framework called "nuclear apartheid" by an Indian diplomat, which provides the title for the book. (1)

Maddock points perceptively to "the mythic conception of America's past" as an important element in creating the pattern of nuclear inequality. "At its heart," he argues, "rested a variant of American exceptionalism that envisioned the United States as outside the normal constraints of a combative world system, therefore exempting Washington from most of the arguments used to dissuade other countries from acquiring nuclear arms." (2) National security concerns and hegemonic goals were likewise elements propelling American policy forward. In addition, a sense of what Maddock calls "technological utopianism" based on American superiority, led to the assumption that other nations could not possibly do what the United States had done on their own. (5) The overarching theme of the book is that "Washington suffered from 'superpower syndrome' – the belief that it could control and dominate the world simply because it had the right to." (9)

The rest of the work amplifies on these ideas in compelling ways. President Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed that an American monopoly was possi-

ble, despite the assessments to the contrary of major scientific leaders. His successor Harry S. Truman subscribed even more strongly to the idea of the sanctity of the nuclear secret. These beliefs led to the effort to provide a system of international control – based on what the United States called the Baruch Plan – that was doomed to failure since the Soviet Union wanted a bomb of its own. Maddock is highly critical of these first postwar efforts: “Truman thus ended his presidency with an incoherent and failed nonproliferation policy.” (78)

In this account, matters hardly improved under Ike. President Dwight D. Eisenhower “ushered in a period of happy denial where problems were ignored in public and discussed only behind closed doors.” (81-82) The administration’s effort to create a multilateral nuclear force under NATO command “exemplified the oxymoronic belief in American policy circles that increasing access to nuclear weapons would inhibit their spread...” (116) And Maddock’s conclusion about Eisenhower echoes his assessment of Truman: “Despite Eisenhower’s desire to control the arms race, he left office having done more to encourage nuclear proliferation than to prevent it.” (143)

Maddock is equally critical of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. He notes at one point “JFK’s familiar muddled thinking.” (179) And he goes on to argue that “He lacked the very political courage to pursue unpopular policies that he had touted while a senator,...While desiring a U.S. – Soviet modus Vivendi, Kennedy succeeded only in increasing Cold War tensions.” (180) Though he hoped to do all he could to halt the spread of atomic weapons, he was unable to secure the nonproliferation agreement he sought during his short term in office; Lyndon Johnson did little better. With little background or expertise in foreign affairs, he was unable to find a way to balance NATO obligations against the hope for nuclear nonproliferation.

Maddox has written a powerful and comprehensive book that examines nuclear policy in abundant detail. He sustains a compelling argument from beginning to end, though it sometimes seems a bit tighter at the starter than at the end. But overall, his lesson rings loud and clear: “Little good has come from U.S. nonproliferation efforts, and few lessons have been learned.” (297) The major powers were more attentive to other security considerations than to controlling the spread of nuclear weapons, and so the nonproliferation treaty that finally took effect in 1970 was “an empty pledge not to sin, enforced by sinners.” (298) The challenges remain, though they become more complicated all the time.

Allan M. Winkler  
Miami University